R U N A W A Y B R I D E

Screenplay by Sarah Parriott & Josann McGibbon

FADE IN

EXT. AN IMPOSSIBLE EXPANSE OF MARYLAND FARMLAND - DAY

The wind rustles the endless field of corn, blows over the freshly mown meadow of soybeans, and magically sways a copse of trees.

It's a Fall after-noon. A SUDDEN POUNDING OF GALLOPING HOOVES breaks the peace and... A HORSE and RIDER burst between the rows of corn into the meadow. They are running for their lives.

CLOSE ON:

The rider is a bride -- a beautiful woman dressed in a disheveled wedding gown, it's train tattered and flying like a knight's banner out behind her. This is MAGGIE CARPENTER.

The horse is frothing and wild-eyed, like the bride, who turns to look behind her in terror. The horse's labored breathing mingles with Maggie's panicked gasps.

We see a WEDDING BOUQUET fly into a ditch as the horse thunders on. Maggie clings to the reins. She looks as though she is running from the devil himself.

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. IKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Establishing.

CUT TO:

EXT. IKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

IKE (V.O.)
Hey, Fisher, pick up. I have some column ideas I want to bounce off you. Not there? Okay. Listen I'm thinking of writing about those mind-numbing informercials that are always on.

Ike walks out of his apartment building talking on cell phone.

IKE (cont'd)
What do you think? Good idea, right? Boring, down to death, pointless -- It sucks.

Ike yells at a CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

IKE (cont'd)
If you guys are here any longer, they're gonna make you sign a lease.

CONSTRUCTION WORKER
Your column should be so funny.

Ike turns and walks down the street, talking into cell phone.

IKE
Okay, I was also thinking I might write about...

He spots a RICH LADY with tons of diamonds getting out of a Limousine, talking to a CHAUFFEUR. He goes up to her.

IKE (cont'd)
Excuse me. I was thinking of doing an article on limousines. What would you say to people who never had a chance to drive in a limo?

They walk up to her DOORMAN.

LADY
I'm sorry, I don't know any people like that.

Ike walks off. They stare at him as he goes.

EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Ike's talking on the phone to his friend's machine again.

IKE
(into phone)
Fisher? Come on -- I know you're sitting there laughing at me. Pick up. I want to run an idea past you.

Ike continues walking now in the full panic of writer's block. He pleads into his friend's answering machine as he walks.

IKE (cont'd)

(into phone)
I just could use someone to toss it back and forth with for a few minutes, get the juice flowing, help me. I have an hour and twenty-seven minutes and fifty-two seconds. Hello?

He walks away from the t-shirt table towards the bar. The Vendor calls out to him.

T-SHIRT VENDOR
Hey, Ike, when are you going to put me in an article?

IKE
When your t-shirts stop shrinking.

Ike enters the bar. The Woman drops the shirt she was holding and walks off with her children. The T-shirt Vendor goes back to selling his shirts.

INT. NEW YORK BAR - LATE DAY

Ike sits at the bar speaking to an attractive Woman nearby, a MAN puts is USA Today on the bar and addresses the BARTENDER.

MAN
I see photos of a lot of dead writers on these walls. Got any living ones? I have a story to tell that could win one of them a Pulitzer.
(then, with enthusiasm)
Picture this, if you will. A small town in Maryland, a sleepy little village, within that a hardware store...

The Man continues speaking as Ike and the woman continue their conversation.

WOMAN
So what's in store for us in tomorrow's column?

IKE
I don't know yet. I'm kind of a last-minute man. Ideas don't flow until an hour or two before deadline.

The Woman gets up and begins throwing darts.

WOMAN
(interrupting)

This is very interesting. You get your ideas for your column from life. You start up a conversation with a woman in a bar, attack her choice of reading material, try and get a rise out of her while you contemplate whether or not she's worth hitting on.

IKE
No, I can't hit on you until I get an idea.

She starts throwing darts.

WOMAN
That's flattering.

IKE
No, you don't understand.

The Woman goes to her bar stool, gathering her bag and leaves a tip for the Bartender.

WOMAN
I think I do understand. So my not responding to your baiting me will inspire one of those potential bitter diatribes you love to write about women and all the things we do to drive men crazy?

IKE
(taken aback)
I don't write bitter diatribes about women... very often.

She whacks him with a newspaper, then shakes his hand.

WOMAN
Only when the ideas aren't flowing, huh? Well, it was very nice to meet you, one-minute man.

The Woman leaves the bar.

IKE
(as she exits)
That's last minute man.
(then, louder)
And it's the quality that counts.

BARTENDER

You know, for a good looking man, you strike out a lot.

MAN
I've seen much worse.

The phone rings. Te Bartender answers it as Ike sits back on his bar stool. Ike grabs the woman's magazine that she left on the bar and starts glancing at it. The Man at the bar has heard the whole thing.

MAN (cont'd)
I said, I've seen much worse.

Ike looks at the Man with reservation. The Man is George Swilling.

IKE
Excuse me?

MAN
The brush-off.

Ike gets up and moves to the dart board. He removes the darts.

MAN (cont'd)
I've witnessed far more treacherous and nefarious exits than that. At least she castigated you in private.

IKE
Not as private as I thought.

Ike turns slightly, giving the man his back.

IKE (cont'd)
Kevin, you've got some napkins?

BARTENDER
Writing or wiping?

IKE
Give me a pen.

The Bartender gives him cocktail napkins and a pen. Ike starts making notes. Ike looks up from his writing. The Man gets up and starts throwing darts.

MAN
(throwing darts hard)
Ah, come on. They deserve it. They love you, they hate you, they're hot,

they're cold, they're high, they're low...

IKE
... They're up, they're down. It's really fun making this list with you, but I've got a column to go write.

BARTENDER
Ike.

MAN
(undeterred)
But you don't have a really superb idea! Well, there's a girl from my hometown you could write about.

Ike moves to the Bartender and pays him.

BARTENDER
(to Man)
Excuse me, we don't need any new ideas.

MAN
She likes to dump grooms right at the altar. They call her "The Runaway Bride".

Both Ike and Bartender turn and stare.

MAN
She performed the travesty seven or eight times. Right at the altar she turns around and runs like hell. Bolts.

Ike turns and heads for the door. The Man calls after him, getting up from his stool without stopping his enthusiastic story.

MAN (cont'd)
Adios. Plows down the aisle, knocking old ladies out of her way like the running of the bulls at Pamplona. And guess what?

IKE
I give up.

MAN
She has the next victim all lined up. She's twirling another body on the

spit.

Ike stops in his tracks. He turns back around in spite of himself.

MAN
(beginning his story)
Imagine if you will, a small town in Maryland...

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Ike sits at his computer, cassette player with Miles Davis PLAYS next to him as he types away reading his handiwork to himself.

IKE
(reading)
"Today is a day of profound introspection, I have been accused of using this column to direct bitter diatribes at the opposite sex! This uncomfortable accusation has plunged me into at least fifteen minutes of serious reflection, from which I have emerged with the conclusion that, yes -- I traffic in female stereotypes."

EXT. USA TODAY OFFICE - DAY

FISHER walks through the main office reading the paper.

FISHER
"But how can one blame me when every time I step out my front door I meet fresh proof that the female archetypes are alive and well? Te mother, the virgin, the whore, the crone; they're elbowing you in the subway, stealing your cabs, and overwhelming you with perfume in elevators."

INT. USA TODAY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Elaine at her desk reads aloud to herself.

ELAINE
"But perhaps, in fairness to the fairer sex, I do need to broaden my horizon and add some new goddesses to the pantheon: I would like to nominate for

deity..."

Fisher hands a file to Elaine.

FISHER
"... The cheerleader, the coed, and the man-eater, the last of which concerns me most today."

Fisher leaves and we hold a USA Today sign.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

The Man comes out of the men's room reading the USA Today, Kevin, the Bartender, stands on the bar reading the same article.

MAN
(reads)
"To be fair, the man-eater isn't exactly new. In Ancient Greece, this fearsome female was known as Erinys, the devouring death goddess. In India, she is Kali, who likes to devour her boyfriend Shiva's entrails while her yoni devour his -- dot dot dot, never mind. In Indonesia, the bloody-jawed man-eater is called Ragma..."

Te Man sits at the bar near to the Bartender.

BARTENDER
You noticed these are all countries without cable.
(then, continues reading)
"... And in Hale, Maryland where she helps run the family hardware store. She is known as Miss Maggie Carpenter ..."
(mispronounces)
".... AKA, the Runaway Bride."

CUT TO:

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - DAY

WORKERS read the above article.

INT./EXT. BEAUTY PARLOR / HALE, MARYLAND - DAY

PEGGY and MRS. PRESSMAN exit the parlor and stroll down the street. (lowers her paper and reads.)

PEGGY (cont'd)
"... And in Hale, Maryland where she helps run the family hardware store."
(to the Women)
We have to go to Maggie. Cindy, mind the shop.
(exits salon; continues reading)
"... She is known as Miss Maggie Carpenter, AKA, the Runaway Bride."

MRS. PRESSMAN
Holy moly.

The older one, Mrs. Pressman, listens with a pained expression as the younger one, Peggy, continues to read the column aloud. Neither one can believe what they're reading.

PEGGY
(reads)
"What is unusual about Miss Carpenter is that she likes to dress her men up as grooms before she devours them. She has already disemboweled six in a row by leaving them at the altar."... I can't ready anymore.

MRS. PRESSMAN
(takes paper from her, reads)
"And her ritual feast continues as she prepares to make a sacrifice out of the seventh fiance. So all bets are on and we hope that this boomerang bride isn't honeymooning with Las Vegas odds makers because many predict that this girl is out of there before the race... before the rice hits the ground"
(then)
Holy moly.

Peggy and Mrs. Pressman step into a hardware store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Peggy and Mrs. Pressman enter, worried.

MRS. PRESSMAN

You tell Maggie.

PEGGY
No, you tell her.

MRS. PRESSMAN
No, no. You're her best friend.

PEGGY
No.

MRS. PRESSMAN
(holding her newspaper)
You know, it's just possible that she hasn't read this yet.

PEGGY
Yeah.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Maybe she hasn't read the paper...

On the counter, they see a copy of USA Today opened to the article about Maggie.

MRS. PRESSMAN (cont'd)
... Or not!

We follow MAGGIE down the back stairs inside The Hale Hardware Store, the prettiest, most welcoming shop of its kind anywhere in small town USA. Somehow the place ha taken on the spirit of the owner's daughter; both stop and shop-girl radiate brightness, charm, and possibility. Maggie comes down steps with a faucet handle and goes to an elderly customer, MR. PAXTON.

MAGGIE
(bright)
Here we go! One antique hot water handle with the "HOT" still on it, guaranteed to fit any American Standard cast iron tub with a four-inch center made between 1924 and 1938. In other words, I think you're out of the doghouse with Mrs. Paxton.

MR. PAXTON
(amazed)
Hallelujah.

MAGGIE
Alright, Mr. Paxton, I'll put it on

your account.

Maggie rounds the bend, another customer, EARL, stands by the paint machine.

EARL
Maggie.

MAGGIE
(walking past customer)
You don't need an air conditioner, Earl, you just need an attic fan -- There's more in the back.

Maggie steps behind the front counter of the store and takes the account book out. Her voice trails off as she sees the dour expression on the faces of her friends.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
What?

Peggy nervously mentions the newspaper.

PEGGY
(delicate)
So -- Mag -- you've seen this, huh?

MAGGIE
(serious)
Yes, I've seen it. And I have to say it's the rudest and most offensive... joke anybody's ever played on me!

To their amazement, Maggie starts smiling.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
You guys! How long did this take you?

Maggie stays amused.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Where'd you get this done?
(laughing)
You creeps! I should disinvite you! And why did you say seven times? This is four.

PEGGY
Uh, Maggie, you told us to bachelorette jokes, so we didn't...

Maggie looks at the stricken face of her friends.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Holy moly.

Peggy looks like she is going to cry with sympathy for Maggie. Maggie is starting to feel uncomfortable. She looks down, dubiously, at the paper.

MAGGIE
Um, you know, now would be a good moment to tell me this is fake.
(no response)
It won't be funny if you drag it out.
Okay?
(no response)
Okay, well... I mean, I can find out...
Real newspapers smear. Phoney papers don't.

She picks up the paper and brushes it against her apron, leaving an INK SMEAR!!

She nearly kneels over.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(sitting)
Bag.

Peggy and Mrs. Pressman immediately spring to her side. They give her a bag to breathe in.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Bag.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKOUT ROOM/GYM - NIGHT

We see Maggie kickboxing in anger. The radio is on. She suddenly stops, yanks Ike's article off the wall, leaves her workout area and goes to her desk.

ANGLE ON DESK AREA:

She turns off the radio and begins to type her letter.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
"Dear Editor..."

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

As Maggie's VOICE-OVER continues to read her letter, we take in

a Manhattan busy day. It is big, loud, and anonymous.

MAGGIE (V.O.; cont'd)
"Greeting from the sticks! Perhaps you believe that a rural education is focused mainly on hog calling and tractor maintenance rather than reading. Why else would you print a piece of fiction about me and call it fact?"

Te CAMERA FINDS Ike, striding across a busy street, dodging taxies. A WOMAN smacks him with a newspaper. He passes a WOMAN TRAFFIC OFFICER, then a hot dog stand. He greets and passes a FALAFEL VENDOR. THE CAMERA PANS to a USA Today Truck.

MAGGIE (V.O.; cont'd)
"I suppose Mr. Graham was too busy thinking us slanderous statements about how I dump men for kicks to bother with something silly like accuracy in reporting. Which is understandable, because with a "man-eater" like me on the loose, who has time to check facts?"

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

He passes regular GUYS who cheer him.

MAGGIE (V.O.; cont'd)
"Still, we cannibalistic queens can get pretty cranky when we see things in print that hurt our feelings, like that we deliberately abandon fiances with malice aforethought."

INT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

He enters the newspaper building, going to Ellie's office.

INT. USA TODAY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

He walks through the crowded city room. His arrival attracts a lot of attention from his CO-WORKERS. Ike seems a little surprised, but he's pleased.

MAGGIE (V.O.; cont'd)
"That's why I was surprised to find Mr. Graham's editor was a woman. Call me a sentimental fool, but I sort of hoped we man-eater could stick together."

Ike works his way down the hall to the editor's office. CHUFFA

Ike greets various workers. He steps up to the editor's secretary, ELAINE. She doesn't smile.

IKE
(to Elaine)
I'll put in a good word for you.

ELAINE
No, no, don't mention my name in there.

IKE
Why?

A buzz.

ELAINE
You can go in now.

Ike goes into Ellie's office. Elaine picks up her phone.

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

ELLIE is that editor. Stylish and successful looking, she's about Ike's age. Ellie sits behind a big desk with a scowl on her pretty face. Her casual-looking husband, Fisher, sits nonchalantly on the arm of the couch. Ike enters as Ellie reads Maggie's letter.

ELLIE
(reading letter)
"Anyway, I'm just dropping you big city folk this little note to say that I have thought of a ritual sacrifice that would satisfy my current appetite: Ike Graham's column on a platter. Yours truly, Maggie Carpenter. P.S. -- I have inclosed a list of the gross factual misrepresentations in your article. There are fifteen."

Ike sits as Ellie puts the letter down and takes off her glasses.

IKE
(chuckles as he sits)
Fully. I like her. She has wit.

ELLIE
I left four messages. You don't return my calls.

IKE
So? I never returned your calls, even when we were married. And what's Fisher doing here anyway?

Fisher gets and places a photo of the cat on a bookshelf on his way to the other side of the room.

FISHER
Ellie asked me to come down to offer moral support.

IKE
Since when does Ellie need moral supp--

ELLIE
-- It's for you, Ike.

IKE
What?

ELLIE
Journalism lesson number one. If you fabricate your facts, you get fired.

Ellie pushes USA Today lawyer's letter across the desk for him to read. Ike picks it up and skims the letter. His face is as impassive as stone.

IKE
Lesson number two. Never work for your former spouse.

ELLIE
That's not nothing to do with it. You cooked this story up and you know it.

IKE
I didn't cook up a story. I had a source.

ELLIE
Someone reliable, I'm sure. A booze-hound in a bar?

FISHER
In vino veritas.

IKE
Don't knock drunk guys in bars. Drunk guys in bars are good. It means they're not driving.

Ike gets up and stands near Ellie, making his point.

IKE (cont'd)
Besides, I'm a columnist. This is what columnists are supposed to do. This is what you like. We push, we stretch, we go out on a limo. That's what makes me good!

ELLIE
No, that's what makes you unemployed.

IKE
I merely write the stuff. You're the one that serves it up.

Ike puts down the letter and puts his glasses back into his pocket.

ELLIE
Not anymore. I have to draw the line.
(pushing a piece of paper)
She sent us this list. Our lawyers say it's actionable.

Ellie hands Ike Maggie's list.

IKE
(scoffs)
Lawyers.
(glances at list)
I don't know, Ellie -- Firing me is going to be very tough on you. It's going to be hard to get over. There will be therapy bills for you.

ELLIE
(shrugs)
I already made an appointment for later today.

IKE
(putting the list down, standing)
See? You want custody of my job? ... Why not just consider my wrist slapped and call me when you feel I've served my time?

ELLIE

I'm sorry, Ike. This is permanent.

Fisher winces and looks away. Ike and Ellie look at each other for a sober moment.

ELLIE (V.O.; cont'd)
If you go quietly, I'll get you severance pay.

Ellie fidgets with her toy rake, then Ike heads for the door. He laughs a little at the painful truth of her words and walks out. Ellie collapses back in her chair. Fisher goes to her and rubs her shoulders.

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - DAY

Ike rides sadly on the back of a forklift, gets off and walks out.

EXT. HALE RESIDENTIAL STREET - ANOTHER MORNING

ANGLE ON MAGGIE'S HOUSE:

A train goes by. A modest clapboard house with a porch. Two entrances. A PAPERBOY tosses a paper onto the lawn in front of the house. The front door opens and Maggie appears fresh out of bed, wearing only a jacket and panties. Heedless of being seen this way, she scampers out to the sidewalk to pick up her delivered paper: USA Today. She tears off the plastic bag and rips into it, looking for her letter. She finds it. A smile on her face, then she scampers back into the house.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

Maggie skips back into her house which she shares with Father and Grandma. A cozy and eclectic place creatively furnished on a shoe-string. She rushes into: KITCHEN WHERE BOB KELLY, fiance #4, is packing cans into a backpack. Bob, 38, has a pleasant face and a body that is almost shockingly buff. He's wearing a T-shirt that reads: "Mountaineers Do It Against the Wall.", Maggie dances over, waving the paper and singing.

MAGGIE
She canned him, she canned him...

Bob test the weight of the backpack adding dehydrate food.

BOB
Come here, Mag, and try this on.

Maggie puts the paper on the kitchen counter and starts to read aloud, paying no mind to Bob, who is sticking her arms through

the straps of the backpack.

MAGGIE
Listen: "Dear Ms. Carpenter, I apologize to you for this unfortunate matter. Ike Graham's column will no longer be appearing in this paper. Best of luck in you upcoming marriage!"

Bob continues to hold up the weight of the backpack as he straps it onto Maggie's shoulders.

BOB
That-a-girl! You sacked him.
(checking pack)
This is the weight of the pack you're going to have to carry in the Himalayas. Tell me if it's too heavy.

Bob lets go and Maggie FALLS BACKWARD, disappearing behind the counter, and hitting the floor, with a THUD. Bob looks down at her. Maggie's voice rises from the floor behind the counter.

MAGGIE (o.s.)
It's a little... It's a little heavy... Help me, baby.

Bob has no answer. He reaches a hand down. He yelps as Maggie pulls him down on top of her, out of frame. We HEAR them giggle and kiss.

INT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - ANOTHER DAY

Fisher uses the dock for a photo shoot featuring men and women in evening and formal wear from Escada for G.Q. Fisher is not actually shooting the camera, but rather supervising it. Fisher claps his hands and calls the models to attention. Then he goes onto the stage and sets the models in their positions.

FISHER (cont'd)
Remember, we are putting the "fun" back into formal.
(to Ike)
I just say that for the agency guys. I don't even know what that means. Now follow me.

INT. USA TODAY OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Elevator doors open. Ike and Fisher exit and walk towards the coffee table.

FISHER
Ike, I really liked the Runaway Bride piece, and since I do freelance stuff for G.Q., I'm in a different position now...

IKE
What are you trying to say to me, Fish?

They stop walking.

FISHER
Vindication. How would you like to get some? A chance to prove that, though your facts weren't entirely straight, your theory was correct.

IKE
(hiding his hope)
The real story on Miss Carpenter.

FISHER
All the gory details.

They start walking again.

IKE
(excited)
The anatomy of the black widow spider of Maryland.

FISHER
It wouldn't be a bad way to get you back into writing feature pieces again.

IKE
(enthusiastically)
This is good. It is a good story, Fish.

They stop at the coffee table and grab something to eat.

FISHER
(nods)
If she runs, then it's a cover story. All true. All accurate.

IKE
(confesses)
Okay, you were right. I hated my column, but I can do this assignment.

FISHER
Then you've got it. If you leave tomorrow for the hinterlands, you'll have plenty of time before her next wedding trot.

IKE
"Paid vindication" That's what I call justice.

FISHER
Justice, yes. Paid, I don't know. They like the idea, but my hands are tied with budget restraints.

IKE
But I'll get my normal fee, right?

He walks away.

IKE
You want me to do it on spec?!

He follows him.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARYLAND HIGHWAY - DAY

We see Ike driving down the highway. The car sputters a little as he and Fisher continue their conversation in voice-over. (If needed by the editor.)

FISHER (V.O.)
Don't say "spec" like it's a dirty word. Nobody ever paid Shakespeare to write a play! Plato never got a book advance...

IKE (V.O.)
Oh yeah! I happen to know from reliable sources that Nietzche got expenses and a rental car.

We hear Fisher laugh.

IKE (V.O.; cont'd)
I'm going to make this work, Fish. I'm going to do it!

Ike's car drives into Hale, passing a billboard reading, "Welcome to Hale."

CUT TO:

EXT. HALE STREET - DAY

Ike drives down picturesque Main Street. He passes Hale Hardware. Sign says: "At Curl. Be back soon."

EXT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - DAY

A BARBERSHOP QUARTET is singing in front of the only hotel in town. Ike pulls up and goes inside.

INT. LOBBY/ATLANTIC HOTEL - DAY

Ike has checked into the Atlantic Hotel. The clerk, LEE, hands him his key. Ike asks about room service and the restaurant. An OLDER WOMAN asks him if he plays bridge as he goes up the stairs to his room.

EXT. HALE MAIN STREET - DAY

Ike exits his hotel as the Barber Shop Quartet finishes singing "Camptown Races."

He now walks down the charming main artery of the town, looking exactly like what he is: a cynical New York out of his element on sunny Main Street, USA. KIDS ride by on bikes, streaming balloons behind them. A balloon hits Ike on the face. As he crosses the street, he mutters into his tape recorder:

IKE
I think I'm in Maryberry.

Flags hang on all the storefronts and the place sparkles with wholesome attitudes as PEOPLE greet each other familiarly. Ike comes to beauty parlor called "Curl Up and Dye". The place is doing business and crowded with WOMEN.

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Cindy, the manicurist, does Mrs. Pressman's nails. Maggie sits on the floor next to Peggy's salon chair, fixing the base of a barber chair. She tightens a screw and looks up, satisfied. Cindy's dog is on the floor near Maggie.

MAGGIE
Cindy, you better 86 Sprout. He seems to be enjoying the petroleum distillates.

Cindy rolls over in her chair, picks up her dog and rolls back

to her station.

CINDY
That's it. Back to obedience school.

MAGGIE
(to Peggy)
Okay -- have a seat... gently, carefully.

Peggy sits in the chair. Maggie spins her around and around.

PEGGY
(delighted as she spins)
You're a goddess!

MAGGIE
I didn't even need to change this gasket, just put in a little hydraulic fluid.

PEGGY
Stop it. When you talk like that, I get turned on and it frightens me.

JUST THEN. Ike enters the salon, taking off his sunglasses. Peggy hops off the chair.

IKE
Hello. I'm looking for Maggie Carpenter. There was a sign at the hardware store across the street...

PEGGY
Are you a reporter?

It's a little early in the game for Ike to be thrown off guard.

IKE
(shocked)
What?

PEGGY
(eyeing his loafers)
It's been our experience that anyone with some sort of gewgaw on his loafers ends up being another big city reporter wanting to interview Maggie.

IKE
About her upcoming wedding and all.

PEGGY
No, about her getting that asshole from New York fired.

Ike smiles down at his loafers and shrugs.

IKE
I am just such a reporter. And you are?

PEGGY
Peggy Phleming. Not the ice skater.

Peggy steps aside. Ike moves toward Cindy and Mrs. Pressman.

IKE
And who are these lovely ladies?

Te ladies shake his hand and introduce themselves.

CINDY
Cindy. Maggie's unmarried cousin.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Mrs. Pressman. No relation.

PEGGY
And you are?

IKE
(turning toward her)
Looking for Maggie.

PEGGY
Yep. Maggie -- Someone to see you.

Maggie looks over from her sitting position on the floor. She gives Ike the once-over, focusing on the shoes.

MAGGIE
(yelling to Peggy)
Reporter?

PEGGY
Yup!

Ike crouches to see Maggie on the floor just as she rises to her feet. Ike straightens up. For a moment, he is thrown by her beauty and intelligent eyes.

MAGGIE
I hope you have a different angle.

It's pretty much all been covered.

IKE
Originality is my speciality.

MAGGIE
Excellent.

PEGGY
Hold on -- Nobody interviews Maggie in here unless they're getting haircut.

MAGGIE
She's the boss.

IKE
Sorry, no. I just got one.

MRS. PRESSMAN
(to Ike)
Excuse me, sir. I have an actual fact for you.

IKE
(steps to Mrs. Pressman)
Yes, Mrs. Pressman.

MRS. PRESSMAN
It's her fourth time to the altar, you know. Not seven like they said.

IKE
I know. Tell me something. Do you think she's going to make it all the way this time?

During the Ike/Mrs. Pressman exchange, Maggie looks at Ike. There's something familiar about him. She looks over at Peggy and beckons her to a copy of Ike's column affixed to a mirror. A goatee and horns, have been scrawled on Ike's byline picture. He's been "devilized". Peggy coughs as she recognizes Ike in the newspaper clipping.

MAGGIE
She swallowed her gun.

Mrs. Pressman continues her story to Ike.

MRS. PRESSMAN
I'm not sure. Mr. Schullian runs the newsstand, he's our local bookie, you know, he's giving eight to one odds she

won't. He says she's so famous now, maybe Vegas will give odds on her. I'm going to wait to hear what the pros say.

IKE
Good fact. Well, you let me know.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Oh, I will.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie indicates column to Peggy. She looks over at the part of the shop used to wash and dye hair. There's a sink, stool and a cabinet affixed to the wall above sink, which holds various shampoos and hair dyes. Maggie gets an idea. Maggie and Peggy step forward toward Ike.

MAGGIE
Well, instead of a haircut, how about a wash? You know, get all that city grit out of it.

IKE
You'll answer my questions?

Maggie nods affirmatively.

IKE (cont'd)
(removing his jacket)
Fine. You wash, I'll ask the questions.

PEGGY
Great.

Ike hands Peggy his jacket. A mystified Peggy leads Ike to the sink. While she does this...

MAGGIE
Have a seat. Peggy, why don't you give him the special treatment that strengthens the follicles.

Ike sits in the chair near the sink. Maggie shakes out a smock and puts it around Ike.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
So, what do you want to know?

Ike leans and rests his head on the sink. Peggy bends over him and wets his hair. She grabs various hair coloring products.

IKE
Getting nervous?

MAGGIE
Nervous? Not at all! No. I've never been more certain in my life. Except -- I am having all kinds of weird dreams.

Ike pulls the cloth down from over his face.

IKE
Weird dreams? You're going to tell me about them?

MAGGIE
Yes.

PEGGY
(calming)
Let's just put this back here for the aromatherapy.

Peggy recovers his face, then continues to fuss with the hair coloring products. Maggie helps.

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - LATER

Ike sits with a towel over his head as Peggy blow-dries the back of his head. His back is to the mirror, his body faces Maggie. Cindy does her own nails as Mrs. Pressman scratches off lottery tickets. The dog, Sprout, sits in is basket.

MAGGIE
In another one...

PETE, wearing a hat, comes in the front door of the salon.

PEGGY
Hey, Pete, I'll be right with you.

Ike peeks out from under his towel as Maggie continues.

MAGGIE
I'm inside the church. Everyone I know is there, only they're not really them. They're like Frankenstein monsters, but without the bolts coming out of their necks. It's all very "Night of the Living Dead". And here's the creepiest part -- I look down at my dress and

it's red. I mean, I have no idea what
it means. Red's not my color!

Ike listens intently and stares steadily into her eyes. Peggy removes the towel. His hair is divided into equal parts and dyed orange and red.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
So what do you think?

Ike stares back at her, the tickle of suspicion creeping up his spine.

IKE
I think you'd look good in red.

PEGGY
No, she's talking about your hair.

Maggie swivels his chair so that Ike faces the mirror. Ike looks at his brightly colored hair.

MAGGIE
You're all ready for football season,
Mr. Graham.

Ike stares at his hair in total confusion. With icy calm, Ike rises from his chair and primps the end of his hair as if giving it the finishing touches. Then he sees his defaced newspaper clipping and all becomes clear. He picks up the article and shows it to everyone. Ike does a slow burn.

IKE
Yes, I think I nailed the personality
profile of the women of Hale.

Ike turns and puts the clipping up on the mirror.

IKE (cont'd)
(to Peggy)
My jacket, please.

Peggy hands him his jacket.

IKE (cont'd)
(sarcastically)
Thank you.

Ike moves toward the door. He spots Pete.

IKE (cont'd)
(putting on jacket;

to Pete)
Excuse me, Pete, do you know a place that sells shampoo... Strong shampoo?

PETE
Doc's Pharmacy. Third and Elm. Tell him Pete sent you. Want my hat?

IKE
No thanks.

Ike smiles at Maggie and exits.

MAGGIE
(to Peggy)
He seems crabby.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

In front of beauty salon, Maggie follows Ike out.

MAGGIE
If you're looking for Elm Street, it's that way.

She puts on her sunglasses.

IKE
Thank you.

He walks the other way.

MAGGIE
If you came down here in the pursuit of happiness, you might as well go back. Because you can't make me feel bad.

She stops walking and turns to Ike.

IKE
I'm not here to make you feel bad. I'm here for vindication. In my heart...

MAGGIE
You have one?

Ike walks back to Maggie.

IKE
I feel I'm right about you. You got me

fired, lady. You destroyed my reputation and you screwed up my hair. You chew men up, spit them out and loved it. And I'm down here to satisfy myself on that point.

PASSERSBY stare at Ike's hair and giggle.

MAGGIE
Did something happen to make you care about reality?

IKE
Yes. Conviction. Conviction that I'm onto the truth. You're going to do the same thing to "poor bastard number four" that you did to the last three. You're going to run again. And I'm not leaving until you do.

MAGGIE
You're going to be very disappointed.

IKE
We'll see.

MAGGIE
I'd love to stay and chat, but I've got to get back to work. I still have my job.

He stares at her for a beat, stung by her words.

MAGGIE
I have nothing to hide, Mr. Graham. Talk to whoever you want. You might actually stumble upon a fact or two.

Maggie walks away. Ike walks a few steps and stops at a KID on a bike.

IKE
Hey, kid, I'll give you ten bucks for your hat.

Kid agrees. Ike puts the hat on and starts to cross the street. An OLD WOMAN walks by and hits him with a newspaper. Ike is stunned.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Maggie pulls into the driveway in her truck. She's in a fine

mood as she walks right in the house.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Bob, Walter, and Maggie's GRANDMOTHER JULIA sit in the living room. Grandma is sewing one of Maggie's wedding veils. Walter drinks wine, Ike wears a hat.

WALTER
You know, when I only see one dog, I know I've had too much to drink.

Te family dog, Skipper, sits near a ceramic dog table. Maggie smiles as she walks in the front door and puts down her tool box and bag.

MAGGIE
You'll never guess who came crawling into town with his tail between his legs.

IKE (o.s.)
Who?

Maggie enters the parlor to see Ike smiling evilly from his seat on the couch.

IKE (cont'd)
(innocently)
Hello, Maggie. I just came by to apologize to your family.
(looks to Walter)
When I'm wrong, I'm wrong. I pushed a story. I made a mistake.

WALTER
In other words -- he's only human. An he brought us a bottle of wine.

Raises the bottle to Maggie.

IKE
They made me put my hat back on.

WALTER
Oh, yeah. Scared the hell out of Skipper.

MAGGIE
You've got to be kidding me.

Maggie stares at them both.

BOB
(enjoying the moment)
No, no, you should have seen Skipper.
(then, imitates growling)
It wasn't that funny.

Maggie gives him a look that says, "You are not absolved." She smiles stiffly, looking back at Ike. She then sits on the arm of Bob's chair and puts her arm on his shoulder.

MAGGIE
So, the forces of good and evil have already met.

Maggie takes the wine bottle from the table next to Walter. She snaps a look to Bob, who follows her.

BOB
I'll help you take into the kitchen.

GRANDMA JULIA
Check on the crabs, Bob.

We overhear them murmuring in annoyed tones about the wedding plans as they exit... Walter puts down his drink.

IKE
Gee, I hope they don't have a fight out there. You don't think they'll call it off...?

WALTER
Well, wedding cake freezes. This we know.

IKE
You know, your daughter seems...

Ike notices that he's been sewn to the veil.

GRANDMA JULIA
Sorry.

IKE
That's okay, Grandma.

Grandma cuts the thread and separates the veil from Ike's sleeve.

IKE (cont'd)
(continuing his thought)

... Like such a lovely girl.

Walter points to a portrait painting on the wall.

WALTER
Like her mother.

IKE
(seeing the portrait)
Ah, beautiful.
(gets up to admire the portrait)
I just can't see her leaving multiple grooms in the dust like that.

GRANDMA JULIA
Oh, yes, you can. She's has 'em all on tape.

IKE
She has a tape?

WALTER
(good-natured)
Yeah. Lee at the hotel videos wedding. I mean Maggie didn't know she was going to make the hundred-yard dash.

Walter gestures to a pile of video cassettes on the bookcase. Ike checks on the tapes.

IKE
Dad's fishing trip, Grandma's knee operation, Grandma's birthday...

WALTER
Gotta tell you this about my daughter. My daughter makes real good time, even in a long dress and heels. Maggie may not be Hale's longest running joke, but she certainly is the fastest.

Walter cracks up.

GRANDMA JULIA
(sarcastically)
Ha ha.

CLOSE ON: A tape. It reads: "Maggie I, II, III." Ike's interest is more than piqued. Ike picks it up. They get up and go to the dining room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINNING ROOM/MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The family dog, Skipper, steals food from the table. Walter scolds him. Walter whacks his crab with his hammer and Ike copies him.

WALTER (cont'd)
Emma and I were only blessed with one child, not for lacking of trying.

MAGGIE
This is good, Dad, don't leave anything out.

Ike's hammer flies out of his hand. He goes to pick it up.

WALTER
So I've come to see it as a bonus, really, that we've been able to plan, and pay for, so many weddings.

MAGGIE
Not this one. This one's on me.

Walter reacts.

IKE
That's fair.

MAGGIE
Despite what you think, I don't do it on purpose. And I have no intention of doing it again.

BOB
That's right, Maggie. Just keep your eye on the ball.

Ike raises his eyebrows in question. Bob explains.

BOB (cont'd)
Sports psychology. It was my major in college.

IKE
Ahh.

BOB
(false modesty)
I'm the town's unofficial fitness

trainer. Big advocate of the mind and body combining for success. You could say or you can quote me, I'm a glass half full king of guy.

MAGGIE
(boasting)
Bob's the head of the P.E. department at the high school. And he coaches the football team. And he's climbed Everest.

To Maggie's satisfaction, Ike shoots Bob a look of begrudging respect. Nobody who's been up Everest is a total clown.

IKE
(impressed)
Everest. Is that right?

MAGGIE
Twice...

IKE
Really?

MAGGIE
(sticking it to Ike)
Without oxygen...

BOB
My girl likes to brag about me.

Bob and Maggie kiss Ike two little love-birds.

BOB (cont'd)
I'm taking her trekking on Annapurna on our honeymoon.

Ike is highly amused.

IKE
How romantic.

MAGGIE
(sharply)
We think so.

IKE
Nothing like sharing your nuptial bed with two Sherpas and a yak.

Walter cracks up, Maggie shoots Ike a look. He smiles back.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM/INT. FISHER AND ELLIE'S BEDROOM (NYC)

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Fisher and Ellie are exercising. Fisher is on a cycle machine. Ellie does yoga stretches. Ike sits back on the couch, puts on his glasses and watches a video taped wedding playing on the TV screen. Superimposed titles read "Brian Norris wedding."

IKE
(to Fisher; into phone)
You won't believe what I'm looking at, Fisher. A videotape of all three train wrecks.

THE TV - CLOSE

Two flower girls and Peggy enter a crowded church where the groom, Brian, and his best man wait at the altar.

Now we see Maggie come down the aisle, then walk past the altar. We see Maggie move away another aisle and out of the church. SHOCKED WEDDING GUESTS rise in horror, as she runs from this first wedding. She drags the train boy up the second aisle as she leaves. Ike hangs up. He gets up to pick up the remote and then sits back down to watch.

The tape fast-forwards to the next wedding. Now Ike is looking at a much more relaxed, hipper, backyard wedding. It says, "Gill Chavez Wedding". He hits the fast-forward button (sometimes slowing down).

ON TV:

We see the Carpenter's backyard. It is Gill and Maggie's wedding day. The yard is crowded with a MIXTURE of Hells Angels-types, Deadheads and townspeople. The "altar" is a band platform against the back fence.

Gill is waiting on the platform with a rock combo playing Grateful Dead-type music. He makes an introductory speech.

Maggie steps out onto the back porch. She's beautiful in a hippie-type wedding ensemble. She walks with her father to a trampoline. We can see her tattoo. She jumps on the trampoline, then dives into the crowd. They watch her and body surf her over their heads to the back fence.

As she hits the stage, she looks at Peggy and Gill, then decides

to go. She jumps off the stage and runs up to a passing GUY on a dirt bike. She jumps on and turns and waves as she rides away. During the video, Ike scribbles: "Gill Chavez". Maggie goes off on dirt bike. The tape fast-forwards to the last of Maggie's fiascoes.

ON IKE'STV

He now sees the third wedding. It's outdoors, in a tree lined area, MUSICIANS plays. Ike laughs as he discovers that Maggie approaches the altar on horseback, in a simple white dress, wearing a crown of flowers. The Maid Marian look. Ike slows the tape.

ON TV: IT SAYS, "GEORGE SWILLING WEDDING".

As Maggie rides down the aisle, suddenly the horse whinnies!

Maggie has kicked it in the shins. It rears and bolts, galloping off with the bride. Ike FREEZE FRAMES the tape on an image of Maggie, hair blowing. Although she is panic-stricken, her soul seems to shine through in tat single frame. As Ike stares at her, the smirk fades from his face. He just looks at her, allowing himself to see her expression, her eyes. He can't help it.

She gets to him. Ike gets a restless look on his face. He stares closely. The groom is George from the bar.

IKE
Kamikaze!

CUT TO:

EXT. TE TROUT BAKERY - THE NEXT DAY

Establishing. High angle wide shot of a bakery in Hale. Ike exits a neighboring shop and walks down the block. He pauses in front of the bakery to take a look at Maggie's truck. As he does, a middle-aged Black WOMAN walks by and whacks him with a newspaper. Ike is stunned as she walks off. He turns to a MAN sitting on a bench.

IKE
Did you see that?

CUT TO:

INT. THE TROUT BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE ON a group of plastic grooms and brides on a counter top.

MRS. TROUT is behind the counter helping Maggie with a selection of grooms for her wedding cake. The groom figures are spread out on the counter. All sizes and colors, some attached to brides, some solo, some tuxes, some in dinner jackets.

MRS. TROUT
This one's very popular, but oh, you've used this one before... Brian. But I like the white dinner jacket.

MAGGIE
No, he's no good. Too blond.

MRS. TROUT
(picks up another)
We'll go with total traditional.

MAGGIE
Too dark.

Then, Ike comes up behind her as she discards another groom.

IKE
But he's got the Bobster's eyes.

Maggie cringes at the sound of Ike's voice.

IKE (cont'd)
No -- the Bobster's eyes are closer set.

She ignores him and continues her search.

IKE (cont'd)
(to Mrs. Trout)
Could I have two coffees, please? And what is that wonderful smell?
(seeing the cinnamon rolls)
I'll have two of those delicious looking cinnamon rolls.

MRS. TROUT
Sure.
(picking up a miniature bride)
Here, Maggie. I think this makes the best you.

Mrs. Trout steps away to get his order. Ike moves to the other side of Maggie and picks up the bride and groom figure.

IKE

Let's see... Excuse me, isn't that cute?
Ahh...

He makes the bride figure repeatedly knock the groom figure in the head and run away screaming.

IKE (cont'd)
Bam, bam, bam, bam, bam! Oh, help me!
Help me! Yup! That's her all right.

Mrs. Trout just about bursts a gut laughing. Maggie takes the bride from Ike coldly.

MRS. TROUT
You must be that Mr. Graham fellow.

Ike turns and goes to her.

IKE
Yes, I am. And who are you?

MRS. TROUT
Betty Trout. Five dollars.

IKE
(as he pays)
Oh, Betty. I take it you're going to be making the wedding cake and they say you're throwing --

MRS. TROUT
(interrupting)
-- The luau for Maggie.

She starts picking lint off his sleeve and buttons his cuff.

MAGGIE
(all smiles for Mrs. Trout)
Grandma made me the cutest outfit. I can't wait to show it to you.

IKE
(cynical delight)
A pre-wedding luau?

MRS. TROUT
Yes. My husband and I love luaus. It'll be fun.

Mrs. Trout turns and grabs Ike's bag containing two coffees.

IKE
Fun? Fun isn't the word.

Mrs. Trout beams. Maggie understands his answer a little better. Mrs. Trout hands Ike his items and he pays.

MRS. TROUT
If you're still in town, you should stop by.

MAGGIE
No, I'm sure he doesn't.

IKE
(to Mrs. Trout)
Actually, I would love to come.
(taps her service bell)
Thank you. Thank you so much.

Maggie steps over, carrying her bride and groom figure choices.

MAGGIE
(exasperated)
Is that what you're going to do now? Follow me around everywhere I go?

Ike smiles at Maggie enigmatically as he picks up his order and heads for the door.

IKE
No.

He starts to leave with his bag. Mrs. Trout stops him.

MRS. TROUT
(handing him the other bag)
Your two cinnamon rolls.

IKE
Bye, Betty. Thanks.

He leaves.

MAGGIE
He's not a nice person.

Maggie hands Mrs. Trout her bride and broom figures. Maggie looks at Mrs. Trout, suddenly nervous. She dashes out. Mrs. Trout imitates Ike bamming the bride and groom, laughing.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Various High School SPORTS TEAMS practice. Maggie strides across the football field, a scowl on her face. A few HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL PLAYERS job past Maggie, doing laps. A boy, KENDALL, calls out to her affectionately as she passes. One of them, DENNIS, slows his pace to run alongside Maggie.

DENNIS
(playful)
Maggie, don't marry Coach! Marry me.
I love you.

MAGGIE
You're jail bait, Dennis. Go away.
Run your laps. Go. Go.

Dennis runs on as Maggie continues toward her goal: Bob and Ike, standing together on the other side of the field.

ANGLE ON BOB AND IKE

They're both standing on the blocking sled. Wave after wave of VARSITY FOOTBALL PLAYERS ram into the sled and drive it across the field with both Ike and Bob on top of it. Ike is munching on one of the cinnamon rolls as Bob pushes the KIDS.

BOB
Drive! Drive! From your hips, get low,
get low, get low. Next!

Ike smiles broadly atop of the sled as he sees Maggie approaching, looking mighty peeved. He nudges Bob and points to Maggie. Bob lights up at the sight of her.

BOB (cont'd)
Good job, gentlemen... Special teams.

The football players move away from the sled. Bob moves to Maggie, leaves Ike alone.

BOB (cont'd)
(to Maggie)
Hey, honey!

Bob kisses and embraces Maggie. She doesn't see Ike immediately, then:

MAGGIE
(indicating Ike)
What is he up to now?

BOB
Ike just came by to check out the team.

IKE
And talk about you.

Ike grins and shows Maggie the notes in his pocket.

MAGGIE
Bob -- are you making friends with this man?

BOB
I'm just bragging about how great you are. I'm the luckiest man alive.

Bob grabs Maggie around the waist and smooches her adoringly. Maggie scowls at Ike. He nods, all charm.

IKE
Well -- I've got to get moving -- lot of work to do today! I'll see you two love-birds later.

Ike leaves. Bob calls after him.

BOB
See you at the wedding.

IKE
You bet ya, Coach.

Maggie is aghast. She stares at Bob. Ike joins in behind a line of peppy cheerleaders.

MAGGIE
At the wedding? You invite him? Bob, don't you realize he's writing another article about me?

BOB
Sure I do. But the bet defense is a good offense, right? You're not going to let your opponent throw you off your game.

MAGGIE
You don't understand this guy.

BOB
Let him come to the wedding. You're

not running, right? Say it. "I'm not..."

MAGGIE
(irritably)
I'm not running.

BOB
So if you're not running and Ike Graham is there to see it, then any article he writes has got to have a happy ending, right? All we're doing is turning lemon into lemonade.

MAGGIE
I've got news for you. No amount of sugar and water is going to turn like Graham into something you want to take on a picnic.

Bob gives Maggie a big hug.

BOB
Where's that homemade sunshine?

Bob blows his whistle, then puts Maggie on the football sled.

BOB (cont'd)
I want you boys to take my princess on the ride of her life... Honey, tell 'em where you parked your car.

Maggie screams as the boys push her down the football field.

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH/CHURCH - DAY

Maggie kneels, hands folded reverently. The booth's grate opens before her.

MAGGIE
Bless me, Father, for I have sinned. My last confession was... ahh...

She tries to recall.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
... Anyway, I have sort of a technical question here. I've been having -- bad thoughts. I mean, really bad thoughts ...

PRIEST

Of an impure nature?

MAGGIE
No -- like -- I'm having a problem with that whole turn-the-other-cheek concept. I want revenge. I want to destroy this guy's life, career, everything. On the sin scale, how big is that? I mean, can I "Hail Mary" my way out of it?

PRIEST
Child, any sin in one's heart is...

MAGGIE
(impatient)
The name's Maggie. It wasn't this side of ten years ago that you had your tongue down my throat. So don't call me "child", Brian. It annoys me.

PRIEST/ BRIAN
Now don't get upset.

Brian closes the confessional window and exits

MAGGIE
(still inside the booth)
Brian, open up. Don't ignore me.

Brian leans into her confessional. She steps out to join him.

BRIAN
You're not even Catholic, Maggie -- you really shouldn't come to confession.

He's a nice looking and gentle man. They regard each other for a beat.

MAGGIE
I'm sorry. I'm just so stressed out about that slime-ball reporter being in town. I jus had to come warn you he might show up here and start asking you all kinds of ridiculous questions.

Brian moves away. Maggie follows and sits in a nearby pew.

BRIAN
Actually, he only asked me one ridiculous question. The rest weren't so bad.

MAGGIE
(sliding along the pew)
What? You talked to him! Did you tell him we dated before you were a priest?

BRIAN
Yes, yes, I'm sure I only did you good, Maggie.

MAGGIE
What did he ask?

A woman, MRS. MURPHY, rushes in.

MRS. MURPHY
Father, am I too late?

BRIAN
No, no.

MRS. MURPHY
It won't take long. Jus two venials.

The woman goes into the confessional booth to wait.

BRIAN
Only respectful things. What did we have in common back then... What kind of music did you like... Did you ruin my life when you left me standing at the altar...

MAGGIE
And what did you say?

BRIAN
How could I be angry at you when clearly what has happened to me is as God intended?

MAGGIE
(relieved)
Good one! Thanks.

BRIAN
It happens to be how I feel.

Brian sits next to Maggie.

MAGGIE

God... Of course. I'm sorry -- I mean, I'm...
(sighs)
Brian -- I've got to go. The man's a lunatic, but I know exactly where he's going next.

BRIAN
God bless you, Maggie.

She turns to rush out, then stops herself.

MAGGIE
Oh, wait, my purse.

She moves to the confessional, knocks, then speaks to Mrs. Murphy.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Excuse me, sorry, forgot my purse. Good luck.

Maggie closes the booth curtain and turns to Brian.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Wait -- what was the ridiculous question he asked?

Brian smiles mischievously.

BRIAN
He wanted to know how you used to like your eggs.

MAGGIE
Weird. Like after all those years you would remem--

She starts to go, then stops in her tracks as she hears:

BRIAN
(interrupting)
-- Scrambled, with salt, pepper and dill. Same as me.

Maggie looks at Brian. Suddenly, she remembers too.

MAGGIE
(tenderly)
I'm really sorry that I hurt you, Brian.

BRIAN
I'm happy here, where I'm supposed to

be. But if you ever become a Catholic, may I ask you a favor, Maggie?

MAGGIE
Of course.

BRIAN
Could your confess to Father Patrick from now on?

MAGGIE
Of course.

And she scampers out. Brian goes back into the confessional.

EXT. GILL'S GARAGE - DAY

Maggie drives up to an old brick firehouse that is now an auto garage. The faded sign reads: "Gill's Garage".

INT. GILL'S GARAGE - DAY

Maggie rushes inside and looks around. No one is in sight. Several cars, including a yellow jeep-like car up on a hydraulic lift, are in the funky garage.

MAGGIE
Gill? Lydia? Gill?

A CRASH, coming from the nearby back room, we hear loud muttering in Spanish, then out stumbles GILL CHAVEZ, 34, wearing a grease-stained Grateful Dead tie-dyed T-shirt. He grins triumphantly, worshipfully cradling a CASSETTE TAPE in his hands.

GILL
Hey -- I found it!

Maggie regards her former fiance with patient warmth.

MAGGIE
Found what?

Gill looks up and gives Maggie a fond, hazy smile.

GILL
Mags! Hey, look -- The tape from the Radio City Music Hall concert -- Remember that night I as trying to get Jerry to let me sit in on "Ripple"?

He pulls out the cassette from its case. It's broken. The tape is dangling from the cassette.

GILL (cont'd)
(disappointed)
Oh, I'll play it for you.

Gill picks up an electric GUITAR and starts to play.

MAGGIE
(shouts over the music)
Listen, Gill -- There's this reporter who's ben making my life a living hell ... If he comes by here, don't talk to him. And whatever yo do....
(crosses to Gill)
... Don't show him that picture of me at the concert in San Francisco --

Suddenly, a loud CHUCKLING emanates from the car overhead.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
What was that?

Maggie stops Gill from playing. She shoots her ex an angry glare and moves a lever on the shop wall. With a HUM, the car descends.

GILL
We went to San Francisco twice. Remember one time we had a flat tire... Which picture?

As the hydraulic lift slows, the car is lowered, revealing Ike sitting in the driver's seat. He has been enjoying the photograph he's holding.

IKE
(feigning shock)
Imagine! Maggie Carpenter topless in a public arena.
(checks photo again)
And I see there was a chill in the air.

Maggie swipes for the photo, but Ike is faster at pulling it away.

MAGGIE
Give me that!

IKE
But the most interesting thing here is that I don't see the rose tattoo that I've heard about on your back.

Gill takes off his guitar and sets it down.

GILL
Ike bet me fifty bucks you don't still have it, Mags. I said "You're on, man! Maggie loved that thing!" And I could really use fifty bucks.

Maggie is conspicuously silent.

GILL (cont'd)
(looking worried)
Mags?

MAGGIE
I'm not gonna show you guys anything. I am a soon-to-be-married woman. Now give me that photograph.

Maggie seethes.

IKE
Sure, I would love to give this to you. Just give us one quick gander at that rose, and, I'll gladly hand it over.

She tries to grab the photo again. Ike pulls it away.

MAGGIE
Fine. Here.

Maggie quickly turns around and pulls down the back of her shirt, revealing the top of her back and a pristine expanse of skin. No tattoo.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(turning back around)
Satisfied?

IKE
Completely.

Gill is still trying to grasp the meaning of this.

GILL
Maggie? You got it removed?

IKE
Gill, I'll go ya double or nothing if was a stick-on.

GILL
(dismayed)

Maggie?

MAGGIE
(admitting)
I'm really, really afraid of needles...
It doesn't make me a bad person.

Ike laughs. Maggie looks at him with rage. Gill dramatically pulls down the front of his t-shirt.

GILL
Look.

There it is on Gill's chest: the rose tattoo. Maggie sighs, pained. Gill shows it to Ike. Ike looks at the tattoo. He shakes his head at Maggie.

IKE
(sincerely)
Look, look, man. I think the man is heartbroken.

MAGGIE
He is not!

Maggie moves the lever on the wall again, sending Ike back up to the ceiling in the car. She grabs the photo from Ike and exits.

GILL
I think I am.

Gill grabs his guitar and sits.

GILL (cont'd)
Hey, Ike, what would Jerry do?

The hydraulic lift stops moving. Ike leans out.

IKE
Jerry. He'd play. He'd play... Jerry would play his heart out.

Ike sings and taps along in tempo on the side of the car as Gill sings and plays "Ripple".

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PORCH - NEXT DAY, SATURDAY MORNING

As Maggie drives into town with Peggy, they see Ike on porch with SHERIFF, POLICE CHIEF and MAIL MAN, all playing instruments as a blues band. Ike is not bad on slide guitar. They all like

Ike.

Maggie "CHUFFAS" with Peggy and moves on.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER THAT DAY

CLOSE ON:

The slow, loopy pitch of a softball. A bat connects.

NEW ANGLE:

A big wholesome man, CORY, runs for first base. He just beats out the throw. Bob, acting as umpire, yells, "Safe!" Happy, Cory turns to the stands and waves.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie and Peggy, cheering loudly. Peggy tries to whoop harder than Maggie, but that would be tough. From firs base, Cory waves back to them. The two women sit back down and Maggie takes back up with their conversation. Maggie is still al steamed up.

MAGGIE
Okay, he's on base. Can we talk about my life now? -- Ike's going to turn that tattoo stuff into a big deal -- that I was never serious about Gill, blah blah. He's totally out to get me.

PEGGY
For what reason? Some personal satisfaction?

MAGGIE
That's what he says, but if he thinks that I don't realize he's writing another article, then he's an idiot.

PEGGY
It's probably because you got him fired.

MAGGIE
(sarcastic)
Ya think?

PEGGY
Not that he doesn't deserve to get fired... Look! Cory's going for second!... Sneaky!

ANGLE ON:

Cory as he runs for second base and with a slide beats the throw for the force out. The women jump and cheer -- Maggie, again, the most boisterous.

ANGLE ON:

Dennis recognizes Ike as he walks up. Dennis tells Ike that he is going to marry Maggie some day and shows Ike where Maggie is sitting.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie spots Ike as they sit back down. She groans.

MAGGIE
There he is. Snoop Doggy-Dogg.

PEGGY
Where?

MAGGIE
Over there. Ten o'clock. He's talking to our little Dennis. Dennis will turn into one of those "sources say" things.

PEGGY
He looks better with that stuff out of his hair. He's an attractive man.

Ike finds Maggie in the crowd and leaves Dennis.

MAGGIE
I'd say you've been in the sun too long. You handle him, okay? I could use five minutes off from that creep.

Before Peggy can protest, Maggie climbs down off the bleachers and goes and stands near the dugout near the rest of Cory's team.

PEGGY
Okay, that's fine. I can do that.

Ike comes up to Peggy.

IKE
Hello, Peggy Phleming, "not the ice-skater".

Ike indicates the seat next to Peggy.

PEGGY
(protesting weakly)

That's Maggie's seat...

Ike sits down comfortably.

IKE
... And this is Maggie's beer.

He starts drinking it. ON THE FIELD, Cory is getting ready to steal third.

IKE (cont'd)
That your husband out there? Cory Phleming, a local radio announcer.

PEGGY
Have you listened to his morning show, "Wake up with ballplayer"?

IKE
Not yet. I had a phlemless morning. I hear he's a pretty good ballplayer.

PEGGY
This game is pretty important to him. He made all-stars in high school, you know.

IKE
That must have made you proud.

Peggy takes a small sip off her soda.

PEGGY
He was going with Maggie back then.
(quickly)
He was never one of her... I mean, they were never going to get... They just dated for a while.

Cory dives in for third and makes it. The crowd goes wild. Peggy yells and jumps in.

PEGGY (cont'd)
Good job, honey!

But Maggie's whoop sails out above it all. Cory waves. But not at Peggy. He directs his delight at Maggie, who jumps up and down by the dugout.

Ike looks between Cory, Maggie and finally, Peggy. Peggy jerks her waving hand back down to her side and sits down. Ike pretends not to have noticed. The two watch as Maggie and Cory

smile at each other.

IKE
It's nice that they're still friends.

PEGGY
(looking at Maggie and Cory)
Oh, sure. That was a long time ago. See, she's not a man-hater at all. She's very supportive of men...

Next BATTER hits one to deep left field and it lands in the grave yard. Cory scores, greeted by Maggie. Ike and Peggy watch as Cory and Maggie belly-bump and high-five each other in celebration of Cory's play. No looks at Peggy. Ike keeps an empathetic silence, seeing that Peggy is truly hurt.

PEGGY (cont'd)
I'll be back in a second.

Suddenly, Peggy stands, pushes past him and runs down the steps. Maggie looks up just in time to catch Peggy's exit. Ike pulls his tape recorder out of his pocket and starts speaking into it.

Maggie shoots Ike an accusing look, walks up to him in the bleachers and sits next to him.

MAGGIE
You've been here for three minutes. What did you do to her?

IKE
You can turn that finger around.

Ike does an on-the-button imitation of Maggie jumping excitedly at Cory. Now Maggie sees what he's getting at.

MAGGIE
(defensive)
You misinterpret everything. We've all been friends our whole lives. But that's the types of relationship you wouldn't understand.

IKE
Obviously, I'm not the only one who doesn't understand it. The USS Maggie leaves quite a wake... Excuse me.

Ike walks away. Alone, Maggie tries to seem enthused.

MAGGIE
See, I cheer good. What is he, a cheer critic?

EXT./INT. STREET/BAR - LATER - DUSK

Sitting in front of Inn Hale Bar, we see the BARTENDER pantomiming holding the reins of a wildly galloping horse. We've seen something like this before. Maggie's wild ride away from her last wedding. Ike laughs with Bartender just as Maggie drives by the bar and sees this.

MAGGIE
(to herself)
This guy never stops.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - NIGHT

Maggie walks up to the front desk of the hotel, where Lee is sleeping with his feet up. She knocks his feet off the counter.

MAGGIE
Lee, hey, wake up. Give me the key to the reporter's room. I want to snoop around.

LEE
(handing her the key)
Okay. Second floor.

MAGGIE
Thanks.

LEE
Don't take anything big.

Maggie moves up the stairs towards Ike's room.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie walks towards Ike's room, checks that no one sees her and enters.

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie lets herself in the modest room and turns on the lights on. She spots on audio cassette on the desk near the door. She holds the cassette up to the light to read the hand-written label. It says "Miles Davis" on it. She pockets the tape. She walks to the living room.

MAGGIE'S POV:

Ike has placed post-its on a framed picture, using the frame as a bulletin board. Post-it notes lay out the information he has gathered under headings and subheadings. Parents "Mother" deceased, subheaded by "Walter" and there is one for "Brian", "Gill", and "Bob". Maggie smiles and shakes her head. She rips one post-it down and reads it to herself.

MAGGIE
(reads)
"How does she get all these guys to propose? She's not that beautiful."
(snorts)
Bite me, paper boy.

She begins ripping many of other post-it off the picture frame.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(as she takes post-its)
Rude...

She's ripping them down, fast and furious, then shoves them in her shoulder bag.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUING

Ike comes down hallway as Harvey puts his shoes out to be shined.

BACK INSIDE THE ROOM

Maggie, looking around, discovers the wedding video on the coffee table and grabs that, too.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Thief!

THE SOUND OF A KEY IN THE DOOR makes Maggie jump. She flees to the bathroom, and shuts and locks the door. Just as Ike enters, he sniffs and looks around the room, instantly knowing something is up. He sees all his notes gone and a glimpse of Maggie as she closes the bathroom door. Ike is steaming. A BUMP sounds from the bathroom. He goes over to the door and tries the handle. It's locked. He starts to pound on the door.

IKE
All right, I know you're in there...
You steal my research... You're messing with the first amendment now. Open up.
Open up. You got no place to go.

INT. IKE'S HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUING

Ike's wrong. Maggie is already trying to open the first bathroom window. It's stuck. She climbs over the bathtub, opens that window and starts to climb out.

IKE
I want to have a very serious discussion with you as to why you're such a pain in the ass.

We HEAR Ike slamming his body against the bathroom door.

As Ike breaks in, he runs to the window and yells after her.

EXT. IKE'S HOTEL WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

IKE (cont'd)
That's breaking and entering. I'll call the sheriff.

MAGGIE
You do that. And remind him he's bringing the wine to the luau. Thanks.

She disappears around the ledge of the building and runs off. Ike's neighbor, Harvey, sits reading near his window.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

CLOSE ON: A CASSETTE PLAYER. We see the familiar handwritten label: "Miles Davis." "Kind of Blue" plays as Maggie listens in a chair, looking shell-shocked, surrounded by the post-its she stole from Ike's room. We see as she reads them: "Father, two-fisted drinker," "Peggy, best friend, but Peggy doesn't totally trust Maggie," "Bob" -- doesn't love him. Overwhelmed, she finishes reading the last note, leans back, puts her feet up on the table, deep in the mood of the melancholy music.

The CAMERA MOVES on the last note on the floor next to her chair. It reads: "SHOWS NO REMORSE".

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET/BEAUTY PARLOR - NEXT DAY

It's early morning. Mrs. Pressman hands Peggy a cup of coffee to go. Peggy walks to the beauty parlor, unlocks the front door and goes in.

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Peggy enters and starts about her opening duties. She turns on the lights and turns and sees her friend, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Do you think I flirt with Cory?

Peggy stops in her track. Maggie is sitting curled up in a salon chair. She looks like she hasn't slept.

PEGGY
Good morning to you, too. You look good.

MAGGIE
Thank you. Do you think I flirt with Cory?

PEGGY
Yes.

Maggie looks miserable.

MAGGIE
I don't mean it.

Peggy moves to the salon mirror near Maggie with her cup of coffee.

PEGGY
I know. I think sometimes you just sort of spaz-out with random excess flirtation energy and it just lands on anything male that moves.

MAGGIE
On anything male that moves? As opposed to anything male that doesn't move?

Peggy pours her coffee out of its Styrofoam cup into a ceramic mug.

PEGGY
Like certain kinds of coral.

Peggy sits in the salon chair next to Maggie.

MAGGIE

I'm going to kill myself.

PEGGY
Why?

MAGGIE
Because you think I'm all like... "Hey man, check me out".

PEGGY
(friendly)
No, I don't think you're like, "I'm charming and mysterious in a way that even I don't understand and something about me is crying out for protection from a big man like you". Very hard to compete with. Especially to us married women who have lost our mystery.

MAGGIE
But you haven't lost your mystery! You're very mysterious!

PEGGY
No. I'm weird. Weird and mysterious are two different things.

MAGGIE
But I'm weird.

PEGGY
No. You're quirky. Quirky and weird are two different things.

MAGGIE
Peggy, there's distinct possibility that I might be profoundly and irreversibly screwed up. Despite that, I love you and I can promise that I will no longer flirt with Cory, and I beg your forgiveness.

Maggie looks ready to cry.

PEGGY
I'm not worried about you and Cory or Cory and me or even that you're irreversibly screwed up. But, Maggie, you've been like this since we were kids. And I think now that you are aware of it and that it hurts people's feelings, maybe it's time to move on

with your life and commit to someone of your own, like Bob, if he's the one.

MAGGIE
I think you're right.
(then)
Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?

PEGGY
Something that brings warmth to my heart.
(pause)
Duckbill platypus.

MAGGIE
It's only funny at Camp Birchwood at three in the morning at a tick hunt. It's not anymore.

Maggie makes her funny face. Peggy doesn't laugh.

PEGGY
You're right. It's not funny now. Maybe we both grew up.

MAGGIE
Thanks. Will you fix my hair?

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

Maggie exits her house, gets on her bike and rides off towards town.

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

Ike is still in bed. He slowly blinks awake, stretches, and is about to throw off the covers when Maggie's voice breaks the silence.

MAGGIE
Freeze. Hold on to those covers -- I didn't come here to see Ike Junior.

Maggie smiles cheerfully at Ike from the foot of the bed. He narrows his eyes at her.

IKE
I take it the desk clerk is one of your many admirers.

MAGGIE
(deadpan)
How do I do it? I'm not that beautiful.

Ike notices Maggie is holding two coffees.

IKE
Coffee. Now.

Maggie hands it to him.

MAGGIE
You're welcome. Your notes made interesting bedtime reading -- if you like trashy fiction. Your observations are distorted, ungrounded an incomplete. You must be very proud.

IKE
I'm not a boastful man. What's your point?

Ike puts a shirt on as Maggie speaks.

MAGGIE
My point is that one again, you're getting it all wrong. That won't improve your reputation any, and it's not very flattering to me either. So, I'm going to give you a chance to write the truth.

IKE
Really.

Maggie turns away from him as he dresses.

MAGGIE
I've decided to cooperate and let you interview me.
(beat)
For a thousand bucks.

Ike clears his throat as he stands putting his pants on.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I want a big wedding and a killer dress and for a grand I will answer all your questions and let you follow me around.

Ike takes his coffee with him as he picks up his glasses, puts them on and crosses to the window.

IKE
My magazine doesn't pay because for stories. It's not what you call ethical.

MAGGIE
Oh, but making up the facts as you go along is ethical? Actually, I meant you. You probably got severance or expenses or both. I'll take your check. No credit cards.

IKE
(to Maggie)
You've seen the post-its. I've already got more juicy material than I need. Why should I pay you dollar one?

MAGGIE
Because I think you're writing on spec and with a first person interview, you might actually sell that thing.

Ike knows she's right.

IKE
Too much.

MAGGIE
Seven-fifty.

IKE
Five hundred.

MAGGIE
Six-fifty.

IKE
Done.

Scowling, he writes out the check and hands it to her. Maggie looks at it and smile sweetly.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ike jogs alongside of Maggie on her bike. Maggie parks her bike and they go inside her door to the house.

INT. MAGGIE'S FOYER AND STAIRS - DAY

Maggie leads Ike upstairs to her workroom.

MAGGIE
Pardon the mess. I haven't cleaned since the fifth grade.

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM - LATER

Insert on a cappuccino machine. We PULL BACK and see Maggie and Ike standing at her work table. An automatic cappuccino maker stands on the table. Its base is made from a used paint mixing machine. It looks very shiny and futuristic. Maggie's logo "MAG" is on the side. The machine shakes as it steams the cappuccino. Ike notices another homemade machine on the table.

IKE (cont'd)
What's this over here?

MAGGIE
It's a birthday present for my cousin. Put your finger in.

IKE
Cindy the manicurist.

He puts his finger in the wrong hole of the machine.

MAGGIE
No, the other one.

He puts his finger in the correct hole. She turns it on. The brushes rotate.

IKE
(laughing)
This is wonderful. You reconfigure all these industrial parts and you do something amazing with it.

He looks around and spots some gadgets and lamps on another table. He walks to them.

IKE (cont'd)
Amazing. Found industrial stuff. Willow lamp... Rasta lamp...

He picks up one of the many logos on the counter. Each boasts a "MAG" logo.

IKE (cont'd)
Is this your preferred logo?

MAGGIE
I think so.

IKE
I like it. This whole thing is pretty incredible.
(studying a lamp)
I think you could probably sell this lamp idea in New York.

MAGGIE
Maybe someday.

IKE
You afraid to try?

MAGGIE
(stares at him)
No, I'm not afraid. Just... Maybe someday.

IKE
Well, I'm impressed. Absolutely incredible.
(sitting)
I didn't expect pink and lacy, but this isn't exactly a woman's room.

MAGGIE
What an incredible chauvinistic observation.

INT. MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM - A BIT LATER THAT DAY

Maggie's showing Ike engagement rings.

MAGGIE
That's Brian's. He took me ut canoeing on the lake and gave me the ring in a velvet box.

Ike snores. Maggie hits him.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(defensive)
It was classic.

Maggie hands Ike another ring. This one is in the shape of a Grateful Dead rose.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Gill. Of course. He proposed at the

tie-dye t-shirt stand at a Dead concert. It was very sweet until he hallucinated that the drum set was a blood-sucking space alien.

IKE
Always a mood killer.

MAGGIE
Still sweet.

Maggie hands Ike a third ring. It's in the shape of a butterfly and studded with multi-color gems.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
George. He proposed at a butterfly farm in St. Thomas. The ring was inside a cocoon.

IKE
(grimacing)
It's a little "Silence of the Lambs" for me. I can't believe you waited for the wedding to run.

MAGGIE
He's an entomologist! I thought it was very unique.

Now Maggie shows Ike the ring on her hand. It's a gold "#1" with a diamond set into the number.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
And here we are at Bob. He proposed during the seventh inning stretch...

Ike touches her hand to examine the ring more closely. Her surprise at his touch shows on her face as she finishes her sentence.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
... At an Oriole's game.

She takes her hand down. Ike steps away.

IKE
Wait. Don't tell me. The scoreboard lit up with "Mary me, Maggie."

Ike picks up his cup of cappuccino and moves behind the couch.

MAGGIE

It was one of the most wonderful moments of my life. Cal Ripken even applauded.

IKE
(stopping)
Highly suspect.

MAGGIE
What do you mean? It was incredibly romantic!

IKE
Maybe it's just me, but -- if you got to dress it up, it doesn't ring true.

Ike moves back to the couch.

IKE (cont'd)
I think the most anybody can honestly say is, "Look..."
(sits on the arm of the couch)
"I guarantee that we'll have tough times. I guarantee that at some point one or both of us will want to get out of this thing. But I also guarantee that if I don't ask you to be mine, I'll regret it for the rest of my life. Because I know in my heart -- you're the only one for me"

Maggie stares at Ike for a beat. His words have taken a little bit of her breath away. She covers.

MAGGIE
I like it.

She moves from the fireplace to a chair and sits.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I'd like it better on a scoreboard.
(lightly)
Is that how you proposed when you asked your wife to marry you?

Ike is taken aback.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Don't look so surprised, you've got divorce written all over you.

IKE
I'm a work in progress.

MAGGIE
So? Is that what you said to her?

IKE
No. I think I said something eloquent like, "So, uh -- maybe we should, ya know. What do you think?"

MAGGIE
Now that's romantic. A proposal like that and you didn't find eternal bliss? What went wrong?

Ike takes a swallow of cappuccino.

IKE
I don't know.

MAGGIE
You don't know.

IKE
No.

MAGGIE
Maybe you should ask her some time. Ever thought of that?

Ike is restless. He stands up.

IKE
Call me crazy, but I believe that check I gave you entitles me to ask the questions for a while.

Ike puts down his cup of coffee, gets his tape recorder and sits close to Maggie.

MAGGIE
Fair enough.
(thinks a beat)
Actually...

Maggie move to TV. She picks up Ike's stolen post-it notes and her wedding video on top of the TV, and goes to the front door.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I'll just need one more day to make sure

your check clears.

IKE
Ow!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HALE STREET - THE NEXT DAY

Ike and Maggie drive in Maggie's truck. They pull up in front of a Bridal Shop.

A spectacular dress fills the small window. It's beautiful, romantic, sexy. Maggie and Ike can be seen in the reflection.

MAGGIE
Even with everything that's happened
I've still never been married and I
still deserve a beautiful dress.

IKE
Agreed.

Maggie gives Ike a smile that lights up the sky. They go inside.

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

The place is fairly large and prosperous, probably the place to go in the Tri-County area. A little FLOWER GIRL, 10, is being fitted on the pedestal in the middle of the room. A saleswoman, POLLY, has taken the flower girl under her wing. They are both under the expert eyes of a stern looking woman, MRS. WHITTENMEYER, the shop owner. Also, the girl's MOTHER is there watching.

POLLY
(to the mother)
She'll be the prettiest little flower
girl in your daughter's wedding.

MAGGIE
Mr. Whittenmeyer. Hi, Polly!

The flower girl sees Maggie and runs and hides behind Polly.

POLLY
Hi, Maggie. You'll have to excuse her,
Maggie. Some of the children are
afraid of you since you dragged that
little boy up the aisle.

MAGGIE
I didn't drag.

(then to the girl)
He tripped on his shoelaces.

Mrs. Whittenmeyer comes forward to greet Maggie.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
You've come for your dress. Good!
I'll get it from the back.

Maggie leads her to the front window.

MAGGIE
(happily)
Actually, I would like to get this dress.

She points to the dress. She smiles back to Mrs. Whittenmeyer, expecting her to share her joy. Mrs. Whittenmeyer darkens.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
(to Polly)
Polly, take Leslie into change.
(then, to Maggie)
But the one you have on hold is lovely.

MAGGIE
(pleasantly)
Yes. But I've changed my mind.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
It's one thousand dollars.

Maggie is keenly aware of Ike listening in.

MAGGIE
I have one thousand dollars.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
(firmly)
The other one is only three hundred
dollars.

Maggie lowers her voice, hoping to lessen the humiliation of the moment.

MAGGIE
Is this dress for sale?

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
It just seems like an awful lot of
money to spend on one of your dresses,
Maggie... You only wear them for about
ten minutes.

Ike watches with regret as Maggie's child-like enthusiasm drains away, her happy mood crushed by the tactless assault of the shop owner. He's starting to see that it's no always easy being Maggie. There's a tremor in her voice.

MAGGIE
Yeah, that's a good point.
(then, sitting)
The other dress is nice.

Ike calls out to Mrs. Whittenmeyer.

IKE
Mrs. Whittenmeyer. May I talk to you for a second?

She walks over to him.

IKE (cont'd)
I don't know much about this kind of thing. I'm from out of town. You're a salesperson, right? You're here to sell wedding dresses.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
(huffy)
Yes. I've been here for thirty years.

IKE
Perfect. Because Miss Carpenter is here to buy one. But not just any one. She wants that one.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
It's a thousand dollars!

Ike goes over and takes the mannequin out of the window. Mrs. Whittenmeyer catches the wig as he puts the mannequin under his arm.

IKE (cont'd)
Look, Aunt Bea, we're buying this beautiful dress and anything else she wants or I'm coming back here with a squirt gun filled with India ink.

Mrs. Whittenmeyer wilts under Ike's fierce gaze. She turns to Maggie.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
Will he really do that?

Maggie gives her a look.

MR. WHITTENMEYER (cont'd)
(to Maggie)
Well, why don't you pick out some accessories while I get this ready, dear. Polly, will you come help me, please?

Polly comes to help carry the mannequin away.

ANGLE ON POLLY AND MRS. WHITTENMEYER:

POLLY
(whispering to Mrs. Whittenmeyer)
It's a thousand dollars.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
Shhhh! The man has ink!

Maggie looks gratefully at Ike.

IKE
Tough to spend money in this town.

TIME CUT: A FEW MINUTES LATER:

Ike sits as he hears Maggie's voice behind him.

MAGGIE (o.s.)
What do you think?

Ike turns around. Maggie is standing on the pedestal, wearing the dress and looking unbelievably gorgeous. She is overwhelming to behold and Ike has to struggle to keep his face under control.

IKE
(stammering)
You look... uh... You look fine.

MAGGIE
Fine. The newspaper's upside down. That's better than fine.

IKE
Bob will be very happy.

She glows. Then the moment between them is broken as she suddenly remembers something and grabs the veil off her head.

MAGGIE

Bob! I almost forgot! I have to meet Bob!

INT. DINER - DAY

This is a great place -- a major hub of social life in Hale. The food is greasy and good, Mrs. Pressman is the waitress, and the CROWD the essence of what is wonderful about a small town. Bob, Maggie and Ike sit on the counter. Mrs. Pressman CHUFFS about the luau, then moves around the corner.

BOB
Mrs. Pressman, I think we're ready to order.

MRS. PRESSMAN
We're out the special because somebody...
(indicates COOK with head)
... didn't order enough sausage.

BOB
Let me have the garden omelette. Egg whites only.

Ike looks at Maggie. He'd bet a thousand bucks on what she'd say next.

MAGGIE
I'll have the same.

IKE
(clears his throat)
Of course.

MAGGIE
What was that? I can't order my eggs without sarcasm?

BOB
Neutral corners you two. You're on the same team now. Any more fighting and it's fifteen minutes in the penalty box.
(gently, to Ike)
Maggie's the nicest person you'll ever meet. But she's always focusing out there. She's got to start focusing more in here.
(taps his chest)
That's why she's had some -- whatever you want to call it -- problems in the past.

(to Maggie)
That's what we're working on -- focus. Right, Maggie? Focus on Maggie. Focus on Bob.

As Bob has been talking, Ike has been watching Maggie's face. The joy seems to have drained out of her.

MAGGIE
(quietly)
Right.

BOB
(to Ike)
I lead Maggie through a visualization exercise. All the sports shrinks use this head stuff. Visualize the end zone, if you catch my drift.

Bob takes out a notepad and hands it to Maggie.

BOB (cont'd)
Here's today's mantra: "It's an open field to Big Bob."

IKE
Tell me. When you get to the altar, will you spike the bouquet?

MAGGIE
You know, there's no...

Before Maggie can finish, Ike intercepts her.

IKE
Well, I'm off. A reporter's work is never done.
(heading to the door)
Mrs. Pressman, thank you.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Tootaloo.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

GRANDMA JULIA (V.O.)
I'd like to explain about the weddings. There are reasons why they didn't come off. Three weddings, no "I do's". You can't believe how much cake we were left with. I should weigh three hundred pounds. I don't think her

father minded spending so much money on booze that nobody drank.

We hear Grandma as through the hotel doors, we see Maggie exit the diner. She gets a bag from inside the cab of her truck and comes inside the hotel where she finds Ike talking to Grandma, who is having tea with her friend, NETTA.

MAGGIE
Ike... Hi, Grandma.

IKE
Gram here was going to give me the skinny on why you run from marital bliss.

GRANDMA JULIA
Right, cover your ears, Netta. It's not that she's afraid of the wedding, she's afraid of the wedding night. Innocent girls are terrified of "the one-eyed snake".
(getting into it)
Why, when I was a virgin bride, I took a knitting needle with me into the bed...

Ike winces.

MAGGIE
Actually, Grandma, I charmed the one-eyed snake awhile ago.

GRANDMA JULIA
Oh, yeah, I forgot. I'll tell you one thing, your grandpa didn't forget that wedding night.
(no Netta)
You can take your hands off your ears, Netta. Your tea's getting cold.

MAGGIE
Can you excuse us a minute?
(then to Ike)
May I have a word with you, please?

Maggie moves toward door.

IKE
Bye, Netta... Bye, Grandam.

He steps over to Maggie in the doorway.

MAGGIE
I found this and didn't know if it was something interesting.

Maggie hands Ike a 30-year-old LP: Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue."

IKE
(excited)
Oh, my God -- It's Miles Davis. This is "King of Blue"! This is the original recording. Hard to find in good condition. Where did you find this?

MAGGIE
(casual)
It was in the attic. It was jus sitting there gathering dust.

IKE
It's valuable. Hang onto it.

MAGGIE
No. You take it.

She steps outside, leaving Ike with the record.

IKE
Hmmm... Figuring out what kind of music I like and then finding me a rare album. You're not trying to soften me up, are you?

MAGGIE
No -- I'm cleaning an attic. I wouldn't attempt the impossible.

She turns and walks back to the diner where Mrs. Pressman is outside watering plants. Ike looks after Maggie and then back down at the record in his hand. Somehow it makes him sad.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S CAR - LATER THAT DAY

Ike drives through Hale gobbling french fries from the fast food bag in his lap. Ike passes THE INN HALE BAR, same dump of a tavern he talked to bartender at.

ANGLE ON: MAGGIE'S CAR parked a few cars down. He pulls over and parks. He gets out and speaks into his tape recorder.

INT./EXT. THE INN HALE BAR -- DAY

Ike approaches the window of the bar. There's a DRUNK MAN and a DOG sitting outside. Inside, we see two figures from the back, arms around each other. One is definitely Maggie. The other is definitely not Bob.

MAGGIE
(coaxing)
C'mon. Let's go.

As Maggie helps the man get up, we see that it's Walter, Maggie's father -- dead drunk.

WALTER
(belligerently)
I haven't had any fun since you got your driver's license...

They stumble and lurch, exiting the bar toward Maggie's car.

MAGGIE
I'm not exactly having fun, either... Steady.

WALTER
(to Dog)
Good boy, Port Hole.

MAGGIE
His name is Skipper, Dad... Steady.

WALTER
I changed it.
(then to Drunk)
See you later, Mr. Travis.
(then to Maggie)
That guy has a problem... Maggie, you can run everyone's life but your own.

Maggie's having trouble keeping him steady as she opens the car door. Ike is there in a flash to help her pull Walter into the car.

WALTER (cont'd)
Good daughters let their fathers pass out.

Walter passes out on the front seat.

MAGGIE

(without difficulty)

Ike... Please don't write anything about this --

IKE
No. Forget about it. Don't even think about it.

Maggie looks at him with real gratitude. She swings the car door shut.

MAGGIE
Watch your leg, Dad.
(then to Ike)
I'm so tired of this.

IKE
Why don't you let him sleep it off in the trunk. I'll take you for a ride. Then we'll come back for him.
(to Drunk on bench)
Keep an eye on him.

DRUNK MAN
I'm too loaded.

IKE
I was talking to the dog.
(turning to Maggie)
All right?

Maggie thinks about this for a moment. She takes a deep breath.

MAGGIE
Okay... I'll just grab my jacket.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - LATE DUSK TO NIGHT

Establishing of Ike's car driving.

INT. IKE'S CAR - LATE DUSK TO NIGHT

Maggie and Ike ride along.

IKE
My dad managed a business and two mistresses. He wanted me to be a novelist. More?

Maggie nods,

IKE (cont'd)
My mother wanted me to become a musician. 0 for two. But at least I'm a journalist and we all know journalism is literature in a hurry.

EXT. IKE'S CAR - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Ike and Maggie stare forward. Both seem in melancholy moods. They're beginning to sense they're in trouble here. Suddenly, the car falters and jerks. It shows to a stop on the shoulder of the road. The car backfires and smokes.

EXT. IKE'S CAR - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Ike and Maggie sit in the steaming car for a moment.

MAGGIE
Your filter's clogged. This takes unleaded.

IKE
Can you fix it?

MAGGIE
First I have to find some tools. I need a half and a nine-six-tenth.

IKE
(removing his glasses)
Of what?

MAGGIE
(in amazement)
Wrenches. My dad's gonna love that one.

Maggie slams the food closed.

IKE
Kind of isolated.

MAGGIE
Yeah. It's kind of nice.

An uncomfortable silent pause. Ike breaks the moment.

IKE
There's one thing we New Yorkers know how to do is hail a cab. If there's no cab, we walk.

Ike stares off down the road. Maggie indicates a building in the distance, then turns off the car lights.

MAGGIE
I can get some tools over there.... and save the battery... There's one thing we country girls know how to do is cut across a field. It's quicker.

Maggie points diagonally across the field to where a gas station sign glows and the lights from the outer house twinkle.

He smiles and follows her into the field.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Be careful of snakes.

IKE
Snakes? Are you serious? I don't like snakes. I've never even seen a snake.

He steps carefully into the field, then hops gingerly toward Maggie.

MOMENTS LATER

Maggie leads Ike through a cornfield.

MAGGIE
Do you think there's only one right person for everybody?

Ike chooses his words carefully.

IKE
No. But I think attraction is too often mistaken for rightness. Attraction is very misleading. And if it's mutual, it's well, terribly distracting.

MAGGIE
Yes it is. And it doesn't mean anything.

Ike nods as they come to a wooden fence. She puts her hand on his shoulder. Ike puts his hands around her waits to give her a boost over the top. We see the flicker of misunderstanding cross Maggie's face at the initial contact. Neither of them moves -- forward or back, but the electricity is obvious.

ANGLE ON: Ike. His conflicted feelings are apparent. With

difficulty, Maggie straightens up and they both quickly remove their hands.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(lightly)
I suddenly forgot how to climb a fence.

They look at each other for a moment, then:

MAGGIE AND IKE
(breaking the moment jokingly)
"Tools".

She climbs over the fence on her own and Ike follows. They see an old guy, LIONEL, whittling on a porch.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Lionel, can I borrow some tools?

IKE
Yeah, we need a half and nine-sixteenths.

LIONEL
Gonna bust out of another wedding?

IKE
You're sure well known around here.

EXT. FISHER AND ELLIE'S BUILDING - THE NEXT DAY

Establishing shot.

INT. FISHER AND ELLIE'S KITCHEN (NYC) - DAY

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

INTERCUT BETWEEN TWO LOCATIONS:

Ike sits on his bed, on the phone, working and eating his breakfast. He's watching Maggie's wedding tape again. Fisher is cooking an elaborate breakfast. Ellie rushes around getting ready for work. He is on the phone to Ike.

FISHER
(into phone)
Yes, well, my theory was that she may be running because she gets attention... Negative attention is attention. Like when women whack you on the street because of your column, that's negative

attention.

IKE (V.O.)
This is about her negative attention, not mine. Did you get the reimbursement for the dress yet?

FISHER
(into phone)
No, I'm paying for the dress. Do you think she's still gonna run?

IKE (V.O.)
I don't know.

Ellie enters the kitchen, hears the question and shakes her head to herself. If only these boys would give it up.

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

He is finding it very hard to gloat. Fisher is annoying him.

IKE
(into phone)
Look -- I'll be in there later today. I'll come by and tell you all about it.

FISHER (V.O.)
You're coming here?

IKE
(into phone)
Yeah.

FISHER (V.O.)
Then come for dinner.

IKE
(into phone)
Okay, we'll order out.

FISHER (V.O.)
Order out like a Philistine, when you got the Galloping Gourmet here?...

Ike hangs up and watches more of the George Swilling wedding video.

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

The bar from the opening scene. GEORGE SWILLING, the same man Ike talked to before, is sitting on a stool, nursing his drink.

He looks better. Ike enters. George looks up and recognizes Ike, who takes the bar stool next to him.

IKE
Get this man a Kamikaze.

GEORGE
Splendid dissection of Maggie Carpenter, very professional job.

Ike sits and leans over to George.

IKE
(whispers)
You could have told me you were fiance number three.

GEORGE
And end up in the papers? I've been humiliated enough already to last a lifetime, thank you. I'm sorry she got you canned.

IKE
Thanks.

GEORGE
She's a cacophony of contradictions.

IKE
Well, I'm writing another article on the cacophony.

GEORGE
Ah, can't stay away from her, can you? Like a moth to a flame.

IKE
Guess you'd know about that. You're an entomologist, right? How's business?

GEORGE
(taking a sip of his drink)
Not bad. I was traveling around studying the reproductive and migratory patterns of locusts when Maggie met me.

IKE
(sarcastic)
Neuter a locust, feed the world.

GORGE
Not the world. Just Africa and China.

Ike wipes the smirk off his face. Like Maggie's other men, this guy has a worthy accomplishment under his belt.

GEORGE (cont'd)
You know Maggie was the only girl I ever met who would hold my tarantula. On the first date.

IKE (cont'd)
So, tell me, George, why do you think she ran?

GEORGE
Same as you said. What did you call her? A "man-eater", "a devouring death goddess."

IKE
I don't think that's why she ran.

GEORGE
Why do YOU think she ran?

Ike sips his drink before answering.

IKE
I don't know. I'm working on it. I was on the wrong track.

GEORGE
And you defending her?

IKE
No. I call it like I see it. I'm a journalist. I'm a truth teller.

GEORGE
Unbelievable, she got to you.

IKE
Oh, please!

GORGE
Join the club.
(passing him his drink)
Here, you need this more than me.

George heads out.

IKE
(protecting, taking his tape recorder out of his pocket)
I'm writing an article, I'm getting paid to do this, it's going to be a cover story, it's going to be published ... The facts will be read someday.

As George pauses in the doorway, Ike holds up his tape recorder.

IKE (cont'd)
What kind of eggs did she like?

GEORGE
Poached, just like me.

George exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET/FISHER AND ELLIE'S BUILDING - DAY

Ike walks down a street toward Ellie and Fisher.

CUT TO:

INT. FISHER AND ELLIE'S APARTMENT (NYC) - NIGHT

Ellie is on the phone as Fisher enters with beer. Ike sits at the piano.

FISHER
(sarcastically)
Overpriced nice apartment and Chinese takeout. That's New York living.

ELLIE
(into phone)
... Just call me when you have it.
(hangs up, then to Fisher)
Ike, how is the story coming? Is she a man-eater?

FISHER
Or a vegetarian?

ELLIE
Or does she pick "NGB'S" -- "Nice Guys, But..." Nice guys, but I'm cheap. Nice guys, but he lives with his mom...

Nice guys, but he just out of prison.

IKE
No... They're interesting guys. Each one of these guys has something going for him. I mean, one's been up Everest. Another's become a priest. One's a pretty good guitar player. And this guy today tried to end world hunger, if you can believe that...

FISHER
Whoa, Ike. Getting a complex, buddy?

ELLIE
Fisher, let him talk.

IKE
(sits)
But one of those guys -- not one of them -- knew her at all. Each one was convinced that she was perfect for them, but they didn't see her. And she never showed up so they couldn't see her. It's a very symbolic thing happening. She becomes what she thinks they wanted to be.

Fisher doesn't like the sound of this. He glances at Ellie, who is looking very interested.

FISHER
(in shock)
Ike is turning sensitive and I can't bear to watch. I'm going to make a fresh pot of tea.

The phone rings as Fisher exits. Ike goes to the piano as Ellie picks up the phone.

ELLIE
(into phone)
Yeah... Oh, Jay... Okay... Bye.
(hangs up, then yells to Fisher)
Fisher, don't forget the fortune cookies.

She joins Ike at the piano. Ike gets serious.

IKE
Is that what I did to you? Is that what happened? Did I just not see

you?

ELLIE
No. No, you didn't.

He hugs her.

IKE
(heartfelt)
Well -- I'm sorry, I'm really sorry, Ellie.

ELLIE
I'm sorry, too.
(beat)
Wow. That only took us between years to say.

Ellie blinks back sentimental tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROUT'S BARN - THE NEXT NIGHT

We hear Hawaiian music. We see a truck with GUESTS drive up and HULA DANCERS through barn slats.

INT. TROUT'S BARN - NIGHT

It's a small barn that's been converted into a luau with a bar. A BAND plays for two hula dancers. The Trouts had decorated it as a little slice of Hawaii. There are tiki lights, numerous rented plastic palm trees and fiberglass copies of Hawaiian statuary. Strings of colored lights crisscross the ceiling. It looks like a Hawaiian high school gym on prom night.

Maggie's family, Mrs. Trout and people we've already met, and more, are here, milling around wit tropical drinks garnished with umbrellas. Plastic leis abound and most people have managed to find their old Hawaiian shirts.

As we come in, the hula dancers finish their applause and Mrs. Trout announces. Hula dancers stop.

LOU TROUT
Welcome to our annual country luau. As you know, Betty and I got married on the rim of the crater, Diamond Head.

MRS. TROUT
(grabbing the microphone)

This year, we're dedicating our first dance to the soon-to-be newlyweds, the King and Queen of Hawaii, Maggie and Bob.

The couple enters. Bob is a goody bronzed god in his King Kamahamela outfit. Maggie is spectacular in her authentic looking Hawaiian Princess get-up. But her face reflects none of the festivities around her. Every now and then, she looks up and glances around for Ike, hating herself for it.

MRS. TROUT (cont'd)
King and Queen, dance.

Maggie and Bob start to dance as the Quarter sings "Aloha Oe."

MRS. TROUT (cont'd)
Everybody dance.

Everybody dances.

TIMES OUT:

Maggie and Bob pose for pictures with some of the guests.

MRS. TROUT
Pictures of the King and Queen.

Dennis poses with Maggie. Cory poses with Bob. Mrs. Trout runs out of film and goes to get more, leaving Peggy and Maggie alone. Peggy whispers to Maggie.

PEGGY
Lighten up, wahine.

MAGGIE
Lighten up, what?

PEGGY
This party is for you and Bob. Get your mind off the reporter.

MAGGIE
I haven't seen him in twenty-four hours. It just gives me the creeps a little bit. I'd feel better if I knew where he was.

PEGGY
(nods to door)
Would it?

ANGLE ON: Ike just entering the party. At least he tried.

He's got a tropical sheet wrapped around his pants and shirt. He walks to the bar and is greeted warmly by Lee. Maggie gets very flustered.

PEGGY (cont'd)
What are you doing?

MAGGIE
(after a beat)
I'm going to go dance with Bob.
Because he's the man.
(referring to her headdress)
I like those grapes.

Maggie dances affectionately with Bob as Mr. Trout, tending bar, greets Ike.

LOU TROUT
Hey, Mr. Graham, welcome to our luau.
What can I get you?

IKE
You got something without a toy in it?

TIME CUT:

A LITTLE LATER - CLOSE ON

A pair of expressive pantomime "A Little Grass Shack".

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Mrs. Trout is on stage, introducing hula contestants. Grandma judges the Hawaiian dancing. The party is at full tilt -- a little wild, a little goofy. Some guests (Bob, Cindy, Cory, Lee and Ted) do the limbo. Walter, Mrs. Pressman doesn't turn as she hears him.

IKE
Aloha. That's a very fetching
headdress you're wearing.

Ike leans into Maggie, enjoying the smell of her hair. She notices, but acts casual.

MAGGIE
Where did you disappear to?

IKE
Missed me bad, huh?

TIME CUT:

All the guests start banding their pineapple cups. Walter rises unsteadily, lifting his pineapple.

MRS. TROUT
Attention. Listen to Walter. Listen close, he slurs.
(then)
Shut up, wahines!

WALTER
In the tradition that has grown through the years, it is now Toast Time! First up, our host, "A Honey of a Beekeeper", Lou Trout..

Lou Trout stands with his glass raised.

LOUT TROUT
May the groom's heart be filled with hopes and the bride's feet be filled with lead!

There are shouts of "Hear hear!" Walter roars.

MRS. TROUT
May the pitter-patter of little feet not be Maggie's.

MRS. PRESSMAN
May the gifts be returned!

TED
May the back of the dress be as pretty as the front!

The laughter swells and swells, led by Walter.

ANGLE ON:

Ike watches as Maggie takes the heat, raising her glass along with the others. Bob raises his glass like the good sport he is. Ike can't believe it.

WALTER
You know the old saying, "You're not losing a daughter..." Well, I'd like to!

Walter gets a bit laugh. He goes again.

WALTER (cont'd)
Maggie may not be Hale's longest

running joke...
(under her breath)

Maggie finishes the punchline along with his father.

WALTER AND MAGGIE
-- But she's certainly the fastest.

Uproarious laughter. Maggie looks terribly pained. Ike's had enough. He pushes himself to his feet. Walter is thrilled. He shushes the CROWD.

WALTER (cont'd)
Oh, look, Mr. Graham, how about a toast?

IKE
I don't know, give me a minute.
(to Maggie)
Are you all right with this?

MAGGIE
Excuse me?

IKE
Are you all right with this? You think this is funny?

MAGGIE
Yes.

IKE
I don't and I don't think you should...

BOB
It's a joke. They're kidding.

WALTER AND CROWD
(yell)
Come on and give us a toast.

IKE
You want me to make a toast? Okay... I'll give you a toast. To Maggie's family and friends. May you find yourselves the bull's eye of an easy target. May you be publicly flogged for all of your bad choices and may your noses to rubbed in all of your mistakes...

Ike watches their reaction. The silence is deafening. All the guests stare at Maggie. Mortified, she holds back tears.

MRS. TROUT
That was funny.
(a pause)
But enough toasts, let's hula. Let's start the music up.

She gets everyone up to hula. Band plays fast tune. Maggie walks through the CROWD down the steps and outside. Ike follows, but Peggy grabs a coat for her. Bob watches her go as Cory approaches.

CORY
Hey, Bob. I got twenty dollars bet on--

BOB
Not now.

Bob rushes after Maggie.

PEGGY
(calling after her)
Maggie. Maggie.
(to Ike, handing him a jacket)
Here. She may need this. It's not really Hawaii.

Ike exits. Then, Bob comes over.

BOB
Where'd Maggie go?

PEGGY
Oh, she just went to get me something from the car.

Cory comes over with Dennis to Bob and Peggy. BOB/PEGGY/CORY/DENNIS CHUFFA: About Bart Starr and football. (Which keeps Bob from going outside to follow Maggie). Bob thinks about it.

EXT. TROUT'S BARN - NIGHT

Ike runs after Maggie. He grabs her arm and turns her to him.

IKE
I'm the only goddamn person in there pulling for you.

MAGGIE
You humiliated me!

IKE

No, Maggie, I defended you.
Humiliating you is what everyone else
is doing. It's the theme of this party.

MAGGIE
I had it under control. Now they feel
sorry for me.

IKE
Well, they should. Because they're
about to watch you hang yourself again.

Maggie has no response.

IKE (cont'd)
-- Tell me something, do you really
care about Mount Everest?

MAGGIE
It's fun! It's high.

IKE
Or the sexual habits of locusts?

MAGGIE
That was very interesting research
George was doing!

IKE
What kind of Dead Head gets a temporary
tattoo?

MAGGIE
I already explained about that.

IKE
And where you ever really going to run
the leper colony in Molokai?

MAGGIE
(wincing)
Brian told you that?

IKE
Or maybe you just wanted to wear the
headdress.

MAGGIE
Every one of those times I was being
supportive. Something you won't
understand.

IKE
Supportive? You weren't being supportive. You were being scared. Just like now. You are the most lost woman I have ever laid eyes on.

MAGGIE
Lost!

IKE
That's right. You're so lost you don't even know how you like your eggs.

MAGGIE
What!?

IKE
With the priest, you liked them scrambled. With the Dead Head, fried. With the bug guy, poached. Now it's egg whites only, thank you very much.

MAGGIE
That's called changing your mind.

IKE
No, that's called not having a mind of your own. What are you doing, Maggie? You really want to let that man drag you up Annapuma on your honeymoon? You don't want to climb Annapuma.

MAGGIE
Yes I do!

IKE
No you don't. You want a man who will lead you down the beach with his head over your eyes just so you can discover the feel of the sand under your feet. You want a guy who will take you into a cave with a thousand candles just to read you a poem. You want a man to wake you up at dawn because he's burning to talk to you and he can't wait another minute to find out what you'll say. Am I right?

He's laid her flat. Maggie can't speak.

IKE (cont'd)
Am I right?

She fights back angry tears.

MAGGIE
Stop. Stop it! I'm getting married on Sunday, and you're just trying to make me run! Why? Because you're a cynical, exploitative, mean-hearted creep who wouldn't know real love if it bit him in the armpit! And all you do is tear other people down and-and-and laugh at them, and criticize what they do, because you're too afraid to do anything yourself! I read your column. You never wrote one about you. I'm not the only one who's lost and you know it! Am I right? Well? Am I right?

ANGLE ON: Bob comes outside.

BOB
Mag. Help me out here. Green Bay. Right guard.

Both Maggie and Ike are breathing hard. Bob comes up to Maggie and gives Ike a very hard look as he puts his arm around his fiancee.

BOB (cont'd)
You know... Blocked Bart Starr, crewcut ... Are you okay?

Maggie adjusts her face as best she can.

MAGGIE
Yes.

BOB
Let me take you back inside, okay?

She lets him lead her away.

MAGGIE
Jerry Kramer.

Ike looks at her drooped shoulder and he shakes his head and walks to his car.

EXT. HALE METHODIST CHURCH - THE NEXT DAY

Peggy and Cindy arrive for the rehearsal. They leave Cindy's dog in Peggy's car and walk to the church.

CINDY
Tell me, why does Maggie need another wedding rehearsal and two days before the wedding? She's already done this.

PEGGY
Bob is making her visualize the ceremony.

CUT TO:

INT. HALE METHODIST CHURCH - NIGHT

They are in the church proper now. Peggy waits in a pew as Bob leads Maggie and Ike up the back steps of the church.

BOB
(to Maggie)
Okay, we're ready. Want me to have Ike leave now?

Maggie turns on Ike with "cheerful" hostility.

MAGGIE
No. No -- Actually, let's make Ike the pastor.

IKE
I'd rather not.

MAGGIE
(sarcastically)
Come on, it'll give you a great view. It's perfect.
(seeing Peggy)
Hey.

Maggie smiles at Bob. Ike sighs and goes with it. Bob pulls Ike to the head of the aisle and places him. Peggy follows Maggie into the foyer to get ready. Cindy sits with Ted at the organ.

BOB
Team effort, Pastor Ike... Cindy, ready?
(after no response)
Cindy, come on.

Cindy leaves to join the girls in the foyer.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - THAT MOMENT

Once in the privacy of the foyer, Peggy and Maggie talk.

PEGGY
He's going to be the pastor?

MAGGIE
Yep. I want him to be front and center and to watch everything.

PEGGY
What happened at the luau?

MAGGIE
(flustered)
... I don't even want to talk about the luau.
(then seeing a hanging rope)
What's this?

PEGGY
It's for the bell.

Cindy joins them.

CINDY
Bob's in a hurry.

PEGGY
Don't be nervous, Maggie. Let us visualize. Remember what Bob said? "Be the ball."

CINDY
"Sink the putt."

PEGGY
"Make the shot."

CINDY
"Nothing but net."

PEGGY
"Never say die."

Maggie puts her hands up.

MAGGIE
Go!

Peggy and Cindy exit. Maggie pulls the bell rope and sways back and forth as she rings the bell.

INT. CHAPEL - THAT MOMENT

It is Maggie's turn to enter. They all turn expectantly. Too much time passes. Ted plays the organ, then stops. Maggie swings back and forth in the foyer doorway.

BOB
Honey, are you okay?

Maggie stops ringing the bell and pulls herself together. She walks into the aisle looking a little shaky. She takes a few tremulous steps slowly with her eyes closed, peeking occasionally with one eye.

IKE
(taking off his jacket)
At this pace, it could be an evening wedding.

BOB
Hold it! Hold it! I think we're taking this too fast.

He begins to pace.

BOB (cont'd)
We need to limber you up a little. You're tensing.
(thinks a moment; to Ike, moving him to groom's spot)
You stand here and be me so she knows how far she'll have to go.
(then to Maggie)
I'm going to walk with you.

Bob goes to Maggie and walks behind her.

BOB (cont'd)
Visualize! Visualize! It's game time.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie walking.

BOB (cont'd)
You are the football. You're spiraling through the air towards the hands of the groom.

She proceeds down the aisle. Bob behind her.

MAGGIE

(eyes down)
Yes, I'm spiraling through the air.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie raises her eyes and sees Ike in front of her as groom. Ike and Maggie lock gazes. If they had to, they couldn't look away. All the things unspoken are now communicated -- the love, the longing.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I streak towards the goal line.

Maggie's pace quickens.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
And I land on the goal line.

ANGLE ON:

Bob beams to see Maggie's eager arrival at Ike's side. He switches off the music and proceeds like a proud coach to be the pastor.

BOB
Okay, I'm the pastor. Dearly beloved, blah, blah, blah. So on and so forth. Ra ta ta ta. Yabada dabada. I now pronounce you man and wife. Kiss the bride, badum dum.
(then moving toward Ted)
We have the crescendo that leads to us right back down the aisle and out the...

Ike kisses Maggie. It is a world class, Olympic kiss. It is a kiss that changes everything and can never be taken back. It is a kiss you only get once in your life.

NEW ANGLE:

Bob's smile dies. Cindy's mouth drops open as the kiss goes on and on. Peggy loses control and screams.

BOB (cont'd)
Maggie!!!!?

Like a bucket of water thrown on two dogs, Ike and Maggie are startled out of their kiss. They pull apart and smile at each other.

ANGLE ON: Bob.

BOB (cont'd)
(furious)
If you were imagining me, you did great.
(to Ike)
What the hell were you doing?

IKE
(eyes on Maggie)
I'm sorry, Bob. She kissed me back.

MAGGIE
(dazed but happy)
I kissed him back.

BOB
Yeah, I caught that. Want to tell me how long this has been going on?

Maggie looks at Ike, wondrous, confused.

MAGGIE
About a minute...?

IKE
A little longer for me.

MAGGIE
Really?

BOB
What do you expect me to say to this?

IKE
How about -- "I hope you'll be very happy together"?

Bob hauls back and punches Ike in the face. Ike drops.

BOB
I hope you'll be very happy together.

Bob storms down the aisle and out of the church.

MAGGIE
(to Peggy)
Take care of him.

Maggie leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - THAT MOMENT

Bob is halfway down the walk. Maggie appears at the church door and calls after him.

MAGGIE
Bob, I'm sorry!
(half to herself)
At least I backed out before the wedding. That's progress!

He keeps marching. Now Peggy appears next to Maggie. Maggie calls again.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
Some woman is going to make you a lot happier than I ever could...

The words are barely out of her mouth when Cindy comes out the door, racing after Bob at a full sprint.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
See?

PEGGY
Well, Maggie -- in the words of Mrs. Pressman: "Holy moly". Call me later.

Peggy goes to her car. Cindy joins her as Bob speeds off in his car. Now Ike takes Peggy's place next to Maggie. Maggie turns to face Ike. They are both beet red, stammering and unable to look at each other, trying to act normal.

MAGGIE
Okay. So... what, uh... What just happened? Just now? Jus then? In there?

IKE
I don't know. I, uh -- I frankly don't even want to talk about it.

MAGGIE
Me, either.

Ike GRABS Maggie and BOOM -- they are all over each other, kissing frantically, tongues, hands, hair, elbow, you name it. Blathering fools.

IKE
(blathering)
I love you. I love you.

MAGGIE
(blathering)
I love you, too.

They come up for air.

IKE
Wait. We have to talk. We have to do some talking now. Pull up a railing.

Maggie sits on the railing, then Ike backs up and sits on the opposite railing.

IKE (cont'd)
You have to go down an aisle and say "I do". You have to get married.

MAGGIE
To who? Are you asking me?

IKE
Me?

Ike backs up to opposite railing and sits facing Maggie.

MAGGIE
Yes, you!

IKE
(thinks)
Well, you do have the dress.

MAGGIE
And the church.

IKE
And the wedding date. There's the two of us.
(beat)
So, you think... maybe... You have to go down the aisle with somebody you love and who love you back.

MAGGIE
I'm okay with that.

IKE
So am I.

MAGGIE
So, we'll...

They both nod and sit there smiling, sort of. The organist, Ted, closes the church door.

TED
Good night.

Ike pulls his tape recorder out of his pocket and quietly speaks into it.

IKE
I'm getting married.

WIDE SHOT:

They smile at each other and remain sitting. Then, silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET/HALE/ATLANTIC HOTEL - THAT NIGHT

Ike drives up and parks in front of the hotel as he talks on his cell phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FISHER AND ELLIE'S BEDROOM (NYC) - NIGHT

Ellie's on the phone. Fisher sits nearby.

ELLIE
Ike's going to get married.

Fisher throws himself onto the carpet and rolls himself helpless with laughter.

ELLIE (cont'd)
(without turning to him)
Fisher, if you pee on that Persian,
I'll kill you.

CUT TO:

INT. BEAUTY SALON - NIGHT DAY

Maggie talks to Peggy, Cindy and Grandma Julia. Grandma Julia sits under a hair dryer. Sprout, the dog, sits in his basket.

CINDY
I love his eyes. I just believe
they're listening to you.

PEGGY

His hair... any color.

GRANDMA JULIA
I like his tight butt.

Peggy laughs.

MAGGIE
Grandma!

PEGGY
(to Cindy)
See, this is a mature relationship.
She's really found it.

CUT TO:

LOVE MONTAGE SHOTS:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Ike and Maggie fishing.

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKSHOP/HOME - DAY

They play ping-pong. They laugh, enjoying the moment.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ike and Maggie have fun playing cards. The game is slapjack.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Maggie and Ike horseback riding. They sit on their horses amongst trees, "nuzzling". Ike reads as he pushes Maggie in a tire swing.

INT. MAGGIE'S ROOM - DAY

Ike and Maggie open and close a Hoberman ball by holding its opposite ends in their teeth. Grandma looks in.

INT. MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There is a fire in the fireplace. Maggie and Ike sit as Ike shows Maggie some passages from his favorite books. He's reading something from Yeats at the moment. They seem happy.

EXT. CHURCH - THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

It is a media circus including FOUR REPORTERS, Midday with Meredith and the T-shirt Vendor. Plus three other people the

reporters are interviewing, a GERMAN LADY, BUTCH KENAN, a farmer and Grandma Julia. Reporter DINA NAPOLI walks down the church steps.

DINA NAPOLI (OF WBAL)
Wedding bells are ringing for the fourth time today in Hale, Maryland. Maggie Carpenter, "Always a Bride -- Never a Bridesmaid", will be attempting to complete her fourth wedding ceremony. We'll come back on the air when the results are in. Back to you, Jessica.

Meredith, the low-end public access TV reporter, films himself pointing a cheap video camera himself.

MEREDITH
The turnout for this morning's wedding is usually reserved for royalty or Hollywood stars, but Maggie Carpenter is Hale, Maryland's special star and the citizens of Hale are out in full force today.

The NY T-shirt Vendor pitches his wares.

T-SHIRT VENDOR
I got "Bye-bye Birdie". "What part of 'I do' don't you understand?"... Get your "Runaway Bride" T-shirts here...

Reporter JULIE MURPHY stands near Grandma Julia and Mrs. Pressman.

JULIE MURPHY (Channel 6)
The bride's been here for almost an hour, but being around in the beginning was never her problem. We'll be here, showing you the full wedding ceremony, we hope.

Reporter JACKI and TIFFANY stand at the edge of the CROWD reporting.

JACKI/REPORTER #3 (WBOC TV16)
Will she or won't she? That is on the minds of these several hundreds folks, who are standing here this morning. Not to mention on the mind of Groom Number #4, ex-USA Today columnist, Ike Graham, who is missing in action.

EXT. WINDOW OF CHURCH/INT. SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

INSERT window of church. Peggy peers out the window at the carnival scene. Cindy sits with Maggie as she leans forward, doubled over on a child's chair. Peggy moves from the window to sit with them.

MAGGIE
(moves to window)
He's not coming. Watch. He's not coming.

PEGGY
No, no. I saw eight geese flying in a **"V".**

MAGGIE
You and your lucky geese. You always see geese.

PEGGY
Not eight...

CINDY
And in a "V".

MAGGIE
Eight is good... "V" could be Victory.

They ad lib various words starting with the letter "V". Maggie is nervous.

CINDY
Rub your ears.

PEGGY
Yes, rubbing your ears is very soothing. Cory does that to me when I hyperventilate.

Maggie rubs her ears.

CINDY
We do it to our dog.

MAGGIE
It's hurting.

CINDY
We'll rub.

After they rub Maggie's ears a bit:

PEGGY
He's here! He's here!

They all squeeze and peer out window. They scream in excitement. Cindy rushes to Maggie's wedding dress.

CINDY
I'll get the dress.

MAGGIE
He's here!... He's here!

PEGGY
Now's the time for calm... If you don't calm down, you won't get your dress on...
(reassuringly)
He's the one... He's the one.

Peggy moves to help Cindy with the dress. Maggie stands alone at the window a moment. She picks up a toy horse.

MAGGIE
This is not a good sign.

Maggie goes over to Peggy and Cindy, and starts to get into her bridal gown. They continue to ad lib words standing with the letter "V".

CINDY
We have to hurry. The Sunday School kids will be here soon.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S CAR - DAY

Ike pulls up slowly. GUESTS peer through the his car window and wave. Ike rubs his headache.

JULIE MURPHY
Well, the groom just pulled up. There was talk of a "now show", but he is here.

DINA NAPOLI
Ike Graham is here!

IKE'SPOV:

He moves as he takes it all in: a FAMILY eats a fast food picnic on a neighbor's lawn, invited GUESTS flock by in their party

best, and local NEWS TEAMS block the way. The STATE SENATOR is making a speech welcoming the press to Maryland. A large GROUP of reporters head up the church's stairs, hauling their equipment. They enter the flood of PEOPLE streaming inside the church. Ike snaps.

EXT. IKE'S CAR - CONTINUING

Ike stops the car where it is and jumps out, slamming the door in anger. The REPORTERS swarm around him as he gets out of the car. They continue to pound him with questions as he walks to church steps. An OLDER LADY smacks him on the shoulder with a newspaper. He turns in astonishment and continues up the steps. He charges up the stairs and grabs Lee.

IKE
Shoot ours so she has one with an ending.

Mrs. Pressman stands, shooting Ike with her video camera.

IKE (cont'd)
(pleading)
Mrs. Pressman, please.

MRS. PRESSMAN
It's okay. There's no microphone. You're no fun.

IKE
No, I'm not.

Ike retreats into the church. Lee comes up to him again with his video camera: CHUFFA about Scorsese.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUING

As Fisher and Ellie sign the guest book, a LOCAL LADY stares at Ellie. Ellie stares back at her until she leaves. Ike walks away from Lee and turns smack into Ellie and Fisher. Ike puts his arms around them and gives them a big hug.

IKE
Friends. Thank you. Thank you.

Over Ellie's shoulder, Ike sees Fisher's grinning face.

IKE (cont'd)
We are friends, aren't we, Fisher?

FISHER
(grinning)

Of course we are. Of course.

IKE
Then you'll be my best man.

FISHER
Well, I'm good, I don't know if I'm best.

IKE
Go talk to the pastor and he'll tell you what to do. And someone will tell me what to do.

ELLIE
You always looked great in that suit... And Ike?
(emotional)
I'm happy for you, honey.

Ellie whispers in his ear.

ELLIE (cont'd)
I'll have a car around the back to whisk you out of here if she runs.

Ellie kisses him on the cheek and walks away.

ANGLE ON:

Bob comes up to Ike. He looks like he's going to punch Ike, then abruptly holds out a rose boutonniere.

BOB
You look awful.

IKE
(sarcastically)
Thank you.

Bob hands the flower to Ike. Ike is shaking. Bob catches this and looks up to Ike. It is a moment of clean honesty between the men.

BOB
Ike. Need help?

He takes the boutonniere and puts it on Ike's lapel.

BOB (cont'd)
I'm glad it's you.

IKE
Really?

BOB
I didn't want to find out I wasn't for her in the fourth quarter.

IKE
Got any last minute advice?

BOB
(motioning to their eyes)
Maintain eye contact.

Bob turns and leaves, going down a side staircase.

IKE
(to himself)
Eye contact. Eye contact.

Out of the corner of his eye, Ike sees a pictures of Christ on the wall. He leans into the picture and whispers.

IKE (cont'd)
Cover me.

He walks into the chapel.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUING

Ike steps up and stands next to Fisher.

FISHER
(to Ike)
I have no idea what I'm doing.

IKE
Your job is... the ring.
(to Fisher)
Do you have the ring?!

FISHER
I just found out I'm best man! I'm lucky I have a suit... What's wrong?

Ike gives the ring to Fisher. The Pastor approaches Ike. Ike turns away and look out over the guests.

IKE'SPOV: There are most of the TOWNSPEOPLE we've come to know, plus some NEW YORKERS for Ike, with little ponytails. Armani wire rims, Donna Karan bodysuits. There's a lot of smirking, checking out the hicks, forming their stories for

cocktail hour. Elaine is in back all dressed in black, mourning Ike. Mrs. Trout approaches Ike.

MRS. TROUT
You should thank Lou and I for the wedding car -- a '63 Buick.

IKE
Thank you.

MRS. TROUT
Oh, come on. You're practically family.

Mrs. Trout starts picking lint off Fisher's jacket.

FISHER
Hello. I'm Fisher.

MRS. TROUT
This doesn't want to come out.

FISHER
You just pull a hair from my neck.

IKE
Mrs. Trout, go back to your seat!

INT. CHURCH FOYER - DAY

Peggy joins Maggie, who is blowing bubblegum and swaying in front of an oscillating fan. Grandma and Walter come in. Grandma gives her a kiss on the cheek.

GRANDMA JULIA
Good luck, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Thank you, Grandma.

Grandma leaves. Walter steps up.

WALTER
(quietly to Maggie)
I'm really rooting for this one.

MAGGIE
Thank you, Dad.

Peggy turns off the fan. Cindy takes the bag from Maggie.

CINDY
Spit.

Maggie spits her bubblegum into the bag. Peggy hands Maggie her bouquet.

PEGGY
Let's go.

MAGGIE
No sauntering down the aisle. Just make time. Let's just get there.

Cindy and Peggy nod and leave. The door closes.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUING

Both extends his hand to Elaine.

ELAINE
Hi, I'm Elaine from New York.

BOB
Hello. I'm Bob, Maggie's fourth attempt.

ELAINE
I'm sorry.

BOB
That's okay. There's a lid for every pot. Besides, I'm comfortable with Ike. I mean, Jack Dempsey lost his heavyweight title to a New Yorker.

ELAINE
I know. Gene Tunney.

The organ begins to play. The organist is Ted. Grandma, Walter, Mrs. Pressman and the Trouts watch. Mrs. Trout picks lint off of her husband's jacket.

ANGLE ON:

Cindy and Peggy enter with the confident air of people who have done this before. They make it to the head of the aisle all too quickly. Peggy gives Ike a wink and an encouraging smile.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - CONTINUING

The door opens and Dennis sticks his head in.

DENNIS
They're ready, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Just a second.

Dennis closes the door behind him as he goes back into the chapel. Maggie has a moment alone. She looks at back door as possible escape route, then changes her mind. She signals the start of the wedding by knocking on the door.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Immediately, Cory and Dennis open the doors for her entrance. All the guests stand as Maggie enter the chapel smiling.

MAGGIE'S POV:

The aisle stretches before her into infinity. Faces goggle at her from every direction. The tiny figure of Ike stands like a beacon a long way off.

NEW ANGLE:

She plunges forward with a sped-up hesitation step.

ANGLE ON:

Ike rocks imperceptibly, urging her on. Peggy and Cindy make little "come on" motions. It seems to be working. Maggie approaches rapidly. The CROWD has turned from skepticism to looks and noises of encouragement.

ANGLE ON: MAGGIE

But then her feet gradually begin to slow.

ANGLE ON:

Fisher gives a little "darn, so close" look.

ANGLE ON:

But Ike is too busy maintaining eye contact. His eyes urge Maggie closer -- loving her, willing her on.

CLOSE ON:

Maggie stops her walk, gives Ike a teasing smile, and then resumes with her walk toward him. His face. Her face. His face. Her face.

CLOSE ON:

Her foot inches forward. The other follows.

NEW ANGLE:

A sigh now rises from the GUESTS as Maggie closes in on Ike. He smiles at her. She smiles at him. She is almost there... She's there, smiling at Ike. The Pastor gestures to the guests to sit down. They do.

ANGLE ON:

Ike sneezes. She looks down and imagines she sees the carpet splitting apart. And she bolts like a bat out of hell! In a flurry of white, she is halfway down the aisle before Ike knows what hits him.

ANGLE ON:

Ike stands there dazed. For a second. Then she springs into action, charging after her.

IKE
(yelling out)
Block the doors!

Like a general, he points to Dennis and Cory in the back and sends them into action. The doors shut in Maggie's face. But she's a wild animal cornered. She moves to the side. The TOWNSPEOPLE stand so Ike can hurry through the pew. Ike climbs on the pews towards her as GUEST crowd the aisle, blocking his path. Like a gazelle, she leaps to the side aisle and scampers down and away. Fisher gets on his cell phone. Ike charges from one of the full pews, crosses the aisle and leaps across the pews near the staircase to cut her off. He grabs her veil and it comes off in his hands. Maggie disappears down the steps of the church basement. Ike fumble with the veil and jumps over the railing, landing on Dennis' toe. He follows down the stairs after her. Mrs. Pressman and Walter exchange bet money.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - CONTINUING

Maggie comes down steps and enters the church children's Sunday school class. A lot of KIDS And TEACHERS are doing religious arts and crafts. As Maggie runs through:

MAGGIE
There's a man coming down those steps with lots of candy in his pockets. If you tickle him, he'll give candy.

She gives her bouquet to a little GIRL as she goes by. Ike comes down stairs.

IKE
Maggie!

The KIDS mob him, grabbing his pockets. Ike fights his way through KIDS.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie as she's in the church kitchen and hops on counter and heads out the window. The window is wide enough.

ANGLE ON:

Ike as he gets to the window, but Maggie is out in driveway.

EXT. CHURCH DRIVEWAY - CONTINUING

Maggie flies toward a FedEx truck at next house just leaving.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

She gathers her dress and jumps in as Ike yells from window, then, quickly climbs out onto the lawn as the truck starts to pull away.

IKE
Maggie!

Maggie looks back once, tearful and regretful, and disappears inside the truck. The truck races off.

The PHOTOGRAPHERS turn their cameras on Ike, en masse. He is enveloped by a barrage of bright lights.

Ellie and Fisher, who have also stepped outside on chapel front steps, are looking around as Ike turns around the corner and past the church.

ELLIE
Look, he's running after her.

FISHER
Look, he's in pretty good shape.

ELLIE
Poor Ike.

They look after the FedEx truck and watch Ike chasing the truck down the road away from the church.

IKE
(running; yells)
Maggie!

ELLIE
Where do you think she's going?

FISHER
Wherever it is, she'll be there by ten-thirty tomorrow.

Cindy, Cory, Peggy and Meredith also rush out of the church and comment on Maggie's runaway. Further down the road, Ike still chases the truck, yelling:

IKE
Maggie!

As the truck rounds the bend in the road and disappears, Ike stops and stares alone after the disappearing truck. A swarm of REPORTERS catch up to him, flashing pictures and asking questions. Another camera flashes and we cut to:

A NEWSPAPER PHOTO

Of Ike's stunned face on the cover of the USA Today. The caption reads: "Hit and Run: Runaway Bride Strikes again". And we see headlines in other papers.

"MAGGIE'S MAD DASH"
"HARDWARE HONEY GOES NUTS AND BOLTS"
"JOURNALIST WRITTEN OFF"
"BRIDE TAKES HIKE...NOT IKE"
"BRIDE TAKE RIDE"
"MAGGIE SAYS I DON'T"

NEWSPAPER MONTAGE:

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

Kevin, the bartender, reads Jay's column, in the USA Today entitled "Maggie's Mad Dash".

CUT TO:

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - DAY

Various newspaper WORKERS also read Jay's column in the USA Today entitled "Maggie Mad Dash" and "Hardware Honey Goes Nuts and Bolts" in another newspaper.

FADE IN

EXT. MAIN STREET/HALE - NIGHT (1-5 MONTHS LATER)

It's a night like any other in Hale -- the regular order of things has been restored on its quaint streets. Quartet sings in front of the hotel. LEE AND CORY CHUFFA: About where Peggy is.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Maggie is sitting, end of a long day. Peggy sticks her head in entrance door.

PEGGY
You okay? I'm closing.

MAGGIE
I'm just finishing up, too.

PEGGY
Want to go to Butch's for a drink or something?

MAGGIE
(interrupting)
No, I'm just going to head home.

PEGGY
Okay.

Peggy starts to go, then moves close to Maggie.

PEGGY (cont'd)
(stepping closer and making a "V" with her fingers)
You know, I was just thinking about that geese thing. I think the "V" was half of a "W". A "W" for...

MAGGIE
What are you talking about?

PEGGY
Wedding. Wedding.
(holding Maggie's face)
You just have to get the rest of your ducks in a row.

MAGGIE
Thank you. You still think that he

was....

PEGGY
Quick. Very quick.

Peggy exits. Maggie stares, losing herself in thought. Then a VOICE startles her.

VOICE
(whispers)
Marry me, Maggie.

Maggie jumps and turns to see: DENNIS -- the kid from the high school football team, popping up from a low position near the counter.

MAGGIE
(softly)
Hi, Dennis.

DENNIS
I am going to propose, you know. I mean, the right way. Soon as I turn eighteen.

MAGGIE
You're sweet, Dennis. But you've got to go. I'm closing up. Here's a candy bar and one for your brother.

Dennis takes the candy and starts to go.

DENNIS
I'm not giving up. A person shouldn't give up.

Dennis exits. Maggie is alone. She turns out the lamp she designed, then on again. She turns off the other lamp on the counter and exits. We hold on Maggie's designed lamp.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S HALLWAY AND APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ike walks up to his door, carrying his mail and a bag of carryout. He opens the door and walks into his apartment. He pets Italics, who sits on his sofa bed. Without taking off his coat, he goes to his keyboard and plays music as he CHUFFAS to his cat about marriage and divorce.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dad and Grandma Julia are there. Grandma is making lunch. Walter is juggling oranges. There's glass of beer on the kitchen counter.

WALTER
That's Maggie. Home for lunch.

GRANDMA JULIA
She's been doing this since the last wedding. I don't think it's good.

Maggie walks in and kisses Grandma on the cheek.

MAGGIE
Hey. Grandma, what's for lunch?

GRANDMA JULIA
Turkey and cheese.

WALTER
Honey, your grandmother and I were thinking about opening a wedding gift museum.

Walter laughs.

MAGGIE
STOP!

Walter looks at his daughter in surprise. He's never heard a tone like this in her voice before.

WALTER
What?

MAGGIE
(quiet fury)
Just stop it. Don't say another word like that.

WALTER
(putting down the oranges)
Maggie, it's just a joke...

MAGGIE
No. It's my life.

WALTER
A harmless joke.

MAGGIE
No, it's humiliating and you've been doing it since I was a kid. I don't like it. Stop. You may not like having a daughter with problems. But guess what? I don't like having a father who's drunk all the time. I'll eat in my room.

Maggie takes a plate and exits.

GRANDMA JULIA
That needed to be said. You know -- you're always making jokes about her, so they won't make jokes about your drinking.

Walter reacts.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ike goes out on his terrace. He bounces a basketball. It doesn't bounce. He sits on the steps of the patio an stares.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM/GYM - DAY

Maggie is kickboxing.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM/GYM - ANOTHER DAY

Maggie is a bit melancholy as she works on her lamps.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER DAY

Ike quietly sits in bed writing and staring into space thinking. His cat sits on the windowsill.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM/GYM - NIGHT

Maggie jumps rope barefooted late at night.

MAGGIE

I need a plan... A plan to life... What would Bruce Lee do? He'd kick some ass...

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Maggie in front of plates full of all sorts of types of eggs -- scrambled, poached, sunny-side up, Benedict, soft boiled, etc -- sits on the kitchen counter. She ties them all.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Establishing shot. Two MEN try to fix the engine of a taxi outside the restaurant.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DUSK

Eke walks by the T-shirt Vendor, goes into a subway station.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DUSK

Ike crosses a busy street where a MAN is being arrested. Ike is passing the upscale "Millennium Hardware Store". He glances at the window, looks away, stops and looks again. The window display is made up of an assortment of Maggie's lamps. Logo "MAG" is on them. He smiles and walks on.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK RESERVOIR - DUSK

Ike stares out at water as he walks.

EXT. IKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ike walks along sidewalk, crosses street, enters his building.

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ike opens the door to his apartment and flicks on the lights. He crosses to hang his coat in the closet. In the closet mirror, he sees and is stunned to find: MAGGIE, sitting on the couch holding Italics, the cat.

MAGGIE
Hello, Ike.

He closes the closet and crosses to his desk.

IKE

Don't tell me. My doorman is one of your many admires... I knew I should have given him a better Christmas gift.

Maggie smiles tenuously. She's more than a little terrified.

MAGGIE
I've been making friends with your cat.
(then)
Is it okay that I'm here?

IKE
I don't have much choice in the matter now, do I? But I can't speak for Italics.
(to Cat)
Traitor!

He moves to the kitchen.

MAGGIE
I don't blame you for being mad...

Ike looks at her. Apparently the word "mad" is an understatement.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
... Or... furious.

Ike looks at her again.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
... Irate? Livid? How's that?

He starts putting cat food in a bowl. The cat leaves Maggie's side and starts to east.

IKE
Livid is good. So what is it, Maggie? You here on business? I saw your lamps. They're terrific.

MAGGIE
It's something I've always wanted to do.

Ike leaves the kitchen, turns on the balcony lights and re-enters the living room from the balcony.

IKE
You actually could make breaking and entering into a new career.
(after opening the glass doors)

So, what are you doing here?

MAGGIE
I wanted to talk to you about why I run or ride away from things.

Ike moves away from her and sits on the steps near the balcony window, listening.

IKE
(after sitting)
Does it matter?

MAGGIE
I think so... When I was walking down the aisle? I was walking toward somebody who didn't have any idea who I really was. And it was only half the other person's fault, because I had done everything to convince him that I was exactly what he wanted. So it was good that I didn't go through with it because it would have been a lie, but you -- you knew the real me.

IKE
Yes, I did.

MAGGIE
I didn't. And you being the one at the end of the aisle didn't just fix that.

Ike takes this in. She's reaching him -- but then the defenses go back up. He turns to her.

IKE
No, I couldn't fix anything...
(as he gets up)
But I still ended up chasing a truck.

Ike moves out to the balcony. After a moment, Maggie follows him.

EXT. BALCONY/IKE'SAPARTMENT - NIGHT

The balcony overlooks Central Park. The twinkling lights of the city stretch out across the beautiful night. Ike looks out at the view with his back to Maggie as she speaks.

MAGGIE
I understand why you bring up the truck. Let me explain something. The fact is, you've seen me at my worst, most

embarrassing, deviously plotting, potentially but not certifiably, psychotic state. And if you liked me then, I mean, now... I can't imagine... (crosses to him) Benedict.

Ike has no response.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I love eggs Benedict. I hate all the other kinds.

She hesitates.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
... I hate big weddings with everybody staring. I would like to get married on a weekday while everybody is at work. If I ride off into the sunset, I want my own horse.

IKE
Should I be writing this down?

She returns to the balcony and hands him the box.

IKE (cont'd)
What's this?

MAGGIE
These are for you.

He opens it. It's her running shoes.

IKE
Used?

MAGGIE
They're mine. I'm turning in my running shoes to you.

IKE
This is getting serious.

Now she is glowing at him, shining with the full force of her.

MAGGIE
And one more thing. I know it's hard to believe there could be more. Um...

Maggie glances around and spots a DECK CHAIR, which she turns so

it is facing the city lights. Then she softly says:

MAGGIE (cont'd)
If you could have a seat, please.

Ike sits. Maggie takes the box from him and puts it aide. And then she gets down on one knee.

IKE
(laughing)
Oh my God. No.

Maggie smiles up at him. Ike tips his head back and covers his eyes with his hand.

MAGGIE
No, no -- don't hide your face, this only happens once in a lifetime. It's definitely a first to me, and you're not going to want to miss it.

He smiles as he looks at Maggie.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I love you, Homer Eisenhower Graham. Will you marry me?

Ike swallows, overwhelmed, overjoyed, and scared shitless.

IKE
Maggie, I gotta think about this a little bit.

Maggie hops cheerfully back to her feet.

MAGGIE
(cheerful)
Good.

She gets off her knees and stands.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
I was hoping you'd say that.

IKE
(laughing)
You were not.

MAGGIE
I was, because if you said "yes" right away, I wouldn't get to say this next part. And I've been practicing it.

(pulling up a chair
and sitting)
Ready?

IKE
I'm listening.

MAGGIE
(tenderly)
"I guarantee that we'll have tough times. I guarantee that at some point one or both oof us will want to get out. But I also guarantee that if I don't ask you to be mine, I'll regret it for the rest of my life. Because I know in my heart -- you're the only one for me".

Ike takes her hands affectionately.

IKE
Pretty good speech, Maggie.

MAGGIE
I borrowed it from this guy I know. So?

Ike looks into Maggie's shining face and pauses. He gets up and motions with his hand for her to stay seated. He goes inside and turns on some music. The cat is sitting by the radio. He returns to the balcony and takes Maggie's hand.

IKE
Dance with me.

They start to dance a slow dance.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LARGE GREEN FIELD - DAY

We see a hill and on top of it is a Pastor marrying Maggie and Ike, in beautiful wedding attire. We see Maggie walk down a leaf-lined aisle to a waiting Ike. They kiss as we hear the vows and hear them each say "I do". They kiss a twirling, whirling kiss, a circular kiss. We hear the applause of about twenty people. Slowly, we see the twenty people come over the crest of the hill. They are all Maggie's family and friends, plus the old grooms. They are all paired in twos, like a love Noah's ark. We see others get the news.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Priest Brian hears about Maggie's wedding.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Mrs. Trout hears about Maggie's wedding.

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

George, Groom #3, hears about Maggie's wedding.

INT. ELLIE'S OFFICE OR APARTMENT - DAY

Ellie and Fisher hear about Maggie's wedding.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Maggie and Ike finally break the kiss. Ike takes her hand and walks her to two horses. Ike and Maggie, on the two horses, ride off happily in their wedding clothes. As the group cheers, Maggie throws bouquet. We see it float in the air.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END