THE FAMILY UNIT

An Honors Creative Project (ID 499)

by

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First Summer Session
"THE FAMILY UNIT"

an Original Screenplay by

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Derived from the song "Tonight"

by

Elton John and Bernie Taupin
A pitch black screen. Then slowly, a STEADY, LIGHT RAIN can be heard, almost inaudible.

FADE IN TO AERIAL SHOT OF SUBURB - NIGHT
Lighted windows are very sparsely scattered since it is the early hours of the morning. After hearing a DISTANT RUMBLE OF THUNDER, the somber introductory NOTES of Elton John's "Tonight" begin, as do the CREDITS. As the tension builds in the music, the CAMERA PANS over the tranquil community.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - EXT. HOUSE
One of many houses, this residence could be anyone's, but it is the home of our main characters. A lone light is on. The swelling intensity, the surging conflict of tempos in the MUSIC belie the above tranquility and this dichotomy continues until a feverishly dissonant CHORD cuts it short... and the MUSIC transforms into a placid, pastoral temperament.

INT. SHORT HALL OF THE HOUSE
ECU on two kissing faces. The CAMERA PULLS BACK to encompass the entire wedding picture of a mutually enraptured bride and bridegroom, and then DISSOLVES into another picture of the COUPLE. As this continues, we are eventually back far enough to ascertain that this is an entire wall of family pictures. Serving as background for the CONTINUING CREDITS, the CAMERA SLOWLY PANS across this heavily laden picture wall to reveal many funny, happy PICTURES of the COUPLE, KIDS, AND OTHERS from holidays, vacations, etc. This hall has been lit from a LIGHT emanating from an adjoining room, and as the MUSIC ends and the LAST CREDIT FADES, the CAMERA FOLLOWS the LIGHT towards its source with a MOVING SHOT from the HALL into--

INT. KITCHEN
We can see from various shots of COUNTERS and KITCHEN APPLIANCES that whoever lives here is an impeccable housekeeper. Within this extreme SILENCE and DIM LIGHTING, we move towards BRIGHTER LIGHT whereupon we discover a LONE WOMAN sitting at the KITCHEN TABLE with her FACE IN HER HANDS. This is our main character, JULIE DENISON. She is an emotionally strong and composed woman whose extreme sensitivity make her a devoted mother and wife. Sensing great inner strength in her poise, we are surprised when she looks up that she has been crying. Gaining her composure, she resumes writing a LETTER to her mother and finishes it in a few sentences, signs it "Love, Julie," puts it in the ENVELOPE and adresses it. Sitting in deep thought for a moment, her weary eyes gaze into space, wanting sleep. But Julie cannot sleep so she empties the dishwasher and rinses and loads the remaining dirty dishes from dinner. Pulling her calendar from a drawer, she sits down again. CU of CALENDAR as she crosses out MONDAY which has "Paul leaves for Dayton"
written on it and then circles "Paul returns home" on THURSDAY. It can be seen from the rest of the calendar that he will be gone on business a great deal of the rest of the month.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
The next day. It is about 9:45 on a bright, sunny June morning. Julie and her son, VINCENT DENISON, are the only ones up. Vince is ten years old and has been increasingly assuming a "man of the house" attitude. He is close to his mother and tries to be helpful. He is now completing putting breakfast dishes in the dishwasher as Julie tries to compile a grocery list.

VINCE
(exasperated)
I thought you were keeping the cereal in here. I can't find anything in this new house.

He is standing on the counter to reach a high shelf. Holding a box of Rice Krispies, he is searching all the shelves for the cereal area.

JULIE
What are you doing up there? Vince, get down please.

VINCE
But where...

JULIE
(jesting)
Your shoes aren't particularly welcome on my kitchen counters.

VINCE
(laughing)
I know, but where...

JULIE
Right here.

She opens another cabinet next to the one she's "taking inventory" in and continues her business.

VINCE
Do you have coke and twinkies down?

JULIE
No.

VINCE
(beat)
Oh.
JULIE
Yes, you can add it to the list-- it's over there on the table. I was hoping you'd leave that habit back in Phoenix, but no such luck I guess.

Vince smiles with contentment as he makes his addition to the list.

Add pancake mix and spaghetti to that too please. You know, when I think of what little there was in this house when we got here last week, I can't help but wonder what your father ate for three months.

With the mentioning of his father, Vince's attitude changes to detachment and resentment as he tries to pass it off. Julie, who has been noticing these negative reactions, quickly looks at her son when she realizes what she has said.

VINC
Why? I'm sure he got along fine. I don't care what he ate.

He leaves the kitchen to go watch TV to get away from the discussion. Hearing the toilet flush upstairs,

VINC
One of the girls is up.

As Julie continues in the kitchen, CAROLYN DENISON, her oldest child at 13 enters in her pajamas and sleepy eyes. She is a lovely, confident girl. Being the oldest, she tends to pull rank on the other kids and tends to be short with her mother.

JULIE
Good morning, Carol.

Carol just lifts her hand and nods mildly.

Good morning, Carol.

CAROL
I said hello.

JULIE
I'm sorry. I guess I didn't hear you. Did Amanda sleep any better last night?

CAROL
I don't know. But I didn't hear her crying any. We need bacon.
Okay. I'm trying to make a grocery...

(shouting from the TV room)
If you make a mess, you better clean it up!

What are you going to do today, Mom?

Carol is making some toast and chocolate milk. Vince comes back in to watch her, and TV VOICES can be heard in the background.

Well, if I don't go to the grocery today, I've got to go tomorrow. And there are still some boxes that need to be unpacked. Why?

We need strawberry jelly too. Well, I thought you might want to take a ride downtown to show us the city more.

That's fine with me. Is that alright Vince?

Oh-- when does Dad get home?

Carol has started into the TV room beforehand and stops. Julie observes Vince's reaction, which is negligible.

Thursday night.

Carol continues into the TV room.

Pig! Clean up your mess!

Vince, it's alright. Don't worry about it.

Julie cracks the door to see if AMANDA is awake. She is, and she raises her head a little and smiles. AMANDA DENISON is the middle child at 12 years old. She is also very attractive, yet she is quiet and pensive and very sincere.

You're awake! How did you sleep?
AMANDA
Better. What time is it?

JULIE
A little after ten. That's why I figured
you were getting along pretty well!

AMANDA
Oh geez, I better get up.

JULIE
Well, don't worry about hurrying. We thought
we'd take sightseeing drive through the city
this afternoon, but there's nothing else pressing.

Julie kisses her and leaves.

INT. CAR - DAY
They are approaching the downtown area and the traffic begins
to pick up. With her eyes transfixed on the cars around her,
Julie is nervously relying on the children to watch the map
and provide the navigation. However, they would rather watch
what's around them, except Amanda.

VINCE
Look at that dog! Doesn't he look like Arthur?

JULIE
I can't look right now. I've got to watch the
road.

(beat)
The traffic is getting much heavier as we get
closer to downtown. Carol, where are we now?

CAROL
(fumbling map)
Well, I'm not sure; I'll need to see a cross
street. But the last time I looked, we...

JULIE
The last time you looked? Honey, I thought
you were following it?

AMANDA
We just passed Hampden Street back there.

JULIE
Amanda, your watching the streets aren't you?
Here Carol, give the map to your sister.

CAROL
I can find it.
JULIE
No, you go ahead and look at the city.

Carol reluctantly forfeits the map and gives Amanda a resentful stare. Amanda looks down, as if she was guilty.

Can you find it Amanda? We're on Lawrence now.

CAROL
Are we still going to Dad's office building?

JULIE
Well I hope so. That's where I'm headed at any rate... I think! Have you pinpointed us yet?

AMANDA
Yes. We just crossed Barker which is here, and Dad's office is down here on Ramsey Street, isn't it?

Julie is not really watching the road closely during this, and suddenly Vince shouts out.

VINCE
Mom, the lights red!

Julie rapidly looks up and slams the brakes on forcefully, but it is not enough and they crash into the back of the car ahead of them. The girls start crying immediately, but Carol quickly stops.

JULIE
(quite shaken)
Oh my God! Are you alright? Vincent? Carol? Amanda? Honey, are you hurt?

CAROL
Mom, that guy is getting out of his car.

Quickly coming back to the matter at hand, Julie pulls herself together and rapidly gets out of her car to meet a MAN who is now looking at the damage.

JULIE
(through the window)
All of you stay in here.

She hurries up to the man, very concerned.
IN THE MIDDLE OF LAWRENCE STREET
It is around 3:00 p.m. and this four-lane street is now getting backed up as a result of this accident.

JULIE
Is there anyone hurt? Are you alright?

MAN
I'm fine, but I can't say the same for my car... or yours.

We can tell that he is quite aggravated, more concerned with the state of the cars than the people in them.

JULIE
I'm so sorry. I'm new to the city, and I was trying to look at a map to find my husband's office. My daughter was showing me...

MAN
Well, when I saw you coming up on me in my mirror, I knew you couldn't have been paying too much attention.

JULIE
(composed but still weak)
Um... I... I suppose we should exchange information. Hold on. Let me get some things out of the glove compartment.

INT. CAR
As their mother is seen returning to the car, the kids are curious as to what has happened. When Julie gets there, she begins searching the glove compartment very methodically, partly to reflect calm and control to the kids, but also because it is her nature.

AMANDA
(upset and weeping)
I don't know why I was making her look at the map. Why didn't I just tell her?

CAROL
(bluntly, impatient)
Amanda, would you please drop it? I think we've gotten the idea. I just want to know what the damage is like.

VINCE
His car doesn't look too bad from here.
JULIE
(openning passenger door)
Excuse me Vince. How are you guys?

Kids respond with "fines" and then a pause as she searches.

CAROL
How's the car?

JULIE
Oh... Carol, I really don't know. I haven't looked at it yet.
(beat)
Here it is. Bear with me.

She goes back to the man.

CAROL
It couldn't have done too much; we weren't going very fast when we hit him. I'm gonna get out and look.

VINCE
(authoritatively)
No you're not! Mom asked us to stay in the car, so we're going to.

CAROL
Little brother telling big sister what to do?

POLICE SIRENS enter in the background, drawing closer.

Well, it sounds like the police are coming, so I better wait anyway.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING
Pulled over to the curb, they have finally made it to Dad's office. The kids are looking out the windows having forgotten much of what happened, but Julie is preoccupied with the worry, but tries to cover it up for the kids.

AMANDA
It's bigger than his last office building.

CAROL
And much nicer.

JULIE
Well, remember Dad wrote in that one letter that he liked these more.
Vince looks disinterested. As Julie begins to pull away from the car, she doesn't see a car change lanes and most stop abruptly again as she simultaneously sees it in her mirror and hears a HORN.

INT. CAR
They have gotten out of downtown and are now near home looking for their new school.

CAROL
(Chuckling)
Maybe we should have waited for Dad to show us around.

JULIE
Give me three months too, and I'll have it down.

VINCE
Is that the school?

JULIE
Yes.

As they drive past, Julie slows down. The Junior high school, Amanda and Carol get nervous and upset.

AMANDA
It's awfully big.

CAROL
I know I'm not going to like it.

JULIE
Now Carol...

CAROL
I'm not.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Julie is making dinner. When she comes to a point where she can stop, she goes upstairs to get something.

INT. TOP OF STAIRS
As she ascends the stairs, she looks emotionally drained. Passing the girls' bedroom, she notices that the door is shut so she goes to open it, but knocks first.
INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM
Amanda is sitting on the floor, crying. Quickly wiping her eyes and grabbing the book next to her, she opens the latter as Julie begins to open the door.

AMANDA
Who is it?

JULIE
Oh, I'm sorry Amanda. I didn't think anyone was in here, so I thought I'd open the door to keep your room cool.
(detecting something)
Is everything okay?

AMANDA
Yes. Fine. I'm just trying to rest a little.

Julie smiles, but is concerned underneath. She doesn't want her kids to hurt, and she wants to help if she can. But she decides not to force the issue, and continues to her own room thinking about the children.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
It is now early evening and they are all having dinner around the kitchen table. Julie is trying to be very "up" and optimistic. There is an obvious place missing at the head of the table. Everyone's pretty quiet as we hear the CLINKING OF SILVERWARE.

JULIE
Pittsburgh is really a pretty nice city.

CAROL
I took another walk this afternoon and met some people in the neighborhood. It's not bad.

AMANDA
But it's not home.

CAROL
(exasperated)
But this is home.

VINCE
I agree with Amanda.

JULIE
Amanda has a valid point. Pittsburgh is not Phoenix.
JULIE
We'd lived there long enough that we had all gotten pretty comfortable. But you've got to remember, when we moved to Phoenix, we didn't think it was Dallas either. But we've been able to adjust to where ever we've moved, and we'll be able to do it here too.

AMANDA
But I still don't like it here.

VINCE
(a bit angered)
Well you're no different than me, and Carol you can say what you want, but I know you don't like it either. And the thing is, we wouldn't even be here if it wasn't for...

CAROL
For Dad? That's right. You can say that and I'll agree, but don't go around telling me how I feel. I've moved enough to know that I'm going to forget about Phoenix.

Julie has been listening, concerned, and looking for a place to interject.

JULIE
Carol, you don't have to forget about Phoenix, but I think you realize you're starting something new, which is good. As far as why we moved, I don't think your father should get any blame. He doesn't work as hard as he does for his own benefit. Although he has certain goals, they all point back to what he'll be able to do for his family when he reaches them.

They continue eating in silence. Julie watches for a reaction.

INT. FACTORY - DAY
The camera focuses on many Atmosphere shots of the factory. We then see Paul Denison talking with the Plant Manager. Paul is a congenial but intense man, of compact build with descriptive gestures. Throughout the conversation, he takes vigorous notes.

MANAGER
Now, those machines over there are 15 years old.
PAUL
Are they the oldest?

MANAGER
No. There are some over in that right corner that are upwards of twenty. So you can begin to understand why this plant doesn't reach the projected output.

PAUL
Yes. If the projection is based on eight year old equipment, it makes things a little clearer.

(beat)
Well, that should be about it. I'm fairly certain I have all the statistical data I need for this plant back in my office.

MANAGER
If you need a quick verification, just give me a call.

INT. CAR
As he drives back to the hotel, Paul is exhausted but encouraged. His mind is racing with ideas and questions and we can see his intense thought. Writing his ideas down as he drives, his thought is interrupted with a thought of the family, and he quickly writes "call home" amid all his other business notes and returns promptly to business.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Paul is finishing his room service dinner while going over his notes from the day. He glances up at the TV occasionally which has a NEWS SPECIAL on. Looking at his watch, he decides to call home. He goes and sits down at the desk and dials the operator.

PAUL
Yes, I'd like to place a long distance call to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, area code 215-642-9623, and I'll have you bill it to that number please.

INT. TV ROOM
All three kids are watching TV when the phone rings, and since Vince is heading into the kitchen for a drink, he answers it.

VINCE
Hello?

PAUL
Hello, Vince. This is Dad. How's everything with you?
There's a sudden change in Vince's attitude. These scenes are intercut.

VINCE
Fine. Mom, it's Dad.

Vince puts the receiver down and goes to get his drink as the girls come into the room to talk with him. Julie gets the extension upstairs. Vince goes back in to watch TV.

JULIE
Hello. How's everything in Dayton?

PAUL
Well, it's... it's holding.

CAROL
Hi Dad!

PAUL
Hi Carol. How are you tonight?

CAROL
Just fine. We're just watching TV.

PAUL
That's what I've been doing too. Have you done anything else?

JULIE
They all stayed around home today, but yesterday we went out in the afternoon and took a little tour of the city.

CAROL
We saw your office building, but on the way down...

JULIE
(Strongly)
Carol, we'll save that until Dad gets home. But we saw the junior high school.

PAUL
Vince answered the phone, I know, but how's Amanda?

JULIE
Carol, is she down there? Let her get on the phone.
Amanda has been waiting quietly, trying to listen in with Carol. She is reserved while speaking. Carol waits impatiently, and wants the phone back immediately when she's done.

AMANDA
Hi, Dad.

PAUL
Hello. Have you been holding the fort down?

AMANDA
No. Mom's been doing a pretty good job of that.

JULIE
(caringly)
She's been having a rough week.

PAUL
Well, it'll get better.

AMANDA
I know it will. I better give this back to Carol now. Bye.

JULIE
Any more news?

PAUL
I'll be home tomorrow, that's about it.

JULIE
Carol, does Vince want to talk?

CAROL
(put out)
I don't know. Vince, do you want to talk?

Vince is sitting slumped in the couch, his eyes on the TV. Without changing position, he curtly states

VINCE
No.

JULIE
Well, that's about it here too then. Have a safe trip home. Good-bye.

They all say good-bye and after they hang up, the girls go back into the TV room, carefree. But Julie languishes over the phone in sullen thought, her hand on the receiver as if she could bring Paul home through it, alone.
EXT. IN NEIGHBOR'S FRONT YARD - DAY
Julie is admiring some flowers while talking with LOUISE, an older woman in her late 50's. She is in good spirits, waiting for Paul to get home.

JULIE
They certainly are beautiful.

LOUISE
I've had the garden for seven years now, and I've collected something from the gardens of just about everyone I know!

JULIE
I'm going to have to collect some from you then.

Paul pulls in their driveway and honks the horn. Julie says good-bye to Louise and walks over to the garage. She is glad he is home, but we also sense a reluctance now, a reservation she has about it. But she smiles as he gets out of the car.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

JULIE
Hello Dad.

PAUL
Hello. Boy, the grass is long. Why hasn't Vince cut it?

JULIE
Is it that long? We didn't notice it.

PAUL
It sure is. Look at it out there.

He comes around the end of the car and gives Julie a quick kiss.

PAUL
How have you been?

JULIE
(holding back)
Pretty well. Busy.

INT. KITCHEN
Paul sets his briefcase down and ARTHUR, the Denison's Golden Retriever, comes up to him excitedly. He seems to give the dog more of a welcome than he gave his wife. While Paul pets Arthur, Julie checks the dinner in the oven; she looks forward to talking with him for a little while before dinner.
PAUL
How much time before dinner?

JULIE
Oh, about an hour.

PAUL
Then I think I'll go up and change and try to get some of the yard cut.

As he heads upstairs, Julie looks let down and frustrated from his virtual ignoring of her. She needs to relax and discuss some things with him. As she affectionately pets Arthur, Vince comes in.

VINCE
Mom, what's for dinner?

JULIE
(food)

VINCE
(smiling)
You beat me to the punch.

JULIE
(smiling too)
I love you.

PAUL
(as he enters)
Vince, while I cut the grass, I'd like you to clip around the house.

VINCE
(strained)
Okay.

As they leave, Julie remains alone petting Arthur.

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT
The kids have gone to bed, and Julie sits in the room reading a book. We hear FOOTSTEPS coming up the BASEMENT STAIRS and then a DOOR CLOSING. Paul enters.
PAUL
I see you set your paint "studio" up downstairs.

JULIE
(with a weary laugh)
Yes! I didn't even know I still had that stuff until I ran across it in one of the boxes I unpacked this week.
(beat)
I don't know how many years I've had those paints, or used them last.

Paul sits down with a sigh and pulls a magazine into his lap. Julie slowly closes her book, looking fondly at her husband.

JULIE
(wanting to talk)
You look tired.

PAUL
It's been a long week.

JULIE
Was it productive?

PAUL
(pleased)
I think so.

Julie obviously feels frustrated that he will not share his week with her in a more detailed manner. Although she tries to remind herself that he is tired, she also takes it personally as though he simply doesn't want to talk with her. But she continues her subtle "digging," trying to instigate some response.

JULIE
I'm a little worried about the kids.

PAUL
They'll be fine. They've done it before.

Paul is unconcerned and removed. Not looking at his wife, he is slowly leafing through the magazine.

JULIE
I know. But they just don't seem to be making the adjustment as well this time.

PAUL
Don't let it bother you, dear.
PAUL?  
JULIE  
Paul?  
PAUL  
Uh-hm.  
JULIE  
Do you know where the intersection of Lawrence and Ashland Streets is?  
PAUL  
Yes... Why?  
JULIE  
Well, I had a small car accident there Tuesday.  
PAUL  
You didn't. Oh honey, what am I going to do with you? Don't you have any good news?  
JULIE  
I was looking at the map. At least no one was hurt.  
PAUL  
(mild sarcasm)  
Oh. Well, that's good news.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY  
It is early afternoon on a Friday, and they are packing the car for a weekend camping trip. Everyone is walking in and out of the house getting things to bring. They are all in good moods.

VINCE  
What next?  
PAUL  
Give me the two suitcases.  
JULIE  
(bringing out a cooler)  
I don't know if this is going to be enough food for all weekend.  
PAUL  
Now the fishing poles.

INT. CAR  
Paul is driving and Vince and Julie are with him in the front seat. The girls and the dog are in the back.
CAROL
(impatiently)
Would you turn the radio up again, please?

PAUL
Carol, it's loud enough.

CAROL
I can hardly hear it back here. Can you Amanda?

Paul doesn't turn it up, but Julie does afterwards and winks to the girls in the back.

VINCE
Dad, what's the fishing like in this lake?

PAUL
I'm not sure.

CAROL
I get the front seat when we stop for gas.

VINCE
No you don't.

INT. CAR
CAMERA on BACK SEAT showing VINCE, AMANDA, AND ARTHUR asleep. Amanda has her arms around the dog which has its head in her lap. Carol is also asleep in the front seat. Paul is in deep thought while driving.

JULIE
What are you thinking?

PAUL
(snapping out of it)
Oh, business.
(beat)
This regional production manager job isn't as easy as it was in Phoenix. Things are in pretty bad shape here.

JULIE
You'll be fine.

PAUL
(thinking, concerned)
But good enough! That executive position is beginning to seem pretty illusive.

Vince wakes up in back.

VINCE
I have to go to the bathroom.
EXT. CAMP GROUND - DAY
ESTABLISHING SHOT of camp ground shows two tents in the middle of some trees by a lake. Julie is up by the tents fixing lunch while the girls are playing frisbee. Paul and Vince can be seen in the background fishing from the shore. As Julie continues, Paul comes back in a disgusted mood.

JULIE
(incredulous)
What's wrong now?

PAUL
I don't understand that son of yours.

Why?

JULIE
He got all bent out of shape when I tried to help him with his casting. Told me to just leave him alone finally.

Julie calls the kids for lunch. Vince is clammed up when he gets there. After getting his food, he goes away from the others at the table and sits on the ground looking at the lake. He's about 15 yards away from the others.

JULIE
Don't you want to sit with us.

PAUL
(strictly)
Vince, we want you to join us.

Vince just looks over at them. The girls and Julie feel the tension; the girls are scared and Mom is concerned.

PAUL
(threateningly)
Vince, get over here!

VINCE
I don't want to.

JULIE
Paul, it's alright.

PAUL
No it's not. I don't know what's gotten in to him, but we're going to nip it in the bud right now.
Paul gets up and angrily walks over to his son. Julie knows this will only augment problems and tries to stop him as do the girls. Vince is detached and stone faced.

**PAUL**

Vince, get over there to the table.

(pulling him up)

Listen young man, I've had enough of this cat and mouse stuff! You're going over there now.

Paul pushes him to the others. Vince sits down but just stares into his plate.

**EXT. CAMP GROUND**

Julie and the girls have just finished putting everything away. The girls are laughing between them, but Julie's smile, as usual, is only show. She observes Paul looking at the lake and is concerned, so she approaches him.

**JULIE**

Vince is in the tent. I think you should go apologize to him.

**PAUL**

(sincerely)

Apologize? Honey, he brought it on himself.

**INT. KITCHEN - DAY**

It's about 7:15 in the morning and Julie is drinking some coffee while Paul is reading the newspaper. She leaves and goes upstairs.

**INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM**

Both girls have just gotten up and look as if they have not slept very well. They are nervous and scared as they try to decide what to wear.

**JULIE**

You're already up!

**AMANDA**

(quietly)

Neither one of us slept very well.

**CAROL**

(with a scared laugh)

I had a dream that I got into my first class and the teacher told me to leave.
JULIE
(reassuringly)
I have no doubts that everything will work out just fine. Oh now Amanda, don't cry.

AMANDA
But I know I won't be able to make any friends.

JULIE
What do you mean? You have the advantage going into 7th grade. All those other kids have never been to junior high before, so for all they know, you're just from another elementary school. Take the initiative!

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY
Julie knocks lightly on Vince's door and then opens it slowly and looks in. Still asleep, she wakes him up after calling his name twice. She has a warm smile on her face.

JULIE
It's time to get up Vince. Your bus comes around 8:15.

INT. KITCHEN
Paul is gone again. They are eating at the table, and it is very quiet. Julie is observing the kids, waiting for someone to say something, but they all look forlorn and depressed. However, Amanda mainly feels bad because the others do.

AMANDA
(timidly)
I was really scared up through lunch until this girl named Linda Thomas came up and asked me if I was someone she knew.

JULIE
Did you introduce yourself?

AMANDA
Yes, and I got the courage to ask her if I could sit with her to eat. That's when she introduced me to some of her friends,

CAROL
Well I'm glad someone got along well.

JULIE
You're day wasn't that bad, was it?
CAROL

(holding back the tears)
All I could think about all day was who
would have been in my classes back in Phoenix.

JULIE
It'll get better. Easier.

CAROL
(crying, getting angry)
No it won't! Don't you understand? I hate
it here!

VINCE
(crying too)
Why couldn't Dad have just said we wouldn't
move?

JULIE
I understand both of you. It's always difficult
to adjust to these things alone. That's what
Dad and I are here for.

CAROL
"I understand! I understand!" No you don't
understand. Do you know how dumb I felt
when I went into the wrong room for my first
class?

JULIE
Is that what all of this is about? Carol,
don't let something like that cloud all of
the other possibilities.

CAROL
(calmer)
I know. At least I think my teachers are
good. But I just don't like being stared at.

JULIE
Well that's a switch. You're other teachers
have always told me you're the center of attention.

Carol slowly starts to smile, realizing this truth. Julie is
relieved.

INT. GIRLS ROOM - NIGHT
The girls have just gotten into bed, and Julie walks wearily
into the room. She sits down on Carol's bed.
JULIE
(tenderly)
I'm worried about you. Are you going to be okay?

CAROL
Yes. It'll just take a while. I'm sorry for yelling at you at dinner.

JULIE
That's alright. I understood why. But things will get better. You'll handle it like a Trojan.

Julie says these last sentences with an intensity as though she is trying to sell herself on the ideas.

I love you.

CAROL
Thank you. I know it... and it helps.

Tucking her in and giving her a hug and a kiss, Julie moves to Amanda's bed and gets a big, tired smile.

JULIE
And you. I'm so proud of how well you handled yourself today!

AMANDA
What you said this morning about my having it the easiest really helped.

JULIE
(looking at her proudly)
But you did it on your own. I love you too.

She tucks Amanda in, gives her a hug and a kiss also, and heads out of the room. She is stopped by a giggle.

AMANDA
Mom? Aren't we too old to be tucked in?

JULIE
You're never too old to be tucked in.
Especially by someone who loves you. Good night.

INT. VINCE'S ROOM
It is dark but for the moon shining through Vince's curtained window. We notice his outline, his back shading his front.
But when he turns over, the faint light of the moon is tell-tale that he has been crying as it glistens off the tears on his face.
Holding firmly to his sheets for comfort, Julie cracks the door. Vince immediately tries to dry his eyes so she won't notice.
JULIE
Is everything alright in here?

VINCE
Yes.

Julie comes to his bed.

JULIE
You sure haven't said much about your first day of school.

VINCE
It was fine.

JULIE
I hope so. Good night.

She gives him a kiss and pulls his sheet up also. She expects he's been crying.

INT. BASEMENT PAINTING AREA
Julie has come down to try to do some painting before she goes to bed. This is the time for herself, her chance to relax. Taking all of her paints and brushes out, a newly begun picture has been started. Suddenly she stops to think. She is very tired and drained; she is too tired to paint. As she puts everything away, we hear ARTHUR WHINING at the top of the basement stairs because he is afraid to come down them. Julie comes to the foot of the stairs once she is done and is amused.

INT. BASEMENT - FOOT OF STAIRS, JULIE POV

JULIE
Well what's the matter Arthur?
(beat)
Huh? Are you afraid to come down here?
(ascending the stairs amused)
I'll come join ya, but I think we should both be going to bed.

INT. TV ROOM
Arthur and Julie are by his bed which is a small rug in the corner of the room. She is petting him lovingly.

JULIE
Well, good night Arthur.
(beat)
We're never to old to be tucked in... are we?

She turns the light out.
EXT. CHURCH - DAY
It is a cool fall morning, and the family is walking up the
church sidewalk. Almost all of the others around them are
above 60 years old.

PAUL
(concerned)
Who suggested this one?

JULIE
Nobody. I had passed it a number of times
and thought it might be worth a try. I
don't think any of us thought the one we
had gone to the last few weeks was what we
wanted.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY
CU of many old people. We hear a drone VOICE reading a very
boring sermon. We see the Denison's sitting amidst a sea
of geriatric cases. Julie roles her eyes to Paul to signify
boring dread. The kids are using the pew pencils to draw on
their programs, but they stop when Paul SCOWLS at them.
However, he is soon falling asleep.

EXT. CURCH PARKING LOT
Approaching the car, the kids suddenly burst out laughing.

PAUL
 seriouisly)
That was better. I think this would be a
good church.

The kids slowly sober up, realizing he means it. They are amazed.

JULIE
I agree.

CAROL
Yes. You did have a restful sleep didn't you?

They all laugh.

JULIE
Okay. I'll take the blame for that one, but
I still think we need to keep looking.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Paul and Julie are alone on this Monday morning since the kids
haven't gotten up yet. He is hidden in his morning paper, all
ready for work as Julie, dressed in her nightgown and robe,
fixes his eggs and toast. She is thinking of things she must
do this week. It is very quiet until she gives him his plate.
She doesn't know quite how to interrupt him... if she can.
JULIE
(reluctant)
Paul?

PAUL
Yes?

JULIE
Could I meet you for lunch sometime this week?

PAUL
Sure. What for?

JULIE
Well, to talk about a few things. And maybe to see your office, which I have yet to see! But, does there have to be a reason?

PAUL
(between bites and paragraphs)
No. You decide when and where and I'll be there.

This lack of input, which has been on the increase, frustrates her, and she doesn't know how to direct her concern.

JULIE
I...I think you would know better than I where would be good. And do you have any meetings this week, or anything...

PAUL
Not that I know of.

JULIE
Wednesday would be pretty good for me.

PAUL
Oh, I might have something that afternoon.
(Checking his datebook)
No, that's clear. I usually eat after one.

JULIE
Okay. We can decide where tonight. You be thinking.

PAUL
Uh-hum.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY
They have just ordered, and the conversation is light and comfortable.
What are you looking at?

JULIE

That man's plate.

PAUL

Ooh. That does look good. What is it?

JULIE

So. What "things" do you want to talk about, and how "few" in number are they?

PAUL

We don't have to go straight to business do we?

JULIE

(Very practical)

No. But don't get bent out of shape if we don't get everything discussed before we're done.

PAUL

(mildly jesting)

I'll only get bent out of shape if we have to rush through our lunch.

JULIE

I can't sit here and eat with you all afternoon if you want me home by six, dear.

PAUL

(trying to be patient)

I know that.

I just thought it might be nice to relax some first.

PAUL

(as if to say "get on with it")

I'm relaxed.

JULIE

(pausing, trying not to get upset)

Fine. We'll talk about the "things."

PAUL

I'm not trying to rush you.

JULIE

That's alright. I know you're busy.
Julie has sensed his intentional rushing of her. Paul can't seem to sit down and enjoy just being with her, and although that's what she's hoping for, she feels pressured into his "management." A good wife doesn't upset her husband. His job is much more difficult to do and more strenuous. Or that's what she believes anyway...

JULIE
(stalling)
Well, I was wondering what you thought of our finances now.

PAUL
Don't you look at the checkbook?

JULIE
You know that's not what I mean.
(beat)
I know it drained alot of money from us with you in the apartment here and the rest of us in Phoenix.

PAUL
(interrupting)
I still can't understand why we had to do that.

JULIE
I know it. But I can't understand why you can't see the children's side. This is our fifth move since we've been married, and the third since Carol's been in school. I just didn't think it would be fair to pluck them out of school in the middle of February and then try to shove them into another one on the other side of the country for the remainder of the year.

Julie has builded a considerable amount of intensity, if not anger.

PAUL
Wait a minute! Calm down. You're getting this all out of perspective. All I'm saying is that your their mother, not their patron saint, and that although it might have been a little more difficult for them to make the transition in the middle of their school year, they would have been able to do it. And it would have been damn better for our financial position, which is what we were talking about anyway. So why don't you...
Wait. Wait. You had the opportunity to defer your transfer, but you wanted to get here and get started. I didn't argue with that. I understand your dedication to your job. But let me say, it wasn't easy living out there without you for three months. The kids crying, always asking why we had to leave. It got to a point where I ran out of answers.

PAUL
(awkwardly)
Now, come on, don't start crying.

JULIE
(continuing)
And I missed you. I do love you, you know.

I hope so.

JULIE
(into her kleenex, seriously)
Do you?

PAUL
(beginning to laugh)
I think we were going to talk about finances.

I'm sorry.

PAUL
They were in pretty tight straits before you and the kids got here, but they're looking better now.

JULIE
Good. Because, well, my mother called last week, and was talking about Christmas.

PAUL
Julie, don't be ridiculous.

JULIE
Paul, I know it's too far to drive. But I called some of the airlines...

PAUL
Julie. No. N-O, no!

The waitress comes to take their order, interrupting them and leaving Paul mad and Julie resigned to defeat.
EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF DENISON HOUSE - DAY
ESTABLISHING SHOT of their home. A dreary, overcast sky hints of more snow as a car passes by on this late January day. The yards are covered with a good 1½ feet of snow, dirty and depressing as the car throws up the slush; one can sense the post-holiday depression. Julie is talking on the phone, looking out of her bedroom window.

INT. BEDROOM
She is listening intently, with a curious look on her face. She tries to keep her spirits up, but sometimes falters.

JULIE
But what was wrong? Oh really? But she's alright ... Well that's good. So how was Christmas now that you have a few weeks to look back on it?
(a smile grows)
I bet; Now I'm beginning to really understand why you dreaded the darn holiday... yea... yea... well, I asked Paul to go out and do some of the shopping this year, or at least go with me on the weekend, but that was a vain attempt.
(she begins to tear, but tries to refrain)
...I... I missed you too... What's the weather like out there?... I wish we had some of it! It's a dreary mess here. We have quite a bit of snow, and it's threatening to bring more. Listen, I better get off before I run the bill up, but I just thought I'd call and say "hi." ... Well, you too... okay. Bye.

Julie hangs up the receiver, walks pensively to the window, and stares lonesomely through the pains. FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN
EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY
Julie and MARY, a tennis friend, are standing outside talking as they saunter towards their cars with their groceries. A beautiful spring day, they are both in good moods.

MARY
I haven't seen either of you on the courts for awhile.

JULIE
It's not that we don't want to. Tennis has just been one more thing Paul has dropped for awhile.

MARY
Sounds like he's busier than I'd want to be!

JULIE
Oh, but he's getting along very well.
JULIE
At least it's paying off. He's getting a lot of praise.

They have come to a parting of the ways as they peel off to their respective cars.

MARY
I'll give you a call. Have you and Paul come over for a set of doubles and dinner.

JULIE
We'd love to. But now I've got to hurry to the airport.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY
We see her drive into the parking lot. A PLANE takes off in the background.

INT. AIRPORT
Julie is neatly dressed and content watching the people as she sits in the terminal. Leafing through a magazine, she looks up and sees a tired Paul heading towards her. She smiles and gets up.

PAUL
Hello Julie.

JULIE
Another rough one, huh?

They kiss, but we are surprised by the lack of emotion.

EXT. CAR
They are walking towards the car carrying the luggage as Julie is recounting some of the family news. Paul tries to look interested, and Julie is very concerned.

JULIE
Mrs. Rawlerson called again. She said Vince's grades aren't improving.

PAUL
I'm surprised.

JULIE
Well so was I. I told her we've set up study hours at night and have been trying to help him study for his tests. (beat)

She was surprised too.
They put the luggage in the car.

INT. CAR
They are on the highway heading home. Paul is still not concentrating to what Julie is saying, but rather thinking about business.

JULIE
You know, all I can do is look at Amanda and wonder why Carol and Vince aren't like her. Her teachers call to say how well she's doing!

Julie notices that Paul isn't responding to anything she's saying, and she covers her reaction.

She reads an awful lot though. No one in our house can keep up with her.
(beat)
Paul, I'm a little worried about Carol, too.

He waits for him to ask why, but he doesn't. He eventually looks at her.

I try to have patience with her, but when you're gone, I don't feel as though I have any discipline power over her.

PAUL
Just be more firm with her.

A silence follows. They are both thinking. Julie is very aware of Paul's presence, but he isn't aware of hers.

INT. PAUL'S OFFICE - DAY
When Paul gets into his office, there is a note in the center of his desk from his boss. It reads:

Paul, I hope your trip was productive.
Please come see me first thing when you get in. Ted.

Unloading his briefcase, he nervously handles the paper and leaves.

INT. TED'S OFFICE
TED is a man in his late 40's, graying, with a congenial nature. He has just come in also when Paul enters.

PAUL
Excuse me Ted. I found this note.
TED
Good morning, Paul. Yes. How did everything go?

PAUL
I think alot will eventually start changing in a few weeks.

TED
Does that mean it went well?

PAUL
(hesitant)
Honestly Ted, I don't know. We changed a great deal of the work flow and shipping schedule, and it seems like an improvement.

TED
I’ve talked with Larry Richmond out there and he was very positive.

(beat)
Paul, we realize that you have only been here in Pittsburgh for awhile, about a year now. But you’ve shown alot in a short time.

(beat)
How would you like a different job?

PAUL
(cautious)
Which direction?

TED (V.O.)
Up.

CAMERA FRAMES PAUL as he sits nervously in the chair, then SMILES.

EXT. DENISON HOUSE - DAY
It is early evening and we see six cars parked in front of their house and a couple walking up the sidewalk to the front door.

INT. DENISON HOUSE
ATMOSPHERE SHOTS show us that a party is being held with a few good friends. The ladies are huddled together in the kitchen and the men in the living room. We here LAUGHTER.

INT. KITCHEN
Julie is looking in the oven when a LADY asks if she can help. Julie responds with a laugh that there is nothing to do yet. We hear the DOORBELL.
MOVING SHOT of Julie going to the FRONT DOOR.

INT. FRONT DOOR
She opens it and peers around the end to see who it is, and then pulls it all the way open to reveal Mary and her husband Duane, a thin man with a good tan.

MARY
Congratulations!

JULIE
Come in, come in! How are you Duane? I saw your wife at the store not too long ago.

MARY
Yes, and I was supposed to have you over for dinner. I guess Haul has been working hard.

DUANE
Well, it's super.

JULIE
I'm proud of him. Come on in and get yourself a drink.

INT. KITCHEN
As Julie comes back in, Amanda comes up to her and asks if she needs her yet.

AMANDA
Mom, what do you need me to do?

JULIE
Well dear, nothing yet. The appetizers should be about done, and when they are, I could use you.

LADY
(coming up to them)
Is this one Amanda, Julie?

JULIE
(beaming)
Yes. This is my pride and joy.

LADY
Are you the one that gets all A's in school?

JULIE
She sure does. Wouldn't it be nice if all your kids could be like her?
Carol has come in during this and has heard her mother gloat over her sister. Julie has headed back to the oven.

LADY
And who are you?

CAROL
(cur, looking at Julie)
I'm Amanda's sister, Carol.

Amanda looks down, guilty and ready for Carol's punishment.

LADY
What's your "special talent"?

CAROL
I don't have one.

Julie has heard her and is agitated as she gets the appetizers out of the oven.

ANOTHER LADY
Oh, those smell so good Julie.

JULIE
It's a recipe I got when we lived in Atlanta, and I just love them. Amanda, you can put those on that plate for me.
(trying to apologize)
Carol, would you please serve them around to our guests then?

CAROL
(softly)
Sure.

INT. GARAGE
Vince is crouching down beside Arthur, petting him affectionately. He is somewhat torn between being blue and angry.

VINCE
You don't like being alone, do ya?
(beat)
Dad always thinks you're in the way.
(beat)
That makes two of us.

He hugs Arthur. Julie suddenly opens the door to throw away some trash, and is surprised to see Vince.
JULIE
Vince, what are you doing in here?

VINCE
I thought Arthur might be lonely.

JULIE
(Sensing some hurt)
I've been looking for you.

VINCE
Why?

JULIE
I have a job for you. I need you to go around and pick up people's empty glasses and bring them to the kitchen.

VINCE
Why?

JULIE
Not so many questions!

INT. DINING ROOM
The 14 of them are jammed in around the large table, Julie and Paul on opposite ends facing each other. The group has gotten somewhat rambunctious. A MAN raises his wine glass to make a toast.

MAN
I propose a toast to Paul, the fastest corporate climber I know!

They all toast. Then SALLY, an ardent feminist, raises a glass to Julie.

SALLY
To his wife Julie, who has undoubtedly made it all possible!

Everyone laughs, the toast is made, and conversation continues.

MAN
Sally, please don't get on your feminist soap box.

SALLY
I won't. But I know Paul will agree that most of his success is due to the strong woman behind him. Won't you Paul?
Julie is curious to hear his response. Paul hesitates, partly for comedic effect, but also because he doesn't know how to answer.

PAUL
I only can have one answer to that question when I'm around you Sally.

EXT. FRONT DOOR
Julie and Paul are saying good night to Sally and her husband who are the last to leave. They close the door.

MOVING SHOT FROM FRONT DOOR
Julie goes into the dining room and picks up a few remaining coffee cups and then moves to the kitchen during the following.

PAUL
I've had about as much of Sally as I can take in one evening.

JULIE
I think Sally's rather enjoyable.

PAUL
But all that feminism can get a little stale.

JULIE
Your sister is a feminist too.

PAUL
(sarcastic)
She is?

INT. KITCHEN
Julie is starting on the dishes. Paul goes around and brings in the last remaining empty glasses and sets them by the sink. The stack of dirty dishes is formidable and Julie already looks worn to a frazzle, but Paul doesn't offer to help and Julie doesn't expect him too.

PAUL
You should have had the girls clean that up.
(beat)
I'll be upstairs.

INT. KITCHEN
Paul comes back down in about ten minutes, and upon observing the substantial work left to do, tells her

PAUL
Why don't you just leave the rest for morning?
JULIE
I might as well do it now.

PAUL
It's been a long day. Would you mind if I went on to bed?

JULIE
(tired)
Go ahead.

He gives her a little peck on the cheek and pats her derriere in one of his first signs of affection.

PAUL
(adressing her bottom)
It's getting a little big. Good night.

INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT
Paul is gone and everyone is watching TV. When the phone rings, Carol jumps up to get it.

INT. GIRLS BEDROOM
Carol is brushing her hair after having cleaned up and changed clothes. She is getting ready to go out when Julie comes up the stairs and sees her.

JULIE
(detecting something)
Who was on the phone?

CAROL
(non-chalant but defensive)
Linda.

JULIE
What did she want?

CAROL
We're going to go over to a friend's house.

JULIE
It would have been nice if you had asked me.
(beat)
Who is it?

CAROL
(hiding something)
You don't know her.

JULIE
Oh. Who's picking you up?
Julie has now caught her in her own trap and tries to be more firm.

JULIE
But Linda doesn't have her driver's license yet. Carol, you're not going.

CAROL
Yes I am.

JULIE
I'm afraid you're not young lady. I know you're trying to avoid the truth about where you're going, and I don't think you need to be going out at this hour anyway.

CAROL
They're on their way to pick me up.

JULIE
We'll just have to tell them you've changed your mind.

INT. TV ROOM
Julie is petting Arthur when she notices car lights in the driveway. She gets up to call Carol and we realize that the car must be leaving.

INT. FOOT OF STAIRS

JULIE
(calling)
Carol!...Carol, they're here.

MOVING SHOT OF JULIE GOING TO GIRLS' BEDROOM.
INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM
Julie sees that she is not there. Hurrying to the window, she sees them finish backing out and quickly leave.

INT. FOOT OF STAIRS
It's late. As Carol starts up the stairs, we see Julie at the top. CAMERA FOLLOWS CAROL'S POV.

JULIE
Where have you been?

No answer.

We'll just have to let your father handle this,

CAROL
(intimidatingly)
He won't do anything.
INT. BASEMENT - DAY
Julie is dressed in grubby cleaning clothes on this hot, summer day. Looking for something in a box, her painting supplies catch her eye and she regretfully walks over to them. She handles some of the paints and brushes, melancholy in mood, then slowly takes the cover off of the canvas. It is the same started picture of a year ago; she has never gotten back to it.

INT. DINING ROOM
While she is dusting, she gets very warm. Upon checking the air conditioner, she discovers it is not working which makes her exasperated. Carol and Amanda come home from swimming, and Julie tries to remain composed, but is still aggravated by Carol and the night before.

INT. KITCHEN

JULIE
The air conditioner isn't working.

AMANDA
What did you do?

JULIE
Nothing. It just stopped.

AMANDA
But it's so hot.

JULIE
I know. But there's nothing I can do.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT
It's about 10:30 and Julie is very nervous and tense. Looking at the phone, she keeps thinking Paul is going to call because she needs to talk with him for a little reassurance. She decides to call him, so she gets out a paper with the phone number and dials.

JULIE
Yes, may I have Mr. Paul Denison's room please.

(beat)

Oh, but I'm sure he's there.

(beat)

This morning? Did he leave another number?

(beat)

No?...well, thank you.
EXT. BACK PORCH - DAY
Paul and Julie are sitting in some lounge chairs having a drink before dinner. There are long periods of silence between thoughts, and we can feel the tension between the two. Julie knows if she says much of anything it will be brusk, so she opts to remain aloof. Paul is impatient with this, and doesn't know what to do.

PAUL
This weather is relaxing.
(beat)
Have you been out in it much the past two days, or have you been inside watching TV?

JULIE
I've been working.

PAUL
Outside?

JULIE
Cleaning.

PAUL
(sarcastic)
For two days?

JULIE
Uh-hum.

PAUL
You sure work slow.

JULIE
It's summer. The kids are home.

PAUL
How are the kids?

JULIE
Fine.

PAUL
Are you having anything good for dinner?

JULIE
It depends on what you like.

PAUL
Oh, this is a great conversation.

JULIE
It might have been a little better if it was last night.
PAUL
Is that what has you all bent out of shape. My not calling last night?

JULIE
You could have at least let me know you had changed hotels.

PAUL
Why, did you call?
(beat)
I'm sorry, but it was a very busy day. I didn't even get back to my room until 10:00.

JULIE
What if something had happened to one of the kids?

Did it?

Julie pauses and softens up.

JULIE
Carol. I found out she was going out with someone, I don't know who. She was going to leave around 8:30, but I told her she couldn't go. She snuck out of the house and went anyway.

PAUL
Did you discipline her when she got back?

JULIE
I tried.

PAUL
But you didn't. Well then that's your fault.

JULIE
Not if you had been here.

PAUL
Do you want this house? Those cars? I know this new job is taking more of my time, but damn it, it comes with the territory.

JULIE
This summer, the kids are...

PAUL
What about the kids?
Julie stops to collect herself a little better and realizes this isn't the time to talk about anything else.

JULIE

Nothing.

PAUL

What? Go ahead and talk.

JULIE

No. It's nothing.

The couple is two units, neither communicating enough to pull the other to them. Julie is despondent. Paul is confused and resentful. Amanda comes out and they both mask their faces with a smile.

PAUL

Hello Amanda. What do you want?

AMANDA

Nothing. I just thought I'd come out and sit with you.

JULIE

Well that's nice.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

We are in Paul's office where he is working vigorously, looking at graphs and checking computer printouts. His SECRETARY comes in and hands him a note.

PAUL

What's this?

SECRETARY

Your wife called while you were at lunch.

He looks at it and can't understand it. He picks up the phone and dials.

PAUL

Hello. Julie, what's this about a "reminder" for the Parents' Night at school? I haven't heard a thing.

JULIE

I told you a few weeks ago and you said you would put it on your calendar.
PAUL
Why didn't you remind me?

JULIE
Why didn't you remember? I'm sorry Paul, but I really don't think we should miss it.

PAUL
It's been a very busy day, dear, and I don't know about it. I know there's no way I can get home early like you requested in this note.

JULIE
I don't know, but we might have to eat after we get home. I just don't think we should miss it.

PAUL
I'll see what I can do. Good-bye.

He rubs his forehead, looks around at everything on his desk and then reaches for a bunch of papers to start going through.

EXT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - DAY
It is late evening and the CAMERA is on Julie and Paul as they hurry up the sidewalk. Julie is trying to pacify Paul as he grumbles into the building.

JULIE
These are the two schedules I have made up. Each one is a combination of the girls schedules so we can each meet some of the teachers of both the girls.

PAUL
How do I find my way around once I'm in there?

JULIE
Oh! I knew I forgot something. The maps!

INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
They are late, so the halls are deserted. They try to get to the office for some maps.

JULIE
Here. The office should have some maps. She runs in and gets two.
Your first room is right here.
PAUL
I'm going to be tardy.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY
Paul is getting confused looking for the room; he keeps checking
the number on the door with the one on his map. We see
many PARENTS in all the rooms, some of whom stare at Paul
when he stands outside their door comparing numbers.

INT. ANOTHER HALLWAY
Julie knows her way and walks straight into her room with
only a cursory glance on the door to verify her choice.
She excuses herself and slides into an empty chair. The
teacher is in the middle of his presentation.

BACK TO UPSTAIRS HALLWAY
Paul finally finds the right room and tries to walk in inconspicuously in the back. Just as he looks comfortably
confident, the TEACHER, a woman, stops her presentation
and adresses Paul. This is MISS LANCY, a real spinster of 70.

MISS LANCY
Excuse me, young man. You need to sign
the attendance sheet and get some of these
handouts.

This sudden embarrassment makes all of Paul's confidence fall
into his shoes.

My students don't get away with being tardy,
or at least they have a good excuse.
(adressing Paul)
Why were you tardy young man?

PAUL
(nervously clearing his throat)
My job. I, I had to work late.

MISS LANCY
Now that would be an acceptable excuse. I
do n't trust many of my students, you see.
That is why I ask them alot of questions.
It keeps them on their toes.

INT. HALLWAY
It is a "passing period" and the halls are crowded with parents
going to their next class. Paul passes Julie and makes a face
as though he isn't going to survive the evening.

EXT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT
They are heading back to the car and Paul is exhausted.
PAUL
Well, to put it in a nutshell, she was an experience. I thought for sure she was going to send me to the principal.

JULIE
(smiling)
See, I knew that. That's why I put her on your schedule.

You're so kind.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
They are seated by a hostess and Julie is all ready to have a good hour alone to talk with her husband. Paul is his practical self, and he behaves as though he would like to be somewhere else.

WAITRESS
Would you like anything from the bar?

PAUL
Two gin and tonics.

JULIE
Look at those curtains. Aren't they pretty.

Paul pays no attention.

This is just what I needed.

Paul opens the menu and begins looking.

What sounds good to you tonight?

PAUL
Just a steak, I suppose.

JULIE
What are they like here?

PAUL
Julie, how should I know. I've never been here either.

JULIE
I thought that maybe you had heard something about it from someone.

The waitress brings the drinks.
INT. RESTAURANT
They are now in the middle of their meal.

JULIE
(making a toast with her wine)
To my hard working husband.

PAUL
(laughing)
Okay. What do you want?

JULIE
Nothing. I just thought you deserved the recognition.

PAUL
What are we going to do about Vince's scholastics this year.

JULIE
I don't know what more we can do. It's been bothering me ever since the year started.

PAUL
(harshly)
He's darn lucky to be in sixth grade after last year's disgusting performance.

JULIE
(sympathetically)
And he knows that.

PAUL
If he knows it, why doesn't he do anything about it?

JULIE
Paul, Vince isn't dumb.

PAUL
Did I say that? No I didn't. But that's just it. He should be breezing right through there. I didn't have any trouble in elementary school.

JULIE
But Paul, I think he's having alot of personal difficulties. When I see him sometimes, I...
PAUL
Oh come on now Julie. He's an eleven year old kid.

JULIE
But Paul, his feelings are more mature than you might think. He's a good boy, and he does try.

PAUL.
I think he has you fooled on both counts.

JULIE
(sincerely)
You just have to have a little trust and patience.

PAUL
(confidently)
I won't argue that. But that's your problem.

JULIE
(defensively)
What.

PAUL
You have too much of both.

JULIE
I really don't think you can have too much of either.

PAUL
(goading her)
That's right. You exercise them both so well with Carol.

JULIE
That's not fair.

(beat)
I've tried with her, and she continually takes advantage of it. She's the one I wish you'd worry about. I can just see problems.

PAUL
You just see alot of character. Carol's a charmer!

Julie continues eating in frustration, feeling that Paul isn't around to see the things she does.
INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Julie is frying bacon for breakfast this morning, and Paul and Vince are sitting at the table. Both are reading, Paul the newspaper and Vince, one of his text books. Concerned, Julie has been watching Vince. Paul puts his paper down.

PAUL
(sternly)
Vince, could I have your attention for a minute.

Julie perks her ears up.

How's your studying coming?

VINCE
Fine.

PAUL
Your mother and I have been quite concerned about that, and we feel we can't afford to let you keep slipping by to the next grade with such poor performances.

We can see the wheels spinning in Vince's angered mind, and Julie can't understand why Paul's doing.

Therefore, I think it's only fair that I tell you now that we will hold you back a year if your grades don't improve dramatically this year. Do you understand?

Vince merely nods his head through his resentment. Julie is desperately trying to contain her temper as she takes the bacon out. With a forced smile on her face, she quickly goes to the table.

JULIE
Excuse me, Paul. Would you come upstairs with me please?

INT. BEDROOM

JULIE
(intensely)
What did you mean by that?

PAUL
You heard it.

JULIE
I know it, and I heard you say "we."
PAUL
(impatiently)
A formality.

JULIE
We never discussed that, and Lord knows I never would have supported you.

PAUL
He needs more pressure on him.

JULIE
It's a filthy threat, and I resent your making me a part of it.
(incredulously)
I can't believe you.

EXT. BACK YARD - DAY
Paul and Julie are raking leaves on this chilly, late Fall day.

JULIE
Did you hear that Mary and Duane are seperated?

PAUL
I'm not surprised.

Why?

JULIE
They just never seemed very close.

PAUL
I never noticed it.

JULIE
You never have been too observant.

Julie stops raking and looks at him as though to ask "What's that supposed to mean?"

PAUL
You're still just a little naive.

JULIE
(trying to pass it off)
Well, I feel sorry for Mary.

PAUL
Honey, I'm surprised you don't feel sorry for bees for losing their stinger when they sting you. Or do you?
JULIE
I like her. She's always been very friendly to me.

PAUL
I haven't found anyone she's not friendly to. As long as you play tennis or have the gullibility to let her talk your ear off, you're in like flint. And you fit both requirements.

JULIE
I'm not "gullible."

PAUL
I'd never let her get talking to me.
(beat)
I wouldn't blame Duane a bit.

There is a short pause while they continue to rake. Julie is thinking.

JULIE
But maybe it was Duane.

PAUL
What do you mean?

JULIE
Maybe he was the problem. Who knows what kind of a husband he is?

PAUL
Well we've been to that house of theirs, and that rock on her finger was the first thing you noticed! And we've seen him with their kids a couple of times. I'd say he's done pretty well for himself.

JULIE
Maybe that's the problem.

PAUL
What, the kids?

JULIE
Nothing.

PAUL
What were you going to say?
JULIE

It really... I don't know... nothing.

PAUL

.seriously

That's one thing that really bugs me about you. If you're not going to finish telling something, don't ever start.

They continue raking. Julie is pensive and obviously affected by Paul's contrary opinions during this conversation, but she is confused thinking she is wrong siding with Mary.

EXT. TENNIS COURT - DAY

We see a CU of a TENNIS RACKET AND BALL going through a serve and watch it go racing over to Julie's court from PAUL'S POV. Julie makes a quick lurch for it, but gives up in the middle of her first stride when she realizes it is impossible to get. Dropping the head of her racket to the ground, she stands resentfully, staring at Paul.

PAUL

.bitingly

Ace!

JULIE

.matter-of-fact

I thought you said you weren't going to serve that hard.

PAUL

.trying to cover his agitation

You can hit those.

JULIE

Maybe so, but I would prefer that you keep your word.

PAUL

That wasn't any stronger than any of the others.

JULIE

Maybe not, but it certainly didn't look that way from here.

PAUL

Your just getting lazy. We can see who's getting out of shape!

He serves again, and this time it's a very weak little lob.

.sarcastically

Is that alright?
Julie doesn't respond and they volley for a few points. We can see that his little comments are bothering her, but she doesn't say anything. She just wishes she could understand why he is compelled to be at odds with her.

When they finish the set, they take a break and get a drink at a machine nearby and watch Carol and Vince as they finish.

PAUL
Good set.

JULIE
Thank you. I just wish I could beat you one of these times.

PAUL
You might if your game keeps improving. I can see a good improvement from the beginning of the summer.

JULIE
Well, I thought I was on the decline.

Why's that?

PAUL
(probing)
You said I was out of shape.

JULIE
(blandly, watching the kids)
Take a joke.
(beat)
Vince has improved alot too.

They finish and come over to join Julie and Paul.

VINCE
She put up a good fight.

CAROL
I almost had you in that last game.

JULIE
Your father thinks you've improved alot this summer, Vince.

PAUL
You have. Your serve and your net game has gotten stronger since we played a few months ago.
-55-

VINCE
Thanks.

CAROL
(to parents)
What do you two say to a set of doubles?

PAUL
Fine. You and me against Vince and your mother?

CAROL
That's what I'd thought.

EXT. TENNIS COURT
Vince has the first serve, and as he prepares, Carol is trying to be the "charmer" her dad thinks she is. When Vince serves, he does it with great intensity as though he is taking his aggression towards his father out on the ball.

CAROL
We'll knock 'em dead! We're a great combination.

PAUL
I'd agree to that.

CAROL
Hit it to Mom's backhand. It's really weak.

VINCE
Are you ready?

VINCE & PAUL
Yes!

Vince looks straight at Paul, and sends the ball hard into his return. Vince and Julie win the volley.

PAUL
Don't serve that hard to your mother, Vince! She won't play with you.

JULIE
(as if to say "stop picking on me")
That's right.

She looks back to Vince to see if he's ready to serve. He can tell from the expression on her face that something's wrong.

INT. VINCE'S ROOM - NIGHT
Vince is sitting at his desk, tired and frustrated with his hands on his head. Leaning over a geography book, he is trying to study, but he can't concentrate. Julie passes his room.
JULIE
(sympathetic)
How's it going there, Trojan?

VINCE
Fine.

JULIE
You look pretty tired.

VINCE
I've got a test tomorrow in geography.

JULIE
Is there anything I can do to help?

VINCE
I don't know. It's over three chapters.

DISSOLVE into Julie sitting and Vince lying on the bed. Julie is scanning a page of the book while he looks at the ceiling.

JULIE
What are the three main rivers in Africa?

VINCE
The Nile, the Niger, and... the Conga.

JULIE
(scanning)
Okay. Where does the Nile River begin and end?

VINCE
It begins from Lake Victoria in Uganda and ends at the Mediterranean Sea in Egypt.

As Julie is looking for the next question, Paul comes in.

PAUL
How are you two students doing?

JULIE
I'm learning about African Geography. But I think Vince has already learned it.

PAUL
Well that's good. Excuse me, but Vince, it's snowing outside so if it's very deep in the morning, I'd like you to shovel the driveway off sometime.
VINCE
Okay.

Vince just continues to stare at the ceiling. Julie looks imploringly at Paul, but he disregards it and leaves.

INT. BEDROOM
When Julie enters the room, she ignores Paul who is getting ready for bed. There is an extended silence.

PAUL
Did it seem like Vince knew his geography?

JULIE
Yes.

Pause.

PAUL
(sensing her annoyance, but unaffected)
How has he been doing lately at school?

JULIE
Better.

PAUL
Good. That decision to hold him back must have done some good then.

Julie says nothing, but just tries desperately to hold back her conflicting emotions and resentment of Paul. He really isn't aware of her feelings and figures she's just tired. They get into bed, she with her back to him, and they turn out the light.

PAUL
Good night, honey.

Pause. CU of Julie's tense and emotional face.

JULIE
(almost to herself)
Good night.

INT. VINCE'S ROOM
It is 6:50 in the morning and it is still dark. Vince is standing at his window, looking at the deep snow which reflects the light of a gas lamp in the neighbor's yard. He wearily looks for some clothes, does not find them, and heads downstairs to ask Julie.
MOVING SHOT FOLLOWING VINCE down the stairs. The only illumination comes from the lights on in the kitchen. As he quietly makes his way down the stairs, we hear the VOICES of his parents. Vince begins to listen when he sees the silhouettes of a suitcase and briefcase at the foot of the stairs.

PAUL (V. O.)
I'll be back Friday afternoon.

JULIE (V. O.)
Do I have the phone number of where your staying?

PAUL (V. O.)
What do you think?

JULIE (V. O.)
Is it upstairs on the desk?

PAUL (V. O.)
Isn't that where I always leave it?

INT. KITCHEN
Paul and Julie are both sitting at the table drinking coffee. He is reading the paper, dressed for work, and she is dressed in warm clothes. She gets up and starts to put on a coat and boots.

PAUL
Where are you going?

JULIE (calmly)
Out to shovel.

PAUL
You don't have to do that.

JULIE
That's alright.

PAUL
I've already talked to Vince about it. Well you heard me.

JULIE
I know. But he has enough to worry about. He has that test today...

PAUL (impatient)
I didn't say he had to do it before school. Lord, I wouldn't expect that. But Julie, that's part of his allowance in the Winter.
Julie doesn't respond. She realizes she'll get upset again if he continues to talk. Vince starts back upstairs.

PAUL
Now honey, don't go out there. Leave it to Vince. He'll be out playing in it anyway.

JULIE
(strained)
He'll be studying.

She heads to the garage for the shovels.

PAUL
(harshly)
Come on Julie, don't be stupud.

She continues with no comment.

EXT. DRIVEWAY
We hear the sound of a shovel and see Julie clearing the driveway in the dark morning silence.

EXT. JR. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY
We see Julie drive up in front of the school on this winter evening, and Amanda and Carol come out with their books and meet her. Amanda gets in the back seat while Carol gets in the front.

CAROL
What took you so long?

JULIE
Why? Have you been waiting?

CAROL
The game was over almost an hour ago.

AMANDA
We won. Two of their best players fouled out.

CAROL
We called since it was over early, but Vince said you had already left.

JULIE
What time is it?

CAROL
I think it's almost six.
JULIE
Is it that late? I'm going to have to hurry or my dinner's going to burn up. I had to stop at the grocery for some things but didn't realize I had been in there so long. Was Vince studying?

CAROL
How should I know?

AMANDA
Does he need any help tonight? I'd be happy to help him.

JULIE
I don't know.

CAROL
Personally, I think you're helping him too much the way it is. He's going to get so lazy that he'll never be able to pass anything by himself without Mom leading him through it.

JULIE
(aggravated but repressed)
Maybe you're right, but at least he's trying. And Amanda, I appreciate your offer. I'm sure you could be very helpful...

CAROL
(dramatically).
Yes, I'm sure you could be too.

AMANDA
What's that supposed to mean?

CAROL
We all know that you're the smartest of the kids. Maybe you should help me. Would you, Amanda? We all just think you're so marvelous.

JULIE
That's enough Carol. As long as it seems that we are helping your brother, we might as well continue. And if you want to help, that's fine, but don't make fun of Amanda just because she's concerned.

(beat)
What was the score of the game?
INT. TV ROOM - NIGHT
Everyone but Carol is watching TV. Paul is reading a magazine and is oblivious to the others and Julie looks tired. Amanda and Vince are absorbed in the program.

MOVING SHOT OF PAUL going into the kitchen to get a drink. We see the telephone cord extending from the phone through a doorway and hear Carol's voice. Although he is curious, Paul gets his drink first and then follows the cord to the other end when Carol notices him and stops talking.

CAROL
(bothered)
What do you want?

PAUL
Nothing.

She simply stares at him with her hand over the receiver until he leaves.

INT. TV ROOM
When Carol is finished with her conversation, she comes in and sits down.

PAUL
Who were you talking to?

CAROL
(alooof)
A friend.

PAUL
I didn't figure it was a stranger.
(beat)
Anybody I know?

CAROL
(bothered)
Maybe.

PAUL
You're certainly talkative.

CAROL
Well can't I have any privacy around here?

The other kids begin to get amused.

PAUL
Sure you can. I'm sorry if that's too big of a question to ask when you're living in our house.
Carol sits for a moment, angered, and then leaves and goes upstairs.

PAUL

I wonder why she's so touchy.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Paul and Julie are sitting at the table having a drink before dinner when Carol comes in.

CAROL

Mom, is it alright if I go to the basketball game tonight with Linda and Nancy?

JULIE

At the high school?

Yes.

CAROL

It's fine with me, but you better ask your father.

PAUL

It's fine with me. How are you going to get there?

CAROL

Nancy's sister is going so she's going to pick us up.

PAUL

As long as you're home by 11:30.

CAROL

I know. Second question. When will dinner be ready?

JULIE

Well, since Amanda's going to a movie too, I'll have it ready in about a half hour.

CAROL

Thanks!

She leaves to go get ready.

JULIE

What are we going to do this weekend?

PAUL

I don't know.
Julie goes over to the stove to work on the dinner.

JULIE
Maybe we should go out and shop for some new suits for you.

PAUL
I should probably go into the office for awhile in the morning.

She tries to hide her frustration.

JULIE
Again?
(beat)
I sort of thought it would be nice to do something together this weekend.

PAUL
(chuckling)
You make it sound as though we never are together.

JULIE
It doesn't seem like we are.

PAUL
You sound like a jealous mistress. If we spent much more time together, we'd probably get bored with each other.

JULIE
Speak for yourself. I really don't call last weekend's snow shoveling "spending time together."

PAUL
Aren't we going to do it again this weekend?

JULIE
Not unless it snows tonight.

There is an extended silence while Paul looks at the mail.

Maybe we should go to a movie tonight.

Paul doesn't respond.

There are a few good ones out that I'd like to see.
PAUL
How do you know they're good?

JULIE
What do you mean?

PAUL
If you haven't seen them yet, how do you know they're any good?

JULIE
I don't know they're good, but I've read a lot of good reviews on them and have heard others talk about them.

PAUL
You can't believe everything you read.

Julie is starting to get upset and defensive as Paul continues his lesson in practicality and logic. Underneath this cross-examination is a hint that Paul enjoys this "game."

JULIE
You can't discount it either.

PAUL
So many of those critics are paid to give a movie good reviews.

(beat)
I remember when I went to see a movie once because of the reviews. I thought it was awful.

JULIE
(sharp)
Then I wouldn't want you to go to any of the ones I've heard about because I'm sure they must be terrible.

PAUL
What's wrong with you?

JULIE
Nothing.

PAUL
If you want to go to a movie, we'll go to a movie.
JULIE
No. Not if you don't want to go.

PAUL
What is it you want to see?

JULIE
I'm not sure. I'd have to look in the paper.

There is a short pause.

PAUL
I'm pretty tired tonight. Maybe we could go tomorrow night.

JULIE
(restrained)
That's fine.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT
Julie is awake, staring at the clock which says 1:05. She is very tense and must wipe some tears from her eyes. When she sits up in bed, she wakes Paul.

PAUL
What's wrong?

JULIE
Nothing.

PAUL
Is Carol home yet?

JULIE
No.

Paul turns over to look at the clock.

PAUL
But it's after one. I thought I told her to be home by 11:30.

(beat)
That's the end of her fun for a while.

Paul gets up and puts on his robe and goes down to the kitchen to wait. By the time 2:00 comes, he is getting rather worried and doesn't know whether to be angry or scared. When Julie comes down, he is trying to read a magazine.
JULIE
Paul, where do you think she is?

PAUL
I don't know.

JULIE
I'm getting worried. Do you think she's alright?

PAUL
God, I hope so.

He gets up and goes to the front door where the hall light is still on. Wanting to look outside, he reaches to open the door. It is locked.

PAUL
(confused)
Didn't you leave the door unlocked?

Yes. Why?

JULIE

PAUL
(slowly starting to get angry)
Well if indeed you did, someone has locked it.

JULIE
What are you talking about?

Paul has begun to hurry upstairs, and Julie follows. Hesitant, he quietly opens the girls' bedroom door. Carol is asleep in her bed, and Paul turns around disgusted and angry.

PAUL
You'll do anything to try to get her in trouble, won't you?

Paul heads downstairs to turn out the lights with Julie on his heals, confused and getting upset. He pays little attention.

JULIE
Is she in there?

(beat)
Paul, I could swear she wasn't home when I woke up at 12:00.

(beat)
I'm not trying to get her in trouble... but the light was still on. I just assumed that...
Paul stops abruptly and looks disgustedly at Julie, cutting her off.

**PAUL**

Don't you know what happens when you assume things?

Julie doesn't respond.

Break it into three words.

*(beat)*

It makes an "ass" of "u" and "me".

They head back upstairs in the thick, silent darkness. We can feel Paul's anger and Julie's guilty despair and need for forgiveness. They enter the room and get in bed without a word, each with their back to the other.

**JULIE**

*(after a silence)*

I'm sorry. I was wrong.

**EXT. HOUSE**

ESTABLISHING SHOT in this darkness conveys the conflict within. From this winter shot, DISSOLVE into SAME ANGLE of the house during a sunny, spring day. There exists a different, more unsettled aura about the house now. Julie drives into the shot and stops at the mailbox to get the mail.

**EXT. GARAGE**

Driving into the garage, she gets out with great conviction and grabs two sacks of groceries. When she gets to the door, it is locked, and her attempts to unlock it are futile as she juggles the groceries. Frustration leads to a hushed "Damn it!" and she finally puts the sacks down. The phone is ringing as she gets the door open, and grabbing the sacks, she hurries to answer it. We can now discern the weariness, the emotionally worn eyes, the strain which her efficient pace had not hinted to.

**JULIE**

*(pleasantly)*

Hello? *(beat)*

No, he's not. He's at work. May I take a message?

She listens and begins rubbing her forehead in tension as she tries to break in.

I... I'm sorry... Well no, I don't think I'm interested today, thank you... good-bye.

She hurries out to the car to get the other groceries.
INT. KITCHEN
The CAMERA is focused on many CLEANING ACCESSORIES that are around the table-- rags, vacuum cleaner, sprays, etc. It then PANS to Julie putting the last few groceries away. Once completed, she heads outside to check on some window screens which she had cleaned earlier.

INT. BEDROOM
Julie lays down to rest. That she is exhausted is evident, however the stress on her face which is gradually augmenting has our attention more than her physical weakness. As she becomes more relaxed and slows down, she begins to think. She begins to cry.

We eventually hear a DOOR SIAM downstairs and then CAROL'S VOICE shouting "MOM!" Julie gets up and goes downstairs. She is somewhat short tempered. The girls are fixing things to eat.

INT. KITCHEN

JULIE
Hello you two. How was school?

CAROL
Not bad, but Mom, I can't stand that Mr. Hefley.

Julie just sits at the table.

He just told us today that we're going to have a test tomorrow over two chapters.
I tell you, he's a jerk.

JULIE
I want you two to clean that up when you're done.

CAROL
Amanda will.

JULIE
I don't care who does it, it just better get done.
I've been cleaning all day trying to get things ready for summer, and I would appreciate it if you could just keep things clean.

AMANDA
Have you cleaned our room?

JULIE
I haven't touched it, or Vince's either.
And I'm not going to either because they're both pits. So would you please start by picking it up for me so I won't need hiking boots?
Both girls feel the tension and Carol goes upstairs to change,

JULIE
I've been telling you kids that I was going to clean today, but you still could never pick up your rooms for me.

AMANDA
(timidly)
I've tried, but it does no good when Carol won't help.

JULIE
I guess that's right. You're not the one I should be talking to.

She leaves to go upstairs. As she approaches the top of the stairs, Carol comes out on her way to rinse something off in the bathroom. As Julie talks, Carol ignores her and goes right by her.

JULIE
Carol, I'd like you to clean up your side of the room. I've been asking you to pick it up the last three days so I could get in there to dust and clean, but I guess you've been too lazy.

CAROL
(coming back, trying to ignore her)
I'll pick it up.

JULIE
Amanda's done her part. It's not fair to her for you to be so inconsiderate.

CAROL
I said I'll pick it up.

When?

CAROL
Would you just leave me alone.

JULIE
Why don't you just tell me when you're going to get it picked up?
Carol stands in front of the mirror with no response, vigorously brushing her hair. Julie is trying to keep calm, but has played this game with her daughter too many times before.

**JULIE**

Well?

Carol still doesn't acknowledge her, so Julie turns around to head back downstairs and as she does, hears Carol softly say "good riddance." Julie slowly returns.

**JULIE**

What did you say?

**CAROL**

Nothing.

**JULIE**

No, I think I heard you.

**CAROL**

I said "good riddance."

**JULIE**

(repressing hurt)

That's what I thought. Thank you, Carol. I can't think of a much nicer thing you could say to your mother.

**CAROL**

Would you just shut-up? I get so sick of your constant nagging.

**JULIE**

Do you think I enjoy it?

**CAROL**

(getting heated)

Yes, as a matter-of-fact, I do! You don't seem to be interesting enough to get attention any other way, so why not nag?

**JULIE**

That's enough, Carol. Just clean this up.

**CAROL**

No, it's not enough. This time you do have my attention! I've had enough of you picking on me, and I want you to know that I really hate you. I love Dad, but I hate you.
This declaration really hurts Julie; Carol's arrow has hit it's target for she feels she has failed.

JULIE
All I want you to do is pick up your room.

CAROL
Why can't Dad be home more and you be the one who's gone all the time!
(beat)
Why don't you yell at me, Mom! Go ahead, nag!

JULIE
That's enough! Just clean it up!

INT. KITCHEN
Vince comes in to find Julie trying to stop crying as she fixes dinner. He has just finished playing outside, and doesn't notice immediately.

VINCE
What's for dinner?

JULIE
Hamburgers.

VINCE
Is there anything I can do to help?

JULIE
Nothing, but thank you.

INT. TV ROOM
Amanda is curled up in a chair, scared and upset as Vince enters from the kitchen, concerned.

VINCE
What's wrong with Mom?

AMANDA
Is she crying? I knew it.

VINCE
What?

AMANDA
She and Carol got in a fight a few minutes ago over cleaning our room, and Carol said she hated her.
MOVING SHOT of an angry VINCE hurrying up to Carol's room where the door is closed. He bursts right in without knocking and finds Carol crying on her bed. Although it surprises him, he is more concerned about his mother.

CAROL
What are you doing in here. Get out.

VINCE
What did you do to Mom?

CAROL
It's none of your business. Just get out!

VINCE
You're wrong. It is my business, and I want to know why she's crying.

CAROL
For God's sake, you know she cries at the drop of a hat anymore. How do you know she's crying from what I said?

VINCE
Not everyone likes to be told they're hated.

JULIE
Who told you I said that?

VINCE
Amanda.

CAROL
Oh, I should have known. My perfect little sister.

(beat)
She's just like her mother.

VINCE
At least someone else cares about Mom around here. Maybe she isn't perfect, but at least she loves us.

CAROL
We all know she loves you, don't we? My, it's so "motherly" the way she helps her son study all the time, and defends you to the last straw against Dad. Yes, you are Mamma's boy.

VINCE
(pausing, getting more resentful)
I suppose it would only be seen that way by Daddy's little girl.
Carol gives a nervous laugh but doesn't respond. There's a pause as Vince scrutinizes Carol.

VINCE
You're the only one he seems to show much affection to. We all know how he feels about me, and I feel the same way about him. But I must say, I feel sorry for him sometimes.

Carol looks at him inquiringly.

You use him. You know Mom's usually right, but you won't admit it. So you butter up to Dad to get him on your side, and all you succeed in doing is making Mom and Dad get in a fight. And all this time Dad thinks you love him.

Carol has softened under this and has listened closely. It seems as though Vince might be right.

CAROL
I do love him.

VINCE
No you don't. You only pretend to. Who has always helped us when we've moved?... Who is usually around when we need help?... Which one tells us they love us?

CAROL
Dad tells me he loves me.

VINCE
You can have Dad. I don't need him anymore. But don't hurt Mom anymore because she does love you.

Carol doesn't respond, but is trying to hold back the tears. Vince slowly walks out the door.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY
Paul is absorbed in the newspaper as usual on this morning and pays little attention to Julie as she tries to talk with him.

JULIE
So you'll be home for dinner tonight but not tomorrow night.

PAUL
Uh-hum.
JULIE
I think it would be sort of nice if we took a nice vacation sometime this summer.

Paul continues to read.

It's going to be difficult to schedule something though. All the kids are so busy this summer. What do you think?

PAUL
Fine.

JULIE
I also don't know how we're going to juggle schedules. Vince's tennis lessons are five times a week, and with Amanda in summer school and Carol working... What do you think?

He does not lift his eyes off the page. Julie begins seething with anger, but contains herself.

Paul, put the paper down.

PAUL
Go ahead.

JULIE
(bursting with anger)
I will not go ahead. Put the damn paper down and talk with me. You have a few responsibilities here with your family that need to be addressed!

PAUL
Oh, calm down! There's no reason to get so heated.

JULIE
Yes there is! You sit there every morning with that stupid newspaper and never say a word to me.

PAUL
Why don't you stop your whining and get on with it then.

There's a short silence.

JULIE
First, I want to know what you think about a vacation this year.
PAUL
I said fine. Go ahead and arrange it.

JULIE
But where, and when?

PAUL
I don't care. You're the one who wants to go.

JULIE
But I would like to have some input. It is your money.

PAUL
That's my input. I'll supply the money.

(beat)
What else?

JULIE
Paul...? Nothing.

(beat)
What am I going to do about the kids' different schedules? Carol's going to be in driver's training too.

PAUL
That could be tricky. Listen, could we talk about this tonight? I better get going.

He gets up and grabs his briefcase while Julie represses her emotions. Giving her a quick kiss, he says good-bye and leaves her standing against the counter, thinking.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING HALL - DAY
CU of a COFFEE POT. We hear the voices of Paul and RON, a business friend of Paul's.

PAUL (V.O.)
That meeting yesterday was a bear, though. We tore those statistics for the Kansas City plant to shreds trying to find a compromise.

RON (V.O.)
That's what I heard.

Ron grabs the coffeepot and pours a cup for each of them.

Are you aware that George will be retiring in a few months?

PAUL
I've been aware of it for the past two years.
RON
(looking at him curiously)
So that's why you've been working like a wild man since you came to Pittsburgh.

PAUL
You're darn right.

CUT TO:

MOVING SHOT OF JULIE walking up the sidewalk of the church, weeping.

CUT BACK TO OFFICE:

RON
Do you think you'll have any kind of a chance at it? You've only had this job for a year now.

PAUL
I know it, but I can't help thinking that they were using this as a training ground. It's an intermediary position, and for all practical purposes, I've been doing George's job the last five months.

RON
But Paul, you're still substantially younger than any of the other executive officers. And what about Larry Reynolds?

CUT TO:

Julie is waiting in the minister's office lounge. The MINISTER comes to get her.

MINISTER
Come on in Julie.

JULIE
I appreciate your accommodating me on such short notice.

CUT BACK TO OFFICE:

PAUL
Ron, I've been shooting for this for as long as I can remember- ask Julie! I have confidence that we will continue to promote by merit, and I know I've got Larry whipped.
RON
I bet Julie's pulling her hair out.

PAUL
She doesn't know about it.

RON
You're kidding me.

PAUL
She's been having a rough time of it since we moved here, so I've been trying to keep the pressure off of her as much as possible by leaving business here in the office.

RON
I wish I could do that. Janet gets so mad at me when I come home and talk business.

PAUL
(chuckling)
I'm not saying it's easy, but I think it's important.

RON
Best of luck. I hope you get the job.

PAUL
So do I.

CUT TO CHURCH:

JULIE
(thinking)
I don't know what's wrong.

(beat)
But I'm worried about the kids... I feel so sorry for Vince. He tries so hard... For some reason Paul can always find something bad to comment on, and I know it affects him deeply.

She begins to cry, but tries to hold it back.

Paul likes Carol though. He's not around enough to see how she really behaves... We don't hit it off too well, Carol and I, because she's a different girl when her father's gone.

(beat)

CONTINUED
CONTINUED

JULIE
And then there's little, quiet Amanda who seems so unscathed by it all. She glides along so smoothly with or without Paul around... I wish the others could.

(beat)
But that's not the answer... A child really needs his father around, doesn't he?

MINISTER
(softly)
And a wife needs her husband.

CAMERA FRAMES JULIE sitting alone. Slowly, her face melts into emotion and tears go rolling down her cheeks.

CUT BACK TO OFFICE:

Diligent and vigorous, Paul sits working at his desk, immune to the pulse of his family's emotions.

INT. KITCHEN
It is early evening and Julie is petting Arthur quietly. As he licks her face, she smiles and hugs him more. We hear a DOOR OPEN and soon Paul enters, tired from a long day. The TV is heard over this.

JULIE
Hello.

PAUL
I'm not going to find dog hairs in my dinner am I?

JULIE
I hope not.

(beat)
How was your day?

PAUL
The usual. And yours?

JULIE
I had a good time with the washing machine.

PAUL
Do I have enough time to work on the checkbook before dinner?

JULIE
Do you have to do that now?
Sensing her attitude, Paul takes a big breath to calm himself down and tries to be patient.

PAUL
No, I just thought I'd try to employ my time efficiently.

JULIE
(turning towards him)
Let's just relax a little bit together.

DISSOLVE INTO an advanced discussion. Julie is trying to be pleasant, but is getting very mad at Paul.

PAUL
If you just stopped treating them like babies, you wouldn't have to worry about it.

JULIE
I'm not treating them like babies. I'm just trying to be helpful.

PAUL
Well then I think you're being too helpful. You've got to make them stand on their own two feet if you want them to walk by themselves, and I'm sure they're all capable of finding rides to their various responsibilities.

JULIE
But who gets complained to when Carol is late to work, or Amanda's late to summer school?

PAUL
You take it too personally. If they're late, it's their own fault.

JULIE
I just can't ignore the kids like you do. Call them for dinner, please.

Paul goes into the TV room and shouts upstairs that dinner's ready while Julie brings the food to the table. Once they are all seated, they say a silent prayer and start eating. All is calm as they begin.

AMANDA
I can't believe there are only three more weeks of school left.
CAROL
I know. I can't wait to start driver's training.

PAUL
I can. I don't want you driving our cars all over.

CAROL
Oh Dad, I'm going to be a good driver.

PAUL
Better than your mother, I hope. Right Julie?

VINCE
I'm going to be glad to get out of elementary school.

Julie glares at Paul as he is about ready to say something about his grades.

JULIE
I would be too if I were you. You've put in a lot of hard work this year, and it's paid off.

PAUL
I understand there's going to be a lot going on with all of you this summer. That's good.
(mockingly)
Your mother wants to go on a vacation this summer. She doesn't know where or when, but she wants to go on a vacation.

Sensing his attitude, she becomes defensive.

JULIE
(looking him in the eye)
We don't have to go.

PAUL
If you want to, we will.

JULIE
I just thought it would be nice for the kids.

There are general agreeable comments from the kids.

PAUL
But I'm sure it's not because you want to go.
JULIE
I didn't say that. But I must say, it does seem like you don't want to go. Are you averse to spending time with your family?

PAUL
What's that supposed to mean?

The kids can already sense the tension.

CAROL
Where do you think we should go, Dad?

PAUL
Be quiet Carol, I want to hear what your mother has to say.

CAROL
Dad, let's just drop it.

PAUL
(bluntly)
Carol, didn't you hear me? Shut-up!

They can all feel a fight coming, and the children start to cry. But Julie is not going to let down.

JULIE
That was effective. Maybe you could be that pleasant on the trip.

AMANDA
Would you two please stop it?

PAUL
(oblivious to the kids)
And you're always so pleasant yourself.

VINCE
Leave Mom alone. She's alot more pleasant than you are.

PAUL
Siding with your mother again. Well that's par for the course. But I would appreciate it if you'd just shut-up because this is between your mother and me.

JULIE
Leave Vince alone Paul. You make it hard enough on him and the other kids anyway.
-82-

CAROL
Stop it, please!

PAUL
You call this house being hard on the kids?

JULIE
You know what I mean.

PAUL
No, I don't know what you mean. I work my ass off for all of you to give you this house, your clothes, and everything else and this is what I get!

JULIE
I'm sick of that self-righteous speech anymore, so stop using it because it doesn't work! You enjoy that job so much you could care less about us! You're gone half the time, but that doesn't stop you from making judgements about what goes on here!

PAUL
Let's talk about judgements since your so fair with Carol. Tell your mother what you think of her Carol!

CAROL
Stop it!

JULIE
What's wrong Carol? What do I do that hurts you?

CAROL
You're perfect. You're too perfect! Just like Amanda! And I'm sorry that I can't make you happy with me! I don't want to be mean, but you make me. You hate me!

JULIE
No! I don't! I love you!

PAUL
You do think you're perfect, don't you Julie. The perfect mother, the perfect wife, everything perfect!
-83-

JULIE
(wild with resentment)
If you don't like the way I do things around here, why don't you just leave!

PAUL
(moving to the closet for his coat)
Maybe I should. From what I've heard here, I'm not needed in this house. So I won't be missed!

JULIE
You're never here anyway, so it won't be anything new!
(beat)
Where are you going?

Everyone is crying hysterically, walking around the TV room and in and out of the kitchen, searching aimlessly for some of the security that existed before the dam burst.

PAUL
(devastated)
I don't know.
(beat)
What difference does it make anyway?

He quickly leaves out the garage door, and when we hear the car engine, Julie loses it and breaks down, staring at the garage door. Dazed, they are all crying to themselves in different areas of the first floor of the house, no one knowing how to comfort the other.

The CAMERA FOLLOWS the car out of the driveway, and slowly pulls back and focuses on the house in the evening dusk.

INT. TV ROOM
Things have now quieted down as the dust settles. Entering the room, Julie has resumed much of her strength and goes to comfort Carol first.

JULIE
I'm sorry if I've hurt you.
(beat)
I love you.

They start crying and hug each other as if to support the other. Amanda and Vince come over too, and through the kitchen door we see Julie comforting them all.
EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT
In the dark silence of this parking lot, we see Paul's forlorn car. It is silhouetted by a lone street light.

INT. CAR
We see him from the back seat, hunched over the steering wheel as if to hug it for comfort. Motionless, we know he is in deep thought.

CU of Paul's face from a SIDE ANGLE shows him crying as he stares at the floorboard. Leaning back, he runs his hands through his hair, and for the first time, we see this man emotionally vulnerable. He is confused. He is weak. He is alone. And he can't seem to understand his feelings or what happened. Searching for an answer somewhere in his mind, he finally buckles under again and the tears flow stronger than before.

INT. HOUSE
We see many still shots of the kitchen again, as in the beginning. It is only lit by the light from the TV room, but in the long shadows, we see that nothing has changed; the same orderliness prevails. We find Julie sitting still in a big chair in the TV room, but unlike her husband, she is composed and strong as if this won't really change anything. The room is softly lit by a lone lamp. We faintly hear the garage door open. The CAMERA FOLLOWS PAUL as he slowly makes his way through the picture hall and gently touches some of the frames. It is very quiet and he looks emotionally exhausted. He makes it to the TV room and stands in the doorway, looking at Julie who only returns his look with a blank face.

PAUL
(bluntly)
I love you.

Julie does not move or change expression, so he repeats himself emphatically as if to beg her to tell him he is loved in return.

PAUL
I love you!

But she doesn't know how to respond. She's afraid for she doesn't know what he's been doing or thinking... so she waits.

PAUL
Don't you believe me?
(slowly entering)
I've been sitting in a parking lot.
(beat)
Remember our wedding?... You were so beautiful.
(beat)
CONTINUE

PAUL
I'll never forget our first house. You were always painting such beautiful pictures. (he pauses, confused)

Why did you stop?

Julie still has not moved, and Paul begins to get desperate for her to acknowledge him. He begins to falter.

PAUL
I always wanted to be a good father. (beat)
I really do love you.

Having thought that she would have spoken by now, that she would have forgiven him, Paul now realizes that maybe she won't and he starts looking all around him for support. Crying and helpless, he now pleads for an answer.

My God, what did I miss? (beat)
What made this just happen?

Julie finally starts to tear, but Paul is not looking at her. Then softly-

JULIE
It didn't just happen. (beat)
It's been coming for a long time, but we just didn't see it.

He moves slowly towards her, and kneeling, puts his head in her lap and hugs her. He begins crying harder.

JULIE
What's wrong?

PAUL
I might be up for a promotion again...executive officer.

He cries harder, she begins to cry but holds him like a child, comforting him with her strength and enduring love. Softly, with the sincerity produced from the insight of new understanding...

JULIE
I love you too.

As the CAMERA PULLS BACK to encompass the warm room lit by the lone lamp, the music of "Tonight" fades in quietly.
In this somber atmosphere, the CAMERA continues to PULL BACK and then DISSOLVES into a shot viewing through the window on this couple tenderly holding each other... and the words begin:

Tonight,
Do we have to fight again
Tonight?
I just want to go to sleep
Turn out the light
But you want to carry grudges
Oh nine times out of ten
I see the storm approaching
Long before the rain starts falling.

Tonight,
Does it have to be the old thing
Tonight?
Oh it's late, too late
To dase the rainbow that your after.
I'd like to find a compromise
and place it in your hands
My eyes are blind, my ears can't hear
Oh and I can not find the time.

Tonight
Just let the curtains close in silence
Tonight
Why not approach with less defiance
The man who'd love to see you smile,
Who'd love to see you smile
Tonight.

As the verses progress, the CAMERA PULLS BACK farther to view the house with it's single light on... to the neighborhood again, as in the opening shots, as the CREDITS are given and the final note is played.