Traces of the Past

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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Abstract

_Traces of the Past_ is my first attempt at a feature length screenplay. I have always been interested in creative writing. Previously, I have written three short screenplays and several short stories. However, my goal has always been to buckle down and write a screenplay. I would envision a movie like _Traces of the Past_ to be on television, perhaps on a channel like “Lifetime,” because it is geared more for women.

_Traces of the Past_ is about a thirty-year-old woman, Julia Donovan, who has what many would consider to be the perfect life. She lives in a large house in a wealthy part of Chicago, is married, and has two children. She basically leads a very happy life, until someone from her past calls her unexpectedly.

Julia’s college boyfriend, whom she hasn’t spoken to in years, calls her out of the blue and wants to meet with her. But this isn’t any ordinary meeting. Jake Lancaster has a bomb to drop - he has AIDS. This means that Julia could have it, too. Suddenly, her worst fears come true. Because she was raised as an only child in a wealthy household, Julia has never really had to deal with anything hard in her life. And now that she does, she doesn’t know how to deal with the emotional pain that she feels. Instead of dealing with the possible AIDS issue with her husband, she isolates herself from her family.

Julia then retreats to the world of art as she spends time with the dying Jake. She tries to ignore her problems by painting. As everyone around her continually urges her to get tested for AIDS, Julia draws further and further away from those she loves.

Writing this screenplay has been one of the hardest endeavors that I have taken on. The thought process involved and trying to make the characters come alive was very challenging. I definitely found this to be a challenging and enjoyable capstone to my senior year at Ball State University.
Acknowledgments

I want to thank first advisor, John Dalton, for all of his help with my screenplay. He has had experience in screen-writing and has given me many helpful suggestions that aided me in the writing and thought process of putting the *Traces of the Past* together.

I also want to thank my second advisor, Margaret Dimoplion for her support as well. This was a hard time in her life to have extra work, but I appreciated her taking the time in helping me with the story aspect of my screenplay.

And thank you to the different people who wrote articles and information about AIDS on the Internet. It helped me to understand the process of testing for AIDS.
EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - NIGHT

It is a rainy night in downtown Chicago. Long shot of a speeding ambulance that has its lights flashing and siren on, drives down the streets. Feature the ambulance as it turns into the downtown hospital.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

JULIA DONOVAN, a pretty woman with her dark hair pulled back in a French twist, waits nervously. She is wearing a long form-fitting red dress with a suit jacket draped over her shoulders. She is holding onto the jacket as she nervously stands in the hospital.

Suddenly, an emergency team runs into through the door with someone in a stretcher. It is JAKE LANCASTER, Julia’s ex-boyfriend from college. He is dying of AIDS, but this is unknown to the audience. Jake’s identity is not revealed, and his features cannot be made out as he lies in the stretcher, because the emergency team is hovered over him. The doctors are quickly checking Jake’s pulse and other vital signs as they run towards the emergency room.

Julia runs along the emergency team and the stretcher. She tries to catch a glimpse of Jake, but the emergency team crowds around his stretcher.

JULIA
What’s going on? What’s happening?

The doctors ignore her, and are totally involved with monitoring Jake’s vital signs.

DOCTOR 1
Can you get a pulse?

DOCTOR 2
Yes, but his heart rate is slowing down. His breathing is sporadic.

JULIA
Can someone tell me what’s going on? Please!

Jake’s hand stretches out to Julia, but his face is not shown.

JAKE
(weakly)

Julia.

Julia, still running along with the emergency team puts her hand over her mouth.

JULIA

Oh, God!

One of the doctors takes Julia aside as she begins to cry.
DOCTOR 3
Ma’am, we have to ask that you stay here. You aren’t allowed into the emergency room.

JULIA
But I need to see him. I need to be with him. He needs me.

DOCTOR 3
I’m sure he does Ma’am, but right now he’s with the best doctors. If you wait in here, I’ll be back later to tell you how he is. Okay?

Julia nods her head, as the tears fall from her face. The doctor runs off into the emergency room doors. Julia leans against the wall nearby and shakes her head.

JULIA
(quietly, to herself)
I can’t believe this is happening.

FADE TO BLACK AND DISSOLVE TO:

The main title sequence in the film begins. It is a simple key of the film title in white letters against a black background. It reads “Traces of the Past.”

FADE UP:

3 EXT. DOWNTOWN CHICAGO - DAY

A Jeep Cherokee drives along the busy streets on a bright day in late May in an overhead shot.
A TITLE CARD FADES IN:

ONE MONTH EARLIER

As the car drives along the street, the camera pans across the road to the nearby Lake Michigan where many sailboats are scattered all over the lake. People are outside enjoying the nice, late spring day.

DISSOLVE TO:

4 INT. JEEP CHEROKEE

Julia is driving the car, her dark hair falling down at her shoulders. She changes the radio station as she waits at a stoplight.
Hope you're enjoying this day, folks! The high today should reach about 85 degrees. So, get out there and have a barbecue with the neighbors on this fine Saturday!

"Summer in the City" begins to play on the radio.

Feature Julia for a moment until the car moves with the green light. Hold shot as the other cars move on past to reveal =

EXT. CHICAGO - PARK - DAY

A family having a picnic in the park. They are sitting on a large blanket as the mother is unpacking the food items and the father is tickling the children.

DISSOLVE TO:

5A  A teenage couple holding hands and walking in the park.

DISSOLVE TO:

5B  A group of young boys tossing around a football with their fathers.

DISSOLVE TO:

5C  A family riding their bikes together.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD

The Jeep Cherokee drives on into an upper-class residential neighborhood. The houses are all large, two story homes with trees shading the wide road.

CUT TO:

INT. JEEP CHEROKEE

Julia looks in her rear view window to see her two young children in the back seat of the car. Her four-year-old son, Spencer, is playing with a plastic toy in the back while his one-year-old sister, Emma, sleeps soundly in her car seat. Both children have blond, curly hair - which contrast with their mother’s dark brown hair. Julia smiles as she sees that her children are content.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD
The car pulls up to a large, beautiful home. Julia parks the car in the driveway and steps out of it.

Julia is a very stylish woman. Even though she had just been to the grocery store, she is dressed in a tight gray tweed skirt that stops just above her knees. She is also wearing a thin white buttoned down shirt that is tucked in to her skirt, and she has a choker of white pearls around her neck.

She looks over at her neighbor's house where an elderly woman is kneeling down in her front yard planting flowers. The song “Summer in the City” fades out.

**JULIA**

Hi, Helen, how are you?

**HELEN**

Just wonderful. I've been waiting for a day like this all winter. And now it's the perfect time for planting my flowers.

Julia steps over to the side door and opens it.

**JULIA**

Summer just wouldn't be the same without seeing your famous roses every day! Have fun!

Helen smiles and then waves one of her gloved hands at Julia and the kids. Julia reaches inside the car, takes the seat belt off of her son, and helps him out of the car. Just as she does so, a box of cereal, that is already opened falls, from the car and spills its contents over the driveway.

**JULIA**

Spencer, didn't I tell you last week not to open the cereal boxes in the car?

Spencer looks up at his mother with sad eyes and nods his head, his hands behind his back. He then shows her the plastic toy that he had been playing with.

**SPENCER**

Sorry. Just wanted the special prize. Looky, it's a truck!

Julia kneels down to her son's level and looks at the toy. She smiles at her son and pats his curly hair.

**JULIA**

Well.....Don't do it again, okay? I mean it this time.

He nods his head, and she pats him on his back.

**JULIA**

Okay, go inside and tell your Daddy to come out and help me unload the groceries.
He smiles at his mother and then runs inside the house. Julia laughs as she hears her son yelling out to his father. She walks over to the other side of the car and tries to quietly open the car door, careful not to wake the sleeping baby. As she slowly lifts Emma from her car seat, her husband MICHAEL walks out of the house. He is tall and has a lean, muscular build. His wavy blond hair is nicely combed back. He is wearing khaki pants and a nice, crisp white shirt. He walks over to kiss his wife as Julia looks surprised by his appearance.

**JULIA**

Don’t you look nice, Michael. What are you so dressed up for? We don’t have to be at Mom and Dad’s until three o’clock.

Michael smiles and kisses his wife again. He reaches in the car and picks up two of the grocery bags.

**MICHAEL**

Can’t a man look nice for his wife on her birthday?

Julia, still holding the sleeping baby, smiles slyly at her husband.

**JULIA**

Well, that’s always expected. (she laughs). I was thinking that we could take the kids to the park today before we have lunch with my parents. It’s so beautiful outside.

Michael and Julia start walking to the house. He looks closely at Julia and smiles mischievously.

**MICHAEL**

Sure, honey. It’s your birthday, whatever you want. But I think I have a better idea.

Julia gives her husband funny look, as if he is acting weird.

**JULIA**

And what might that be?

He only answers her with a smile as he opens the front door and motions for her to go on inside.

**INT. JULIA’S HOUSE**

As Julia steps inside of the house, the lights come on all at once, cameras begin to flash, and a hundred people shout “Surprise!” Julia looks dazed as she walks through the hallway of her house into the kitchen area where the crowd is gathered. Colorful balloons cover the ceiling of the kitchen area, and the crowd of people are all looking at Julia and yelling “Happy Birthday.” Julia’s best friend, VANESSA
walks over. Vanessa is a tall slender woman whose thick curly auburn hair is pulled back from her face in a unique hairstyle. She hugs Julia and takes Emma from her.

**VANESSA**
Happy Birthday, sweetheart! Are you surprised?

Julia, still looking dazed, breaks out into laughter.

**JULIA**
Surprised? Oh gosh, yes! How did you - when did you and - ?

**VANESSA**
It was a mad rush, but Michael and I decorated like crazy this morning when you were out. It's all for you, baby! Enjoy!

She grabs Julia and gives her another big hug.

**JULIA**
I think I should go back in my room for a minute and change my clothes.

**VANESSA**
Don’t be silly, Jules. You look beautiful. You always do.

Before she can protest, Michael comes up behind her, hugging her from the back. He whispers into her ear.

**MICHAEL**
Happy birthday, princess.

Vanessa and Michael stand on opposite sides of Julia and bring her into the crowd of people.

DISSOLVE TO:

10 **INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY**

Julia, a smaller woman than Vanessa, is immediately overwhelmed by the many well-wishers. Julia’s parents come up and hug their daughter. Her parents, MRS. LILLIAN WHITFIELD and MR. THOMAS WHITFIELD are an attractive, classy looking silver-haired couple. Mrs. Whitfield is dressed similarly to her daughter and her husband is wearing a casual suit.

**JULIA**
(laughing)
So, how about a late lunch, huh?
MR. WHITFIELD
That was Michael’s idea for a good cover story. Hey, it worked, didn’t it?

JULIA
It sure did!

Julia’s mother, looking very emotional, hugs her daughter again.

MRS. WHITFIELD
Oh, darling, you look beautiful. I can’t believe that it’s been thirty years since I was in the hospital giving birth to you. I just can’t believe it!

JULIA
Oh, mom! Stop, you’re going to cry.

MRS. WHITFIELD
We hope you have a wonderful birthday, darling.

The large house is packed with people of all ages. Friends of Julia’s parents and of Julia and Michael, who had brought their children, gather around. They are all trying to catch a glimpse of Julia. Julia’s parents walk her over to some of their old family friends.

10A Michael and Julia mingle with some of their guests, laughing, and drinking champagne.

10B Other guests of the couple, who are gathered around the downstairs of the house, are mingling among each other, drinking champagne, eating plates of food, and having a wonderful time.

10C The guests pass around Julia’s daughter, Emma. As they take turns playing with her, they comment on her cuteness and try to make her laugh.

10D Spencer plays with toys by the fireplace with some other young children.

11 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM

Mrs. Whitfield walks up to Julia with a middle-aged man, TONY ALVAREZ, whom Julia doesn’t know.

MRS. WHITFIELD
I want you to meet someone, dear. This is Tony Alvarez, and he is in the process of opening an art gallery downtown.

MR. ALVAREZ
Nice to meet you, Ms. Donovan.
Julia smiles as they shake hands.

JULIA
(sipping champagne)
Please, call me Julia.

MRS. WHITFIELD
I’m helping Mr. Alvarez to arrange the big gallery opening in another month. It will be fabulous.

MR. ALVAREZ
Your mother is amazing, Julia. Without her, I wouldn’t know where to begin!

JULIA
Well, you have nothing to worry about now. Mother thrives on big projects, and she always manages to pull off the unthinkable.

MR. ALVAREZ
I’m beginning to see that. However, your mother invited me to your birthday party to meet you in person, Julia.

Julia gives her mother a puzzled look.

JULIA
Oh, really?

MR. ALVAREZ
Your mother has been telling me all about your artwork. I hear that you have some wonderful oil paintings that you’ve been wanting to submit to a gallery.

Julia looks embarrassed as her mother continues to smile brightly. Her mother smiles brightly with excitement, but Julia looks very uncomfortable with the situation.

JULIA
Oh, gosh. I - - I haven’t painted in years.

Mr. Alvarez sees a painting in the family room and walks over to it, studying every detail.

MR. ALVAREZ
What about this painting? It looks like a fine piece of work.

JULIA
That was a gift from an old friend.
She looks at the painting with a tender expression, as if it really meant a great deal to her.

MRS. WHITFIELD
Honey, why don’t you show him around the house? I know you have some of your best pieces hanging upstairs.

Before Julia can say anything, Spencer walks up and tugs at her skirt.

SPENCER
Mama, when are you going to blow out your candles? I’m hungry for cake!

JULIA
Spence -

MRS. WHITFIELD
Grandma will take you outside to get you some lunch first, how does that sound?

JULIA
No, mother, it’s all right. I’ll take him. It was nice to meet you, Mr. Alvarez.

MR. ALVAREZ
Let me know if you change your mind.

Julia nods her head and smiles lightly as she heads for the patio doors. She sighs out of relief that her son saved her from having to deal with that embarrassing situation. Mrs. Whitfield, still standing with Mr. Alvarez in the house, looks a little embarrassed that her daughter left so abruptly.

MRS. WHITFIELD
Oh, Tony, I’m so sorry about that. I think Julia’s a little distracted today. You know, with the surprise party and all.

MR. ALVAREZ
Oh, that’s all right. It’s quite understandable.

MRS. WHITFIELD
I’ll have her show you some of her work another time. Or maybe I’ll just bring some of her paintings to you this week. She really is a fabulous artist.

MR. ALVAREZ
Oh, I don’t doubt that. If she’s anything like her mother, I’m sure she is overflowing with creative talent.
MRS. WHITFIELD
(smiling brightly)
Oh, why thank you. I’m still hoping that Julia will open one of her own galleries one of these days. That’s what she had always dreamt of doing.

Mr. Alvarez nods his head, looking interested in what Mrs. Whitfield has to say.

MRS. WHITFIELD
Well, anyway, I want you to meet some of my old friends. I’m sure they’ll want to contribute to your gallery.

Mrs. Whitfield then leads Mr. Alvarez over to a group of her friends.

CUT TO:

12 EXT. JULIA’S HOUSE - PATIO - DAY

Julia exits the house through the patio doors, holding hands with her young son. Vanessa, who was just flirting with one of the single men at the party, runs up to talk to Julia.

VANESSA
Hey, darlin’, are you having a good time?

Julia smiles at her best friend as she approaches, but it is a forced smile. She still looks a little disturbed, because of the situation with the art dealer and her mother.

JULIA
Yeah, I am. Could you do me a favor?

VANESSA
Sure, anything for the birthday girl!

JULIA
Could you get Spencer some lunch?

VANESSA
Sure thing.

She was about to take Spencer’s hand, but notices that Julia seems upset about something.

VANESSA
Julia, are you okay? You don’t look like you are having much fun.

JULIA
Oh, I’m having a great time, thank you so much for everything.
Vanessa gives Julia a suspicious look, as if she doesn’t believe that everything is all right.

**VANESSA**
You’re welcome, darlin’, but I know that something’s wrong.

**JULIA**
Oh, I’m fine. My mother just embarrassed me back in the house. She brought some poor art gallery owner to the party, hoping that he would take some of my paintings, can you believe that?

**VANESSA**
So, what’s wrong with that? You’re a fabulous artist, Jules.

**JULIA**
I was a good artist, but that was years ago.

**VANESSA**
And you still are.

**JULIA**
Maybe, but I just don’t have the time anymore. You know, with the kids and my job with Michael’s company.

**VANESSA**
Yeah, so what if you’re a little out of practice. Talent like yours never goes away.

**JULIA**
I guess I shouldn’t let it bother me. I’m probably making a big deal out of nothing. But sometimes I just feel like I disappointed my mother in some way, because I didn’t become the true artist that she always hoped I would be. I mean, that’s what I always said I wanted to do while growing up.

**VANESSA**
Jules, I thought you were happy working with me at the office.

**JULIA**
I am, I am. But when I was back in college I had always pictured myself opening a gallery someday.

Spencer, still holding his mother’s hand, jerks it to get her attention. He is bored just standing there holding his mother’s hand and is growing impatient from his being hungry.
SPENCER
Mommy, I'm hungry!

JULIA
Oh, sorry, baby. Vanessa's going to get you lunch now.

Vanessa takes his hand and smiles down at him. She walks away towards the large buffet table that is set up near the swimming pool and turns back around cheerfully to Julia.

VANESSA
Well, don't worry about it today, it's your birthday~

JULIA
(smiles)
Okay, I won't. You're always so optimistic, Vanessa. What would I do without you?

VANESSA
I can't imagine!

Julia stands in the same spot, smiling as she is looking in the direction of Vanessa and her son, Spencer.

DISSOLVE TO:
13 EXT. JULIA'S HOUSE - PATIO - TABLE - DAY

Michael sits at one of the poolside tables, and talks with a couple around their same age. Julia walks over and squeezes her husband's shoulders.

JULIA
So, what are we talking about here?

Just as Michael is about to speak, MELISSA TAYLOR interrupts.

MELISSA
All business and politics. Completely boring if you ask me.

The men laugh.

MICHAEL
Sorry we're boring you, Melissa!

WARD TAYLOR
Don't listen to my wife, Julia. I'm just catching up with your husband, trying to get him out on the course one of these afternoons.
Melissa rolls her eyes and stands up to give Julia a hug.

MELISSA
Happy birthday! What do you say we ditch the guys and grab us something to eat?

JULIA
Sounds good to me. I'm actually starving!

She kisses her husband before taking off for the buffet with Melissa. Michael and Ward continue their discussions.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. POOLSIDE - BUFFET TABLE - DAY

Julia and Melissa start filling up their plates with food at the buffet table as they talk.

MELISSA
Just look at all this food. Your husband really is something! I can't believe he put all of this together! He needs to give Ward some pointers.

The women laugh.

MELISSA
Julia, we need to get together for lunch sometime. We hardly see each other since you stopped working at the studio.

JULIA
Actually, Michael and I are taking the new sailboat out next weekend. You and Ward should come with the kids.

MELISSA
Oh, what a nice idea. I'm sure that Ward could talk Michael's ear off about his business ideas.

They sit down at one of the tables that are set up by the pool.

MELISSA
So, how do you like working for Michael?

Julia takes a bit from her fruit salad as Melissa takes a bite from her sandwich.

JULIA
I love it, I really do. It's not like the work I did at the studio, but it's still rewarding.
MELISSA
I can’t even fathom the idea of working with Ward. That would be too much togetherness for me.

JULIA
(laughing)
Actually, Michael and I don’t see each other much during the day. Since I work in the graphic arts area and he works in the executive area, we really only see each other during our lunch hours. We make it a point to make our lunch hour our special time together.

MELISSA
Hmmm... Well, you should stop by the studio sometime. I’m currently working on a mural for a new hotel downtown. I could use your input. Landscapes were always your forte and not mine. You know me, I always prefer modern art.

JULIA
Sure, I know that. You know, Melissa, my mother brought this new art gallery owner to the party to show him some of my paintings. Would you like me to introduce you to him today?

MELISSA
Would I ever? That would be fabulous! Are you sure you wouldn’t mind?

JULIA
Of course not, it’s not like I have anything to show.

Julia smiles slightly and then continues to eat her fruit salad. The look on her face shows that she is envious of Melissa and her career as an artist.

DISSOLVE TO:

15 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Julia is standing at the kitchen table with Michael and Vanessa at either side of her. Mrs. Whitfield stands nearby, holding Emma. The crowd is gathered around the table, but move aside when Mr. Whitfield brings in a large cake and places it on the kitchen table. Julia laughs as she looks down at the cake. It has a big 30 in the center of it along with the happy birthday message.

MICHAEL
I want to thank everyone for coming here today to celebrate my wife’s birthday. It means a lot to the both of us.
VANESSA
And as Julia’s best friend, it is my duty to embarrass her on her 30th birthday! Everyone, join me in singing Happy Birthday!

Julia laughs and looks embarrassed as the crowd sings happy birthday to her. The camera pans around the room to show the happy faces of the crowd singing happy birthday to Julia.

CU Julia as she smiles happily. She looks up at her best friend who is singing wildly and loudly. She puts her arm around Julia and squeezes her shoulder. Julia then looks up at her husband. He looks down at her with loving eyes. Julia smiles brightly and blows out the candles. Everyone cheers and Julia looks very happy. We see that even though there are a few things that she still yearns for in her life, she is very happy.

DISSOLVE TO:

16 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

A soft music bed plays in the background to create a romantic mood. Close up of a fire in the fireplace. PAN pictures on top of the fireplace. The pictures display Julia and Michael on their wedding day and various pictures of them and their children.

17 DISSOLVE into a close up of wine pouring into two glasses. Zoom out to a long shot of Michael sitting on a long, white leather sofa in the family room as he is pouring the wine into the glasses.

CUT TO:

18 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - SPENCER’S ROOM - NIGHT

Balloons cover the ceiling. Tilt down to reveal a children’s room. Julia sits on Spencer’s bed next to him as they look at a book together. Julia closes the book and reaches over to give her son a hug, and kisses him on the forehead.

JULIA
Time for Spencer’s nighty-night.

Spencer grabs his mother as she tries to get up from the bed.

SPENCER
Not yet! Not yet!

JULIA
Hey, someone’s had a big day and needs his sleep. Did you have fun today?

Spencer nods his head and yawns, laying back onto his pillow.
SPENCER
I like the balloons. The red ones are the best.

JULIA
Oh, yeah? Red is my favorite color, too. Would you like to help Mommy pick out some red flowers tomorrow? We’ll go to the flower shop when I get home from work and then you can help me plant them in the garden. How does that sound?

Spencer nods his head and closes his eyes. Julia kisses him again on his forehead and slips out of the room.

19 EXT. JULIA’S HOUSE - HALLWAY

Julia slowly closes Spencer’s door. She then walks to the room across from the hall.

20 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - EMMA’S ROOM

Emma lies in her crib, fast asleep. Rack focus to reveal Julia standing at the door, looking in on her baby.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

A long shot as Julia walks down the stairway into the family room. She smiles as she slowly lies down next to Michael on the couch and gives him a soft kiss.

JULIA
Thank you for today, Michael. It really meant a lot to me.

Michael smiles and hands his wife a glass of wine.

MICHAEL
I’m glad you enjoyed it. I hope we have many more of these to celebrate.

They toast their wine glasses and then each take a sip. They set the wine glasses down on the glass coffee table next to the couch and begin kissing. The phone rings. They let it ring twice before Julia slowly sits up.

JULIA
We better get it before it wakes up Emma. We’d never get her back to sleep.

She kisses Michael and then stands up.
MICHAEL
It's probably Vanessa. Knowing her she probably left her purse. Or lost a ring. Or an earring.

Julia laughs at Michael as he makes fun of her best friend's sometimes scatterbrained behavior. She walks over to the kitchen to answer the phone as Michael continues to lay on the couch, sipping his wine.

JULIA
Hello? (beat) Yes, this is Julia Donovan. (beat) Jake? Jake Lancaster?

Michael looks over at Julia, his curiosity is peaked.

JULIA
God, Jake, how long has it been? Seven, eight years now? (beat) How did you get my number?

Michael looks a bit sad as he sits back and slowly sips his wine. He looks at a painting on the wall by the fireplace. It is a peaceful scene of Lake Michigan. Ironically, it displays the same serene sailboat scene that Julia had driven by earlier that morning. Again, we see Julia talking on the phone.

JULIA
So, what are you up to now? (beat) Oh, really? (beat) How long will you be in the area? (beat) Yes, of course. (beat) That's sounds great. I will see you there on Monday then. (beat) Yes, noon is good for me too. Well, I guess I will talk to you then.

Julia hangs up the phone and starts laughing lightly as she walks back into the family room. Her laughter stops when she sees Michael with a sad expression on his face. He is now sitting up.

MICHAEL
Jake Lancaster?

Julia sits down next to him on the couch. Noticing that he seems a little jealous, she tries not to sound excited by the phone call.

JULIA
(taking a sip of her drink)
Yeah, can you believe it?

MICHAEL
(unenthusiastically)
Wow, what a blast from the past.

Michael sets down his wine glass on the table.
JULIA
Well, he’s in Chicago for a couple of days on business. I guess he wanted to see if I was still alive or something. It’s been forever since I’ve talked to him.

Michael continues to stare at Julia. As she notices his intent gaze, she looks at him and playfully slaps him on the leg.

JULIA
Oh, Michael. He only wants to have lunch with me. I haven’t seen him in years.

MICHAEL
And he was only your first love.

JULIA
Yeah, so? That was in college. You’re the one that I married five years ago, not him.

MICHAEL
It just surprises me how happy you sound. From what you have told me in the past, that guy really broke your heart when he went back with his ex-girlfriend.

JULIA
(rolls her eyes)
Oh, Michael, I’m over that. To me it was just an experience I had in college. And it wouldn’t surprise me at all if Jake was married to Lydia now after all those years. Really, it’s no big deal. The past is the past.

Julia waits for Michael to say something, but when he doesn’t, she continues.

JULIA
(continued)
Anyway, I’m sure he just wants to brag to me about the great career that he probably has.

MICHAEL
Would that make you jealous?

JULIA
What do you mean?

MICHAEL
If he is a successful artist.
JULIA
No, I'd be happy for him that he achieved what he wanted in life. Why would that make me jealous?

Michael picks up the two wine glasses to bring them to the kitchen. Julia looks confused.

JULIA
Michael, what's wrong? Why does me seeing Jake tomorrow bother you so much?

Michael walks back into the room and sits down, facing her.

MICHAEL
Sometimes when I look at that picture of Lake Michigan that Jake painted for you, it just reminds me of what you and Jake shared. Something that you and I will never share.

JULIA
But, Michael, you and I share so much more than Jake and I ever did. Sure, we both loved to paint and understood that about each other, but you and I have a life together. How can anything compare to that?

MICHAEL
I guess I've always been afraid that one day you would regret what you gave up for me.

JULIA
Michael, I didn't give up anything that I didn't want to. Why do you think that?

MICHAEL
Maybe this is silly, but I can't help thinking this. I've wondered before that if you ever came across Jake sometime, and you saw his lifestyle as an artist, you'd wish things had been like that for yourself.

JULIA
But it was my decision to come and work with you. No one forced me to leave the studio.

MICHAEL
I know, but I realized my dream. I wanted to be a CEO in an advertising company, and I am. Becoming a famous artist was always your dream, and meeting me got in the way of that.
JULIA
Michael, I never realized you felt that way or had those thoughts. So, it’s not really about Jake, then is it?

MICHAEL
Well, in a way no. I just want to be able to share everything with you, and I guess the fact that Jake was more involved in those dreams of yours just makes me feel a little insecure or jealous in a way. It’s just something that I’ll have to work out with myself, I guess.

JULIA
Oh, Michael, believe me, you have nothing to worry about.

Michael smiles lightly and nods his head and gets up from the couch. Julia still sits there.

JULIA
Don’t you still want to talk?

Michael stops at the hallway entrance that leads to the master bedroom.

MICHAEL
(smiling)
I think it’s time for bed. I still have one more present for my wife.

JULIA
(smiles slyly)
Oh, really? I’ll be there in a minute.

Michael smiles and walks into the hallway. Julia watches Michael as he walks away. She smiles and the audience can tell by her expression that she truly loves her husband. She then gets up and walks over to the painting of Lake Michigan. She gazes at it for a moment. A close up of the signature at the bottom of the painting that says “Forever, Jake.” Julia runs her finger over the signature, looking at it intently, and then walks to the same hallway to join her husband. Music bed ends.

DISSOLVE TO:

22 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - EMMA’S ROOM - MORNING

Emma is laying in her bed awake with a pacifier in her mouth. Julia, dressed in a short black skirt and white blouse, walks over to the crib to pick her up.

JULIA
Hi, Baby, are you awake? Is my little Emma still sleepy?
Julia picks up the baby and walks out of the room.

23 INT. JULIA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Michael, dressed in a black business suit, eats breakfast at the kitchen table. Spencer is also eating breakfast at the table, dressed in pajamas and watching cartoons on the TV beside the table. Julia comes in carrying Emma and sets her in the high chair at the kitchen table. She walks over to the counter and takes a sip out of a coffee mug. KIM, a young Asian woman, walks in.

**JULIA**
(putting on her suit jacket)
Kim, hello! Michael and I are running a little late today. I haven't even fed Emma yet! Do you mind?

Julia grabs some baby food from the refrigerator and hands it to Kim.

**KIM**
Oh, no problem, Julia.

Kim pulls out one of the chairs at the table and begins to feed the baby.

**MICHAEL**
(in between bites of food)
Hi, Kim, did you have a good weekend?

**KIM**
Oh, yes! My parents came up from Cleveland for a visit. How was the birthday party?

**JULIA**
So, you knew about it too, huh?

Kim and Michael exchange smiles.

**KIM**
Oh, of course!

Julia rushes over to kiss her kids goodbye for the day. Michael brings his dishes over to the sink where he rinses them off.

**JULIA**
Be good for Kim, Spencer. And we'll get flowers when I come home, all right?

Spencer nods his head slowly, his eyes glued to the TV.
JULIA
See you later, kids!

KIM
Goodbye, you two! See you at five o’clock!

Michael and Julia nod and wave as they rush to the door.

24 EXT. JULIA’S HOUSE - MORNING
A music bed plays in the background.
Julia and Michael get into their Jeep Cherokee and drive off.

DISSOLVE TO:

25 EXT. BUILDING - MORNING
Michael and Julia walk into the doors of a modern-looking business building.

26 INT. BUILDING - ELEVATOR - MORNING
Michael and Julia walk out of the elevator as three other people remain standing in
the elevator. They walk together for a second to the entrance of an office. They
stop to face each other by the door. Michael kisses Julia at the door and then peers
inside the office.
Music bed ends.

27 INT. OFFICE - DAY
Two desks with computers are facing each other. Vanessa, her auburn curls pulled
back from her face, is working on her computer. She is dressed in a white blouse
and a bright flower-printed skirt.

MICHAEL
Morning, Vanessa.
Vanessa looks up from the computer, smiles, and rolls her eyes.

VANESSA
Good morning, you disgusting lovebirds.
Julia and Michael, still standing outside the office, laugh and kiss again.

MICHAEL
Have a good morning, honey. I’ll stop in before lunch, even
though you won’t be joining me today.

Julia nods and smiles. Vanessa rolls her eyes again.
VANESSA
Come on, Mike, you’re on my time with Julia now.

They laugh again and kiss once more before Julia happily walks over to her desk. Vanessa stares at her and has a sly smile on her face. Julia gets situated at her desk and turns on her computer when she notices Vanessa staring at her.

JULIA
Yes?

VANESSA
Have a good evening, birthday girl?

JULIA
Yes, I did. I had a very good evening. But it actually didn’t start off that way.

VANESSA
Oh?

JULIA
Do you remember me telling you a long time ago about Jake Lancaster? That guy -

VANESSA
That stallion you dated at the art institute?

JULIA
Yeah, sure, whatever. Well, he called me last night out of the blue.

VANESSA
To wish you a happy birthday or something?

JULIA
No. Actually, I don’t think he remembered that. He’s in town for a couple of days and wants to get together for lunch today.

VANESSA
Sounds pretty cozy.

JULIA
No, no. I honestly think he just wants to brag about his career. He had so much potential and drive when I knew him. He’s had to have done something spectacular with his talent.

VANESSA
Hmmm.....So how does Michael feel about you seeing him?
JULIA
He’s definitely not thrilled about the idea.

VANESSA
Well, that’s perfectly understandable. I mean, Jules, didn’t you think that Jake was the one that you were going to marry back then?

JULIA
Oh, sure, back then when I was young and naive. And then he dumped me for his ex-girlfriend.

VANESSA
Oh, yeah. Linda, the bimbo.

JULIA
(laughs)
You mean Lydia. I’m sure they’re married now. They were meant to be or something.

Vanessa stares at Julia, making her feel uncomfortable.

VANESSA
Yeah. So, what’s the story?

JULIA
I’m just curious, you know. It’s been a long time since I’ve seen him. Wouldn’t you be intrigued if you had just heard from your first love? What about what’s-his-face? Alex Matterton?

Vanessa gives Julia a dirty look.

VANESSA
Please, Jules. I thought it was established that we never bring up that dreaded name again!

Julia laughs.

VANESSA
Well, Jules, it is your duty today to hook me up with this artist stud muffin of yours.

JULIA
What? Hook you up? Are you nuts?
VANESSA
No. Since you are trying to convince me that you are over him, why not?

JULIA
Hey, I don’t need to convince anyone. It should be obvious.

VANESSA
Okay. Then if he’s not married to the bimbo and all, I’m interested.

JULIA
When are you not interested?

VANESSA
Hey, not all of us are happily married with the perfect life.

Julia smiles and shakes her head. The women exchange smiles and get to work.

28 The clock on the wall dissolves from 8:15 to 11:45.

29 Julia looks down from the clock above their desks and catches Vanessa looking at her. Julia is getting nervous about the lunch date, though she tries not to make it too apparent.

VANESSA
(smiles slyly)
Looks like it’s lunch time.

JULIA
I can’t believe this. I’m getting nervous.

Vanessa smiles. The door knocks and the women look at the office door. Michael is standing there.

MICHAEL
Hello, ladies. Since my wife is forcing me to fend for myself today, it looks like I’ll need a new date. Vanessa, would you care to escort this lonely man to lunch today?

Vanessa and Julia exchange smiles.

VANESSA
(in her best southern accent)
Why, I’d be delighted!

She gets up and joins Michael at the door.
MICHAEL
Shall we escort you downstairs as well?

Julia, still sitting at her desk, shakes her head.

JULIA
No, I just want to finish up something before I leave. Go ahead without me.

MICHAEL
All right. Have a good lunch, but not too good!

Vanessa and Michael smile before leaving. Julia takes a deep breath and glances up at the clock again. She is growing increasingly nervous. She then takes a close look at the photographs displayed at her desk. They are of her children, a family photo, and one of Julia with her parents. She smiles at them tenderly before taking another deep breath and standing up. She takes a second to look out of the window by her desk, which shows the skyline of Chicago.

DISSOLVE TO:

30 EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - DAY

Julia is walking along the busy streets of Chicago during the lunch hour rush. She continues to take deep breaths as she walks on and smoothes her business suit around her slim figure. She stops suddenly to look up at the restaurant sign. Seeing that it is the restaurant where she is meeting Jake, she takes another deep breath and walks in the door.

CUT TO:

31 INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Julia approaches the hostess at the front.

JULIA
Hi. I am meeting someone here today. Jake Lancaster?

The hostess looks through a black book until she comes upon Jake’s name. She looks up at Julia and smiles.

HOSTESS
Right this way.

Julia smiles nervously and follows the hostess to the back of the restaurant. The table is located out on the canopy-covered patio. Jake is slowly revealed through the crowd of people as they approach his table. He is dressed in a cream turtleneck and gray tweed pants. He is slightly pale in coloring and has short black hair.
Jake stands up and smiles as the hostess leads Julia and places the menus on the table. Julia and Jake stand awkwardly for a second and then hug quickly.

**JAKE**

Julia, wow! You look great!

Julia smiles nervously as they each take a seat.

**JULIA**

Thank you, Jake. It's really nice to see you. Such a surprise!

They smile softly for a moment, each person looking at the other as the **WAITRESS** steps up and sets waters on the table.

**WAITRESS**

Hello, my name is Megan. I'll be your server today. What can I start you off with to drink?

**JAKE**

Just water for me, thanks. Julia, can I order you some wine?

**JULIA**

Uh, no. Water's fine for me, too.

**JAKE**

I'll take your soup of the day and a salad with Italian on the side.

The waitress jots down the order on a little pad of paper and then looks over at Julia.

**WAITRESS**

And for you, ma'am?

**JULIA**

I'll take the same. But with French on the side, please.

**WAITRESS**

I'll be back in a few minutes with your orders.

Jake nods his head at the waitress. He then looks at Julia and smiles. Julia takes a deep breath, looking a little uncomfortable.

**JULIA**

Jake, are you on a special diet or something?
JAKE
(laughs)
What do you mean?

JULIA
It’s just weird to see you order a salad and water. What happened to the steak-and-wine-loving Jake that I knew?

JAKE
(looking a little uncomfortable)
Oh, well, I’m not as young as I used to be. Need to stop eating red meat, you know?

Julia smiles as there is a brief silence between them.

JULIA
Wow, it’s been a long time, hasn’t it?

Jake nods his head and keeps his eyes glued on her.

JAKE
Too long. I’ve been wanting to get a hold of you for a long time, but I just haven’t had the courage, I guess.

JULIA
(looking nervous)
Oh, really?

JAKE
(looking down)
Yeah.

Jake begins twisting a napkin uncomfortably and looks like he is deep in thought. He looks a little paler in the face. They sit in an awkward silence briefly before Julia tries to break the ice.

JULIA
So, you’re in Chicago on business for the week?

JAKE
Yeah, a week. Maybe longer. I own two art galleries right now, one in L.A. and one in New York. I fly back and forth between them all of the time, and now I’m considering opening one in Chicago. It’s only natural, since this is where I went to school.....where we went to school.

JULIA
Wow, I knew things would work out for you, Jake.
Jake smiles slightly and nods his head, his hand continually twisting the napkin.

JULIA
Do you sell a lot of your own work?

JAKE
Yeah, business has been really good for a long time. I can’t complain about that. I paint whenever my schedule allows me to, so I basically work at both ends of the spectrum.

Julia smiles and nods her head.

JULIA
Sounds like you lead a very busy life.

JAKE
And what about your work? Will I see any of your murals or paintings displayed somewhere in Chicago when I check out the competing galleries?

JULIA
No, actually I work as a graphic designer for my husband, Michael, at an advertising agency.

Jake’s smile fades as Julia continues.

JULIA
I really enjoy the work. I use a lot of computer graphics and 3-D art when I compose my work.

JAKE
Hmmmm...that surprises me. I would have pictured you owning one of your own galleries here in Chicago. Doing something like me.

Julia smiles slightly as the waitress brings the soup and salads to the table. They each began to nibble at their salads as an uncomfortable silence crosses them.

JULIA
So, are you and Lydia still together?

Julia looks at Jake intently, waiting for his answer. A brief silence falls between them as Jake bites his lip and looks up at Julia.

JAKE
Lydia? Oh, no. We’re not together anymore.
JULIA
Really? That really surprises me. I mean, I would have thought that the two of you would be married by now.

JAKe
Well, it almost happened. But, it just didn’t work out that way.

Jake looks very sad and wipes away the sweat that began forming on his forehead. Julia looks very concerned as she watches Jake. He appears to be sick, maybe with the flu or something, she thinks.

JULIA
Jake, are you all right? You don’t look like you feel too well.

He nods his head and begins tearing apart the napkin in his hand. He is growing increasingly uncomfortable. He knows that he has something important to tell Julia, but he is terrified to tell her what he knows he has to.

JAKe
So, how did you and your husband meet?

Julia’s concern for Jake fades as she is sidetracked by the new topic of conversation. Her face lightens up as she begins to talk about her family.

JULIA
(smiles)
Oh, gosh. It wasn’t long after I left the art institute. I started working for a studio downtown. I worked on several paintings for restaurants and hotels while I was at the studio. But we also restored art downtown at some of the historical buildings. Well, Michael had been working at an ad agency and since the business was expanding, they wanted to relocate to one of the older buildings in town.

Jake tries to pay attention to Julia, but he looks increasingly uncomfortable.

JULIA
(continuing)
The building had a lot of Renaissance artwork painted on the ceilings, and Michael’s company wanted to keep that look and expand it elsewhere into the building. We met when I was hired as part of the creative team of artists to repair and paint more Renaissance scenes.

She sits back in her chair and almost seems like she is in a daze as she talks about her memories. Jake continues to wipe the sweat off his face and looks increasingly ill, but Julia doesn’t notice right now.
JULIA
(continuing)
We just spent more and more time together as I worked in his building. And boom! We were married, and we have been for five years now. We even have two children.

JAKE
(sounding surprised)
You have kids?

JULIA
Sure I do. I think I have some pictures here with me.

Jake has a baffled look on his face as Julia shuffles through her small purse. She hands him two pictures. He looks at the pictures and continues to look shocked.

JULIA
My son, Spencer, is four and my daughter, Emma, is fourteen months old.

JAKE
(shaking his head in disbelief)
I never knew. You have so much now.

Jake stands up suddenly. He wobbles as he stands and tries to regain his balance by grasping onto the chair in front of him.

JULIA
Jake? What’s the matter?

JAKE
Julia, I’m sorry. You’ll have to excuse me. I’ll be back.

He stumbles off and Julia sits back in her chair, sipping her water. She picks up the pictures of her children that Jake had set down on the table and places them back into her purse.

Suddenly, a big thump is heard and someone screams. The camera zooms into Julia’s face as she looks very confused and startled.

DISSOLVE TO:

33 INT. OFFICE - DAY

Michael and Vanessa walk into Vanessa and Julia’s office. They look surprised that she isn’t back yet.

MICHAEL
I wonder why she isn’t back yet.
Vanessa walks over to her desk, turns her computer back on, and sits down. Michael stays at the doorway.

**VANESSA**

Don’t worry, Romeo, she’ll be back soon. She’s probably just trying to convince Jake to go out with her best buddy, that’s all.

Michael smiles.

**MICHAEL**

I bet she’s just running late. They probably ate at one of the busier restaurants downtown.

**VANESSA**

Sure, probably.

Michael still lingers, looking deep in thought.

**VANESSA**

Michael, don’t worry!

**MICHAEL**

I’m not, I’m not. Just have her give me a buzz when she gets back in, okay?

**VANESSA**

No problem.

**MICHAEL**

All right, see you later.

Michael smiles again and then leaves.

DISSOLVE TO:

34 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Julia is sitting in a chair, looking around patiently as she waits for a nurse. She looks over in another direction when she hears an old man coughing. He has purple lesions covering the exposed parts of his body and is hunched over. The nurse by his side helps him to walk. Julia’s attention is focused on him as her face displays the sadness and fright she feels by looking at such a sight. A nurse approaches Julia.

**NURSE**

Julia Donovan?

Julia is startled by the nurse.
JULIA

Yes, I'm Julia Donovan.

She stands up and smooths her business suit.

JULIA

Is Jake all right? I mean, he looked fine before. We were having lunch together downtown, and then he collapses all of a sudden without warning.

NURSE

Yes, that can happen. Mr. Lancaster is stabilized right now. But we're keeping him overnight for observation. His immune system is down from all of the traveling he's been doing. We really don't want to take any chances right now.

JULIA

(nods her head)

Sure, I understand. But, what's wrong with him? I'm just an old friend that he is visiting. I haven't seen him in years.

NURSE

Yes, I'm aware of that. Mr. Lancaster has asked to speak with you.

JULIA

Yes, I'd like that, but can you tell me what's the matter with him? He never mentioned any health problems at lunch.

The nurse avoids looking at Julia as they begin walking down the hall of the hospital.

NURSE

I think it's better if Mr. Lancaster tells you himself.

JULIA

Okay.

They stop at the nearby elevator as the nurse presses the up button. Julia looks frightened as she waits in silence, looking deep in thought.

CUT TO:

35 INT. HOSPITAL - JAKE’S ROOM

Julia and the nurse walk into the hospital room. They stand at the doorway as the nurse knocks on the door that is already opened. She pauses for a second before stepping into the room. Jake is lying on the bed wearing a hospital gown. He looks
very tired and pale. The nurse adjusts his covers as Julia stands in the doorway, looking very uncomfortable and worried.

NURSE
I’ll leave you two alone now.

The nurse leaves, and Julia slowly walks into the room. Jake smiles lightly, motioning her to come on in.

JAKE
Pull up a chair.

Julia grabs a nearby chair, pulling it up to Jake’s bedside.

JULIA
Jake, this is really scary. Is this how you greet an old friend?

She tries to laugh, but feels very uncomfortable. Jake looks at her and smiles slowly.

JAKE
This isn’t the way I wanted you to see me, Julia. But, I guess I waited too long.

JULIA
What do you mean? Too long for what?

Jake leans back, looking up at the ceiling.

JAKE
Where do I begin? How do I say this to you?

Julia says nothing, looking confused as she sits there by Jake’s bedside.

JAKE
So much has happened during these past eight years, Julia. So much since we’ve seen each other last. After graduating from the art institute, I had the time of my life. Everything came so easily to me. Sure, I had to work for what I had, but not that hard. I just did what I loved in life. Paint.

Julia nods her head, listening intently to Jake as he speaks.

JAKE
(continuing)
I moved out to L.A and all of a sudden I had all of these people giving me money right and left, wanting to buy my paintings for prices that you couldn’t fathom. What can I say? I loved it. I was young, rich, and had almost everything I ever
could have wanted in life. I lived the high life for so long that I
didn’t think the lows ever existed. But then everything started
falling apart for me. One by one, the threads of my life began
to unravel. I didn’t know how to handle it. I didn’t know how
to cope.

JULIA

Oh, Jake. Is it drugs?

JAKE

What?

JULIA

Did you get involved with drugs?

JAKE

Drugs? No, if only it was that simple. You have a drug
problem, you deal with it. It goes away eventually. What I
have never goes away.

He looks straight at Julia, but she still appears confused and a little frightened.

JAKE

Lydia and I were still together after college. She followed me
out to L.A. and became very successful herself. We had such
great times together. Always going to parties and hanging out
with the Hollywood types, I’m sure you can imagine.

Julia nods her head and smiles.

JULIA

You know, that’s how I always pictured you living.

Jake smiles briefly, but then gets serious again.

JAKE

Yeah, well, we had our rough times like we did in college. We
broke up off and on, but for the most part things were great for
us. Shortly after I opened the gallery in New York, I proposed
to her. You know Lydia, she immediately began planning this
elaborate wedding.

Julia smiles and nods her head.
JAKE
(continuing)
That was when she started becoming sick. She would go through these periods where she would have terrible colds or sicknesses, and she just wouldn’t get better. We had to postpone the date of the wedding because she came down with something again. You knew Lydia, she was always so stubborn. She refused to go to any doctors, but it finally became too much for her, and she agreed to get tested for cancer and anything else. But she didn’t have cancer, she had AIDS.

Julia’s eyes widen. She looks very surprised. She never thought that she would ever know anyone who had AIDS.

JULIA
AIDS?

JAKE
Yes, she had full blown AIDS at that point. She was put on several medications that seemed to help her for awhile, but she was too far gone. She held on for a long time, but died eight months ago.

Julia looks at Jake with sadness. Shaking her head in disbelief from the news that she has just heard.

JULIA
Oh, Jake, I don’t know what to say. It’s so terrible to hear.

JAKE
It was a hard time for me, and it’s not any better now. With Lydia being sick for so long all of the time, I really neglected myself. My health fell apart as well, and I finally forced myself to get tested. After a few weeks the test came back. It was positive.

Julia looks stunned when she hears this. Tears well up in her eyes. She can’t believe what she is hearing.

JULIA
Positive? You mean --

JAKE
I have HIV. And since I went so long without any kind of treatment or medication, I think it’s progressed to AIDS now. I have full blown AIDS, Julia.
JULIA
Oh my God, Jake. I can’t believe I’m hearing this.

JAKE
I know it’s a shock. There’s really no way of --

JULIA
Jake, why didn’t you ever tell me any of this? I could have helped you somehow. I mean, at least I could have helped you deal with Lydia’s death.

Jake shakes his head.

JULIA
It’s too much to deal with on your own, Jake.

JAKE
I’m -- I’m okay, Julia. I don’t need any help.

He looks up at her painfully as she walks over to sit on the edge of his bed and takes his hand into hers.

JAKE
God, Julia, I’m the one who owes you. You don’t understand the terrible guilt I’ve felt all of this time. I knew I had to tell you sometime, but how do you tell a person?

JULIA
Jake, what do you mean? Did you think I wouldn’t understand or would think of you differently because you have AIDS? You know I’m not like that.

JAKE
No, that’s not it. Julia, you have such a wonderful life. You’re married now and have two children. God, if I only knew you had kids. It makes things so much more complicated now.

JULIA
Why? What do you mean?

JAKE
Julia, don’t you understand what’s going on? You could have HIV or AIDS, too. Your whole family could have it.

Julia bolts up from her seat as if it were on fire. She looks crazy with fear.

JULIA
What?
Jake looks very upset, as if he could cry at any moment.

JAKE
Julia, I’m so sorry. I never knew how to come out and tell you. I was afraid to face you again.

JULIA
(still looking shocked)
No, no! This can’t be true.

JAKE
Maybe it isn’t, but you have to get tested right away.

JULIA
(shaking her head)
This can’t be happening!

JAKE
Julia, just please sit down and listen to me.

JULIA
No! I don’t want to hear anymore!

JAKE
Please. Let me talk to you. Explain to you - -

She looks bewildered and very upset. She looks at Jake with shocked and crazed eyes as the tears began to fall.

JULIA
You bastard!

She then immediately runs out of the hospital room, and Jake is left alone in the room. He buries his head in his hands and cries.

CUT TO:

36 INT. OFFICE - LATE AFTERNOON

Vanessa is putting on her jacket at her desk as Michael walks in. He looks very worried. Vanessa sees his worried expression.

VANESSA
Still haven’t heard from her?

Michael shakes his head as Vanessa grabs her purse and joins him at the door.
MICHAEL
Where on earth could she be?

VANESSA
I haven’t a clue, Michael. It’s not like Julia to bail on work like that. I know this guy is an old friend of hers, but she still could have called.

Michael shakes his head in concern.

MICHAEL
Come on, let’s go. I need to get home to the kids. She’ll probably call me at home.

Vanessa puts her arm around Michael to comfort him as they leave the office.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 EXT. CHICAGO STREETS - LATE AFTERNOON

A long shot of Julia walking along the busy streets of Chicago during the rush hour traffic. Everyone around her is walking fast and seems to be very busy - getting home to their families after work. Julia walks slowly among them, sticking out among the crowd, looking lost. She comes to a stop and acts like she doesn’t know what to do or where to go. She looks very confused.

A close up of Julia’s face among the crowd. The crowd seems to fade into the background as Julia’s face becomes the center of the screen. Her face looks drained and pale. Her face is tear-stained, and she looks like she is in shock.

38 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Kim is on the floor of the family room playing a board game with Spencer. Emma is sitting on the floor close by, occupying herself with some toys. Michael walks in the front door as Spencer runs over to hug him.

MICHAEL
Hey there, buddy.

SPENCER
Where’s Mommy?

Michael looks down at his son and pats him on the head, not wanting to answer his question. He doesn’t want Spencer to think that something happened to his mother, so Michael does his best to cover up his concern for his wife’s whereabouts.

MICHAEL
Kim, has my wife called today?
Kim looks up from the floor as she continues putting away the pieces of the board game.

**KIM**

(shaking her head)

No, Julia never called today. But her mother called. She wants Julia to call her back tomorrow.

Michael nods his head slowly, looking down and in deep thought.

**MICHAEL**

Okay, I’ll let her know. Thanks.

Spencer tugs at his father’s suit jacket.

**SPENCER**

Daddy, where’s Mommy? We’re suppose to buy flowers to plant.

**MICHAEL**

Umm, she’ll be back soon, Spence. Why don’t you help Kim pick up.

Spencer runs to help Kim pick up the pieces of the board game as Michael takes off his suit jacket and takes a seat on the nearby couch. He is quiet, holding his jacket in his hands and looking deep in thought. Kim looks up, noticing Michael acting unusual.

**KIM**

Is everything all right?

**MICHAEL**

I think so. I hope so.

DISSOLVE TO:

39  EXT. CHICAGO - PARK BENCH - EVENING

A long shot of Julia as she is sitting on a bench in the park near Lake Michigan. This is the same park that she had driven by just yesterday on her birthday. She looks cold and frightened, sitting alone on the bench. Tears are streaming down Julia’s face. She looks over in another direction.

39A  A man and woman are taking a walk with their two children. They have a son and daughter who look the same age as Julia’s children.

39B  Close up of Julia, showing her face looking intently on the other couple. The couple and their children represent everything that she has now and what may be at stake with the news that she had just heard from Jake.
39C Slow motion of the family walking. Close ups on each member of the family as they enjoy their walk and their time together.

39D Extreme close up of Julia looking dazed, realizing that she is now the cause of what could be the demise of her own family.

CUT TO:

40 INT. JULIA’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Michael is at the kitchen table with the children. Spencer is eating his dinner. Michael, now dressed in jeans and a nice flannel shirt, is feeding Emma in her high chair. The phone rings and Michael jumps up and quickly walks over to answer it.

MICHAEL
Hello? Oh, hi, Vanessa. No, she’s still not home yet (beat) No, I’m trying not to worry, but this just isn’t like Julia. You know that. Besides, she hates taking the taxi. She would have called me or you to come pick her up before she’d take a cab all the way home (beat) Yeah, sure. I’ll have her call you when she gets home. Yeah, I’ll be fine (beat) Talk to you later.

Michael hangs up the phone and looks baffled about his wife’s disappearance.

CUT TO:

41 EXT. CHICAGO - NIGHT

Julia is walking alone downtown. There are hardly any other people around, and her arms are wrapped around herself, showing that she is cold and that it is late at night. She looks up at the building in front of her. It is a hotel - the sign reads ‘Hotel Pierre.’
A close up of her face as she tries to decide what to do. She steps into the hotel.

42 INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Julia walks into the hotel, still looking lost and confused. She starts to walk up to the front desk, but then sits down in the lobby. She looks weary and tired. She looks like she is going to cry again and collapses her hands onto her face. A man dressed in a hotel uniform approaches her.

HOTEL MAN
Can I help you, ma’am?

Julia looks up at him and shakes her head. He smiles at her and looks concerned as she notices her tear-stained face. Julia sits back in the chair and sees a telephone across the room. She slowly stands up and walks over to it. She dials the numbers and looks as if she is going to cry as she waits for someone to answer.
The room is dark with the exception of moonlight and street lamp light peeping in through the blinds covering the window. The phone rings four times before Vanessa stirs awake and flips on the light next to her bed. She picks up the phone that is located by the lamp. Her red curly hair is in a mess from being asleep for hours now.

**VANESSA**

Hello? Julia? Girl, do you know what time it is?

**JULIA**

I know, Vanessa. I’m sorry. I really need your help.

**VANESSA**

My God, Julia, are you all right? Michael and I have worried sick about you. You never showed up at work after lunch or bother to call one of us.

She waits for Julia to respond, but she only hears sniffling on the other end.

**VANESSA**

Julia, what’s wrong? Where are you? Are you calling from home?

**JULIA**

(crying)

No, I’m not at home. I’m at the Hotel Pierre downtown. I’m all alone right now. Can you come here and pick me up? Please, I really need you.

**VANESSA**

Sure, Jules. I am on my way. Are you going to be okay?

**JULIA**

(crying)

Julia nods her head, tearing streaming from her face. She is choked up from crying.
VANESSA
(filtered through the phone)
Jules? Are you there?

JULIA
Yeah, I’ll be okay. Just please hurry. Hurry.

She hangs up the phone and wipes the tears from her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

44 EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Vanessa, in her small white car, quickly pulls up the side of the road by the hotel. Julia, who is standing just inside the hotel at the window runs outside of the hotel and to Vanessa’s car.

45 INT. VANESSA’S CAR - NIGHT

Julia steps into Vanessa’s car.

VANESSA
Jules, what’s going on?

JULIA
Just drive.

Vanessa accelerates quickly. She watches the road for a second and then looks over at Julia. Julia remains quiet, looking out of the window. Again, Vanessa looks at Julia.

VANESSA
Talk to me Jules. I’m going out of my mind here.

Julia doesn’t say anything. She keeps her gaze on the road.

VANESSA
What happened tonight? Why are you so upset?

Tears flow from Julia’s eyes as she tries to hide it from Vanessa. She shakes her head, not wanting to talk yet. Vanessa places her right hand on Julia’s left arm and shakes it.

VANESSA
Julia, please! You’re really scaring me! Did something bad happen?

Julia nods her head quickly, her hand covering her mouth. Vanessa takes a close
look at Julia.

VANESSA
(slowly)
Did you cheat on Michael?

JULIA
God, no!

VANESSA
Well, what then? Where have you been all evening? Did that Jake guy try to rape you or something? Julia, I’m your best friend! Please tell me what happened.

JULIA
(crying)
I can’t talk about it right now.

VANESSA
Yes you can. Look at yourself! You’re falling apart!

JULIA
My life is falling apart.

VANESSA
Your life is falling apart?

JULIA
(getting irritated)
Listen, just drive to your place and I will tell you everything then, okay?

VANESSA
Yeah, okay.

Vanessa looks back over at Julia with fear and concern for her best friend. She then concentrates on the road ahead of her as they drive on in silence. Julia closes her eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

46 INT. VANESSA’S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A dark apartment, with the moonlight streaming through the windows is shown. The door clicks as it is unlocked and Vanessa and Julia enter the apartment. Vanessa flips on the main light to show a nice, modern looking apartment. Vanessa and Julia walk into the apartment, entering the kitchen area. Vanessa is dressed in sweats and a T-shirt, her hair pulled back in a ponytail. Julia is still wearing her
black business jacket and shirt, although they appear very wrinkled now. Julia immediately takes a seat at the kitchen table.

**VANESSA**
Can I make you some coffee?

**JULIA**
Yeah, sure.

Vanessa walks over to the coffee maker and gets it started.

**VANESSA**
Julia, don’t you think you should give Michael a call?

**JULIA**
No, I don’t want to wake him.

**VANESSA**
Wake him? Like he could sleep with you missing, Jules.

**JULIA**
Well, I just think it would be better if I just stayed here for the night. Do you mind?

**VANESSA**
(looking confused)
No, of course not. But, Jules, I really think that you should at least call Michael and let him know that you are staying here tonight. Don’t you think so?

**JULIA**
(shakes her head)
I just can’t talk to him right now. I can’t. I’m not ready to deal with things.

Vanessa looks confused as she makes the coffee. She waits for Julia to explain what she means, but Julia just sits, looking dazed.

**VANESSA**
Well, why don’t you get comfortable? Go look in my room and grab anything that you want.

Julia leaves the kitchen as Vanessa continues to make the coffee. Julia comes back to the table, also wearing sweat pants and a T-shirt. Vanessa brings two cups of coffee, sets them down on the table, and takes a seat next to Julia. Vanessa stares at Julia, waiting for her to tell her the problem. Julia takes a sip of the coffee and then notices Vanessa staring at her.
**JULIA**
Vanessa, I found out today that Jake has AIDS.

**VANESSA**
AIDS? Oh God. That’s terrible.

Julia nods her head.

**JULIA**
He passed out when we were having lunch. It was the scariest thing. One minute we were talking about our lives and the next minute he was down on the ground.

**VANESSA**
Wow, that’s awful.

**JULIA**
He was taken to the hospital and I stayed with him for awhile. That’s when he finally told me about the disease.

**VANESSA**
Jules, I’m so sorry for you. It must have been hard for you to hear. Him being your first love and all.

**JULIA**
Yeah, but it’s more than that, Vanessa. Because Jake has AIDS, I might have it too.

**VANESSA**
What?

Julia just looks at Vanessa. She looks like she is about to start crying again.

**VANESSA**
Whoa, Julia. That was a long time ago.

**JULIA**
I know, but it’s still possible. Isn’t it? I mean, that’s why he came all the way to Chicago. To tell me that he’s dying and I might be, too.

She bursts into tears and covers her eyes with her hands. Vanessa moves over to her side to give her a hug.

**VANESSA**
Julia, it’s been eight years since you’ve been with him, right? Eight years. There’s no way this is possible. It’s just not logical.
JULIA
Yes it is. Jake got AIDS from Lydia. And he was with Lydia before and after me, remember?

VANESSA
Let me get this straight. The only way for this to be possible is if Lydia gave Jake AIDS before he ever went out with you, right?

JULIA
Yes, exactly.

VANESSA
Still, it's been eight years. Wouldn't you already have signs or symptoms by now?

JULIA
I don't know.

VANESSA
You would have to by now. After eight years.

JULIA
I don't know, Vanessa, I don't know how this works.

VANESSA
Julia, I just don't see how this is possible.

JULIA
Well, obviously there's a possibility. Why else would Jake have told me?

VANESSA
Well, how long has he known about this?

JULIA
I don't know. For awhile I guess. He said Lydia died eight months ago.

VANESSA
What? Eight months ago? He's known about this for at least eight months and he never bothered to tell you until now?

Julia nods her head, tears falling from her face.

JULIA
Oh, God, Vanessa, what am I going to do?
VANESSA
Julia, don’t go crazy over this now. You don’t know yet if this is a reality or not. You need to get tested first.

JULIA
Vanessa, I’m so scared. If I have it, then my whole family has it. Michael.......Our kids.

VANESSA
Julia, don’t think about that now. If you want, I can take you to the hospital tomorrow and you can get the test done then. I think it takes a few weeks to know for sure if you are negative, but at least then you will know and you won’t have to worry about it anymore.

JULIA
(nods her head)
Yeah, maybe you’re right. I just need to get some sleep. If that’s even possible. I just need some time to think and get this all straight in my mind.

VANESSA
Are you going to see Jake again?

JULIA
I never want to see him again. Look what he’s done to me. Look at the pain he’s causing me.

Vanessa nods her head. She thinks that Julia is thinking a little irrationally right now.

VANESSA
Are you sure you don’t want to call Michael? He has no idea what’s going on, Jules. I can’t imagine being in his place right now.

JULIA
Yeah, I think it’s better that he doesn’t know everything yet. I need some time to put things together. I don’t know how to tell him about this.

VANESSA
Okay, Jules, whatever you want. Listen, we really need to get some sleep. Come on, I’ll make the couch out into a bed.

As they get up from the table, Vanessa leans over to give Julia a hug. Julia is overwhelmed with emotions as she tries her hardest to hold back her tears.
JULIA
Thank you, Vanessa. Thank you.

VANESSA
I’m always here for you, Jules. Everything will be all right, you’ll see.

JULIA
I hope so.

DISSOLVE TO:

47 INT. VANESSA’S APARTMENT - MORNING

The sun streams through the blinds of the windows. Julia, who is sleeping on the couch hugging a pillow close to her face, stirrs slowly as the sunlight wakes her up. She slowly gets up from the couch and walks towards the back of the apartment.

48 INT. VANESSA’S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Vanessa is putting on her make-up in front of her large dresser mirror. She stops and smiles when Julia walks into her room and sits on the edge of Vanessa’s bed.

VANESSA
Hey, good morning. Did you sleep okay?

JULIA
(nodding her head)
Yeah, pretty well.

VANESSA
Good. I didn’t want to wake you. You needed a good night’s rest.

Julia nods her head solemnly.

JULIA
Well, I’m going to hop in the shower now.

VANESSA
Okay.

Vanessa smiles, but looks worried about Julia. She watches Julia close the door and sits for a minute, waiting to hear the shower being turned on. As soon as the shower can be heard, Vanessa walks over to sit on the edge of her bed and picks up the phone.

CUT TO:
Michael, wearing a suit, is at the kitchen table feeding the children when the phone rings. He runs over to pick it up.

MICHAEL
Hello? Vanessa! Oh, I’m so glad to hear from you! Have you heard from Julia?

IN VANESSA’S BEDROOM.

VANESSA
Yeah, actually she’s at my apartment.

IN JULIA’S KITCHEN

MICHAEL
She’s at your apartment? Well, is she okay?

IN VANESSA’S BEDROOM.

VANESSA
Yeah, she’s fine, Michael. I picked her up last night and she was too tired to come home last night, so she slept over here.

IN JULIA’S KITCHEN

MICHAEL
So what happened yesterday? Where was she all afternoon and why didn’t she call me to pick her up?

IN VANESSA’S BEDROOM.

VANESSA
I don’t really know. Ummm.... I guess she just wanted to be alone yesterday or something. I don’t -

IN JULIA’S KITCHEN.

MICHAEL
What’s going on, Vanessa? Is there something serious going on that I need to know about?

VANESSA
(filtered through phone)
Listen, I can’t talk to you about it now. I just wanted you to know that she’s okay. I’ll probably be at work later on today. I’ll see you then.
MICHAEL
What about Julia?

IN VANESSA’S BEDROOM. The shower stops and Vanessa looks up towards the bathroom.

VANESSA
I’m sure you’ll see you later. I have to go now. I’ll talk to you later. Bye.

IN JULIA’S KITCHEN. Michael hangs up the phone and puts his hand over his forehead, as he looks confused and deep in thought.

IN VANESSA’S BEDROOM. Vanessa gets up from the bed quickly as Julia comes out of the bathroom wearing a robe and a towel wrapped around her head. Vanessa smiles at Julia and goes about finishing up her make-up.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. CHICAGO - MORNING

A long shot of the busy Chicago streets as Julia and Vanessa drive in Vanessa’s car. The car pulls into the parking lot of a hospital right in downtown Chicago.

51 INT. VANESSA’S CAR

The car parks and Julia hesitates before getting out of it.

JULIA
I don’t know if I can do this now. Maybe it’s too soon.

VANESSA
Julia, the sooner you know, the better.

JULIA
I’m just so afraid to find out.

VANESSA
Julia, the chances of you having AIDS are so slim. But I know you. No matter what you may think, you will feel better knowing the truth.

Julia looks as if she is going to speak again, but hesitates.

VANESSA
Come on, let’s go. In a few weeks you can put this all behind you and get on with your life. I want you to be your happy self again. All right?
Julia looks at Vanessa and nods her head.

52 INT. HOSPITAL - MAIN LOBBY

Julia and Vanessa walk through the main doors into the lobby. Vanessa looks around, wondering where to go - it's like she's on a mission to get this taken care of. But Julia is in a daze. She looks like a lost puppy, following her best friend.

VANESSA
I wonder where we need to go.

JULIA
I don’t know. It feels weird being back here after everything that happened yesterday.

Vanessa didn't hear Julia's comment as she has her mind on trying to figure out where they need to go to get the HIV test done.

VANESSA
Maybe we should ask someone.

Julia grabs Vanessa's arm and holds her back.

JULIA
Ask someone? No, we'll find it ourselves.

VANESSA
Julia, this hospital's huge. It'll just take a second to ask someone.

JULIA
No, don't. Please. It's embarrassing.

VANESSA
Julia, we're in a hospital. They're not here to judge you. They're here to help. Would it make you feel better if I asked for you?

Julia nods her head. She stands back, feeling self-conscious and looking around her to see if anyone overheard as Vanessa goes to the front desk to ask a nurse where to go. Of course, no one around her is paying attention, but she still looks very uncomfortable. Her hands are grasping onto her arms, hugging herself. Vanessa returns to Julia. She puts a supportive arm around her.

VANESSA
It's on the third floor. Are you okay?

CUT TO:

53 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM
Julia and Vanessa walk into the small waiting room area. Vanessa has to nudge Julia up to the front desk as steps back and lets Julia handle this on her own. The nurse looks up from her work as Julia approaches her.

**JULIA**  
(uncomfortable)  
Hello... Um, I was wondering what the procedure is for getting tested for... AIDS.

Julia looks incredibly uncomfortable and embarrassed as she asks, but the nurse responds to her with friendliness.

**NURSE**  
There is no test specifically for AIDS, so we run a test that detects HIV antibodies in your bloodstream. This involves collecting a blood sample.

**JULIA**  
(nodding her head)  
Okay. Can I get this done today?

**NURSE**  
We really recommend that you have a counseling session before and after the HIV antibody test.

**JULIA**  
A counseling session?

**NURSE**  
Yes, whether or not your test comes out positive, the counseling session is a central part of the testing process. Our counselor will talk to you thoroughly about the testing process and will answer questions that you may have.

Julia looks down, thinking.

**JULIA**  
Oh, I see.

**NURSE**  
Here, take one of these.

The nurse hands Julia a piece of paper with a number on it. The nurse smiles.

**NURSE**  
Everything is kept confidential here. Just take a seat and come back up here when your number is called.
Julia nods her head and smiles lightly at the nurse. She turns around slowly and joins Vanessa, who is already seated among the others waiting their turn. Vanessa looks up from her magazine that she had picked up.

**VANESSA**

What'd the nurse say?

Julia shows Vanessa the number and then sits down next to her.

**JULIA**

I have to wait my turn. She said that I have to talk to a counselor first before I even get tested.

**NURSE**

Number fifty-eight.

Vanessa and Julia look back at Julia's ticket. It reads seventy. They sigh and sit back in their seats.

**VANESSA**

I guess we have awhile to wait, don't we?

Vanessa smiles and then continues to read her magazine. Julia looks restless and nervous, she keeps looking around the waiting room. She looks at some of the different people who are also waiting in the room as well. A teenage girl sits across the room waiting with her boyfriend. They are holding hands, and her head is resting on his shoulder. Close to them sits a man sitting by himself, wearing sunglasses and looking straight ahead. On the other side of the room waits a woman who looks like Julia's same age. The woman looks nervous as well. She skims through a magazine and continually looks around her. She catches Julia's gaze and immediately looks back down at her magazine.

**VANESSA**

Hey, Julia, look at the perfume sample in this magazine. It smells awesome! It must be new, I've never seen it before. Here, smell it.

She hands the magazine over to Julia, but Julia pushes it away.

**JULIA**

I don't care about some stupid perfume. Let's be serious.

**VANESSA**

Gee, sorry. I'm only trying to help, Julia. I'm trying to get your mind off of this.
JULIA
Well, nothing’s going to help.

VANESSA
Okay, I’m sorry I tried.

Vanessa shakes her head out of frustration and continues to read her magazine. Julia picks up a magazine, skims it, and puts it back down. She stands up.

VANESSA
Where are you going?

JULIA
I just have to get out of here.

VANESSA
Do you want me -

JULIA
(sounding frustrated)
Look, I’m just going to the bathroom. I’ll be back.

Vanessa, looking concerned, watches her best friend leave the waiting room.

54 INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

Julia walks out of the waiting room doors into the hallway. She wanders the hall, looking for the bathroom. She walks up to ask one of the nurses that are in the hallway, and she recognizes the nurse that had led her to Jake’s room the day before. The nurse is writing some information down onto the clipboard she has in her hands as Julia as she approaches her.

JULIA
Excuse me.

NURSE
Hello! Mrs. Donovan, right?

JULIA
Yes, um can you tell me where I can find a bathroom?

NURSE
Oh, sure. Go right down the hallway and make a right. You can’t miss it.

JULIA
Thanks.
The nurse smiles, nods her head, and then continues to write on her clipboard. Julia starts to walk away, then hesitates. She turns back around to face the nurse.

**JULIA**

How is Jake doing?

**NURSE**

He's doing much better. In fact, he gets discharged in a few days. I think he's up right now if you would like to visit him.

**JULIA**

Well I--

**NURSE**

I can take you to his room if you don't remember the room number.

**JULIA**

Yeah, all right.

The nurse smiles and leads Julia down the hallway.

**NURSE**

I'm sure Mr. Lancaster will be pleased to have a visitor. He's been down since he's been here. He's hardly eaten any of his food.

Julia looks sad as she listens to the nurse. She feels guilty for leaving Jake's room the way she did yesterday.

As Julia and the nurse come to Jake's room, Julia hesitates before going inside. The nurse smiles, pats Julia's arm, and walks away.

55 **INT. HOSPITAL - JAKE'S ROOM**

Julia slowly walks into Jake's room. Jake is watching television, and doesn't notice her come in.

**JULIA**

Jake?

Jake looks almost startled when he hears Julia's voice. His face then lights up when he looks over at her.

**JAKE**

Julia! I'm so glad you're here. I didn't think you'd ever be back.

Julia looks down at the floor, and nods her head.
JULIA
I wasn’t planning on it. Honestly, Jake, after yesterday I never wanted to see you again.

The happy look on Jake’s face has faded into a look concern and guilt.

JAKE
That’s understandable. You have every right to feel that way.

She nods her head, not responding.

JAKE
Please, come in.

JULIA
I can’t stay long. I just wanted to see if you were all right.

Jake smiles briefly. After an uncomfortable silence, Julia takes a seat in the chair next to Jake’s bed.

JULIA
So, how are you doing? The nurse told me that you’ll be discharged in a few days.

JAKE
Yeah, I was happy to find that out. The food here is terrible.

Jake laughs briefly from his lame joke, but Julia only smiles briefly.

JAKE
More importantly, Julia, how are you doing?

JULIA
I’m holding up, I guess you could say. I really don’t know how to deal with this. I just never thought I would ever have to deal with something like AIDS.

JAKE
Most people think that way. I know I did. And for awhile I was in complete denial. I didn’t want to accept the facts. Then after I finally accepted it, I was full of anger and rage. Is that the way you feel, Julia?

JULIA
I don’t know. I can’t explain the way I feel.
JAKE
You must hate me. Anybody in your position would. I certainly hate myself for everything I’ve done to you. There’s so much that I would go back and change if I could.

Julia nods her head, as she listens to Jake with a solemn expression.

JULIA
Well, that’s just not possible, is it?

Jake shakes his head and looks down in guilt. A brief silence falls between them.

JAKE
So, how is your husband? How is he handling this?

JULIA
He doesn’t know. I haven’t told him yet.

JAKE
(shakes his head in disbelief)
Oh, Julia.

JULIA
(getting defensive)
I’m going to. I just don’t know how to tell him. The thought scares me.

JAKE
That’s the way I felt about telling you. I felt overwhelmed with guilt, and it ended up taking me a few years to come to terms with everything and get up the courage to come and meet with you to tell you the truth.

Another brief silence falls between them.

JULIA
Are you going back to L.A. tomorrow?

JAKE
No. I’m going to look for a place in Chicago when I get a chance. I’ve decided to live here from now on.

JULIA
Really? What about your place in L.A.?
JAKE
I sold it before I came out here. There's nothing keeping me there. I wanted to make a fresh start out here. I was born and raised in Chicago, so I might as well die here, too.

JULIA
(putting her hands over her face)
Oh, Jake. Don't say that stuff. Please!

JAKE
Sorry, Julia. I'm not trying to be inconsiderate, but that's how I feel. I know I am going to die, why cover up the facts?

Julia solemnly shakes her head.

JULIA
Listen, I should probably go now.

JAKE
Thank you, Julia. Thank you for coming to see me. It means a lot. More than you probably realize.

She smiles lightly, stands up, and starts walking towards the door.

JULIA
Can I call you sometime?

Julia, who stands at the door, turns around to face Jake.

JULIA
You have my number.

She then leaves the room. Jake lays in the hospital bed, still looking in the direction of the door where Julia was just standing. He is smiling lightly, because he was so happy that Julia visited him.

56 INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

Julia slowly walks through the hallway, looking bewildered once again. She comes upon the doors of the HIV-testing waiting room.

57 INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM

Vanessa is up at the front desk, talking frantically to the nurse. She turns around as Julia enters the room. The look of relief comes over her face as she quickly walks over to Julia.
VANESSA
There you are! Where have you been?

Before Julia has time to answer, Vanessa grabs her by the arm like a small child. She leads Julia in the direction of the front desk.

VANESSA
(talking quickly)
Your number was just called a few minutes ago. I was just telling the nurse that you went to the bathroom and you'd be back soon. It's good that you came back, because she was about to scratch you off the waiting list! But now that you're back, you can go on ahead. I can't go back with you, so --

Julia yanks her arm from Vanessa's grasp and stops.

JULIA
I can't do this.

VANESSA
What? It's your turn, Jules.

JULIA
No. I -- I can't do this today.

VANESSA
Julia, we talked about this before. It's better to get it over with now so that --

JULIA
I just saw Jake.

VANESSA
Jake?

Julia nods her head, looking very upset again. Vanessa looks at her friend for a second and then sighs. She walks to the front desk.

VANESSA
I'm sorry for the trouble. You can cancel number seventy.

NURSE
Cancel it? But you were just telling me --

The nurse then looks over at Julia, who is standing a little ways away. The look of understanding then crosses her face. She nods her head. Vanessa walks back over to Julia.
NURSE
Number seventy-one please.

VANESSA
Come on, let's go.

58  INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY

Julia and Vanessa walk out of the waitingroom doors and continue walking down the hallway.

VANESSA
So what happened? I thought you never wanted to see Jake again.

JULIA
I thought I didn’t, but he’s so sick. I feel so bad for him.

VANESSA
Julia, he caused all this. The pain that you’re going through right now is all because of him.

JULIA
Yeah, and yesterday I hated him - truly hated him for it. But now I realize that he’s the only one who truly understands what I’m going through.

They stop when they come upon an elevator. Vanessa presses the “down” button.

VANESSA
Okay, I can see that. But what does that have to do with you not wanting to get tested today.

The elevator opens and two nurses and two patients step out. After they leave, Julia and Vanessa enter the elevator.

59  INT. HOSPITAL - ELEVATOR

JULIA
He scared me, Vanessa. He talked about his own death as if it was no big deal. It’s like he’s already accepted his fate and doesn’t want to fight anymore. I’m not ready to do that yet.

VANESSA
Julia, you don’t even know if you have AIDS!

JULIA
I know, I know. I will get tested. I will. I just think Michael
Vanessa needs to know about it first.

Vanessa looks relieved.

**VANESSA**

Oh, good. So, you’re going to tell him tonight then?

**JULIA**

(nodding)

I don’t know how, but I will.

Vanessa smiles at Julia as the elevator stops and opens.

CUT TO:

60 **EXT. HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY**

Vanessa and Julia walk in the parking lot among the many cars that are parked. They come to Vanessa’s white car. Vanessa unlocks the door on the driver’s side.

**VANESSA**

So, where to now?

**JULIA**

Were you thinking of going back to the office?

They both get into the car.

61 **INT. VANESSA’S CAR - DAY**

**VANESSA**

I probably should, but I can take you anywhere you’d like to go first. That is, if you didn’t want to stop in and see Michael at the office.

**JULIA**

(shaking her head)

No, I’ll talk to him when he gets home. As it is, I’m sure he’ll be besieging me with questions about last night.

**VANESSA**

Do you want me to take you home?

**JULIA**

Yeah, I need to be with my kids right now.

Vanessa smiles and starts the car.