KATE
We should probably stop and eat somewhere. If I just knew where we were.

She looks around outside the car then begins rummaging for an atlas in the glove compartment.

MAGGIE
Now that you mention it, I'm starving.

MICHELLE
Who is looking out the window, seemingly oblivious to the conversation.

I could eat.

KATE
Folds the map ceremoniously then announces,

I have no idea where we are!

MICHELLE
Does this mean we aren't going to eat anytime soon?

MAGGIE
Don't worry, we'll find someplace to eat. Okay, everybody, watch for signs. We haven't eaten in

Looks at watch.

Good God, six hours.

KATE
In mock astonishment.

How'd we make it this long?

MICHELLE
Keeping the same tone.

I don't know. I just don't know...

MICHELLE
Suddenly, and pointing as she yells.

Look! Over there. It's a miracle.

LORI
A dream come true!

MAGGIE
To the Golden Arches!

The car speeds along with a high McDonald's sign visible in the distance.

EXT The women emerge from the car, dusty and hot. MAGGIE runs over to hug a Ronald McDonald statue and LORI snaps her picture. She aims it at KATE who gives her a death look but blinds her with the flash anyway. They ramble into the restaurant, dazed by the florescent light and the cool of the air conditioning.

MICHELLE
Taking a deep breath.

I love the smell of grease in the evening.

KATE
I can almost feel my arteries hardening.

MAGGIE
UH--HUH!

LORI
What's everyone getting?

MAGGIE
Staring at her.

Food...And lots of it.

A FULL SHOT as they order at the counter. The camera then follows MICHELLE and KATE as they order first and grab napkins and straws for everyone. They find a booth in the crowded dining area. A Little League game has just ended and what appears to be the entire team is eating at the tables right next to them. MAGGIE joins them in a bit, followed a few minutes later by LORI.

MAGGIE
Looking around the restaurant.

What lovely, well behaved children we're sitting by.

MICHELLE takes the pickle off of her sandwich and tosses it up so LORI can catch it in mouth. LORI bites down on it and they laugh.

And aren't we setting a lovely example?

MICHELLE
Ducking a French fry that flies by her.

No need to fear for the future of the planet or anything with these kids around.

LORI

As she takes a bite of the sandwich.

No sirree. Say, Miss Educator of America's Future, what's the national attention span down to these days, 12 seconds, 10 seconds.

KATE

Taking a drink

More like .2 seconds with the kids I've had.

MAGGIE

It's really a shame that this is the future of the world.

A little boy in a Simpsons' tee shirt is tackled by what appears to be his big brother, who proceeds to put French fries up his nostrils.

I thought we were bad!

KATE

What was it you used to call us?

MAGGIE

Swallowing a bite before she speaks.

The Junkfood Generation. Everything we eat is garbage for the body.

Gesturing at their trays.

Case in point. Everything we read or see or listen to is garbage for the mind. And soul, if we have any left.

KATE

Defensively.

Oh, so, poetic about the apocalypse. If we're all so awful, then how come you're so concerned about saving the planet. Why not just let us all go to hell in a handbasket?

MICHELLE
Is that a quarter, Kate?

KATE
No... It's an expression and that's the same as a quote. As I was saying... Why do you care if you've been fed so much garbage?

MAGGIE
I don't know, I'm stubborn I guess. I didn't say it had to be this way. It's not my fault Charlie's Angels were our first role models but...

LORI
Interrupting her.

I wanted to be Kelly.

MAGGIE
Which one was that?

LORI
I don't remember... But she was the one I always had to be when we played Charlie's Angels.

MAGGIE
Whatever. So...

Gesturing with a French fry.

It is my fault if I let them still be my role models. I don't want to settle for garbage my whole life, y'know? I might not have the utmost faith in my generation, but it's the only generation I've got. And it might be the only generation we have left. These youngsters don't give me too much hope for a brighter day.

KATE
Looking at a hellion who is staging a battle between his Happy Meal toys. Her arm is resting on the back of the booth. She turns back to MAGGIE to speak.

I know what you mean.

MICHELLE
Are we ready to go? The leaders of
tomorrow are starting to scare me?

LORI

Almost wistfully as she scoots out of the booth.

"This world demands the qualities of youth; not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination...a predominance of courage over timidity."

KATE

Turning to her, a little surprised.

JFK?

LORI

Matter of factly.

RFK.

MAGGIE

Not to be outdone.

"There is nothing like youth. Youth is the Lord of Life...Youth has a kingdom waiting for it."

KATE

Shaw?

MAGGIE

No. Oscar Wilde.

MICHELLE

Clapping her hands.

Break! Let's go before we get anymore boring.

She begins to walk out of the restaurant. KATE follows close behind her, as she carries her drink out with her. Slightly dejected, MAGGIE and LORI walk out together, being careful to avoid the Little Leaguers.

MAGGIE

Somewhat thoughtfully.

I don't know why they're in such a hurry. I've got the keys. They're not going
anywhere until I get there.

EXT They all fall into the Escort. MAGGIE stretches before getting in. She says something to KATE, who gets a map out of the glove compartment. As MAGGIE enters the car, KATE is trying to determine exactly where they are. As she is unfolding the map, MAGGIE pulls out of the parking lot. A LONG SHOT as they drive away.

A MEDIUM SHOT of the front seat as KATE and MAGGIE discuss the route.

KATE
Let me see. We are here.

She points to a place on the map.

MAGGIE
Uh, Kate, I'm driving. I can't really look at the map. Why don't you just tell me where we are.

KATE
That's probably a better idea. The way I see it, the next major city we hit will be Tulsa. So if we want to sleep tonight, we should probably stop there.

A CLOSE UP of LORI, arms folded over her chest, as she stare straight ahead.

LORI
Barely audible.

I don't want to stop in Tulsa.

KATE
In CLOSE UP, refolding the map and looking for another city.

Okay... There's got to be some other place to stay. Oklahoma's a big state.

LORI
In CLOSE UP, still not moving.

I don't want to stop anywhere in Oklahoma, especially Tulsa though.
MEDIUM SHOT of the front seat.

MAGGIE
Oh, so I should just drive all night, without stopping. And then we can die. That's a sound plan, Lori.

KATE

Turning around, crinkling the map as she move.

Why can't we stop in Oklahoma...OH!

A MEDIUM SHOT of the backseat.

MICHELLE

MICHELLE, who had been staring out the window, now faces the group and explains.

S-T-E-V-E lives in Oklahoma.

LORI glares at her.

A MEDIUM SHOT of the front seat.

MAGGIE
Oh, now I get it. We can't be in the same state as St...oops.

KATE
Don't say the "s" word.

LORI, who has squirmed in her seat, is now looking out at the road.

LORI
I just don't want to deal with him, that's all. And we spend the night, I'll try to call him. And then I'll hang up. And I'll call back. It'll just be a big scene and I don't want to do it.

MEDIUM SHOT of front seat. MAGGIE and KATE look at one another.
MAGGIE
Maybe you could just not call him.
We could find something else to do.
Right, girls?

Gives a prodding look to KATE.

KATE
Sure. We always find something to do.

CLOSE UP, a little disappointed.

LORI
I know, I just wish we didn't have to stop
anywhere in the state.

She rests her head on the window and closes her eyes.

INT CLOSE UP, MAGGIE is searching for a radio station. It is now dark and the car is quiet. MAGGIE looks into the rearview mirror and notices LORI and MICHELLE are asleep. She glances at KATE, who is in the same condition. Finding nothing on the radio, she switches it off. She stares into the darkness and sees the Oklahoma state line sign. She suddenly starts singing "Oklahoma," waking the group.

A MEDIUM SHOT of the frontseat, so we now see KATE, who wakes up with a jolt. She hits the window as she tries to sit upright again.

KATE
What the hell? What's going on?
Where are we?

MAGGIE
Oklahoma! Hence the singing.
And that will be a quarter, missy.

A MEDIUM SHOT of the backseat, MICHELLE and LORI groggily coming to. LORI, hearing they are in Oklahoma, just hangs her head in her hands.

LORI
God, this is depressing.

MICHELLE pats her on the hand and rests her head back against the window and closes her eyes again.

A MEDIUM SHOT of the frontseat finds

KATE
To MAGGIE

Are you tired?

MAGGIE
I will be once we stop. But I'm okay for now. I think I'm in some kind of road trance. I guess I'm hypnotized to fall asleep at the wheel.

Reassuring her.

But I'll let you know when I get tired. S-T-E-V-E or not, we'll stop.

LORI

Chiming in from the back.

I heard that.

MEDIUM SHOT of frontseat. KATE has found a radio station and they are singing along with a country song. It is late but everyone has caught a second wind. MAGGIE, however, gets a worried look on her face after a few moments of the singing. A CLOSE UP reveals the panic she is beginning to feel.

MAGGIE
Please. Oh, God, please, no.

KATE
What's wrong?

The car suddenly lurches forward and begins sputtering.

MAGGIE
THAT'S what's wrong!

KATE
Are you giving it gas?

MAGGIE looks at her but refuses to dignify the question with an answer.

LORI

Leans forward.

Do you think we should stop? Do you need to pull over?

MAGGIE
Annoyed and pumping the gas pedal with all of her strength.

      It's done this before. I hate when it does this. I hate it.

Looks at KATE

      I really hate it.

      KATE
      Pull over. We can't keep going like this.

      MAGGIE
      How far are we from Tulsa?

      KATE
      Not far. A mile or so, maybe.

      MAGGIE
      Okay, we'll try to make it to the next exit. Everybody pray. And Kate, there's a five in my wallet. You better just put it in your little cuss box now. It'll save time later.

EXT A LONG SHOT of the car creeping onto an exit ramp. Every move is a lurch, followed by a sputter. The car makes it off of the ramp and turns onto a barren road. After a few moments of travel, they run into a small hotel. MAGGIE pulls into the drive and they all get out of the car, slowly.

EXT A MEDIUM SHOT of MAGGIE as she throws herself on the hood of the car. She smacks it twice and screams "why" at it. Some people look out of the windows of their rooms. MICHELLE walks over to her.

      MICHELLE
      Do you want to look under the hood?

      MAGGIE
      What are we going to look for? Do you anything about cars?

      MICHELLE
      No...But maybe if we look, we'll see something that looks weird. And we can check the oil.

      MAGGIE
      Walks around to pop the hood from inside the car. As she moves back to lift the hood, she speaks.

      The oil's fine. It wouldn't just sputter and die like this because of oil, would it?
KATE brings a paper towel to MICHELLE and MAGGIE so they can check the oil. LORI has disappeared, but they haven't had a chance to really notice yet. The three gather around the engine as MICHELLE checks the oil. MAGGIE taps her fingers on the car as she waits. KATE is studying the engine itself, tightening every knob and adjusting every wire she sees. MICHELLE puts the dipstick back into the car and lets MAGGIE close the hood.

MAGGIE
Well?

MICHELLE
No oil. You just need to put some more in and it should be fine.

MAGGIE
Now I feel like a real dumbass. Speaking of which...

KATE
I don't know where she went.

MICHELLE
Money says she found a payphone.

MAGGIE
Probably a good bet...Well, I guess we should try to get a room, eh?

MICHELLE
You two go get us some...

Looking around the motel and parking lot

Accommodations? And I'll try to find Lori.

She walks away.

KATE
C'mon, Mag. Let's go see what Norman has for us.

MAGGIE
Okay, but if I see a stuffed bird in the office, I bolt...Oil or no.

A FULL SHOT of LORI in a phone booth at the end of a row of rooms. It is from MICHELLE'S POV and we hear more and more of LORI'S conversation as MICHELLE moves closer. LORI'S back is to her so she doesn't see her until she taps on the glass. When she turns to face MICHELLE, it is obvious that she is crying. MICHELLE'S face falls a little seeing LORI like that. She wanders off to leave LORI alone.
A MEDIUM SHOT of MICHELLE, who finds a Coke machine and begins rummaging in her purse for change. Finally finding enough, she puts the change in but, after she make each of her selections, the empty light comes on. She eventually gets two cans, though, and sits on the curb waiting for LORI. She comes over in a moment.

LORI

As MICHELLE hands her the can, she wipes the remainder of the tears from her eyes.

Mr. Pibb?

MICHELLE

Apologetically.

That was all they had. How is he?

LORI

He's okay. I haven't talked to him in months. He's so different now. And I don't ever know what to say.

MICHELLE

Taking a swig of her Mr. Pibb.

That's why you usually hang up.

CLOSE UP of LORI as she continues. There is buzzing red neon sign behind her. She is warmed by its light and the scene is quiet except for her voice and the light's accompaniment.

LORI

He's dating someone. Not Kathy... You know the one he cheated on me... Well, she dumped him.

She laughs softly but not at all happily.

So he has someone else now. I asked him he was going to marry her. I thought that was a pretty legitimate question, we're of an age, right? He said... oh God... "No... I almost got married once." And he asked me if I was seeing anyone. Jeesh, like an idiot, I said no. You know what the worst part was, Shel?

Before MICHELLE can respond, LORI continues.

He told me he missed me. He was so glad to hear from me because he missed me. He missed me. I didn't think he would,
y'know. I thought that I just missed him. But he misses me, too.

She takes a drink.

Then I told him I had to get off the phone or else I'd really start crying. But I think I've held up pretty well, right?

She sets the can down and starts crying. MICHELLE moves over and puts her arm around her.

MICHELLE
You're doing fine, Lori. Just fine.

LORI

Her nose and eyes now red.

You mean it, Shel?

MICHELLE nods to her and they both smile. KATE enters the scene and stands looking down at them for a moment.

KATE
I hate to interrupt the party, girls. But I thought maybe you'd want to retire to our spacious room.

The three of them get up and KATE leads them to the room. There are two beds with cranberry comforters on them. The curtain at the window matches the comforter perfectly, giving a dark look to the whole room. The rest of the furniture is a nightstand between the beds, a dresser with a TV on it and small round table with two chairs. MAGGIE, in a MEDIUM SHOT, is on the far bed, looking at the phonebook, when everyone else enters the room.

MAGGIE
Good news. There's a gas station about a mile up the road. So tomorrow morning we can walk up there. And, it gets better, there's a diner there. Yet another greasy spoon we can savor.

LORI

As she moves to the opposite bed. The result is a MEDIUM SHOT of the two beds. The other two enter or leave the scene from this shot.

Walk? A mile? I haven't walked a mile since...I think I had to do it once for a class. But that's it. Walk? Can't we get oil at that Circle K?
MAGGIE
Good idea. We're cooking now! But there's more. Who wants to do laundry tonight? All night laundry across the street, right next to a Circle K. We have found Mecca girls. I think we should all just stay here to live out the rest of our days.

LORI
No way. I don't want to spend another extra second in this state.

MAGGIE
Talked to Steve, huh?

LORI nods her head. MICHELLE walks over to the mirror and pulls her hair into a ponytail and begins to look for a rubber band. KATE moves to sit down by LORI.

MICHELLE
Looking in the mirror, down at the dresser.

Does anyone have a rubber band? I really need to get my hair up.

MAGGIE
As she looks at the air conditioner.

Maybe I can try to turn up the AC. But I don't want to break it. I'd hate to cause trouble in Nowhere, Oklahoma.

MICHELLE
Turning to MAGGIE, and soon sitting by her.

Did you say something about laundry?

MAGGIE
I thought it would give us something to do. Maybe buy a six pack at the Circle K.

MICHELLE
I'll go with you. This room gives me the willies.
MAGGIE

To LORI and KATE.

I'm not sleeping with her! She'll keep me up all night looking for killers.

KATE and LORI, MEDIUM SHOT, sitting on the other bed.

KATE

Lori, are you going to go with them?

LORI

I don't know. I'd hate to stay cooped up in here. It is a nice night.

A FULL SHOT of both beds for the conversation.

MAGGIE

Exactly. We can put some laundry in, sit out under the stars, drink some beer, and keep you away from the phone.

LORI

I'm not that bad, am I?

MAGGIE

No.

LORI

Really?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

LORI and MAGGIE rise to leave.

LORI, in CLOSE UP, as they get to the door. She turns to KATE and MICHELLE.

LORI

See, I'm not really that bad. Right?

MICHELLE, in CLOSE UP, nods her head with an affirmative. She continues to nod until LORI and MAGGIE shut the door, when she begins to shake her head. She and KATE fall back on the bed in laughter. They are interrupted when MAGGIE pops her head back in.
CLOSE UP, MAGGIE, as she leans her head into the room.

MAGGIE
Hurry over, 'kay?

She waves to them and shuts the door.

EXT MICHELLE and KATE, FULL SHOT, as they wander around the parking lot. They stroll rather than sprint to the laundrymat, with the Circle K as their beacon. The two of them cross the deserted street and walk up to the laundry.

INT MAGGIE and LORI in the laundrymat, MEDIUM SHOT, as they "sort" through the dirty clothes from the past few days. Occasionally they throw shirts at one another. At first they don't notice KATE and MICHELLE when they come in. But soon the four of them are gathered around their small pile of laundry.

LORI
Looking down at the feeble assortment of clothes.

This was a good idea, Mag. We might have half a load here.

MAGGIE
Clever. Now who has the detergent?
No one. We can't do laundry without detergent. Why didn't one of you bring some?

MICHELLE
I'm sorry. I didn't think. I'll go...Wait.

MAGGIE
You're pretty quick tonight. It only took you eighty bejillion minutes to figure out that one.

MICHELLE
Oh, it didn't take me that long. Really, though, I can walk over and get some. But shouldn't they have some in here?

She looks around the place but finds no laundry supplies.

All right. Really, I'll walk over and get some stuff.

KATE
You want me to go with?

MICHELLE nods and they walk out of the laundrymat. As they leave, two young men
enter, carrying four baskets of laundry. They walk to the opposite end, then back out to their car.

MAGGIE and LORI looking at each other, a little puzzled.

The two men re-enter the laundromat carrying detergent and beer.

MAGGIE and LORI looking at each other, pleased looks on their faces.

MAGGIE

In a deadpan voice.

Two of them and two of us!

LORI

Replying in the same tone.

Two of them and four of us!

MAGGIE bites her lip, a bit disappointed, and nods in remembrance. The two of them continue to talk until they are suddenly interrupted from a voice at the other end of the laundromat.

JEFF

Hey, you want a beer?

They turn to look at the speaker. LORI is a little taken aback. MAGGIE is not so shocked.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

He begins to walk the length of the laundromat to bring her the beer. As she jumps off the table they have been sitting on, LORI grabs her arm. MAGGIE is startled and looks at her for an answer.

LORI

Do you think it wise to accept beer from strange men?

MAGGIE

Lori, we're in a laundromat in Oklahoma. They're harmless.

JEFF approaches them, handing the beer to MAGGIE. LORI glares at him.

Thanks.
JEFF
You're welcome. I'm Jeff. That's George.

GEORGE waves from the other end as he sifts through his clothes.

MAGGIE
Nice to meet you. This is Lori. Say "hello," Lori.

LORI grumbles, drumming her fingers on the table in annoyance.

And I'm Maggie. We're driving across the country. And you are...?

JEFF
We're on the lam. We killed a man in Missouri.

He smiles broadly and is soon joined by MAGGIE in his smile. LORI only looks more angry. MICHELLE and KATE come back now and are surprised to see more people in the laundromat, and that these people are talking to their friends.

LORI
Almost shouting.

Kate, Shel, over here.

They walk over and smile and JEFF, who is still laughing. GEORGE walks over to them now. All of them are gathered around the little pile of laundry in an awkward circle.

Look, girls, Maggie made a new friend. He's a criminal.

MEDIUM SHOT of MAGGIE, JEFF and LORI.

MAGGIE
Get over it, Lor. It was a joke.

Turning to JEFF.

Right?

CLOSE UP of Jeff as he takes a swig of beer.

In MEDIUM SHOT, LORI, standing, begins to put the laundry in the washing machine. Her action is deliberate and concentrated. She takes the soap from MICHELLE and rips open the box.
LORI

Does anyone have a cup? I need to measure this.

MAGGIE

Turning to her.

Just pour some in.

LORI

Explaining.

We don't want a sudsy mess. So we need to be exact.

MAGGIE walks toward her and grabs the box. LORI will not let go of it, however. They struggle for a moment until both of them have a good deal of detergent on them. LORI measures an amount in her hand and pours it into the machine and closes the door. She walks toward MICHELLE and KATE for a beer. MAGGIE opens the machine door and dusts the detergent on her off into the washer. She then sits back on the table.

MAGGIE

Picking up her beer.

Where we were? Oh, you and Butch Cassidy are running from the law.

JEFF

More like Neal Cassady.

LORI

Leaning in.

Huh?

JEFF turns to her and replies condescendingly.

JEFF

Neal Cassady...Friend of Ginsberg, Burroughs, Kerouac...

LORI

Rolls her eyes and throws back her head.

Oh, good Lord. I cannot handle that tonight.
She grabs MICHELLE'S hand. They head for the video game.

C'mon.

MEDIUM SHOT of MAGGIE, sitting on the table, JEFF, standing in front of her, and KATE on a bench by MAGGIE.

MAGGIE

Explaining to JEFF.

She's not very literary.

She takes a drink of beer. JEFF turns to GEORGE, who is now reading a book.

JEFF

Hey, Geo, throw me my book will ya?

GEORGE rifles through a duffel bag and retrieves a dog-eared notebook. He hurls at the other table, causing the confused but interested KATE to duck. MAGGIE merely drinks her beer, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

KATE

What's that?

JEFF

Ruffling through the pages.

My writing. Poems, stories, personal stuff.

KATE

Oh...Maggie writes.

MAGGIE

Not really.

KATE

Sure you do, all the time...

She is silenced by MAGGIE putting the cold beer bottle on her neck.

A FULL SHOT of JEFF on the table.

JEFF

Scoffing at MAGGIE.

What do you write? Did you write for the college paper? All idealism and shiny
phrases that don't mean a thing in practice. But it felt good to at least write it, didn't it?

He hops up on the other table, facing MAGGIE and KATE.

A CLOSE UP of JEFF as he continues.

JEFF
Or maybe you keep a journal. Secret thoughts and desires, heartbreak and love gone wrong. Yeah, you write... You write quaint bourgeoisie bullshit that doesn't matter.

MAGGIE as she turns to a stunned KATE.

MAGGIE
It's refreshing to meet someone who's an asshole right away, and doesn't waste your time by being polite at first.

MEDIUM SHOT of JEFF crouches on the table to be face to face with MAGGIE and KATE.

JEFF
You're funny.

MAGGIE smiles, though she knows he's being sarcastic.

Laugh all you want.

He opens his notebook. And reads from it.

"The wrench ripped into my open flesh, blood oozing, pus swelling in me. I'm ugly and sick of this place and the blood is warm, the blood is soft, the blood is me."

LORI, noticing the show, returns to the scene, leaving MICHELLE to fight the Toxic Invaders on her own. She stands next to JEFF by his table.

LORI
Yecch! What the hell is that? That's writing? That's your art? What's it about? What's it mean?
JEFF resumes the standing position. The camera follows him up.

JEFF
It's about life. They tell me what to do and how to be. And it just fucking rips me apart. And nobody gives a shit.

MEDIUM SHOT of LORI, now standing beside KATE and MAGGIE.

MAGGIE
To KATE
You could make a mint off of this guy.

LORI
To JEFF
Who's "they"?

KATE
To LORI
That's a good question. I was wondering who "they" were, too.

JEFF still standing on the table.

JEFF
They! They! Everyone. All those people who won't let me do what I want. They stifle me and try to make me conform to their rules and petty lives.

MICHELLE walks over, eating a candy bar, and stands next to JEFF'S table. She hears only the last part of the conversation.

MICHELLE
Sounds like basic paranoia to me.

LORI
To JEFF
Kind of like what you did to Maggie. Her writing isn't nearly as important as yours. Her writing has to conform to your rules or
it's no good.

KATE
Excellent remark, counselor.

JEFF

He snickers.

Figures.

MAGGIE
What's that mean?

JEFF
She's just going to be Miss "L. A. Law" when she grows up, that's all.

MAGGIE
And what are you going to do?

JEFF

Sneering at her.

What are you going to do?

In a panic, MAGGIE bolts from the laundrymat, MICHELLE fast behind her leaving LORI and KATE to haggle with JEFF.

LORI

After she opens another beer, and pointing at JEFF, who is sitting on the table now.

You're damn right. I'm going to make something of myself. While you're whining about the awful state of the world, I'll be doing something about it. God willing, I'll pull in six figures and maybe I can do something decent with it. Instead of being like you, and your angst, and your art, and your bullshit, who will just bitch about everything and not have one goddamn resource to do anything about it.

She takes a swig of beer and arches her eyebrows at him.

EXT MAGGIE, LONG SHOT, throwing rocks in the parking lot, while MICHELLE sits on a car.

MICHELLE
Did he scare you?

MAGGIE

Still throwing rocks and not turning around.

Just a bit.

She hits a nearby building and walks toward the car. She sits next to MICHELLE

MEDIUM SHOT of MICHELLE and MAGGIE on the car.

MAGGIE

Still holding a rock in her hand.

He has a point. What am I doing?

MICHELLE

Maggie, there's a lot you can do. You're smart. Actually, sometimes you're brilliant.

MAGGIE smiles in thanks to her.

There's so much you could do.

MAGGIE

Like what? Jesus, four years of college and look at me.

MICHELLE

Yeah, look at you.

MAGGIE

She sighs.

I just don't want to spend the rest of my life sitting in some little room with twenty other people who are all doing the exact same thing I'm doing. I'm not cut out to be a button-pusher. You know, I don't take orders well.

MICHELLE

No! I hadn't realized that. But you always going to go off and write the Great American Novel?

MAGGIE

Yeah, me and 35 million other people.
MICHELLE
I just don't think you should let what some asshole in a laundromat get to you like this.

MAGGIE
It's just that he's right. And, y'know, there's nothing worse than an asshole who's right.

MICHELLE
Maggie, my dear, there's nothing you can't do. You just haven't decided what you can do yet, that's all. You'll figure it out and be great at it. Am I right?

MAGGIE
But when do I figure it out? I'm running out of time here. You're all actually doing something with your lives and I'm...

Her voice trails off at the end as she tries to think of something.

MICHELLE
You could go back to school. That way you could delay real life even longer.

MAGGIE
But it's still out there, waiting for me, right?

MICHELLE
Maggie, reality is overrated.

They both smile at the repetition of MAGGIE'S maxim. MAGGIE rests her head on the car's windshield and MICHELLE does the same. They both stare straight up.

MICHELLE
Big Sky country. Close enough.

MAGGIE
Who's car is this, anyway?

FULL SHOT of the laundromat's door. LORI barrels out, slamming the door behind her. She sees MAGGIE and MICHELLE on the car and walks over to them, from their POV.

LORI
Screaming at them.

He is a freak! "Oh, doom and gloom. Terror and sorrow." Freak! Why did you
talk to him?

MEDIUM SHOT of the three of them on or by the car.

MAGGIE

In CLOSE UP as she tries to answer her.

Well, he...

MICHELLE

CLOSE UP as she defends MAGGIE.

How was she supposed to know he was so scary?

MEDIUM SHOT of the group.

MAGGIE
He offered me a beer. We're in Oklahoma, I thought he'd be okay.

LORI
Well you thought wrong.

MICHELLE
It was an honest mistake.
Is Kate still in there?

CLOSE UP of LORI as she takes a drink of beer and shrugs her shoulders.

LORI
Huh? Oh, I guess so.

MICHELLE jumps off of the car and runs back inside. MAGGIE hops off, grabs LORI'S hand and runs inside too.

PAN of laundromat, KATE and JEFF sitting on tables facing each other. His friend is still at the opposite end of the room, watching his laundry spin.

KATE and JEFF, MEDIUM SHOT, as the others join them.
KATE

To JEFF

So what you're saying is that the entire system is corrupt. So you're an anarchist?

JEFF

Wincing as if in pain.

See, you have to slap some arbitrary label on me. Why can't I just be who I am?

KATE

I didn't slap a label on you. I just asked a question. But, read a dictionary. If you don't want any government, you're an anarchist. Very simple.

JEFF

You don't get it. You've lived your whole life in a suburban cocoon, all blue-eyes and cotton candy dances, mom and dad to tuck you into your canopy bed everynight. You don't know a fucking thing about me.

KATE

But you seem to know so much about me. How is that possible? You don't make any sense. None at all. It's a wonder you have any friends.

She blinks at him and turns to her friends who are sitting by her.

I think the washer's finished.

MAGGIE as she stands to move the load to a dryer. She makes it a point to walk the wet clothing by JEFF and brush him with a cold sock or two. The camera follows her in the semicircle she makes as she puts the laundry in the dryer and sits on the opposite side of the table. As she sits down, we resume the MEDIUM SHOT, and LORI hands her a beer.

MAGGIE

Angst!

Is her only reply. The joke is lost on MICHELLE, but the others laugh. All except JEFF, who returns to his spot by GEORGE. He is busy scribbling in his notebook as they watch him.

That's too bad. I was starting to get used to the little guy.
KATE
I just don't understand it. He spends all his time sobbing about the world. Grow up, get a job.

MAGGIE
I should be so lucky.

MICHELLE and LORI get up to go back to the video game. When JEFF looks up at the movement, LORI waves maliciously. MAGGIE and KATE stay at the table, facing the dryer.

KATE
So, did you come to any grand conclusions in the parking lot?

MAGGIE
Not exactly. Shel just did a little cheerleading. I guess that's what I needed.

KATE
Maybe...He really got to you, though.

MAGGIE
Just made me think a little.

KATE
You have to do what you have to do, Mag. If you want to drive that car forever and write adventure stories, fine. But do it. You can't keep postponing it.

MAGGIE
Sarcastically.

Thank you. I feel much better now.
I think there's some broken glass in the parking lot I can stick under my fingernails. Excuse me.

She jumps from the table but KATE catches her arm.

KATE
I'm sorry, Maggie. But you do need to think about this. And I have to be the one to tell you. Lori's too confused herself. And your Shel's hero, she can't see what you're doing to yourself. Face facts, Mag.

MAGGIE
Do you always have to be so goddamn
practical? Oh...

She fishes into her pocket, finds a quarter and hands it to KATE, then goes back outside.

MAGGIE in the parking lot, FULL SHOT, walking around. JEFF comes out and walks up to her.

CLOSE UP of MAGGIE as she sees him approaching.

MAGGIE
Good Lord, what do you want.

JEFF
Thrusts a piece of paper at her.

Here.

He turns and goes inside. He meets KATE, LORI and MICHELLE as they leave the laundromat, carrying their bag of now clean clothes. As the door shuts, LORI call to JEFF.

LORI
It was nice to meet you...

The door slams shut.

dick!

The three of them approach MAGGIE and form a circle around her as she reads the paper JEFF gave her.

MAGGIE
Reading, with some help and reactions from the others.

"Sweet bitch." That's a nice title, don't you think? I can't wait to read the rest to you. "Fire pours from you, sugary venom I want to drink."

LORI makes a gagging noise.

It gets better. "You despise me because I am like you. I want you because you are like me. To tame you with leather straps and steel spikes would be to soothe my soul. To force my words into you and crush your honey smile," That's especially nice, that crushing business. Here's the
grand finale, though. "would be pleasure supreme. Destroy you, destroy me and the sun, for once, shines bright."

KATE
That's sick. Why would he write that?
Some tree died so he could insult you!
Terrible, just awful.

FULL SHOT the group walks back toward the hotel. They are still talking about the poem.

MAGGIE
I just wanted a beer. How was I supposed to know he was Travis Bickle.

LORI
I'm just glad George didn't talk to us.
That might have been worse.

MICHELLE
Nothing could be worse.

KATE
I think she's right. He was probably the worst human being I've ever met, personally.

MAGGIE
Oh, he wasn't that bad. He's just a little misguided, that's all.

MICHELLE
A lot misguided. I think we should sleep in shifts.

INT NIGHT OVERHEAD SHOT, MICHELLE is staring at the ceiling, her hands folded on her chest. MAGGIE is asleep next to her. LORI and KATE are sleeping in the other bed. MAGGIE turns over and smacks MICHELLE, causing her to let out a startled yell, which wakes MAGGIE.

MEDIUM SHOT of MAGGIE and MICHELLE.

MAGGIE
Go to sleep, will ya?

MICHELLE
I can't. I don't like hotels.
MAGGIE
Shel, if you don't sleep now, when are you going to sleep. Remember, sleeping in the car is verboten.

MICHELLE
I hate hotels. And what if Jeff really is a killer and he hates us and he wants to kill you and breaks in and tries to murder us.

MAGGIE
If Jeff and his gang of marauders bust in here, don't you think we'd hear it?

MICHELLE nods.

Then we'd be awake. So you don't need to be awake now. So, close your eyes. Go ahead, close your eyes. Now picture yourself in your own bedroom. Where the walls are, where the windows are. Switch this room around until it matches your room. Okay?

MICHELLE
Goodnight, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Goodnight, Shel.

INT DAY MICHELLE is the first one up, and she is watching TV. The noise wakes up LORI and KATE, who are closer to it than MAGGIE is. MAGGIE soon rolls over and joins the commotion.

MICHELLE
Oh good, you're all up. I already took a shower.

She wrings her long hair.

So whoever's next can jump in.

MAGGIE
I'll go. Then I can go over and fix the car. And you two lovely morning people can get ready while I'm gone. How ya feeling today, Lori?

LORI grunts at her. MAGGIE grabs some clothes from the laundry bag and goes into the bathroom. KATE and LORI stare at the TV. MICHELLE is watching "The Brady Bunch."
Helping her.

MICHELLE
Did you ever wonder what happened to Mike and Carol's first people?

KATE

Spouses?

MICHELLE
Yeah, they've each got three kids, but nobody ever mentions the missing parents. Didn't they want custody?

KATE
I think they're supposed to be dead.

MICHELLE
Okay, then the kids would have some kind of tremendous trauma. They couldn't just start being cheerleaders and football heros. A necessary period of mourning is essential.

KATE
You're probably right, Shel. Is anyone hungry?

LORI
Please don't mention food. How much did I drink last night?

MICHELLE
Not that much. But you were angry, and you didn't sleep well.

LORI looks at her surprised.

I was awake a lot last night.

KATE
Lori, what you need is a good hardy breakfast. That'll make you feel better. Does that sound good to you, Shel?

MICHELLE
Uh-huh, I could eat. Oh, this is my favorite one....

KATE
Throws her head back in disgust.

Can't you give me a straight answer?
It's very simple, do you want to eat
or not? I know you "could," but it's a yes
or no question. Just answer it that
way.

MICHELLE
You're in a fine mood today! Bad
dreams last night? Yes, I am
hungry, therefore I could eat.

LORI
If you two are going to fight, could
you do it with a little less volume and
vehemence. I'm not up to arguments
right now.

KATE
We aren't arguing. We just had a
discussion, that's all.

LORI
Discussion's over, then. All right?

MAGGIE, MEDIUM SHOT, emerges from the bathroom, dressed and toweling her hair. KATE brushes by her on her way to take a shower. MAGGIE sits on her bed and continues to dry her hair. LORI and MICHELLE say nothing.

MAGGIE
What's going on here? I sense a little
hostility.

MICHELLE
Classic separation anxiety, that's all.

LORI
What she said.

MAGGIE
I'm going to get some oil. Shel?

MICHELLE
Yeah, I'll walk with you.

MAGGIE
Will be back in a bit to pick you two
up.

LORI
Okay, I'll try to be ready.
MAGGIE and MICHELLE leave. KATE comes out of the shower and looks around.

KATE

CLOSE UP

Where'd everybody go?

LORI

Getting out of bed, slowly.

They went to fix the car. I'm going to shower now. And then we should be ready to go.

KATE sits on the bed and watches TV as she puts lotion on her legs. When she is finished, she lays her head back on the pillow and closes her eyes. LORI then comes back in.

LORI

Kate, oh, sorry...Could you throw me that brush.

KATE tosses the brush on the table to her.

Thanks. Back in a flash.

KATE

Calling to her.

Take your time.

EXT DAY FULL SHOT MAGGIE and MICHELLE walking on the road. They kick rocks and pick up leaves as they walk. MAGGIE occasionally tossles her hair to dry it. MICHELLE tries to comb her hair with her fingers.

MICHELLE

It'll be hot today.

MAGGIE

Uh-huh.

MICHELLE

How far do you think we'll get today.

MAGGIE

Well, we're starting earlier than I thought we would. We should make pretty good time. But we'll probably have to stop somewhere tonight.
Almost wistfully.

MICHELLE

That's good.

MAGGIE

Uh-huh.

INT DAY MEDIUM SHOT In the hotel room, LORI is out of the shower and putting her hair back in a headband. KATE is putting on some makeup. MAGGIE and MICHELLE enter carrying coffees and a paperbag of doughnuts. The four of them begin packing up. Each hands something to the other as they run across various items in the room. MAGGIE disappears into the bathroom and comes back out.

MAGGIE

That's everything. Grab a doughnut and let's hit the road.

EXT The four of them are in their normal stations in the car. It is midmorning, the western sun shining brightly. A FULL SHOT of the car as it speeds down the dusty highway.

INT MEDIUM SHOT KATE and MAGGIE in the front seat. KATE is tuning the radio, MAGGIE is adjusting her sunglasses. LORI leans forward.

LORI

Where are we?

KATE

Showing her a spot on the map.

Right about here.

LORI

Looking around at the barren scenery.

So are we lost?

MAGGIE

No, we just aren't sure where we are, that's all.

KATE gives her a disgusted look and tries to fold the map.

INT Later in the day, the sun is beating relentlessly into the Escort now. MEDIUM SHOT
of the backseat, LORI and MICHELLE laughing.

CLOSE UP, a dozing KATE as she revives.

    KATE
    What's so funny?

MEDIUM SHOT, backseat, as LORI leans forward.

    LORI
    Shelly's joke.

    KATE

Turning to look at the backseat.

    What joke?

    MICHELLE
    You'll think it's stupid. I don't know what made me think of it. Oh, it was a bag of chips on the road. That's what it was, Lor.

    KATE
    Nevermind, what's the joke?

    MICHELLE
    You'll think it's dumb...What did the battery say to the potato chip?

She pauses to let everyone ponder.

    "I'm Eveready, if you're Frito-Lay."

MICHELLE and LORI succumb to fits of laughter. KATE turns her back to them and rests her head against the window.

CLOSE UP, KATE'S head against the glass, her reflection into the car.

    KATE
    You're right, that was stupid.

    MICHELLE
    I told you you wouldn't like it.
EXT The car glides down the road. Occasionally another car or truck passes, but the highway is surprisingly bare for midday.

INT MEDIUM SHOT of frontseat. MAGGIE wipes the sweat from her eyes under her sunglasses. KATE is looking at the map again.

MAGGIE
Okay, chow time. We'll stop and grab something. And go to the bathroom. But we aren't staying long. It'll be faster if we eat in the car.

MEDIUM SHOT, LORI and MICHELLE exchange confused looks.

EXT The car pulls into the parking lot of another McDonald's. All of them get out and stretch their legs. MICHELLE pulls her long hair up onto her head as she walks into the restaurant, right next to LORI. KATE and MAGGIE lag behind.

EXT MEDIUM SHOT MAGGIE and LORI as they enter the restaurant, MAGGIE holding the door for KATE.

MAGGIE
Is there a reason you're being such a bitch right now?

KATE
Shocked.

What are you talking about?

They walk into the restaurant but stay by the door. LORI and MICHELLE are visible ordering in the background, but make no attempt to interrupt.

MAGGIE
Whatever you said to Shelly this morning and then with the joke. What's wrong?

KATE
You wouldn't get it if I told you.

MAGGIE
Angry.
That's fine. What am, too immature to grasp your thoughts now?

KATE
You're all acting like this is just another roadtrip. Like we're on some kind of extended weekend here. I think I'm the only one who knows how much everything's going to change.

MAGGIE
Throwing her hands up.

You were right, I have no idea what you're talking about.

KATE
Our lives have changed and everyone's acting like we're still going to see each other everyday. And we aren't. We're inevitably going to lose touch, Maggie. And I can't act like we're still some kind of inseparable gang of four.

Her voice trails off.

It hurts too much.

MAGGIE
So if we all hate you, it'll make your leaving the country seem like a really good idea, eh?

KATE
Something like that.

They walk over to the counter. MAGGIE turns to KATE before they order.

MAGGIE
I don't think it matters, really, what happens now. We grew up together, all of us. So I won't talk to you everyday on the phone for three hours. At least we did once, y'know, Katie?

INT MEDIUM SHOT of MICHELLE and LORI standing at a counter getting napkins and doing their "pickle toss" routine and laughing. They are slap happy from being in the car all day, with only that to look forward to as well. MAGGIE and KATE approach with their food and all file out of the restaurant.
INT LATE AFTERNOON MEDIUM SHOT of the backseat. The McDonald's trash sits between LORI and MICHELLE as they sleep on one another's shoulders.

EXT FULL SHOT of the car barreling through the desert.

INT MEDIUM SHOT of the frontseat. MAGGIE is singing along with the radio. KATE has found a rock'n'roll station and MAGGIE is singing Springsteen's "Promised Land" as loud as she can. As the next song starts, KATE moves forward to change the station. MAGGIE stops her with a quick hand motion.

MAGGIE
That's a great song.

KATE
What is it?

MAGGIE
Oh, you'll get it at the chorus.

MAGGIE taps her fingers on the steering wheel as she waits for the chorus herself. As soon as it begins she sings "Bitchin' Camaro."

MAGGIE
Everybody!

MEDIUM SHOT of LORI and MICHELLE surprised and not knowing the words in the backseat.

CLOSE UP of a startled KATE, who likewise has never heard the song.

MAGGIE, CLOSE UP, as she continues to sing, and realizes she is the only one doing so.

MAGGIE
Nobody!

EXT The sun is setting, they have been traveling the entire day. The car is seen heading into a slowly setting sun.

INT MEDIUM SHOT MAGGIE yawns, and KATE soon does the same.

MAGGIE
I think we should stop for the night. We can get a good night's sleep and leave for El Paso in the morning. Lori, you might want to call your
parents, let them know we'll be in sometime tomorrow.

EXT NIGHT The car pulls into a parking lot in front of an old wooden building with a neon "vacancy" sign blinking nearby. The motel is really a series of small bungalows which once might have been nice, but now seem only rustic. They all get out of the car, carrying their bags and head for the door marked "office."

INT MEDIUM SHOT The four women enter the office and ring the bell on the counter for service. An old woman approaches them.

CLERK
What can I do for you girls?

MAGGIE
We need a room for the night. A double would be great, if you have one.

CLERK
I think I can put all of you in 5. Are you sure that's enough room for all of you?

She laughs to herself.

MAGGIE
I think it'll be plenty big enough.

CLERK
Taking MAGGIE's credit card and handing her a book to sign into.

Are you girls here for the rodeo?

MAGGIE
Smiling.

No, we're just passing through.

MICHELLE
What rodeo?

CLERK
The rodeo'll be here all week. You girls are lucky you got here when you did. Might not be any rooms left later in the week. Some of riders are already here, getting ready.

MICHELLE
You mean like cowboys?
Looking at the other three.

LORI
Say, I might learn to love this place.

CLERK
You live in Texas?

LORI
My parents just moved to El Paso. I'm going to school there in the fall.

CLERK
Well, I'm sure you'll love it here. We all do. If you want to soak up some atmosphere and whatnot, you could run next door.

MICHELLE
Intrigued

Next door?

CLERK
My husband and I run that little bar. It's a nice, homey place, if you girls want a drink, you look like you've been on the road all day. If you're old enough.

MAGGIE
Handing the book back to her.

Thanks. We'll keep that in mind.

They turn and leave. The camera follows them in FULL SHOT as they stumble and drag their way to cabin 5.

INT MAGGIE sits on a rocking chair in the corner of the room. KATE stretches on one of the beds, LORI does the same on the other. MICHELLE walks over and looks out the window.

MICHELLE
Who wants to get a drink?

LORI
I don't know.

KATE
I'm way too tired. I think we should just try to get some sleep. And I need to shower. I'm a filth ball.

MICHELLE
It would just be one tiny drink. This could be the last time...

MAGGIE
Interrupting her.

Yeah, I think we could walk over. Just stay a minute. Maybe there's a band or something.

KATE
Why don't you go. I don't really feel like it.

MICHELLE
Why can't we all go over for a little while? C'mon.

All of them get up and head out the door.

EXT NIGHT MEDIUM SHOT of the KATE and LORI walking in front, trying to scout out the destination. MICHELLE follows them and is putting her hair in a ponytail. MAGGIE is kicking a rock as she brings up the rear. Soon they are standing in front of "MAXIE'S." They hear loud country music and even louder people from inside.

LORI
We could go back to the room now.

MICHELLE
Oh, c'mon, it'll be fun.

KATE
I think it looks a little scary.

MICHELLE
There are four of us. What's going to happen? Really!

MAGGIE walks over and puts her hand on the door to open it. Just before she does, LORI yells.

LORI
Didn't you see "Thelma & Louise?"

MAGGIE
Turning around swiftly.
She has a point.

MICHELLE

Walking past MAGGIE and grabbing the door.

C'mon. It's one lousy drink.

INT MAXIE'S It is a bar of dark wood and few lights. It is crowded tonight, with what they can only guess are regulars. MEDIUM SHOT as they struggle through the crowd and find a table. LORI and MICHELLE sit down, while KATE and MAGGIE look around the place.

KATE
Where do you think the bathroom is?

MAGGIE
I don't know. I'll help you look, though.

Turning to LORI and MICHELLE

You two stay out of trouble.

KATE and MAGGIE leave the table and a waitress comes to the table to take their orders.

LORI
I don't know. I think I just want a beer. Why don't you bring a pitcher of Bud Lite.

WAITRESS
Looking at her a little surprised.
You're awful thirsty, hon.

LORI
Sheepishly.

Oh, and four mugs.

MICHELLE
Tequila.

LORI
Shef?

WAITRESS
You want tequila?
MICHELLE
Yeah. I want a shot of tequila.

Turning to the waitress.

Better make it two.

WAITRESS
Okay. Two shots of tequila and a pitcher of Bud Lite. I'll be right back.

KATE and MAGGIE pass the waitress on the way to the table. They sit down in the two seats between LORI and MICHELE. A MEDIUM SHOT of the whole table as they begin to talk.

MAGGIE
To LORI

Whatdja get?

LORI
A pitcher. Tell them what you got, Shel.

MICHELLE
Smiling devilishly, enunciating every syllable of the word.

Te-qui-la!

KATE
Oh, my. She'll be a handful tonight.

MAGGIE
Definitely. We aren't staying long.

The waitress returns with the tray of drinks. The DJ starts playing "Killin' Time" as she sets the pours their drinks and sets them down.

WAITRESS
If you girls need anything else, just give me a holler.

She leaves.

A CLOSE UP of KATE as she lifts her glass.

KATE
I wish she wouldn't call us girls.
MEDIUM SHOT of the whole table.

MAGGIE
I kind of like it. Makes me feel more my age.

MICHELLE
As she lifts a shot of tequila.

Here's mud in your eye.

A CLOSE UP of MICHELLE as she finishes the drink and her red-faced, bug-eyed reaction to it.

PULL BACK
To MEDIUM SHOT, as MICHELLE reaches for her beer chaser. She accidentally knocks over the other shot.

KATE
Great move, Grace. Let me get the waitress to bring us a towel.

MICHELLE
That's okay.

She pulls her hair away from her face and holds it behind her head. She then leans forward and licks the tequila off the table. As she finishes lapping it up she sings, Champs' style

"Tequila."

KATE, CLOSE UP, as she puts her hand in front of her face and shakes her head.

MAGGIE, CLOSE UP, as she looks at KATE then at MICHELLE. She is smiling broadly at both of them and the scene in general. She lifts her glass to propose a toast.

MAGGIE
To LORI

I think you should start this one.

LORI, CLOSE UP, as she raises her glass and begins the toast.

LORI
Here's to all the men we loved, who didn't love us.

MICHELLE, CLOSE UP, as she raises her glass to continue.

MICHELLE
Here's to all the men who loved us, who we didn't love.

MAGGIE, CLOSE UP, moving her glass to the center of the table to join the rest as she closes the toast.

MAGGIE
Fuck the men, here's to us.

PULL BACK

To MEDIUM SHOT as they all drink. KATE leans over to MAGGIE.

KATE
No charge for that one.

They chink glasses.

INT Some time later, the women are ready to leave. They each look in their purses for the correct change and leave some money on the table. The DJ is playing "The Dance" as they leave. FULL SHOT as they exit the bar.

EXT NIGHT PARKING LOT FULL SHOT The song can be heard as they walk back toward the motel. Each of them slowly walks toward another and soon they are walking, arms linked, toward their room

EXT DAY PARKING LOT FULL SHOT MAGGIE is loading the car as KATE and MICHELLE carry cups of coffee to the car. They are smiling and talking, with no hint of yesterday's animosity. LORI is sitting on the front fender, tying her shoes.

LORI
My mother's crazy. I'm convinced of it. Shel, do you think you could take her with you. I really think she's nuts.

MICHELLE
Handing her a cup of coffee. You always thought she was nuts. What's so different now?

LORI
I told her, "Mom, we'll be there later today. I'm not sure when. And I don't think they're spending the night." And she says she's got the guest room all fixed up and she's making turkey. Like it's Thanksgiving. I tell her things and she never listens.

MAGGIE
Walking from around the back of the car.
They're so difficult at that age.

LORI
Shaking her head.
I know. I know.

MAGGIE
Everybody in, let's go, troops.

They all climb in the car and MAGGIE drives off, FULL SHOT, out of the parking lot and onto an empty road.

INT CLOSE UP LORI as she looks out the window. She gradually turns and looks at MICHELLE thumbing through a magazine next to her, KATE reading the map and MAGGIE looking into the rearview mirror. Catching her glance, MAGGIE smiles at her in the mirror. LORI faintly smiles back and returns to the road.

EXT EVENING MAGGIE'S POV as she drives past the "El Paso" sign.

INT MAGGIE MEDIUM SHOT of the frontseat. KATE still has the map unfolded on her lap.

MAGGIE
We're here.
INT MEDIUM SHOT of the backseat.

LORI

Indecisively.

This is it.

MICHELLE

Yeah.

EXT The car travels through the city, making its way through the remnants of rush hour and early evening traffic. Once they are out of town, they easily make their way to LORI'S house.

EXT EVENING The car pulls in front of LORI'S house and she gets out and stretches her legs rather deliberately. She stands and looks at the her new home for a moment. Everyone else remains in the car for now.

INT MEDIUM SHOT of the frontseat. MAGGIE and KATE look at the house.

MAGGIE

It's nice.

KATE

Uh-huh. I like that Tudor next door, too.

LORI

Leaning her head into the car.

You getting out? Mom and Dad Carroway will probably want to see you.

EXT MEDIUM SHOT as MAGGIE gets out of the car and stands next to LORI.

MAGGIE

Can't stay.

LORI

Her voice raises with the invitation.

We can eat. Maybe spend the night?

MAGGIE

I'd rather drive while I'm awake. Katie's got to catch a plane tomorrow night. So we should go, y'know?

LORI

You're sure?
MAGGIE
Yeah. I'm sure.

KATE and MICHELLE get out of the car. MAGGIE walks to the trunk and gets LORI'S bag out. They all take turns hugging LORI and we hear their mumbled goodbyes and promises to write. MICHELLE hands her the last Ding Dong. LORI smiles as she takes it and begins walking up the walk toward the house. When she gets to the door, her parents greet her and hug her, all of this from the car's POV. Noticing the group, her parents, and LORI, wave to them.

EXT The three of them stand by the car and wave.

MAGGIE
Yelling to LORI

Catch all the bad guys, all right?

Then they get back into the car and reverse down the drive. The door to the house closes and the porch light is turned off as they pull onto the street.

INT MICHELLE, CLOSE UP, rearranges things in the backseat and settles in for a few more hours of driving.

MICHELLE
That wasn't bad.

INT MEDIUM SHOT of the two in the front seat.

KATE
No.

MICHELLE starts to cry in the backseat.

MAGGIE
Not bad at all.

INT NIGHT MICHELLE is asleep in the backseat. MAGGIE and KATE are silent in the front. The brightness of an "all night diner" sign attracts them and MAGGIE pulls into the parking lot.

INT DINER, MEDIUM SHOT, as the three of them stroll numbly into the crowded restaurant and find a booth. As they sit down, a waitress approaches them. She asks if they want coffee and they all nod. They sit for a moment until she returns with the pot of coffee and three mugs.

MICHELLE

Resolutely, to the waitress. I want a cheeseburger.

KATE and MAGGIE stare at her in disbelief.
I'm hungry.

WAITRESS
Okay, can I get you two anything?

KATE and MAGGIE shake their heads "no." The waitress leaves and each of them fixes her coffee. KATE reads over the menu while they sit there and MAGGIE looks around the place. MICHELLE stares at nothing in particular, waiting for her food.

MICHELLE
How long before we get to...?

MAGGIE

Stopping her.

Probably a few hours.

MICHELLE
You and Kate will spend the night?

MAGGIE
I guess so.

KATE
Is that a problem, Shel?

MICHELLE
No, I'm sure there's an extra bed or two to be had. Of course, they might want to keep you two.

She takes a drink of coffee.

MAGGIE

Turning to her.

That's not funny.

The waitress returns with MICHELLE'S cheeseburger. She sets it down and puts the check under the plate. KATE wordlessly passes her the ketchup.

MICHELLE
Takes the bun off the burger and lifts the pickle off.

Who wants my pickle.

MAGGIE bats her hand down. KATE looks up surprised then realizes why. MICHELLE puts the pickle on the plate and reassembles the burger. As she takes a bite, MAGGIE turns to her again.

MAGGIE
As she chews.

Maggie

Quite all right. Really. Want a bite?

Maggie declines and returns to her coffee.

INT NIGHT In the car once more, Maggie drives while Michelle sleeps in the back. Kate is half-asleep but eager to talk.

Kate

I think we should be just on time for my flight.

Maggie

It'll be a good day's drive from Shelly's. But we should be okay. Are you ready to go?

Kate

Oh, yeah. It's where the job is. Five years of school, I should be ready to teach. And it'll be a lot of fun, a different culture, learning a new language. It's really what I've always wanted to do.

Maggie

I'm convinced.

EXT NIGHT The car glides down the bare, desert highway. The terrain is unusual and beautiful, but they aren't quite sure where they need to be. Feeling like they are near the clinic, Kate turns to wake Michelle

Michelle

Abruptly.

Are we there? What? We're here.

Maggie

Are we? I've never been here, so you might want to direct me. I have a tendency to get lost late at night when I don't have a clue where I am.

Michelle

Rubbing her eyes.
We're close. You need to take a right onto Oak Creek Way. It's on that street.

KATE
Are we near that?

MICHELLE
Annoyed.

I said we were close.

KATE
I meant to that road. Are we near it?

MAGGIE
As she turns the car the car onto another road.

Yes, we are.

EXT The car continues on the road. Soon they are near a large house, which is modeled after a hacienda. There is a main building and a number of smaller buildings around it. MAGGIE pulls in front of the main building. As she parks, everyone gets out of the car.

MICHELLE
I'll go check in. I hope somebody's up.

She walks into the building. MAGGIE and KATE stand outside, looking at the night sky and around the grounds.

MAGGIE
This is nice. I didn't think it would look like this.

KATE
You expected maybe a neon "Boobyhatch" in front of the place?

MAGGIE
Defensively

Something like that!

MICHELLE comes back out and motions for them to follow her inside. MAGGIE and KATE grab their luggage and enter the building.

INT CLINIC MICHELLE is walking ahead of them, talking to an older man. MAGGIE and KATE follow them down a long hallway. He opens the door to a room and shows them inside.

MICHELLE
Thanks, Dr. Cutler. Sorry about the hour.

DR. CUTLER
Oh, that's not a problem. We're thrilled to have you. Breakfast will be between 6:30 and 11 tomorrow. You're all welcome to eat in the cafeteria.

MICHELLE thanks him and he leaves. KATE wanders around the small room and looks out the window. MAGGIE collapses on the couch by the door.

MAGGIE
I'll just sleep here. Wake me when you need me.

MICHELLE
Settling down on the bed.

Do you want me to get you up for breakfast?

MAGGIE
I thought I'd seen the last of dorm food years ago.

MICHELLE
That's a "no." How 'bout you, Kate?

KATE
Turning from the window.

Sure, get me up. We should probably leave around noon, don't you think, Mag?

There is no answer, as MAGGIE has fallen asleep. KATE and MICHELLE lay down on the bed and close their eyes.

INT MORNING KATE and MICHELLE are in the same position asleep. MAGGIE is up and sitting by the window. KATE wakes up and notices her.

KATE
What time is it?

MAGGIE
I think it's around 9.

KATE
Sitting up.

Why are you up so early?

MAGGIE
Couldn’t sleep...That couch wasn’t as comfortable as I thought it would be.

MICHELLE rolls over, turning her back to them and making an almost understandable sound. KATE and MAGGIE start to laugh and try to stop themselves. So tired and silly are they, that they have to run out to the hallway to not wake MICHELLE.

KATE
She’ll kill us if she hears us laughing at her.

MAGGIE
She's so funny when she wants to sleep, though.

KATE
And vocal about it. Say, since we're up, do you want to grab some breakfast?

MAGGIE
I guess cereal would be safe. Do you have any idea where the cafeteria may be?

KATE
Why don't we just walk up the hall and see what happens.

MAGGIE
Okay. But you do the talking if anyone stops us. I’ll just get us checked in.

KATE
Good point.

They walk down the hall and come to the main desk. They pick up a pamphlet and find a map. Each points in the direction the cafeteria should be.

INT CAFETERIA MEDIUM SHOT MAGGIE and KATE are in line with a number of other people. Everyone else is casually dressed but tidy. They stick out in their slept in clothes and generally disheveled appearance. They take their trays and walk around the room to find an empty table. As they sit down at one, MEDIUM SHOT, a frail looking middle-aged man sits down next to KATE.

MAGGIE
Biting into a banana.

This is good. I had hoped for a doughnut, though. But I can settle for cornflakes and fruit. It's all so healthy.

KATE
I think that's the idea.
The man stares at them and moves closer to KATE. She tries to ignore him but he is too close to her. He takes out a ball of string from his pocket and shows it to her.

**KATE**
Yes? Is something wrong?

**MAGGIE**
I think that's a given.

**STRINGMAN**
I collect string. Birds use string to build nests. Do you know what you are?

He opens his hand and shows her his palm.

You're a little finch I can hold in my hand.

MAGGIE, CLOSE UP, stares at him, big eyed. KATE says nothing to him. Before anyone can speak, they hear MICHELLE calling to them. She enters and sits down, MEDIUM SHOT, next to KATE and STRINGMAN.

**MICHELLE**
There you are. Why didn't you wake me?

**MAGGIE**
We already had a third.

**MICHELLE**
Oh. Who's your friend?

**KATE**
Through the clenched teeth of her smile.

I have no idea. But maybe you'd like to talk to him, Shel? Maggie?

**MAGGIE**
No, I'm going to shower.

She gets up.

You kids have fun now.

MICHELLE takes her box of cereal and opens it, eating it dry, and looks at KATE and STRINGMAN, smiling at them. KATE tries to eat, but does so nervously, as he watches every move she makes.

INT KATE and MICHELLE are back in the room as MAGGIE gets out of the shower. She is dressed and running her fingers through her wet hair as they enter the room.

**MAGGIE**
Hustle up, Kate, we need to get
going. And we don't have room for your new friend. So don't even ask.

KATE
I wouldn't dream of it.

She passes her, going into the bathroom.

I'll hurry.

She leaves and MAGGIE and MICHELLE sit on the couch. MAGGIE is putting on mascara as MICHELLE watches.

MAGGIE
Don't start, Shel, okay.

MICHELLE
Start what?

Her voice begins to break.

MAGGIE
That. I was hoping we could make it out of here without tears.

MICHELLE
Crying now.

I wanted to. I didn't want to be a complete basketcase. But I can't help it. I'm going to miss you so much.

She throws her arms around the stoic MAGGIE.

MAGGIE
Shel, this is all going to be all right. You've got a lot to do here. And we'll still be friends. Geography isn't going to change that.

MICHELLE
Right! How many people from high school do you see regularly?

MAGGIE
Nevermind that. Listen, Shel, I don't want to think about not being together for the rest of our lives.

MICHELLE
Wiping her eyes and sniffing.

I should just...focus...on the time we spent together...not the time that...we'll be apart.

MAGGIE
Exactly. That's my girl.

MICHELLE starts to sob now, as KATE comes out of the bathroom. She ignores them for a moment and puts her dirty clothes in her suitcase and takes out her brush. She sits on the bed.

KATE
I guess I should have planned on this, eh?

MICHELLE
Really, I'll be fine. You need to leave soon. I'll be okay.

KATE
Standing and getting her bag.

Walk us out?

MICHELLE rises and she walks out with MAGGIE and KATE. They walk slowly down the hall and outside into the bright morning sun.

EXT MEDIUM SHOT in front of the car. MICHELLE hugs KATE as MAGGIE puts the luggage in the trunk. KATE gets in the car. MAGGIE walks around to the passenger side and meets MICHELLE. They embrace and hold hands as MAGGIE walks over to her door.

MAGGIE
You hang in there, Shel. I promise to write you as soon as I know what the hell I'm doing.

MICHELLE only nods in response.

You'll be okay. This a great place for you. And...Oh, hell. Come here.

She hugs her for moment and rests MICHELLE'S head on her shoulder. They separate and MAGGIE gets in the car.

MICHELLE
Be careful, you two.

MAGGIE
Putting on her sunglasses and turning up the radio.
Careful?

She begins to pull away. Once the car is turned around, she stops in front of MICHELLE.

Shelly, love ya!

KATE

Leaning over toward the driver's side.

Me too.

They drive off.

INT DAY MEDIUM SHOT MAGGIE and KATE have been driving for quite a while. The trash of candybar wrappers and empty drink cups attest to this. They are both hot and tired and most likely cranky. KATE is playing with the radio and has turned off one song too many for MAGGIE.

MAGGIE
Goddammit, Kate. What was wrong with that song? Except maybe that I love it. I ask for one fucking thing and...

KATE
Do you have to talk like that?

MAGGIE
Like what?

KATE
So abusively. You've got a college degree, can't you be a little more creative when you vent your anger?

MAGGIE
I'm sorry to offend you and your fucking cuss box. I forgot you've never said a foul thing in your life.

KATE
I didn't say that. But at least I'm trying to stop sounding like some gang member. I'd like to avoid as much culture shock as possible in Korea.

MAGGIE
Fuck Korea. I am sick to death of Korea and service and coming back and then maybe marrying Allen...

KATE
You're sick of all that? Just because I have a plan to do something with my life and you want to wa...

She stops herself.

MAGGIE

Hissing

And I what?

KATE

No.

MAGGIE

Gravely.

I know what you're going to say, Kate. So say it.

KATE

Defiantly.

You're going to waste your life on your writing and your directionless dreams.

EXT The car passes the California state line. The radio is playing "American Pie."

INT MEDIUM SHOT resumes the discussion in the car.

MAGGIE

Of all people, Kate. I thought you got it. Not everyone can go save the huddled masses. I can't just pack up everything and leave everyone I know.

She starts to cry.

KATE

Oh, I see this is just some little lark for me. Not like it's my job or future or anything like that. Oh, no. You think I want to leave all of you and my family and Allen?

MAGGIE

As bitchy as she can sound.

That's right. You really want to
MAGGIE looks at her, relieved.

KATE
Yes...That's our exit.

MAGGIE
I see it! You don't want to get married yet.

KATE
Of course, I do.

MAGGIE
That's why you're leaving the country. Because you really want to stay here. I get it.

KATE
Starting to cry.

I have to leave. I need a job, Mag. I have to do this. You think this is easy for me?

MAGGIE
Yeah...You haven't seemed the least bit fazed by the thought that your best friend will be a million miles away, God knows where.

KATE
This job is a necessity. Five years of school and student loans, I have to get some money. And all I want to do is stay here with you.

MAGGIE looks at her, relieved.

The only reason I made it through these last few years was you. Everything went crazy on me, school, family, even Allen. And you got me through it. You have no idea how hard it is to say goodbye to you.

They are silent. The car glides through the California scenery. MAGGIE eases into the steady flow of traffic going to the airport as the sun sets.

EXT The car pulls into the airport parking lot. MAGGIE gets out and takes KATE'S bag from the trunk. They walk, still silent, into the airport.

INT AIRPORT The place is crowded with business travelers and reunited families. KATE walks over to the United desk and asks about her flight. MAGGIE is left standing in the milieu. She sits on the suitcase. KATE returns.
KATE
I need to check this. The flight is leaving on time, so I need to hurry.

MAGGIE carries the bag and follows KATE to the baggage check. KATE signs the necessary forms and they walk toward her gate. They pass quickly through airport security and look for a place to sit while they wait for her flight. They sit for a minute then hear a boarding call for KATE'S flight. Both of them rise. They walk over to the departure door. At the door, they embrace stiffly and KATE hands MAGGIE a package she retrieved from her suitcase. MUSIC begins, REM'S "Untitled."

MAGGIE
What's this?

KATE

Looking around, annoyed.

I hate when people say that. Open it and find out.

She turns to walk through the door. MAGGIE rips open the package and we see it is framed picture of the four bridesmaids.

MAGGIE

Calling to KATE, as her voice breaks.

Katie!

KATE turns around, her face red from her beginning tears. She walks quickly back to MAGGIE. They embrace, warmly now, and both are crying.

When did you do this?

KATE
Circle K's quite a convenience store.

MAGGIE
Kate, I'm sorry...

KATE
Don't worry about it. I understand.

MAGGIE
No, I want to tell you something. I've spent my whole life trying to be something. I wanted to be pretty or smart. I wanted to be an astronaut or president, hell, for a while I even wanted to be you. I wanted to be something. Well, now I just want to be.

KATE
I envy you. I've got my entire life planned. I know where my second child is going to high school. But you, Maggie, you get to live your life. One day at a time, devil may care.

MAGGIE

Laughing

I'm glad you're sure about it.

KATE
You're the best. The whole world is yours, you just have to take it. And people like you... I'm just proud I know you.

MAGGIE
Let's not go that far. You're the one doing the important thing, let's face it.

KATE
I don't want to go now.

MAGGIE
You have to, millions of illiterate children are counting on you.

KATE looks at her ticket and hears another boarding call.

Go...I love you, Kate. This is want you've always wanted to do, so do it. Sounds simple enough, huh?

They embrace again and KATE begins to walk toward the plane. MAGGIE stands and watches her. KATE turns suddenly and yells to her.

KATE
Give 'em hell, Maggie.

She turns and continues to the plane. MAGGIE turns on her heel and tosses her keys into the air. She catches them and twirls them on her finger. She smiles broadly at the people who pass by her.

FADE OUT