

FADE IN

EXT. AN IMPOSSIBLE EXPANSE OF MARYLAND FARMLAND - DAY

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

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

CLOSE ON:

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

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

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

FADE TO BLACK

EXT. IKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Establishing.

CUT TO:

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

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

IKE (V.O.)

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

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

IKE

What do you think? Good idea, right? Boring, down to death, pointless -- It sucks.

Ike yells at a CONSTRUCTION WORKER.

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

CONSTRUCTION WORKER
Your column should be so funny.

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

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

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

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

They walk up to her DOORMAN.

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

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

EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - DAY

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

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

Ike continues walking now in the full panic of writer's block.

He pleads into his friend's answering machine as he walks.

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

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

T-SHIRT VENDOR

Hey, Ike, when are you going to put me in an article?

IKE

When your t-shirts stop shrinking.

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

INT. NEW YORK BAR - LATE DAY

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

MAN

I see photos of a lot of dead writers on these walls. Got any living ones? I have a story to tell that could win one of them a Pulitzer.

(then, with enthusiasm)

Picture this, if you will. A small town in Maryland, a sleepy little village, within that a hardware store...

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

WOMAN

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

IKE

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

The Woman gets up and begins throwing darts.

WOMAN

(interrupting)

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

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

She starts throwing darts.

WOMAN
That's flattering.

IKE
No, you don't understand.

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

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

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

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

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

The Woman leaves the bar.

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

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

MAN
I've seen much worse.

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

MAN

I said, I've seen much worse.

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

IKE

Excuse me?

MAN

The brush-off.

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

MAN

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

IKE

Not as private as I thought.

Ike turns slightly, giving the man his back.

IKE

Kevin, you've got some napkins?

BARTENDER

Writing or wiping?

IKE

Give me a pen.

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

MAN

(throwing darts hard)

Ah, come on. They deserve it. They love you, they hate you, they're hot, they're cold, they're high, they're low...

IKE

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

BARTENDER

Ike.

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

Ike moves to the Bartender and pays him.

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

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

Both Ike and Bartender turn and stare.

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

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

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

IKE
I give up.

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

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

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

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - DUSK

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

IKE

(reading)

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

EXT. USA TODAY OFFICE - DAY

FISHER walks through the main office reading the paper.

FISHER

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

INT. USA TODAY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Elaine at her desk reads aloud to herself.

ELAINE

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

Fisher hands a file to Elaine.

FISHER

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

Fisher leaves and we hold a USA Today sign.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

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

MAN

(reads)

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

The Man sits at the bar near to the Bartender.

BARTENDER

You noticed these are all countries without cable.

(then, continues reading)

"... And in Hale, Maryland where she helps run the family hardware store. She is known as Miss Maggie Carpenter ..."

(mispronounces)

".... AKA, the Runaway Bride."

CUT TO:

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - DAY

WORKERS read the above article.

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

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

PEGGY

"... And in Hale, Maryland where she helps run the family hardware store."

(to the Women)

We have to go to Maggie. Cindy, mind the shop.

(exits salon; continues reading)

"... She is known as Miss Maggie Carpenter, AKA, the Runaway Bride."

MRS. PRESSMAN

Holy moly.

The older one, Mrs. Pressman, listens with a pained expression as the younger one, Peggy, continues to read the column aloud.

Neither one can believe what they're reading.

PEGGY

(reads)

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

MRS. PRESSMAN

(takes paper from
her, reads)

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

(then)

Holy moly.

Peggy and Mrs. Pressman step into a hardware store.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - CONTINUOUS

Peggy and Mrs. Pressman enter, worried.

MRS. PRESSMAN

You tell Maggie.

PEGGY

No, you tell her.

MRS. PRESSMAN

No, no. You're her best friend.

PEGGY

No.

MRS. PRESSMAN

(holding her newspaper)

You know, it's just possible that she hasn't read this yet.

PEGGY

Yeah.

MRS. PRESSMAN

Maybe she hasn't read the paper...

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

MRS. PRESSMAN

... Or not!

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

MAGGIE

(bright)

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

MR. PAXTON

(amazed)

Hallelujah.

MAGGIE

Alright, Mr. Paxton, I'll put it on your account.

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

EARL

Maggie.

MAGGIE

(walking past customer)

You don't need an air conditioner, Earl, you just need an attic fan -- There's more in the back.

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

MAGGIE

What?

Peggy nervously mentions the newspaper.

PEGGY

(delicate)

So -- Mag -- you've seen this, huh?

MAGGIE

(serious)

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

To their amazement, Maggie starts smiling.

MAGGIE

You guys! How long did this take you?

Maggie stays amused.

MAGGIE

Where'd you get this done?

(laughing)

You creeps! I should disinvite you! And why did you say seven times? This is four.

PEGGY

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

Maggie looks at the stricken face of her friends.

MRS. PRESSMAN

Holy moly.

Peggy looks like she is going to cry with sympathy for Maggie.

Maggie is starting to feel uncomfortable. She looks down, dubiously, at the paper.

MAGGIE

Um, you know, now would be a good moment to tell me this is fake.

(no response)

It won't be funny if you drag it out. Okay?

(no response)

Okay, well... I mean, I can find out... Real newspapers smear. Phoney papers don't.

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

She nearly kneels over.

MAGGIE
(sitting)
Bag.

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

MRS. PRESSMAN
Bag.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKOUT ROOM/GYM - NIGHT

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

ANGLE ON DESK AREA:

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

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

EXT. MANHATTAN - DAY - ESTABLISHING SHOT

As Maggie's VOICE-OVER continues to read her letter, we take in a Manhattan busy day. It is big, loud, and anonymous.

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

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

MAGGIE
"I suppose Mr. Graham was too busy thinking us slanderous statements about how I dump men for kicks to bother with something silly like

MAGGIE
 accuracy in reporting. Which is understandable, because with a "man-eater" like me on the loose, who has time to check facts?"

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

He passes regular GUYS who cheer him.

MAGGIE
 "Still, we cannibalistic queens can get pretty cranky when we see things in print that hurt our feelings, like that we deliberately abandon fiances with malice aforethought."

INT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCKS - CONTINUOUS

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

INT. USA TODAY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

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

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

Ike works his way down the hall to the editor's office. CHUFFA Ike greets various workers. He steps up to the editor's secretary, ELAINE. She doesn't smile.

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

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

IKE
 Why?

A buzz.

ELAINE
 You can go in now.

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

CUT TO:

INT. ELLIE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

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

ELLIE

(reading letter)

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

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

IKE

(chuckles as he sits)

Fully. I like her. She has wit.

ELLIE

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

IKE

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

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

FISHER

Ellie asked me to come down to offer moral support.

IKE

Since when does Ellie need moral supp--

ELLIE

-- It's for you, Ike.

IKE

What?

ELLIE

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

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

IKE

Lesson number two. Never work for your former spouse.

ELLIE

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

IKE

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

ELLIE

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

FISHER

In vino veritas.

IKE

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

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

IKE

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

ELLIE

No, that's what makes you unemployed.

IKE

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

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

ELLIE

Not anymore. I have to draw the line.

(pushing a piece of paper)

She sent us this list. Our lawyers say it's actionable.

Ellie hands Ike Maggie's list.

IKE

(scoffs)

Lawyers.

(glances at list)

I don't know, Ellie -- Firing me is going to be very tough on you. It's going to be hard to get over. There will be therapy bills for you.

ELLIE

(shrugs)

I already made an appointment for later today.

IKE

(putting the list down, standing)

See? You want custody of my job? ... Why not just consider my wrist slapped and call me when you feel I've served my time?

ELLIE

I'm sorry, Ike. This is permanent.

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

ELLIE (V.O.)

If you go quietly, I'll get you severance pay.

Ellie fidgets with her toy rake, then Ike heads for the door.

He laughs a little at the painful truth of her words and walks out. Ellie collapses back in her chair. Fisher goes to her and rubs her shoulders.

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - DAY

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

EXT. HALE RESIDENTIAL STREET - ANOTHER MORNING

ANGLE ON MAGGIE'S HOUSE:

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

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - THAT MOMENT

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

MAGGIE

She canned him, she canned him...

Bob test the weight of the backpack adding dehydrate food.

BOB

Come here, Mag, and try this on.

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

MAGGIE

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

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

BOB

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

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

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

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

INT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - ANOTHER DAY

Fisher uses the dock for a photo shoot featuring men and women in evening and formal wear from Escada for G.Q. Fisher is not actually shooting the camera, but rather supervising it.

Fisher claps his hands and calls the models to attention. Then he goes onto the stage and sets the models in their positions.

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

INT. USA TODAY OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

They stop walking.

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

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

FISHER
All the gory details.

They start walking again.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He walks away.

IKE
You want me to do it on spec?!

He follows him.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARYLAND HIGHWAY - DAY

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

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

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

We hear Fisher laugh.

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

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

CUT TO:

EXT. HALE STREET - DAY

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

EXT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - DAY

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

INT. LOBBY/ATLANTIC HOTEL - DAY

Ike has checked into the Atlantic Hotel. The clerk, LEE, hands him his key. Ike asks about room service and the restaurant.

An OLDER WOMAN asks him if he plays bridge as he goes up the stairs to his room.

EXT. HALE MAIN STREET - DAY

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

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

IKE
I think I'm in Maryberry.

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

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

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

Cindy's dog is on the floor near Maggie.

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

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

CINDY
That's it. Back to obedience school.

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

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

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

MAGGIE

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

PEGGY

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

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

Peggy hops off the chair.

IKE

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

PEGGY

Are you a reporter?

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

IKE

(shocked)
What?

PEGGY

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

IKE

About her upcoming wedding and all.

PEGGY

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

Ike smiles down at his loafers and shrugs.

IKE

I am just such a reporter. And you are?

PEGGY

Peggy Phleming. Not the ice skater.

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

IKE
And who are these lovely ladies?

The ladies shake his hand and introduce themselves.

CINDY
Cindy. Maggie's unmarried cousin.

MRS. PRESSMAN
Mrs. Pressman. No relation.

PEGGY
And you are?

IKE
(turning toward her)
Looking for Maggie.

PEGGY
Yep. Maggie -- Someone to see you.

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

MAGGIE
(yelling to Peggy)
Reporter?

PEGGY
Yup!

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

MAGGIE
I hope you have a different angle.
It's pretty much all been covered.

IKE
Originality is my speciality.

MAGGIE
Excellent.

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

MAGGIE
She's the boss.

IKE
Sorry, no. I just got one.

MRS. PRESSMAN

(to Ike)

Excuse me, sir. I have an actual fact for you.

IKE

(steps to Mrs. Pressman)

Yes, Mrs. Pressman.

MRS. PRESSMAN

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

IKE

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

During the Ike/Mrs. Pressman exchange, Maggie looks at Ike.

There's something familiar about him. She looks over at Peggy and beckons her to a copy of Ike's column affixed to a mirror.

A goatee and horns, have been scrawled on Ike's byline picture.

He's been "devilized". Peggy coughs as she recognizes Ike in the newspaper clipping.

MAGGIE

She swallowed her gun.

Mrs. Pressman continues her story to Ike.

MRS. PRESSMAN

I'm not sure. Mr. Schullian runs the newsstand, he's our local bookie, you know, he's giving eight to one odds she won't. He says she's so famous now, maybe Vegas will give odds on her. I'm going to wait to hear what the pros say.

IKE

Good fact. Well, you let me know.

MRS. PRESSMAN

Oh, I will.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie indicates column to Peggy. She looks over at the part of the shop used to wash and dye hair.

There's a sink, stool and a cabinet affixed to the wall above sink, which holds various shampoos and hair dyes. Maggie gets an idea. Maggie and Peggy step forward toward Ike.

MAGGIE

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

IKE

You'll answer my questions?

Maggie nods affirmatively.

IKE

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

PEGGY

Great.

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

MAGGIE

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

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

MAGGIE

So, what do you want to know?

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

IKE

Getting nervous?

MAGGIE

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

Ike pulls the cloth down from over his face.

IKE

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

MAGGIE

Yes.

PEGGY

(calming)

Let's just put this back here for
the aromatherapy.

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

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - LATER

Ike sits with a towel over his head as Peggy blow-dries the back of his head. His back is to the mirror, his body faces Maggie.

Cindy does her own nails as Mrs. Pressman scratches off lottery tickets. The dog, Sprout, sits in is basket.

MAGGIE

In another one...

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

PEGGY

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

Ike peeks out from under his towel as Maggie continues.

MAGGIE

I'm inside the church. Everyone I know is there, only they're not really them. They're like Frankenstein monsters, but without the bolts coming out of their necks. It's all very "Night of the Living Dead". And here's the creepiest part -- I look down at my dress and it's red. I mean, I have no idea what it means. Red's not my color!

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

MAGGIE

So what do you think?

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

IKE

I think you'd look good in red.

PEGGY

No, she's talking about your hair.

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

MAGGIE

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

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

IKE

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

Ike turns and puts the clipping up on the mirror.

IKE

(to Peggy)
My jacket, please.

Peggy hands him his jacket.

IKE

(sarcastically)
Thank you.

Ike moves toward the door. He spots Pete.

IKE

(putting on jacket;
to Pete)
Excuse me, Pete, do you know a place
that sells shampoo... Strong shampoo?

PETE

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

IKE

No thanks.

Ike smiles at Maggie and exits.

MAGGIE

(to Peggy)
He seems crabby.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

In front of beauty salon, Maggie follows Ike out.

MAGGIE

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

She puts on her sunglasses.

IKE

Thank you.

He walks the other way.

MAGGIE

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

She stops walking and turns to Ike.

IKE

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

MAGGIE

You have one?

Ike walks back to Maggie.

IKE

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

PASSERSBY stare at Ike's hair and giggle.

MAGGIE

Did something happen to make you
care about reality?

IKE

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

MAGGIE
You're going to be very disappointed.

IKE
We'll see.

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

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

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

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

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

Kid agrees. Ike puts the hat on and starts to cross the
street.

An OLD WOMAN walks by and hits him with a newspaper. Ike is
stunned.

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

Maggie pulls into the driveway in her truck. She's in a
fine mood as she walks right in the house.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DUSK

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

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

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

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

IKE (O.S.)

Who?

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

IKE

(innocently)

Hello, Maggie. I just came by to apologize to your family.

(looks to Walter)

When I'm wrong, I'm wrong. I pushed a story. I made a mistake.

WALTER

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

Raises the bottle to Maggie.

IKE

They made me put my hat back on.

WALTER

Oh, yeah. Scared the hell out of Skipper.

MAGGIE

You've got to be kidding me.

Maggie stares at them both.

BOB

(enjoying the moment)

No, no, you should have seen Skipper.

(then, imitates growling)

It wasn't that funny.

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

MAGGIE

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

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

BOB

I'll help you take into the kitchen.

GRANDMA JULIA

Check on the crabs, Bob.

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

IKE

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

WALTER

Well, wedding cake freezes. This we know.

IKE

You know, your daughter seems...

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

GRANDMA JULIA

Sorry.

IKE

That's okay, Grandma.

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

IKE

(continuing his thought)
... Like such a lovely girl.

Walter points to a portrait painting on the wall.

WALTER

Like her mother.

IKE

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

GRANDMA JULIA

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

IKE

She has a tape?

WALTER

(good-natured)
Yeah. Lee at the hotel videos
wedding.

WALTER

I mean Maggie didn't know she was going to make the hundred-yard dash.

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

Ike checks on the tapes.

IKE

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

WALTER

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

Walter cracks up.

GRANDMA JULIA

(sarcastically)

Ha ha.

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

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINNING ROOM/MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

WALTER

Emma and I were only blessed with one child, not for lacking of trying.

MAGGIE

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

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

WALTER

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

MAGGIE

Not this one. This one's on me.

Walter reacts.

IKE
That's fair.

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

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

Ike raises his eyebrows in question. Bob explains.

BOB
Sports psychology. It was my major
in college.

IKE
Ahh.

BOB
(false modesty)
I'm the town's unofficial fitness
trainer. Big advocate of the mind
and body combining for success. You
could say or you can quote me, I'm a
glass half full kind of guy.

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

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

IKE
(impressed)
Everest. Is that right?

MAGGIE
Twice...

IKE
Really?

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

BOB
My girl likes to brag about me.

Bob and Maggie kiss Ike two little love-birds.

BOB
I'm taking her trekking on Annapurna
on our honeymoon.

Ike is highly amused.

IKE
How romantic.

MAGGIE
(sharply)
We think so.

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

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

CUT TO:

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

INTERCUT TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

Fisher and Ellie are exercising. Fisher is on a cycle machine.

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

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

THE TV - CLOSE

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

Now we see Maggie come down the aisle, then walk past the altar.

We see Maggie move away another aisle and out of the church.

SHOCKED WEDDING GUESTS rise in horror, as she runs from this first wedding. She drags the train boy up the second aisle as she leaves. Ike hangs up. He gets up to pick up the remote and then sits back down to watch.

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

ON TV:

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

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

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

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

ON IKE'S TV

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

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

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

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

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

IKE
Kamikaze!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE TROUT BAKERY - THE NEXT DAY

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

IKE
Did you see that?

CUT TO:

INT. THE TROUT BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

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

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

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

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

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

MAGGIE
Too dark.

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

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

Maggie cringes at the sound of Ike's voice.

IKE
No -- the Bobster's eyes are closer
set.

She ignores him and continues her search.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ike turns and goes to her.

IKE
 Yes, I am. And who are you?

MRS. TROUT
 Betty Trout. Five dollars.

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

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

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

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

IKE
 (cynical delight)
 A pre-wedding luau?

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

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

IKE
 Fun? Fun isn't the word.

Mrs. Trout beams. Maggie understands his answer a little better.

Mrs. Trout hands Ike his items and he pays.

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

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

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

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

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

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

IKE

No.

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

MRS. TROUT

(handing him the other
bag)

Your two cinnamon rolls.

IKE

Bye, Betty. Thanks.

He leaves.

MAGGIE

He's not a nice person.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

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

DENNIS

(playful)

Maggie, don't marry Coach! Marry me. I love you.

MAGGIE

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

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

ANGLE ON BOB AND IKE

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

BOB

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

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

BOB
Good job, gentlemen... Special teams.

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

BOB
(to Maggie)
Hey, honey!

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

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

BOB
Ike just came by to check out the team.

IKE
And talk about you.

Ike grins and shows Maggie the notes in his pocket.

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

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

Bob grabs Maggie around the waist and smooches her adoringly.

Maggie scowls at Ike. He nods, all charm.

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

Ike leaves. Bob calls after him.

BOB
See you at the wedding.

IKE
You bet ya, Coach.

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

MAGGIE

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

BOB

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

MAGGIE

You don't understand this guy.

BOB

Let him come to the wedding. You're
not running, right? Say it. "I'm
not..."

MAGGIE

(irritably)
I'm not running.

BOB

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

MAGGIE

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

Bob gives Maggie a big hug.

BOB

Where's that homemade sunshine?

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

BOB

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

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

INT. CONFESSIONAL BOOTH/CHURCH - DAY

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

MAGGIE

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

She tries to recall.

MAGGIE

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

PRIEST

Of an impure nature?

MAGGIE

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

PRIEST

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

MAGGIE

(impatient)

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

PRIEST/BRIAN

Now don't get upset.

Brian closes the confessional window and exits.

MAGGIE

(still inside the booth)

Brian, open up. Don't ignore me.

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

BRIAN

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

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

MAGGIE

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

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

BRIAN

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

MAGGIE

(sliding along the
pew)

What? You talked to him! Did you
tell him we dated before you were a
priest?

BRIAN

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

MAGGIE

What did he ask?

A woman, MRS. MURPHY, rushes in.

MRS. MURPHY

Father, am I too late?

BRIAN

No, no.

MRS. MURPHY

It won't take long. Just two venials.

The woman goes into the confessional booth to wait.

BRIAN

Only respectful things. What did we
have in common back then... What
kind of music did you like... Did

BRIAN
you ruin my life when you left me
standing at the altar...

MAGGIE
And what did you say?

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

MAGGIE
(relieved)
Good one! Thanks.

BRIAN
It happens to be how I feel.

Brian sits next to Maggie.

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

BRIAN
God bless you, Maggie.

She turns to rush out, then stops herself.

MAGGIE
Oh, wait, my purse.

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

MAGGIE
Excuse me, sorry, forgot my purse.
Good luck.

Maggie closes the booth curtain and turns to Brian.

MAGGIE
Wait -- what was the ridiculous
question he asked?

Brian smiles mischievously.

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

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

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

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

Maggie looks at Brian. Suddenly, she remembers too.

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

BRIAN
I'm happy here, where I'm supposed
to be. But if you ever become a
Catholic, may I ask you a favor,
Maggie?

MAGGIE
Of course.

BRIAN
Could your confess to Father Patrick
from now on?

MAGGIE
Of course.

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

EXT. GILL'S GARAGE - DAY

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

INT. GILL'S GARAGE - DAY

Maggie rushes inside and looks around. No one is in sight.

Several cars, including a yellow jeep-like car up on a
hydraulic lift, are in the funky garage.

MAGGIE
Gill? Lydia? Gill?

A CRASH, coming from the nearby back room, we hear loud
muttering in Spanish, then out stumbles GILL CHAVEZ, 34,
wearing a grease-stained Grateful Dead tie-dyed T-shirt.

He grins triumphantly, worshipfully cradling a CASSETTE TAPE in his hands.

GILL
Hey -- I found it!

Maggie regards her former fiance with patient warmth.

MAGGIE
Found what?

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

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

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

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

Gill picks up an electric GUITAR and starts to play.

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

Suddenly, a loud CHUCKLING emanates from the car overhead.

MAGGIE
What was that?

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

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

As the hydraulic lift slows, the car is lowered, revealing Ike sitting in the driver's seat.

He has been enjoying the photograph he's holding.

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

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

MAGGIE
Give me that!

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

Gill takes off his guitar and sets it down.

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

Maggie is conspicuously silent.

GILL
(looking worried)
Mags?

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

Maggie seethes.

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

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

MAGGIE
Fine. Here.

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

MAGGIE
(turning back around)
Satisfied?

IKE
Completely.

Gill is still trying to grasp the meaning of this.

GILL
Maggie? You got it removed?

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

GILL
(dismayed)
Maggie?

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

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

GILL
Look.

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

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

MAGGIE
He is not!

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

GILL
I think I am.

Gill grabs his guitar and sits.

GILL
Hey, Ike, what would Jerry do?

The hydraulic lift stops moving. Ike leans out.

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

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

CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL PORCH - NEXT DAY, SATURDAY MORNING

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

Maggie "CHUFFAS" with Peggy and moves on.

EXT. SOFTBALL FIELD - LATER THAT DAY

CLOSE ON:

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

NEW ANGLE:

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

ANGLE ON:

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

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

PEGGY
For what reason?

PEGGY
Some personal satisfaction?

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

PEGGY
It's probably because you got him
fired.

MAGGIE
(sarcastic)
Ya think?

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

ANGLE ON:

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

ANGLE ON:

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

ANGLE ON:

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

MAGGIE
There he is. Snoop Doggy-Dogg.

PEGGY
Where?

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

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

Ike finds Maggie in the crowd and leaves Dennis.

MAGGIE

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

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

PEGGY

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

Ike comes up to Peggy.

IKE

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

Ike indicates the seat next to Peggy.

PEGGY

(protesting weakly)
That's Maggie's seat...

Ike sits down comfortably.

IKE

... And this is Maggie's beer.

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

IKE

That your husband out there? Cory Phleming, a local radio announcer.

PEGGY

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

IKE

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

PEGGY

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

IKE

That must have made you proud.

Peggy takes a small sip off her soda.

PEGGY

He was going with Maggie back then.

(quickly)

He was never one of her... I mean,
they were never going to get... They
just dated for a while.

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

Peggy yells and jumps in.

PEGGY

Good job, honey!

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

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

IKE

It's nice that they're still friends.

PEGGY

(looking at Maggie
and Cory)

Oh, sure. That was a long time ago.
See, she's not a man-hater at all.
She's very supportive of men...

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

PEGGY

I'll be back in a second.

Suddenly, Peggy stands, pushes past him and runs down the steps.

Maggie looks up just in time to catch Peggy's exit. Ike pulls his tape recorder out of his pocket and starts speaking into it.

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

MAGGIE

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

IKE

You can turn that finger around.

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

MAGGIE

(defensive)

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

IKE

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

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

MAGGIE

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

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

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

MAGGIE

(to herself)

This guy never stops.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - NIGHT

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

MAGGIE

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

LEE

(handing her the key)

Okay. Second floor.

MAGGIE

Thanks.

LEE

Don't take anything big.

Maggie moves up the stairs towards Ike's room.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

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

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

MAGGIE'S POV:

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

MAGGIE

(reads)

"How does she get all these guys to propose? She's not that beautiful."

(snorts)

Bite me, paper boy.

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

MAGGIE

(as she takes post-its)

Rude...

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

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL HALLWAY - CONTINUING

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

BACK INSIDE THE ROOM

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

MAGGIE

Thief!

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

It's locked. He starts to pound on the door.

IKE

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

INT. IKE'S HOTEL BATHROOM - CONTINUING

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

IKE

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

We HEAR Ike slamming his body against the bathroom door.

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

EXT. IKE'S HOTEL WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

IKE

That's breaking and entering. I'll
call the sheriff.

MAGGIE

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

She disappears around the ledge of the building and runs off.

Ike's neighbor, Harvey, sits reading near his window.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

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

The CAMERA MOVES on the last note on the floor next to her chair.

It reads: "SHOWS NO REMORSE".

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN STREET/BEAUTY PARLOR - NEXT DAY

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

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

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

MAGGIE

Do you think I flirt with Cory?

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

PEGGY

Good morning to you, too. You look good.

MAGGIE

Thank you. Do you think I flirt with Cory?

PEGGY

Yes.

Maggie looks miserable.

MAGGIE

I don't mean it.

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

PEGGY

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

MAGGIE

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

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

PEGGY

Like certain kinds of coral.

Peggy sits in the salon chair next to Maggie.

MAGGIE

I'm going to kill myself.

PEGGY

Why?

MAGGIE

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

PEGGY

(friendly)

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

MAGGIE

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

PEGGY

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

MAGGIE

But I'm weird.

PEGGY

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

MAGGIE

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

Maggie looks ready to cry.

PEGGY

I'm not worried about you and Cory or Cory and me or even that you're irreversibly screwed up. But, Maggie, you've been like this since we were kids. And I think now that you are aware of it and that it hurts people's feelings, maybe it's time to move on with your life and commit to someone of your own, like Bob, if he's the one.

MAGGIE

I think you're right.

(then)

Is there anything I can do to make it up to you?

PEGGY

Something that brings warmth to my heart.

(pause)

Duckbill platypus.

MAGGIE

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

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

PEGGY

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

MAGGIE

Thanks. Will you fix my hair?

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - LATER THAT MORNING

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

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER THAT MORNING

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

MAGGIE

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

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

IKE

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

MAGGIE

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

Ike notices Maggie is holding two coffees.

IKE

Coffee. Now.

Maggie hands it to him.

MAGGIE

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

IKE

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

Ike puts a shirt on as Maggie speaks.

MAGGIE

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

IKE

Really.

Maggie turns away from him as he dresses.

MAGGIE

I've decided to cooperate and let you interview me.

(beat)

For a thousand bucks.

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

MAGGIE

I want a big wedding and a killer dress and for a grand I will answer all your questions and let you follow me around.

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

IKE

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

MAGGIE

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

IKE

(to Maggie)

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

MAGGIE

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

Ike knows she's right.

IKE
Too much.

MAGGIE
Seven-fifty.

IKE
Five hundred.

MAGGIE
Six-fifty.

IKE
Done.

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

CUT TO:

EXT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

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

INT. MAGGIE'S FOYER AND STAIRS - DAY

Maggie leads Ike upstairs to her workroom.

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

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM - LATER

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

IKE
What's this over here?

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

IKE
Cindy the manicurist.

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

MAGGIE

No, the other one.

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

IKE

(laughing)

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

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

He walks to them.

IKE

Amazing. Found industrial stuff.
Willow lamp... Rasta lamp...

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

IKE

Is this your preferred logo?

MAGGIE

I think so.

IKE

I like it. This whole thing is pretty
incredible.

(studying a lamp)

I think you could probably sell this
lamp idea in New York.

MAGGIE

Maybe someday.

IKE

You afraid to try?

MAGGIE

(stares at him)

No, I'm not afraid. Just... Maybe
someday.

IKE

Well, I'm impressed. Absolutely
incredible.

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

MAGGIE
What an incredible chauvinistic
observation.

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

Maggie's showing Ike engagement rings.

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

Ike snores. Maggie hits him.

MAGGIE
(defensive)
It was classic.

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

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

IKE
Always a mood killer.

MAGGIE
Still sweet.

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

MAGGIE
George. He proposed at a butterfly
farm in St. Thomas. The ring was
inside a cocoon.

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

MAGGIE

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

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

MAGGIE

And here we are at Bob. He proposed during the seventh inning stretch...

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

MAGGIE

... At an Oriole's game.

She takes her hand down. Ike steps away.

IKE

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

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

MAGGIE

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

IKE

(stopping)
Highly suspect.

MAGGIE

What do you mean? It was incredibly romantic!

IKE

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

Ike moves back to the couch.

IKE

I think the most anybody can honestly say is, "Look..."

(sits on the arm of
the couch)

"I guarantee that we'll have tough times. I guarantee that at some point one or both of us will want to get out of this thing.

IKE

But I also guarantee that if I don't ask you to be mine, I'll regret it for the rest of my life. Because I know in my heart -- you're the only one for me"

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

MAGGIE

I like it.

She moves from the fireplace to a chair and sits.

MAGGIE

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

Ike is taken aback.

MAGGIE

Don't look so surprised, you've got divorce written all over you.

IKE

I'm a work in progress.

MAGGIE

So? Is that what you said to her?

IKE

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

MAGGIE

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

Ike takes a swallow of cappuccino.

IKE

I don't know.

MAGGIE

You don't know.

IKE

No.

MAGGIE

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

Ike is restless. He stands up.

IKE

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

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

MAGGIE

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

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

MAGGIE

I'll just need one more day to make
sure your check clears.

IKE

Ow!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HALE STREET - THE NEXT DAY

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

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

MAGGIE

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

IKE

Agreed.

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

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY

The place is fairly large and prosperous, probably the place
to go in the Tri-County area.

A little FLOWER GIRL, 10, is being fitted on the pedestal in the middle of the room. A saleswoman, POLLY, has taken the flower girl under her wing. They are both under the expert eyes of a stern looking woman, MRS. WHITTENMEYER, the shop owner. Also, the girl's MOTHER is there watching.

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

MAGGIE
Mr. Whittenmeyer. Hi, Polly!

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

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

MAGGIE
I didn't drag.
(then to the girl)
He tripped on his shoelaces.

Mrs. Whittenmeyer comes forward to greet Maggie.

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

Maggie leads her to the front window.

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

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

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

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

MRS. WHITTENMEYER
It's one thousand dollars.

Maggie is keenly aware of Ike listening in.

MAGGIE
I have one thousand dollars.

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

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

MAGGIE
Is this dress for sale?

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

Ike watches with regret as Maggie's child-like enthusiasm
drains away, her happy mood crushed by the tactless assault
of the shop owner. He's starting to see that it's not always
easy being Maggie. There's a tremor in her voice.

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

Ike calls out to Mrs. Whittenmeyer.

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

She walks over to him.

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

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

IKE
Perfect.

IKE

Because Miss Carpenter is here to buy one. But not just any one.

She wants that one.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER

It's a thousand dollars!

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

IKE

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

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

MRS. WHITTENMEYER

Will he really do that?

Maggie gives her a look.

MR. WHITTENMEYER

(to Maggie)

Well, why don't you pick out some accessories while I get this ready, dear. Polly, will you come help me, please?

Polly comes to help carry the mannequin away.

ANGLE ON POLLY AND MRS. WHITTENMEYER:

POLLY

(whispering to Mrs. Whittenmeyer)

It's a thousand dollars.

MRS. WHITTENMEYER

Shhhh! The man has ink!

Maggie looks gratefully at Ike.

IKE

Tough to spend money in this town.

TIME CUT: A FEW MINUTES LATER:

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

MAGGIE (O.S.)
 What do you think?

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

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

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

IKE
 Bob will be very happy.

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

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

INT. DINER - DAY

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

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

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

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

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

MAGGIE
 I'll have the same.

IKE
(clears his throat)
Of course.

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

BOB
Neutral corners you two. You're on
the same team now. Any more fighting
and it's fifteen minutes in the
penalty box.

(gently, to Ike)
Maggie's the nicest person you'll
ever meet. But she's always focusing
out there. She's got to start
focusing more in here.

(taps his chest)
That's why she's had some -- whatever
you want to call it -- problems in
the past.

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

As Bob has been talking, Ike has been watching Maggie's face.

The joy seems to have drained out of her.

MAGGIE
(quietly)
Right.

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

Bob takes out a notepad and hands it to Maggie.

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

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

MAGGIE
You know, there's no...

Before Maggie can finish, Ike intercepts her.

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

MRS. PRESSMAN
Tootaloo.

INT. ATLANTIC HOTEL - MOMENTS LATER

GRANDMA JULIA (V.O.)
I'd like to explain about the weddings. There are reasons why they didn't come off. Three weddings, no "I do's". You can't believe how much cake we were left with. I should weight three hundred pounds. I don't think her father minded spending so much money on booze that nobody drank.

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

MAGGIE
Ike... Hi, Grandma.

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

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

Ike winces.

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

GRANDMA JULIA
Oh, yeah, I forgot.

GRANDMA JULIA

I'll tell you one thing, your grandpa
didn't forget that wedding night.

(no Netta)

You can take your hands off your
ears, Netta. Your tea's getting
cold.

MAGGIE

Can you excuse us a minute?

(then to Ike)

May I have a word with you, please?

Maggie moves toward door.

IKE

Bye, Netta... Bye, Grandam.

He steps over to Maggie in the doorway.

MAGGIE

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

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

IKE

(excited)

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

MAGGIE

(casual)

It was in the attic. It was just
sitting there gathering dust.

IKE

It's valuable. Hang onto it.

MAGGIE

No. You take it.

She steps outside, leaving Ike with the record.

IKE

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

MAGGIE

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

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

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S CAR - LATER THAT DAY

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

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

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

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

MAGGIE

(coaxing)

C'mon. Let's go.

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

WALTER

(belligerently)

I haven't had any fun since you got
your driver's license...

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

MAGGIE

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

Steady.

WALTER

(to Dog)

Good boy, Port Hole.

MAGGIE

His name is Skipper, Dad... Steady.

WALTER

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

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

WALTER

Good daughters let their fathers
 pass out.

Walter passes out on the front seat.

MAGGIE

(without difficulty)
 Ike... Please don't write anything
 about this --

IKE

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

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

MAGGIE

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

IKE

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

DRUNK MAN

I'm too loaded.

IKE

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

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

MAGGIE

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

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD - LATE DUSK TO NIGHT

Establishing of Ike's car driving.

INT. IKE'S CAR - LATE DUSK TO NIGHT

Maggie and Ike ride along.

IKE

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

Maggie nods.

IKE

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

EXT. IKE'S CAR - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

Ike and Maggie stare forward. Both seem in melancholy moods.

They're beginning to sense they're in trouble here. Suddenly, the car falters and jerks. It shows to a stop on the shoulder of the road. The car backfires and smokes.

EXT. IKE'S CAR - COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

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

MAGGIE

Your filter's clogged. This takes unleaded.

IKE

Can you fix it?

MAGGIE

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

IKE

(removing his glasses)
Of what?

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

Maggie slams the food closed.

IKE
Kind of isolated.

MAGGIE
Yeah. It's kind of nice.

An uncomfortable silent pause. Ike breaks the moment.

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

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

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

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

He smiles and follows her into the field.

MAGGIE
Be careful of snakes.

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

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

MOMENTS LATER

Maggie leads Ike through a cornfield.

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

Ike chooses his words carefully.

IKE
No. But I think attraction is too
often mistaken for rightness.

Attraction is very misleading. And if it's mutual, it's
well, terribly distracting.

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

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

ANGLE ON: Ike. His conflicted feelings are apparent. With
difficulty, Maggie straightens up and they both quickly remove
their hands.

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

They look at each other for a moment, then:

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

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

MAGGIE
Lionel, can I borrow some tools?

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

LIONEL
Gonna bust out of another wedding?

IKE
You're sure well known around here.

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

Establishing shot.

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

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - DAY

INTERCUT BETWEEN TWO LOCATIONS:

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

FISHER

(into phone)

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

IKE (V.O.)

This is about her negative attention, not mine. Did you get the reimbursement for the dress yet?

FISHER

(into phone)

No, I'm paying for the dress. Do you think she's still gonna run?

IKE (V.O.)

I don't know.

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

INT. IKE'S HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

IKE

(into phone)

Look -- I'll be in there later today. I'll come by and tell you all about it.

FISHER (V.O.)

You're coming here?

IKE

(into phone)

Yeah.

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

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

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

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

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

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

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

IKE
Get this man a Kamikaze.

GEORGE
Splendid dissection of Maggie
Carpenter, very professional job.

Ike sits and leans over to George.

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

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

IKE
Thanks.

GEORGE
She's a cacophony of contradictions.

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

GEORGE

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

IKE

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

GEORGE

(taking a sip of his drink)

Not bad. I was traveling around studying the reproductive and migratory patterns of locusts when Maggie met me.

IKE

(sarcastic)

Neuter a locust, feed the world.

GEORGE

Not the world. Just Africa and China.

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

GEORGE

You know Maggie was the only girl I ever met who would hold my tarantula. On the first date.

IKE

So, tell me, George, why do you think she ran?

GEORGE

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

IKE

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

GEORGE

Why do YOU think she ran?

Ike sips his drink before answering.

IKE

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

GEORGE

And you defending her?

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

GEORGE
 Unbelievable, she got to you.

IKE
 Oh, please!

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

George heads out.

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

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

IKE
 What kind of eggs did she like?

GEORGE
 Poached, just like me.

George exits.

CUT TO:

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

Ike walks down a street toward Ellie and Fisher.

CUT TO:

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

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

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

ELLIE

(into phone)

... Just call me when you have it.

(hangs up, then to

Fisher)

Ike, how is the story coming? Is she a man-eater?

FISHER

Or a vegetarian?

ELLIE

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

IKE

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

FISHER

Whoa, Ike. Getting a complex, buddy?

ELLIE

Fisher, let him talk.

IKE

(sits)

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

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

FISHER

(in shock)

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

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

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

She joins Ike at the piano. Ike gets serious.

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

ELLIE
 No. No, you didn't.

He hugs her.

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

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

Ellie blinks back sentimental tears.

CUT TO:

EXT. TROUT'S BARN - THE NEXT NIGHT

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

INT. TROUT'S BARN - NIGHT

It's a small barn that's been converted into a luau with a bar.

A BAND plays for two hula dancers. The Trouts had decorated it as a little slice of Hawaii. There are tiki lights, numerous rented plastic palm trees and fiberglass copies of Hawaiian statuary. Strings of colored lights crisscross the ceiling.

It looks like a Hawaiian high school gym on prom night.

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

As we come in, the hula dancers finish their applause and Mrs.

Trout announces. Hula dancers stop.

LOU TROUT

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

MRS. TROUT

(grabbing the
microphone)

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

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

MRS. TROUT

King and Queen, dance.

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

MRS. TROUT

Everybody dance.

Everybody dances.

TIMES OUT:

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

MRS. TROUT

Pictures of the King and Queen.

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

Peggy whispers to Maggie.

PEGGY
Lighten up, wahine.

MAGGIE
Lighten up, what?

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

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

PEGGY
(nods to door)
Would it?

ANGLE ON: Ike just entering the party. At least he tried.
He's got a tropical sheet wrapped around his pants and shirt.
He walks to the bar and is greeted warmly by Lee. Maggie
gets very flustered.

PEGGY
What are you doing?

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

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

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

IKE
You got something without a toy in
it?

TIME CUT:

A LITTLE LATER - CLOSE ON

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

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

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

IKE

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

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

MAGGIE

Where did you disappear to?

IKE

Missed me bad, huh?

TIME CUT:

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

MRS. TROUT

Attention. Listen to Walter. Listen
close, he slurs.

(then)

Shut up, wahines!

WALTER

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

Lou Trout stands with his glass raised.

LOU TROUT

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

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

MRS. TROUT

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

MRS. PRESSMAN

May the gifts be returned!

TED

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

The laughter swells and swells, led by Walter.

ANGLE ON:

Ike watches as Maggie takes the heat, raising her glass along
with the others. Bob raises his glass like the good sport
he is.

Ike can't believe it.

WALTER

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

Walter gets a bit laugh. He goes again.

WALTER

Maggie may not be Hale's longest
running joke...
(under her breath)
Maggie finishes the punchline along
with his father.

WALTER AND MAGGIE

-- But she's certainly the fastest.

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

WALTER

Oh, look, Mr. Graham, how about a
toast?

IKE

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

MAGGIE

Excuse me?

IKE

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

MAGGIE

Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BOB
Not now.

Bob rushes after Maggie.

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

Ike exits. Then, Bob comes over.

BOB
Where'd Maggie go?

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

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

EXT. TROUT'S BARN - NIGHT

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

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

MAGGIE
You humiliated me!

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

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

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

Maggie has no response.

IKE
-- Tell me something, do you really
care about Mount Everest?

MAGGIE
It's fun! It's high.

IKE
Or the sexual habits of locusts?

MAGGIE
That was very interesting research
George was doing!

IKE
What kind of Dead Head gets a
temporary tattoo?

MAGGIE
I already explained about that.

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

MAGGIE
(wincing)
Brian told you that?

IKE
Or maybe you just wanted to wear the
headdress.

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

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

MAGGIE
Lost!

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

MAGGIE
What!?

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

MAGGIE
That's called changing your mind.

IKE
No, that's called not having a mind
of your own. What are you doing,
Maggie?

IKE

You really want to let that man drag you up Annapuma on your honeymoon? You don't want to climb Annapuma.

MAGGIE

Yes I do!

IKE

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

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

IKE

Am I right?

She fights back angry tears.

MAGGIE

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

ANGLE ON: Bob comes outside.

BOB

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

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

BOB
 You know... Blocked Bart Starr,
 crewcut ... Are you okay?

Maggie adjusts her face as best she can.

MAGGIE
 Yes.

BOB
 Let me take you back inside, okay?

She lets him lead her away.

MAGGIE
 Jerry Kramer.

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

EXT. HALE METHODIST CHURCH - THE NEXT DAY

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

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

PEGGY
 Bob is making her visualize the ceremony.

CUT TO:

INT. HALE METHODIST CHURCH - NIGHT

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

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

Maggie turns on Ike with "cheerful" hostility.

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

IKE
 I'd rather not.

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

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

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

Cindy leaves to join the girls in the foyer.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - THAT MOMENT

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

PEGGY
 He's going to be the pastor?

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

PEGGY
 What happened at the luau?

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

PEGGY
 It's for the bell.

Cindy joins them.

CINDY
 Bob's in a hurry.

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

CINDY
"Sink the putt."

PEGGY
"Make the shot."

CINDY
"Nothing but net."

PEGGY
"Never say die."

Maggie puts her hands up.

MAGGIE
Go!

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

INT. CHAPEL - THAT MOMENT

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

BOB
Honey, are you okay?

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

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

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

He begins to pace.

BOB
We need to limber you up a little. You're tensing.
(thinks a moment; to Ike, moving him to groom's spot)
You stand here and be me so she knows how far she'll have to go.
(then to Maggie)
I'm going to walk with you.

Bob goes to Maggie and walks behind her.

BOB
Visualize! Visualize! It's game
time.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie walking.

BOB
You are the football. You're
spiraling through the air towards
the hands of the groom.

She proceeds down the aisle. Bob behind her.

MAGGIE
(eyes down)
Yes, I'm spiraling through the air.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie raises her eyes and sees Ike in front of her as groom.

Ike and Maggie lock gazes. If they had to, they couldn't
look away. All the things unspoken are now communicated --
the love, the longing.

MAGGIE
I streak towards the goal line.

Maggie's pace quickens.

MAGGIE
And I land on the goal line.

ANGLE ON:

Bob beams to see Maggie's eager arrival at Ike's side. He
switches off the music and proceeds like a proud coach to be
the pastor.

BOB
Okay, I'm the pastor. Dearly beloved,
blah, blah, blah. So on and so forth.
Ar ta ta ta. Yabada dabada. I now
pronounce you man and wife. Kiss
the bride, badum dum.
(then moving toward
Ted)
We have the crescendo that leads to
us right back down the aisle and out
the...

Ike kisses Maggie. It is a world class, Olympic kiss. It is a kiss that changes everything and can never be taken back. It is a kiss you only get once in your life.

NEW ANGLE:

Bob's smile dies. Cindy's mouth drops open as the kiss goes on and on. Peggy loses control and screams.

BOB
Maggie!!!!?

Like a bucket of water thrown on two dogs, Ike and Maggie are startled out of their kiss. They pull apart and smile at each other.

ANGLE ON: Bob.

BOB
(furious)
If you were imagining me, you did great.
(to Ike)
What the hell were you doing?

IKE
(eyes on Maggie)
I'm sorry, Bob. She kissed me back.

MAGGIE
(dazed but happy)
I kissed him back.

BOB
Yeah, I caught that. Want to tell me how long this has been going on?

Maggie looks at Ike, wondrous, confused.

MAGGIE
About a minute...?

IKE
A little longer for me.

MAGGIE
Really?

BOB
What do you expect me to say to this?

IKE
How about -- "I hope you'll be very happy together"?

Bob hauls back and punches Ike in the face. Ike drops.

BOB
I hope you'll be very happy together.

Bob storms down the aisle and out of the church.

MAGGIE
(to Peggy)
Take care of him.

Maggie leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHURCH - THAT MOMENT

Bob is halfway down the walk. Maggie appears at the church door and calls after him.

MAGGIE
Bob, I'm sorry!
(half to herself)
At least I backed out before the
wedding. That's progress!

He keeps marching. Now Peggy appears next to Maggie. Maggie calls again.

MAGGIE
Some woman is going to make you a
lot happier than I ever could...

The words are barely out of her mouth when Cindy comes out the door, racing after Bob at a full sprint.

MAGGIE
See?

PEGGY
Well, Maggie -- in the words of Mrs.
Pressman: "Holy moly". Call me later.

Peggy goes to her car. Cindy joins her as Bob speeds off in his car. Now Ike takes Peggy's place next to Maggie. Maggie turns to face Ike. They are both beet red, stammering and unable to look at each other, trying to act normal.

MAGGIE
Okay. So... what, uh... What just
happened? Just now? Just then? In
there?

IKE
I don't know.

IKE
I, uh -- I frankly don't even want
to talk about it.

MAGGIE
Me, either.

Ike GRABS Maggie and BOOM -- they are all over each other,
kissing frantically, tongues, hands, hair, elbow, you name
it.

Blathering fools.

IKE
(blathering)
I love you. I love you.

MAGGIE
(blathering)
I love you, too.

They come up for air.

IKE
Wait. We have to talk. We have to
do some talking now. Pull up a
railing.

Maggie sits on the railing, then Ike backs up and sits on
the opposite railing.

IKE
You have to go down an aisle and say
"I do". You have to get married.

MAGGIE
To who? Are you asking me?

IKE
Me?

Ike backs up to opposite railing and sits facing Maggie.

MAGGIE
Yes, you!

IKE
(thinks)
Well, you do have the dress.

MAGGIE
And the church.

IKE
And the wedding date.

IKE
 There's the two of us.
 (beat)
 So, you think... maybe... You have
 to go down the aisle with somebody
 you love and who loves you back.

MAGGIE
 I'm okay with that.

IKE
 So am I.

MAGGIE
 So, we'll...

They both nod and sit there smiling, sort of. The organist,
 Ted, closes the church door.

TED
 Good night.

Ike pulls his tape recorder out of his pocket and quietly
 speaks into it.

IKE
 I'm getting married.

WIDE SHOT:

They smile at each other and remain sitting. Then, silence.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET/HALE/ATLANTIC HOTEL - THAT NIGHT

Ike drives up and parks in front of the hotel as he talks on
 his cell phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

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

Ellie's on the phone. Fisher sits nearby.

ELLIE
 Ike's going to get married.

Fisher throws himself onto the carpet and rolls himself
 helpless with laughter.

ELLIE
(without turning to
him)
Fisher, if you pee on that Persian,
I'll kill you.

CUT TO:

INT. BEAUTY SALON - NIGHT DAY

Maggie talks to Peggy, Cindy and Grandma Julia. Grandma Julia sits under a hair dryer. Sprout, the dog, sits in his basket.

CINDY
I love his eyes. I just believe
they're listening to you.

PEGGY
His hair... any color.

GRANDMA JULIA
I like his tight butt.

Peggy laughs.

MAGGIE
Grandma!

PEGGY
(to Cindy)
See, this is a mature relationship.
She's really found it.

CUT TO:

LOVE MONTAGE SHOTS:

EXT. OCEAN - DAY

Ike and Maggie fishing.

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKSHOP/HOME - DAY

They play ping-pong. They laugh, enjoying the moment.

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Ike and Maggie have fun playing cards. The game is slapjack.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Maggie and Ike horseback riding. They sit on their horses amongst trees, "nuzzling". Ike reads as he pushes Maggie in a tire swing.

INT. MAGGIE'S ROOM - DAY

Ike and Maggie open and close a Hoberman ball by holding its opposite ends in their teeth. Grandma looks in.

INT. MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

There is a fire in the fireplace. Maggie and Ike sit as Ike shows Maggie some passages from his favorite books. He's reading something from Yeats at the moment. They seem happy.

EXT. CHURCH - THE DAY OF THE WEDDING

It is a media circus including FOUR REPORTERS, Midday with Meredith and the T-shirt Vendor. Plus three other people the reporters are interviewing, a GERMAN LADY, BUTCH KENAN, a farmer and Grandma Julia. Reporter DINA NAPOLI walks down the church steps.

DINA NAPOLI (OF WBAL)

Wedding bells are ringing for the fourth time today in Hale, Maryland. Maggie Carpenter, "Always a Bride -- Never a Bridesmaid", will be attempting to complete her fourth wedding ceremony. We'll come back on the air when the results are in. Back to you, Jessica.

Meredith, the low-end public access TV reporter, films himself pointing a cheap video camera himself.

MEREDITH

The turnout for this morning's wedding is usually reserved for royalty or Hollywood stars, but Maggie Carpenter is Hale, Maryland's special star and the citizens of Hale are out in full force today.

The NY T-shirt Vendor pitches his wares.

T-SHIRT VENDOR

I got "Bye-bye Birdie". "What part of 'I do' don't you understand?"... Get your "Runaway Bride" T-shirts here...

Reporter JULIE MURPHY stands near Grandma Julia and Mrs. Pressman.

JULIE MURPHY (Channel 6)

The bride's been here for almost an hour, but being around in the beginning was never her problem.

JULIE MURPHY (Channel 6)
 We'll be here, showing you the full
 wedding ceremony, we hope.

Reporter JACKI and TIFFANY stand at the edge of the CROWD
 reporting.

JACKI/REPORTER #3 (WBOC TV16)
 Will she or won't she? That is on
 the minds of these several hundreds
 folks, who are standing here this
 morning. Not to mention on the mind
 of Groom Number #4, ex-USA Today
 columnist, Ike Graham, who is missing
 in action.

EXT. WINDOW OF CHURCH/INT. SUNDAY SCHOOL ROOM - DAY

INSERT window of church. Peggy peers out the window at the
 carnival scene. Cindy sits with Maggie as she leans forward,
 doubled over on a child's chair. Peggy moves from the window
 to sit with them.

MAGGIE
 (moves to window)
 He's not coming. Watch. He's not
 coming.

PEGGY
 No, no. I saw eight geese flying in
 a "V".

MAGGIE
 You and your lucky geese. You always
 see geese.

PEGGY
 Not eight...

CINDY
 And in a "V".

MAGGIE
 Eight is good... "V" could be Victory.

They ad lib various words starting with the letter "V".
 Maggie is nervous.

CINDY
 Rub your ears.

PEGGY
 Yes, rubbing your ears is very
 soothing. Cory does that to me when
 I hyperventilate.

Maggie rubs her ears.

CINDY
We do it to our dog.

MAGGIE
It's hurting.

CINDY
We'll rub.

After they rub Maggie's ears a bit:

PEGGY
He's here! He's here!

They all squeeze and peer out window. They scream in excitement.

Cindy rushes to Maggie's wedding dress.

CINDY
I'll get the dress.

MAGGIE
He's here!... He's here!

PEGGY
Now's the time for calm... If you
don't calm down, you won't get your
dress on...
(reassuringly)
He's the one... He's the one.

Peggy moves to help Cindy with the dress. Maggie stands alone at the window a moment. She picks up a toy horse.

MAGGIE
This is not a good sign.

Maggie goes over to Peggy and Cindy, and starts to get into her bridal gown. They continue to ad lib words standing with the letter "V".

CINDY
We have to hurry. The Sunday School
kids will be here soon.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S CAR - DAY

Ike pulls up slowly. GUESTS peer through the his car window and wave. Ike rubs his headache.

JULIE MURPHY

Well, the groom just pulled up.
There was talk of a "now show", but
he is here.

DINA NAPOLI

Ike Graham is here!

IKE'S POV:

He moves as he takes it all in: a FAMILY eats a fast food picnic on a neighbor's lawn, invited GUESTS flock by in their party best, and local NEWS TEAMS block the way. The STATE SENATOR is making a speech welcoming the press to Maryland. A large GROUP of reporters head up the church's stairs, hauling their equipment. They enter the flood of PEOPLE streaming inside the church. Ike snaps.

EXT. IKE'S CAR - CONTINUING

Ike stops the car where it is and jumps out, slamming the door in anger. The REPORTERS swarm around him as he gets out of the car.

They continue to pound him with questions as he walks to church steps. An OLDER LADY smacks him on the shoulder with a newspaper. He turns in astonishment and continues up the steps. He charges up the stairs and grabs Lee.

IKE

Shoot ours so she has one with an ending.

Mrs. Pressman stands, shooting Ike with her video camera.

IKE

(pleading)
Mrs. Pressman, please.

MRS. PRESSMAN

It's okay. There's no microphone.
You're no fun.

IKE

No, I'm not.

Ike retreats into the church. Lee comes up to him again with his video camera: CHUFFA about Scorsese.

INT. CHURCH - CONTINUING

As Fisher and Ellie sign the guest book, a LOCAL LADY stares at Ellie. Ellie stares back at her until she leaves. Ike walks away from Lee and turns smack into Ellie and Fisher. Ike puts his arms around them and gives them a big hug.

IKE
Friends. Thank you. Thank you.

Over Ellie's shoulder, Ike sees Fisher's grinning face.

IKE
We are friends, aren't we, Fisher?

FISHER
(grinning)
Of course we are. Of course.

IKE
Then you'll be my best man.

FISHER
Well, I'm good, I don't know if I'm best.

IKE
Go talk to the pastor and he'll tell you what to do. And someone will tell me what to do.

ELLIE
You always looked great in that suit... And Ike?
(emotional)
I'm happy for you, honey.

Ellie whispers in his ear.

ELLIE
I'll have a car around the back to whisk you out of here if she runs.

Ellie kisses him on the cheek and walks away.

ANGLE ON:

Bob comes up to Ike. He looks like he's going to punch Ike, then abruptly holds out a rose boutonniere.

BOB
You look awful.

IKE
(sarcastically)
Thank you.

Bob hands the flower to Ike. Ike is shaking. Bob catches this and looks up to Ike. It is a moment of clean honesty between the men.

BOB
Ike. Need help?

He takes the boutonniere and puts it on Ike's lapel.

BOB
I'm glad it's you.

IKE
Really?

BOB
I didn't want to find out I wasn't
for her in the fourth quarter.

IKE
Got any last minute advice?

BOB
(motioning to their
eyes)
Maintain eye contact.

Bob turns and leaves, going down a side staircase.

IKE
(to himself)
Eye contact. Eye contact.

Out of the corner of his eye, Ike sees a pictures of Christ
on the wall. He leans into the picture and whispers.

IKE
Cover me.

He walks into the chapel.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUING

Ike steps up and stands next to Fisher.

FISHER
(to Ike)
I have no idea what I'm doing.

IKE
Your job is... the ring.
(to Fisher)
Do you have the ring?!

FISHER
I just found out I'm best man! I'm
lucky I have a suit... What's wrong?

Ike gives the ring to Fisher. The Pastor approaches Ike. Ike turns away and look out over the guests.

IKE'SPOV: There are most of the TOWNSPEOPLE we've come to know, plus some NEW YORKERS for Ike, with little ponytails.

Armani wire rims, Donna Karan bodysuits. There's a lot of smirking, checking out the hicks, forming their stories for cocktail hour. Elaine is in back all dressed in black, mourning Ike. Mrs. Trout approaches Ike.

MRS. TROUT
You should thank Lou and I for the
wedding car -- a '63 Buick.

IKE
Thank you.

MRS. TROUT
Oh, come on. You're practically
family.

Mrs. Trout starts picking lint off Fisher's jacket.

FISHER
Hello. I'm Fisher.

MRS. TROUT
This doesn't want to come out.

FISHER
You just pull a hair from my neck.

IKE
Mrs. Trout, go back to your seat!

INT. CHURCH FOYER - DAY

Peggy joins Maggie, who is blowing bubblegum and swaying in front of an oscillating fan. Grandma and Walter come in.

Grandma gives her a kiss on the cheek.

GRANDMA JULIA
Good luck, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Thank you, Grandma.

Grandma leaves. Walter steps up.

WALTER
(quietly to Maggie)
I'm really rooting for this one.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Dad.

Peggy turns off the fan. Cindy takes the bag from Maggie.

CINDY

Spit.

Maggie spits her bubblegum into the bag. Peggy hands Maggie her bouquet.

PEGGY

Let's go.

MAGGIE

No sauntering down the aisle. Just make time. Let's just get there.

Cindy and Peggy nod and leave. The door closes.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUING

Both extends his hand to Elaine.

ELAINE

Hi, I'm Elaine from New York.

BOB

Hello. I'm Bob, Maggie's fourth attempt.

ELAINE

I'm sorry.

BOB

That's okay. There's a lid for every pot. Besides, I'm comfortable with Ike. I mean, Jack Dempsey lost his heavyweight title to a New Yorker.

ELAINE

I know. Gene Tunney.

The organ begins to play. The organist is Ted. Grandma, Walter, Mrs. Pressman and the Trouts watch. Mrs. Trout picks lint off of her husband's jacket.

ANGLE ON:

Cindy and Peggy enter with the confident air of people who have done this before. They make it to the head of the aisle all too quickly. Peggy gives Ike a wink and an encouraging smile.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - CONTINUING

The door opens and Dennis sticks his head in.

DENNIS
They're ready, Maggie.

MAGGIE
Just a second.

Dennis closes the door behind him as he goes back into the chapel. Maggie has a moment alone. She looks at back door as possible escape route, then changes her mind. She signals the start of the wedding by knocking on the door.

INT. CHAPEL - CONTINUOUS

Immediately, Cory and Dennis open the doors for her entrance.

All the guests stand as Maggie enter the chapel smiling.

MAGGIE'S POV:

The aisle stretches before her into infinity. Faces goggle at her from every direction. The tiny figure of Ike stands like a beacon a long way off.

NEW ANGLE:

She plunges forward with a sped-up hesitation step.

ANGLE ON:

Ike rocks imperceptibly, urging her on. Peggy and Cindy make little "come on" motions. It seems to be working. Maggie approaches rapidly. The CROWD has turned from skepticism to looks and noises of encouragement.

ANGLE ON: MAGGIE

But then her feet gradually begin to slow.

ANGLE ON:

Fisher gives a little "darn, so close" look.

ANGLE ON:

But Ike is too busy maintaining eye contact. His eyes urge Maggie closer -- loving her, willing her on.

CLOSE ON:

Maggie stops her walk, gives Ike a teasing smile, and then resumes with her walk toward him. His face. Her face.

His face. Her face.

CLOSE ON:

Her foot inches forward. The other follows.

NEW ANGLE:

A sigh now rises from the GUESTS as Maggie closes in on Ike. He smiles at her. She smiles at him. She is almost there... She's there, smiling at Ike. The Pastor gestures to the guests to sit down. They do.

ANGLE ON:

Ike sneezes. She looks down and imagines she sees the carpet splitting apart. And she bolts like a bat out of hell! In a flurry of white, she is halfway down the aisle before Ike knows what hits him.

ANGLE ON:

Ike stands there dazed. For a second. Then she springs into action, charging after her.

IKE
(yelling out)
Block the doors!

Like a general, he points to Dennis and Cory in the back and sends them into action. The doors shut in Maggie's face. But she's a wild animal cornered. She moves to the side. The TOWNSPEOPLE stand so Ike can hurry through the pew. Ike climbs on the pews towards her as GUEST crowd the aisle, blocking his path. Like a gazelle, she leaps to the side aisle and scampers down and away. Fisher gets on his cell phone. Ike charges from one of the full pews, crosses the aisle and leaps across the pews near the staircase to cut her off. He grabs her veil and it comes off in his hands. Maggie disappears down the steps of the church basement. Ike fumble with the veil and jumps over the railing, landing on Dennis' toe. He follows down the stairs after her. Mrs. Pressman and Walter exchange bet money.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH BASEMENT - CONTINUING

Maggie comes down steps and enters the church children's Sunday school class. A lot of KIDS And TEACHERS are doing religious arts and crafts. As Maggie runs through:

MAGGIE
There's a man coming down those steps
with lots of candy in his pockets.

MAGGIE

If you tickle him, he'll give candy.

She gives her bouquet to a little GIRL as she goes by. Ike comes down stairs.

IKE

Maggie!

The KIDS mob him, grabbing his pockets. Ike fights his way through KIDS.

ANGLE ON:

Maggie as she's in the church kitchen and hops on counter and heads out the window. The window is wide enough.

ANGLE ON:

Ike as he gets to the window, but Maggie is out in driveway.

EXT. CHURCH DRIVEWAY - CONTINUING

Maggie flies toward a FedEx truck at next house just leaving.

ANOTHER ANGLE:

She gathers her dress and jumps in as Ike yells from window, then, quickly climbs out onto the lawn as the truck starts to pull away.

IKE

Maggie!

Maggie looks back once, tearful and regretful, and disappears inside the truck. The truck races off.

The PHOTOGRAPHERS turn their cameras on Ike, en masse. He is enveloped by a barrage of bright lights.

Ellie and Fisher, who have also stepped outside on chapel front steps, are looking around as Ike turns around the corner and past the church.

ELLIE

Look, he's running after her.

FISHER

Look, he's in pretty good shape.

ELLIE

Poor Ike.

They look after the FedEx truck and watch Ike chasing the truck down the road away from the church.

IKE
 (running; yells)
 Maggie!

ELLIE
 Where do you think she's going?

FISHER
 Wherever it is, she'll be there by
 ten-thirty tomorrow.

Cindy, Cory, Peggy and Meredith also rush out of the church and comment on Maggie's runaway. Further down the road, Ike still chases the truck, yelling:

IKE
 Maggie!

As the truck rounds the bend in the road and disappears, Ike stops and stares alone after the disappearing truck. A swarm of REPORTERS catch up to him, flashing pictures and asking questions. Another camera flashes and we cut to:

A NEWSPAPER PHOTO

Of Ike's stunned face on the cover of the USA Today. The caption reads: "Hit and Run: Runaway Bride Strikes again". And we see headlines in other papers.

"MAGGIE'S MAD DASH"

"HARDWARE HONEY GOES NUTS AND BOLTS"

"JOURNALIST WRITTEN OFF"

"BRIDE TAKES HIKE...NOT IKE"

"BRIDE TAKE RIDE"

"MAGGIE SAYS I DON'T"

NEWSPAPER MONTAGE:

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

Kevin, the bartender, reads Jay's column, in the USA Today entitled "Maggie's Mad Dash".

CUT TO:

EXT. USA TODAY LOADING DOCK - DAY

Various newspaper WORKERS also read Jay's column in the USA Today entitled "Maggie Mad Dash" and "Hardware Honey Goes Nuts and Bolts" in another newspaper.

FADE IN

EXT. MAIN STREET/HALE - NIGHT (1-5 MONTHS LATER)

It's a night like any other in Hale -- the regular order of things has been restored on its quaint streets. Quartet sings in front of the hotel. LEE AND CORY CHUFFA: About where Peggy is.

INT. HARDWARE STORE - NIGHT

Maggie is sitting, end of a long day. Peggy sticks her head in entrance door.

PEGGY

You okay? I'm closing.

MAGGIE

I'm just finishing up, too.

PEGGY

Want to go to Butch's for a drink or something?

MAGGIE

(interrupting)

No, I'm just going to head home.

PEGGY

Okay.

Peggy starts to go, then moves close to Maggie.

PEGGY

(stepping closer and
making a "V" with
her fingers)

You know, I was just thinking about that geese thing. I think the "V" was half of a "W". A "W" for...

MAGGIE

What are you talking about?

PEGGY

Wedding. Wedding.
(holding Maggie's
face)

You just have to get the rest of your ducks in a row.

MAGGIE

Thank you. You still think that he was....

PEGGY
Quick. Very quick.

Peggy exits. Maggie stares, losing herself in thought.
Then a VOICE startles her.

VOICE
(whispers)
Marry me, Maggie.

Maggie jumps and turns to see: DENNIS -- the kid from the
high school football team, popping up from a low position
near the counter.

MAGGIE
(softly)
Hi, Dennis.

DENNIS
I am going to propose, you know. I
mean, the right way. Soon as I turn
eighteen.

MAGGIE
You're sweet, Dennis. But you've
got to go. I'm closing up. Here's
a candy bar and one for your brother.

Dennis takes the candy and starts to go.

DENNIS
I'm not giving up. A person
shouldn't give up.

Dennis exits. Maggie is alone. She turns out the lamp she
designed, then on again. She turns off the other lamp on
the counter and exits. We hold on Maggie's designed lamp.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S HALLWAY AND APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ike walks up to his door, carrying his mail and a bag of
carryout. He opens the door and walks into his apartment.
He pets Italics, who sits on his sofa bed. Without taking
off his coat, he goes to his keyboard and plays music as he
CHUFFAS to his cat about marriage and divorce.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Dad and Grandma Julia are there. Grandma is making lunch.

Walter is juggling oranges. There's glass of beer on the kitchen counter.

WALTER
That's Maggie. Home for lunch.

GRANDMA JULIA
She's been doing this since the last wedding. I don't think it's good.

Maggie walks in and kisses Grandma on the cheek.

MAGGIE
Hey. Grandma, what's for lunch?

GRANDMA JULIA
Turkey and cheese.

WALTER
Honey, your grandmother and I were thinking about opening a wedding gift museum.

Walter laughs.

MAGGIE
STOP!

Walter looks at his daughter in surprise. He's never heard a tone like this in her voice before.

WALTER
What?

MAGGIE
(quiet fury)
Just stop it. Don't say another word like that.

WALTER
(putting down the oranges)
Maggie, it's just a joke...

MAGGIE
No. It's my life.

WALTER
A harmless joke.

MAGGIE
No, it's humiliating and you've been doing it since I was a kid. I don't like it. Stop. You may not like having a daughter with problems.

MAGGIE

But guess what? I don't like having
a father who's drunk all the time.
I'll eat in my room.

Maggie takes a plate and exits.

GRANDMA JULIA

That needed to be said. You know --
you're always making jokes about
her, so they won't make jokes about
your drinking.

Walter reacts.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ike goes out on his terrace. He bounces a basketball. It
doesn't bounce. He sits on the steps of the patio and stares.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM/GYM - DAY

Maggie is kickboxing.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM/GYM - ANOTHER DAY

Maggie is a bit melancholy as she works on her lamps.

CUT TO:

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - ANOTHER DAY

Ike quietly sits in bed writing and staring into space
thinking.

His cat sits on the windowsill.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S WORKROOM/GYM - NIGHT

Maggie jumps rope barefooted late at night.

MAGGIE

I need a plan... A plan to life...
What would Bruce Lee do? He'd kick
some ass...

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Maggie in front of plates full of all sorts of types of eggs -- scrambled, poached, sunny-side up, Benedict, soft boiled, etc. -- sits on the kitchen counter. She ties them all.

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY

Establishing shot. Two MEN try to fix the engine of a taxi outside the restaurant.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DUSK

Eke walks by the T-shirt Vendor, goes into a subway station.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET - DUSK

Ike crosses a busy street where a MAN is being arrested. Ike is passing the upscale "Millennium Hardware Store". He glances at the window, looks away, stops and looks again. The window display is made up of an assortment of Maggie's lamps. Logo "MAG" is on them. He smiles and walks on.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK RESERVOIR - DUSK

Ike stares out at water as he walks.

EXT. IKE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Ike walks along sidewalk, crosses street, enters his building.

INT. IKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ike opens the door to his apartment and flicks on the lights. He crosses to hang his coat in the closet. In the closet mirror, he sees and is stunned to find: MAGGIE, sitting on the couch holding *Italics*, the cat.

MAGGIE

Hello, Ike.

He closes the closet and crosses to his desk.

IKE

Don't tell me. My doorman is one of your many admirers... I knew I should have given him a better Christmas gift.

Maggie smiles tenuously. She's more than a little terrified.

MAGGIE

I've been making friends with your cat.

(then)

Is it okay that I'm here?

IKE

I don't have much choice in the matter now, do I? But I can't speak for Italics.

(to Cat)

Traitor!

He moves to the kitchen.

MAGGIE

I don't blame you for being mad...

Ike looks at her. Apparently the word "mad" is an understatement.

MAGGIE

... Or... furious.

Ike looks at her again.

MAGGIE

... Irate? Livid? How's that?

He starts putting cat food in a bowl. The cat leaves Maggie's side and starts to eat.

IKE

Livid is good. So what is it, Maggie? You here on business? I saw your lamps. They're terrific.

MAGGIE

It's something I've always wanted to do.

Ike leaves the kitchen, turns on the balcony lights and re-enters the living room from the balcony.

IKE

You actually could make breaking and entering into a new career.

(after opening the glass doors)

So, what are you doing here?

MAGGIE

I wanted to talk to you about why I run or ride away from things.

Ike moves away from her and sits on the steps near the balcony window, listening.

IKE
(after sitting)
Does it matter?

MAGGIE
I think so... When I was walking down the aisle? I was walking toward somebody who didn't have any idea who I really was. And it was only half the other person's fault, because I had done everything to convince him that I was exactly what he wanted. So it was good that I didn't go through with it because it would have been a lie, but you -- you knew the real me.

IKE
Yes, I did.

MAGGIE
I didn't. And you being the one at the end of the aisle didn't just fix that.

Ike takes this in. She's reaching him -- but then the defenses go back up. He turns to her.

IKE
No, I couldn't fix anything...
(as he gets up)
But I still ended up chasing a truck.

Ike moves out to the balcony. After a moment, Maggie follows him.

EXT. BALCONY/IKE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The balcony overlooks Central Park. The twinkling lights of the city stretch out across the beautiful night. Ike looks out at the view with his back to Maggie as she speaks.

MAGGIE
I understand why you bring up the truck. Let me explain something. The fact is, you've seen me at my worst, most embarrassing, deviously plotting, potentially but not certifiably, psychotic state. And if you liked me then, I mean, now... I can't imagine...

MAGGIE
(crosses to him)
Benedict.

Ike has no response.

MAGGIE
I love eggs Benedict. I hate all
the other kinds.

She hesitates.

MAGGIE
... I hate big weddings with everybody
staring. I would like to get married
on a weekday while everybody is at
work. If I ride off into the sunset,
I want my own horse.

IKE
Should I be writing this down?

She returns to the balcony and hands him the box.

IKE
What's this?

MAGGIE
These are for you.

He opens it. It's her running shoes.

IKE
Used?

MAGGIE
They're mine. I'm turning in my
running shoes to you.

IKE
This is getting serious.

Now she is glowing at him, shining with the full force of
her.

MAGGIE
And one more thing. I know it's
hard to believe there could be more.
Um...

Maggie glances around and spots a DECK CHAIR, which she turns
so it is facing the city lights. Then she softly says:

MAGGIE
If you could have a seat, please.

Ike sits. Maggie takes the box from him and puts it aside. And then she gets down on one knee.

IKE
(laughing)
Oh my God. No.

Maggie smiles up at him. Ike tips his head back and covers his eyes with his hand.

MAGGIE
No, no -- don't hide your face, this only happens once in a lifetime. It's definitely a first to me, and you're not going to want to miss it.

He smiles as he looks at Maggie.

MAGGIE
I love you, Homer Eisenhower Graham. Will you marry me?

Ike swallows, overwhelmed, overjoyed, and scared shitless.

IKE
Maggie, I gotta think about this a little bit.

Maggie hops cheerfully back to her feet.

MAGGIE
(cheerful)
Good.

She gets off her knees and stands.

MAGGIE
I was hoping you'd say that.

IKE
(laughing)
You were not.

MAGGIE
I was, because if you said "yes" right away, I wouldn't get to say this next part. And I've been practicing it.
(pulling up a chair
and sitting)
Ready?

IKE
I'm listening.

MAGGIE

(tenderly)

"I guarantee that we'll have tough times. I guarantee that at some point one or both of us will want to get out. But I also guarantee that if I don't ask you to be mine, I'll regret it for the rest of my life. Because I know in my heart -- you're the only one for me".

Ike takes her hands affectionately.

IKE

Pretty good speech, Maggie.

MAGGIE

I borrowed it from this guy I know.
So?

Ike looks into Maggie's shining face and pauses. He gets up and motions with his hand for her to stay seated. He goes inside and turns on some music. The cat is sitting by the radio. He returns to the balcony and takes Maggie's hand.

IKE

Dance with me.

They start to dance a slow dance.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LARGE GREEN FIELD - DAY

We see a hill and on top of it is a Pastor marrying Maggie and Ike, in beautiful wedding attire. We see Maggie walk down a leaf-lined aisle to a waiting Ike. They kiss as we hear the vows and hear them each say "I do". They kiss a twirling, whirling kiss, a circular kiss. We hear the applause of about twenty people. Slowly, we see the twenty people come over the crest of the hill. They are all Maggie's family and friends, plus the old grooms. They are all paired in twos, like a love Noah's ark.

We see others get the news.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Priest Brian hears about Maggie's wedding.

INT. BAKERY - DAY

Mrs. Trout hears about Maggie's wedding.

INT. NEW YORK BAR - DAY

George, Groom #3, hears about Maggie's wedding.

INT. ELLIE'S OFFICE OR APARTMENT - DAY

Ellie and Fisher hear about Maggie's wedding.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

ANOTHER ANGLE:

Maggie and Ike finally break the kiss. Ike takes her hand and walks her to two horses. Ike and Maggie, on the two horses, ride off happily in their wedding clothes. As the group cheers, Maggie throws bouquet. We see it float in the air.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END