ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JOAN DELANEY is a sixteen-year-old girl, typical in every imaginable way. Her room is littered with teenage business -- rock posters, discarded clothes, books, CD's, stuffed animals from years gone by. We can detect from her surroundings that she is growing up in a very middle class family -- nothing extravagant here. She sleeps splayed on her bed in typical teenage fashion. As we pan across the room, we HEAR A DISTANT, MUDDIED VOICE:

VOICE

Joan.

Joan stirs, turns over, throwing an arm across her face. And then, AGAIN:

VOICE (CONT'D)

Joan.

Joan stirs again. This time, the VOICE COMES LOUDER.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Joan.

Joan sits straight up in bed, her heart pounding, breathing heavily. She looks around her room, but nothing is there. Blink, blink, as she stares into the indigo light of the room. She lies back down. Turning her head, she is able to look outside her window and see a full moon peering down through the curtains. She reaches for an old worn out teddy bear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

She is still asleep, though in a different position, and we HEAR A VOICE, this time YELLING.

VOICE

Joan! Joan!

She sleeps through this one.

CUT TO:
INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

HELEN DELANEY is forty-five, youthful despite everything, funny, smart, tough. She's a good Irish Catholic working-class girl, though she's lapsed from the Catholic part in recent years.

HELEN
Joan Agnes! Don't make me beat you!

REVEAL:

that Helen is cooking for several. Already in the kitchen is LUKE DELANEY, a nerdy fifteen-year-old, a year younger than his sister. He's wiry and a little neurotic, but mostly smart.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Why have my children stopped listening to me?

LUKE
We never listened to you, Ma.

HELEN
William! Breakfast!

LUKE
Dad definitely never listened to you.

HELEN
You aren't helping.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/HELEN AND WILL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

WILL DELANEY is getting dressed. A handsome, rugged man in his forties. He straightens his tie, smooths back his hair, reaches for his wallet, then for his gun. Which worries us. Until he also reaches for his badge. He's a cop. He starts out of the room, remembers something, then goes over and kisses a rosary which is hanging from the bedpost. This is purely superstition and habit. Will Delaney hasn't been in a church since he was married.

CUT TO:
INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joan is still sleeping. A KNOCK on her door. No answer.
Will Delaney comes in. Stands over her. Sits down next to
her. Starts to blow lightly on her face. She swats at it,
as if there's an insect. He blows a little harder. She
starts awake. He LAUGHS.

   JOAN
   Dad, get away.

She kicks at him. He LAUGHS and goes out.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

Will comes into the kitchen. Luke is eating. Helen is still
putting the morning together for her family. Will gives her
a kiss and means it.

   HELEN
   Where's Joan?

   WILL
   She's up.

   HELEN
   What about Kevin?

   WILL
   Let him sleep.

He pours himself a cup of coffee.

   HELEN
   Why?

   LUKE
   Mom, you know all that stuff in my
   room? The candles and crystals and
   stuff? Don't touch that. I'm
   doing an experiment with light.

   HELEN
   I want him to go job hunting today,
   Will.

   LUKE
   Really important experiment.

(CONTINUED)
HELEN
If he's not going to college, he has to get a job.

WILL
He doesn't know anybody. Give him time to adjust.

LUKE
Life altering stuff.

HELEN
I'm not listening to you, Luke.

LUKE
Good to know.

HELEN
We've been here six months. Joan has adjusted. Luke has adjusted.

LUKE
Also good to know.

WILL
The world won't end if he sleeps another half hour, Helen.

HELEN
The doctor was very specific about this. No preferential treatment. We all agreed.

LUKE
Anyway, this experiment with light, it's called the double slit experiment.

HELEN
If you treat him special, then he'll expect the world to do that.

WILL
I heard all the same lectures as you...

But Will abruptly stops talking as KEVIN DELANEY, 19, wheels himself into the room. He's a paraplegic, due to a car accident over a year ago. Handsome, a former football star, his life has been derailed. He tries to keep up his humor, but he is tainted with anger.
CONTINUED: (2)

KEVIN
Ever get the strange feeling that you’re being discussed?

LUKE
I never get that.

KEVIN
Because you’re too boring.

LUKE
That’s what I’m thinking.

HELEN
Your pancakes are cold. I put the classifieds there. And I circled some things.

KEVIN
(picking up the paper)
What, no CEO positions available? Just as well. I’d be the only one whose mother has to drive him to work.

HELEN
You’re going to learn to drive.

KEVIN
I know how to drive. That’s how this all started, I seem to recall.

HELEN
You know what I mean. You have to...

Will makes a gesture for her to stop talking.

HELEN (CONT’D)
Never mind. Apparently you don’t have to do anything.

Tension in the air. Helen goes back to the stove. Will gives her a pleading look. She sighs, then puts some more pancakes on a plate, takes them over to Kevin.

HELEN (CONT’D)
Here. These are hot.

She kisses him on the top of the head. Will smiles at her appreciatively.

CUT TO:
INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

She is getting dressed, a large collection of choices already scattered around her feet. She looks at herself in a full length mirror, turning, can't decide. Suddenly something catches her eye, outside the window. She goes over, sees the form of a MAN standing under a tree, staring up at her window. She is frozen, looking at him.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

The Delaneys are eating.

LUKE
So what you do is, you shoot photons at this piece of paper...

Under which Joan enters, in a hurry, heading for the back door.

JOAN
There's a pervert in the yard.

LUKE
...and a pervert appears in the yard.

HELEN
What?

JOAN
Come see.


CUT TO:

EXT. DELANEY HOME/BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

As Joan heads out to where she saw the man. But there is nothing there.

JOAN
He was standing right here.
Looking up at my window.

Helen and Luke just stare at her. Will goes over and inspects the ground.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WILL
No footprints.

JOAN
The ground is frozen.
(off his look)
He was here.

HELEN
What did he look like?

JOAN
I couldn’t see his face. He was wearing a dark coat.

LUKE
A pervert coat?

HELEN
That was Mr. Sellars. He’s always out early. He’s overly involved with his gutters.

JOAN
I don’t think so. And last night? I heard somebody calling me. In this weird voice. In my room.

Everyone just stares at her.

HELEN
Joan. There definitely wasn’t anyone in your room last night.

JOAN
I’m not crazy. And I haven’t dropped acid in just ages.

HELEN
Come eat your breakfast. You’re going to be late for school.

LUKE
Please excuse Joan from first period. She was hallucinating.

JOAN
Shut up, weirdo.

LUKE
I’m the weirdo?

(continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

HELEN
Enough. Let's go inside and have a civilized family breakfast.

LUKE
It's always good to try something new.

Helen shoots him a look, and they head back inside. Will lingers, looking at Joan.

JOAN
I saw him, Daddy.

Will puts an arm around Joan. She stares up at her window, wondering. On this we...

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

FADE IN:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CLASSROOM - DAY

Joan sits in French class as the teacher, MRS. MARX, DRONES ON. She is sitting near her would-be friends, ELYSE and SOPHIE, who are pretty and popular. Not too far away is ADAM FLYNN, who is staring in their direction. Joan sees him, glances away, catches the eye of her friends.

MRS. MARX
Apres le film, les quatres amis...

CLASS
Apres le film, les quatres amis...

JOAN
(sotto voce)
God, could he be more obvious?

MRS. MARX
...recontre Michelle a le cafe...

CLASS
...recontre Michelle a le cafe...

ELYSE
What do you mean?

JOAN
The way he's staring at you.

(CONTINUED)
ELYSE
He's not staring at me.

SOPHIE
Me, either.

MRS. MARX
...pour prendre les boissons.

CLASS
...pour prendre les boissons.

Joan shoots another glance at him. He looks away.

JOAN
What's the deal with him?

SOPHIE
Monsieur Flynn is what we call 'debris de blanc.'

ELYSE
(off Joan's look)
White trash.

JOAN
Well. Obviously that won't work. Me being from royalty and all.

MRS. MARX
Mademoiselle Delaney.

Joan looks up, caught.

MRS. MARX (CONT'D)
Could you read the next paragraph to the class?

Joan looks down and is stumped.

JOAN
I... don't think so.

MRS. MARX
Porquois pas?

JOAN
Porquois...
(conscious of her new friends)
...je ne parle pas Francais.
CONTINUED: (2)

This gets a good LAUGH FROM EVERYONE. Except Mrs. Marx.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Joan is walking to the principal’s office, slip in hand. She looks miserable. She suddenly hears FOOTSTEPS behind her. She turns to look. No one is there. She speeds up her pace.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY - ARCADIA - DAY

Will Delaney approaches a crime scene, complete with a handful of uniformed cops and some yellow crime tape. He approaches a body under a blanket. Leans down, lifts the blanket, and looks at the victim. It’s a young girl, late teens, scantily clad. She’s been beaten up and choked. Will stares at her for a long beat. A plainclothes detective approaches. This is BARRY NEWFIELD.

BARRY
Chief. What are you doing here?

Will covers her back up and stands.

WILL
Drug related?

BARRY
We don’t know yet. It’s an hour old.

WILL
How long has it been for her?

BARRY
Rigor has set in. Probably happened sometime last night. Patrol car found her.

WILL
You ID’d her?

BARRY
Not yet. (Then)
Chief, you show up on a call like this, the guys are gonna think you don’t trust them.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WILL
I wouldn’t want them to think that.
(pointing in the dirt)
You get a picture of that?

BARRY
What?

WILL
Boot print.

Barry leans down, looks at it, sighs. He stands and motions to a nearby uniformed officer.

BARRY
Osborne, get over here.

OFFICER OSBORNE runs over. He’s barely into his twenties.

BARRY (CONT’D)
Get a photo of that boot print.

OSBORNE
Boot print?

BARRY
Right there. And a plaster cast.

OSBORNE
Okay, sir. And, sir, the M.E. just arrived.

BARRY
Thanks.

Before he can go off:

WILL
Wait a minute. The medical examiner is just getting here?

OSBORNE
Yes, sir, Chief.

WILL
So tell me she was found with the blanket already on her.

OSBORNE
No, sir.
(off his look)
She was just lying there, out in the open.

(CONTINUED)
WILL
You've contaminated the scene, officer.

Osborne tucks his head.

WILL (CONT'D)
Dammit, it's procedure 101.

OSBORNE
I'm sorry, sir.

WILL
(sighs)
Just go get the M.E.

Osborne runs off. Will looks to Barry.

WILL (CONT'D)
You brought in the rookies because it was a prostitute?

BARRY
We don't know that it's a prostitute, yet. Osborne was the officer on patrol. Luck of the draw.

WILL
He should know better.

BARRY
This used to be a safe place to live, Chief. Less than twenty homicides a year, most of them domestic disputes. Violent crime has doubled in the last year, and it's hard for the boys to catch up. (off Will's look)
But then, you know that.

WILL
I'll tell you what hasn't doubled in the last year, and that's the conviction rate. That's going to change, under my watch.

BARRY
I get that, Chief. But if I could just reiterate. You showing up on a routine murder investigation...

(CONTINUED)
WILL
Lt. Newfield. When these investigations become routine, I won't have to show up anymore.

He walks off. On Barry--

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CLERICAL AREA - DAY

The clerical area outside the principal's office. Helen works there. She is talking to a fellow worker, MARLENE. Under this, Joan enters, slides into a chair, and attempts to hide her face with a pamphlet.

HELEN
Marlene, did you see this excuse slip for Marty Wilkins?

MARLENE
Yeah, I signed it.

HELEN
Don't you think his mother, who's a lawyer, would know how to spell either 'sore' or 'throat'? I mean, she'd get one of them right.

MARLENE
I'll call him in after lunch.
(seeing Joan)
Well, look who's here.

Helen looks over. She moves over to the counter, across from Joan.

HELEN
Joan?

Joan looks up.

JOAN
Hi, Mom.

HELEN
Are you here to see Mr. Chadwick?

JOAN
Apparently I'm getting some kind of award.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HELEN
Oh, really? Most likely to end up in big rig school?

JOAN
You know, a lot of people would consider your job a conflict of interest.

HELEN
That's fascinating.

MR. CHADWICK, a typical high school principal, comes out.

CHADWICK
Ah, Ms. Delaney. Let's have a chat.

He motions for her to come in. Helen watches Joan as she goes into the principal's office.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CHADWICK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joan sits in a chair as he moves behind his desk.

JOAN
Look, Mr. Chadwick, I have to tell you that Mrs. Marx hates me. I'm not sure why.

CHADWICK
Could it be that you disrupt her class?

JOAN
I don't get in trouble anywhere else.

(off his look)
Okay, Mr. Backus hates me, too. But that's just because I'm morally opposed to dissecting frogs. Everywhere else, I'm good.

(still off his look)
P.E. does not count.

Chadwick takes a breath.
CONTINUED:

CHADWICK
You are a special case, Joan. We like your mother very much, and your father is an influential figure in town. We do take into consideration that you’re new here. And the fact that your family went through a very difficult time before relocating.

JOAN
I don’t want special treatment.

(beat)
Although, a little special treatment wouldn’t hurt.

CHADWICK
I saw your records from your former school. I saw your I.Q. tests. You should be blowing everyone else out of the water. I don’t like to see anything go to waste.

JOAN
Well, that explains your tie.

(realizing)
I’m sorry. That was awful. Did I say that?

Chadwick takes a long breath, folds his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Joan is walking back to class, probation slip in hand. We hear the VOICES of teachers talking in nearby classrooms. Joan turns a corner and is walking down a deserted hallway. She runs her hand along the lockers, like a twig along a fence, making a rattling noise. Suddenly she looks up and sees A MAN standing there. He is middle-aged, nondescript. It is the same man Joan saw standing outside her window. He has longish hair and gentle eyes. She stands very still and looks at him.

MAN
Joan.

She is paralyzed. She doesn’t know what to do.

MAN (CONT’D)
We need to talk.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Joan turns and starts walking away from him.

    MAN (CONT'D)
    You're not crazy.

She speeds up her pace. He takes a step toward her.

    MAN (CONT'D)
    Don't be afraid.

Joan turns.

    JOAN
    Leave me alone, you freak.

    MAN
    I just need a moment.

Now Joan picks up the pace and starts running and yelling.

    JOAN
    Help! Somebody help me!
    (as she continues to run)
    Mom! He's here! Somebody help!

On the man, as he watches Joan running down the hallway...

    FADE OUT.

    END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Will Delaney hurries down the corridor. He finds a small knot of people. Joan is recovering, trying to talk to the people around her. Helen is there, as well as Mr. Chadwick and some security guards. Joan looks up and is happy to see her father. She runs to him. He hugs her.

WILL
Did he touch you?

JOAN
No, Daddy.

WILL
Is it the same guy?

JOAN
Yes. It was him.

Will walks with Joan back over to the group. Will and Helen exchange a look.

CHADWICK
Mr. Delaney, security has scoured the place. They couldn’t find anything unusual. Still, I’ve suggested to Helen that she and Joan should go home for the day.

WILL
That’s a good idea. I’ll get a unit out here.

CHADWICK
I’m not sure that’s necessary. It would be disruptive for the kids.

WILL
Not as disruptive as being abducted, I’m thinking.

CHADWICK
Chief Delaney, if we could speak.

He leads Will off to the side.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CHADWICK (CONT'D)
As I said, we've combed the premises. We've talked to some teachers, some students. Nobody remembers seeing anyone fitting her description.

WILL
Try harder. Someone had to have seen something.

CHADWICK
Well, that's just it. Mr. Parker, the music teacher did see something. His classroom is in the area where Joan allegedly encountered this man. He recalls looking out the door, seeing Joan in the hall.

WILL
When?

CHADWICK
At the time she said the attack occurred. He paid special attention because your daughter was acting strangely.

WILL
How so?

CHADWICK
Talking to herself.

This registers with Will. He doesn't know what it means but he doesn't like it.

CHADWICK (CONT'D)
I just had Joan in my office this morning, for disrupting, then smarting off in her French class. Two days ago it was biology class. Last week, P.E.

WILL
What's your point?

CHADWICK
She's acting out. It's not unusual after some kind of tragedy.
CONTINUED: (2)

WILL
You think my daughter has psychological problems?

CHADWICK
That isn't what I said.

WILL
My child doesn't have a problem. She doesn't need a shrink. And if she says someone approached her, then that's what happened. I'm going to get a unit out here. And what you need to do is your job. Keeping our kids safe, not psychoanalyzing them.

Will walks off, then turns on a heel; he's pissed.

WILL (CONT'D)
Nobody tells me about my family. Got that?

And before Chadwick can answer, Will is gone.

INT. DELANEY HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin is LISTENING TO ELVIS COSTELLO and is painting model soldiers. The door opens O.S. He looks up. His mother and Joan enter.

KEVIN
Hey. What's going on?

Joan says nothing. She goes straight through the room and upstairs. Helen lingers.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
Why are you guys home?

HELEN
Some man approached Joan at school.

KEVIN
The pervert?

HELEN
We don't know. Honestly, I don't even know if it's happening, or if Joan is...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

KEVIN
Cracking up?

HELEN
I was going to say looking for attention.

Helen hovers over him a beat, then:

HELEN (CONT'D)
What are you making for dinner?

KEVIN
The Napoleonic army.

HELEN
The great thing about cooking? It doesn't require legs.

KEVIN
Mom, I don't want to fight.

Helen draws up a chair. Kevin ignores her as he keeps working.

HELEN
Kevin, you can't just give up and withdraw. You have to do something. You have to have plans.

KEVIN
I had plans.

HELEN
You're nineteen years old. You're going to spend the rest of your life doing this?

KEVIN
This is an art, you know. There are people who do this for a living. Building miniatures for museums. I've looked into it.

HELEN
I don't understand why you can't go to college.

KEVIN
Because the only reason I was going to college was to play ball. I'm not the brains of the family. I don't like school.

(CONTINUED)
HELEN
But there are so many other options, if you'd just explore them.

KEVIN
Don't you think I wish I was one of those guys who could get jazzed about the wheelchair Olympics?
(beat)
I'm not doing that bad, considering. But stop trying to make me the world's greatest invalid.

Helen doesn't know what to say. Finally, she stands.

HELEN
Do me a favor. Go talk to your sister.

KEVIN
What about?

HELEN
She's upset. And you are still her brother. She needs you.

Helen walks out. On Kevin, thinking about being needed —

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Joan is lying on her bed, staring at the ceiling. A KNOCK and she looks up. Kevin wheels himself in.

KEVIN
Hey.

JOAN
Hey.

KEVIN
Mom wants me to talk to you.

JOAN
To make sure I'm not crazy?

KEVIN
Yep. So are you crazy?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
No.

KEVIN
Okay. I’m glad we had this talk.

He starts to wheel out.

JOAN
Like I want some weirdo to be following me. Like I want to create a story for people to pass around the lunch room. Because I was beginning to get a little too popular.

KEVIN
Joan, here’s the thing. Mom likes normal. Dad really likes normal. Before my accident, Luke was all they could handle in the freak-for-a-kid department. Now they’ve got me. You’re their only hope for normal.

JOAN
That is just wrong.

KEVIN
Sounded good, though. Didn’t it?

She LAUGHS and kicks at his leg with her bare foot. A look comes over his face. Joan sits up, terrified.

JOAN
Oh, God. I’m sorry. What’d I do?
(off his silence)
Did you feel that?

He looks at her. He nods.

KEVIN
No.

JOAN
You’re an ass.

She throws a glass of water on him as he LAUGHS.

KEVIN
I felt that.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

He pulls her into his lap, tickling her. As she fights back, LAUGHING, we...

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

As Helen is starting dinner, she looks up to the ceiling, HEARING THE LAUGHTER. A beat, then she crosses herself.

INT. POLICE STATION - THE NEXT DAY

A staff meeting. Barry, who is head of homicide, is addressing the homicide cops, most of whom are in uniform, some in plain clothes. Will is staring at the wall as Barry talks.

BARRY
Abigail Dorset is the victim's name. Eighteen years old, a runaway. She spent the last couple of nights at a teen shelter. We're still looking for the next of kin.

Barry starts passing out photos to the cops.

BARRY (CONT'D)
The victim was sexually assaulted, beaten and strangled. Forensics has determined that she did not die in the location where she was found. She was dumped.

WILL
Any similar murders on record in the last year?

BARRY
A couple of prostitutes. Nothing this major.

(off Will's look)
I'm sorry, Sir. I mean, no one this young.

Will looks away, staring out the window. He's disturbed. A knock on the door and Will's assistant, PATTY, sticks her head in.

PATTY
Chief, the Mayor.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WILL
(reaching for the phone)
What line?

PATTY
In your office.

On Will--

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA DRUGSTORE - DAY

Joan is there with her friends, Elyse and Sophie. They are reading magazines at the magazine rack.

ELYSE
Oh, listen to this. Men overwhelmingly prefer real breasts to breast implants.

JOAN
They must be talking about chicken.

The girls LAUGH.

SOPHIE
And here. Austin, 29, says, "What I most value in a woman is a sense of humor."

JOAN
Which means a girl who'll laugh at my jokes.

The girls GIGGLE.

SOPHIE
You are so cynical.

JOAN
I'm a realist.

The girls notice a knot of boys standing next to them. They smile and GIGGLE. One BOY in particular stands out. He is tall, gangly, and handsome. He smiles directly at Joan. The others follow his gaze, then look at her. She blushes, then looks back at the magazine.

CUT TO:
EXT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

as Joan and her friends walk out and the boy follows her.

JOAN
See you guys tomorrow. Another fun filled day of higher education.

The friends wave goodbye and walk on. Joan walks in the other direction. She suddenly realizes that the boy is there.

BOY
I'm in fifth period English. With you.

JOAN
You are?

BOY
I sit at the back. I'm Josh.

JOAN
I'm Joan.

They smile awkwardly.

BOY
You're new, right?

JOAN
Sorta new. I moved here last May.

BOY
You going home now?

JOAN
Yeah. I live on Carter Road. Which is just up there.

BOY
Okay. I live on Military Drive. I'll walk with you. I mean, if that's okay.

JOAN
(shrugs)
It's okay with me.

She looks over her shoulder and sees her friends disappearing down the street, without looking back.

CUT TO:
INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Will sits with the Mayor, EDGAR TIMMONDS, an imposing fellow.
Will is being chastened.

TIMMONDS
I've known Pete Chadwick for thirty years. He's a good man and an outstanding principal.

WILL
He implied that my daughter was a liar. At best. At worst, he implied that she was mentally disturbed.

TIMMONDS
He says you jumped to those conclusions.

WILL
So he called you and tattled?

TIMMONDS
You're both prominent members of this society. There's a public relations aspect to the job, Will.

WILL
I'm not here to win a popularity contest. I'm here to create a police force where, all due respect, one barely exists. And your crime rate reflects it. It's in your best interest to let me do my job and not worry about getting invited to join the Rotary Club.

TIMMONDS
The city chose you from a list of highly qualified candidates. You're here because of their endorsement. I encourage you not to take that lightly.

Timmons stands.

TIMMONDS (CONT'D)
That's all for now, Will.

( CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

And he goes out. On Will--

CUT TO:

EXT. ARCADIA STREET - EVENING

As Joan and the Boy walk along the street together.

JOAN
I mean, school is school. It’s just terrible, no matter where you are. But here it’s really bad. I don’t know anybody, and I’m trying to act all normal. Just trying not to draw attention to myself.
Because my father’s the Chief of Police. But at the same time, you want to use any kind of leverage.
I mean, anything to stop me from being a big zero. So do I mention my father or do I try to hide from it? Who knows.

The Boy says nothing as they walk along.

JOAN (CONT’D)
You’re really in my English class.

BOY
Sure.
(off her look)
I mean, I am and I’m not.

JOAN
What’s that supposed to mean? You skip a lot?

BOY
Yeah, I skip.

JOAN
Boy, I wish I had the courage to do that. But my parents are so all over me. If I do the littlest thing wrong, they know it.

BOY
That’s what parents are for.

JOAN
(suspiciously)
You live around here?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BOY
Oh, yeah.

JOAN
Where?

The boy stops walking. Joan stops walking to.

BOY
I want to talk to you.

JOAN
Unless I'm missing something, you are talking to me.

The boy looks from side to side. They are on a deserted street. Joan notices this, too, and is nervous.

BOY
I mean, I want to be honest.

JOAN
Who are you?

BOY
I saw you today.

Joan stares at him a beat.

JOAN
You saw me where?

BOY
I was the person in the hallway.

Joan freezes. The boy realizes she's frightened.

JOAN
You were in the hallway? And outside my house?
(he nods)
No, that guy was an old guy.

BOY
Okay, this part is difficult. I don't always look the same.

JOAN
What are you talking about?
(backing up)
What do you want with me? Because I'm warning you, my dad's a cop.
Not just a cop. The cop.

(CONTINUED)
BOY
I know who your father is. Will Delaney, born September 4th, 1957, in Brooklyn, New York. His mother was Eleanor Monroe, his father was Gerald Delaney. Your father had an uneventful childhood, attended Bronx Science, then City College, then joined the police force in 1980. He met your mother shortly after. One Helen Brodie. An art school dropout. You are the middle child of three. Your older brother Kevin was in a car accident a year and a half ago which fractured his back and left him a paraplegic. You have one other brother, Luke, fifteen. Your favorite color is green, you love salt on canteloupe, Jim Doss broke your heart in the eight grade and you’re afraid of clowns.

JOAN
(frantic)
Who are you?

BOY
I’ve known you since before you were born.

JOAN
I’ll ask you one more time...

BOY
I’m God.

JOAN
You’re what?

BOY
God.

Joan stares at him, shocked.

BOY (CONT’D)
It's nice to meet you again.

As she continues to stare, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Joan is standing with God. She doesn't know what to think.

     JOAN

     God.

     GOD

     Yes.

     JOAN

     As in God.

     GOD

     Right.

     JOAN

     Old testament, burning bush, Tower of Babel, Ten Commandments God.

     GOD

     I come off much better in the New Testament. But yes, the same God.

     JOAN

     Okay, let's say you are God.

     GOD

     Thank you.

     JOAN

     I've got some questions.

     GOD

     No.

     JOAN

     No?

     GOD

     As a general rule, I'll ask the questions.

He starts walking. She struggles to keep up with him.

     JOAN

     What, you're snippy with me? God is snippy?
CONTINUED:

GOD
I'll explain something to you, Joan. It goes like this. I don't look like this. I don't look like anything you'd recognize. You can't see me. I don't sound like this. I don't sound like anything you'd recognize. I'm beyond your experience. I am taking on this form because it's comfortable for you. Makes sense to you. And if I'm snippy it's because you understand snippy. Do you get it?

JOAN
Sort of.

GOD
Because I'm not really snippy. I have a very good personality. You'd like me.

JOAN
I'm not religious, you know.

GOD
It's not about religion, Joan. It's about fulfilling your nature.

JOAN
I definitely haven't done that.

GOD
Exactly.

Joan regards him a beat.

JOAN
Okay, let's say you are God.

GOD
Joan. I am God.

JOAN
Let's see a miracle.

God pauses in front of a large tree. He gestures to it.

GOD
How about that?

JOAN
That's a tree.

(CONTINUED)
GOD
Let's see you make one.

God keeps walking. Joan moves along after him.

JOAN
So do you just go around appearing to people?

GOD
Not like this.

JOAN
But why me? I mean, I don't go to church. I was baptized as a Catholic, though. Mom read us stuff from the Bible when we were little. But my Dad hates the Catholic church, even though he is one, so we never go. My Mom likes the saints. When we were selling our house, she buried St. Joseph in the back yard. You know, a statue. Not the real one.

GOD
Yes, I'm acquainted with the whereabouts of the real one.

JOAN
Is it weird for me to have a crush on you?

GOD
I won't look like this next time.

Joan stops, stands still. He turns to her.

JOAN
Next time?

GOD
I'm going to be dropping in on you now and then, Joan.

Why?

JOAN

GOD
Let's just say I need you to do some errands.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (3)

JOAN

Why?

GOD

Do you notice how I'm not answering any of the why's?

JOAN

But this is dumb. I'm not religious. I don't even believe in you.

GOD

You will. Now, about these errands...

JOAN

What, like get an army and invade France?

GOD

That's been done. I want you to get a job. At the Village Book Store. It's a few blocks from your house. The manager's name is Sammy. Now he's snippy. It's important that you do this pretty soon.

(off her look)

Don't ask why.

JOAN

What if I say no? Will I burst into flames?

GOD

Where do you people come up with this stuff? Have I ever made anyone burst into flames?

JOAN

There was the pillar of salt thing.

GOD

You should have listened to that lecture on metaphor in your English class. Good-bye, Joan. Do as I ask.

He starts away.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (4)

JOAN
(beat)
Oh, I get it. You're crazy. Wow.
That's a relief. I have to be
going now. And you're probably due
back at the Institute?

GOD
Soon, Joan.

God walks away. Joan stands there, feeling confused. She
watches him walk down the sidewalk. People walking past
don't seem to see him. He turns a corner, and Joan watches,
wondering what just happened.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - EVENING

Everyone is sitting around the table, not eating. They are
waiting. Joan comes in the back door, and gets the stink eye
from her father.

JOAN
Sorry I'm late.

Will looks at his watch.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I was talking to my friends. You
want me to make friends.

WILL
I want you to make friends who have
to be home for dinner.

JOAN
I lost track of time.

LUKE
See, when the sun starts going
down? That's a reliable indication
that the day is ending.

HELEN
Your father doesn't need any help.

KEVIN
Can we eat while we fight?

Kevin starts passing the food.

(CONTINUED)
HELEN
Joan, after what happened at school, you can't just wander off and expect us not to worry.

JOAN
Okay. I'm sorry.

KEVIN
Hey, haven't I fulfilled our family tragedy quota? I think you can all relax.

HELEN
It doesn't work that way.

KEVIN
What 'It'?

LUKE
Actually it does work that way, in terms of percentages.

KEVIN
Mom's not talking about percentages, though.

WILL
Be respectful to your mother.

KEVIN
I'm just saying. When Mom says "It" she's talking about God. Which is interesting since we never go to church.

Joan shifts uncomfortably.

HELEN
Once a Catholic, always a Catholic.

KEVIN
So we just trot him out to explain the bad stuff?

Now Joan is really uncomfortable.

JOAN
CONTINUED: (2)

LUKE
Can't.

JOAN
Why?

LUKE
You don't want to talk about God.
Physics is God.

Joan looks at him, curious.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/LUKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Luke is surrounded by books, studying. His walls are adorned with pictures of Albert Einstein and other scientists. A KNOCK on the door.

LUKE
Enter.

Joan comes in.

JOAN
What are you doing?

LUKE
Rehearsing for my part in the big musical.
(off her look)
I'm studying. What else do I do?

She sits down on his bed.

LUKE (CONT'D)
(without looking up)
No, I won't do your math.

JOAN
I don't want you to do my math. I just want to, you know. Talk.

LUKE
Right.

Joan doesn't say anything. He looks up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LUKE (CONT'D)
Let me guess. You've fallen in love with a science geek and you want me to tell you how to converse with him.

JOAN
What did you mean when you said God is physics?

LUKE
You wouldn't understand.

JOAN
Why wouldn't I?

LUKE
You'd have to have a basic foundation in the subject. And knowing how a hair dryer works doesn't count.

JOAN
So you believe in God, then.

LUKE
Sure. It's logical.

JOAN
It is?

LUKE
If you accept the special theory of relativity, which I do, and the laws of thermodynamics, which I do, and when you throw in the fact that light is conscious, which it appears to be, well. How can you argue?

She looks at him, confused.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Besides, Einstein believed.

JOAN
Do you think He could be, you know, just walking around in the world?

LUKE
Like a person.

(off her nod)
It's not empirically inconsistent.

(MORE)
CONTINUED: (2)

LUKE (CONT'D)

Everything is energy, and energy can manifest in any form, depending upon its rate of vibration.

JOAN

So God could vibrate himself into, say, the form of a hot guy about my age?

LUKE

See, I knew there was a guy in this.

JOAN

Yes or no. Could it happen?

LUKE

As the great physicist Faraday once said, nothing is too wonderful to be true.

On Joan, considering it.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - DAY

It’s after school. Joan comes in and can’t help noticing a HELP WANTED sign in the window. SAMMY, the manager, is a man in his late thirties, a would-be writer who is frustrated to be still working in a bookstore. He has an “I’m really an artist” demeanor and the bitter attitude to go with it. He’s waiting on a middle-aged FEMALE CUSTOMER.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Where are your books on tape?

SAMMY

See, that’s a paradox. Because books on tapes are, by definition, tapes, which means they are not books.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

I don’t understand what you’re saying.

Sammy picks up a book and flips through it.

SAMMY

This is a book. It doesn’t make any sound. It won’t fit into a stereo. You can’t engage with it while you drive.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SAMMY (CONT'D)
It requires effort and imagination, not to mention the ability to read.

FEMALE CUSTOMER
Could I please see the manager?

SAMMY
Sadly, I'm the manager and the owner. Complain to me about me.

FEMALE CUSTOMER
You know what? I'm never coming back here.

SAMMY
Well, that will certainly eat right into my books on tape business.

The lady goes by, brushing past Joan, who is now almost too anxious to talk to Sammy. He looks at her.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
I don't sell Harry Potter anything.

JOAN
I'm not here for a book.

SAMMY
Well, you're part of a growing trend. What do you want?

JOAN
The job.
(off his look)
The one you're advertising.

SAMMY
Oh, I'm sorry. That's for someone who can see over the counter.

JOAN
Look, I'm sixteen. I've had jobs before.

SAMMY
Really. Name all four books of The Alexandria Quartet.
(off her blinking stare)
See, people might ask you things like that.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN
Then I’d say, let me look it up on
the computer. I’m good with
computers.

SAMMY
Yes, everyone is good with
computers and cell phones and
digital cameras and Tivo. But no
one can form an objective thought
to save their lives. Go home, all
right? Hiring you would only
complicate my life because I’d have
to rant and rave about your shabby
education, and I have enough to
rant and rave about.

JOAN
I have to have this job.
(off his silence)
I was sent by God.

SAMMY
Oh, yeah? Do you have a note?

JOAN
If I come back with a note, can I
have the job?

SAMMY
If you come back with a note from
God, you can have the store.

JOAN
I don’t think I want the whole
store.

SAMMY
Go. Away.

Joan looks at him. A beat, then she walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. PICNIC GROUNDS - DAY

A police picnic. The grounds are full of police officers,
not in uniform, with their children. Will, Helen, Kevin,
Luke and Joan are approaching the picnic.

HELEN
What’s the Mayor’s wife name?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WILL
Mrs. Mayor.

HELEN
Really, Will.

WILL
I think it's Carol. Don't worry, she won't remember your name, either.

JOAN
Do we have to stay long?

HELEN
No, we don't. But we're going to, just to torture you.
(off her look)
This event was your father's idea. We can't leave.

WILL
It's a morale booster.

LUKE
See how boosted everyone is?

WILL
Look, Kev. Horseshoes.

KEVIN
Yeah?

WILL
You could play horseshoes.

HELEN
Yes, you can. Why don't you?

KEVIN
Gee, this whole exchange seems very spontaneous. I don't feel any dramatic tension. Do you?

HELEN
Just try it, Sweetheart.

KEVIN
I can't. I came here to pick up women who are interested in paraplegics. So I'm going to be busy all day.
Kevin wheels himself off. Helen and Will exchange a look. The Mayor and his wife, ANGELA approach.

MAYOR
Good turnout, Will.

WILL
I'm sure they'd all prefer a raise. You remember my wife, Helen.

ANGELA
Yes, Helen. Good to see you again.

HELEN
And you. Carol.

ANGELA
Angela.

HELEN
Right.

She gives Will a look. Will turns.

WILL
My daughter Joan, my son Luke. And Kevin, over there.

ANGELA
Where?
(then)
The one in the wheelchair?

HELEN
Yes.

ANGELA
What a shame, on such a beautiful day. How long will he have to be in that?

Will and Helen are embarrassed.

MAYOR
It's permanent, Ange. He's a cripple.

WILL
He's physically impaired. Due to a car accident.

ANGELA
How awful.
HELEN
Yes, we think about killing him in his sleep. If you'll excuse me.

Helen goes off.

MAYOR
I'm sorry.

WILL
It's all right. It's difficult.

Tense smiles. And everyone moves toward the picnic.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As Joan wanders over to inspect the food table. She reaches for a potato chip, bites into it, looks up to see ADAM FLYNN. He's staring at her. It's kind of odd.

ADAM
Hi.

JOAN
Hi.

ADAM
Plain?

JOAN
What?

ADAM
Are they plain? The chips. I don't like the flavored ones.

JOAN
They seem pretty plain.

(then, as he reaches for one)

Who doesn't like the flavored ones?

ADAM
They seem radioactive to me.

JOAN
You're in my French class.

ADAM
(in French)
Yes, I sit behind you and stare at you because you're breathtakingly beautiful.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (4)

JOAN
I'm bad at French.

ADAM
(smiles)
I know.

They fall into line to get food. As they approach an African American WOMAN serving the food:

JOAN
Your dad's a cop?

ADAM
No. He's in maintenance. They let him come to the picnic, though. Everybody likes him.

JOAN
Maintenance. Like...

ADAM
Sweeping. Unclogging toilets. At headquarters.

JOAN
Oh.

ADAM
Your dad's the Chief of Police.

JOAN
Yeah.

ADAM
So how will they react to the engagement?

She looks at him, speechless.

ADAM (CONT'D)
Now, that's humor.

She smiles.

WOMAN
Hamburger or hotdog?

ADAM
Vegetarian.
(to Joan)
It was nice of you to talk to me.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (5)

ADAM (CONT'D)

(in French)
See you in my dreams.

He goes off. She watches him.

WOMAN
Hamburger or hotdog?

JOAN
Hamburger.

WOMAN
That's a fine young man right there.

JOAN
You know him?

WOMAN
I know everybody. You want that well done, right?

JOAN
Yeah.

WOMAN
How come you didn't get the job?

Joan stares at her. The woman stares back, unwavering.

JOAN
Is that you?

WOMAN
I ask the questions.

JOAN
I... I tried. The guy wouldn't hire me. I mean, he said he would, but I have to bring a note.

WOMAN
He was being facetious, Joan. You can't tell people I sent you. You'll sound like a nut.

JOAN
Then how do I get the job?

WOMAN
Figure it out. That's why I gave you a brain.

(then, shifting her demeanor)

(MORE)
CONTINUED: (6)

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Sweetheart, I can't talk to you all
day. I've got hungry people to
feed.
(to the person behind her)
Hamburger or hotdog?

Joan looks at her a beat, then wanders away, staring over her
shoulder. The woman's eyes connect with her, then back to
the crowd. On Joan, staring at God...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. DELANEY HOME/HELEN AND WILL’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Helen is looking at vacation brochures as Will gets ready for bed.

HELEN
The Florida Keys? We always wanted to go there.

WILL
You always wanted to go there. I hate sand, water and bugs. And I really hate it when they all get together.

HELEN
Then how about Canada. We can do that rail thing.

WILL
Canada is where people go when they can’t really afford to go on vacation.

HELEN
You are not helping.

WILL
I don’t think I can get away. It’s only been six months. I’m still on probation, as far as the city’s concerned.

HELEN
We always go somewhere at Christmas.

WILL
Maybe not this year, Helen.

HELEN
Why not?

WILL
Think how it would be for Kevin. Putting him in the same old situation, so he has to look at the difference.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HELEN
So he has to look at it?
(off his silence)
And we have two other children who
deserve the rest of their lives.

WILL
And they'll have that. They're fine.

Will gets into bed, reaches for his book.

HELEN
I don't think Joan is fine.

WILL
Can we not talk about this now?

HELEN
When would you like to talk about
it?

WILL
Anytime but now.

He opens his book.

HELEN
What if she's imagining this guy?
Or worse, lying about it.

WILL
That's not what's happening.

Will is quiet for a moment. Helen watches him.

HELEN
The thing about going somewhere for
Christmas, Will? It would be a
start. We could get out there and
see what the world looks like to us
now.

Will sighs, looks at his wife.

WILL
I can't think more than a day
ahead. Because I can't imagine my
life... my son's life... being the
way it is forever.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

HELEN
Can't you just be happy that he lived?

WILL
Of course I am.
(beat)
I'm grateful for that every day.

She puts her hand on the side of his face. He kisses it, but keeps his eyes on his book. Helen slides down into bed and turns over.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELANEY HOME - MORNING

Joan is wandering around, looking for someone. Her father comes out, carrying a cup of coffee.

JOAN
Are you here? How does this work? Can I just call you up and you appear?

WILL
Who are you talking to?

Joan whirls, startled.

JOAN
Daddy. You scared me.

WILL
You scared me. Because it looked like you were talking to yourself.

JOAN
I'm... rehearsing for something. A play.

WILL
You're in a play?

JOAN
A speech. A poem. I have to memorize.

Will looks hard at her.

WILL
Are you all right, Kitten?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
I'm fine.

WILL
(beat)
I was thinking. Maybe you want to come down to the station and do a composite drawing.

JOAN
Oh. No, thanks.

WILL
Really? Because the sketch artists do amazing work. We've had a lot of success with that approach.

JOAN
I didn't get that close a look at him.

WILL
You said you looked right at him.

JOAN
Honestly, Dad. I just want to forget it.

She kisses him and goes toward the house. On Will, watching her, worrying...

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/BATHROOM - DAY

Joan is brushing her hair. Some kids leave the room and she's alone. There's a KNOCK on the door, and a JANITOR sticks his head in.

JANITOR
You alone in here?

JOAN
Yes.

JANITOR
'Cause I have to clean.

JOAN
Fine.

He comes in.

(CONTINUED)
 CONTINUED:

JANITOR
You're going to be late for class.

JOAN
(looking at her watch)
No, I'm not.

Then, she realizes.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Okay, this is getting old.

He looks at her.

JOAN (CONT'D)
You can't just keep popping up in your different party suits. I mean, of course you can. You can do anything. You're God. But it's driving me a little crazy. And don't nag me about the job. Don't you have a universe to run? Starving children, people in burning buildings and stuff? Can't you just go make a whale or something and leave me alone? Please?

The janitor stares at her. Blink blink.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Oh. Sorry. I thought you were somebody else.

Joan hurries out of the bathroom, embarrassed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - DAY

Will pulls up in an unmarked police car, gets out. Walks over to where a crowd is gathering. There, in plain sight, is the dead body of a young girl, about the same age as the one before. No blanket this time. Barry walks over to him.

BARRY
Normally I wouldn't call you.

WILL
No kidding.
CONTINUED:

BARRY
This one's younger. And not a runaway. Her name is Lindsey Mitchell. Junior at AHS. Mother reported her missing yesterday afternoon. She's been dead about twenty-four hours.

Will bends down and looks at the body. It's disturbing, as this could easily be his daughter.

WILL
Did you notify the FBI?

BARRY
I was waiting for you.

WILL
You're head of homicide. What do you think?

BARRY
I think it's the same guy.

WILL
Me, either.

He stands up, staring down at the body, resigned.

WILL (CONT'D)
Baptism by Napalm.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Joan comes into the book store. Sammy is on the phone with his wife. You wouldn't want to be her.

SAMMY
Is it moving?... Is it breathing?... Well, if it's moving and breathing, it's not dead... Dammit, Heidi, if it's hopping it's really not dead. It's goddamn cheerful.

Joan stands there waiting for him to get off the phone.
CONTINUED:

SAMMY (CONT'D)
I told you we shouldn't get a rabbit for a pet. It's not a pet. It's food...Oh, don't do that. Heidi...

She hangs up on him. He sighs and puts the phone down.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Do not get married.

JOAN
Remember me? I came about the job.

SAMMY
Remember me? I said no.

JOAN
I didn't get a note from God, but I do have a strong verbal recommendation.
(off his look)
That's a joke. I'm revealing my good nature.

SAMMY
Why do you want to work here?

JOAN
(beat)
I like books.

SAMMY
Really.

JOAN
Oh, yeah. I'm crazy for them.

SAMMY
So you'll be shoplifting them.

JOAN
I'm not that crazy for them. Actually, I don't really like them. I need the job. Please say yes.

Sammy looks at his watch with a sigh.

SAMMY
You know how to work a cash register? In the off chance that someone comes in to buy something?
CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN

Yes.

SAMMY
Tell you what. I’ll run home, take
my wife’s rabbit to the vet, get
back here by six to close up. If
you haven’t burned down the store
or wiped out my inventory, I’ll
hire you.

JOAN
What, now?

SAMMY
Yes, now.

JOAN
I wasn’t thinking now.
(off his look)
Now is great.

SAMMY
I’ll be back at six.

He goes off. On Joan, looking around. All these books.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Helen is coming out of the grocery store, carrying bags,
heading to her car. Her eye catches something across the
street.

HER POV

Of a church.

ANGLE HELEN

Looking at it. Considering.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Joan is wandering through the book store, flipping through
books. She comes across a coffee table art book called The
Lives of The Saints. She flips through. All these
mysterious and beautiful icons appear. One in particular
holds her attention. It’s a picture of Joan D’Arc. She
starts reading about her. She looks at the picture.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

They look eerily similar. Joan turns the page. And there she sees Joan at the stake. Burning, eyes turned toward heaven. Joan slams the book shut.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

It’s a Catholic church, full of statues and icons and candles. It’s peaceful and beautiful. Helen sits in a pew, staring at the images in front of her. A PRIEST walks through, but Helen doesn’t notice him. He stops beside her.

PRIEST
I’m opening up this booth.

She looks up at him.

HELEN
Oh, no. I’m not here for confession.

PRIEST
Is there anything I can do for you?

HELEN
I really don’t think so.

He starts away. Helen’s voice stops him.

HELEN (CONT’D)
Unless you can tell me how to live in the absence of Faith.

He walks slowly over to her.

HELEN (CONT’D)
See, I believe in God. I just don’t trust him.

PRIEST
That’s a terrible place to be.

HELEN
He seems to either be toying with us or indifferent to us. Which do you think it is?

The priest smiles, sits down next to her.
PRIEST
St. Teresa of Avila, one of the holiest women who ever lived, once shouted at the heavens, "No wonder you have no friends if this is how you treat people." All because her carriage got stuck in the mud.

Helen can't help smiling.

PRIEST (CONT'D)
I believe God loves us all the time. And that He understands us, even when we don't understand Him. And that one day, it will all make sense.

HELEN
When we're dead?

PRIEST
I'm hoping to figure it out before then.

On Helen, feeling somewhat connected to his words.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Joan looks at her watch. It's past six o'clock. It's getting dark outside. She needs to leave. She starts opening drawers and looking around until she finds some keys.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Joan tapes a note on the door for Sammy, then locks the front of the store. She starts walking home in a hurry.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

She turns a corner, and suddenly realizes someone is following her. She turns. It's a MAN in jeans and a zip-up jacket. He smiles kindly at her.

JOAN
Is that you?

MAN
Hi.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Could we work out some sort of system? Some kind of code word? Because I really embarrassed myself with the janitor. Did you see that? By the way, do you see everything or just the interesting stuff?

(off his silence)
Oh, right. You ask the questions.

MAN
Do you need a ride?

JOAN
A ride? Yeah, that would help. My parents are going to kill me.

MAN
My car’s over here.

JOAN
God has a car? Like a Lexus or what?

The man goes to the car and puts the key in the lock.

JOAN (CONT’D)
God locks his car?

MAN
So, you live near here?

She looks at him and suddenly realizes this is not God. She starts backing up.

JOAN
You know what? I think I’ll walk.

MAN
You don’t want to do that.

Joan backs up some more, then turns around and runs. She heads in the direction of the store.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

As she runs for the door, fumbling with the keys. We hear FOOTSTEPS. Joan is panicking, trying to get into the store. She drops the keys.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

A HAND reaches into frame and picks them up. Joan SCREAMS, turns to run. The hand grabs her arm. She tries to fight back.

SAMMY
What the hell are you doing? Why are you leaving?

Joan realizes it's Sammy. She throws her arms around him. He's taken aback.

JOAN
Oh, my God. There's a man...

SAMMY
What man?

JOAN
This man... he tried to get me in his car...

SAMMY
What man?

She looks around. There's no one in sight. Joan is trembling and shaken. She looks at Sammy. She feels completely insane.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joan is sitting on the couch, by herself. Staring straight ahead. Across the room, her mother sits in a chair, her father stands. They are both staring at her. They are waiting. A long beat.

LUKE
(O.S.)
Is Joan finished being yelled at? Because there's a global warming special on the Discovery Channel.

HELEN
(fierce mother voice)

LUKE
(O.S.)
I'll catch it in reruns.

Joan sighs.
CONTINUED:

JOAN
I thought I’d be home by six. Then
the owner was late coming back.
I’m sorry I scared you.

HELEN
You go and get a job, just like
that, without telling anybody.

JOAN
You’re always bugging Kevin to get
one.

HELEN
That’s Kevin. You’re in school.

JOAN
Some parents would think that was
industrious.

(beat)
And then there was this man, who
was kind of following me.

HELEN
Oh, for God’s sake.

(to Will)
I can’t take any more of this.

WILL
Helen. Why don’t you let me handle
this?

HELEN
Fine. I kind of miss the fifties.

She gets up and goes out. Will is staring at Joan. She
looks up at him with teary eyes.

JOAN
I swear there was a man, Daddy.

WILL
The same man.

JOAN
No, a different one.

WILL
(beat)
Why are you doing this?
(off her silence)
You cannot be making this up for
attention.

(MORE)
CONTINUED: (2)

WILL (CONT'D)
Because there really is someone out there, Joan. And if a man is following you, I need to know.

JOAN
He really is. I mean, I think he is. The one earlier, that turned out to be... someone else. But the one tonight, he seemed real.

Will looks at her. He doesn't know what to say. Then:

JOAN (CONT’D)
Daddy, I don't want this to be happening to me.

She starts to CRY and he hugs her.

WILL
What's happening, Joan? What is it? You can tell me. Whatever it is, we'll deal with it. I'll get you a counselor, a doctor, a priest. I'll make it okay. That's my job.

She doesn't say anything. She knows she can't tell.

WILL (CONT’D)
Look at me.
(she does)
I am not going to lose you. For any reason. Do you understand?

She nods, holds on to him, wishing it were that simple.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She's lying in the dark, clutching the stuffed dog, unable to sleep. She HEARS A VOICE:

VOICE
Joan.

She sits up, catching her breath. She looks over and sees the profile of Kevin in his wheelchair.

KEVIN
I appreciate what you did. It was kind of stupid and you got in trouble. But it was brave. And I get the point.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
I have a point?

KEVIN
My little sister can get a job.
I've got no excuse. So you're
shaming me back into the world.

Joan just looks at him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)
But you're right. It's time.
(beat)
Go back to sleep.

He turns and wheels himself out. Joan lies down, turns over, looks at the stars peering in through her window.

PULL BACK

From the perspective of the heavens, this small girl in a big, confusing place...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW