ULTRA

"PILOT"

by

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ULTRA

ACT ONE

TEASER

OVER BLACK:

PENNY
(V.O.)
We all dream of greatness. Maybe it is our first act of cognition, this notion of transcendence.

FADE IN:

The darkness starts to move and we see swirling lights mixed with stars and galaxies mixed with barely discernible shapes mixed with sounds of life on high speed. Your basic acid trip.

PENNY
(V.O.)
We know that anything is possible. We reject limitation. We experience eternity and realize every bit of human potential.

The swirling acid trip becomes a human cell and we see the cell dividing.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Then we're born.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

SLAP
A doctor holds the baby girl up to the fluorescent light.

DOCTOR
It's a girl!

The exhausted mother leans up on her elbows and stares.

MOTHER
Oh, crap.
She collapses.

ON THE BABY

Flailing in the doctor's hands.

CUT TO:

EXT. RURAL SETTING - A BACK YARD - DAY

We see a kids' swingset, and the feel of the location is somewhere Kentucky, late summer, early eighties, Common Era Billy Idol.

   PENNY
   (V.O.)
   I remember the first time it occurred to me. That I was meant to be great.

Some raggedy kids are playing cowboys and Indians in the backyard of a run down house. A tiny girl, who is Penny at age three, walks past them. She's wearing a makeshift cape tied around her ordinary play clothes. A FAT WOMAN in ugly clothes smokes while she yells at the other kids.

FOLLOW PENNY

As she climbs the swingset. She stands on the bar. She looks at the children playing below. She looks up at the sky. Then she jumps off, attempting to fly. The girl falls out of frame.

SPLAT

CUT TO:

THE LITTLE GIRL

On the grass. Shaken but not hurt.

   KID
   (O.S.)
   Mama!

CUT TO:
INT. SOMEBODY’S HOUSE - BASEMENT

PENNY
(V.O.)
I tried to fit in with the girls.

A bunch of six year-old girls are sitting around playing Barbies.

PENNY
I don’t get it. She’s twenty. She has all these clothes. She has a convertible. A dream house. A boat. What kind of job does this woman have? Is she a drug dealer?

The other little girls just stare at her. She’s lost them.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOMEBODY’S BACK YARD - DAY

PENNY
(V.O.)
I tried to fit in with the boys.

It’s a basketball net in someone’s back yard. A series of shots as Penny dribbles and weaves and drives around the boys, scoring them off the court. She goes up for a lay up and makes it. She turns to receive her applause in time to see all the boys walking away, leaving her alone with the game.

CUT TO:

PENNY
(V.O.)
Then I decided academics were my way out.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Penny, now a teenager, is beautiful in an awkward kind of way. She is talking to her date who is O.S.

PENNY
When you think about it, the whole reason the sky is blue is an incredible optical illusion.

(MORE)
PENNY (cont'd)
It's all a trick of reflection and refraction. We used to believe color was a projection of an inanimate object's physical properties, but really it is a reflection of the properties it does not possess. Which is to say that a blue thing is not blue, but is every color except blue, since blue is the color it reflects.

ANGLE - JIMMY
The personality and I.Q. of leather.

JIMMY
I'm like the only guy virgin in school.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAILER PARK - DAY
A ragtag group of people are standing in front of a trailer. Penny is saying goodbye to them with bags at her side.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I got accepted at NYU. Which was like getting accepted to Satanic Communist Infiltrators Kill Your Relatives University.

Penny faces her group.

PENNY
Okay. So, bye, everybody.

MOTHER
I guess we'll never see you again.

Her mother takes a long drag off her cigarette. The cab drives up out front. Penny waves at her relatives and gets in the cab.

PENNY
(V.O.)
That wasn't really when it started, though. It started much later.

CUT TO:
EXT. STREET - MANHATTAN - NIGHT

Outside of a bar called THE FROG AND PEACH.

PENNY
(V.O.)

Penny is locking up the bar, saying good-night to her friends, KYRA and SUZETTE. They kiss and head off in opposite directions, checking their cell phones.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Like a lot of people in the city I was on a quest to be great. I didn’t realize that what I really meant was famous. Great is a whole other thing.

She walks away from them, turns a corner, and tries to hail a cab. The street is a little deserted and she is approached by TWO MUGGERS.

MUGGER #1
Hey, you got the time?

She ignores him and walks on.

MUGGER #2
You don’t have the time?

She doesn’t say anything. First guy pulls a knife.

MUGGER #1
No? Then how about something else?

Penny’s tired. Doesn’t want to deal with this. She slowly turns. The guys approach.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I grew up on a farm with six brothers. I thought I had a fighting chance.
As the one with the knife gets close, she goes to shove him... but something happens and she suddenly picks him up and hurls him into traffic as if he were made of styrofoam. He bounces off the hood of a cab. The other one is still staring. He looks at her.

PENNY
Wow. Okay.

He turns and runs off. The other one struggles to his feet and also runs off. The cab is sitting there. Penny brushes herself off and gets into it. Door shuts.

PENNY
(O.S.)
2nd and 9th please.

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES
ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

PRESENT TIME

Penny comes into the living room of her apartment, still in her nightgown, stretching and yawning. It's a corner apartment overlooking Central Park. She observes the day.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I don't need to tell you who I am. You already know. Too many people know. I forgot to keep my mouth shut. That's always been my problem.

ANGLE - SIDE WINDOW

Scaffolding on the building next door. Some construction workers are standing there. They can see right into her apartment. They are waving at her, fists in the air, etc.

GUYS
Hey, Ultra! Ultra! Over here!
Rescue me!

Penny rolls her eyes, waves at them, then lowers the blinds. She goes to do the same with her other window and spies...

A NIKE BILLBOARD

She's on it. Decked out in full superhero garb, wearing Nikes. The slogan says: "Greatness Doesn't Stand Still."

PENNY
(V.O.)
What you don't know is how I got here. How it all happened.

She lowers the blinds.

CUT TO:

INT. DIFFERENT TINY APARTMENT - DAY

ONE YEAR EARLIER - PRE-ULTRA
Penny is sitting in her tiny cramped studio basement apartment, typing on a computer. She's wearing a scarf and gloves. Every now and then she kicks the radiator.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I graduated with a degree in Communications. My father, the turkey farmer, said, "Oh, that's great. You went to college to learn how to talk to people?" He hated people. Couldn't imagine why anyone would want to talk to them. Let alone write about them. But that was my plan.

On her walls are posters of Steinbeck, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf. She pauses to gaze up at them, then goes back to what she's doing.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM-LIKE SETTINGS - NEW YORK CITY - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny sits in a class with other would-be writers. A WOMAN is reading her poem.

WOMAN
My love is spit on the sidewalk. My hope is a bug splattered on the windshield. My dreams are detritus in the gutter. I am devoid of concern. I am devoid of devoidness. Nothing is my house pet. Nothing curls in my lap. All is despair. Doom. Doom. Doom.

Penny is just staring ahead. She looks around to see how others are reacting. They nod, really into it. She gulps:

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

PENNY
(V.O.)
Fortunately, I had a good job.

A loud, rowdy, down and dirty bar in the East Village. Penny is dishing out drinks as fast as she can.
PENNY
(V.O.)
While I was waiting to become
great, I spent my time making other
people feel that way.

A drunk leans over the bar.

DRUNK
The iPod was my idea.

PENNY
Nice idea.

DRUNK
Yeah. And they are gonna pay.

A handsome guy in a nice suit, JEFF, approaches the bar.

PENNY
Hey, Jeff, margarita?

JEFF
How'd you know?

PENNY
(shrugs)
You've been fighting with your
wife, a deal went bad, you need
tequila.

JEFF
(a little spooked)
How'd you know that?

PENNY
You just said it.

JEFF
No, I didn't.

PENNY
Sure you did.

He shakes his head. She shrugs it off, starts to make him a
margarita. Another guy, RYAN, approaches the bar and leans
on it. He's a cop.

RYAN
Hey, Penny, I'm off duty, get me a
beer.
PENNY
Yeah, you probably shouldn't have done that.

Penny keeps pouring drinks.

RYAN
What?

PENNY
Taken that dope from the evidence room.
(as if it's a conversation)
I know it wasn't much. But it's illegal.

She looks up to see him staring at her, shocked.

PENNY
You didn't just tell me that?

Jeff and Ryan are both shaking their heads.

PENNY
Weird. I heard it.

They're staring at her. She smiles nervously and hands Ryan his beer.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - OUTSIDE A CLUB - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

PENNY
(V.O.)
I let it go at first. I wasn't thinking about being super. I was thinking about being great. Or famous. Or just on the list.

Penny and her friends KYRA and SUZETTE are standing at a velvet rope outside a club. It's winter and they are shivering. Watching throngs of people go past the rope while they are kept out. An indifferent BOUNCER mans the rope.

KYRA
We're on the list.

The bouncer consults the list.
PENNY
(V.O.)
Kyra was a struggling actress.
Suzette was in a struggling rock band. Which, unlike a struggling writer, meant they actually left their apartments. They had their fingers on the pulse. They knew all the places.

KYRA
(to Penny)
This is the place.

PENNY
(V.O.)
They were on the list.

SUZETTE
(to the bouncer)
I'm sure we're on the list.

BOUNCER
Nope.

KYRA
Look, my manager assured me.

BOUNCER
Your apartment manager?

KYRA
I'm an actress.

SUZETTE
She was constipated on national TV.

KYRA
(indicating Suzette)
She's in The Cold. It's a band. It has a cult following.

BOUNCER
So did Jim Jones. Ladies, go home, you're not getting in tonight.

He gives Penny a gentle shove.

PENNY
You know what, really don't touch me.
BOUNCER
Move. Along.

He touches her a little more forcefully and she shrugs off the touch. He goes FLYING into the door and slides down it. He's out of breath. He's having trouble catching his breath. Everyone gasps and stands back. Penny runs over to him.

PENNY
I'm sorry but I told you...

Now that the bouncer's down, everyone storms the doors. Kyra and Suzette wave her in. She turns back to the guy.

PENNY
Maybe this can be our little secret?

He nods, wheezing, holding up his hands for protection.

PENNY
Breathe through your nose.

She follows her friends into the club.

PENNY
(V.O.)
There were rumors springing up all over the country. But especially in New York City. About people with...how do you say it...you know, super powers.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK DINER - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny, Kyra and Suzette are eating burgers. It's late.

PENNY
(V.O.)
But I really didn't think that was true...let alone me.

SUZETTE
It's some kind of trick, right? Like a karate move?
PENNY
I don’t know. Years of wrestling with my brothers.

KYRA
Who cares? We got in.

PENNY
Yeah. Thank God. So we could stand in a clump and yell at each other and not drink.

SUZETTE
Maybe you’re like Cryptic Man.

PENNY
You mean an urban legend?

KYRA
I know people who swear they saw him. In the Meat Packing District. Or Lower East Side.

PENNY
Was he on the list?

SUZETTE
When that club on 16th caught fire? He carried them out. A dozen people. Afterwards, he was just gone. I heard that from Benny, my bass player.

PENNY
Speedball Benny?

SUZETTE
It’s just hash now. And it’s recreational.

PENNY
I came to New York to get famous, not to stand around in clubs.

KYRA
That’s how you get famous.
   (then)
Ssh. Future husband approaching.

They hush and look up as two HOT GUYS approach. Just as they get near, one hot guy puts his arm around the other.
SUZETTE
Unfortunately, not yours.

KYRA
We're never going to get married in this city.

PENNY
Who wants to get married? We're here to pursue our aspirations and stuff.

SUZETTE
Can't we be married and famous?

PENNY
You, too? You're the iconoclast.

SUZETTE
Sid and Nancy, Kurt and Courtney. It can happen.

PENNY
Yeah, those ended well.

KYRA
What, you're prepared to be alone forever just so you can be a writer? Haven't you ever been in love?

PENNY
Yeah.

KYRA
Don't you miss it?

Penny stares off.

CUT TO:

INT. WORKING CLASS HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A teenage Penny and her teenage "boyfriend" RICHARD RICARDI (she calls him Rich) are sprawled on the floor listening to Nirvana and getting high.

RICH
I am so getting out of here.
PENNY
Yeah, me, too.

RICH
I mean, who throws their life away
on this kind of bullshit?

PENNY
Yeah.

RICH
It's like there's a commitment to
being miserable. And if you even
imagine anything better they want
to kill you for it.

PENNY
Crabs in a bucket.

He looks at her. Too stoned to get it.

PENNY
When one crab tries to crawl out of
a bucket, the other crabs will pull
him back in.

That's the most profound thing he's ever heard.

RICH
Wow. See, you say things like
that.

PENNY
It's not original.

RICH
But you remember it.

A beat as they listen to Nirvana and share a joint.

PENNY
Promise we're never going to lose
each other. No matter what.

RICH
Yeah, fuck that.

They continue to make out. A VOICE FROM ABOVE:

RICHARD'S MOTHER
Richard? What are you doing? You
don't have that Penny Pendrosa down
there, do you?
They break apart and look up. Then back at each other.

PENNY
We'll always find each other, right?

RICH
Yeah.

They continue to make out.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

The two muggers and the bouncer sit in chairs against the wall with their various injuries bandaged.

PENNY
(V.O.)
But we lost each other. Rich and I. The last I heard he was climbing mountains in Tibet.

ANGLE - BULLPEN AREA

Penny glances at the angry men, then away. She sits across from OFFICER RYAN. He's taking a statement from her.

PENNY
(V.O.)
So anyway. You can't actually throw people around without getting noticed. Even in the East Village. Nobody was seriously hurt but they were seriously pissed.

RYAN
And you definitely saw a weapon?

PENNY
Yes, one of them had a knife. I was about to be mugged. What was I supposed to do?

RYAN
The bouncer didn't have a weapon.

PENNY
He touched me. I asked him not to. Then he did it again.
RYAN
Look, the muggers have records, I can make that go away. But the bouncer is different.

PENNY
Guys can't go around shoving women. Besides, I barely touched him.

RYAN
He has whiplash. And witnesses have a different story.

PENNY
It's New York, Ryan, it's a petri dish of gossip.

RYAN
What about that thing where you read my mind?

PENNY
I didn't read your mind.
(off his look)
I'm not Cryptic Woman if that's what you're thinking. You know why? Because that's not real.

RYAN
We get a dozen reports a week.

PENNY
You know how many people think they've been abducted by UFO's?

RYAN
All I know is the Captain, the Commissioner, all the way up to the Mayor...they're concerned about this vigilante thing.

PENNY
Then maybe they should do a better job. And you should stay out of the evidence room.

He looks at her.

RYAN
I'll make the report. Keep a low profile, okay?
Penny nods, offers to shake his hand. Ryan is concerned for a beat, then does it.

**PENNY**
See? I shake like a girl.

CUT TO:

**INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA**

Kyra, Suzette and Penny are eating Chinese and shivering. Suzette kicks the radiator.

**PENNY**
(V.O.)
I couldn't tell him what was happening because I didn't know. It took a real big event for me to get it. And even then I didn't entirely get it. I just knew it wasn't normal.

**SUZETTE**
You got no heat.

**KYRA**
She likes being poor.

**SUZETTE**
I'm a musician and I have heat.

**KYRA**
Being poor makes her feel like an artist.

**PENNY**
Please. Talk about me like I'm not here. And you have to know how to do it.

Penny hits the radiator just right and it comes on, hissing steam. **THE PHONE RINGS.** As she goes to answer it:

**PENNY**
I nearly went to jail getting us into that club. A little appreciation might be in order.

(MORE)
PENNY (cont' d)
( into phone)
Hello?

CUT TO:

EXT. MOUNTAIN SIDE - K2 - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

A snowy, blustery scene. A grown up Richard Ricardi is in mountain climbing gear and talking on a cell phone.

RICH
Penny? Penny Pendrosa?

INTERCUT

Between this scene and Penny’s apartment as they talk.

PENNY
Rich?

RICH
Oh, my God. I found you.

PENNY
Richard Ricardi! Where are you?

RICH
K2. Getting ready to ascend. I’ve been looking for you for years. Your folks had their phone disconnected.

PENNY
Yeah. Their social life dried up.

RICH
So I googled you. I didn’t get a hit until today. I found your arrest report! You beat up some guy?

PENNY
I can explain.

RICH
What are you doing in New York?

PENNY
Trying to be a writer.

RICH
(can’t hear her)
A waiter?
PENNY
Long story.

RICH
After this climb, I’m going to New York.

PENNY
Great. How long?

A gaggle of other mountain climbers motion for Rich to join them.

RICH
I have to go. You know I love you.

PENNY
(can’t hear him)
What?

RICH
I love you...

PENNY
You’re breaking up.

Rich looks at his cell phone which has gone dead.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA
She’s left holding the dead phone.

PENNY
Rich!

But he’s gone. She hangs the phone up. Her girlfriends are staring at her.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT
She’s brushing her teeth, staring into the mirror.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Intense feelings. Intense connections. That’s where it begins.

(MORE)
PENNY (cont’d)
I don’t know where it ends. Back then, I didn’t even know where it was going.

There’s a crumpled picture of a teenage Rich taped to the window. She stares at it. She puts her toothbrush back and reaches for the mouthwash as she’s staring at the picture. The bottle of mouthwash FLIES into her hand. It takes her a second to realize what happened. She stares at it. She puts it back then does it again.

PENNY
Cool.

She rinses and puts it back and suddenly there is a LOUD NOISE in her head. A RUSHING, RUMBLING SOUND. She runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

It’s empty. Nothing is happening. But the NOISE continues. She presses her hands to her ears.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

The noise is almost deafening now. She doesn’t know what’s happening. The SOUND is that of RUSHING SNOW. She hears a voice yelling: AVALANCHE! And she knows what’s happening.

PENNY
Rich!

And in that moment the mirror shatters.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY - PRESENT TIME

Penny comes out of the apartment carrying a bag of laundry. She’s greeted by a group of fans.

FANS
Ultra! Ultra, over here! Can you sign this?

Penny pauses to sign autographs.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I didn’t go to his funeral because there wasn’t one. They never actually found his body. Just his jacket. My number was in it. And a plane ticket to New York.

Penny waves to the fans and walks on. Lingering, watching her, is a creepy looking lady with dark hair and cat eye make-up wearing a mink.

CUT TO:

INT. DRYCLEANER’S - DAY - PRESENT TIME

Penny comes in and is greeted by a Korean lady named CORA.

CORA
Miss Ultra. Good to see you.

PENNY
Good to be seen.

CORA
You lucky you not invisible.

PENNY
That’s supposed to be the greatest power.
CORA
(dissipative wave)
They abuse it. Spy on people. I hear stories.

Cora sorts through Penny's Super Hero Uniforms.

CORA
Light starch in the cape as usual?

Penny nods.

CORA
(to someone behind her)
Be right with you.

Penny turns to see MINK LADY standing behind her.

CORA
(leaning in, secretive)
I clean Cryptic Man, too.

PENNY
How do you know?

CORA
His assistant come in here. I never actually see him.

PENNY
No one does. That's why he's cryptic.

CORA
You different. You go out there with it. Not ashamed. Cryptic Man get very dirty. You neat. Tuesday okay?

PENNY
Fine. Take care, Cora.

Penny turns to go. Mink Lady is staring hard at her. Penny stares back, then moves on. Mink Lady watches her.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY - PRESENT TIME

Penny walks down the street. Every now and then someone whispers and points.
PENNY
(V.O.)
Now super powers are everywhere. Some are more impressive than others.

She moves past a billboard of TECHNOMAN. It's a geeky looking guy decked out in gadgets and hardware. A BUS goes past with an ad for THE HAIR, a woman in a skimpy superpower outfit with huge hair. On a catwalk, we see posters of FLY BOY. He looks amazingly like Astro-Boy.

She moves past a news stand, stops and looks at a magazine called SUPER. On the cover is a translucent bubble, human sized. The headline: MEET THE BUBBLE.

PENNY
That's new. The Bubble.

The Indian Man at the news stand nods.

INDIAN MAN
(shrugs)
Invisible. Floats.

PENNY
I guess that's important.

He shrugs. Penny walks on.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK SUBWAY - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Pre-Ultra Penny walks through the subway.

PENNY
(V.O.)
But back then there was just the rumor of Cryptic Man and everybody was sure that was like alligators in the sewer. When my powers started, I didn't know what do with them. So I did what any starving novelist would do. I abused them.

She walks past a bagel stand and stares. She's hungry. When the guy at the stand turns his back, she stares until a bagel flies into her hands. She looks around to see if anyone noticed. No one did. She moves on.
She gets to the turnstile and watches people swiping their Metro Cards through. When it's her turn, she walks up and STARES at the turnstile until it turns and she walks through.

CUT TO:

INT. SUBWAY CAR - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

She's riding along eating her bagel and reading a paper.

PENNY
(V.O.)
But I also used them for good.

Suddenly she's hearing a man talking.

MAN #1
Soon as the door opens you stand up, act like you dropped something, then you grab the bag.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I didn't read minds. I just heard head talk. I couldn't hear low level basic mind chatter. But I could hear intense dialogue. And not all the time, either. Which is what made it so fun.

She looks up. There's no one in her car but an old lady in a hat dozing. She stands and follows the sound of the voice. She goes into the next car. Looks around but doesn't see the guy. The voice gets louder as she walks on. She goes into a third car and she sees a nervous looking kid sitting two seats down from a rich looking woman with a Prada bag next to her.

MAN #1
(in his head)
Don't lose your nerve. Just do it. Then you run to the far exit. Nobody knows what happened. Take a breath and just do it.

Penny walks over to the woman.

PENNY
Excuse me. This man is about to steal your purse.
They both look at her. The man is stunned. The woman picks up her purse and puts it in her lap.

Not sure what to do, she just gives them both a thumbs up and walks back to her car.

**PENNY**

**(V.O.)**

My powers weren’t helping me get over Richard. I thought about him every day.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. WRITING CLASS - DAY - PRE-ULTRA**

Penny is in her writing class as the teacher passes back papers.

**PENNY**

**(V.O.)**

And they didn’t help me with my writing aspirations.

She takes her short story from him and scrawled across it in red: See Me. As the class ends and everyone files out, the teacher stops her. He talks to her and she’s near tears.

**PENNY**

**(V.O.)**

I wasn’t great at it. I wasn’t even mediocre. But I was stubborn. I had to show them. All the people who ridiculed me and said I’d never make it. My family.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. RURAL TURKEY FARM - DAY - FLASHBACK**

**PENNY**

**(V.O.)**

It’s like Rich said. You weren’t supposed to aspire to anything. You weren’t supposed to want to want more. You were expected to commit to a life of misery because they had.
Penny as a twelve year old is feeding the turkeys along with a seemingly endless amount of brothers and sisters and her parents, all in overalls, dealing with turkeys in one way or another. Penny is dragging. She yawns.

MOTHER
I know why you’re tired. Up all night scribbling in your notebooks. What good’s that gonna do you? Living in a dream world.

Penny says nothing.

MOTHER
You act like you’re above your raising. Well, sister, this is the life you were born into. We do turkeys. That’s the end of it.

PENNY
You can’t make me stay here. I’m going to be famous.

Her brothers and sisters laugh.

MOTHER
That’s it. Shovel detail.

She hands her a shovel and she goes off to shovel turkey dung.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Why should I have expected them to support my dreams when they had killed their own?

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is leaving her writing class. She walks along, despondent and cold. As she passes a trash can, she rips her story into pieces and throws it away.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I always knew I was different. But that didn’t necessarily mean great. (MORE)
PENNY (cont'd)
It could mean that I was just a freak.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny walks into her dark apartment, drops her messenger bag and goes for the light, but:

CRYPTIC MAN
Don't turn on the light.

Penny freezes.

PENNY
I have a gun.

CRYPTIC MAN
No, you don't.

PENNY
I'm not alone.

CRYPTIC MAN
Yes, you are.

Penny pauses.

PENNY
I have super human strength.

CRYPTIC MAN
Yes, you do.

She steps into the room a bit. She sees a SHADOWY FIGURE sitting in a chair near the radiator. It's making clinking noises. He reaches out his hand and silences it. It starts hissing steam.

PENNY
Who are you?

CRYPTIC MAN
You know.

PENNY
No, I don't.

CRYPTIC MAN
Yes, you do.

She goes to turn on the light.
CRYPTIC MAN
Don't do that.

PENNY
Why not?

CRYPTIC MAN
Because.

PENNY
Because why?

CRYPTIC MAN
For God's sake, you're killing the drama. You really are a terrible writer.

PENNY
You're Cryptic Man.

CRYPTIC MAN
Thank you.

PENNY
You broke into my apartment?

CRYPTIC MAN
I shape shift. Here's the deal. You're becoming super. You have to accept it. Denying your powers doesn't stop them. It just makes them less controllable. So get with it. And stop abusing them.

PENNY
How do you know I'm doing that? Are you spying? Are you like Santa? How do you work?

CRYPTIC MAN
Cryptic Man. Try to get on board, Penny. And start kicking around a concept. A name. A look. Like that. If you ignore the powers, you become vulnerable to the other side.

PENNY
There's another side?

CRYPTIC MAN
What did you do on Saturday mornings growing up?
PENNY
I shoveled turkey crap.

CRYPTIC MAN
I want you to go see someone. He's
a scientist. In fact, he's The
Scientist. He'll explain it all.
Remember. The abdication of power
is an abuse of power.
(then)
Maybe cut your hair.

He disappears. She turns on the light. When she turns, she
sees that the chair is empty. She looks around her apartment
but Cryptic Man is gone. She walks over to the chair. On it
is a business card. Cryptic Man. Shape Shifting. Problem
Solving. She turns the card over and sees another name and
address written down. THE SCIENTIST. Followed by an address.
The phone rings and she answers it.

INTERCUT

Kyra and Suzette standing at a rope. Penny in her apartment.

KYRA
Hey...we're having a rope
crisis...you need to get down here
and beat up the bouncer...

PENNY
Kyra, shut up, I just had Cryptic
Man in my apartment.

KYRA
You had what?

PENNY
(yelling to be heard)
Cryptic Man! In my apartment. In
the flesh!

KYRA
All I heard was flesh.

There's the blip of call waiting.

PENNY
Hang on. Another call.
(pushes the button)
Hello?
CRYPTIC MAN
(V.O.)
Christ, I thought it went without saying. Don't tell anyone.

And then the phone goes dead. As she holds it listening to the dial tone, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY - PRESENT TIME

Penny is walking down the street in full Superhero garb. No one pays much attention to her. Suddenly she hears a sound:

WOMAN IN DISTRESS
Oh, my God. Help! Someone help us!

This is a red flag to Penny.Ultra. She starts running and achieves lift off. She starts to fly down 5th Avenue past all the obvious tourist attractions until she lands on a side street. A WOMAN IN DISTRESS and HER HUSBAND are being held up by MUGGERS. She lands with arms akimbo and stares at the muggers.

MUGGER #3
Ultra!

Scared, they turn and run off. The woman in distress and her husband hug each other, relieved. Penny turns to the camera.

PENNY
When you’re super human, you can’t afford to get dehydrated.

She holds up a bottle of Gatorade. She hesitates and nothing happens.

DIRECTOR
(O.S.)
Cut!

WIDEN TO REVEAL

We are on a commercial set. The street scene is fake. And it’s clear that Penny is hooked up to a harness.

PENNY
I don’t understand. Am I supposed to drink now?

DIRECTOR
You’re supposed to drink before you say your line.
PENNY
Why am I flying? I don't actually fly. If you wanted flying, you should have gotten The Hair. She flies. Allegedly.

DIRECTOR
Penny, do we have to deconstruct? Just drink before you say the line.

HUSBAND
I feel like I should say something here.

DIRECTOR
Everybody back to one.

As the actors disperse...

PENNY
(V.O.)
So I went to see The Scientist. It's one thing to know you're super. But you still have to know why.

CUT TO:

EXT. RUN DOWN APARTMENT - LOWER EAST SIDE - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is knocking on the door of an apartment in a bad part of town. She looks around nervously. After a beat, the door opens, still chained and a crazy, wild haired person peers out at her.

SCIENTIST
What?

PENNY
Hi. I'm Penny. I was sent here.

SCIENTIST
By who?

PENNY
(confidentially)
Cryptic Man.

SCIENTIST
Speak up.
PENNY
Cryptic Man.

SCIENTIST
You and everybody else.

He goes to close the door.

PENNY
Wait. I have his card.

She reaches in her pocket and produces the card. The Scientist stares at it. He opens the door and walks back into the apartment. She follows him in.

CUT TO:

INT. RUN DOWN APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

It's the home of a true eccentric. Wall to wall books and strange looking equipment. Cats. A mess. She has to step over things.

SCIENTIST
Everybody thinks they're super human these days. I have to use discretion. Have a seat.

She looks around. There's nowhere to sit. So she stands.

SCIENTIST
So what do you do?

PENNY
I'm a bartender.

SCIENTIST
We're burning daylight here.

PENNY
Oh... super things? I can move stuff without touching it.

SCIENTIST
Telekinesis. What else?

PENNY
Super human strength. I hear things.
SCIENTIST
Elevated adrenaline. Clairaudient. What else?

PENNY
That's not enough?

SCIENTIST
(shrugs)
It's average.

PENNY
I threw a guy into traffic. And one against a door. I got arrested.

SCIENTIST
How much can you control it?

PENNY
I don't know.

The Scientist produces a tape recorder and puts it on a table.

SCIENTIST
You're okay with me recording this?

She looks at the tape recorder and it flies off the table and breaks into pieces.

SCIENTIST
I guess not.

PENNY
Sometimes that happens.

SCIENTIST
So you can't control it much.

PENNY
This is very new to me, okay? I wanted to be a writer.

SCIENTIST
Why aren't you sitting?

PENNY
There's nowhere to sit.

SCIENTIST
Good point.
(then)
So, here's the deal.
He pulls down a very lo-tech white board and begins diagramming with stick figures and arrows, starting with a swamp.

SCIENTIST
Human evolution. Single cell amoeba, swamp creature, primates, blah blah, here we are wearing Prada.

Creates a relevant drawing.

SCIENTIST
But. There are gaps. No fossil evidence of the jump from amoeba to frog, frog to bird, monkey to rock star. Somewhere along the way there's a leap. It's called punctuated evolution. No one knows why but I have a theory. Communal creatures. Agrarian societies. Tribal mentality. The individual gives up power to the social structure for safety and the benefits of being fed. Following the leader becomes part of the DNA. How, you ask? Because beliefs inform our physiology. So years of believing that this social hierarchy works, that power moves up the chain and those at the top are taking care of us because they have our best interest at heart, that's not just part of the psyche, it becomes part of the cell tissue. With me?

Penny nods with an overwhelmed stare.

SCIENTIST
What's happening now? We no longer have faith in that power structure. Foreign invaders, crime and corruption, politicians who don't even understand politics, and the tribe picks up on that. What does the body do? What it always does. Evolves. Takes the power back from the hierarchy. The individual makes the leap. Punctuated evolution.
PENNY
So that's me.

SCIENTIST
Maybe. That's what we'll figure out together. Questions?

PENNY
Yeah. Why me?

On The Scientist.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny walks down the street deep in thought.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Piece of advice. No matter how tempting it is, don't ever ask someone 'why me?' You're either going to hear a lie, such as I've never felt this way before, or the truth, such as I heard in The Scientist's office.

As Penny approaches her apartment building, she sits down on a bench in front of it. She's clearly shaken. Memories are racing through her head. They come at her in flashes.

FLASHBACK - HER CHILDHOOD HOME

Penny and her brothers and sisters huddle on the stairs as her parents fight in the kitchen. She's tiny and frightened.

PENNY
(V.O.)
The Scientist said why not you?
And I said because I come from nothing. Nowhere.

FLASH - THE VIOLENCE ESCALATES

Now things are breaking in the kitchen and the kids flinch.

PENNY
(V.O.)
He said, was there pain? And I said was there pain? Was there anything else?
FLASH

Penny moves away from the group to peer into the kitchen.

PENNY
(V.O.)
He said, greatness comes from pain.
Until you know that, you can’t know anything. And you have to remember. Until you remember, your powers stay in the shadows. So I remembered.

FLASH

Penny stands very small and alone in the doorway, watching her father terrorize the family. Penny opens her mouth in a silent scream as his shadow falls over her.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny sitting on the bench. She covers her face as she receives the memory.

PENNY
(V.O.)
And that’s when it all started happening.

Suddenly a familiar voice.

RICH
(O.S.)
Penny?

Penny looks up, taking in a breath. We don’t see what she sees.

CUT TO:

INT. COMMERCIAL SET - DAY - PRESENT TIME

The end of the commercial shoot. Penny is unstrapping herself from the harness. The commercial shoot has ended. Her agent BUDDY SALISBURY, early thirties, is with her.

BUDDY
I think that went well. Great energy.

(MORE)
BUDDY (cont'd)
The director is cutting edge.
They're talking Superbowl. How do you feel about it?

PENNY
I'm fine, Buddy. I'm just tired.

BUDDY
Penny. Watch the vernacular. A Super doesn't get tired.

The director heads in their direction.

DIRECTOR
Penny?

PENNY
No more pick ups. I'm unstrapped.
(gesturing)
You know my agent, Buddy.

DIRECTOR
Sure. Hi. Penny, it's a fan.
Over by the donuts. Just wants an autograph.

PENNY
Oh, no.

BUDDY
Part of the gig. Keep up the image.

PENNY
It's not an image. I actually am super human.

BUDDY
And how much does that pay?

Penny rolls her eyes and goes in the direction of the donuts.

ANGLE - SNACK TABLE

As Penny approaches, she sees that the Mink Lady from the drycleaner's is there.

PENNY
Do I know you?

VERONIQUE
We meet again.
PENNY
The drycleaners?

VERONIQUE
I’ve been watching you.

PENNY
Great. Can I sign something for you?

VERONIQUE
My name is Veronique.

Penny picks up a napkin and starts signing it.

VERONIQUE
(spelling)
N-e-m-e-s-i-s.

PENNY
Veronique. Nemesis.

VERONIQUE
As in I’m yours. Obviously.

PENNY
Why is that obvious?

VERONIQUE
I do what you can’t. I’m invisible.

PENNY
(beat)
I can see you.

VERONIQUE
Because you’re super.

Penny makes a gesture.

PENNY
Everyone can see you.

Veronique looks around, realizes this is true.

VERONIQUE
Okay, so I’m having an off day.

PENNY
It’s totally okay to be normal.
VERONIQUE
Sure, if I were. But I'm not.

Veronique is so not super. Penny stares at her.

PENNY
Great. Good luck.

She hands Veronique the napkin and walks away.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Everyone thinks being super is, well, super. Glamorous, even. But there's a lot of down time. And the people who aren't super want to take you on. They want to prove something. You learn to resist it.

Penny watches Veronique walk away.

PENNY
You have trouble finding friends.
And you still long for....

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

On the bench. Where we left Penny in the past. Rich's voice is still reverberating in her ears.

PENNY
(V.O.)
...something.

She is staring at something and can't believe her eyes.

REVERSE ANGLE

It's Richard Ricardi. In the flesh.

RICH
Penny.

PENNY
Rich?

RICH
Hi.
PENNY
But it can’t be. You’re...

RICH
Dead?

PENNY
Yeah.

RICH
Not so much.
(off her look)
Come on. Touch me.

She touches him. He touches her. She believes it’s real and she throws her arms around him. They kiss.

CUT TO:

INT. NEW YORK DINER - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny and Rich sit in a diner, catching up with each other.

RICH
I loaned my jacket when I decided not to go on the climb. I had a bad knee. Decided at the last minute.

PENNY
Then you just let a few months go by. Without calling.

RICH
I was in shock from the whole thing. My friends had died. I saw it all happen from base camp. I barely escaped. I felt guilty. Maybe I wanted to die, you know? So instead I let myself disappear.
(beat)
I don’t expect you to understand.

Penny thinks about it a beat.

RICH
It’s just that...when something extraordinary happens to you...how do you go back to normal life?
PENNY
(thinking)
Yeah.

RICH
But you do. You have to. And when you go back you have to make it count. So that's what I'm here to do.

Penny stares at him.

RICH
I love you. I always have. Marry me.

She stares at him. She doesn't know where to start. And on this, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. SCIENTIST'S APARTMENT - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is practicing her skills with The Scientist. The Scientist has several things laid out on a table and he challenges her to move them. She moves them all in erratic direction.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER ANGLE - TREADMILL

Penny is running on the treadmill. She's distracted. She starts running so fast that the treadmill finally blows and sparks fly and it's smoking. Penny jumps off.

SCIENTIST
Okay, what's going on?

PENNY
I didn't sleep. I had a Frappucino. Mars is in retrograde.

SCIENTIST
There's a guy.

PENNY
And there's a guy. Are you saying there can't be?

SCIENTIST
What?

PENNY
A guy.

SCIENTIST
Of course there can. But it might interfere with the frequencies.

PENNY
I swear it won't.

SCIENTIST
It already is.
PENNY
Can't you fix that? Give me a frequency pill or a patch?

SCIENTIST
I don’t have that kind of technology. This is all very new. But one thing I am finding is that love interferes.

PENNY
So if you’re super you’re single?

SCIENTIST
Possibly.

PENNY
Because this ground has been covered. Biology is not destiny.

SCIENTIST
Okay, it's not.

The Scientist gives her a large weight to lift.

SCIENTIST
Go.

She picks it up as if it's nothing.

PENNY
It seems to me that being in love would make a person's powers stronger.

SCIENTIST
I didn’t say it weakens you. It makes you less predictable. And that’s not good.

Ranting, Penny is now waving the huge weight around.

PENNY
That’s like the old argument that a woman can’t be president because she gets a period. One generation it’s hormones, the next is frequencies. Where does it end?

SCIENTIST
You can put that down now.
She puts it down and it goes through the floor. She looks at the hole, then at him. Someone starts yelling from below.

SOMEONE
(O.S.)
Hey, dude! What the hell?

PENNY
Are you giving me an ultimatum?

SCIENTIST
No. But you may have to give him one.
(nods to a weight)
Next.

Penny picks up the weight, thinking.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK - CENTRAL PARK BUGGY RIDE - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny and Rich are riding in a horse and carriage. She's snuggled up against him. It's magical and romantic.

PENNY
(V.O.)
So...where to start? What's the easiest way in to 'I'm Experiencing Punctuated Evolution'? Maybe just the old standard.

PENNY
Rich, we need to talk.

RICH
I knew this was coming.

PENNY
Really?

RICH
Yes, I want to have kids. And yes, I know you still want to be a writer. There's no reason we can't work that out. Besides, kids are a few years away, don't you think?

PENNY
Kids. Yeah.

Her mind wanders.
INT. DELIVERY ROOM - DAY - FANTASY

Penny is in delivery with Rich at her side, a nurse and a doctor standing at the business end.

    DOCTOR
    One more push, Mrs. Ricardi. Make it count.

Penny raises up and pushes. A BABY SHOOTS OUT with such force that it lands on the doctor and thrusts him against the wall.

    CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK - CENTRAL PARK BUGGY RIDE - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Back to scene. Penny shakes off the vision.

    PENNY
    Yes, we should definitely talk about kids. And where we're going to live. And stationary and name changes and Vegas vs. St. Pat's and all that. But before we get there, I have something to tell you.

Rich holds up a hand.

    RICH
    We were away from each other for a long time. I don't think we have to confess everything. I know there have been guys.
    (then)
    Guys, right?

    PENNY
    Yeah, but that's not it either.
    (beat)
    You know how you googled me and saw my arrest report?

    RICH
    It was self-defense. I know you're not a criminal. You've always been kind of strong. Remember when we used to wrestle in my basement? I had my work cut out.
PENNY
Yeah, well... I'm even stronger now.

RICH
Sure.
(then)
How strong?

PENNY
(beat)
Super.

Rich thinks about it a beat.

RICH
Are you on hormones?

PENNY
No. It's a naturally occurring thing. It's, you know, punctuated evolution.

RICH
So you're good with being a woman.

PENNY
I just have to say it. I'm super human. I didn't plan it. It just started happening. And now I'm in it. Cryptic Man came to see me and I'm working with The Scientist and I don't know where it's going but it's probably not a full time thing, in fact, you won't even have to see it, so if you're good with it, I'm good with it. Are you good with it? Great. Let's not talk about it again. I love you.

She kisses him and leans against him. And Rich doesn't know what hit him.

CUT TO:

INT. BRIDAL SHOP - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Kyra and Suzette are watching as she comes out in her 19th wedding dress. Suzette is flipping through a music magazine.
KYRA

No.

PENNY

Why not?

KYRA
You look like a popsicle.

PENNY
Come on. We're running out of options. I'm starting to think you guys aren't happy for me.

SUZETTE
That's because we're not happy for you.

PENNY
I know, it seems like I'm a big hypocrite because I'm the one who didn't want to get married, but that's because I never expected to see Rich again. Guys, it's true love. And when it's true love, you just go for it. Right?

KYRA
And just give up on being great?

PENNY
Not exactly. I can do both.

They stare at her. She turns and looks into the mirror. It shatters. They look at her. She turns and runs back into the dressing room. As she goes:

PENNY
Wrong dress.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny comes home from her hard day of trying on dresses. She has the shopping bags to prove it. She's about to turn on the light when she senses a presence.

PENNY
Who's there?
CRYPTIC MAN
You know the drill.

She moves closer to him and sits down.

PENNY
This is getting really old.

CRYPTIC MAN
You’re telling me.
(then)
You’re not seriously going to marry that guy.

PENNY
What difference does it make to you?

CRYPTIC MAN
Do you think he’s ever going to let you be who you are?

PENNY
Rich has known me forever.

CRYPTIC MAN
He doesn’t know you now.

PENNY
I told him.

CRYPTIC MAN
You haven’t shown him.

PENNY
Look, since you’re here I might as well tell you face to...person to...directly.
(takes a breath)
I haven’t decided one hundred percent that I’m going to be super.

CRYPTIC MAN
But you are.

PENNY
You know what I mean. I might not use it.

CRYPTIC MAN
For good.
PENNY
For anything. Just because you have a talent, doesn't mean you have to use it. Plenty of people have great skills and they never feel the need to develop them or become great, they just live. Is that a crime?

CRYPTIC MAN
I don't know. Let me go to Starbucks and turn on my computer and think about it.

PENNY
(beat)
I don't want to lose Rich.

CRYPTIC MAN
I'm not saying you have to. But it's wrong not to show him. And I think you'll find that being great is not like having skills. It's an impossible thing to run from.
(beat)
I know. I've tried.

And he's gone. She turns on the light. The chair is empty except for a box. She opens the box and takes out a cape. On it the big letters: ULTRA.

PENNY
Ultra. Oh, that's not cheesy.

She throws open the window.

PENNY
Get this! I am not Ultra!

She flings the cape out the window.

PENNY
Even if I'm great, I'll never be Ultra!

She slams the window shut. When she turns around, the cape is neatly folded on the chair. No escape. So to speak.
EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Rich and Penny are walking down the street arm in arm.

PENNY
I was thinking January.

RICH
What about it?

PENNY
To get married. Because nobody gets married in January. We can get discounts. Our choice of locations. We could probably book St. Pat's in January.

RICH
First let's talk about this other thing. The super human thing?

PENNY
Oh, that.

RICH
How are you thinking of using that?

PENNY
Whatever. It's probably just a hobby.

RICH
Because what I'm picturing for us is a quiet life.

PENNY
Sure.

  (then )
How quiet?

RICH
I nearly died, you know? And it made me start thinking about things. Being alive, for example, and how I should try to stay that way.

PENNY
I like you better that way.

RICH
I'm thinking a farm in Connecticut.
PENNY
Wow. I kind of put my time in on the farm.

RICH
Yeah, but you’re writing. I’m farming. The point is...nobody’s climbing mountains or jumping off buildings.

PENNY
Oh, I don’t fly.

RICH
Still, you see my point.

PENNY
Do we have to decide this now? It’s such a nice night.

RICH
Yeah. You’re right. It is.

She is a bit disturbed but doesn’t want to let on. They walk. Suddenly there is a loud SCREECHING followed by an enormous CRASH.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I don’t know. Sometimes the Universe works like that.

She looks over and in SLOW MOTION, we see the nightmare of the accident unfolding. Sparks and smoke and cars tumbling.

When it’s all over, one car is upside down, another on top of it.

Penny can hear the MUTED SCREAMS of the people inside, a couple and a kid. She looks at Rich. Rich is staring at the accident. She knows what she has to do.

People are starting to gather. She pushes her way through the crowd.

She pulls one car off of the other. Helps the people out. Then she pulls the doors off the one on the bottom. The couple and their kid scramble out. She ushers them to the sidewalk. One, a man, is too injured to walk. She goes back and grabs him and carries him to the sidewalk.
She looks towards the mess and hears the DRIP DRIP HISSLSS of gas coming out of the car. She hears the SOUND of the explosion starting seconds before it does.

**PENNY**

Everybody back! Get down!

The crowd backs up and hits the ground just as the CAR EXPLODES.

When the smoke clears, Rich is watching her from a distance, staring, paralyzed. She stares back. She knows she's lost him. As she turns her attention back to the victims, we...

**FADE OUT.**

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

CLOSE - TV - PRE-ULTRA

It's Entertainment Tonight.

ET HOST
There are heroes and there are superheroes and once in a lifetime there are...
(finger quotes)
"Ultra heroes." That's what this aspiring writer from the East Village of New York City is calling herself after her superhuman rescue of five Manhattan residents from a fiery car crash.

CUT TO:

SEGMENT FOOTAGE

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is walking along with the ET host.

ET HOST
So how do you explain your sudden ultra hero status?

PENNY
It's not ultra hero. It's just Ultra.

ET HOST
This sounds like something out of one of your movie scripts.

PENNY
I write novels.

ET HOST
So give us the scoop, do you know...
(finger quotes)
..."Cryptic Man."
PENNY
Casually.

ET HOST
And where's your cape?

PENNY
It's at home.

ANGLE - HOST

ET HOST
(laughs)
Of course it is. There you have it, the latest word in Ultra Heroes.

PENNY
(O.S.)
Just Ultra.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

INT. PENNY'S CHILDHOOD HOME - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

All of her family are gathered around, one on top of another, avec some babies, varying degrees of cleanliness, smoking, watching the T.V. segment. They look at her.

PENNY
(V.O.)
First stop, telling the family.

PENNY
Well. That's the story.

They stare at her.

FATHER
That's what you went to college for?

MOTHER
She's possessed by the devil.

CUT TO:
INT. GRAND CENTRAL STATION - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is saying goodbye to Rich.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Next stop, saying goodbye to Rich. We didn't make it permanent. We called it 'taking a break to think about things.' Kiss of death.

They hug and kiss and he walks toward the trains. She stands alone in the vast hall.

PENNY
(V.O.)
Because we both knew I wasn't headed for a quiet life.

CUT TO:

INT. AGENCY - CORRIDOR - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is walking down the corridor of a major talent agency. She moves past pictures of plenty of famous people.

PENNY
(V.O.)
And then the usual stuff that happens after you get famous.

CUT TO:

INT. AGENCY - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is sitting with a bunch of agents, including Buddy Salisbury.

BUDDY
I know you're being courted by every agent in town but we really think we can make great things happen for you here. We can set you up with the best endorsements. Nike, Gatorade, Calvin Klein.

(MORE)
BUDDY (cont'd)
You can have own fragrance. I'm just spitballing here. I mean, super is the new thing. And you're on the cutting edge of it. You're young. You're hot. I'm sure you don't mind changing your look. In a good way. A super way that while super remains you. But let me ask you one question and it really is a question. Does it have to be Ultra?

CUT TO:

INT. STORE - STYLIST - DAY - PRE-ULTRA

A store on 5th Avenue, Penny is being dressed.

STYLIST
You have a long waist which is in no way a bad thing but you don't want to draw attention. Maybe a cute belt cinched at the waist. Tights are a cliche of course but you might want to think about some fun stockings. Glitter. Fishnet.

Penny puts her cape on over the outfit.

STYLIST
Are we married to the cape?

CUT TO:

INT. SCIENTIST'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny is hitting golf balls into a net while The Scientist takes notes.

PENNY
Agents and clothes and TV shows and all these phony people. Why don't I just move to L.A.?

She stops and gestures to what she's doing.

PENNY
When am I going to need this?
SCIENTIST
Hand eye coordination. Very important. And a lot of criminals play golf.

PENNY
So do a lot of lonely old lesbians.

SCIENTIST
But before that they were young attractive lesbians. Which is hot.

PENNY
I want my boyfriend. Is that too much?

SCIENTIST
It takes a great man to be with a great woman.
(leans forward)
Penny, being super human is not a new thing. Socrates, the Buddha, Jesus, Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Abraham Lincoln, Rosa Parks, Helen Keller, I could go on. They didn’t worry about dates.

PENNY
How do you know?

SCIENTIST
They were destined for greatness. They didn’t worry about who was going on the journey with them.

PENNY
Then maybe I’m not great. Because I am worried about it.

SCIENTIST
Most people lie awake at night wondering about the point of their existence.

PENNY
Yeah, after they’ve had hot monkey sex.

She hits another ball and it goes through the net and through the wall into the next apartment. A voice from somewhere:
SOMEONE
(O.S.)
Hey, what's going on?

SCIENTIST
(jotting)
Excellent.

CUT TO:

INT. TINY NEW YORK APARTMENT - NIGHT - PRE-ULTRA

Penny comes into her apartment, carrying groceries. She goes to turn on the light, senses something and doesn't. She moves into the living room and the shadowy figure of Cryptic Man is sitting there.

PENNY
Hi, Honey. How was your day?

CRYPTIC MAN
Not bad.

PENNY
So you get to pop in any time you feel like it and I never get to call the cops and say this creepy super guy is harassing me?

CRYPTIC MAN
You could try.

PENNY
I'm not sure I'm ready for this.

CRYPTIC MAN
I wasn't sure I was ready either.

PENNY
Yeah? What were you doing when your greatness hit you?

CRYPTIC MAN
I was a corporate lawyer.

PENNY
Oh. So being great was definitely a step up.

CRYPTIC MAN
I liked my job. I miss it sometimes. I'm a people person.
PENNY
Really. Which is why you never show your face.

CRYPTIC MAN
You can turn on the light.

Penny hesitates. Then taking him at his word, she does. For the first time, we see Cryptic Man, who is all dressed in black and is more handsome than George Clooney.

PENNY
Wow.
(them)
Why are you letting me see you?

CRYPTIC MAN
Because now you are one of us.

PENNY
There’s a lot of us, huh?

CRYPTIC MAN
A few. You’ll meet them eventually. You don’t have to be alone. You just have to be brave.

PENNY
I’m working on that.

She slumps on her couch. Cryptic Man watches her, smiling.

CRYPTIC MAN
Penny, this is what you were born to do.

PENNY
Yeah, I know...Cryptic...but...
(them)
Do you have a real name?

CRYPTIC MAN
Sam.

PENNY
Do you have a family and everything?

CRYPTIC MAN
I did. Amicable divorce. Weekends with the kid.
PENNY
I mean before that.

CRYPTIC MAN
Foster system. Moved around.

PENNY
So bad childhood really is a part of it.

CRYPTIC MAN
Needing to read the mood, see the future a little bit, it’s a survival instinct. Hypervigilance. This is an elevated form.

(then)
There’s this thing in the Bible. But it’s in other religious teachings, too. "To whom much is given, much is expected."

PENNY
Yeah, I got that on my report card. "Not working up to potential."

He laughs. She looks down.

CRYPTIC MAN
It’s spinning straw into gold, Penny. That’s all.

She smiles at her hands. Flexes them.

PENNY
Do you have normal interests? What do you do on the weekends? Like to dance? Bowl? Play a little a little golf? Because if you play golf...

She looks down to form her thoughts and when she looks up, he is gone. She’s alone.

PENNY
I hate when you do that!

But she’s talking to no one. She turns on the TV. And they are interviewing the kid whose life she saved. A BOY about six.

TV ANCHOR
Then what happened?
BOY
My mommy was screaming. My daddy
was quiet. I could smell smoke. I
didn’t know what would happen. And
then she was just there and she
took the door off and I could get
out.

TV ANCHOR
And who did that, Brett? Who took
the door off?

BOY
(grinning)
Ultra.

He smiles at the camera. Penny stares. And she knows.

CUT TO:

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

Suzette is up on stage singing. Penny comes in from her day
of shooting the Gatorade commercial. She slides into a seat
next to Kyra, who is nursing a martini. Suzette is on stage,
singing.

KYRA
Oh, good, you made it. Long day
saving lives?

PENNY
Gatorade commercial.

KYRA
Well, it’s good to know someone
famous.

PENNY
Come on, you’ll get a break.
Besides, this is nice. Hanging out
with the girls. Being normal.

Penny looks to Suzette who is hamming it up on stage.

KYRA
Yeah. Somebody has to be normal.
Otherwise, who would you save?
PENNY
Listen. You guys keep me sane. I know it looks fabulous from where you’re sitting but it gets kind of lonely.

KYRA
Don’t worry. You’ll always have us. We knew you when you didn’t have heat.

Kyra gives her a hug. Penny smiles, watching Suzette. Suzette waves them up on stage. They go up with her and start singing. It’s the Kinks’ song, "You Really Got Me", and they are getting into it. Suzette passes the microphone to Penny, and just as she is getting into it, the entire sound system blows in a nightmare of squeals and pops. Penny sighs.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK STREET - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

Penny is saying goodbye to Kyra and Suzette, hugs and kisses.

PENNY
(V.O.)
I was jealous of normal people. They were jealous of me. That’s how it works. We are mirrors to each other. We reflect what we have disowned in ourselves. And that’s the mystery.

Penny walks down the street, turns a corner, and walks down another deserted street. She hears footsteps behind her and she turns. She sees Veronique standing there.

VERONIQUE
You should have listened to me.

PENNY
I’m listening.

VERONIQUE

Veronique raises a gun and shoots at her. Penny, being super, catches the first bullet. It burns her hand and she drops it.
VERONIQUE
Not so great now, are you?

Penny stares at her, having a moment of self doubt. The second bullet pierces her chest and she collapses.

HER POV

Of standing on a swingset, rural backyard, seeing the kids in the distance as she holds out her arms and attempts to fly. It's all magical until the ground rushes up to meet her and she lands hard, splat. She looks up, a little girl surprised, but instead of seeing her mother...

CRYPTIC MAN

Is standing over her.

CRYPTIC MAN
It's okay. Breathe.

YOUNG PENNY
Can I die?

CRYPTIC MAN
Self-doubt. Your weakness.

PENNY
But can I die?

When we cut back, it's present time Penny.

CRYPTIC MAN
If you want to.

She lies back down, trying to breathe. She stares at the stars until they turn into the swirling images we saw in the opening. The world of transcendence she remembers. She thinks about it. Then we hear a Door Slam. We are...

INT. CAB - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME

Cryptic Man has put her in the back of a cab. She's exhausted and bleeding. He's got his arm around her

CRYPTIC MAN
St. Vincent's. Hurry.

PENNY
You put me in a cab?
CRYPTIC MAN
I don’t fly.

PENNY
You don’t fly? I don’t fly.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAB - NEW YORK CITY - NIGHT - PRESENT TIME
As it makes its way through traffic.

PENNY
(O.S.)
Wait, I’ve seen you fly.

CRYPTIC MAN
(O.S.)
That’s shape shifting. That’s different.

PENNY
(O.S.)
You couldn’t shape shift me to the hospital?

CRYPTIC MAN
(O.S.)
Don’t be ridiculous.

PENNY
(O.S.)
No, explain it. I don’t get it.

CRYPTIC MAN
(O.S.)
Do you ever stop talking?

And on this, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE