

Infinitely Polar Bear

**By
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EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

A man strides up a grassy hill. He is in his late-30s, clean-shaven with shaggy hair. He wears a well-cut tweed riding jacket, jodhpurs and riding boots. He carries a large shillelagh which rests on his shoulder.

This is CAM STUART. He sings with gusto, a Civil War marching song.

CAM

*...John Brown's body lies a-
mouldering in the grave/
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering
in the grave
John Brown's body lies a-mouldering
in the grave
His soul is marching on/
Glory, glory hallelulah/
Glory, glory hallelulah...*

At the top of the hill there is a boulder. It catches his eye and he cocks his head, bemused.

Laid out on the surface of the rock is a cheap fake beard. He looks around. There is not a person or a building in sight. The tall grass bends in the wind.

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY

Cam, now wearing the fake beard, stands on the rock, gazing out imperiously. He takes several deep breaths through his nose, appreciating the fresh air. Then he jumps off the boulder and continues his song as he marches down the hill.

CAM

*He's gone to be a soldier in the
army of the Lord/
He's gone to be a soldier in the
army of the Lord/
He's gone to be a soldier in the
army of the Lord...*

He disappears from view. A TITLE CARD READS: **1978.**

INT. CHILDS' BEDROOM. NIGHT

In the darkness, we hear:

CAM (O.S.)

Girls, wake up. Wake up.

A flashlight clicks on. It swings between two sleeping children.

Two bi-racial girls are sprawled out asleep on their beds. AMELIA is ten; FAITH is eight. Cam shakes them. They resist waking. He pulls their twisted covers off.

CAM
Rise and shine.

Finally they sit up. They blink at him, disoriented, shielding their eyes from the glare of the flashlight.

CAM (CONT'D)
Happy birthday, Amelia.

Amelia turns on her bedside lamp.

AMELIA
It's not my birthday.

Cam is disheveled and dirty, still wearing the tweed riding jacket, jodhpurs, riding boots and fake beard. His eyes are wide, wet and burning.

AMELIA
You look ridiculous. Why are you wearing that beard?

CAM
Do you like it?

FAITH
No.

CAM
Then it's history!

He rips off the beard and throws it to the floor. The girls eye him warily.

AMELIA
Where were you last night? Mommy was worried.

FAITH
You smell like mothballs.

CAM
Good nose, Faithie. This riding outfit belonged to Great-Grandpapa. We're exactly the same size.

Cam admires the craftsmanship of the jacket.

CAM
Hand-stitched by blind nuns.

AMELIA
Wasn't everything hand-stitched
back then?

CAM
Not by blind nuns.

FAITH
Where's Mommy?

CAM
Sleeping. Shhh.

Faith collapses back onto her pillow, whimpering.

EXT. HILL. DAY

Cam, without the fake beard, marches up the hill as the sun comes up. His daughters hurry behind him, still half-asleep. They both wear sweaters over their nightgowns. He stops to look at the sunrise and takes a long drag on his cigarette.

CAM
It's going to be one hell of a hot
day.

FAITH
I'm freezing.

She looks like she's going to cry.

CAM
Take my jacket, Faithie. I don't
need it. Are you cold, Amelia?

He puts his jacket on Faith. Teeth chattering, Amelia shakes her head no. Cam pats her approvingly on the head.

CAM
Tough cookie.

She smiles with pride, shivering.

EXT. FOREST. DAY

Cam and the girls traipse through the woods, each one of them searching for something on the ground. Sunlight filters through the hundred-year-old trees. The air is humming and buzzing. It feels like summer.

Suddenly Cam kneels by a rotten tree trunk. He gives a sharp WHISTLE.

His daughters run to him. The ground is covered with bright orange chanterelles. They are beautiful. They seem to glow in the shade of the tall trees. The girls are mesmerized.

FAITH

I wish I had a gown that color.

He holds out his hand and they each slap him five, laughing.

INT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - KITCHEN. DAY

The chanterelles sizzle in a cast-iron pan. Cam stirs them gently, still wearing the jodhpurs but no jacket or shirt. He also wears a battered old gray fedora with a small freshly-picked flower stuck in the band. A cigarette dangles from his lips. His gut hangs out. An attractive African-American woman in her mid-30s leans against the kitchen counter. She wears a housecoat. She looks tired. This is MAGGIE.

CAM

That's what education should be about. Hands-on, in the field.

(calling loudly)

You girls are fierce mushroom-hunters!

MAGGIE

They're in bed. Exhausted.

CAM

It's good for them to see the sunrise. They're too stuck in their cozy little routines.

MAGGIE

They're ten and eight.

A long loaded silence. Then:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You haven't been taking your lithium.

Cam picks up the cast iron pan and slams it down hard on the burner. Maggie jumps and screams, startled. She turns and hurries away.

CAM

God damn it!

INT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRY - LIVING ROOM. DAY

Toys are scattered everywhere. A coffee table lies on its side. Cam holds a pack of cigarettes in each hand. His face is enraged. Maggie rushes away from him. He follows her. The girls watch from the upstairs landing.

CAM

My grandfather started the Harvard Forestry School -- I'm trying to bestow some of his legacy to my children -- and you're hassling me about lithium!

MAGGIE

I'm calling Dr. Wendell.

Cam steps in front of her and smashes the phone out of the wall. He kicks a zebra skin drum across the floor.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

We live in this house --

He jabs his finger in her face.

CAM

You're just like my parents. You want to keep me doped! Depressed! Fat! Slow! You'd neuter me if you could!

MAGGIE

(like speaking to a child)
Your parents let us live in this house on the condition that you remain stable --

CAM

To hell with the house then! I'm not going to let my goddamn parents use it as a choke chain!

MAGGIE

How could you not take it?! How could you do that to us?!

He suddenly drops to his knees, maudlin and melodramatic and overcome with sincere emotion. He holds onto her housecoat.

CAM

It kills me, Maggie. The girls and I had a beautiful morning. It was magical. That doesn't happen when I take my lithium.

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
 Don't you understand? Please tell
 me you understand.

He looks so desperate that she wants to say she understands. But she can't. He reacts with another 180-degree turn, back to anger. He pounds the floor repeatedly.

CAM (CONT'D)
 You know what? Forget it. I'm
 going to find someone who gets it.
 Who gets *me*!

Cam turns and rips open the front door. He marches down the sloping lawn, swiftly and stiffly like a soldier.

Maggie runs to the open door.

MAGGIE
 That's just an excuse to get laid!

CAM
 (without looking back)
 It's a chance to be understood!

MAGGIE
 By getting laid!

CAM
 Boo hoo hoo! Poor bourgeois Maggie
 and her bourgeois monogamous
 fantasy!

EXT. DRIVEWAY. LATER

Maggie, wearing a crochet dress and knee-high boots, throws garbage bags stuffed with clothes and toys into the trunk of a pale blue Saab. The two little girls watch their frantic mother. Amelia holds the entire "Little House on the Prairie" series; Faith hugs eight different Barbie Dolls. Cam appears at the end of the long driveway, riding his bicycle uphill. He is now wearing a red Speedo, thin-soled canvas tennis shoes, and a red bandana tied around his neck. It is a ridiculous get-up. When he sees Maggie, he starts shouting.

CAM
 Hey! Hey! Hold it, god damnit!
 Hold it!

MAGGIE
 (to her daughters)
 Get in, get in!

CAM

That is my car and those are my children! Feeble, Maggie, pretty fucking feeble!

He pedals faster as Maggie pushes her daughters into the car. She dives in after them, pulls the door shut and locks all the doors.

INT. SAAB. SAME TIME

Cam races up and crashes his bike hard into the car. He and the bike go sprawling. Maggie and the girls scream.

Maggie slides into the driver's seat and fumbles for the right key. She drops her key ring on the floor.

Cam circles the car, gesturing wildly. He sounds faraway through the glass but he is roaring. The girls stare at him.

CAM

Goddamnit, Maggie! I am a man! I am a man! Men like to screw! That's what we do!

MAGGIE

Amelia, Faith. Cover your ears.

They don't. They watch in disbelief as Cam pounds his chest and roars unto the skies:

CAM (CONT'D)

That's why we have balls!

Then he rips open the hood and reaches into the engine.

Maggie finds the right key, puts it in the ignition and turns it. Nothing. She turns it again. Nothing.

Cam slams the hood down and grins through the windshield. He comes around to her driver's side window. His eyes are bright and wet and insane. He holds the distributor cap.

CAM (CONT'D)

I'm never going to let you go. I love you all too much.

Both girls stare at him, completely still. Cam looks back at them and sees their terrified faces looking out at him and his face changes. A profoundly sad expression comes over him. An expression of regret.

CAM

I'm sorry.

He staggers backwards, puts his hands in front of his face and sinks to the driveway cross-legged. He doesn't move.

INT. SAAB. LATER

Maggie sits in the backseat, between the girls. Faith is on her knees, braiding her mother's hair. Amelia looks out the window. Cam hasn't moved. His bare shoulders are beet red.

AMELIA

He's sitting on the gravel and all he's wearing is a bathing suit.

MAGGIE

Sweetie, your father is very sick right now. He's not himself.

AMELIA

He's really sunburned.

MAGGIE

Listen. Look at me.

She does.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I don't want you to tell your friends or teachers about any of this. We know your father's a good person and he would never hurt us, but it's hard for people to understand and it's very sad. Okay? Okay?

Amelia nods.

EXT. DRIVEWAY. DUSK

Two policeman lay a blanket over Cam's shoulders and help him into the back of their police car. Cam is docile and does not resist. The girls watch from an upstairs bedroom.

INT. MCLEAN HOSPITAL VISITING ROOM. DAY

Maggie and the girls sit side-by-side on the couch of the visiting room of McLean Hospital.

Amelia is engrossed in "Watership Down." Faith is making two Barbie dolls kiss passionately and whispering. The room is pale green, filled with tranquil watercolors.

A nurse holds the door open. Cam enters. He moves slowly and he is hunched over, bloated and slow. He has a shaggy beard. He wears an oversized stained t-shirt with an idiotic logo and sweatpants. His hands tremble.

AMELIA/FAITH

Daddy!

They run to him and hug him around the waist. He pats their heads with swollen hands. His speech is thick and slurred.

CAM

Little. Big Little. I loved your letters. I'm feeling much better.

They are disturbed by his appearance.

AMELIA

You are?

FAITH

Your stomach is really big.

CAM

That's the medication they put me on. Doesn't hurt. Go on, hit it.

He stands tall and sticks his lithium gut out. They shake their heads.

CAM

Come on. Pound on it.

He slaps it again to show how hard it is. Amelia punches him half-heartedly in the stomach. He tenses his muscles.

CAM (CONT'D)

Harder. Let's go.

Amelia complies with a flurry of little fists. Cam shuffles away from her.

CAM

Okay, okay. Remember. Never do that when Harry Houdini's not ready. That's how they killed him.

Cam sits down across from Maggie and indicates for the girls to climb into his lap. They do. He lights a cigarette with unsteady hands and smiles at Maggie through the smoke.

CAM
You're a sight for sore eyes.

MAGGIE
What happened to the clothes I brought you?

CAM
There were too many buttons on shirts. And...
(searching)
...latches on pants.

MAGGIE
How are you feeling?

CAM
(ruefully)
I feel great.

Maggie looks concerned.

MAGGIE
You seemed better last week. Are they adjusting your medication?

CAM
Yeah, they're trying something new on me...
(standing up)
I want to sit down.

Cam starts shuffling around the room again.

CAM
I want to sit down. I want to be home with my family.

AMELIA
You will, Daddy!

Cam smiles at them. Then, abruptly, he starts to sing, stiffly.

CAM
*"When Daddy comes marching home again, hurrah hurrah...
We'll give him a hearty welcome then, hurrah hurrah...
The men will cheer and the boys will shout, hurrah hurrah...
the ladies they will all turn out, hurrah hurrah...
And we'll all...
(MORE)*

CAM (cont'd)
 (pauses, re-sets)
*"When Daddy comes marching home
 again, hurrah hurrah..."*

He holds his arms out. The girls go to him and sing along.

ALL FOUR
*"We'll give him a hearty welcome
 then, hurrah hurrah...
 The men will cheer and the boys
 will shout, hurrah hurrah,
 the ladies they will all turn out,
 hurrah hurrah..."*

Their singing continues over:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX. DAY

Two large brick apartment buildings face each other across a parking lot. It is an urban environment.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Maggie and the girls look around a vacant two-bedroom apartment. It is clean and bright and sunny. Maggie nods at the SUPERINTENDENT.

Amelia looks very worried. Maggie goes to the window and points, trying to be upbeat.

MAGGIE
 Look, girls. There's a swimming
 pool. It'll be open in the summer.

Amelia looks out. In between the two matching apartment buildings is a pool enclosed by a chain link fence. Next to the pool area is a concrete "park" area with metal picnic tables. Across from the building they are in is the other building, staring back at them.

AMELIA
 Daddy loves swimming.

Maggie doesn't respond.

INT. WALDEN STREET APARTMENT - KITCHEN/DINING ROOM. DAY

Maggie and the girls have moved in. The apartment is clean and spare. Marimekko prints cover simple Swedish furniture. The sunniest corner is full of hanging plants. Maggie has made it pleasant.

Maggie is in the kitchen cooking dinner.

The girls sit at the dining room table. Amelia is doing her math homework. Faith wears an all-lavender outfit and she is carving a flower design into the antique mahogany table with the pointy handle of a fork.

They pepper Maggie with questions and complaints.

AMELIA

The roof lights come in our window at night and it's too bright. I can't sleep. It's bright as day.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Maybe I can make a curtain for your room.

AMELIA

Mommy, they're huge security lights. Like you would see at a prison.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Amelia, I also wish we could've stayed out in the country, but there were no good jobs in Sudbury.

FAITH

Your job here isn't good.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'm going to find a better one.

AMELIA

Why can't Daddy live here with us?

FAITH

I don't like visiting him at the halfway house.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Your father is still recovering from his breakdown.

FAITH

He's a way better cook than you.

IN THE KITCHEN

Maggie sighs heavily.

MAGGIE

Girls, let's have a little quiet.
A few moments of quiet.

IN THE DINING ROOM

Amelia watches as Faith digs in to the table harder and with more determination.

AMELIA

Daddy told me they injected him with Thorazine at the hospital and it made him bite the insides of his cheeks until his mouth was filled with blood.

Beat.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

It's still quiet time.

AMELIA

What's Thorazine?

Maggie comes out with two bowls of pasta and sees what Faith has been doing. She drops the bowls down on the table and grabs Faith by the shoulders.

MAGGIE

Faith! What are you doing? Why would you do that? Why would you do that?

FAITH

It's a flower. It's pretty.

Maggie sinks into a dining room chair, lays her head on the table and sobs. After a moment, the girls take their pasta bowls and start eating in silence.

AMELIA

Now we're being quiet, Mommy.

FAITH

Yeah, Mommy, now we're being quiet.

EXT. STREET. DAY

It is raining. Faith and Amelia, both wearing backpacks, walk down an urban sidewalk. They are five feet apart, not speaking. They come to a corner. Amelia goes straight and Faith goes right.

EXT. ALLEY. DAY

Amelia trudges alone down an alley.

EXT. DESOLATE PARK. DAY

Amelia cuts through a public park.

EXT. VINYL-SIDED HOUSE. DAY

Amelia approaches a three-story house. She rings the doorbell. She is dripping wet. One of Cam's HOUSEMATES answers the door. He has an unfriendly, suspicious manner and bad skin.

AMELIA

My father... lives here?

INT. SECOND-FLOOR HALLWAY. DAY

Amelia passes a fidgety woman with a bowl haircut. She stops and stares at the closed door to her father's room. There is a home-made poster taped to the door which reads:

You say INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY,
I say WE ARE NOT ALONE.

Also taped to the door is a National Geographic picture of a gorilla. She knocks.

CAM (O.S.)

Yes?

She opens the door. Cam sits over the various parts of a camera, unshaven with a cigarette in his mouth. He wears jeans and a green sweatshirt that says "Vermont". His room is filled with moving boxes stacked floor to ceiling. He stands, surprised to see his bedraggled daughter.

CAM

Darling! Poor little draggletail.

He tosses the cigarette into a Styrofoam coffee cup and puts it on a table with many other old half-filled cups with cigarette butts in them. He kneels down to hug her.

CAM

I'm going to make you some soup.

He picks her up in his arms and carries her down the stairs.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE KITCHEN. DAY

Amelia's clothes hang over the hissing radiator, drying off. Cam stirs soup on the stove. Amelia sits at the table wrapped in a big towel. Cam opens a tin of biscuits and arranges them on a plate.

CAM

What's my plan? My plan is... get a job. That's number one.

Amelia nods her approval.

CAM

I'll get out of this halfway house and get my own apartment. Then you girls can come for sleepovers and I'll make crepes for breakfast and dinner.

Amelia nods her approval.

CAM

And then I'll move back in with you and Faith and Mommy. That is, if Mommy will have me.

He holds the plate of biscuits out to her. She takes one.

AMELIA

I feel like Lucy visiting Mr. Tumnus.

Cam smiles, pleased.

CAM

That's the nicest thing anyone's ever said to me.

AMELIA

Mommy says you have a drinking problem.

Cam bristles, offended.

CAM

Most people I know drink far more than I do.

AMELIA

I think if you could stop drinking and take your lithium then Mommy would let you come home.

CAM
(sighing deeply)
I don't think Mommy loves me
anymore.

AMELIA
But she says she loves you!

CAM
Really? Does she say it a lot?

AMELIA
She always says she loves you. But
that it's hard to live with you
when you refuse to face up to your
adult responsibilities.

CAM
(frowns)
Do you think Mommy should be
confiding in you like this?

AMELIA
I don't know.

CAM
The thing is I can see all this
from Mommy's point of view. I
certainly understand why she slept
with Jake Beal after the Walden
Pond incident. Sleeping with Will
Bronson was pushing it, but I still
forgive her.

AMELIA
But Mommy says you slept with
somebody in the hall closet during
a party when I was eight months
old. She says you started it.

CAM
(defensive)
I was manic. I was high as a kite
when I did that. I never had a
prolonged affair like everybody
else seems to do!

Amelia looks down and reaches for another biscuit. Cam
sighs, sorry and sad.

CAM
Do you still feel like Lucy
visiting Mr. Tumnus?

AMELIA

Not really.

INT. MAGGIE'S DREARY OFFICE. DAY

Maggie stands at a large metal filing cabinet, organizing color-coded files. A square-shaped woman in her 50s deposits a tall stack of files next to Maggie's head: CAROL.

CAROL

These too.

The phone rings. Maggie tenses.

CAROL

Tell your kids to stop calling.
This is a job.

Carol trundles away. Maggie answers, professionally.

MAGGIE

Hello, Keller Brothers --
(quietly)
Faith, is it important, sweetie?
You can't call so much. They don't
like it. No TV... Okay, one show --
two shows and a movie, but please
don't call again unless you have
to. I love you.

INT. APARTMENT. EVENING

Cam makes dinner: crepes filled with creamed chicken and spinach. Faith sets the table. Amelia plays the piano.

The front door key turns in the lock.

FAITH

Mommy's home!

Maggie opens the door and walks in with a bag of groceries. Faith gestures to the table with a flourish. Maggie nods, impressed, and then she sees Cam in the kitchen and reacts, surprised, but not unpleasantly.

INT. KITCHEN. CONTINUOUS

Maggie joins Cam in the kitchen.

MAGGIE

Hello.

CAM
Hello. Guess who showed up on my
doorstep today?

He nods toward Amelia. Maggie puts her groceries down.

MAGGIE
How did she get there?

CAM
Walked.

MAGGIE
All the way from school?

He nods. They share a look of parental concern. Then:

CAM
I think we should find a therapist
for her to talk to.

MAGGIE
Do you think that's something your
parents might pay for? Mine can't
help anymore.

CAM
I'll ask them.

Maggie smiles at him gratefully and unpacks the groceries.
They move around the tiny kitchen. In the living room,
Amelia starts playing a jaunty version of "The Entertainer."

CAM
She's getting good.
(calling)
That sounds great, Big Little!
(to Maggie)
How's the job going?

MAGGIE
Oh, the job.

She hangs her head.

MAGGIE
I graduated from Sarah Lawrence. I
can't believe I'm doing this.

Maggie looks sad and tired. Cam puts his arm around her and
Maggie leans into his shoulder. Amelia walks into the
kitchen and puts her arms around both parents, joining them
in this sweet moment. They smile down at her. Then Maggie
deflates.

MAGGIE
I forgot the laundry --

AMELIA
We'll get it!

She pushes her parents together and runs from the room.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER

The apartment door slams. Amelia and Faith walk down the hall with a hamper. They look at each other hopefully.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING STAIRS NEAR LAUNDRY ROOM. NIGHT

Amelia and Faith walk away from the laundry room with their hamper full of clothes. Three children are playing cards on the stairs in the hall. KIM, 10, and ALI, 8, are Korean sisters. Also with them is THURGOOD, 12, who is black and very tall, friendly and fey.

KIM
Hi.

AMELIA/FAITH
Hi.

KIM
I'm Kim. This is Ali. This is Thurgood. We live on the ninth floor.

THURGOOD
(with a floppy wave)
Hey there.

AMELIA
I'm Amelia and this is Faith.

KIM
You guys go to Lincoln?

AMELIA
No. We go to Peabody.

Kim squints angrily.

KIM
Peabody is the best public school in the city. We're not in the Peabody School district.

Thurgood puts his hand to his mouth, mock afraid.

THURGOOD

(sing song)

Uh oh. Somebody's telling a big
fat fib!

KIM

If you live here, you're supposed
to go to Lincoln. A school that is
totally one hundred percent
terrible.

THURGOOD

Unless you like getting your 'A'
kicked by Irish kids.

FAITH

I don't want to get my 'A' kicked.

THURGOOD

Honey, nobody does.

AMELIA

Well... we go to Peabody.

As Amelia and Faith struggle up the stairs with their hamper:

KIM

You don't get it. What you're
doing is illegal. And it's not
fair. It's not at all fair. You
guys are going to go to jail.

Amelia and Faith hurry away. Faith looks back.

FAITH

Bye.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The family sits at the table, having finished the dinner Cam
made. Music plays on the record player.

AMELIA

What if someone asks me where I
live? I don't want to lie.

MAGGIE

Peabody is the best public school
in the city --

AMELIA

I don't care. I don't want to lie.

CAM

You're not lying, sweetheart. Your mother is lying.

Maggie furrows her brow at him.

FAITH

I don't want to go to Lincoln!
They said we're going to get beat up.

CAM

Don't worry, Faithie. I'll teach you how to fight.

AMELIA

What if my teacher finds out I'm lying?

MAGGIE

Miss Kendricks loves you. You're her best student.

FAITH

(wailing)

They said we'd get our 'A' kicked by Irish kids!

MAGGIE

You're not going to get your 'A' kicked --

CAM

(riled up)

-- you'll be kicking 'A'!

AMELIA

If you want us to go to the Peabody School so bad, why didn't we move into the Peabody School district?

MAGGIE

We can't afford the Peabody School district. We're lucky to have gotten a rent-controlled apartment.

AMELIA

But Daddy's family is so rich --

MAGGIE

(losing it)

Yes, but we have no money! Can you girls understand that! We have no money! I send out my resume and I get nothing! I just spent my last twelve dollars! You want to be poor and get a bad education?

The neighbor below bangs very angrily on the ceiling. They all sit in silence. Then:

CAM

Seconds, anyone?

Faith holds out her plate. Cam serves.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Cam, for this delicious dinner.

CAM

Could be like this every night...

Maggie stiffens.

MAGGIE

That would be nice, but I need a husband, not a wife.

CAM

I'd like to be a husband but my wife won't let me.

MAGGIE

Girls, go play in the lobby.

FAITH

But --

MAGGIE

Go!

As they scurry out of the apartment:

CAM

I'm lonely, Maggie. I don't want to move to some shitty apartment, I want to come home!

EXT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

The girls listen at the door with concern as their parents continue to argue.

MAGGIE (O.S.)
 I'm lonely too, Cam! This, here,
 is lonely, but you have to show me
 that it'll be different this time.
 Bohemia is over --

A neighbor across the hall opens the door and looks annoyed.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Maggie lays out three Business School applications on the dining room table: Harvard, Columbia, Wharton.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Cam is on a pay phone on Mass Ave. He is leaving an answering machine message. He wears a green polo shirt and madras shorts. He wears a Polaroid 250 around his neck.

CAM
 Hi, Maggie. It's me. It's a
 beautiful day. I'm skulking around
 Harvard Square. Anybody home?
 Pick up if you're there.

He waits. No answer. He continues his message.

CAM
 Just wanted to see...

INT. RESTAURANT PHONE BOOTH. DIFFERENT DAY

Cam stands at a restaurant pay phone, leaving another message. He wears a battered corduroy sportcoat.

CAM
 ...what you and the girls are up
 to. Thought we could go sailing.
 I think Eliot Perkins would let me
 borrow his sailboat...

EXT. STREET. DIFFERENT DAY

Cam is at a different pay phone, leaving another message. He wears a three-piece suit. He wears the Polaroid 250.

CAM

...Or "Bringing up Baby" is playing
at the Orson Welles and there's
also a Buster Keaton festival --

A loud BEEP. The machine hangs up on him. Cam hangs up the
phone and walks out alone into the bustling street.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY. DAY

Amelia sits on a bench outside the Principal's Office,
hugging her backpack, trying not to cry. Maggie exits the
Principal's Office and sits down next to Amelia.

AMELIA

What'd he say?

MAGGIE

(lightly)

He said we're not in the Peabody
School district so you and Faith
have to go to Lincoln.

Amelia's face crumples.

AMELIA

I'm sorry, Mommy.

Maggie hugs Amelia to her.

MAGGIE

Don't apologize to me. Please
don't apologize to me --

AMELIA

He asked where we lived and I
wasn't sure what to say --

MAGGIE

You did the right thing. I never
wanted you to lie.

AMELIA

He said it was illegal what we were
doing.

MAGGIE

I guess I wasn't thinking of it
that way. I just wanted you to go
to the best school.

Maggie sits back and wipes at Amelia's tears.

AMELIA

What if Faith gets beat up and it's all because of me?

MAGGIE

Don't worry about Faith. Faith bites.

Amelia laughs, then:

AMELIA

I love my teacher.

MAGGIE

And she loves you. She stopped me in the hall and told me...

(her voice breaks)

She was so sorry. And she would miss you very much.

Amelia nods and leans against her mother.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Cam enters with two pillowcases stuffed with clothes. Two sleeping bags sit on the sofa. As Cam picks up a teddy bear and stuffs it in one of the pillowcases:

CAM

Sleeping bags, pajamas, stuffed animals, books, changes of clothes, what am I forgetting?

MAGGIE (O.S.)

Toothbrushes?

Maggie enters from the kitchen with a tray. On it is a teapot and tea cups and buttered toast on a plate. She puts it on the table and pours it out, handing him a cup.

CAM

I bought toothbrushes they can keep at my apartment. And I took two big cardboard boxes and set them up like little beds. They're going to flip.

MAGGIE

They're so excited.

CAM

And during the day they can turn them over and use them as puppet theaters.

MAGGIE

You're going to have fun.

CAM

Now that I have my own place, Maggie, I'd be happy to pick them up any day and have them stay over. There's room for you too...

Beat. Maggie doesn't reciprocate.

CAM

Just kidding. Not until you're ready.

MAGGIE

Cam, I got into business school.

Cam reacts, impressed.

CAM

Maggie Stuart, you are some punkins. I wish I had some of that bourgeois midwestern can-do.

MAGGIE

I got a scholarship. To Columbia.

Cam is thrown.

CAM

Wait. You can't take the girls to New York.

MAGGIE

No. I can't even afford a studio apartment in New York. Jenny said her mother has a small room she can rent me.

CAM

So what about the girls?

MAGGIE

Here's my proposal. I can get my degree in eighteen months if I do the summer session. So I go to New York. You move in here and take care of the girls.

He looks at her for a long beat. Then:

CAM

...Me?

He takes out a cigarette.

MAGGIE

Yes. You. You miss them. And they miss you so much. It's just eighteen months. When I get my MBA, I'll get a job in Boston and move back in here.

(gripping his arm)

I know it sounds crazy, Cam, but you can do it. I know you can.

Cam walks away from her, considering.

CAM

I suppose it might be good for me to have a purpose --

MAGGIE

A routine. The doctor thinks that's exactly what you need.

CAM

Yes. A routine. Getting meals on the table. Taking them to school every morning, putting them to bed every night, making sure they brush their hair and their teeth... the laundry.

He looks exhausted.

CAM

That sounds like a lot.

MAGGIE

It is a lot. But we're sinking deeper and deeper into a hole and I have to do something.

CAM

The new school does feel a bit like a reformatory.

MAGGIE

It's grim. You and I went to good schools, we had piano lessons --

CAM

I never had any lessons.

MAGGIE

But you learned how to fence and
ski and sail and speak French...

CAM

But I never took lessons. My
family taught me those things.

MAGGIE

The point is we both got a good
education. And I want that for our
children.

CAM

Well, I want that too. But
eighteen months is a lot of
routine.

MAGGIE

You can do it.

CAM

I can?

MAGGIE

I will come back every weekend and
help you.

Cam looks at her.

CAM

Every weekend? And stay here with
us?

MAGGIE

Yes.

CAM

So it would be like we were a
family again?

She nods. Cam looks off into the distance, a determined look
on his face. He feels the importance of his mission.

CAM

I am their father, after all.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY

Maggie sits across from MURRAY and PAULINE STUART, Cam's parents. Murray wears a corduroy jacket with a pipe tucked into the pocket. Pauline wears a red turtleneck with a large, elaborate jade necklace over it.

PAULINE

I'm afraid we need to intervene on our son's behalf and say: no. He's just not up to the task.

MAGGIE

I know he can do it.

MURRAY

And what if he can't? It's a recipe for disaster.

Reveal that Cam is also at the table. He takes umbrage at his father's remark as he lights his mother's cigarette.

CAM

You don't seem to think I can do anything.

PAULINE

We just don't want you to tax yourself, darling boy.

MAGGIE

We met with Dr. Wendell. He said Cam has made an excellent recovery from his breakdown and he felt he could do this.

CAM

He thinks I need more responsibility, not less.

Murray looks mystified.

MURRAY

But you're a *man*. Even if you could do it, why would you want to?

MAGGIE

He loves to cook. He loves to tell stories and play games. He's a good father. I would never ask him if I didn't believe he could do it.

Cam smiles at her gratefully. He puts his hand on hers.

PAULINE

We believe in him too, but what if he has a breakdown?

MAGGIE

He won't. Because we're all going to support him and make sure he takes his lithium. I'll check in every day on the phone and I'll be there on the weekends.

PAULINE

That sounds exhausting.

MURRAY

Is this because of Feminism?

MAGGIE

We're living at the poverty level. The girls are at a terrible school.

MURRAY

Our children went to the best schools and I'll tell you, it didn't add up to much.

PAULINE

(turning on him)

Our children are delightful!

MURRAY

Absolutely. But not one of them is self-supporting.

PAULINE

Well, Murray, lest you forget: neither are we.

Annoyed, Murray pulls the pipe out of his pocket and starts to pack it.

CAM

I think what Maggie is doing is quite admirable.

MURRAY

I agree. Very commendable.

PAULINE

But how did it get to this? I thought Gaga was paying the rent on your little apartment.

MAGGIE

She is.

PAULINE

It isn't enough?

MAGGIE

No.

PAULINE

(to Murray)

Don't we have some crystal or some silver we could sell?

MURRAY

That won't even pay for this meal.

PAULINE

(forcefully)

No no no. Maggie Stuart, you cannot leave your family.

MAGGIE

Pauline, I'm desperate. Utterly and completely desperate. We have no money.

Pauline looks like she just ate something terrible.

PAULINE

I hate talking about "money!"

Pauline always says the word "money" with extreme distaste.

MURRAY

Then let's drop it.

PAULINE

(leaning in)

I wish we could help but we're barely getting by on the dollops of cash Gaga doles out to us...

MURRAY

Pauline, please!

Murray turns his back on the table and aggressively puffs on his pipe. This is uncomfortable for him.

MAGGIE

Cam is a trust fund baby with no trust fund. My parents have done all they can. One of us is going to have to earn a living.

Pauline looks very sad. She pats Maggie's hand with genuine emotion.

PAULINE

Oh, my dear, it all just sounds so dreary!

EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

Cam, wearing jade swimming trunks and a bright green shirt, is organizing Maggie's suitcases in the back of a small U-Haul. A nervous, skinny man in his 40s looks on, biting his fingernails. He is PETER.

PETER

Why does he keep re-arranging everything? It was fine before. We need to go, Maggie. We're heading into miserable traffic.

Maggie nods. Peter gets into the passenger seat. Cam looks toward him suspiciously.

CAM

Who is this wimp?

MAGGIE

Carol Webber's cousin. He's moving to New York to live with his mother. I'm lucky he's splitting the cost of the truck.

CAM

He's making you drive?

Cam seems unconvinced. Maggie hugs Amelia and Faith and tries to be upbeat.

MAGGIE

You can call me anytime day or night. And I'm going to come home the weekend after next, so don't be too sad because you're going to see me before you know it.

They nod. Faith wipes away her tears. Amelia is stone-faced.

MAGGIE

Amelia, you have to brush your hair. Faith, will you make sure your sister brushes her hair?

Faith nods. Amelia shakes her head.

MAGGIE

You are going to have a lot of fun
with Daddy.

Peter honks the horn. Cam reacts angrily.

CAM

Hey!

Maggie stands quickly.

MAGGIE

Cam --

CAM

(re: Peter)

You're saying goodbye to your
daughters! What kind of a cold-
hearted S.O.B. honks the horn?

MAGGIE

Please. I'm about to spend five
hours in very close quarters.

Cam sighs and nods. Then:

MAGGIE

Cam, thank you. I know this is
big.

Cam wears a stoic expression.

CAM

I just wish I hadn't dressed like a
big green bug.

Maggie laughs. He wraps her up in a big hug. Then the horn
honks again.

CAM

Go. Seriously. Or I'm going to
kick the living shit out of this
guy.

Maggie gets into the driver's seat.

MAGGIE

I love you. I love you girls!

CAM

We love you too.

The truck starts up. It pulls out into the street. They all stand waving.

INT. MOVING TRUCK. MOMENTS LATER

Maggie wipes a tear away. Peter is oblivious.

PETER

We'll have to make a lot of stops,
I have a very small bladder --

Suddenly Maggie is startled to see Cam running full-speed alongside the truck.

CAM

Maggie! Take the Wilbur Cross
Parkway!

Maggie is stuck moving forward in the flow of traffic. She doesn't know what to do.

MAGGIE

The what?

CAM

Remember, Maggie? We were going to
Tom and Linda's wedding and we
thought we'd be late but I took the
back roads and we made it in the
nick of time? The Wilbur Cross
Parkway!

She's looking for a place to pull over. People behind her are honking now.

MAGGIE

I don't know if I remember....

CAM

(shouting)

At New Haven, shoot across 34 West
to the Wilbur Cross! It becomes
the Merritt Parkway!

EXT. STREET. CONTINUOUS

The truck keeps moving and Cam can't keep up. He shouts after them.

CAM

You can avoid Bridgeport and the
trees are twice as green!

Cam lights a cigarette. He stares after the truck as it disappears from view.

EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

Cam walks back to his daughters who are still standing on the sidewalk where he left them. Faith is crying. Amelia is not letting herself. He picks Faith up and she puts her head on his shoulder. As they walk toward the apartment building:

CAM

Who wants ice cream for lunch?

EXT. PARK. DAY

The girls still look really sad while they eat their ice cream cones. Cam watches them with concern.

CAM

Want to see a movie?

They shake their heads.

CAM

We could drive out to Plum Island
and look for sea glass?

They shake their heads.

CAM

We could go to the Museum of Fine
Arts and look at Great Grandpapa's
portrait.

AMELIA

Why is his portrait hanging at the
museum?

CAM

Because a very important artist
named John Singer Sargent painted
it.

FAITH

Why?

CAM

(indignant)

"Why?" Don't you know who we are?

EXT. BEACON HILL. DAY

Cam and the girls are in his Fiat. The car is filled with trash: food wrappers, used napkins, empty containers, orange peels, mail. They are parked outside a large freestanding mansion on Beacon Hill.

CAM

That's where your great-grandmother grew up.

FAITH

In that whole house?

CAM

The whole thing. It's the grandest house on Beacon Hill. Designed by Bulfinch, a very famous architect.

AMELIA

How did they get so rich?

CAM

Railroads. Your great-great-grandfather was once the richest man in Boston.

AMELIA

So how come we're so poor?

CAM

...Well, all that money was put into a trust which is controlled by your great-grandmother. And she decides when to give who what. And... it's hard to explain.

The girls stare at the house in awe.

CAM

You want to see the inside?

They look excited and confused.

FAITH

Are we allowed?

AMELIA

You can't just walk up and knock on people's doors.

CAM
 (tickled by her ignorance)
 Sweetheart... this is Boston.
 They're practically expecting us.

INT. ENTRY HALL. DAY

The girls look around the grand entry hall, amazed. Cam has a hand on each of their shoulders. A MAID comes in.

MAID
 Mr. Fabrini will be out in a
 minute.

CAM
 (to girls)
 On the second floor are the parlors
 where they would have huge fancy
 dress balls...they would lay thick
 canvas down to protect the wooden
 floors and it looked like snow...

A man in his mid-40s comes out of a study. This is MR. FABRINI. He wears a business suit. He seems annoyed.

MR. FABRINI
 Can I help you?

CAM
 Hello. My name is Cam Stuart. My
 great-grandmother grew up in this
 house and I was wondering if I
 could show it to my daughters.
 It's an important part of their
 family history.

MR. FABRINI
 I'm sorry, Mr. Stuart. But this is
 my home. I don't give tours.

The girls are mortified. They both start for the door, but Cam holds them in place. He is defiant.

CAM
 This house was in my family for
 more than five generations. My
 great-great grandfather was born in
 this house on Boxing Day in 1842.

MR. FABRINI
 And would your great-great-
 grandfather give tours to anyone
 who came along?

CAM
 Certainly. If they had a personal
 connection going back more than
 five generations.

MR. FABRINI
 Then he's a better man than me.

CAM
 (pointed)
 "Better man than I."

The girls wince.

INT. FIAT. MOMENTS LATER

Cam drives much too fast down Storrow Drive, weaving in and
 out of traffic. Everyone is shouting.

CAM
 We're going back there again! I'm
 going back every day till he shows
 you that house!

AMELIA
 Slow down!

CAM
 Our family lived there for more
 than a century for chrissake!

FAITH
 But it's his house now and he
 doesn't want to show it to you!

AMELIA
 That was so embarrassing!

CAM
 You shouldn't be embarrassed! He
 should be embarrassed!

FAITH/AMELIA
 No! You should be embarrassed!

Cam reacts as if they are speaking a foreign language.

CAM
 Me? I'm not embarrassed! I'm the
 eldest son of the eldest son of the
 richest man in the world!

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT

The family rides the elevator in silence. All three of them look furious.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The apartment is filled with boxes. Amelia is on the kitchen phone. Faith is on the phone in the living room. They are both unhappy, talking low, as Cam lurks about.

FAITH

We want you to come home.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'll be home in twelve days...

AMELIA

We want you to come home right now.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

This is a big adjustment --

AMELIA

Why aren't you coming home this Friday? You said you'd come home every single weekend. That's what you said.

INT. MAGGIE'S NEW YORK ROOM. SAME TIME

Maggie stands in a grim little room with a bed and a desk and a bright overhead light. Her suitcases surround her. You can hear loud traffic noise.

MAGGIE

I have registration and orientation -- next weekend is really not that far away...

INT. LIVING ROOM. MORNING

Cam is snoring on the couch still wearing the bright green shirt and jade swimming trunks. The TV is on. Faith stands over him, near tears, in her nightgown.

FAITH

Daddy, wake up. Daddy. We slept too long and we're going to be late for school.

Cam opens his eyes and blinks at her, disoriented.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ELEVATOR. DAY

A disheveled Cam races down the hall and puts his hand on the door of the elevator to keep it from closing. In his other hand he has a box of cereal.

CAM
Girls! Let's move it!

On the elevator is an attractive woman professionally dressed. This is BECCA. She wears a turtleneck sweater and big brown glasses. She smiles at Cam. He smiles back.

CAM
You're Maggie's friend. I'm Cam.

BECCA
Becca. Kyle's mother.

Faith runs onto the elevator.

FAITH
I hate being late for school.

CAM
Don't worry, bunchkin. You won't be late.

Cam holds out the box of cereal. Faith reaches in, grabs a handful, stuffs it in her mouth.

CAM
(calling)
Amelia! Let's go!

BECCA
I just have to say: my ex-husband would never do what you're doing. I think it is so evolved.

Cam puffs up.

CAM
You do?

Tousled Amelia runs onto the elevator. Cam steps on.

BECCA
Absolutely. Most men would be extremely emasculated having their wife go off to be the breadwinner.

CAM
(deflates)
Oh. Thanks.

The elevator doors close.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Cam runs a red light at the intersection of Huron Ave and Garden Street. The girls scream.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY

He pulls up with a screech in front of the school. The girls tumble out. As they sprint off:

CAM
You want me to pick you up after school?

AMELIA/FAITH
No!

He watches the girls run up the deserted steps of the school.

CAM
I love you!

EXT. PARKING LOT. DAY

Cam has the hood of his car open. The girls walk up, wearing their backpacks, not talking to each other.

CAM
You girls want to learn how to change an oil filter? It's pretty straightforward --

AMELIA/FAITH
No./Not really.

CAM
Just don't be helpless.

He shuts the hood. A woman in her mid-50s is taking many grocery bags out of her car. This is RUTH-ANN MCKAY.

CAM
Who's that?

AMELIA

Ruth-Ann.

FAITH

Please don't introduce yourself.

CAM

Why not?

FAITH

Because you talk too much and nobody wants to talk to you.

CAM

I'm just being friendly. Don't you want to know your neighbors? We live in a world with other people.

He approaches Ruth-Ann. The girls follow.

RUTH-ANN

Hello girls.

AMELIA/FAITH

Hi.

CAM

Hi, Cam Stuart --

Ruth-Ann shakes hands warmly.

RUTH-ANN

Yes, Maggie told me. Welcome to 205. Ruth-Ann McKay.

CAM

Can we help you with your bags?

RUTH-ANN

(grateful)

Are you kidding?

As they pick up the bags:

CAM

See, girls? People appreciate a little kindness. That's all I'm talking about.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam carries three bags and the girls each struggle to carry one down the hall to Ruth-Ann's apartment. She unlocks her door and starts taking the bags from them.

CAM

Do you need us to help you put them away?

RUTH-ANN

No, this is fine. Just put the bags down.

CAM

Are you sure? We're happy to do it.

RUTH-ANN

No, this has been so helpful. Thank you.

CAM

You need anything moved? A desk or something like that?

RUTH-ANN

No I'm happy with where my desk is...

She starts to close the door.

CAM

Sometimes mixing up an arrangement freshens a space --

RUTH-ANN

No, thank you. I have to start dinner. So if you'll excuse me.

CAM

You need anything chopped? An onion?

RUTH-ANN

No. I'm not using onions tonight.

She closes the door in his face.

FAITH

What is wrong with you?

AMELIA

You made her slam the door in your face.

CAM

(oblivious)

She had to go cook dinner.

FAITH

She had to get rid of you!

CAM

Get off my case! I'm just being a good neighbor!

AMELIA

You're an annoying neighbor. People are going to see you and run in the other direction!

CAM

No, they're going to run toward me! Because I'm going to make sure they know that I'm the kind of guy who's willing to move heavy furniture! Or clean out a storage locker!
(yelling)
Because I'm a good neighbor!

He storms off down the hallway. Ten strides later.

CAM

This is bullshit!

He goes into the stairwell and slams the door.

INT. DINING AREA. NIGHT

They sit at the dining table, eating in angry silence. Then:

CAM

I learned to cook this on a Norwegian steamship headed down the Amazon.

Beat.

AMELIA

When did you do that?

CAM

Summer after I got kicked out of Harvard.

AMELIA

I thought you got kicked out of Exeter.

CAM

I got kicked out of both. For very different reasons...

The girls' interest is piqued.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM. NIGHT

Cam sits in the reading chair. The girls are in their beds, listening intently to their father's story. Faith has curlers in her hair and a net over them.

CAM

I was on my way to my Ec 10 exam and I hear this bag-pipe music so I follow the sound into The Square and a street musician is playing Scottish ballads and he's got his hat out. People are walking by and putting money in it and I think *that's a good idea*. So I put my hat out and sit next to him and I start singing along in my best Scottish brogue and he tells me to scam.

AMELIA

Because he didn't ask you to sing and he wants to make all the money.

CAM

Exactly. Well, we exchanged a few words and then...the bastard jumped me! This scrawny little guy and he jumped me! We got into a major brawl on top of the bag pipes and I got so excited I shit my pants.

AMELIA/FAITH

Ew!

Cam laughs.

CAM

Needless to say, I didn't make the exam.

AMELIA

And they kicked you out for missing
one exam?

CAM

Well... then the next semester I
registered for seventy-five
courses.

He chuckles.

CAM

That's when they determined I might
not be Harvard material.

CUT TO:

Both girls are asleep, breathing steadily. The clock ticks.
Cam gets up from his chair and turns out the light.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Cam walks into the living room of the apartment, which is now
full of all his boxes. He stares at them.

Cam opens a box. It is filled with magazines, pieces of
paper, phone books, tools, cords. It is completely
disorganized. He blinks at it. It fills him with despair.

INT. KITCHEN. NIGHT

Dirty dishes are piled in the sink and all over the counters.
Cam stares at it in despair.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY

The laundry hamper is overflowing, dirty clothes piled
halfway up the wall. Cam stares at it in despair.

INT. FRONT DOOR. NIGHT

Cam grabs his coat and scarf from the coat-stand.

CAM

(loudly)

Girls, I'm going out for a couple
of hours. You get some good rest.
I'll be back before midnight...

No answer from the sleeping girls.

CAM

...Or after midnight. Love you!

He opens the door, closes it quietly behind him.

EXT. PARKING LOT. NIGHT

Cam steps out into the cool air. He takes a deep breath, lights a cigarette, and heads out into the night.

INT. DIVE BAR. NIGHT

A bar full of aging professors, shaggy poets and intense poetesses.

Cam sits at the bar, drinking a can of beer. He has an animated conversation with two friends. One wears a bow-tie, horn-rimmed glasses and a tweed jacket; the other wears a grimy coat and ragged hat. The homeless-looking friend laughs, revealing no front teeth. Cam gestures to the bartender, indicating another round.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam, drunk and smoking, walks down the long hall to the corner apartment. He takes out his keys and opens the door. But it stops; the chain-lock has been fastened.

All the lights in the apartment are on.

CAM

(pissed off)

Oh, shit.

He knocks.

CAM

Unchain the door, please.

Amelia comes running from the living room, crazy-haired, wielding a baseball bat.

AMELIA

Where did you go?

CAM

Unchain the fucking door.

AMELIA

We woke up and you were gone.
Faith was really scared.

Cam grows more irritated.

CAM
Don't use the chain. Anyone who
really wants to come in won't be
stopped by this dinky chain.

As she unchains it:

AMELIA
It stopped you.

As he enters:

CAM
I didn't really want to come in.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam stumbles in and Amelia holds up the telephone receiver,
triumphant.

AMELIA
Mommy's on the phone.

CAM
(bitterly)
Thank you. Thanks a lot.

He reluctantly takes the telephone from her. She walks down
the hall to her bedroom.

CAM
(to phone)
Hello.
(beat)
Everything's fine, Maggie. Nobody
is hurt.
(beat)
I told them I was going out, but
they were sleeping! Should I wake
them up every time I want to go
out?

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM. NIGHT

Amelia sits down on the bed next to Faith.

FAITH
She's going to know he's doing a
bad job.

AMELIA
He's drunk.

FAITH
Do you think it's good for Mommy to
know that?

Amelia shrugs.

AMELIA
She's coming home a week early.

Faith gasps with excitement and hugs her sister tight.

INT. BATHROOM. NIGHT

Cam opens the medicine chest and takes out his enormous
bottle of lithium. He stares at it for a long time.

EXT. SCHOOL. DAY

The Fiat pulls up in front of the school. Children are
filing in. The girls jump out of the car. Before Amelia
slams the door:

CAM
Remember, girls. Mommy's coming
Friday. Let's make the apartment
nice for her.

AMELIA
You have to unpack your boxes.

CAM
(lighting a cigarette)
I'm just saying, we all need to
pitch in --

Both girls look bratty and pissed-off.

AMELIA
But they're your boxes...

FAITH
We don't know what to do with
them...

AMELIA
We don't ask you to clean up our
room...

Cam cannot handle the onslaught of attitude.

CAM
Fuck it, forget it. Have a nice
fucking day.

Cam puts the Fiat in gear and zooms off, way too fast. The girls watch him go, stunned and self-conscious, knowing that the other kids heard.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Cam looks at all the boxes. The place is a disaster. He goes to the window and looks out. It is a beautiful day. Cam sighs.

CUT TO:

THE RECORD PLAYER

Cam drops the needle on Olatunje's Drums of Passion. A heavy rhythmic beat fills the room as he opens up the first box and pulls out a rusted old machete.

INT. APARTMENT. LATER

The girls enter the apartment. They can't believe their eyes. It is spic and span. A large new bookshelf lines the front hall. They jump up and down like crazy.

FAITH/AMELIA
Daddy! Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!

Cam enters from his bedroom. He wears a grimy, oil-stained jumpsuit. The girls throw themselves into his arms.

CAM
Pretty good, right?

FAITH
It's beautiful. We love it!

CAM
Just don't look in my bedroom.

The girls hurry to his bedroom.

INT. CAM'S BEDROOM. MOMENTS LATER

Cam's room looks like a garage. Large industrial metal shelves house paint-thinner, spray paint cans, motor oil, etc. Stacks of mail and magazines cover the desk and there are clothes all over the bed. Amelia points at the bed.

AMELIA

Is that a machete?

FAITH

We'll keep this door closed...

She closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Spirits are high. Amelia clears the dining room table. Faith washes the dishes and Cam dries and puts the dishes away. They sing a World War II marching song.

ALL THREE

*Hitler! Has only got one
ball...Goering! Has two but very
small...Himmler! Has something
sim'lar...But Josef Goebels has no
balls at all...*

EXT. TRAIN STATION. NIGHT

Cam and the girls stand on the platform as the train pulls in to the Station. Cam is trying to untangle some of the massive snarls in Amelia's hair. Maggie gets off at the far end. The girls take off, running for her.

Maggie drops her suitcase and drops to her knees and holds them tight. Cam walks toward them, smiling. He holds a bunch of orange gerberas. She accepts them and kisses him on the cheek. She kisses both girls on the head.

He picks up her suitcase and they walk down the platform. The girls skip alongside, holding their mother's hand, happy to be all together.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

The family bustles into the apartment. Maggie stops dead when she sees how cozy and warm it is. She looks at them with amazement. The girls are gleeful.

MAGGIE
Who built these shelves?

AMELIA
Daddy.

Cam looks modest but he is bursting with pride.

CAM
They're just shelves.

EXT. PARK. DAY

Faith and Amelia play on the monkey bars. Cam and Maggie sit on a bench. Maggie looks happy.

MAGGIE
It was hard to come this weekend.
I'm so glad I did. I think this is
just what you needed, Cam! I think
this is going to be a great thing
for us.

He smiles at her and takes her hand. She smiles back at him. They sit holding hands as they watch the girls play.

CUT TO:

UNDOING THE APARTMENT MONTAGE

Cam lays out a bunch of newspaper on the living room floor and goes to work, taking apart an old phone. He walks away from the tools and parts of the disassembled phone and it never moves.

CUT TO:

The girls come in with a large hamper of laundry. They dump it on the sofa and start folding it, but then they run off and it stays where it is.

CUT TO:

The family sits in the living room eating dinner in front of the television. A large roll of paper towels that is sitting on the coffee table is knocked over and rolls to the floor, leaving a long trail of paper towel. Nobody picks it up.

CUT TO:

Cam lies on the sofa, drinking a beer and watching television. His head rests on the pile of clean laundry. Amelia and Faith roller skate around the room.

CUT TO:

The phone parts have been pushed under the piano bench to make room for Cam's bicycle, which stands upside down as he fixes the brake mechanism. He puts his glass down on top of the piano, in front of a large model ship. The top of the piano is now filled with dirty glasses, beer cans and empty yogurt containers with spoons sticking out of them.

CUT TO:

Cam sits down in his armchair and starts taping wide silver duct tape over a large tear in the arm.

Pull back on the living room. Nothing has been picked up or put away. It is a disaster.

CUT TO:

Faith stares miserably at the stack of dirty dishes in the kitchen sink.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam sits in his armchair. The TV is on. He is trying to brush the snarls out of Amelia's hair.

AMELIA

Ow! Daddy!

CAM

Sorry.

AMELIA

OW!

CAM

This is what happens when you don't brush your hair for two weeks.

Faith marches out of the kitchen, furious.

FAITH

Daddy, if you're not going to do the dishes, then I'm doing them.

Cam blinks at her. It is an odd threat. He shrugs.

CAM

Okay.

Faith marches into the kitchen. A cupboard opens and slams shut. He turns his attention back to Amelia's hair.

AMELIA

You're hurting me! I'll do it!

She turns and rips the brush from his hand.

CAM

Fine. You do it.

Amelia stomps away to the bedroom. Seconds later Faith marches back to the living room with a sponge held between two fingers.

FAITH

Where are the sponges?

Cam becomes immediately stern.

CAM

What's wrong with that sponge?

FAITH

It smells!

CAM

Then don't smell it!

FAITH

My hands stink just from touching it!

CAM

That's because someone left it soaking in the dishwasher! I keep telling you girls, it needs to be rinsed and squeezed when you're through with it!

FAITH

You brought it from your old apartment! It's probably five years old! It's disgusting!

CAM

We are not the kind of people who throw perfectly useful things away!

FAITH

You won't throw anything away!

CAM
That is a perfectly good sponge
with plenty of life left in it!

Faith throws the sponge at him.

FAITH
Fine! Then you do the dishes!

CAM
Fine! I will! With this sponge!

Faith runs away. The downstairs neighbor pounds on the ceiling. Cam angrily pounds back.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Maggie, wearing her coat and holding her suitcase, stares with dismay at the wreckage of the apartment.

CAM
We lost some momentum, but we'll
get it back.
(beat)
I did get a new sponge.
(pointed, to the girls)
Even though I washed the old one
with soap and it smelled fine.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Maggie, wearing yellow rubber gloves and her hair tied back, cleans furiously. Cam and the girls make piles.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Amelia helps her mother make her bed on the sofa. Faith practices her pirouettes.

AMELIA
Faith and I thought of the perfect
job for Daddy. A crepe cart in
Harvard Square. Like they have in
Paris.

Maggie and Cam look at each other, amused.

MAGGIE
You do make the best crepes.

CAM

And I do love standing outside in
January, freezing my ass off for
pennies.

Maggie laughs.

FAITH

We're working on the menu.

MAGGIE

I like chocolate and coconut.

FAITH

We have that!

She does a dramatic pirouette. Her parents laugh.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

It is late. Maggie sits up in her bed on the sofa, sewing a
button on a little girl's sweater. Cam sits at the other end
of the sofa. The girls have gone to bed. Cam is feeling
sorry for himself.

CAM

...and the building is packed with
single mothers who are always
checking in with each other and
getting together for coffee but do
any of them ever ask how I'm doing?
Do they ever invite me for coffee?
I'm pretty sure they all got
together for wine and cheese two
nights ago.

Maggie has to bite her lip to keep from laughing.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, it's not funny.

CAM

(smiling)

It is funny. It's pathetic. I'm a
pathetic whiner. Which is probably
why they don't invite me.

MAGGIE

They're leery of men, that's all.
Especially married men with
children.

CAM
I'm not exactly a married man.
(beat)
Am I?

MAGGIE
Well. We're a family.

Cam slides his hand up her leg. She shifts away.

CAM
So is this really how we're going
to do it? You come every weekend
and take up residence on the sofa?

MAGGIE
For now.

CAM
Come on, Maggie. We haven't slept
together since before my breakdown--

He leans forward and kisses her, but after a moment she rolls
off the sofa and moves away from him. He chases after her,
playful, flirting.

MAGGIE
I don't know what will happen, Cam.
I just want to get through this
period. Can't we see how it goes?

As he attempts to unbutton her top:

CAM
And what happens at the end? You
move back in here and what happens
to us? Where do I go?

MAGGIE
I want you to be the person we all
know you can be. It will take
steady, sustained effort. You can
do it, Cam. If you want to do it.

He puts his hand on her breast.

CAM
Sexy, sexy answer.

She laughs at his unrelenting flirtation.

MAGGIE
Honest, honest answer.

CAM
So what is this? Some big test?

MAGGIE
Don't think of it like that. You
hate tests --

CAM
Not if this was on the test...

He kisses her. This time she kisses him back.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY. NIGHT

The girls stand outside the closed door to Cam's bedroom,
listening and whispering to each other.

FAITH
Are they having sex?

AMELIA
I think maybe.

The girls celebrate silently. Then they hear raised voices:

MAGGIE (O.S.)
I'm sorry, Cam. I just can't make
promises right now --

CAM (O.S.)
What a bunch of baloney. You must
think I'm the biggest sucker on the
planet.

The girls scurry into their room as Cam's bedroom door is
ripped open. Cam walks out, pulling his shirt on. He grabs
his coat. Maggie runs after him.

MAGGIE
Are you taking your lithium?

CAM
Oh, shit. Lithium doesn't stop you
from feeling lonely and
unappreciated. Enjoy your sofa.

He exits. The front door slams.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Maggie lies on her bed on the sofa. Amelia walks up to her. Maggie lifts the covers and Amelia gets under the blankets next to her mother.

AMELIA

When you and Daddy met at WGBH, was he the way he is now?

MAGGIE

(delicately)

In some ways. He was funny. Compassionate. He knew everything about the outdoors. He had a job, which was good for him. He was a terrific lighting designer. But in the end, it was too much pressure... I didn't understand about the manic-depression. Besides, everyone was having nervous breakdowns in the 60s, so I didn't realize what a big deal it was.

AMELIA

You're probably sorry you married him.

MAGGIE

No. Never.

Amelia snuggles in closer.

AMELIA

You know, he's not usually so angry like he just was. We yell at him way more than he yells at us.

This information is not comforting to Maggie.

EXT. STREET. DAY

A cold winter day in a run-down part of Somerville, Massachusetts.

Cam leans over the engine of a dented and rusty Plymouth Valiant, gunmetal gray with white patches. He wears a grimy green parka with a gray three-piece suit poking out underneath. He wears nice leather shoes. A cigarette hangs out of his mouth. His hair is combed.

He shuts the hood.

Amelia and Faith watch apprehensively. Amelia wears a parka over white tights. Her snarly hair is pulled back in two barrettes. Faith wears a long wool coat and has her hair neatly combed under a velvet headband.

Cam crosses to the driver's side, gets in and turns the car on, revs the engine. CHRIS, the unfriendly man selling the car, doesn't even try to give a spiel.

CHRIS

Like I said in the ad, it runs.

Cam looks around the interior of the car.

CHRIS

There's been some wear and tear on the seats.

A large flap of vinyl hangs down revealing the foam underneath. In the front and the back.

CAM

Get in, girls, see what you think.

Chris opens the back door and the unhappy girls start to climb in.

AMELIA

There's no floor!

CHRIS

It's a little rusted. Don't step on it.

Amelia and Faith look at each other, sinking. They slide onto the backseat without stepping on the floor.

Cam leans through the back door and looks at the floor well, which is a rusty hole with ragged rusted edges.

CAM

No floor? That's dangerous. I have two small children. I'll give you three hundred and you deal with the Fiat.

He points to the Fiat which now has a broken driver side window that's been taped up with plastic and duct tape.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

As the Valiant pulls away, Amelia kneels on the backseat and waves out the back window.

AMELIA
Goodbye, Fiat! Goodbye, Fiat!

Cam honks the horn in rapid succession for a cheerful, triumphant goodbye. They drive out into the street. Faith sits down and opens a "Harper's Bazaar" but Amelia stays kneeling on the seat, looking out the back window. Her eyes fill with tears.

FAITH
Daddy, Amelia's crying.

AMELIA
You always cry.

Faith looks out the window, an angry expression on her face.

FAITH
Not anymore. I vowed never to cry again.

Cam looks in the rear-view mirror with concern.

CAM
My little Stoic? What's wrong, darling? Ma petite pamplemousse?

The tears roll down Amelia's face and she can't wipe them away fast enough.

AMELIA
It's just... What's going to happen to the Fiat? Nobody's going to want it.

FAITH
I thought you were crying because this car sucks.

Amelia shakes her head and says in a small voice:

AMELIA
That car sucked too.

She watches as the Fiat gets smaller and smaller and then they turn a corner and it's gone.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

The girls lie across the backseat, leaning against either door, huddled beneath an old army blanket. They wear hats.

Faith has the "Harper's Bazaar" magazine on her chest and Amelia holds a book called "Turning Your Dream Into A Small Business".

They are both mesmerized at the sight of the highway rushing by through the rusty holes in the floor.

EXT. WESTON ESTATE. DAY

The Valiant turns onto a long driveway and drives past an enormous lawn and a large weeping willow and an unattached four car garage and parks in the circle in front of the house, behind a maroon Bentley.

INT. DINING ROOM. DAY

A regal old lady sits at the head of a long mahogany table, a little silver bell by her water glass. She is 92 and of another era, extremely patrician. She wears a long-sleeved black dress, pearls and a blonde wig that looks like hair swirled into a bun. This is GAGA. Cam is at the foot and the girls are in the middle. The table could sit twelve.

A BUTLER brings around a silver bowl of mashed potatoes.

Faith spoons a huge amount onto her plate next to the roast beef and the peas. The butler continues around the table.

GAGA

I propose a game of crazy eights
after lunch.

FAITH

Yeah!

GAGA

We don't say 'yeah,' dear. We say
'yes.'

CAM

Thank you, Gaga. Their mother
keeps fighting that battle.

GAGA

And how is their mother?

CAM

She's well. She's been home every
weekend. But she has finals so she
stayed in New York to study. We're
muddling through without her.

(to the butler)

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
 Tell Betty the roast beef is
 divine.

The butler nods silently and disappears to the kitchen.

GAGA
 Do you girls think it's unusual
 that your mother is in New York?

AMELIA
 She wants to have more career
 opportunities.

FAITH
 Mommy says women can do anything.

GAGA
 She's quite a "striver," isn't she?

That hangs in the air for the moment.

CAM
 We prefer the word "fighter."

FAITH
 (pointing)
 Is that a painting of Grandma
 Paulie when she was little?

GAGA
 Yes. And it's pronounced
 (very patrician)
 'Paulie.'

FAITH
 Polly.

GAGA
 Paulie.

FAITH
 (trying hard)
 Polly. Polly.

GAGA
 She's not a parrot!

FAITH
 Polly.

Amelia thinks she's got it.

AMELIA
 Polly!

GAGA
 (frustrated)
 Paulie. Pauline.

The little girls are really trying but they are unable to hear the distinction.

AMELIA
 Polly.

FAITH
 Polline.

GAGA
 What is the world coming to?

Faith is fiercely concentrating. She says with extreme self-consciousness in a faux British accent:

FAITH
 'Paul-ie.'

GAGA
 Yes!

INT. LIVING ROOM. LATER

The girls sit at a game table playing cards with Gaga. Cam enters, wearing his parka, carrying two large ancient cookie sheets under his arm and a large roll of duct tape.

CAM
 I'm going out to work on the car.

As Gaga shuffles the cards:

GAGA
 The girls tell me it has no floor.

CAM
 It had no floor.
 (holding up cookie sheets)
 I found these in your kitchen vault. Betty said I could have them.

FAITH
Cookie sheets?

CAM
 You won't be able to step on them, but it'll keep out the cold air and detritus.

Amelia sighs and shakes her head.

GAGA

Cam, I'm very proud of you for taking care of these darling girls all by yourself. I mostly use the Lincoln these days. I'd like you to have the Bentley.

The girls scream and leap to their feet like Lottery winners.

INT. BENTLEY. MOMENTS LATER

Amelia and Faith are scrambling all over it, touching everything. They push every button. They run their hands over the smooth wood. They rest their cheeks against the leather and inhale. Amelia sits in the driver's seat and waves through the windshield at her father, who is outside, looking at the car with apprehension, smoking a cigarette.

INT. LIVING ROOM. MOMENTS LATER

Gaga looks extremely displeased, both hands on her cane. Cam stands across from her, hands in his pockets.

CAM

We live in a rent-controlled apartment.

GAGA

I know that. I pay your rent.

CAM

And we're very grateful --

GAGA

Piffle. It's dirt-cheap.

CAM

The point is... I can't afford to take care of the Bentley. I can't even afford to fill up its gas tank.

GAGA

If you're asking me for gas money --

CAM

I'm not asking for gas money, Gaga.

Cam suddenly becomes nervous, uneasy. This is hard for him.

CAM

The girls are both phenomenal students... they're not being challenged. If you really want to help, I think they would flourish in private school.

Beat. She scowls at him.

GAGA

I don't think that's teaching the girls a very good lesson, do you?

Cam looks confused, then resigned:

CAM

I suppose not.

Gaga takes his hand in an attempt to be supportive:

GAGA

We all believe in you, Cameron. We know it's not too late for you to amount to something.

INT. VALIANT. NIGHT

They drive home in silence. The girls pout in the back seat.

CAM

Girls, look. I'm sorry we can't take the Bentley. It just doesn't make sense. I know it's disappointing.

They don't respond. Then, in a coldly rational voice:

AMELIA

You should've taken it and then sold it and bought the crepe cart and then you could've made lots of money and we wouldn't be so poor.

CAM

Sweetie, although crepes may be delicious, they're not exactly the goldmine you think they are. Especially during a recession.

AMELIA

Well, then we could've sold the Bentley and just had some money.

CAM
 (sighing)
 Gaga would never let me sell that
 car.

AMELIA
 But she was giving it to you.

CAM
 That's not how it works. It's hard
 to explain.

Beat.

FAITH
 It was our one chance to have
 something that other people might
 want. Nobody wants what we have.

They ride on in silence.

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

Maggie walks out of the station, with Cam and the girls. Cam
 carries her suitcase. The girls brim over with excitement.

AMELIA
 We have a surprise for you.

They can't contain themselves. They run to the Valiant.
 Maggie slows as she approaches the car. Inside, a DOG is
 barking like mad and scrambling back and forth over the
 seats. Cam whistles and when the dog sees him, he starts
 whining and wagging his tail, scratching at the windows.

FAITH
 That's Jock! That's our dog!

AMELIA
 Daddy got him for us!

FAITH
 Amelia named him!

MAGGIE
 Why is he acting like that?

AMELIA
 He was abused by his last owner.
 So any time Daddy leaves him he
 gets really upset.

FAITH
 Because he loves Daddy! Because
 Daddy saved him!

As Cam puts the suitcase in the trunk:

CAM
 We're working on it.

Maggie looks unenthusiastic.

MAGGIE
 And this is the new car?

CAM
 It was abused by its last owner.
 But Daddy saved it!

Cam opens the passenger side door for her, with a flourish. Jock streaks out and tears down the sidewalk, going after another dog who is on a leash. Cam and the girls race after him.

CAM
 Jock! No! Bad dog! Jock!

It is chaos.

EXT. RAYMOND PARK. DAY

Bundled up, the family kicks a soccer ball around. Jock runs between them. Some distance away Kim and Ali watch from the swings. Cam sees them.

CAM
 Don't those little girls live in
 our building?

AMELIA
 Yes. But they're really mean.

CAM
 (amused)
 Mean? They're wearing identical
 pink parkas. How mean can they be?
 (calling)
 Hey! Hey!

He waves at them to come over. Hesitant, they do.

EXT. RAYMOND PARK. LATER

Maggie sits on a bench with Faith in her lap. Cam plays a spirited soccer game with all the little kids in the park. The ball comes toward Cam, who is smoking. He throws down his cigarette and dodges a kid, then passes the ball to Kim, then picks up his cigarette again when the ball is gone.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. NIGHT

The girls both hold onto Jock's leash as they walk toward the apartment. Cam and Maggie follow behind.

CAM

They seem like nice kids. You should have them over sometime.

Both girls scowl at him over their shoulders.

AMELIA

No way.

FAITH

I'd rather die than have people over to our shithole.

The girls take off running down the hall. Cam looks exhausted. Maggie looks at him; he shrugs, beleaguered.

CAM

They crush my soul.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

Spring. The early crocuses are coming up.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

The apartment is a disaster. Art materials lie all over the table. Amelia bangs out a song on the piano and sings at the top of her lungs while Faith does a dramatic dance. They are both in their nightgowns.

AMELIA

"Here we come, here we come, we're the pirates, and we're going to make you swab the decks..."

CAM (O.S.)
 (calling from the kitchen)
 Faithie-bear, could you clean your
 stuff off the dining room table?

FAITH
 (twirling)
 I'm busy.

Cam emerges from the kitchen, a mixing bowl in his arms. He is whisking something and wearing a utilitarian apron.

CAM
 Dinner will be ready soon. It would
 be awfully nice to have a place to
 sit down and eat it.

FAITH
 Later!

Cam watches, frustrated.

CAM
 Now. Now.

She keeps dancing. Suddenly Cam explodes, HURLING THE BOWL
 AT THE WALL.

CAM
 NOW!

Both girls are startled out of their musical reverie. Then
 Faith explodes:

FAITH
 You are so MEAN! I am not your
 SERVANT!

CAM
 No! I'm the goddamn servant! All
 I do is cook for you and drive you
 around and tend to your every
 need...

He watches, furious, as she stomps by him.

CAM
 ...you treat me like a goddamn
 maid!

Cam turns off the stove. Grabs his overcoat and scarf.

CAM
 I've got to get out of here.

Amelia jumps up from the piano and gets in his way.

AMELIA

We don't have a babysitter.

CAM

You don't need a babysitter.

AMELIA

But it's night-time. We get scared. Faith gets scared.

Cam looks for his keys, wallet.

CAM

You need to toughen up. What is there to be scared of? Wolves? Vampires?

AMELIA

Rapists.

Cam shakes his head and puts on his coat.

CAM

If a rapist knocks, don't let him in.

AMELIA

What if they force their way in? That's what rapists do!

CAM

Just kick him in the balls!

Amelia runs to block the door. Jock starts barking and jumping around.

AMELIA

(panicked)

No, Daddy. Don't go.

Amelia drops to the ground and grabs Cam's leg.

CAM

I don't get it. You never want to be seen with me, you won't have your friends over, you won't let me talk to people -- I can't take it anymore! I need to spend time with adults, not a bunch of bossy brats! Unhand my foot!

Cam leaves the apartment, slamming the door behind him. The dog barks constantly.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam steams down the hall. Punches the elevator button. Waiting at the elevator, he pulls a pack of cigarettes from his pocket.

He looks up. At the end of the hall his daughters stand in their nightgowns and look at him silently, mournfully. The elevator door opens. We can still hear the dog barking.

He gives them the finger. Charges onto the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT

Cam is agitated. He runs his hands through his hair. He punches the wall.

INT. LOBBY. NIGHT

Ruth-Ann waits for the elevator. The door opens to reveal Cam, sitting dejected on the floor. She hesitates.

RUTH-ANN

Going up?

CAM

(defeated)

I guess so.

INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT

Cam walks back down the hall to the apartment. He unlocks the door, but the chain is up. It stops him. He sighs with frustration, then hurls his shoulder into the door, busting the chain and sending the door smashing open.

The girls scream, alarmed, and jump to their feet. Amelia holds a baseball bat, Faith holds a cricket bat. Then they see it's him.

INT. APARTMENT. CONTINUOUS

Cam walks in. As he lights a cigarette:

CAM
(worn-down)
You see, girls? That chain is worthless. The only thing it provides is a false sense of security, and that's the last thing you girls need.

He hugs them and they hug him back.

AMELIA
We'll be braver, Daddy, I promise.
Next time we'll be braver.

He nods and heads back toward the kitchen.

CUT TO:

Cam cleans up the bowl and its contents that are spilled all over the wall and floor.

CUT TO:

Cam replaces the chain on the door with a deadbolt lock.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam lies on the sofa, watching TV, drinking a beer, smoking. He flips through the channels. He finishes the beer and crumples it. It joins four other crumpled cans. He reaches for another. He looks depressed.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

Cam, rumped and low-energy, sits behind the wheel. The girls sit in the back seat. As Maggie gets in the car, she sees that Cam has a huge bandage that covers his entire hand and forearm. It looks like a giant q-tip.

MAGGIE
Cam, what happened?

CAM
What? Oh. Broke up a dog fight.
Stupid.
(beat)
We had to give Jock away.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

The swimming pool is being filled. All the kids in the building stand outside the chain link fence watching with excitement.

INT. VALIANT. DAY

Cam, still low-energy, waits in the car. Maggie opens the door. The bandages on his hand are gone.

MAGGIE

The girls didn't want to come?

CAM

It got old.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Maggie carries her suitcase over to the sofa in the living room. She surveys the messy room, which now has a mini-trampoline in the middle of the rug. She stares at the mini-trampoline, incredulous. Faith runs in.

FAITH

Look what we found in the trash!

Faith happily starts jumping up and down on it, doing splits in the air.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Cam stands at the open fridge, staring into it, uninspired. Amelia and Faith, wearing bathing suits, charge into the kitchen full of energy. Amelia grabs bread, peanut butter, jam and milk. Faith hops up on the counter and pulls down two glasses, two plates. Amelia slaps together two sandwiches and Faith pours two glasses of milk. The girls leave the kitchen, each gingerly carrying a plate and a very full glass of milk. Cam still stares into the fridge.

EXT. TRAIN STATION. DAY

Cam waits in the car double-parked. He is driving a red Toyota station wagon with one gray door. Maggie is confused as she gets into the car.

MAGGIE

What happened to the Valiant?

CAM
 Didn't I tell you? It caught on
 fire.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. DAY

The swimming pool is being drained. Amelia, Faith, Kim, Ali and Thurgood stand outside the chain link fence with their bicycles, watching sadly as a tarp is pulled over it. After a few moments, they hop on their bikes and pedal away.

EXT. STREET. DAY

September. Amelia and Faith walk to school in a large and lively group of children, all wearing big backpacks.

INT. LIVING ROOM. DAY

Cam sits in his red armchair, watching TV, smoking. He is unshaven and unkempt. He wears tube socks, a red smoking jacket and tight tennis shorts. Amelia marches in and tapes a sign on the TV screen that reads "SMOKING SUCKS AND THEN YOU DIE!" Faith tapes one underneath with a picture of a big black lung that says: "DEAD SMOKER'S ACTUAL LUNG!"

Cam stares blankly at the signs taped to the television. He does not stop smoking. Then:

CAM
 I'm depressed.

Amelia sits down on the floor and starts tying her sneakers.

AMELIA
 Of course you are. Your family gives you just barely enough money to live on, you can't hold down a job, and you annoy people.

CAM
 You left out my hemorrhoids.

FAITH
 (to Amelia)
 Where are you going?

AMELIA
 Out. I'm meeting Kim and Ali.

FAITH
 Can I come?

AMELIA
 (half-hearted)
 I guess.

CAM
 Can I come?

AMELIA/FAITH
 (outraged)
 No! God! We're going to hang out
 with our friends!

CAM
 How come you never invite your
 friends over here?

FAITH
 To this shithole?

CAM
 Stop saying that.

FAITH
 Daddy, you can't hang around with
 kids. It's weird.

AMELIA
 We need to have our own lives. And
 you need your own life --

CAM
 How am I supposed to have my own
 life when you won't let me *do*
 anything --

They leave, slamming the door.

INT. HALLWAY. MOMENTS LATER

Amelia and Faith wait by the elevator. Cam opens the
 apartment door and stands at the end of the hall, looking at
 them mournfully. They are both furious. They look away.
 They look back. He is still staring at them. They exchange
 a look. They are pained by his misery. Finally, they
 relent:

AMELIA
 Fine. We're hanging out at the
 picnic tables.

The elevator doors open. The girls get on.

EXT. CONCRETE PARK. DAY

Kim, Ali and Thurgood sit at the metal picnic tables. Faith and Amelia are across from them. Amelia has her Tarot cards and she is doing a Tarot reading. She flips a card.

AMELIA
The Death card.

KIM
Does that mean I'm going to die?

AMELIA
Not necessarily...

Cam stands at the end of the table, digging stuff out of his pockets, looking for matches.

CAM
Any of you kids got a light?

Amelia and Faith shoot him a withering look. Amelia starts gathering her Tarot cards.

AMELIA
(to Kim)
Can we finish this at your apartment?

KIM
Our parents don't want us to have anyone over. We just got a new sectional.

Amelia looks at Thurgood who shakes his head.

THURGOOD
My older brother is studying for law school -- he freaks out if there's kid noise.

CAM
You're all welcome to come over to our apartment...

Faith and Amelia look at each other, furious. They both glare at him.

AMELIA
Cam, can we speak to you for a minute?

Faith and Amelia pull him aside, away from the other kids. Cam looks uneasy.

AMELIA

I am about to lose my shit. We said you could come hang out with us. We did not say you could invite people into the apartment.

CAM

But I think it could be fun --

AMELIA

No. Not fun. Humiliating.

FAITH

Do we need to spell it out for you?

CAM

But I'll make tea for everybody. And cinnamon toast. We've got lots of board games --

AMELIA

(hissing)

We don't want people to see how we live!

CAM

(exploding)

Big deal how you live! It's not your fault! Tell them your Dad's manic-depressive or bi-polar or whatever they're calling it these days! Don't not have friends because of me!

The girls are thrown by this outburst. Cam slumps.

CAM

Fuck it. Forget it. Never mind.

He turns and walks back to the building, defeated. Faith and Amelia look at each other, considering.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY. DAY

Amelia and Faith stand outside their apartment with Thurgood, Kim and Ali. Amelia takes her keys from around her neck.

AMELIA

I'm warning you. You've never seen anything like this.

THURGOOD

I've been to messy houses before.

Faith raises her eyebrows.

FAITH
Not like this.

AMELIA
(whispering)
I'll run and close Daddy's door.

Faith nods. Amelia opens the door and darts in. Faith blocks the doorway.

INT. APARTMENT - CAM'S BEDROOM. DAY

Cam sits at his desk. A radio has been pulled apart and he is soldering a circuit board. His room looks like a bomb exploded.

Amelia pokes her head in the door.

AMELIA
We brought some friends over.

Cam blinks, surprised.

CAM
Really?

Amelia nods and closes the door.

INT. APARTMENT. DAY

Amelia and Faith stand in the middle of the squalor with Thurgood, Kim and Ali, who seem stunned by the mess.

KIM
Why do you have so much stuff?

FAITH
(with authority)
Our Dad is totally Polar-Bear.

AMELIA
(to Faith, correcting)
Bi-polar.
(to the rest, explaining)
Manic-depressive.

THURGOOD
I have an uncle with that. He also lives like a pig.

KIM
Hey! This is cool!

Kim happily bounces on the mini-trampoline in the middle of all the squalor.

CUT TO:

The children fill the living room:

Amelia, Faith and Ali play Roulette.

Thurgood sits cross-legged on the mini-trampoline, bouncing gently and staring at the album cover of "Guys and Dolls."

Kim examines an old wooden cane. She pulls the handle and a sword comes out. She is totally amazed.

Cam emerges from the kitchen with a teapot and a plate of cinnamon toast points. He serves them all toast and refills their teacups.

Cam has never seemed happier.

CAM
Would anyone like to learn how to
make chocolate truffles from
scratch?

THURGOOD
Me!

He leaps to his feet and follows Cam into the kitchen.

EXT. HILLSIDE. DAY

Cam comes into view, striding up the hill, whacking at the tall grasses with his machete. Behind him, the children begin to appear; they march behind him, fanning out on either side, talking and laughing: Amelia, Faith, Kim, Ali, Thurgood, and three other kids from school.

EXT. WOODS. LATER

The gang of children spreads out, searching the ground for mushrooms and playing.

CUT TO:

The children sit on a fallen tree trunk, watching, as Cam demonstrates on Amelia how to twist someone's arm behind their back. Amelia grabs his arm and does it to him.

CUT TO:

Cam crams the kids into the Toyota. He lays the boys down in the way back like cord wood. The engine turns over twice and starts. The car is weighed down and drags in the back as Cam drives slowly down the dirt road.

INT. KITCHEN. DAY

Amelia watches as Maggie frosts a birthday cake. Maggie starts to pipe "Happy Birthday Faith" in white icing on the top.

AMELIA

I don't think I'm black.

MAGGIE

Of course you're black.

AMELIA

But I look white.

MAGGIE

Sweetie, you're black.

AMELIA

Faith looks black. I look like Daddy.

MAGGIE

You're a mix of both of us.

AMELIA

Nobody thinks I'm black. When I tell them. Nobody thinks I look like you.

MAGGIE

Amelia, I am black. Your mother is black. So you're black.

Maggie runs out of space on the cake, halfway through "Faith."

MAGGIE

Damn it.

She throws down the pastry bag. Amelia feels guilty.

AMELIA

You know, you and Daddy could go out to dinner some time. We don't need a babysitter.

MAGGIE

You don't?

Amelia shakes her head.

AMELIA

We used to get scared, but we're not scared anymore.

Maggie puts her hand on Amelia's head and looks at her.

MAGGIE

You've gotten so old.

AMELIA

(smiling)

If it makes you feel better, I'll tell people I'm black. Even if they think I'm delusional.

EXT. STREET. NIGHT

Cam and Maggie walk to a restaurant. They are both nicely dressed, wearing scarves and overcoats.

MAGGIE

I think the last time we were at Legal Seafood, Faith pulled shrimp scampi all over my silk blouse.

CAM

You were so sad.

MAGGIE

It was my best shirt.

CAM

That was the same dinner where she trundled across the room and punched me right in the nuts.

MAGGIE

(laughing)

You were so sad.

He nods, laughs.

MAGGIE

Amelia told me she doesn't think she's black.

CAM

What? Her mother's black. She's just testing you, being feisty.

She smiles at him with real gratitude. She links her arm through his.

MAGGIE

She also said they're not scared anymore. The girls seem to be in a really good place.

CAM

No kidding. Amelia beat up the class bully last week. Kicked him so hard in the knee she put him on crutches.

MAGGIE

Wow.

CAM

I felt quite proud.

MAGGIE

You seem good too, Cam.

CAM

So do you. Well whaddaya know.

MAGGIE

I'll be so happy when I get a job and I'm back here. Thanks for making it possible.

Maggie smiles at Cam. He pulls her closer.

CAM

Stop sleeping on the sofa. Let's sleep in a bed together.

Maggie laughs but doesn't pull away.

MAGGIE

Cam, I can't go in your room.

CAM

Why not?

MAGGIE

It's beyond belief. You have three bicycles in there.

Cam looks flabbergasted.

CAM

That's your reason?

MAGGIE

Yes! There are cans of paint thinner -- and the last time I went in there I got motor oil on my skirt. I mean it's... it's ridiculous.

CAM

Then I'll clean it up.

Maggie laughs, teasing him.

MAGGIE

That would be nice. It would make it more inviting.

CAM

You never said anything about this before.

MAGGIE

I'm done nagging you to clean your room, you're a grown man and it's your room.

CAM

And my room is not inviting to you?

MAGGIE

(amused)

No! Not to me or anybody else. Probably not even to you.

Cam laughs, good-naturedly.

CAM

Definitely not to me. I'm cleaning it up. It'll take me two days tops. You'll see. It'll be a thing of beauty.

They walk on.

INT. FINANCIAL FIRM. DAY

Maggie sits in a waiting room, professionally dressed, completely pulled together. Across from her sit three handsome 24-year-old white men. Suits, ties, polished shoes. They are talking, laughing.

YOUNG MAN 1

...of course I know Jim Quincy! We were in the Delphic together at Harvard... I actually won this belt off him --

RECEPTIONIST

Maggie Stuart?

Maggie stands. The young men look at her like she's a curiosity.

INT. PLUSH OFFICE. DAY

Maggie sits across from three fifty-year-old versions of the young men in the waiting room.

MAGGIE

...I'm graduating at the top of my class and I've actually been offered a futures job at E.F. Hutton in New York, but Howard and Company is where I want to be.

BUSINESSMAN 1

E.F. Hutton, that's terrific. Why come back to Boston?

MAGGIE

My children are here --

Beat. Their eyes glaze over. Maggie instantly regrets mentioning her children.

BUSINESSMAN 1

(politely)
And how old are your children?

MAGGIE

Twelve and ten. Very independent. Which allows me to come in early and work late --

BUSINESSMAN 1

(smiling)

Thank you so much. We'll let you know.

The men stand up, signalling the end of the meeting.

INT. FINANCIAL FIRM. DAY

As Maggie walks past three young men in their nice suits and ties, she understands her prospects.

EXT. STREET. DAY

Maggie waits on a corner in downtown Boston. She looks cold and unhappy. She looks up the street and sees the red Toyota wildly backing down the one-way street. Irate drivers honk at Cam. He stops in front of her. She gets into the car.

INT. TOYOTA. CONTINUOUS

CAM

How'd the interview go?

Maggie puts on an upbeat front.

MAGGIE

Really well I think! I know a lot of people are vying for this position, but I think I'm very qualified. And I've got some more interviews.

CAM

Any one of these places would be lucky to have you.

She smiles at him gratefully.

INT. CAM'S BEDROOM. DAY

Cam stands in the middle of his messy bedroom, pulling excess books off the shelf and putting them in a box. He comes across The Collected Poems of Robert Frost. He opens the book. He sits down on the edge of the bed, reading.

Amelia calls from the kitchen:

AMELIA (O.S.)
Daddy, do I add more butter for
each omelette?

As Cam turns the page:

CAM
(yelling)
Half a tablespoon and make sure you
let it get nut-brown.

Faith steps into the doorway. She is festooned with gold and pink ribbons wrapped around her arms and upper torso.

FAITH
Did you start my costume?

CAM
...What costume?

FAITH
You know. My Flamenco dancer
costume for the talent show.
You're making me a skirt.

Beat.

CAM
Right.

FAITH
(concerned)
Daddy, it's tomorrow.

CAM
(lamely)
Right. I know.

FAITH
I knew it! You're not making it.

CAM
I am making it. I said I would
make it and I will.

FAITH
Can you even sew?

CAM
Hey, I was in the army.

FAITH
I want it to be all sparkly and
ruffly.

CAM
You got it, buggins.

Faith claps her hands and excitedly breaks into her stomping Flamenco dance. The neighbor below bangs on the ceiling.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam opens a closet door and hauls Maggie's sewing machine off the top shelf.

CUT TO:

Dining room table. Cam sits in front of the sewing machine, a cigarette dangling from his lips. He studies Faith's Flamenco doll.

CAM
I just have to make this skirt, two
hundred times bigger.

CUT TO:

He draws a pattern on the pink satin fabric. He cuts out the pattern, smoking all the while. A huge amount of ash drops on the fabric. He doesn't notice.

CUT TO:

He pushes the fabric through the sewing machine. This way. That way. The table is covered with dirty coffee cups. His ashtray overflows with cigarette butts. He screws up a seam.

CAM
Goddamnit! I can't do it! I can't
fucking do it!

He yanks the fabric out of the sewing machine, throws it on the floor, jumps on it, picks it up, throws it at the wall, it flutters to the floor. This only fuels his rage. He spastically grabs it, crosses to the open window and hurls out the unfinished skirt. He pushes his hair back, looks around wild-eyed and crazy.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. NIGHT

He wades through a bush to retrieve the skirt.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Cam has returned to working on the skirt. He sews a ruffle on. He turns to the flamenco doll.

CAM

Your skirt is a joke compared to what this skirt is going to look like.

Cam downs the last of a cup of coffee, cracks open a beer and takes a swig.

INT. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT

Cam stands at the open window, drinking a beer. He picks up the phone and dials.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

(sleepily)
...hello?

CAM

(into phone)
Guess what I did?

INTERCUT WITH MAGGIE

She turns on her bedside lamp and sits up, trying to orient herself.

MAGGIE

Cam... it's almost four in the morning.

Cam examines the skirt with pride.

CAM

I just made your daughter an incredible skirt. Sparkles, ruffles... It's probably my greatest achievement since I rebuilt the engine to my Dad's Studebaker in college.

MAGGIE

That's terrific, Cam. You should probably get some sleep.

CAM

I don't want to sleep.

MAGGIE

But you must be tired --

CAM

But I'm not tired.

Maggie sits up.

MAGGIE

Cam, you know how important sleep
is to --

CAM

Come on, Maggie! Name me one other
father in America who is up right
now sewing their daughter a
flamenco skirt!

MAGGIE

Cam... You are taking your
lithium... aren't you?

Beat.

CAM

Actually, I haven't taken my
lithium since you left.

Maggie hangs her head.

CAM

I find that if I take small, steady
sips of beer throughout the day, it
keeps me on an even keel...

He takes a long, loud, defiant sip of his beer.

CAM

Ahhh...

Maggie looks stricken.

INT. APARTMENT. MORNING

Cam sits on the floor surrounded by bits of fabric.

Faith manages to squeeze into the very beautiful and way too
tight skirt. It is so tight all the way down, she can barely
move her legs. She finally gets it on and stares down at it.
She wiggles to make the ruffle move. Then:

FAITH

I look like a flamenco mermaid!

She hops over to Cam, throws her arms around his neck and says dramatically:

FAITH
It's the most glorious skirt I've
ever known!

EXT. STATION. SAME DAY

Maggie walks out of the train station. Cam is double-parked. He wears his battered corduroy jacket and an Oxford shirt. Maggie gets in the car, closes the door.

INT. TOYOTA STATION WAGON. CONTINUOUS

They sit in silence.

CAM
I'm not manic.

MAGGIE
But you could be.

CAM
I was excited. People are allowed
to get excited when they can't sew
worth a damn and they manage to
pull off a flamenco skirt that gets
their daughter the second-most
applause at the talent show.

INT. RESTAURANT. DAY

A tony Boston restaurant. The lunch crowd is well-dressed. Cam and Maggie cross to sit down at the bar. Cam is angry.

MAGGIE
You promised to take your lithium.

CAM
And you promised to love me for
better or for worse.

The MAITRE D' hurries over to them.

MAITRE D'
Excuse me, sir. But our dress code
requires you to wear a tie...

Without missing a beat, Cam pulls an untied bowtie out of his jacket pocket. As he ties it without looking:

CAM

Let me say one thing about lithium -
- no one even knows if it works.
Same goes for haldol, valproic
acid, and all their other so-called
treatments. I'm just a guinea pig.
And you never would've known I'd
stopped taking it if I hadn't told
you. I'm an idiot. A fucking self-
destructive fuckhead.

His bowtie is perfectly tied. The Maitre D' nods and quickly
retreats from this conversation.

MAGGIE

Cam, you said you would take
responsibility for your condition --

CAM

The way you've taken responsibility
for your children?

MAGGIE

That's not fair. You know how hard
this was for me.

CAM

I know, I know, it was hard to come
every weekend...

MAGGIE

No! It wasn't hard to come, it
wasn't hard to come...

Tears suddenly roll down Maggie's face. Cam is startled.

MAGGIE

...it was hard to leave. Every
weekend. And have people think I
was the worst mother in the world
because I wanted my children to
have a better life and I didn't see
any other way to get it. You're
from an old blue-blood family.
When you live in squalor, it's
"eccentric." When black people
live in squalor, believe me, no one
is charmed.

Cam is quiet for a moment as that sinks in.

CAM

If it's any consolation, no one
seems charmed by my squalor either.

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)

(beat)

I haven't made any headway on my bedroom.

Maggie looks at him and nods, resigned. Then:

MAGGIE

I'm going to take the E.F. Hutton job. In New York. It's my only offer.

CAM

New York? Maggie, I can't keep doing this all by myself --

She puts her hand on his arm.

MAGGIE

I'm not asking you to. You've done an amazing job. It's time for me to take the girls.

Cam reacts.

CAM

You're taking the girls to New York? But what about me and you? What about us?

Maggie looks away. She is anguished. Cam seethes.

CAM

I knew it. I knew it.

MAGGIE

There's so much I love about you, Cam. And I don't want to give up on you. But I just... I can't.

CAM

So were you even trying to get a job here? Or was this your plan all along?

MAGGIE

No! My plan was to come home and maybe I'd be with you and maybe I wouldn't, but we'd still be a family. But none of that matters. These Boston firms don't want me.

CAM

Why don't they want you?

She looks at him for a beat.

MAGGIE

Because, Cam, this is Boston. They want people like you.

This hits Cam like a ton of bricks. His face hardens.

CAM

You want a job in Boston? I'll get you a job in Boston!

Cam stands and storms out of the restaurant.

INT. DICK'S OFFICE. DAY

DICK, 40, sits behind a large oak desk with a view onto the financial district. He wears a suit and tie. He is tall, handsome and athletic. The walls are hung with pictures of sailboats. Cam sits across from him. Cam is agitated.

DICK

You look well, Cam. Everything good down your way?

CAM

Not really, Dickie. No.

DICK

Sorry to hear that --

CAM

As you know, Maggie's just gotten her MBA.

DICK

I heard. Good for her.

CAM

I was wondering why there isn't a place for her here. It is a family firm, after all.

Dick sighs and looks sorry.

DICK

Well, Cam, I wish there were. But we just don't have the position at the moment.

CAM

So you're telling me that when Dickie Jr and...the other one...

(MORE)

CAM (cont'd)
graduate from college, they won't
land here?

DICK
Sumner. That's my other son --

CAM
God damn it, Dickie! I know how it
works! You create the position!

DICK
I have to say, Cam, this is why we
never invite you to the Christmas
party.

CAM
I don't give a shit about your
Christmas party. I want you to
hire my wife. She works fifty
thousand times harder than any of
you!

Dick gets up from the desk.

DICK
I'm afraid I have to ask you to
leave.

CAM
Do you have any idea how hard it
is? Do you have any idea what
sacrifices she's made? She needs a
job here! In Boston!

Cam picks up a model sailboat and hurls it at the wall.

DICK
Cam! Stop it! Snap out of it!

Cam picks up a chair and throws it at the bookcase, which
comes down. Dick tackles him to the floor.

CUT TO:

Two SECURITY OFFICERS escort Cam out. Dick puts his hand on
Cam's shoulder.

DICK
Just so you know, I won't tell Gaga
about this.

Cam looks at him, resigned.

INT. APARTMENT. NIGHT

Maggie sits on the sofa, folding laundry. The front door opens. She hears Cam walk down the hall to the bathroom.

MAGGIE

Cam? Cam?

INT. APARTMENT BATHROOM. NIGHT

Cam stands at the sink, filling a glass of water. He is soaking wet from head to toe. Maggie comes to the doorway of the bathroom. She is startled by his appearance.

MAGGIE

Why are you wet?

Cam doesn't look at her. He takes out his bottle of lithium.

CAM

Girls asleep?

She nods. He empties three large pills into his hand.

CAM

Faith show you her skirt?

MAGGIE

Yes. It's beautiful.

Cam swallows the pills with the full glass of water. He closes the medicine cabinet and sighs.

CAM

I couldn't get you a job in Boston.

As he walks past her into his bedroom:

CAM

I jumped in the Charles River.

INT. APARTMENT CAM'S BEDROOM. CONTINUOUS

His bedroom is a pit. Cam sits down on his bed, among the piles of clothes.

CAM

I'm just going to miss them is all.

Maggie nods, with great sympathy.

MAGGIE

I know.

She exits, gently closing the door. Cam looks around at his room, the manifestation of failure.

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR. DAY

Amelia and Faith sit at a round table, ice cream sundaes in front of them. Maggie and Cam sit across.

AMELIA

Isn't New York really expensive?
Where are we going to live?

MAGGIE

I'll find an apartment in a very
safe neighborhood.

FAITH

Where will we go to school?

MAGGIE

I'll figure that out.

AMELIA

We can't ride bikes in New York.

MAGGIE

You can ride your bikes when you
come here.

AMELIA

What about Daddy? Who's going to
take care of him?

MAGGIE

Daddy will take care of himself.

CAM

I'll go to dinner parties, movies,
I'll have escapades.

Faith and Amelia look disapproving.

AMELIA

I think escapades are a bad idea.
He could end up in jail.

FAITH

If we're not here, he'll drink too
much and stop taking care of
himself.

CAM
That's not true.

AMELIA
He'll be lonely without us.

CAM
Well, that's true.

MAGGIE
Taking care of you alone has been a lot of pressure for your father.

AMELIA
How? We get to school...

FAITH
...he drives us anywhere we want to go...

AMELIA
...we've seen more r-rated movies than any of our friends...

FAITH
...plus he makes us french toast for dinner.

MAGGIE
He needs a break.

AMELIA
When I had the flu, he cut up strawberries and kiwis for me. And he arranged them on the plate like little flowers.

Maggie looks at Cam. He shrugs modestly.

CAM
I did do that. I did that.

MAGGIE
Daddy will visit and you'll visit him. New York is an incredible city. You'll like it. I promise.

AMELIA
(shaking her head)
What a crock.

Maggie is speechless. Cam nods at her.

CAM
Get used to it.

EXT. CONCRETE PARK. DAY

A hibachi engulfed in flame. PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Cam grills shishkebabs by the metal picnic tables. Though it is a chilly day, he wears denim overalls, a striped denim workshirt and a denim cap. The girls play Chinese jumprope with Kim and Ali at the other end of the park. Maggie sits at the picnic table, near Cam, watching her daughters play with their friends.

Thurgood runs into the park area and stops in front of Cam.

THURGOOD
You've been working on the
railroad.

CAM
All the live-long day.

Thurgood laughs and runs off to join the other kids. Maggie smiles. Cam stares into the fire.

CAM
I can't visit you in New York.
Too much speed and noise and all
the people out on the streets all
night. Winds me up. Knocks me off
track.

MAGGIE
(nods)
I was just thinking about that.

CAM
I do understand why you don't want
to live with me. I'm a much better
father than I was a husband.

MAGGIE
You know what Faith said to me last
night? She said: "You don't lose
your temper like Daddy and you keep
the apartment nice, but the thing
about Daddy is he's always around.
He's always there."

CAM
I thought that irritated them.

He reaches through the flames and turns the shishkebabs with long metal tongs. Maggie stares off. Then she takes a deep breath.

MAGGIE

I have a plan. I take this job and earn some money. The girls stay here with you. They keep riding their bikes. They stay with their friends. But we get them into a good private school where they can be challenged. I insist on that.

CAM

Maggie. Are you sure?

Maggie stands and walks over to Cam.

MAGGIE

If they come to New York they'll be shut up like house pets in some dark apartment and I'll be working till eight o'clock at night, every night. I don't want that for them.

Maggie looks over at the girls. Her heart breaks.

MAGGIE

They're my babies.

Maggie buries her face in her hands. Cam holds out his arms.

ANGLE ON THE CHINESE JUMPROPE

Amelia is jumping. Kim looks over Amelia's shoulder.

KIM

I thought your parents were divorced.

FAITH

(sighing)
No, they're married.

KIM

But your Mom doesn't live with you?

AMELIA

No. Except on the weekends.

THURGOOD

So are they married on the weekends?

AMELIA
Sort of, not really...

Amelia turns to look at her parents at the other end of the park. Maggie has collapsed into Cam's arms and she is sobbing. Cam is sobbing too. He still holds the metal tongs. Amelia watches them for a long time. Then:

AMELIA
It's hard to explain.

INT. TOYOTA STATION WAGON. DAY

Cam drives the car on the highway, smoking. A CAT is draped over Cam's shoulders while he drives. The girls are sleeping in the backseat under a blanket. Amelia yawns and stirs.

AMELIA
Daddy? How much longer?

CAM
(pleasantly surprised)
You're awake. I thought you were going to sleep the whole way home.

He quickly stabs out his cigarette. Faith squirms awake.

CAM
We just crossed into Massachusetts.
We're making great time.

Faith climbs into the front passenger seat.

CAM
You both conked out so quickly.
Must've been a fun weekend.

FAITH
It was. Mommy let me do her hair.

Cam drives. It's quiet for a moment. Amelia sits up and stares out the window, then:

AMELIA
Do you know that Mommy has a boyfriend in New York?

CAM
Of course I know.

AMELIA
He's nice. But I don't like him.

FAITH
Me neither.

CAM
Oh boy. Poor Mommy.

AMELIA
Why poor Mommy?

CAM
Because it's hard to conduct a
romance when your children are
gunning for your lover.

AMELIA/FAITH
Ew! Lover!

CAM
Lover, swain, beau, whatever.

AMELIA
How come you always feel so sorry
for Mommy?

Cam sighs and looks sad.

CAM
Because Mommy tries hard. She
wanted things to go differently.

AMELIA
Me too.

FAITH
Me too.

Cam smiles.

CAM
Me three.

The girls laugh. Then Faith looks back at her sister and
rolls her eyes with irritation.

FAITH
Daddy, Amelia's about to cry.

Cam looks in the rearview at Amelia who is crying.

CAM
Big Little... what is it?

AMELIA
I just... I worry about you.

CAM

Please, darling. Don't worry about me. I'll be fine.

They drive in silence. Then, starting in an absurdly deep voice, Cam breaks into "Annie Laurie." He sings in a full Scottish brogue, his voice getting very high and squeaky and forlorn on the chorus.

CAM

*Maxwellton Braes are bonnie
Where early lies the dew
Twas there that Annie Laurie
Gave me her Promise True
Gave me her promise true...
And ne'er forgot shall be...
For Bonnie Annie Laurie, I'd lay me
doon and dee...*

The girls join in. As they sing, a series of cuts:

-- Cam takes Amelia and Faith on a walk through Mt. Auburn Cemetery.

-- Amelia runs between the shelves of books in an overstuffed bookstore. She rounds the corner and nestles in next to Cam who sits on the floor, with Faith on his lap.

-- Cam proudly leads Amelia, Faith, Thurgood, Kim and Ali on a tour through the grand old mansion on Beacon Hill. The children are blown away by the splendor. As they file past Mr. Fabrini on their way out, thanking him, he nods curtly and gives them all a very tight smile. He is clearly extremely annoyed by Cam and can't wait to get rid of him. Cam grins back at him, victorious.

BACK TO:

INT/EXT. TOYOTA STATION WAGON. DAY

They sing together.

ALL THREE

*Like dew on the gowan lying
Is the tread of her fairy feet
And like winds in summer sighing
Her voice is low and sweet
Her voice is low and sweet...
(high and squeaky)
She's all the world to me...
And for bonnie Annie Laurie, I'd
lay me doon and dee...*

They speed down the highway.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHADY HILL SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS. DAY

AMELIA, wearing the school athletic uniform, her hair pulled back in a tidy french braid, stands with eight other girls at lacrosse practice. They are lined up, taking turns shooting on goal. A TITLE CARD READS: **One year later.**

Amelia runs forward and fires a ball into the net.

CAM (O.S.)
Nice shot, Amelia!

Amelia waves at Cam, who is cheering from the sidelines. Another girl runs and shoots into the net.

CAM (O.S.)
Nice shot, Amelia's friend!

Amelia jogs back to the line of girls.

SHS TEAM MATE
How come your dad always comes to practice?

AMELIA
(matter-of-fact)
He's got nothing else to do.

ON CAM

He gives Amelia a thumbs up. He drops to his knee and takes some pictures.

CUT TO:

Practice is over. Amelia is laughing with her friends as they put the lacrosse balls in a bag and pick up the cones. Faith runs up to Amelia. Faith is wearing an SHS sweatshirt and eyeglasses. Together the girls run over to Cam as he puts a new roll of film in his camera. The rest of the team heads back to the gym.

AMELIA
Daddy, Annie invited me for a sleepover, can I go? Please?

FAITH

And Fifi asked if I wanted to go with her family to the movies.

CAM

But I finally convinced Eliot Perkins to let me borrow his boat. I thought we could have a picnic on the river.

AMELIA

It's too late to go out on a boat.

CAM

It's four o'clock.

AMELIA

I really want to go to Annie's.

CAM

Maybe Annie wants to take a ride down the Charles River.

AMELIA

Daddy...

CAM

I'm serious. She lives in Boston. How many times has she gotten a ride home on a boat?

Now they are the only ones left on the field.

AMELIA

She takes the T.

CAM

(to Faith)

What about Fifi, do you think she'd like to have a picnic on the water?

FAITH

Her mom's picking her up in twenty minutes. Please can I go?

CAM

You will never find a more beautiful boat or a more perfect day to go out on the river.

They are unmoved. Cam shakes his head, giving up.

CAM

Okay, well, I guess I'll tell the Charles River to go fuck itself.

Both girls laugh at his ridiculous reaction.

AMELIA

Well, I have heard that the Charles River is a real asshole.

Cam chuckles at that.

AMELIA

Thanks, Daddy.

He nods. They both hug him. He hugs them back.

FAITH

Bye, Daddy.

CAM

Oh, darlings, I'm so proud of you. So's Mommy.

AMELIA

Why?

CAM

We just are.

They back away from him, waving, then turn and head across the field. He stands, watching them go. They glance back over their shoulders, smile and wave again quickly. He waves mournfully. They quicken their pace. Then he calls out:

CAM

I love you!

They stop dead. They whirl around and steam toward him. They are completely enraged.

AMELIA

Don't do that.

CAM

Do what?

AMELIA

Watch us walk away.

CAM

I'm just watching you walk.

FAITH
Please don't.

CAM
Why?

FAITH
You make us feel bad.

CAM
I don't want you to feel bad.

FAITH
(stamping her foot)
Yes, you do! That's why you stand
there looking all pathetic!

CAM
I'm just watching you walk across
the field, for chrissake! I think
I'm allowed!

The girls sigh, frustrated. Amelia steps toward him, looking
him dead in the eye. She is stern, deliberate.

AMELIA
Daddy. We are walking away now.
And we are not turning around. We
are not looking back.

CAM
I'm not asking you too!

They shake their heads.

FAITH
(angry)
We love you, Daddy.

AMELIA
(furious)
We love you. Goodbye.

The girls turn and link arms. They huddle close together and
walk away from him as quickly as they can. As they go, Faith
glances at her sister with concern. She puts her hand over
Amelia's and squeezes it.

FAITH
Don't cry. Don't cry.

Tears stream down Amelia's face.

AMELIA
(shakes her head)
Can't help it.

ANGLE ON CAM

Hands in his pockets, he watches them walk away.

Pressed together, in lock-step, they cross the playing fields. Autumn leaves skitter around their feet.

They keep walking. They do not turn around. They do not look back.

Then, just before they recede from view, they stop and turn. They face him from this great distance. He brightens and holds up his hand. They each hold up a hand. He makes a fist in the air as if to say *courage, onward*. The girls do the same. The three of them stand like that for a moment. Then Amelia and Faith turn and run in the opposite direction, disappearing into the gymnasium.

Cam looks up at the sky. He smiles to himself. He pulls a tam o'shanter with a red pompom from his pocket and puts it on his head. He lights a cigarette and walks toward the river.

FADE OUT.