

Angel Wings

by

Michael A. Weintraub

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mweintr@falstaff.net

TITLE CARD:

Certainty is beautiful.

A moment later, a second TITLE CARD appears below it.

TITLE CARD:

But uncertainty is more beautiful still.

FADE IN:

EXT. JAMES FAMILY HOUSE - FRONT LAWN - DAY

Typical suburban house, five bedrooms, three bathrooms. Lovely summer afternoon, not too hot. A bicycle lies on its side next to a tree.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS BEDROOM - SAME

Young BARRY JAMES, 8, sifts through his closet. He doesn't seem to find what he's looking for. He gets up, leaving the mess behind. He walks over to the bedroom window and looks out it. He opens the window.

BARRY

With God as my wind, I shall fly.

EXT. HOUSE - BEDROOM WINDOW - AFTER

Barry steps out onto the window ledge. He has to brace himself to fit onto it.

INT. HOUSE - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

Barry's older sister, JENNIE, 13, walks out of her bedroom. As she passes Barry's open bedroom door, she looks in it. She sees his back to her. She SCREAMS.

JENNIE

Barry, no!

Barry turns his head back.

BARRY

It's okay, Jennie.

JENNIE

Get down. Come back in here.

She starts to walk, slowly, into his room.

BARRY
I'm going to fly.

He turns back around and faces outside. He looks up into the blue sky.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Up above, the white streak of an airplane's path pierces the cloudless blue sky. Looking up, Barry smiles.

INT. HOUSE - BARRY'S ROOM - SAME

Jennie takes another step toward Barry.

JENNIE
Barry, if you jump out, you can't fly. You're going to fall and hurt yourself really badly.

BARRY
No, I'm not. I know it.

Jennie tries to grab Barry, but he steps aside, just out of her reach.

BARRY
Goodbye Jennie.

Barry jumps.

EXT. HOUSE - SAME

Jennie's SCREAM lasts longer than Barry's leap. In mid-air, he swings his arms wildly, but to no avail: he lands with a CRUNCH in a heap on the lawn. He lies on his back, half-awake. He stares up at the airplane streaks in the sky again. His eyes glass over, and slowly they close. He has an odd smile on his face.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

A passenger bus travels down the highway.

TITLE CARD:

Two days later.

INT. BUS - SAME

The bus is mostly full, with only a few vacant seats. One of the empty seats is next to ALINA ROBERTS, 29, pretty but not gorgeous. She sits by the window, twirling her long, dark hair around her fingers as she lazily reads a book: CASE STUDIES IN ADOLESCENT PSYCHOSIS, VOLUME II.

Seated two rows behind Alina, on the opposite side, is DARRELL CUMMINGS, 37, with long stringy, dirty, hair and a face pockmarked with acne and scars. He is listening to his portable radio, and tugs on the wires of his headphones in between spurts of tapping the music's drumbeat on his lap.

Alina finishes reading a page, and closes her book. She puts it in her bag, and takes out a hairbrush. She rises from her seat and walks to the restroom in the rear of the bus. She doesn't notice Darrell as she passes him.

INT. BUS STATION - DAY

Alina and Darrell's bus pulls into the station. Both get out, and carry their bags into the terminal.

EXT. BUS STATION - DAY

Alina gets into a long taxi queue, while Darrell stands around. He rubs the two days worth of beard growth on his chin, and eventually climbs onto a city bus.

We follow Darrell onto the bus.

INT. CITY BUS - AFTER

Darrell sits in the rear of the bus. Only two PASSENGERS are on the bus, and one of them is talking to the BUS DRIVER.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Darrell opens the door and enters a cheap, rent-by-the-month motel room. He drops his bag on the bed and goes into the bathroom.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Darrell strips and gets the bathtub ready for a shower. When the water's hot enough, he rips the paper wrapping off a bar of soap and gets in.

INT. TAXI CAB – DUSK

The sun begins to set as Alina enters a taxicab. The DRIVER is an elderly man, and very willing to talk to his attractive young passenger.

DRIVER

Where to, sweetheart?

ALINA

Oceanside Estates Hotel.

DRIVER

Gotcha.

He starts the engine and they head off. A moment later, the Driver starts talking again.

DRIVER

You an actress?

ALINA

Actually, no.

DRIVER

You're not here to break it? No big, golden Hollywood dreams? That's a rarity for my backseat, I'll tell you. You're a pretty girl, too.

ALINA

Umm, thanks.

DRIVER

What's your name? I'm Ernie.

ALINA

Alina.

Ernie sticks a hand in the backseat. Alina reluctantly shakes it.

ERNIE

Pleased to meet you, Alina. What kind of name is that? Spanish? Dark haired beauty like you.

ALINA

Polish.

ERNIE

Oh. So what brings you to LA?
Conference? You a doctor?

ALINA

I'm a doctor, yes. But, not a
conference this time. I'm here for
a patient.

ERNIE

Ahh.... Very nice.

EXT. MOTEL – NIGHT

The street in front of Darrell's motel is a hotbed for illicit activities. A few PROSTITUTES hawk their wares on a street corner, while a street VENDOR proffering stolen Rolexes enthusiastically tries to make some money.

VENDOR

(to a prostitute)

Hey, baby. Got some of that love
for me tonight? I'm real lonely
and can love you good. Real good.

PROSTITUTE

Not tonight, honey. I ain't got
the time.

The vendor looks down at his card table.

VENDOR

I got all the time you need,
sugar. Right here on my table! Ha!

He LAUGHS hysterically at his own joke. The prostitute offers him a sad smile and turns back toward the street. Not getting the hint, the vendor shakes the table, testing its stability.

VENDOR

It's strong enough for us, too,
baby. Come on over, I'll give you
the time of your life!

He GUFFAWS again, not noticing that she doesn't even bother a look at him.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - SAME

Darrell gets dressed in front of the mirror and combs his hair back. He turns back to the bed and opens his bag. Several handguns, including an automatic, spill out, along with a wad of bills wrapped in a rubber band. He undoes the bills and peels off a couple of \$100 bills for the night.

After putting the guns back in the bag, he zips it and stuffs it under the bed. He exits the room.

EXT. MOTEL - AFTER

The prostitutes are still standing around. The Rolex vendor has given up, however, and packs up his table for the night. Darrell exits the motel. Two prostitutes hover toward him. A THIRD PROSTITUTE watches them.

PROSTITUTE #1

Hey, honey. Sure you don't want to go back inside?

PROSTITUTE #2

It's gonna get real cold tonight. We'll keep you warm.

PROSTITUTE #1

Yeah, real warm.

The two prostitutes eye Darrell lustily.

DARRELL

I'm on my way out now.

Darrell walks over to the third prostitute.

DARRELL

What's your name?

PROSTITUTE #3

Christina.

DARRELL

I'm Darrell. Wanna go to a party with me? It's not too far from here, and we'll have fun.

CHRISTINA

Two hundred.

DARRELL

No problem. Let's go.

CHRISTINA

Okay, after you.

Darrell grabs her hand and leads her down the street.

INT. TAXI CAB – NIGHT

Ernie the cabbie is still talking Alina's ear off. She takes a journal out of her bag to read, trying to tune him out.

ERNIE

My niece is also a doctor. A psychiatrist. She charges four hundred dollars an hour to stressed out studio guys. Wow, more in an hour than I make in a week. Now, last week she was telling me about this guy. He's all stressed out because of, oh I don't know, that big sci-fi alien movie that just bombed. You like movies?

ALINA

Not really, no. Sorry.

ERNIE

Hey, don't be. It's odd down here not to like 'em, but you're not from here anyway.

Ernie looks in the rearview mirror and notices that Alina's not paying attention. He then notices two YOUNG WOMEN standing on the sidewalk, waving their arms frantically, trying to hail a cab. He pulls up next to them.

ERNIE

Hey, Allie, I gotta pick these girls up.

ALINA

What? You can't do that!

ERNIE

If they're heading your way, I can pick them up. I need the fares, sorry.

He rolls down the passenger-side window and smiles at the young women.

ERNIE

Hey ladies. Need a lift?

The two women are both pretty and dressed well. They nod at Ernie.

YOUNG WOMAN #1

Uhh, you know where the Oceanside.... Estates Hotel is?

She confirms this by looking at a piece of paper in her hand.

ERNIE

Yeah, come on in.

INT. TAXI CAB - AFTER

One of the young women, CATHERINE, is in the front seat next to Ernie. The other, MICHELLE, sits in the back beside Alina, who tries her best to ignore them.

ERNIE

What's going on at the hotel, ladies?

CATHERINE

A party.

Catherine checks her hair in the visor's mirror. Michelle leans over the front seat to WHISPER in Catherine's ear.

CATHERINE

I'm not sure....

ERNIE

What is it?

MICHELLE

We were asked to bring some friends with us.

CATHERINE

Yeah. Can you join us?

She winks at him.

ERNIE

Me? Nah, I'm on duty all night.
But, I'll tell ya what, sweetheart
there is going there, too.

MICHELLE (to Alina)

Hey, you're going to the
Oceanside, too?

Alina looks up from her book.

ALINA

I'm sorry?

MICHELLE

You're going to the party, too?

ALINA

Which party? At my hotel?

CATHERINE

We're going to a party at the
Oceanside tonight. Wanna join us?

ALINA

Oh, I don't think that's a good
idea. I'm pretty tired.

CATHERINE

Come on, just stop in. Never know
what kind of fun you might find.

Catherine flashes a Hollywood smile and rests her hand on Ernie's leg. His eyes light up.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT

Darrell and Christina, the prostitute, walk up the lawn to the front door of the house. Loud MUSIC can be heard from within, and PEOPLE milling about are seen in silhouette in the curtains.

The front door opens and a YOUNG MAN spills out. He's very drunk.

YOUNG MAN

Darrell? Is that you, man? What the fuck are you doing back in LA? Isn't Hargrove your P.O.?

DARRELL

Just here for some business, don't get too excited. I'll be gone before you wake up with a hangover and remember I'm here.

YOUNG MAN

I'm still staying with Donny.

DARRELL

Okay, I'll look ya up. Take it easy.

Darrell and Christina enter the house and the young man leaves.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

There are a half-dozen PEOPLE lounging around on the sofas, La-Z-Boys, and the floor. Most of them appear to be stoned and/or drunk. Darrell and Christina enter without an acknowledgment. They don't even notice the television blaring a Lakers game.

DARRELL

My friend's around here somewhere. I'll just be a minute. Go get yourself a drink.

CHRISTINA

Okay. You want somethin'?

DARRELL

Yeah, get me a beer.

He cocks a smile at her and heads down a hallway. Christina walks into the kitchen.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTER

Christina stands at the keg, priming the pump. A few FRAT BOYS ogle her.

INT. HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Darrell knocks on a bedroom door. From the hallway, there does not appear to be anyone inside the bedroom.

VOICE IN BEDROOM O.S.

Yeah, what is it?

DARRELL

Benny, it's me.

BENNY O.S.

Darrell? What the --

The bedroom door opens. Benny is a large, muscular black man with his hair neatly done in dreadlocks. He is naked, and doesn't seem to mind Darrell seeing him that way. Behind him, in bed, lies a NAKED YOUNG WOMAN. She doesn't do much to cover herself up, either.

DARRELL

Looking good, Benny. Hope I'm not interrupting.

BENNY

No problem, welcome back to LA.

He gives Darrell a gigantic bear hug. Releasing him, Benny turns on a lamp by the door, leading Darrell into the bedroom with him. The girl in bed rolls over and covers her eyes. Darrell does not take his eyes off her body.

BENNY

Jasmine, meet Darrell. We go way back.

DARRELL

Hiya Jasmine.

Jasmine doesn't reply. Darrell closes the door behind him.

BENNY

She's shy. Anyway, what's up?

DARRELL

Came here to do some shopping. Anything on sale?

Benny walks back to the bed.

BENNY

Get up, I need to move the
mattress.

Jasmine gets up, wrapping the bed sheet loosely around her body. She walks into the bathroom and shuts the door. Benny slides the mattress off the box spring, revealing a cutout in the frame. Two large, full, Manila envelopes lie in the crevice. He takes one out and opens it on the bed. Flattened Ziploc bags of cocaine, heroin, and marijuana fall out.

DARRELL

All right. Long time, no see.

BENNY

What do you need?

DARRELL

Hmm, one of each.

Benny hands him a few packets, and Darrell gives him two bills. Shaking his head, Benny returns one of them to him.

BENNY

Call it an old friends discount.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - AFTER

Darrell walks in and finds Christina, a beer in each hand (one beer is half-empty), TALKING to the frat boys in the kitchen. Christina hands him the full beer.

CHRISTINA

No problem.

Darrell drinks the beer in one long gulp.

DARRELL

There, we ready?

CHRISTINA

Ready when you are.

DARRELL

Then we're gone.

CHRISTINA

(to the frat boys)
Bye boys.

She gives them a very flirty look, and follows Darrell out of the kitchen.

INT. OCEANSIDE HOTEL - LOBBY - NIGHT

The Oceanside Estates Hotel is a throwback to the glory days of Hollywood. Plaques on the wall commemorate various films that were filmed there in Hollywood's Golden Era, and stars like Dietrich and Bogart that slept there. A winding staircase ducks around the lobby to the second floor.

Alina stands with the two young women by the elevator.

MICHELLE

Room 1153. Just knock and say we invited you. I'm Michelle and she's Catherine.

ALINA

Okay, let me take a shower and then I'll see if I'm up for it.

The elevator door opens, and Alina gets in. Michelle and Catherine head to the bar.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alina, clad in a plush white hotel bathrobe, with her wet hair wrapped in a towel, steps out of the bathroom and sits on the bed. She opens her briefcase and takes a case folder out and opens it on the bed. A typed up, twenty-page report on BARRY JAMES, along with a picture of the boy, is in the folder. Alina starts to read the report.

EXT. DARRELL'S MOTEL - NIGHT

Darrell and Christina return to his motel. They pass Christina's fellow prostitutes but no signs of recognition is made by anyone as they walk to his room. Darrell carries a small tote bag loosely in hand.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - AFTER

Darrell opens the tote bag on the sink counter.

DARRELL

Want some?

CHRISTINA

Some pot, yeah.

DARRELL

Comin' right up.

Darrell rolls a nice sized joint and lights it for Christina. He takes a hit from it before handing it to her.

CHRISTINA

Thanks.

DARRELL

Okay.

CHRISTINA

So, what do you want?

DARRELL

Hang on, honey, I got you all night. Don't worry, nothing too kinky.

CHRISTINA

That's what I'm afraid of.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alina gets off the elevator and finds room 1153. VOICES are heard inside. Alina knocks on the door and finds that it is open already, just leaning shut. She enters the room.

INT. DARRELL'S MOTEL ROOM - SAME

Darrell is on top of Christina in bed, having sex. Neither seems to be having that much fun, and Christina has a look of duty on her face. Darrell climaxes and rolls over onto his back. Christina rises from the bed and walks naked into the bathroom. Darrell sits up and re-lights the half-smoked joint.

INT. ROOM 1153 - NIGHT

Michelle and Catherine stand in the corner of the hotel room alone.

ALINA

Hi, I'm here.

MICHELLE

Yes, we noticed.

ALINA

Where's everyone?

CATHERINE

Beats us. The party's not here.

ALINA

Where is it, then?

CATHERINE

You'll see.

ALINA

What do you mean?

Catherine hands Alina a note. Alina moves over by the bed to read it.

ALINA

(reading note)

"Good evening Ladies. We're sorry we could not be there with you, but there's been a slight change of plans. We apologize and wish you still will join us. The phone will ring at 11:30 p.m. Do not answer it. Five minutes later it will ring again. That is call you want. Thank you."

She hands the note back to Catherine.

ALINA

What the hell is this?

Michelle LAUGHS.

CATHERINE

Some party, eh? They're always like this. A little adventure.

ALINA

Well, what time is it?

MICHELLE

Eleven-fifteen.

ALINA

We have to sit around another twenty minutes to be told where the real party is? I don't think so.

She walks toward the door, but before she could get there the PHONE RINGS. She stops and looks at Michelle and Catherine, who take turns looking at each other.

CATHERINE

Should we answer it?

MICHELLE

No. He said not to answer the first call.

CATHERINE

But it's not supposed to come for fifteen minutes.

The phone continues to RING.

ALINA

I say you answer it.

CATHERINE

Really?

ALINA

Sure, why not?

Another RING.

MICHELLE

Yeah, get it.

Catherine answers the phone.

CATHERINE (into telephone)

Hello? (a beat) No, it's not 11:30 yet, we know.... We were curious, okay. Five minutes, yeah.

She hangs up the phone.

MICHELLE

Well?

CATHERINE

There's going to be a taxi waiting
for us in five minutes.

MICHELLE

Taking us where?

CATHERINE

I don't know.

MICHELLE

This is ridiculous.

CATHERINE

Yeah, you're telling me.

ALINA

Okay, this is too mysterious. I'm
coming.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Alina stands outside the hotel with the Catherine and
Michelle. A chill has descended upon the night, the three
women are woefully underdressed and shivering.

CATHERINE

Cold. Very cold.

The TAXI arrives. Michelle flags it down. The DRIVER stops the
cab and rolls down the passenger-side window.

DRIVER

Party, anyone?

INT. DARRELL'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Darrell gets up from bed and walks into the bathroom.
Christina remains asleep in bed. He takes a drink of water
from the sink and washes his face, which has turned beet red.
The scars and scabs on his face swell up.

He starts lathering his face with shaving cream. His hands
shake violently as he tries to shave. Streaks of blood mix
with the running tap water and spray pink everywhere.
Finishing, he dries his face and returns to the bedroom.

Darrell lies down next to Christina. After a few moments, his displeasure at being unable to sleep becomes obvious. He shakes Christina awake.

CHRISTINA

Wha-?

Darrell slides her down the bed so her head is on his lap. Christina lazily begins to stroke him with her hands.

DARRELL

Yes, do it.

Christina fully awakens and looks up at Darrell's bloody face.

CHRISTINA

Your face, it's all bloody.

DARRELL

Don't look up. Just go.... Yes.

INT. TAXI CAB - NIGHT

Alina, Michelle, and Catherine are all squeezed into the back seat. The DRIVER drives hazardously fast.

MICHELLE

You know where to go?

DRIVER

Yah, no problems.

CATHERINE

Where?

The driver SLAMS on the brakes outside of an apartment complex.

DRIVER

Here.

EXT. THIRD FLOOR LANDING - NIGHT

The three women hear PARTY NOISES as they walk up the steps. Just as they go to knock on the door, a GUNSHOT is heard inside.

ALINA

Okay, that's my cue. I think I've had enough for one night.

CATHERINE

The party's just beginning, I can tell.

ALINA

Well, enjoy it. I'm out of here.

CATHERINE

After all we've done just to get here?

Another GUNSHOT ricochets inside the apartment.

ALINA

Yes, really. It's too much for me. 'Night girls.

Alina leans over the balcony.

ALINA

Hey, taxi!

EXT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - MORNING

Darrell gets out of a taxi and walks down a busy downtown street. He sits on a park bench outside of a bank, CALIFORNIA TRUST, and watches it studiously for traffic. A few CUSTOMERS pass in and out of the bank over the next few minutes.

Darrell scours the surrounding block quickly with his eyes, searching for something, or perhaps plotting something else.

A HOMELESS BUM sits down next to Darrell.

BUM

Years ago, I had an account there. They closed it on me.

Darrell pulls a five-dollar bill out of his pocket.

DARRELL

Here, go get some breakfast, man.

BUM

Thanks man!

The bum scurries off. Darrell regards him for a minute and then returns to studying the bank.

A moment later, ARON BARTLEY, 48, extremely tall and mostly bald, walks into the bank.

EXT. JAMES HOUSE - DAY

Barry and Jennie's parents, HELEN and CAREY JAMES sit together on the living room sofa, watching the cars pass outside.

HELEN

She said she'd get here around ten.

CAREY

Okay, she's not late yet. Give her a few minutes, anyway. She just got into town last night, she said.

There's a KNOCK on the door. Carey rushes up to answer it. He opens the door and lets Alina in.

HELEN

Oh, we didn't see you coming.

ALINA

I had the address mixed up, the cab dropped me off next door. I walked over.

CAREY

Welcome. I'm Carey James, and this is my wife Helen.

ALINA

Dr. Alina Roberts. Pleased to meet you.

HELEN

Come in, please. Have a seat.

ALINA

Thanks.

Carey walks over to the bottom of the staircase.

CAREY

Jennie? Can you bring your brother downstairs?

JENNIE O.S.

Okay Dad.

As Carey, Helen, and Alina sit down on the sofa, Jennie slowly carries her brother down the staircase. Barry appears to be catatonic, and does not respond as Jennie sets him down on the loveseat next to them. He looks around the room, his eyes not focusing on anything. There's a light, soft cast around his right wrist, but otherwise he appears physically unharmed from his fall.

Alina gets up from the sofa and sits on the loveseat with Barry.

ALINA

Barry? Hello? I'm Alina. I'm here to help you.

Barry doesn't respond, but his eyes lock on her for a brief moment.

HELEN

Since his accident, he hasn't walked.

CAREY

It's not because he can't. He can walk, he just chooses not to.

Alina nods.

ALINA

If he can't fly, he won't walk.

Suddenly, Barry speaks.

BARRY

Hi Alina.

He extends his right hand out to Alina. Alina takes it and gently shakes it, smiling.

ALINA

Hi Barry. Do you mind if I sit and talk with you?

BARRY

No. It's okay. I'm a little tired, though.

ALINA

I won't stay long. We'll just talk for a few minutes.

CAREY

Helen, Jennie, let's leave them.

HELEN

Barry, we'll just be in the back yard, okay?

ALINA

Thank you. Barry, what grade are you in?

BARRY

Second.

ALINA

Which subjects in school do you like?

BARRY

I like math.

ALINA

I liked math, too.

EXT. JAMES HOUSE - BACKYARD - SAME

Barry's parents and sister sit around a picnic table, watching the two inside.

CAREY

She has a great way with him.

HELEN

She'd better for what we're paying her.

CAREY

Helen, really.

INT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - DAY

Aron waits in the lobby area of the bank, aimlessly flipping through loan brochures. A bank official, PRESCOTT, comes out behind the bulletproof glass partition.

PRESCOTT

Aron Bartley?

Aron rises from his seat and walks over to Prescott. Aron towers above him. He leans down to shake Prescott's hand. Aron speaks with a Scottish brogue.

ARON

Call me Aron, please.

PRESCOTT

André Prescott. Welcome to California Trust.

INT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - AFTER

Aron sits opposite of Prescott's desk. Prescott has a large file folder open, and thumbs through the pages within.

PRESCOTT

Mr. Bartley, were you the executor of your mother's will?

ARON

No, I was not.

PRESCOTT

Unfortunately, we need the notarized signature of the executor, if they cannot be present for these proceedings.

ARON

Unfortunately, the executor died shortly after my mother passed away.

PRESCOTT

Oh, I am sorry to hear that.

ARON

Car accident. He was a good man.

He shakes his head solemnly.

PRESCOTT

You have my sympathy for your double loss, sir.

ARON

Thank you.

Prescott examines a stack of papers on his desk carefully.

PRESCOTT

Unfortunately, in this situation, I'm not sure how to proceed. We will, of course, get you the money willed to you by your mother, but there's a bit of sticky red tape I have to wade my way through first.

ARON

Isn't there a manager or someone who can sort through this?

PRESCOTT

Actually, yes, that would be Mr. Carlisle, but he's away at a conference this week. He'll be back tomorrow morning and I can assure you this will be tops on his list, the first thing tomorrow. Don't worry about it.

ARON

Okay. I'll come back then.

Aron rises from his seat and turns for the door. Prescott looks over the will again.

PRESCOTT

Now, wait here a second. Are you familiar with your mother's request for the memorial at Stanford?

Aron stops at the door.

ARON

No, I wasn't.

Prescott hands him the will and points to a paragraph.

PRESCOTT

Here.

INT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - LOBBY - AFTER

As Aron exits Prescott's office he passes Darrell, entering the bank. Darrell walks through the empty roped-off line for customers to a TELLER. Darrell hands her a hundred dollar bill.

DARRELL

Can you break this for me? Fives
and tens, please.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Alina and Barry are still talking on the couch. Barry's parents and Jennie are seen through the window outside, pacing around the lawn.

ALINA

Here, take my hand.

Alina gets up from the couch and offers her hand out to Barry. He tentatively grasps it, and she helps him stand up. Together, they hold hands as she leads him a few steps toward the window.

ALINA

There, very good. Now, I'm going
to let go. Just stand there. Don't
try to walk.

BARRY

Okay.

Barry's fingers slip free of Alina's hand and she takes a cautious step back. Like a small child, Barry totters, but stands on his own again, as if for the first time. He beams a smile.

ALINA

Very good, it's not hard at all,
is it?

BARRY

No, I'm remembering again.

ALINA

Good. Here, let me help you sit down again.

Alina puts her arm around his shoulder and leads him slowly back to the couch. Together, they sit back down.

Barry's family returns inside.

HELEN

We saw that. We're very proud of you, Barry.

CAREY

Good job, kiddo.

ALINA

I'll see you again tomorrow morning, okay?

BARRY

Good. Bye-bye.

Jennie lifts Barry up off the couch again and carries him upstairs.

CAREY

That was remarkable, thank you.

ALINA

Don't get too optimistic by the beginning. Sudden, quick progress is often at the start of a very long healing progress. We could easily be disappointed tomorrow. You never know, especially with children.

CAREY

Yes, we understand. Thank you, though.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alina sits in a hotel bathrobe, her hair wet, at the desk, making notes in Barry's file.

INT. DARRELL'S MOTEL ROOM - SAME

Darrell sits on his unmade bed, methodically cleaning and loading his guns. He checks the sights on each, aiming at a lamp near the door. He pulls the trigger, and a CLICK is heard as an empty chamber is dropped. He turns to the mirror and focuses on himself. He FIRES again.

DARRELL

Bang, you're dead. Do not collect
\$200, do not pass go, proceed
directly....

Quickly, with the fluid skill of a military marksman, he drops the gun he was checking out and reaches for an unloaded rifle, and fires several empty shots at his reflection.

DARRELL (Cont.)

....to death. Thank you for
playing.

INT. ARON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aron sits in front of the television, watching a SITCOM on television. A bowl of half-eaten pasta sits on his lap. The TELEPHONE RINGS. Aron places the bowl on the coffee table and answers the phone.

ARON (into telephone)

Hello?

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)

Mr. James?

ARON (into telephone)

Sorry, you've dialed the wrong
number, I'm afraid.

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)

Oh.... Sorry. Have a good night.

ARON (into telephone)

Yes, you too.

He hangs up the phone.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - AFTER

Alina hangs up the phone, waits a bit, and then picks it back up and re-dials the number. After a few rings, she gets an answer.

ALINA (into telephone)
Hello, Mr. James?

CAREY (O.S., on telephone)
Yes, hello?

ALINA (into telephone)
Hi, this is Dr. Roberts.

CAREY (O.S., into phone)
Hello, how are you?

ALINA (into telephone)
Just fine, thank you. I was just checking up on Barry.

EXT. DARRELL'S MOTEL - MORNING

The faintest morning lights of dawn strike over the hotel as Darrell exits, wearing a long, bulky black trench coat. He is cast in shadow as he walks, calmly, down the highway to a bus stop. He drops his bags and waits for a bus to arrive. There is no one else around.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - MORNING

Alina sits at the kitchen table, eating breakfast with Helen, Jennie, and Barry, who is shoveling spoonfuls of corn flakes into his mouth as fast as he can.

HELEN
Barry, slow down, please.

Carey enters the kitchen. He hands an envelope to Alina.

CAREY
There you go.

ALINA
Thank you.

Alina doesn't open the envelope, but feels the weight of the contents. It's obvious that a large stack of bills is in the envelope. She tucks it into her briefcase and finishes eating with the family.

INT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - PRESCOTT'S OFFICE - MORNING

Aron meets again with Prescott, this time with the bank's manager, ROGERS, sitting beside Prescott.

ROGERS

Mr. Bartley, was the executor also your mother's lawyer?

ARON

No, she had a separate personal attorney.

ROGERS

Good. We'll need to know his or her name. That should straighten out this whole mess.

ARON

I have it right here.

He hands Rogers a letter from his briefcase. Rogers reads it and then places it down.

ROGERS

Great, we'll send a fax out to Mr. Charon and get this expedited. Hopefully it will be resolved by close of business today.

ARON

Thank you.

EXT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - AFTER

Alina approaches the bank as Darrell gets off a city bus. Aron opens the door and walks out. Darrell stands back, smoking a cigarette. Aron nearly bumps into Alina as she enters.

INT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - AFTER

Alina finds a long line waiting for her. She gets at the end of it.

As the line slowly moves along, Alina finds herself three people behind a teller.

Darrell enters the bank and checks the time on a wall-mounted clock: 9:09 A.M. He reaches into a coat pocket and takes out a ski mask and a small, collapsible lunch bag. He puts the ski mask on and then takes a handgun out of another pocket. He waves it in the air.

DARRELL

Anyone want to die today?

Everyone in the bank turns to him. A few people SCREAM.

DARRELL (Cont.)

Now, I didn't think so. I don't want to kill anyone; I just want your money. So, make things easy for me, and I'll make things easy for you. No wallets, no purses, just cash. No checks, no credit cards. Cash only. D'ya understand?

He opens the lunch bag and walks around the bank, collecting bills from the customers. Alina opens the envelope she was given to by Carey and GULPS. There are hundreds of dollars in cash in it. She has a deposit slip, completely filled out, in her hand. Alina puts the slip in the envelope and quickly throws the stuffed envelope over the teller's counter.

The TELLER looks surprised at Alina. Darrell sees her toss out of the corner of his eye and looks over at Alina.

ALINA (to the Teller)

Deposit, please.

DARRELL

What the hell's that, honey?

ALINA

This bank's insured. I'm depositing cash.

DARRELL

Oh. Well, that money's going to me.

ALINA

Steal it from the bank, not me.

DARRELL

Making things difficult here?

He takes a menacing step toward Alina. She doesn't blink at the gun he waves in her face.

ALINA

No. Not at all.

DARRELL

Good.

He walks over to the teller.

DARRELL

Give me her money.

The teller hands him her envelope. Darrell takes the cash out of the envelope and throws the envelope and deposit slip down on the counter.

DARRELL

No, just the cash. Keep the papers.

Darrell takes a good look at the amount of cash Alina was depositing.

DARRELL

Not bad, sister. Thanks. Looks like I'm done now.

Darrell leaves. As the bank returns to calm, POLICE SIRENS are heard outside.

Rogers, the bank manager, comes down a staircase, oblivious to what just happened.

GUNSHOTS and ad libbed POLICE TALK over a bullhorn are heard O.S.

POLICE OFFICER (O.S., ad lib)

Put the gun down now! Down!

More GUNSHOTS. Acting on instinct, Rogers ducks.

ROGERS

What happened?

TELLER

We were just taken.

ROGERS

What?

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Aron exits the bathroom and walks down the hallway. As he passes his SECRETARY's desk, she calls for him.

SECRETARY

Sir, you have a message.

ARON

Who?

SECRETARY

A Mr. Prescott, would you like his number?

ARON

No, I have it, thank you.

INT. ARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Aron dials Prescott's number. After a few rings, Prescott answers.

PRESCOTT (O.S., on telephone)

California Trust. André Prescott speaking.

ARON (into telephone)

It's Aron.

PRESCOTT (O.S., on telephone)

There's been a problem here at the bank today. We won't have your mother's estate settled this afternoon. I'm sorry.

ARON (into telephone)

What happened?

PRESCOTT (O.S., on telephone)
I can't really explain. Watch the news.

ARON (into telephone)
I will. Can you come over later?
Have dinner?

PRESCOTT (O.S., on telephone)
What time?

ARON (into telephone)
Seven-thirty.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - BARRY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alina and Barry sit next to each other on his bed. He fumbles with a model plane on his lap.

ALINA
Tell me what happened.

BARRY
When?

ALINA
When you jumped.

Barry stops playing with the plane.

BARRY
Well.

ALINA
It's okay, you can tell me. I won't get mad at you.

BARRY
Mom and Dad did.

ALINA
I know. I won't. I promise.

BARRY
Cross your heart?

ALINA
And hope to die.

BARRY

Okay. I was reading a book for school and got bored. I looked out the window and saw a bird.

ALINA

And that's when you thought you could fly?

BARRY

Yes. Well, no. I always knew that.

ALINA

When did you first think you could fly, then?

BARRY

I don't know.

Tears start to well in his eyes. Alina notices them, and hands him a tissue.

ALINA

It's okay, we don't have to talk about it.

BARRY

No, I don't mind. I just don't know.

ALINA

Do you like to fly?

BARRY

Yes.

ALINA

Have you been in an airplane before?

BARRY

Yes. We went to visit Grandma in Oregon.

ALINA

Did you like it?

BARRY

It was fun. I got wings. Plastic wings.

ALINA

Do you understand how airplanes fly?

BARRY

No. Does God do it?

ALINA

No, they have engines. They are powerful machines that push themselves over the air. That's how they fly.

She demonstrates with Barry's model plane.

ALINA

See, the air goes under the wings, and the engines lift the plane up. You're not an airplane, Barry. Do you understand that?

BARRY

I can't fly?

ALINA

No, I'm afraid you can't.

BARRY

But, God told me to.

ALINA

Who did?

BARRY

God.

ALINA

What did He say?

BARRY

He said to spread my wings and fly.

ALINA

When did you hear this?

Barry thinks.

BARRY
I don't remember.

ALINA
Did you try to fly before you fell
out of your window?

BARRY
No. Just the one time. Why?

ALINA
I'm trying to help you, Barry.

BARRY
What's wrong with me?

ALINA
Nothing. Nothing's wrong, don't
worry. I'm going to go downstairs
and talk to your mom and dad now,
okay?

BARRY
All right.

Alina exits the bedroom.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTER

Helen and Cary sit watching the TV news. Coverage of the bank robbery is the top story. Alina stops at the bottom of the stairs and watches.

HELEN
Is that the bank you were at this
morning?

ALINA
How many banks get robbed everyday
here?

HELEN
I mean, this was the bank you were
at.

ALINA
I see.

CAREY

How's Barry?

ALINA

Fine. I need to talk to you two.

Helen turns off the TV.

HELEN

Yes?

ALINA

He seems to believe that God talks to him.

CAREY

God?

ALINA

Yes, Barry thinks that God told him to jump.

CAREY

What do you think?

ALINA

I don't know. That's why I'm down here with you.

HELEN

Well, Barry goes to Sunday school with Jennie.

CAREY

We're both God-fearing parents, we wanted to instill a strong belief in our children.

ALINA

Nothing wrong with that.

CAREY

We're not zealots or anything. Barry wasn't spoon-fed anything.

ALINA

Okay. That's what I wanted to know. Thanks. I should get going now.

HELEN

You sure you're okay?

ALINA

Yes, thanks.

HELEN

I mean, since the bank robbery
this morning?

ALINA

The money's insured. I'll get it
eventually.

CAREY

Good. We can help you out if you
need.

ALINA

No, thank you. I'm fine.

Alina exits the house.

EXT. JAMES HOUSE - SAME

Alina walks down the front walk of the house and turns back. She looks up at the second level, at Barry's bedroom window. He is sitting by the sill, looking up at the clouds. Alina waves up at him, but he doesn't notice. Barry moves to raise the window to open it, but it won't budge. After a moment of struggling with it, Barry retreats back to his bed, out of sight. Alina breathes a sigh of relief and continues down to the street and walks to the bus stop.

INT. ARON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Aron and Prescott sit at the dining room table, eating dinner.

ARON

Did you see any of it?

PRESCOTT

No, I didn't. I was in my office
the whole time. I don't believe
it.

ARON

How much was taken?

PRESCOTT

About two thousand. Mostly cash deposits.

ARON

Who was the guy?

PRESCOTT

A drifter, he acted alone. He was living at a motel in West Hollywood.

ARON

Oh, okay. Glad no one was hurt.

PRESCOTT

Yes, that was thankful. The robber's in critical condition, though. He was shot by an officer. Stomach wound.

They both eat silently for a bit.

PRESCOTT

So, what are you going to do with it?

ARON

With what?

PRESCOTT

The money.

ARON

The inheritance?

Prescott nods.

ARON

Oh, I don't know. Quit my job, maybe. Buy a boat and sail around the world.

PRESCOTT

Is it enough to retire on?

ARON

I don't know. I have a bit of my own saved away. I'm going to head up to the Bay Area, first, though. Spend sometime where I grew up. There's the memorial for my mother that needs to be setup.

Aron SIGHS.

ARON (Cont.)

She was a good woman. When she was seventeen, she came to America from Scotland. She raised me by myself when my father was killed. Worked twelve-hour days. And then, one day, we had all that money. Now I have more. I don't know what to do with it all.

PRESCOTT

Looking to double it?

ARON

What do you mean?

PRESCOTT

I might have something you'll be interested in.

ARON

What is it?

PRESCOTT

I can't say now, really. But, I'll let you know.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Alina browses the magazine rack, not really seeing anything of interest. She moves on to the rest of the store.

A young man, RAY HOLMES, notices her and slowly follows her down the aisles. Alina doesn't see him and continues to browse.

INT. BOOKSTORE – SHOPPING MALL – AFTER

Alina has two books in hand and stands at the checkout line. The CASHIER finishes a sale and Alina steps up to the counter. The cashier keys in the books sale codes.

Ray leans against the magazine rack, pretending to read a magazine. He can't take his eyes off Alina.

Alina writes a check for her purchase.

CASHIER

Ma'am, I need to see your driver's license and a major credit card.

Alina fumbles in her purse for her wallet. As she does so, she drops her checkbook and pen onto the floor.

ALINA

Damn.

She leans over to pick them up, but the pen has slid out of sight. She puts the checkbook back in her purse and finally fishes her wallet out.

ALINA

Here.

She hands a credit card and her license to the cashier. They are studied a bit, and the cashier copies the pertinent information to the back of the check and returns the cards to Alina, along with the books and receipt.

Alina exits the store, never noticing Ray. After Alina is out of sight, Ray walks over to the register, leans down, and picks up the pen she left behind. It is imprinted with the text OCEANSIDE ESTATES HOTEL and the insignia of the hotel. He puts the pen in his pocket and walks out of the bookstore.

INT. JAMES HOUSE – BARRY'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

The lights are off, but Barry's not asleep. He lies on his back, his eyes wide open. The moonlit shadow of the tree outside his window is cast on the floor and the foot of his bed.

Through the window, Barry watches the moon, the stars, and an owl that flies to the window ledge and looks inside. Seeing nothing of interest, the owl hops over to a branch of the tree and slowly and quietly starts to HOOT.

Barry gets up from bed and walks to the window. He looks at the bird, which is about ten feet from the window. He tries to raise the window, but it's locked firmly shut. He struggles a bit to undo the locks, but he's not strong enough. After a concerted effort, he finally gives up and sits back down on the bed.

The bird outside, sensing the motion of Barry sitting back down, flaps its wings, streaking off into the night. Barry looks at his bedroom door. It is dark, out of the path of the moonlight, but surrounded by the cracks of light that seep inside from the well-lit hallway.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Alina passes a maid's cart, with pillows and towels, as she makes her way to her room.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - LATER

Alina sits at the desk, reading one of the books she bought at the bookstore, taking notes on a pad of paper from Barry's file. The pen runs out of ink.

ALINA

Damn.

Alina fumbles in her purse for a pen, but doesn't find one. She stops and thinks for a moment and then gets up and walks out of the room, taking care to not lock herself out.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - AFTER

The maid's cart is still abandoned. Alina walks up to it and finds a drinking glass with a dozen pens in it and takes three out. She quietly and discreetly walks back to her room. The MAID exits a room and does not notice Alina.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Ray parks his car in the hotel's lot and walks toward the entrance.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - AFTER

Ray walks through the lobby, back to the bar, constantly scanning for Alina.

A few moments later, he exits the bar and comes back to the lobby. He sits on a sofa, waiting.

A magazine on the coffee table in front of him keeps him occupied for a bit, but soon he grows bored and gets up, exiting the hotel.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - DAWN

Ray returns and except for the two CLERKS at the front desk, the lobby is deserted. He sits on a sofa with a view of the elevator and watches it, waiting for Alina to come out.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Alina's in a rush. She buttons her blouse, kicks on her shoes, and gathers her bags, all seemingly at the same time. She ties her hair back in a hasty ponytail, throws on her coat and heads out the door all in one fluid motion.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - AFTER

As he did last night, Ray sits in the lobby waiting for Alina. He sips coffee and a newspaper is folded on his lap. He watches the elevator as it opens. Alina gets out with several other guests. Ray smiles to himself and gets up, newspaper tucked under his arm. He walks to the group Alina's stuck in.

Alina tries to walk around the group, but they're too slow and she's trapped. Frustrated, she darts around and runs right into Ray. They both fall to their feet. Alina's bags spill open on the floor.

ALINA

Damn.

RAY

Let me help you.

Alina looks up at him and likes what she sees. She smiles at him.

ALINA

Thanks.

He takes the pen she dropped in the bookstore out of his pocket without her noticing. As he hands her a pile of papers, he slips the pen to her.

RAY

Here you go.

ALINA

That's everything, thanks.

She gets up and starts to walk to the front door. Ray scampers to his feet and hurries to her side.

ALINA

Are you staying here?

RAY

No.

ALINA

Why are you here then?

They walk out of the lobby.

EXT. HOTEL - MORNING

Alina heads down the driveway to the street. Ray tags along like a puppy following its master.

RAY

I was waiting for someone.

ALINA

Oh.

RAY

They never showed.

ALINA

Too bad. Well, seeya.

RAY

Listen, can I buy you dinner sometime?

ALINA

I don't date strangers.

RAY

Neither do I. My name's Ray. Ray
Holmes.

Alina stops and offers her hand for him to shake.

ALINA

Alina Roberts. My pleasure.

RAY

Now we've met, we're not strangers
anymore. Have dinner with me.

Alina starts walking to the sidewalk again.

ALINA

Really, I'm going to have to pass.
Thank you, though. I'm flattered.

RAY

All right. I give up. I'll not
pester you anymore.

Alina stops and waits by the bus shelter.

RAY (Cont.)

Hey, you're waiting for a bus?

ALINA

Wow, you're good looking and
smart.

RAY

Listen, I'm not trying to bother
you. I'm not a freak, really, I'd
just like to help you. Do you need
a ride somewhere or something? My
car's just over there. It's no big
deal.

ALINA

No thank you. The bus is fine.

RAY

Okay, good-bye. I'll catch you
around sometime, Alina.

ALINA

Maybe.

RAY

Take care.

He bows before her and turns around, walking back to the parking lot. Alina watches the bus tread slowly down the street toward the hotel. A flume of black smoke billows out behind it. She looks back at Ray, ambling slowly, regretfully, to his car.

ALINA

Ray!

He doesn't hear her.

ALINA (Cont.)

Hey, Ray!

Ray turns around.

RAY

Yeah?

Alina runs up the driveway. The bus approaches the stop.

ALINA

I'm sorry. I was rude. Yeah, sure, why not? Meet me here tonight for dinner?

RAY

What time?

ALINA

Is seven okay for you?

The bus doors open. PASSENGERS get off.

RAY

Sure. See you then. Hurry, you'll miss your ride.

ALINA

Thanks. See you then.

Alina runs to the bus. Ray stands back, and watches her. She gets on the bus and pays the DRIVER, who shuts the doors behind her. The bus trudges on, down the road.

Ray gets into his car and fires up his cell phone. He punches in a number and waits for it to be answered.

RAY (into telephone)
Hey, Jerry. I can't make it tonight. Show it without me. I'll try to make it afterward, but no guarantees. Let Leo know I'm sorry. I'll have my cell on all day, if you need me, but don't call me after six. Thanks, man.

EXT. JAMES HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Alina and Barry stroll slowly through the yard. Two glasses of lemonade await them on the patio table.

ALINA
How are you feeling?

BARRY
Fine.

ALINA
Your mom says you want to go back to school.

BARRY
Yeah. Can I?

ALINA
Soon, yes. We're not quite ready yet.

BARRY
What do we need to do?

ALINA
Some things. I need to find out some more information first. Soon, though. Don't worry.

INT. CALIFORNIA TRUST - DAY

Prescott stands in the lobby, waiting for something or someone. Soon, Aron arrives, and Prescott exits with him immediately.

ARON

What is it?

PRESCOTT

Let's go.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFÉ — AFTER

Prescott and Aron talk over lunch menus.

ARON

Okay, André, what's up?

PRESCOTT

There's a kid I know.

ARON

A kid?

PRESCOTT

Well, not a kid, but he's young. A friend of my nephew's. He's right out of film school.

ARON

Okay, and?

PRESCOTT

He just made his first film, little low budget thing. Nothing too fancy, cost him about twenty thousand to make.

ARON

So?

PRESCOTT

He's got this new script, absolutely fascinating. I'd like to produce it. I mean, I'd like us to produce it.

ARON

What? I don't know anything about making movies. I hardly watch them as it is.

PRESCOTT

Just some money. No more of your time than you'd want to give. He's a pretty efficient kid, he'll make good use of it.

ARON

How much money are you talking about here?

PRESCOTT

I don't know, offhand. Maybe eight hundred thousand, close to a million.

ARON

That's a lot of money.

PRESCOTT

Read the script, it's a sure bet.

Prescott hands Aron a screenplay. Aron thumbs through it.

ARON

Mission. Let me guess, big budget action flick?

PRESCOTT

Not quite. Just read it, Aron.

ARON

Okay, I will.

INT. ARON'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Aron enters his office with a cup of coffee in hand and shuts the door behind him. He changes the clock radio on his desk from a talk radio station to a classical station.

Aron sits back in his high-backed chair and relaxes. The screenplay is on the desk in front of him. He leans forward and picks it up, opening it to page one.

ARON

(reading aloud)

Fade in.

FADE TO:

INT. ARON'S OFFICE - LATER

Aron finishes reading the last page of the screenplay and closes it, gently laying it back down on his desk. He takes a tissue and dabs his wet eyes with it. He blows his nose and stretches. He is obviously moved by what he just read.

Aron tosses the wadded up tissue toward a trashcan across the room and misses by two feet.

ARON
(muttering)
And people wonder why I didn't
play basketball.

He gets up, walks over to the errant tissue, picks it up and places it in the trash. He walks back to his desk and picks up the telephone and dials a number rapidly from memory.

ARON (into telephone)
I just read it. I'm no expert, but
it's very good. I want to meet
this guy.... eight o'clock,
Pasadena.... Yeah, I know where
that is. I'll be there, see you
then, thanks.

INT. CITY BUS - DUSK

Alina rides back to the hotel on the city bus. As it approaches her hotel she checks her watch, 6:50 p.m. and then her appearance in the reflection of the dirty tinted window. She brushes her hair back and deems herself acceptable.

The bus slides to a stop outside of the hotel and Alina walks down the steps to the sidewalk.

EXT. HOTEL - SAME

Ray is sitting on the hood of his car in the parking lot. He smiles when he sees Alina approach him. She smiles, too.

ALINA
You're early.

RAY
Is that bad?

ALINA

Nope. Not at all. I like promptness in men. So, what did you have in mind?

Ray gets down off the hood and opens the passenger door for Alina.

RAY

Hop in.

INT. RAY'S CAR - ROAD - AFTER

Ray slows down and stops at a red light. He looks over at Alina.

RAY

So, what do you do?

ALINA

I'm a child psychologist. You?

RAY

Filmmaker.

ALINA

Interesting.

RAY

It pays.

ALINA

What kind of films do you make?

RAY

I just finished a thriller. Low budget, nothing you'd ever hear of or probably ever see.

ALINA

I'll keep my eyes out for it. What's it called?

RAY

It's called Code of Honor. About a cop that's framed for murder and has to prove he's innocent.

ALINA

Ahh.

The light changes back to green and Ray puts the car back in drive.

RAY

In fact, it's being screened tonight over in Pasadena. I just finished a new script, though, which should hopefully be better. We're shooting that this summer.

ALINA

Is that where we're going?

RAY

The screening? No. I didn't think you'd be interested. I have reservations for us in Burbank.

ALINA

Okay, I don't know this area at all.

RAY

Where are you from?

ALINA

Oakland.

RAY

What brings you down to sunny southern California, then?

ALINA

A patient.

RAY

Let me guess, a messed up kid?

ALINA

Yep. You are a smart one. Nothing gets by you.

RAY

Child abuse?

ALINA

No, it's a bit different. I also have a Masters degree in Theology, so I get the weird ones. This one's a little boy who thinks he's an angel and wants to fly.

RAY

Fly? Hmm.

ALINA

Nice story, huh?

RAY

I'll say. Parents sell the rights yet?

He LAUGHS at his own joke. Alina manages an uncomfortable smile.

ALINA

I'm not finished treating him yet. Almost.

RAY

So, is he?

ALINA

What?

RAY

An angel. Can he fly?

ALINA

Sorry, no. There aren't any angels in this city of angels.

RAY

God's nowhere to be found here.

INT. FANCY RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Alina and Ray pick at their salads. In between them, a white candle burns. The yellow light it gives off casts itself beautifully on their young, fresh faces.

ALINA

What's the new screenplay about?

RAY

It's a bit of an exposition on the nature of God. It's moody, you know?

ALINA

Oh, tired of the action genre already?

RAY

Not really, I'm just trying to diversify. It's called Mission.

ALINA

So, what's the story?

RAY

Well, it's about a priest who is commanded to guide a nun to a man she's supposed to fall in love with.

ALINA

Who commands the priest?

RAY

God.

ALINA

Oh, yeah, of course. Sounds, umm, interesting. A nun, you said?

RAY

Yes.

ALINA

Don't you think some people might find that just a little teeny-weeny bit blasphemous?

RAY

I suppose, yeah. It's just a story. There are worse things in the news every night.

ALINA

Yes, but—

RAY

-Really, you're dealing with a boy who thinks he can fly. Which is more fucked up? My story or that kid?

Alina is visibly shaken.

RAY (Cont.)

Look, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend you. I'm just a bit defensive when it comes to my work.

ALINA

Well, I'll just have to read it and judge for myself, then?

RAY

Exactly.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

A couple dozen VIEWERS watch Ray's movie, Code of Honor. Aron and Prescott sit together in the back row. The final shot of the film fades out and the first credit reads:

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY RAY HOLMES

Aron turns to Prescott.

ARON

Very good. He has a good eye. I liked the new story better, though.

PRESCOTT

I thought so, too. Unfortunately, he's not here now. I was told he was coming.

The credits are short and end abruptly. The HOUSE LIGHTS are turned on. Prescott rises from his seat and starts to make his way down the aisle to the front.

PRESCOTT (Cont.)

There's my nephew, I'll be right back.

Prescott walks up to the front row, where a group of young FILM JUNKIES are discussing the film. One of them, JERRY, breaks away from the group and approaches Prescott.

JERRY

Hi Uncle André. Did you like it?

PRESCOTT

Actually, we did. Is Ray here? I have a friend that wants to meet him.

JERRY

No, he couldn't make it tonight. Leo's here, though. Who's your friend?

Prescott turns around and faces the back of the theatre.

PRESCOTT

Aron! Come on down here!

Aron walks slowly down the aisle to the front of the theatre.

JERRY

Jesus, he's tall.

PRESCOTT

He's also recently rich and doesn't know what to do with the money.

Aron joins the group.

ARON

Hello, Aron Bartley.

JERRY

Jerry Gibbons, pleasure to meet you.

EXT. FANCY RESTAURANT - PARKING LOT - SAME

Alina and Ray walk out of the restaurant and head back to his car.

ALINA

Thanks. I enjoyed dinner.

RAY

Want to see a movie now?

ALINA

Your movie?

RAY

Sure, there's nothing else good playing.

ALINA

I thought we missed the screening?

RAY

Hey, I'm the director. It's my movie. When I want it shown, it's shown.

ALINA

Well, okay, then, Mr. Powerful Hollywood Filmmaker.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - LATER

Aron, Prescott, Jerry, and LEO, a portly, bearded young man, sit in the front row.

ARON

Obviously, I want to meet Ray first, but I'm very interested. I don't know much about movies, but I know what I like.

LEO

Well, I won't speak for Ray, but I think he likes people who know what they like. And, I do, too.

Somehow, Leo manages to flash a winning smile to Aron.

Ray and Alina arrive. As they enter the theatre, Ray is surprised to see people still there.

RAY

Oh, hello.

JERRY

We didn't expect you to show.

RAY

Sorry about that, I had other plans. How did it go?

LEO

Just fine. Everyone liked it.

RAY

Great. We're here now to watch it.

LEO

Before you do, Ray, there's someone you should meet.

He gestures toward Aron. Aron rises from his seat and bows over to Ray.

ARON

Aron Bartley, glad to meet you.

Ray shakes his hand. Alina looks at Aron like she knows him from somewhere but can't place it. Aron doesn't pay any attention to Alina, he's focused only on Ray.

RAY

Likewise. Did you enjoy the film?

ARON

I did, indeed. I also liked the script I read this afternoon.

RAY

Great. I always welcome new fans.

Aron hands him a business card.

ARON

I hope to be more than a fan. I have to run now, though, but please call me up tomorrow.

RAY

Will do, it was nice meeting you.

Aron and Prescott leave together.

JERRY

We're out of here, too, Ray. Speak to you tomorrow. You two enjoy the film.

Jerry and Leo leave, TALKING as they walk out the door.

RAY

Okay, have a seat wherever you'd like. Let me start up the projector.

He disappears behind the curtain. Alina picks a seat in the middle of the theatre, halfway back from the screen.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - PROJECTION ROOM - SAME

Ray fires up the projector and sets the reels running. The movie starts, and Ray stays in the projection room for a few minutes, watching Alina watch the movie.

EXT. HOTEL - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Alina stands with Ray beside his car.

ALINA

I had a good time tonight.

RAY

So did I, thanks.

ALINA

You're welcome.

RAY

How much longer are you in town?

ALINA

Probably another week or so.

RAY

Can I see you again before you leave?

ALINA

Sure. Call the hotel for me. Leave a message if I'm not in. I have voice mail here.

RAY

Great. Goodnight.

He takes a half-step closer to her. He's close enough that if he wants to reach out and kiss her, he can. Alina smiles at him, and looks down at his advancing feet.

ALINA

Goodnight.

She turns around and walks inside.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Ray sips from a mug of coffee as he walks over to his desk. On it is a telephone, his wallet, a copy of Mission, and Aron's business card. He takes another sip of coffee, puts the mug down, and picks up the telephone, dialing Aron's number.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - BARRY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Alina and Barry are sitting on his bedroom floor, playing with a Lego set.

BARRY

I got these for my birthday when I was four. I love them.

ALINA

When I was a little kid, my older brother had a million Legos. I didn't like to play with them then.

BARRY

You didn't?

ALINA

No, I thought they were for boys.

BARRY

Jennie likes to play with them, though.

ALINA

It was different when I was a kid. There were boy-toys, and girl-toys.

BARRY

You can create a million cool things with them.

ALINA

Yeah, I know. I like them now.

She looks out the window. There's really nothing of interest out there, but she seems distracted by something.

BARRY

You okay?

No response. Barry shrugs, and begins construction of a multi-colored airplane. He has to reach across Alina to get to the wheels.

INT. ARON'S OFFICE - DAY

Ray sits across the desk from Aron. The script is open between them.

RAY

If we start filming in July, we can finish by October. But, if we wait 'til August, it won't be until December.

ARON

Why?

RAY

A million reasons. The locations we'll want to use will be busy. We're on the bottom rung here, and get second chances at everything. Plus, Gary Dukater won't be available after November.

ARON

I've lived here my whole life, but never realized exactly how Hollywood works.

RAY

Well, pay attention.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Alina walks into her hotel room and sees the message lamp on the telephone blinking.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alina sits on Ray's couch, flipping through a magazine. Ray is behind her, in the kitchen, cooking dinner.

RAY

Almost ready.

He stirs a pot and sets the stirrer down beside the stovetop. He walks into the living room.

RAY

No, don't read that. The script's right there.

ALINA

Oh, ok.

She puts down the magazine and picks up the screenplay.

ALINA

Mission, by Ray Holmes.

RAY

That be me.

ALINA

How long did it take to write this?

RAY

About five months. Last one took longer, almost a year.

ALINA

When do you start filming?

RAY

I don't know yet. We're still doing the casting and securing the locations. Maybe end of July, hopefully sooner.

ALINA

Okay. Your water's boiling over.

Ray rushes back into the kitchen to stir the pot. Alina begins to read the script.

FADE TO:

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ray and Alina are sitting on his couch. Alina takes a sip of her wine and sets it back down on the coffee table.

RAY

You disagree?

ALINA

Well, no. I just haven't felt that way yet, so I don't know.

RAY

You've never seen someone and thought to yourself "Yes!?" It happens to me once a month, it seems.

ALINA

Well, yeah, of course I have. But it wasn't love. It was more like a lust.

RAY

It was a temporary feeling?

ALINA

More like a fleeting one. Just a time-and-place situation.

RAY

I don't work like that. I obsess, it's more than fleeting.

ALINA

I'm not quite sure why you're telling me this.

RAY

Me neither. I'm not usually this confessional. But, I think I can be open with you.

He leans in closer to her.

ALINA

You do?

RAY

Is that okay?

ALINA

I suppose. I didn't quite expect this.

RAY

Do you mind?

Closer. They're so close they're WHISPERING to each other.

ALINA

No, I don't.

RAY

Good.

He kisses her. It's a slow kiss, and he's the first to pull away.

RAY

I'm sorry.

ALINA

What for?

She slides on top of him and kisses him again, more aggressive, assured.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN

The first rays of sunlight awaken Alina. Beside her, Ray is still asleep. She quietly gathers her clothing, in a pile beside the bed on the floor, and dresses.

Without looking back at Ray she slips out of the bedroom.

EXT. BARRY HOUSE – MORNING

Helen opens the door and lets Alina in. She appears to be in a rush, and is breathing heavy, like she just ran up the driveway in a sprint.

ALINA

I'm sorry, Helen. I overslept.

HELEN

Well, come in, then.

Alina enters.

INT. BARRY HOUSE – AFTER

Alina sits down on the couch. Carey walks in from the kitchen.

CAREY

Hi Alina.

ALINA

Sorry I'm late.

CAREY

No big deal.

ALINA

Where's Barry? Is he upstairs?

Carey looks at Helen. Helen looks back at Carey.

ALINA (Cont.)

Well?

HELEN

He's at school, Alina.

ALINA

What?

CAREY

He was anxious to go back, and we thought he was ready.

ALINA

You thought he was ready? You're not his doctor, you're not qualified to say that.

HELEN

No, we're not. But, we're his parents. We decided it over dinner last night, and tried to call you at your hotel -

ALINA

I was out last night.

HELEN

I know, well, you weren't in when we called.

CAREY

We tried three or four times. By the time we had decided and put Barry to bed, you still hadn't answered. So, when he got up this morning, we took him to school.

ALINA

I don't believe this. Did you let him ride the bus?

HELEN

No, Carey drove him there. We're going to pick him up, too, at three o'clock.

ALINA

I'd like to see him then. I'd like to see him now, actually. He's not ready to go back.

HELEN

We didn't agree. He's a young boy, Alina, he's not sick.

ALINA

I didn't say he was. But, he had, and still has, problems. Serious emotional problems, and they have to be dealt with. I wasn't ready to insert him into a volatile situation like school. School can be an emotional war zone for a kid like him. It could be brutal. The other kids could tease him, ridicule him. It wasn't a good idea. I wish you hadn't done that.

HELEN

Look, we're his parents. In fact, we'd like to end his treatment with you.

ALINA

He's not ready yet, I'm warning you.

Helen opens up her purse and takes out an envelope of cash. She offers it to Alina.

HELEN

Here, take this. Thank you very much.

Alina accepts it, grudgingly.

ALINA

Yeah, thanks.

Without looking back, she storms out of the house.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Alina stands around the front entrance of the school, with other MOTHERS awaiting their children.

A SCHOOL BELL rings inside, and slowly but surely, the KIDS start poring out into the sunshine.

Barry, with a few of his FRIENDS, come out, all smiles.

ALINA

Barry!

Barry turns to her and smiles.

BARRY
Hi Alina.

ALINA
Are you okay?

She heads over to him.

BARRY
I'm fine, yeah. I'm back at
school.

ALINA
I know. I was concerned. Can we
talk?

BARRY
Sure. (to his friends) I'll see
you guys later.

Alina and Barry walk around to the side of the school.

ALINA
Barry, listen to me, this is
important, okay?

BARRY
Sure, what's up?

ALINA
Are you sure that you're able to
be in school again?

BARRY
Yeah, why?

ALINA
I think you and I still need to
talk.

BARRY
We're talking now, right?

ALINA
No, I mean like we were at your
home, when you weren't in school.

BARRY

My Mom and Dad say that I don't need to anymore, though.

ALINA

What do you think?

BARRY

I feel fine, really. That's what I think.

ALINA

Well, okay. If you need me, call me, all right? I'm still concerned for you.

She hands him a business card.

BARRY

Thanks.

ALINA

I'll let you go home now. You take care, okay? Don't be afraid.

BARRY

I will. Bye Alina.

Alina starts to walk away. She turns back and with a smile, waves at Barry.

ALINA

Goodbye Barry.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alina is laying on her bed, idly watching the television and counting the money that Helen paid her. There are dozens of bills, of various denominations, on and about her on the bed.

There is a KNOCK on the door. Alina looks surprised: she obviously didn't order room service. She checks her hair quickly in the mirror as she walks to the door. She opens the door: it's Ray.

ALINA

Oh, hi.

RAY
I'm sorry, but I'm a bit confused.

ALINA
Excuse me?

RAY
May I come in?

ALINA
Oh, yeah, sure.

Alina steps aside and lets him in. She sits on the edge of the bed and he takes the desk chair. She starts to organize the money again in the envelope.

ALINA
Okay, what's up?

RAY
Well, why'd you leave this morning?

ALINA
Oh, that.

RAY
Yeah, that.

Alina takes a big sigh.

ALINA
I'm on the verge of something big, I think.

RAY
How do you know that?

ALINA
Things are different. The kid, Barry, he seems to be telling me something.

RAY
What the hell are you talking about?

ALINA

I wish I knew how to tell you. The sunlight's different down here. The water tastes odd, and I know it's not just the pollution. I'm getting this incredible déjà vu, but I don't remember what of. It's a karma.

RAY

And what does that have anything to do with the kid? Or myself, too, for that matter?

ALINA

I don't know. But I feel it.

RAY

You can't always trust your feelings.

ALINA

Then why are you here?

RAY

For an explanation.

ALINA

Well, you're getting one now. I think I'm in love. And it's not with you. I don't know who, actually.

RAY

Yeah, hrmph.

ALINA

Do you want to go for a ride? I want to show you something.

INT. RAY'S CAR - NIGHT

Ray drives on the freeway. Alina's arm dangles loosely out the passenger window.

ALINA

Since last night, everything's different. For all I know, the air pressure's changed, because it feels like life's a lot looser to me. Things move quicker.

RAY

And you're sure it's not me.

ALINA

Absolutely. Sorry, Ray. I do like you, though. I won't forget you.

RAY

It's okay

ALINA

It's been so quick. But, as I've stopped to think about it, the more I know it's not you. This is important stuff.

EXT. JAMES HOUSE - NIGHT

Alina and Ray walk down the quiet street. Except for a cat darting up a tree trunk, there isn't any activity. They stop outside of the James house.

ALINA

This is where the kid lives.

RAY

He jumped from up there?

ALINA

He tried to fly from up there.

RAY

I thought he jumped.

ALINA

Well, it depends on how you look at it. He thinks he was trying to fly. I thought he was jumping.

RAY

That's a fair, scientific analysis of the situation, yes.

Alina scowls at his mockery.

ALINA

Now, though, I think that he was trying to fly.

RAY

That's impossible, you know.

ALINA

A lot of things are impossible, but they still happen.

RAY

If you say so. I don't know the kid, so I won't say what is and what isn't possible.

ALINA

So, as it turns out, everything I've wanted to believe has turned out to be false. Now, I have to find new things to believe in.

RAY

And I'm not in your master plan, huh?

ALINA

No, I think he is, though.

RAY

The kid? You're serious.

ALINA

Yeah, I think I am.

RAY

So, what are you going to do about it? Run off with him?

ALINA

No, no. I just need to talk to him again. Then, hopefully, things will be clear.

RAY

Let's get going, then. No use
stalking the kid after his
bedtime.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Ray and Aron sit opposite each other at the dining room table. Between them is a yellow legal pad. Ray and Aron take turns passing back and forth a pen and jotting notes on the pad.

RAY

I'm not sure about that. She
wouldn't say that.

ARON

What's the matter with you today?
Nothing's working for you. You're
disagreeing with your own script.

RAY

It's a complicated matter, Aron.
I'm completely over my head with
some things.

Aron gestures to the script.

ARON

This?

RAY

The film? No. Other things. It's
weird, I can't explain.

ARON

Well, I don't have all day here
with you.

RAY

Maybe we should do this another
time, then. Tomorrow okay for you?

ARON

Sure. Call me in the morning, I'll
be around.

Aron exits. Ray remains at the table, moving the pen around in his fingers like a baton twirler. He jots a few notes down, but grows frustrated and walks over to the window. Sliding his fingers through the blinds, he looks down at the road and watches the cars and people go by. Nothing of interest to him happens until a bus pulls up and among the people getting off it is a NUN. Ray rushes over to the door and heads out.

EXT. RAY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ray exits the front door of the apartment and looks around for the nun. As he sweeps his head back and forth to look in all directions, he sees a BLUR IN BLACK go around a corner. He quickly dashes off in that direction believing that it's the nun.

As he turns the corner, Ray sees that it was, in fact, the nun, and she's about twenty yards ahead of him. He runs to catch up with her.

He stops next to her. She doesn't pay much attention to him; to her he's just another guy running down the street.

RAY

Excuse me.

She doesn't stop. Ray taps her on the shoulder.

NUN

Yes?

Finally we see her face. She's young and very attractive.

RAY

I'm sorry. I don't mean to startle you. I just wanted to ask you some questions.

NUN

Questions?

RAY

Yeah, I'm a writer. I mean, I'm making a movie about a nun, and I just wanted to get some of the facts straight. You know, about being a nun.

NUN

Okay. What did you have in mind?

RAY

Well, I have a few questions. It might take a while. Do you mind? I'll buy us some coffee, if you'd like.

NUN

Oh, I can't now, sorry. I'm late. Shall I call you?

RAY

Yes, please. I'd like that.

He hands her a business card. She reads the card, smiling.

NUN

Ray Holmes. Hi. I'm Sister Catherine.

RAY

Pleasure to meet you.

He awkwardly offers his hand to her. She takes it and gently shakes it.

SISTER CATHERINE

The same. I'll call you.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - TICKET COUNTER - DAY

Alina waits in line behind one other PERSON.

INT. ARON'S APARTMENT - SAME

Aron sits at his desk, on the phone. He is obviously on hold. After a few seconds, he starts talking.

ARON (on telephone)

Yes. I'd like a roundtrip ticket to San Francisco. (a beat) Tomorrow night. Can I keep the return open?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Aron eats alone in a crowded restaurant. On the table next to his plate is an old college yearbook.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ray sits on the couch, watching TV. An open copy of Mission rests beside him. A ballpoint pen acts as a bookmark. There are various notes scribbled on the page and in the margins. The telephone RINGS. Ray answers it on the second ring.

RAY (into telephone)

Hello?

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)

Hi, it's me.

RAY (into telephone)

Hi there. What's up?

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)

I wanted to say good-bye. I'm leaving tomorrow night. I have a new job starting on Monday and I need to prepare.

RAY (into telephone)

Okay, thanks for calling. You take care.

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)

I hope you forgive me. I was a jerk last night.

RAY (into telephone)

It's okay, I understand completely. And I'm going to use it someday.

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)

Use it? What do you mean?

RAY (into telephone)

In a story. I'm going to have a character like you. Do you mind?

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)
 No, not really, I deserve as much.
 Just change the name to protect
 the guilty.

RAY (into telephone)
 Will do. Look me up if you're ever
 back in town.

ALINA (O.S., on telephone)
 I will. Good-bye.

INT. ALINA'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Alina hangs up the phone. She is sitting on the bed, and beside her, her bag is open and is half-filled with folded clothes. More clothes rest on the back of the desk chair, awaiting folding.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

The phone RINGS, awakening Ray. Groggily, he raises his head and answers it on the third ring.

RAY (into telephone)
 Hello?

SISTER CATHERINE (O.S., on telephone)
 Hello, may I please speak to Ray
 Holmes?

RAY (into telephone)
 This is him.

SISTER CATHERINE (O.S., on telephone)
 Ray, hello. This is Sister
 Catherine. We spoke yesterday.

RAY (into telephone)
 Yes, I remember. I don't have nuns
 calling everyday.

Ray sits up in bed. He's awake now.

SISTER CATHERINE (O.S., on telephone)
I wasn't sure if it was all right
to speak to you, but I checked
with my Superior. I can discuss
your story with you if you still
want to.

RAY (into telephone)
Yes, definitely. When's good for
you?

SISTER CATHERINE (O.S., on telephone)
How about this afternoon? Four-
thirty?

RAY (into telephone)
Fine. Remember where we met
yesterday? There's a coffeehouse
across the street.

SISTER CATHERINE (O.S., on telephone)
Yes, I know it. I'll see you then.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - FOOD COURT - DAY

Aron and Ray eat fast food tacos and, again, look at the
script that's open between them. Aron jots a note down on the
script.

RAY
I've a meeting this afternoon with
a nun.

ARON
Okay.

RAY
I just want to confirm the details
of Mary Charlotte's story with
her. She seems pretty nice.

ARON
Is she good looking, too?

Aron means this in jest, but LAUGHS when Ray nods.

ARON (Cont.)
Really? Oh boy-o, you'd better
watch out.

RAY

Yeah, I know. She's God's wife. Of all of the husbands, He's the one I don't want to piss off.

ARON

We shouldn't even be joking about this. But, it's in the script.

Ray winks.

RAY

Well, I'll just write it off as research, then.

ARON

Anyway.

RAY

Yes.

ARON

I have to go out of town tonight. I'll probably be back on Monday or Tuesday.

RAY

All right. Where are you going?

ARON

Up to the Bay Area. I'm helping to dedicate a memorial to my mother at Stanford. She passed away last month. It's on Sunday afternoon, but I haven't been up there since I was a little boy, so I want to go back and spend some time there.

Ray thinks about saying something, and opens his mouth to do so, but decides against it and takes a drink from his soda instead.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STUDIO - BACKLOT TOUR - DAY

Alina walks around a studio backlot as part of an amusement park tour. JAPANESE TOURISTS surround her.

EXT. COFFEEHOUSE - DAY

Ray checks the time on his watch: 4:05 P.M. He hurries inside the coffeehouse.

INT. COFFEEHOUSE - AFTER

Sister Catherine is sitting at a corner table, sipping from a cup of tea. She sees Ray come in and waves him over.

RAY

Sorry I'm late.

SISTER CATHERINE

It's nothing. I'm free for the rest of the day.

RAY

I see. I'll be right back, let me get a drink.

INT./EXT. ARON'S APARTMENT - DAY

Aron closes up his suitcase, puts on his coat, and walks out the door of his apartment, bag in hand.

Outside the apartment, a TAXICAB is waiting for him. He gets in the cab.

INT. COFFEEHOUSE - DAY

Ray hands a fresh copy of his script to Sister Catherine. As she takes a look at it, he sips from his coffee.

RAY

Here.

SISTER CATHERINE

I've never seen one of these.

RAY

It's almost like a stage play. "INT." and "EXT." describe whether the scene is inside or outside. The rest of that line tells where the scene is set, and the time of day. Other than that, it should be pretty straightforward.

SISTER CATHERINE
I'll read it tonight.

RAY
Okay, let me warn you. The nun in the story, Sister Mary Charlotte, is not exactly a model nun. I mean, this isn't going to be the most wholesome movie. This ain't Sister Act.

SISTER CATHERINE
It's okay, I wasn't always a nun.

She gives Ray a mischievous smile. It sends chills down his spine.

EXT. HOTEL/INT. TAXICAB - EVENING

Alina walks out of the lobby of the hotel, bags in hand, and enters a waiting cab. The CABBIE starts up his engine.

CABBIE
Where to? LAX?

ALINA
Yeah. Actually, there's somewhere I want to go on the way.

CABBIE
No problem.

He cuts out into traffic, sending a flurry of pigeons into motion, escaping the sidewalk.

EXT. BARRY HOUSE - DAY

The cab pulls up into the driveway.

ALINA
I'll just be a minute.

The cabbie starts the wait meter. Alina exits the cab and walks up to the door. She rings the doorbell.

After a half-minute, Carey opens the door. He looks surprised to see Alina.

CAREY

We thought you left.

ALINA

Actually, I'm on my way to the airport now. I just wanted to say good-bye to Barry. Is he home?

CAREY

He's upstairs. Wait here.

Alina nods, and he shuts the door. Alina turns around and holds up her index finger to the cabbie, indicating "one more minute." The cabbie shrugs and opens a newspaper to read.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - SAME

Carey enters the family room, where Helen and Barry are working on a puzzle together.

HELEN

Who was at the door?

CAREY

It's Alina.

BARRY

Alina's here?

He gets up from the sofa and starts for the front door.

CAREY

Hold on, sport.

BARRY

I want to say hi to her.

HELEN

No, you can't, Barry.

BARRY

Why Mom?

Barry starts to pout. His eyes transform into puppy-dog eyes, and Helen weakens, but doesn't give in.

HELEN

Sorry.

Barry glares at her, and then storms up the stairs to his bedroom. Carey looks at Helen, who shrugs. Carey sighs. He returns to the front door and opens it. Alina is still waiting.

CAREY

I'm sorry, Alina, but he's not feeling too well today. He's taking a nap now upstairs.

Alina casts her eyes downward.

ALINA

Oh, I'm sorry. Say good-bye for me, then, please. And, also to Helen and Jennie. Thank you.

CAREY

Thank you, Alina. We do appreciate your work.

Alina nods and turns around. She returns to the cab. Carey watches her get in it. The cabbie pulls out of the driveway and drives away from the house.

INT. JAMES HOUSE - BARRY'S BEDROOM - SAME

Barry opens his bedroom window and watches the cab move out of the driveway. He sees Alina turn around in the backseat and look up at him. He waves to her.

INT. TAXICAB/EXT. JAMES HOUSE - SAME

The cabbie slows the cab to a stop at an intersection. In the backseat, Alina waves to Barry. She wipes a tear from her eyes. She sees Barry step out, again, onto the ledge. Alina frantically waves her hands "no" to him.

Barry waves, indicating up to her. She starts to open her mouth, to shout, but doesn't make a sound.

The cabbie starts to turn the corner. Alina loses sight of Barry. He remains on the ledge as the cab disappears. After a moment, he returns inside the bedroom.

INT. RAY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Ray sits near the window, watching the sunset outside. There's a glass of ice tea dangling loosely from his hand. He snaps out of his reverie when there is a KNOCK on the door.

Walking to the door, Ray takes another sip of the tea, and places the glass on a table. He opens the door. It's Sister Catherine. But, she's not in her nun's habit, she's wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. Ray blinks, and finally recognizes her.

RAY

Hi.

SISTER CATHERINE

I hope you don't mind. I got your address from the script.

She holds up his script in her hand.

RAY

No. Please, come on in.

She smiles and steps past him into the apartment. She looks it over.

SISTER CATHERINE

Nice place.

RAY

Thanks. I do my best. Can I get you something?

SISTER CATHERINE

Ice tea would be nice, please.

RAY

Coming right up. Have a seat, make yourself at home.

Sister Catherine sits on the couch, sliding some newspapers out of the way.

SISTER CATHERINE

I read the script.

RAY

Already?

He looks up at the kitchen clock.

SISTER CATHERINE

It was good. You got a few things wrong, though.

He returns with the drink for her.

RAY

Like what?

SISTER CATHERINE

Oh, minor details, really. Things you wouldn't know about being a nun. On the whole, though, it was pretty good.

RAY

Thanks.

He gives her a sincere smile of appreciation.

SISTER CATHERINE

Are you making the movie?

RAY

Soon. We're casting now.

SISTER CATHERINE

Have you cast Sister Mary Charlotte yet?

RAY

No. We're having auditions next week.

SISTER CATHERINE

Okay. Do you want me to tell you what you need to correct? Or is that not my job to do?

RAY

No, please. That's why I asked you to read it.

SISTER CATHERINE

Okay. Come here. I took some notes.

Ray sits down on the couch beside her. He sits an uncomfortable distance away, as if protecting and honoring her privacy and space.

Sister Catherine takes a folded sheet of paper out of her pocket. On it are an itemized list, written in her immaculate script.

RAY

That's some list.

SISTER CATHERINE

Well, it got me thinking. For the most part, you got the character right. But, some things were either missing all together or just wrong. Little things, though.

RAY

Fair enough. You're the expert.

She looks up at him archly.

SISTER CATHERINE

Hardly. I'm still a novice.

RAY

Not to change the subject, and if you don't mind my asking, what made you decide to become a nun?

SISTER CATHERINE

It's something I've always known. When I was a little girl, I was very sick, and a miracle happened in the hospital - my heart started beating again after I was pronounced dead - that was attributed to Saint Catherine. In order to become a saint, two miracles have to be attributed to you; my recovery was the second for Catherine. When I became a nun, I took her name as my own.

RAY

Catherine's not your real name?

SISTER CATHERINE

No, it's not my birth name. I used to be Michelle Walton.

RAY

What about your family?

SISTER CATHERINE

They still call me Michelle.

She LAUGHS.

RAY

No, no. I mean, what do they think about you being a nun?

Ray gets his pen ready to write down her response. This conversation's turned from casual to serious.

SISTER CATHERINE

Oh, they're fine with that. Why wouldn't they be?

RAY

I don't know. Doesn't your mother want you to have a family? Mine sure does....

SISTER CATHERINE

I have a younger sister who can bear that burden. I'm on my own path.

Ray nods, understanding.

INT. AIRPLANE — EVENING

Alina walks down the aisle of the plane to her seat in the rear. She checks her boarding pass and then takes the window seat. The aisle seat next to her is empty. Once she is settled, she leans her head against the window and closes her eyes.

EXT. BARRY HOUSE — SAME

Barry, still out on the window ledge, prepares to jump. He looks down at the ground. No one is watching him.

Barry sticks a foot out into the air, as if to step onto an invisible surface. He puts the foot back on the ledge, and bends his legs. He springs up and leaps out into the air.

For a moment, he is flying, but soon starts to drift downward at a slower rate than he did when he first tried to fly. Invisible wings flutter in the air, trying to keep him aloft....

INT. AIRPLANE - EVENING

Alina JERKS awake.

ALINA

Barry, no!

A few PEOPLE across the aisle regard her. She shakes, nervously, in her seat, before realizing it was just a dream. Composing herself again, Alina smiles at the people, reassuring them and herself that she is, in fact, fine.

INT. AIRPORT TERMINAL - SAME

Aron, his suit bag slung over his shoulder, rushes down the terminal to the last gate. He hurriedly hands his ticket to the AGENT and walks briskly down the jetway to the plane.

INT. AIRPLANE - AFTER

Aron hangs his bag in the closet near the front and then walks down the aisle, looking for his seat. He has to slouch over due to the low ceiling on the plane.

He finds his seat: the aisle seat next to Alina. They exchange smiles of courtesy as he squeezes himself into the tiny seat.

ARON

Good Evening.

ALINA

Hi there.

Aron crinkles his brow. He's trying to recognize her face.

ARON

Have we met before?

ALINA

I don't know. We may have. I'm not from Los Angeles.

ARON

Neither am I, actually. I live down here now, though.

ALINA

I live in Oakland. I teach at Stanford.

ARON

That's where I'm heading. I went to school there.

ALINA

Oh, really?

She smiles at him. Soon, it begins to rub on her.

ALINA (Cont.)

Wait, I think we have met before.

Aron burrows his brow. He's not sure if they have met.

ARON

Really?

ALINA

I think so. It'll come to me. In any case, I'm Alina.

She offers her hand to him. He shakes it.

ARON

Pleased to meet you, I'm Aron.

Alina and Aron smile at each other. The Flight Attendant fades out as the engines ROAR to life, and the plane pulls away from the gate. Aron very slowly lets go of Alina's hand. They both look out the window as the plane pulls down the runway and takes off over the ocean.

The plane pulls back around over land, and down below, they see Los Angeles glitter in the dusk, preparing for the night.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE UP TO:

TITLE CARD:

Every beginning is only a sequel, after all, and the book
of events is always open halfway through.

Wisława Szymborska, Love at First Sight

FADE OUT.