

Barbara Blythe:
The Girl You've Always Known
by
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EXT FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - DAY

The early morning sun is slowly lifting the dew. The LA sky has never been bluer. A large group of well-healed mourners is gathered around a beautiful rich casket heaped with bright flowers.

PASTOR

(Reading from notes)

Barbara will be remembered most by her millions of fans for the joy she brought them. Through her pain and sorrow, she always maintained a cheerful countenance. She felt it was her duty to keep smiling, even in the face of adversity. When things looked their most bleak, she could always be counted on to turn toward the camera, smile and deliver the line that was to become her trademark, "If you thi..."

(choked up)

"If you... If you think that's bad, you should see the other guy."

He looks up from his notes, confident his well-constructed eulogy has brought a tear to everyone's eye.

ANGLE MOURNERS

And it has.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I'd often been asked, if I had it all to do over again, what would I change? I would just look the person in the eye and say, "Nothing. I wouldn't change a thing..." Even if I could, which I couldn't. You see, that's a trick question. My life was set from the start - entirely out of my control. I had no choice in what was to unfold. But I have no complaints and want nothing more.

EXT. FARMINGTOWN RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

TITLE: FARMINGTOWN, NEBRASKA 1936

It looks just like a movie set. Bulbous cars drive by slowly through groups of happy children playing kick the can and riding soapbox cars.

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Women wearing big hats and high heels sashay along. Neighbors nod and smile at neighbors. It's all just a little too much, but then that's Barbara's world.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I was born Barbara Sue Weiner on October 14, 1930. It was the start of the depression. My Daddy was a banker, so we had it better than most, I suspect.

INT WEINER DINING ROOM

DADDY, MAMA, Barbara and BUFORD are arranged perfectly around the supper table. It could be a drained-color photo right out of the Post.

BARBARA (V.O.)

My brother Buford was four years my elder, and I idolized him.

BUFORD

(To Mama)

May I have some more Brussel sprouts, please?

MAMA

You may.

She passes him a heavy bowl.

CHILD BARBARA

Me too!

MAMA

Oh honey, there's only enough for one serving.

CHILD BARBARA

Ah gee.

BUFORD

(Dejected)

Oh scout, you can have mine. That's okay.

CHILD BARBARA

Really, Bufe?

BUFORD

Sure, I ain't that hungry anyway.

CHILD BARBARA

Gee, thanks Bufe.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUFORD

You're welcome.

(Handing her the bowl)

I'll just eat what's left of the turkey.

CHILD BARBARA

You will?

BUFORD

(Chuckle)

You want that too, Scout?

CHILD BARBARA

Gosh no Bufe. You gotta eat somethin'.

She watches Bufe pile the rest of the meat on his plate and drizzle gravy all over it, as she jabs her fork in a leathery sprout. (For some reason, no one ever wonders why Barbara is the only one in her family with a Southern accent.)

There's a KNOCK at the door. Mama gets up.

MAMA

I wonder who that could be, calling at supper time?

We FOLLOW her into the...

WEINER ENTRYWAY

We see that their home is a more-than-ample 20's structure with wood-paneled walls and a wide staircase leading to a second, possibly third floor.

RONNY is waiting at the door - short, scrawny, 6 years old, dressed shabbily, holding an inexpensive puppy.

RONNY

Hey, Mrs. Weiner.

MAMA

Hey, Ronny. It's uh... Barbara can't play now.

RONNY

Is she eatin' supper?

MAMA

She... she's tending to some chores now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNY

Smells like turkey and Brussel sprouts, Mrs. Weiner. You make the best supper. Why, just hearin' your name makes my mouth water.

MAMA

Thank you, Ronny. She can play later-

RONNY

I just want to show her my puppy real quick.

He walks in past her and heads straight for the...

WEINER DINING ROOM

Daddy, Barbara and Buford are looking his way with long faces as he enters and stands facing the table. Buford's cheeks are bulging. Ronny looks over the empty dishes and turkey carcass.

RONNY

Hey Mr. Weiner, Barbara... Buford.

They mumble replies.

RONNY (CONT'D)

I got a new puppy. Pop says if I'm lucky I can keep this one.

Bufe swallows the lump in his mouth whole. It gets stuck halfway and he starts to turn blue. Ronny just stares.

BARBARA (V.O.)

They were hard times. The kind of times that made you think hard and worry deep.

EXT. WEINER FRONT PORCH - EARLY EVENING

The big sky is still lit up deep blue, and the bugs are thick around the porchlight. WE PAN to include Barbara rocking on the porch swing, deep in thought, reading a big book.

Daddy steps out onto the porch and sits next to her. He's a tall, serious man without many lines, but he knows how to make the most of what he has.

DADDY

Wha'cha reading there, Sport?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHILD BARBARA
Tale of two cities.

DADDY
Mighty weighty book for a little
girl.

CHILD BARBARA
Oh, it ain't so weighty.

He lights his pipe. Barbara studies him.

CHILD BARBARA (CONT'D)
Daddy?

DADDY
What Sport?

CHILD BARBARA
Daddy, why did Mama tell Ronny
Spurlow that I was doin' chores,
when she knew we was eatin' supper.

DADDY
Well Sport, I reckon she didn't
want to hurt Ronny's feelings. You
see, we're fortunate to have the
money to buy food for supper.
Ronny's family, well... times are
tough.

CHILD BARBARA
Why don't we give them some of
ours?

DADDY
(Smiles)
Well Sport, I don't expect you to
understand quite yet. You will when
you get older.

CHILD BARBARA
Understand what?

DADDY
Well... If we just gave them some
food, it would be like giving them
a handout. Ronny's Daddy would feel
ashamed. It would hurt his dignity.

CHILD BARBARA
That's not what he said.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DADDY

Oh?

CHILD BARBARA

Mr. Spurlow, he said he'd take anything.

DADDY

Well Sport, he would say that. But he's a proud man. All men are proud. It's sort of an unwritten agreement among men that no matter how much you say you want a handout, you never really want one. You see? He might say he'd take anything, he might even accept anything, but... he will never... want to. And we must never go against a man's deepest wishes.

CHILD BARBARA

I don't-

DADDY

I know, I know. You'll just have to trust me on this one, Sport.

He pats her knee and stands.

DADDY (CONT'D)

Come on now, it's gettin' late.

He holds the door open, as Barbara takes her cue and walks in.

BARBARA (V.O.)

Daddy was like that. It seemed no matter how much he would explain something, there would always be more questions afterward.

INT. CHILD BARBARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark and she is lying in bed with her hands behind her head, looking thoughtfully out her second-story window. The black arms of a cottonwood shift slowly in the light breeze.

After a moment, we hear a low HUMMING SOUND and a pulsing red light drifts down into view, shining through the branches from the other side of the tree. Barbara watches it, as it watches her. She shows no sign of fear or surprise - it has come every night for as long as she can remember.

(CONTINUED)

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Then, a greenish light flashes on, flooding Barbara and her room with a beam brighter than the sun. She closes her eyes, as usual. Then, the bright light fades away and the red light floats up and away.

She pulls the covers up and falls asleep.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD MARKET - DAY

The grocer is standing on the sidewalk, arms akimbo, looking up and down the street anxiously. "Agostino's Market, Fresh Fish" is printed on a long sign over the windows running the width of the store. Another postcard shot. Barbara comes skipping by.

CHILD BARBARA
Hey, Mr. Agostino.

MR. AGOSTINO
Hey, Barbara.

We TRACK with Barbara as she cuts through an empty lot next to the store. It's attractive and bucolic, like everything else we see in Farmingtown.

She stops when she notices Ronny crouched behind a bush, holding a shopping bag, eating a slice of bread with his brother Donny.

CHILD BARBARA
Hey fellas, what'cha doin'?

Ronnie grabs her and pulls her down with them.

RONNY
(Hushed)
We're playing a game.

CHILD BARBARA
What kinda game?

RONNY
Shh.

Ronny looks back toward the market.

CHILD BARBARA
What's in the bag?

RONNY
Hey Barbara, remember my puppy?

CHILD BARBARA
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RONNY

You want one too, just like it?

CHILD BARBARA

Sure!

RONNY

Come on.

He checks back one last time, then signals to the two and they run across the lot into the...

FARMINGTOWN WOODS

From a HIGH WIDE ANGLE we watch the trio jump over logs and zigzag through a patch of scraggly trees growing along a stream. Their path follows the stream down to a valley of once-prosperous farms.

EXT. SPURLOW HOUSE - DAY

A sharp contrast to Barbara's place. It's flat, crooked, shabby, littered with broken down trucks, fronted by a lot that has been defoliated by farm animals and hyperactive kids.

Five wild, shoeless children have a small girl tied to a stake, and are doing an Indian dance around her. She doesn't seem too concerned.

The haggard mother is hanging wash on a line. Ronny, Donny and Barbara run past her through the front door.

INT. SPURLOW LIVING ROOM

It's big, bare and dim, with one threadbare rug. The unshaven father is slumped in an easy chair, reading a paper.

MR. SPURLOW

(Shouting, as always)

Hey you kids! Slow down! You're driving me crazy!

They continue running into the...

SPURLOW BACK ROOM

Another big, bare room with several mattresses on the floor. They run to a wood box in the center and look in.

ANGLE INTO BOX

Four little ill-bred puppy faces look up at Barbara with their big, sad eyes. She falls in love.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHILD BARBARA
Oh Ronny, they're darling!

RONNY
(Shouting)
Hey Pop! There were six this
morning! What happened?

ANGLE ON RONNY AND BARBARA

Barbara picks one up tenderly. It licks her face.

MR. SPURLOW (O.S.)
If you don't get rid of them damn
dogs, I will! They ain't no good
for target practice or eatin' or
nothin'! You hear me!?

RONNY
You want one, Bar?

CHILD BARBARA
Sure!

MR. SPURLOW (O.S.)
You hear me!?

RONNY
Okay, they're twenty cents apiece.

CHILD BARBARA
Twenty?

RONNY
Ten.

CHILD BARBARA
Ten?

RONNY
I'd give one to you for free,
but...

He looks down and runs a hand across his perpetually runny
nose. Something clicks with Barbara.

CHILD BARBARA
I understand. It would be like a
handout.

RONNY
Yeah.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHILD BARBARA
Oh, Bobby, that's so sweet.

He looks at her.

CHILD BARBARA (CONT'D)
You don't want me to be ashamed. I understand.

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out a handful of coins. Ronny's mouth drops.

CHILD BARBARA (CONT'D)
Here's twenty cents.

RONNY
Hell, I'll give you the whole box for thirty.

CHILD BARBARA
I don't want you to give me anything, Ronny. I know about pride.

RONNY
Okay, forty.

CHILD BARBARA
My mama would never allow me to have a whole box of puppies. I only want one. This one. I'm going to name him, Fluffy.

Ronny and Donny look at each other with "gag me" expressions. Barbara doesn't notice. She looks down at the one she is holding and snuggles it.

BARBARA (V.O.)
It was more than my first puppy. It was my first love.

EXT. WEINER BACKYARD - A YEAR LATER

Barbara and Fluffy cavort in the grass. She rolls onto the ground and the dog jumps on her and licks her face. Fluffy has grown into a large and somewhat fearsome black Rottweiler.

BARBARA (V.O.)
We had a bond that ran deeper than the Grand Canyon. I remember my time with Fluffy was filled with such innocent, overwhelming joy.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I couldn't imagine what people were talking about when they spoke of all the misery brought on by the Depression. What a lot of fuss? I thought the Depression would just go away on its own if everyone had something to love.

EXT. FARMINGTOWN POND - DAY

Barbara is sitting on a clump of grass with her dog, watching children play in the water.

A branch of a old oak hangs over the deep end and some of the big kids are using it as a diving board. Ronny runs to Barbara dripping wet.

RONNY
 Hey Bar, come in with us.

CHILD BARBARA
 My Daddy said not to.

RONNY
 Why?

CHILD BARBARA
 It's too dangerous.

RONNY
 No, it ain't. Come on.

CHILD BARBARA
 Nah, I better not.

RONNY
 Well, suit yourself. Hey, watch me jump off the branch.

CHILD BARBARA
 Ronny, No!

It's too late. He's already tearing across the dirt toward the tree. Barbara stands.

CHILD BARBARA (CONT'D)
 It's too dangerous! You'll drown!

She watches tensely, as he climbs the tree, walks gingerly out the branch and stands at the end. A BIG KID comes up right behind him and waits by the trunk. The branch bends.

BIG KID
 Hurry up, you little squirt.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ronny bends over and stares way down to the shallow brown water below.

BIG KID (CONT'D)
Are you gonna dive in or not?!

He is suddenly paralyzed by fear. The Big Kid takes another step out onto the branch, causing the branch to pitch up and down.

RONNY
(Screaming)
Stop!

BIG KID
Go on, jump then!

RONNY
I can't! Stop!

The Big Kid bounces. Ronny starts to lose his balance.

RONNY (CONT'D)
Stop! I want off! Stop!

BIG KID
Jump, you little turd!

Ronny falls off, SCREAMING. He topples head over heels through the air, and plunges into the water head first. The others stare.

ANGLE ON BARBARA

She is too frightened to scream.

RESUME THE KIDS

The ripples calm where Ronny entered the water. The kids watch and wait. No Ronny. The Big Kid dives in after him. After a moment, he surfaces and takes a breath, then goes back under. He comes up again.

BIG KID (CONT'D)
(To everyone)
Someone get help! I can't see him!

A few of the older kids run off.

ANGLE ON FLUFFY

Watching intently. He lets out a deep BARK and charges toward the water.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHILD BARBARA
Fluffy! No!

ANGLE WATER

Without missing a beat, Fluffy flies five feet through the air and dives in like a pro.

EXT. UNDERWATER

We FOLLOW Fluffy as he deftly swims through the murk in search of Ronny. There he is, deep underwater. His foot is stuck under a rock or board.

Fluffy grabs Ronny's pants in his teeth, and pulls back with all his might, totally focused, willing to give his life to save the boy. Finally with his lungs bursting, Fluffy pulls the boy free.

EXT. FARMINGTOWN POND

Fluffy and Ronny bob to the surface and a CHEER rings out among the kids. Barbara is crying with joy, as she runs to the water's edge.

Fluffy drags Ronny to the shore just as two men rush up. They carry Ronny to dry land and start artificial respiration. Fluffy scrambles out of the water and shakes himself, as all the kids rush over and give him a hug.

Barbara stands back and watches him with admiration overflowing.

BARBARA (V.O.)
I have never felt prouder than at that moment. Here was a living being who had set aside his fear and gave everything he had in this world to save another. None of my accomplishments in life, including the three Academy Awards, would ever compare. I would always feel the utmost humility toward Fluffy.

EXT. WOODS

Barbara and Fluffy are walking together slowly up the trail by the stream.

BARBARA (V.O.)
Walking alongside this big dog, I was in awe of his greatness. I no longer felt that I was his master. But fate was to have its way.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Like a cannon shot, I was to be propelled full force into life, in a direction over which I had no control.

EXT. WEINER HARDWARE STORE - EVENING

Barbara, Fluffy and Ronny are meeting Daddy as he locks up the store. Daddy places a hand on Barbara's back and they head off.

BARBARA (V.O.)

All through the summer of '37, I would meet Daddy outside his hardware store at closing time. It was one of the few stores in town that hadn't gone under.

DADDY

How you feeling, Ronny?

RONNY

Almost a hundred percent.

DADDY

That's good.

RONNY

Foot's still a little sore though.

DADDY

Well, shoes might help.

RONNY

Yeah, maybe.

DADDY

You got some don't you?

RONNY

Not really.

DADDY

What are you going to do when school starts? You can't go without shoes.

Ronny thinks about that.

RONNY

Pop says I can't go to school no how.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DADDY
(Embarrassed)
I see. Well...

RONNY
Got chores to do.

DADDY
Yup. It takes a lot of work to run
a farm. What are you raising?
Chickens, corn...?

RONNY
Nothin'. Can't afford nothin'. Pop
says we might just pull up stakes
and move off to California.

CHILD BARBARA
Where abouts? Hollywood?

RONNY
Wouldn't be Hollywood. That's for
sure. Maybe Pacoima.

They suddenly look up and stop.

ANGLE - THEIR POV

The silhouetted figure of a man staggers to the center of the
sidewalk and faces them. He raises a liquor bottle high and
drinks it down to the last drop.

MR. SPURLOW
Hey Weiner, what are you doing with
my kid?

ANGLE ON THE GROUP

DADDY
We are walking him home.

MR. SPURLOW
I'll walk him home. Give him to me.

Daddy puts his hand on Ronny's shoulder.

DADDY
It's no trouble.

MR. SPURLOW
Give him to me, Goddamnit! He
belongs to me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DADDY

I don't think you're in any shape
to-

MR. SPURLOW

He's my goddamn kid! Mine! Get your
goddamn hands off him! Don't you
have enough already, with your big
house and your fancy hardware
store? You own half the goddamn
town and now you're trying to take
my kid, too? Well, you can't have
him. He's all I have left. And he's
mine.

Spurlow moves toward them into the light. He is the picture
of evil. Daddy steps back, holding the children away from
him.

DADDY

Spurlow, I'm not trying to take
your child. Why don't you just
settle down and we can-

MR. SPURLOW

See this?

Spurlow pulls out a knife and waves it at them.

MR. SPURLOW (CONT'D)

Now, you're not so high and mighty.
What'cha got in the bag?

DADDY

You don't want to do this, Spurlow.
You're just digging your own grave.
Stop now before-

MR. SPURLOW

I'm digging my grave?! I'm digging
my goddamn grave?!

(Loud evil laugh)

My grave has already been dug and
I'm lying in it now just waiting
for them to start shoveling in the
dirt. I've got nothin'. Nothin'
except a house full of goddamn kids
and dogs and chickens and shit. And
that's nothin'. So, I got nothin'
to lose.

He grabs Ronny's arm and Fluffy springs into action. Taking
everyone by surprise, he lunges at Spurlow and wrestles him
to the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MR. SPURLOW (CONT'D)
Get him off me! Get this goddamn
animal off me!

The struggle ensues.

DADDY
Call him off, Barbara.

CHILD BARBARA
(After a moment)
Fluffy stop. Fluffy!

Fluffy turns to her, allowing Spurlow just enough time to free his arm and plunge his knife into the dog. Fluffy YELPS and Spurlow leaps to his feet. The group stares in horror for a beat. Then, Spurlow runs off into the darkness.

CHILD BARBARA (CONT'D)
Fluffy!

She kneels beside him, holds him. He is bleeding badly, panting, unable to move. Ronny kneels too and begins to cry.

BARBARA (V.O.)
I'm sure there was a lot of sadness
in the world during those years,
but at that moment everything
stopped for one little girl. With
Fluffy's passing, my life changed.
I learned what heartache felt like.
And no matter how many years pass,
a heartache never, ever goes away.

INT. CHILD BARBARA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barbara is sitting up in bed, bent over weeping quietly. Out the window, the red light watches.

EXT. FARMINGTOWN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

TITLE: TWELVE YEARS LATER

CLOSE SHOT WHISTLE as the bandleader counts down.

ANGLE ON BAND

The Farmingtown Falcons marching band starts up big and bold, percussion pulsing, horns almost in tune.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON FIELD

The energy level is in the red. The FHS cheerleader squad bounces out to the sidelines and leads the packed stadium in a rousing cheer as the seconds tick down.

ANGLE FOOTBALL PLAYERS

CRUNCH. The teams collide, a Falcon goes wide, the ball is tossed, the end zone is mere yards away.

We TRACK with FHS Number 43 as he receives the pass with ease and melts through the defense.

ANGLE CHEERLEADERS

At least half the eyes in the stadium are on the award-winning cheerleading staff, as they mount an impossible routine, with breath-taking moves, culminating in a spectacular pyramid.

ANGLE NUMBER 43

He glides past the last of the defense and sails unimpeded the remaining few feet. Touchdown!

ANGLE SCOREBOARD

The final second ticks away. FHS wins!

ANGLE CROWD

Everyone is on their feet, confetti and streamers flying.

ANGLE CHEERLEADERS

What a show! Their arms are raised high, shaking their blue and gold pompons with zeal. We MOVE IN to a CLOSE SHOT of the girl standing on top of all those shoulders, the prettiest one, the one with the biggest smile of all.

ANGLE ON PLAYERS

As they trot in line toward the locker room under the stadium. Number 43 stops and faces the cheerleaders. One of them sees 43 standing there and runs to him.

YOUNG BARBARA

Tommy!

TOMMY

Hey Barb, did you see me? Did you see me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG BARBARA

I sure did! It was wonderful.
You're wonderful.

TOMMY

Ah shucks.

YOUNG BARBARA

It looked so effortless. And you
did it, Tommy. I can't believe it.
I'm so proud.

They hug.

TOMMY

Gotta run, kid.

He turns and heads to the locker room.

A couple of girls watching the scene turn to each other and
GIGGLE.

INT. WEINER'S DRUG STORE FOUNTAIN - DAY

Barbara is seated with the two girls, VIV and FLO, drinking
sodas.

VIV

He's such a dreamboat. I'd give
anything to be you, Barb.

FLO

Half the girls in Farmingtown
would.

YOUNG BARBARA

It's just a date.

FLO

Listen to her, just a date. He's
just the most dreamy boy in the
world.

VIV

He's so big and strong. Oh, just to
feel his arms around me...

FLO

Are you gonna let him kiss you?

YOUNG BARBARA

I might. If I feel like it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIV

Oh. How could you not feel like it?

YOUNG BARBARA

You girls are all making such a big fuss about this. He's just a boy...

FLO & VIV

Just a boy.

YOUNG BARBARA

And when he's got his arms around me, it feels just like any other boy's arms...

FLO & VIV

Any other boy.

YOUNG BARBARA

With the addition of a few more muscles...

FLO & VIV

Muscles.

YOUNG BARBARA

And he's bigger...

FLO & VIV

Bigger.

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh, stop it.

They GIGGLE.

FLO

All I gotta say is, if you don't think you're the luckiest girl in the world, you're screwy.

YOUNG BARBARA

I feel lucky.

VIV

You don't act it.

YOUNG BARBARA

I feel it. But when it comes right down to it, I just don't think Tommy is...

FLO & VIV

Tommy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG BARBARA

Stop it. I just don't share your opinion of him... after having real personal experience with him...

FLO & VIV

(Melting)

Ohhh.

YOUNG BARBARA

I mean he's big and strong and handsome and popular and fun to be with and he's a really nice boy, with a good family and all, but-

VIV

Is there anything else?!

YOUNG BARBARA

Yeah. I don't love him.

Viv and Flo just shake their heads.

INT. FHS GYM - NIGHT

A big Homecoming Dance is shaking down the rafters. A hep twenty-piece swing band is playing and the floor is alive with a few hundred jivin' teens, cooking on hormones.

And there's Tommy and Barbara, center floor, all lit-up by two hot follow spots. He's big and cute, but she's the one who owns the place. We had no idea this little dumpling could dance like this, and she's got a knockout figure to boot. Near the end of the tune the drummer takes a solo, and Barbara takes the lead, moving her big football player around the floor like a piece of furniture. Under his legs, over his shoulders and ending with a leap in the air, landing split-legged on the floor. The crowd goes wild.

INT. FHS GYM - LATE

The evening is slowing and the MUSIC is right for romance. Barbara is having an uninspiring dance with another boy, REX. She's tired, but has a duty to fulfill as the prettiest, most popular girl in the world. Rex is a short, skinny kid, who is dancing a bit too close for her taste. His eyes are closed in a state of utter bliss.

YOUNG BARBARA

(Sweetly)

Rex, honey. It's kind of warm. Do you think you could give me a little more room?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His eyes open, spell broken.

REX
I'm sorry, Barbara.

He backs away, then slowly closes in again as his eyes fade shut. He starts to work his left hand down her back, and pull her in tight against him. She feels something and looks down. He's breathing heavier. She knows the symptoms.

YOUNG BARBARA
Rex, honey.

REX
(Spell broken again)
What?

YOUNG BARBARA
Rex, I don't want you to embarrass yourself.

REX
What do you m... What do you...

YOUNG BARBARA
I mean... we need a little more room between us.

REX
I'm sorry.

Maybe some banal conversation will change the mood.

YOUNG BARBARA
How do you like Mr. Neilson?

REX
Uh, I don't know.

YOUNG BARBARA
I had him last year for biology. I never thought I'd enjoy that subject, but he somehow brings it to life. Don't you think?

REX
Yeah.

YOUNG BARBARA
Have you dissected the frogs yet?

REX
I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG BARBARA

It's fascinating. All those little organs. Have you ever seen a frog's insides?

REX

Yeah, but not on purpose.

(Beat)

Umm, do we have to talk about dead frogs?

YOUNG BARBARA

What would you rather talk about?

REX

(Beat)

All I can think about is you. You're so... pretty.

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh Rex, how sweet.

They look into each other's eyes, then Barbara closes hers and moves in slowly.

She plants a long, g-rated kiss on his quivering lips. We can almost hear a few zits pop on his face. His heart is pounding out of control. She backs away. He's Jell-O.

REX

Oh, my God. Oh, my God. I don't feel so good.

YOUNG BARBARA

Just relax. Take deep breaths.

REX

I can't. This is the best moment of my life. You're so wonderful.

YOUNG BARBARA

You are too, Rex.

REX

Do you mean it?

YOUNG BARBARA

Sure.

REX

You don't mean it. You don't have to.

(Beat)

Will you kiss me again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The TUNE ends, the crowd applauds.

YOUNG BARBARA
Some other time, maybe.

REX
Thank you for the dance.

YOUNG BARBARA
You're welcome. Good-bye.

She leaves him, passing through the crowd like an angel.

REX
(To the angel)
Barbara. For one brief moment, our paths intersected and you came to earth and touched me with your soul and made me whole. I shall now be forced to compare every other event in my life to this one, and I know in my heart I will never be any closer to God than I have been tonight.

EXT. TOWN SQUARE - NIGHT

A bucolic band is playing Sousa in the gazebo. Could it be a scene from The Music Man? It's a warm Spring evening - kids are frolicking in the grass, happy people are walking by eating popcorn and cotton candy, lightening bugs are flickering in the trees.

BARBARA (V.O.)
School was over and everyone in town was eager to get out and socialize. It seemed like any other Friday evening in Farmingtown - same people, same place, same small talk. It didn't seem like the time and place for a life-changing event of monumental proportions.

Barbara, Flo and Viv come into VIEW strolling giddily along a path in the park.

FLO
My mom says she'll give me a chair in her beauty salon, but I don't know... I'm not sure I want to work for her the rest of my life. It's been 18 years, after all. Time for a break.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VIV

What about finding a man?

FLO

I think they're supposed to find me, not the other way around.

VIV

Is it up to the fish to find a hook?

FLO

No.

VIV

Right. That's what bait's for.

FLO

Bait, shmait. I've tried every gimmick in the book. The only way I'm going to get lucky, is to carry a big club around.

YOUNG BARBARA

Don't you worry, Flo. You'll get your man.

FLO

What makes you so sure?

YOUNG BARBARA

If you want something bad enough, it'll come to you.

FLO

Cute story.

They're by the public restroom.

FLO (CONT'D)

Listen, I got to powder my nose.

VIV

Me too.

(To Barbara)

You coming?

YOUNG BARBARA

I'll wait here.

They walk off. Barbara listens to the BAND and the water RUSHING in the stream by the path. She glances over to a small bridge spanning the stream and recognizes a solitary male figure, sitting on the railing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

She walks over to the person, approaching him from behind.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

Ronny?

The figure turns and faces us. One would be hard-pressed to draw a comparison between this Ronny and the unwashed 6-year-old. He has dark, to-die-for eyes, black wavy hair. He could easily be classified as a dreamboat, but has chosen a life apart from the masses.

TEEN RONNY

(Aloof)

Barbara. Long time, no see.

YOUNG BARBARA

I've been busy... Being queen for a day.

TEEN RONNY

I hear you're a cheerleader.

YOUNG BARBARA

Something like that.

He pulls out a pack of Camels, offers Barbara one.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

No thanks.

He lights up.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

So, how are you doing?

TEEN RONNY

Can't complain.

YOUNG BARBARA

I saw your name on the honor roll.

TEEN RONNY

Oh yeah?

YOUNG BARBARA

You must be proud. You've accomplished so much. And you did it all on your own.

TEEN RONNY

It ain't much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

YOUNG BARBARA

How can you say that? You started with... with nothing, and you did this on your own. Most of the kids in school have everything handed to them and don't appreciate any of it. You... you're special.

TEEN RONNY

Yeah, I'm special all right. So, is there a point to all this?

He looks away from her and takes a long drag off his cigarette.

YOUNG BARBARA

I suppose not.

(Beat)

What's wrong?

TEEN RONNY

Nothing that would concern you.

Barbara stares at him for a moment, then turns and walks away. Ronny flicks his cigarette in the water. Barbara stops by the post at the end of the bridge, looks down. Ronny faces her back. They wait like that for what seems like forever.

Then, Barbara turns and runs to him. She grabs him and hugs him with all her might. He reaches around her and they embrace passionately, longingly, making up for all the lost years. They pull apart, smile. They're speechless, but somehow know. They close their eyes and kiss deeply.

ANGLE ON VIV AND FLO

They have been watching the two with mouths agape.

FLO

I know who that is. Isn't that the new kid from Wichita? Dwayne something?

VIV

I don't think so. This one's taller, not as fat.

FLO

Do you think I can safely ask her for the football player now?

VIV

I get the football player. You can have the auto shop guy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FLO

What am I supposed to do with an auto shop guy? I'll take the class president.

VIV

You said he was cute.

FLO

So, I changed mind.
(Watching)
They haven't moved. Do you think they're in trouble?

VIV

Yup. Big trouble.

RESUME BARBARA AND RONNY

They are still locked in a passionate, all-consuming embrace. Finally, they come up for air.

YOUNG BARBARA

Wow.

TEEN RONNY

Yeah. You know, I can't help it. I keep seeing images of us skinny-dipping in the watering hole. Remember?

They laugh.

YOUNG BARBARA

Until my Daddy made me stop.

Viv SHOUTS to Barbara.

VIV (O.S.)

Hey, Barb. Let's beat it!

YOUNG BARBARA

Give me a minute.
(To Ronny)
You want to walk with us?

TEEN RONNY

No, I'd rather not.

YOUNG BARBARA

Come on.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

TEEN RONNY

I don't have much patience for
small talk.

YOUNG BARBARA

I understand. See you?

TEEN RONNY

Yeah.

Barbara leaves him and joins the two girls. They walk off,
chattering excitedly. Ronny turns away and walks slowly
across the bridge in the other direction.

EXT. FLO'S HOUSE - LATE

Flo and Barbara are walking in the dirt shoulder of a rural
residential street. It's late, quiet, they're alone. The
CAMERA starts HIGH and CRANES down to meet them.

FLO

So, you haven't said what you're
going to do.

YOUNG BARBARA

I don't know. I've been thinking
about a few things.

FLO

Like what?

YOUNG BARBARA

I could work in Dad's drug store,
then go to college somewhere next
fall.

FLO

Is that what you want to do?

YOUNG BARBARA

Sure. No. I don't know.

FLO

Well, I got to tell you. It'd be a
damn shame to let all your talent
go to waste.

YOUNG BARBARA

What talent?

FLO

Oh shut up. You got more talent in
your little finger than me and Viv
put together. You know you do.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLO (CONT'D)

I'd hate to see you ten years from now living in Farmingtown, with ten snot-nosed kids running around, married to some slob. It just wouldn't be right. Life would seem so hopeless.

YOUNG BARBARA

Well Flo, you know how the song goes, "You just have to take life one day at a time."

FLO

But you got to make plans.

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh sure. But how can you make plans if you don't know what's going to happen.

FLO

Uh. You make plans to make things happen.

YOUNG BARBARA

But you see, if you live your life according to a plan, you're liable to miss some golden opportunities.

FLO

(She yawns)

Well, what about this weekend?

They stop at the walkway to Flo's small house.

YOUNG BARBARA

No plans.

FLO

Maybe we'll find some golden opportunities.

YOUNG BARBARA

You never know.

Flo heads toward her house, Barbara continues on.

FLO

Night.

YOUNG BARBARA

Night.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Barbara walks a little faster now, bouncing along happily, oblivious. She starts to sing something she's heard on the radio.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

Oh well I'm
 Taking life one day at a time
 Living today
 On one thin dime.
 And when the money's all gone
 And I'm back on the streets
 I'll just pick myself up
 And say, ain't life sweet.
 Ain't life sweet, Ain't life sweet,
 I'll just pick myself up
 And put on a smile
 And drink another cup
 And walk another mile
 And then good fortune will come my
 way
 And I'll be all ready for another
 day.

Flo's house is adjacent to a...

EXT. SMALL PARK

The street becomes a well-worn path, as she bounces toward home. A barn owl HOOTS in a nearby tree and she becomes aware of the sound of her feet in the DRY LEAVES. The farther into the park she goes, the darker it gets and the denser the bushes become. Then, in the dim light of a half moon, she looks to the right. Something has caught her eye. It's the pulsing red light. She stops and stares. There is no SOUND, just the light, bright enough to be seen clearly through the thick bushes. It's almost hypnotic.

She starts to walk faster. She looks to the right. The light is tracking with her. She picks up speed, the light keeps up. She stops, the light stops. She decides to turn back. The light turns with her. No matter what she does, the light is right there. Then, she runs and the light grows in intensity. It pulls ahead of her and arcs around to cut her off. She stops.

The light moves out from behind the bushes and we can see what it's attached to, backlit by a streetlight. Barbara's eyes grow wide. The red light is a running light on a what appears to be a flying saucer. The saucer is small, 30 feet in diameter, and completely SILENT and smooth running as it levitates just above the ground.

Barbara is unable to move. It pulls to within a five feet of her and stops. Now she can make out a PURRING SOUND.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It hovers nearly motionless for some time, enough time for her to begin to regain her faculties. She turns and starts to walk away from it slowly, not sure how it will react. It doesn't move. She walks a little faster. Still no movement.

Then, the ground begins to shake and an unbearably powerful low rumble fills the air. She stops and covers her ears. She looks back. The saucer is right there, two feet away. All around her small pools of colored light appear on the lawn and trees. They move and undulate. The lights become more intense, and appear to come from above. She looks up and her heart stops.

ANGLE WIDE MOTHER SHIP

Barbara is a small figure, looking up. Over her, just above the trees, covering the entire area of the park is a mother ship. Its skin is deep black. We can only guess its shape by the myriad of running lights, pulsing and turning as the ship spins slowly.

Then a light kicks on, brighter than the sun. It SNAPS and POPS, ECHOING throughout the neighborhood with high voltage arcing SOUNDS. It grows into a powerful beam of green light that slices through the air with claps of THUNDER and illuminates all of Barbara in a tight laser spot.

ANGLE CLOSE ON BARBARA

The blinding light bleaches out all the color. She bends her head forward and covers her eyes. A wind starts to swirl around her. She opens her mouth and SCREAMS, but we can't HEAR her above the unearthly rumble.

DISSOLVE TO:

A FIELD OF WHITE

And the SOUND slowly dissipates.

INT. MOTHER SHIP

What we experience now is a montage of shapes and movements, voices and odd SOUNDS as Barbara is moved from place to place in a semi-conscious state. We assume she is aboard the ship, and aliens are examining her. We see a snatch of an alien face, very close, coming in and out of blinding green and red light. Then it is SILENT and very dark. Then an ear-piercing SHRIEK of SOUND cuts in and a mechanical movement of something over us, emitting a blue laser beam.

CUT TO:

BLACK

And Silence. Then...

SLOW DISSOLVE
TO:

INT. MOTHER SHIP EXAMINING ROOM

As Barbara awakens, she finds herself facing an odd-looking long-faced man, with pendulous earlobes. He is seated facing her. An identical man is standing behind this one. They are both wearing black suits, white shirts and wide ties. The seated one is staring straight into Barbara's eyes, cocking his head quizzically.

ALIEN 1
Wwwwemayga hhhhear yolllllpa...

The alien is trying to imitate human speech, but it SOUNDS backwards and processed. The alien tries again.

ALIEN 1 (CONT'D)
Kwwuuuhhh, kwuuhhhh, llllllip
(Snap, pop)
ggggger, kwaaahhh.

He seems to be frustrated with his inability to communicate. He shrugs and stands, offers the seat to the other alien.

ALIEN 2
Kwwuuuu, Kwwuuuu.
(No reaction)
Oy. Oy.

This SOUNDS the most human and Barbara reacts favorably. The aliens think they've made a breakthrough.

ALIEN 2 (CONT'D)
Oy! Oy! Oy vey!

This makes Barbara smile.

ALIEN 2 (CONT'D)
Oy vey, oy vey, oy vey!
(Snap, zzzit)
Kwwuuuu. Kwwuuuu. Puquashhhhh.

Her smile drops. This frustrates Alien 2. He points his three fingers at her face and turns his head away. The room starts to spin and she blacks out again.

CUT TO:

BLACK

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SMALL PARK - MORNING

The early morning light finds Barbara lying in the grass beside the path. There is no trace of aliens or flying saucers. She gets up slowly and collects her wits.

BARBARA (V.O.)

They didn't tell me to do anything in particular. It was more of a feeling, a very strong feeling. When I awoke in the park, I knew exactly what I wanted to do with my life - had to do. And I knew somehow everything would just work out. I had no choice.

INT. BARBARA'S FARMINGTOWN BEDROOM - DAY

She has locked her door and is frantically packing two suitcases. Her parents are outside the door questioning her and KNOCKING.

BARBARA (V.O.)

They weren't holding any gun to my head and I didn't feel tortured or brainwashed. On the contrary, I felt the utmost, overwhelming sense of well-being and joy. I was completely optimistic about my future. When I thought logically about what I was doing, I had to laugh. It all seemed so silly and absurd, even frightening. But I knew deep in my heart and soul, it was right.

INT. FARMINGTOWN TRAIN STATION

Barbara steps away from the ticket window and motions for Daddy, Mama and Buford to follow. With unearthly energy, she races toward the platform, carrying her two heavy suitcases. The three can barely keep up.

BARBARA (V.O.)

It wasn't some harebrained plan cooked up by a careless high school kid. It was a plan with a serious purpose. I knew it. I knew it with more certainty than anything in my life.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But if you were to ask me just what the purpose was, I couldn't tell you. I still can't. Because to this day, I've never figured it out.

DADDY

Now, if you get in trouble, just call me and I'll wire you money for a ticket home.

YOUNG BARBARA

Daddy, I'm not going to get in trouble. I told you. As soon as I get there, I'll find a job-

DADDY

What if you don't? Jobs aren't that easy to come by.

YOUNG BARBARA

I will. I know I will.

DADDY

Where will you stay?

YOUNG BARBARA

I'll find an apartment.

DADDY

I don't know. I'd feel better if you were living with a friend. It's not safe. It's a big city.

YOUNG BARBARA

I'll invite Flo once I get settled. Everything will be okay.

MAMA

Barbara, there are so many details. We... You haven't had time to sort everything out properly. Can't you give it a month... a week?

YOUNG BARBARA

No.

MAMA

I'm afraid this whole thing is just going to blow up in our faces.

YOUNG BARBARA

It won't. Besides, it's my face. I know what I'm doing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAMA

I'm not so sure.

EXT. FARMINGTOWN TRAIN STATION PLATFORM

They head out toward the waiting train.

DADDY

You don't even have a map.

YOUNG BARBARA

I can get maps and newspapers and toothpaste and underwear and anything else I've forgotten when I get there.

MAMA

My little daughter's leaving. I can't believe it.

(Crying)

What about all of us and your friends? It's all so sudden. All our plans...

She stops and turns to them.

YOUNG BARBARA

All right. You've all brought up some interesting points. Believe it or not, I've thought about all these things. I'm not stupid.

MAMA

I didn't say you were...

YOUNG BARBARA

You see, if I just think about all the reasons I shouldn't go, I'd be here forever. Logical, realistic thinkers will always find reasons why something shouldn't be done. Why, I'll bet I could think of a thousand reasons why we don't need an Eifel Tower or a Statue of Liberty. And what about a Revolutionary War? Think of all the risks involved with that. I love you all and you've done a good job raising a wise, intelligent girl. But I've made up my mind and I'm not going to change it. So, instead of thinking up more reasons why I'm going to fail, well, I could sure use some help with my bags.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They chew on that for a moment, then Buford steps forward.

BUFORD

I'll help you on one condition.

(She looks right at him)

You give me your autograph when you
become rich and famous.

That breaks the ice. Barbara hands Buford the bags, then she runs to Daddy and Mama, and hugs them good-bye. Last, she hugs and kisses Buford.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)

All Aboard!

Buford and Barbara make a mad dash for the train. Buford sets the bags inside and hops out just as the train starts forward.

ANGLE TRAIN WINDOW

Barbara comes to the window, looks out with a big smile and waves with glee.

ANGLE HER POV - THREE ON PLATFORM

As she pulls away from them, they are standing on the platform, waving, with perplexed, sad looks.

ANGLE WINDOW

Barbara's smile droops just a little. She hadn't considered how lost they would feel without her. Then, something else catches her eye and the smile fades.

ANGLE HER POV - RONNY

How did he know she was... He is leaning against a post smoking a cigarette. As the car passes, he gives her a small two-finger salute from the brow.

ANGLE WINDOW

She continues watching until she can no longer see the station, then she leans back out of view.

INT. L.A. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A crowd is approaching us from the tunnel leading in from the platform. We SEE Barbara in the crush and PULL her through the doors into the main station. She looks up and all around in utter amazement, never having seen anything like this. She continues through the cavernous station, carrying her heavy bags, hardly looking down once.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

ANGLE ON THE DOOR from inside, as it opens revealing Barbara with her bags. She's instantly swept back to reality when she sees what a cheap hotel in Hollywood looks and smells like.

She sets her bags by the saggy single bed and pulls back the curtains, letting in a rush of city light, including the "OTE" of a blinking red neon sign. Opening the window lets in NOISE and smog and a cacophony of other bad smells and sensual experiences, such as a drunk couple arguing just outside.

She sits on the bed, tired, dejected. Then slowly we see the transition, which we have seen so often from the indomitable Barbara Weiner. In one moment she is near the point of all-out panic. In the next, a smile takes hold and her adventurous, unflagging optimism returns brighter than ever.

INT. DRUG STORE LUNCH COUNTER - NIGHT

She walks to the counter and sits. It's empty, some of the lights are off. A head pops up. MADGE is written on her badge.

MADGE

Sorry honey, we're closed.

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh darn.

MADGE

Nearest counter open now is down on Fairfax.

YOUNG BARBARA

Which way is that?

Madge comes over.

MADGE

You don't know Fairfax? How long have you lived here?

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh, let's see, about an hour.

MADGE

An hour! Geez.

(Shakes her head)

Okay, just this time. I got some soup, some coffee. About it. Grill's off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG BARBARA
Just some soup would be nice.

Madge gets the soup.

MADGE
You staying someplace?

YOUNG BARBARA
At the Carlton Arms.

MADGE
(Making a face)
Ooo, sorry to hear that. You must
be from... let me guess, umm, Iowa.

YOUNG BARBARA
Pretty close. Nebraska.

MADGE
That would've been my second guess.

YOUNG BARBARA
Where you from?

MADGE
New York. Been here, oh, six
months.

YOUNG BARBARA
So, we're both new to the area.
What a coincidence.

MADGE
Actually, no. Everybody in LA's
from someplace else. The whole
country's moving in. Can I give you
some advice?

YOUNG BARBARA
Sure.

MADGE
Go back.
(Sets the bowl in front of
her)
But if you must stay, you got to be
more careful who you talk to. I'm
okay. But you tell the wrong guy
where you live, where you work.
Pretty soon you got trouble.
(Goes back to cleaning)
You got a job? It's okay, you can
tell me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG BARBARA

Well, not yet. I'm going to be a movie star.

MADGE

Ha! Another coincidence. So am I, and half the people in the city. Get in line, honey. If you want to make it, you either got to be very talented, very lucky, or willing to, you know, bend over backwards. Actually no, you don't need talent.

Madge moves away from Barbara, wiping the counter. Barbara was about to take a bite of soup, but she's suddenly not hungry anymore.

EXT. PARAMOUNT GATES - DAY

Barbara is standing in the driveway looking up at the gate. A limo HONKS and she steps out of the way. She tries to look in but the windows are tinted. The guard smiles and salutes the limo through. Then he looks back at Barbara, without the smile, and points down the street with his thumb.

INT. PARAMOUNT ADMINISTRATION HALL - DAY

We PULL Barbara down the hall. She is reading the signs on the doors. She goes in one labeled "Personnel".

INT. PARAMOUNT PERSONNEL OFFICE

It's a big very unglamorous room, filled with wannabe's sitting around anxiously. She goes to a counter. Before she can get a word out, the bored woman points to a tray of blank applications. Next to it is where the filled-out applications go. We know this, because there are big signs over them and they are full.

INT. MGM PERSONNEL OFFICE

Same type of atmosphere. Barbara is seated at a long desk, filling her application out.

INT. WARNERS PERSONNEL

Same deal. This one at least has windows.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

She is lying back on the bed, listening to the RADIO, red neon light blinking O.S. We FOLLOW her legs down. They are dangling over the end of the bed, feet soaking in a tub of hot water.

INT. DRUG STORE LUNCH COUNTER - DAY

She's drinking coffee, reading the ads in Variety, while Madge rushes orders around.

YOUNG BARBARA

Here's one. "Quality Actors Wanted,
any age, any type, send photo,
stats, five dollar initiation fee."

MADGE

Pass. They take your money and you
never hear from them.

YOUNG BARBARA

"Actors needed, all ages, must be
willing to..."

(reads to herself)

My word.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD - DAY

She's pounding the pavement, reading the names in the stars
as she passes over them. It's hot.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Barbara is writing a letter home.

INT. WEINER DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Daddy and Buford are crowded around Mama reading the letter.
They get to a part and look up at each other. Daddy shakes
his head.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Barbara is deep asleep. Morning sunlight is beginning to pry
through the east-facing window. There's a KNOCK on the door.
She bolts upright, shakes her head. KNOCK. She gets up, looks
for her robe.

YOUNG BARBARA

Just a minute.

Finds it on the floor, puts it on, starts to open the door,
stops.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

Who is it?

MUZZY

Muzzy from downstairs. You got a
phone call.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG BARBARA
Be right there.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

The hotel is one notch up from a flophouse. Barbara runs in from the elevator and over to the payphone. Muzzy can hear everything, as he sits behind the counter reading a racing form.

YOUNG BARBARA
This is Barbara. Yes. Yes. Sure,
umm, I need to... Can you hold,
please.
(To Muzzy, excitedly)
I need something to write with,
please.

He reluctantly bends over the counter and hands her a pen, no paper. She'll use the wall, like everyone else.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)
Umm, okay, I'm ready.

INT. PARAMOUNT TYPING POOL

ANGLE ON BARBARA

She is dressed pretty, smiling big. A hand reaches in.

WOMAN'S VOICE
Congratulations. I'm Mrs. Fernwood.

We DOLLY BACK to reveal MRS. FERNWOOD standing before six other girls. Behind her is a long table with stacks of colored paper. The woman is bored with her job, the girls and life.

MRS. FERNWOOD
You're all here today because you girls claimed to have some aptitude for typing. Well, if you're lucky and do a good job, you'll get to do that someday. For now, your job as script collator is to collate the scripts.

She turns to the table and points.

MRS. FERNWOOD (CONT'D)
The changed pages come in over there.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. FERNWOOD (CONT'D)
 You take the old pages out, put the
 new pages in, rebind them and put
 them over there. Sounds easy, but
 it's not.

She turns back to them and paces like a drill sergeant.

MRS. FERNWOOD (CONT'D)
 Your biggest enemy is sheer and
 utter boredom, tedium as you've
 never known. One day you put page
 63 in where page 73 should be, the
 actor who gets the script complains
 and in a flash you're looking for a
 new job. The actors and directors
 have no tolerance for incompetence.
 And I assure you, we have no
 shortage of people with your
 skills. Any questions?

The girls slump on beat.

ANGLE ON CLOCK

It's 8:00am.

MATCH DISSOLVE
 TO:

INT. PARAMOUNT TYPING POOL - LATER

2:33PM.

ANGLE ON BARBARA

As she stuffs the pages. It's dreadful work, but she's
 smiling and HUMMING a sweet song. She finishes one. We TRACK
 with the script as it's handed down the line to the last
 girl, who plunks it on a finished pile. Fernwood enters from
 a side office. We TRACK with her as she walks back down the
 line of bored faces to smiling Barbara.

MRS. FERNWOOD
 Excuse me, young lady.

YOUNG BARBARA
 Me? I'm Barbara.

MRS. FERNWOOD
 Right. I need to have that stack of
 scripts taken down to stage 11,
 right away. I can't wait for the
 messenger. Do you think you can
 handle that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG BARBARA

(Excited)

Sure, Mrs. Fernwood. Where's stage 11?

MRS. FERNWOOD

(Turning away)

Now. And don't make any mistakes.

INT. STAGE 11

A standard living room set. The actors and crew are in the last tense moments of a difficult master shot. DORIS MANCHESTER, the star, is in her final position, seated on the couch. A well-dressed man is standing over her swirling brandy in a snifter. The Director DWAYNE GARRIS stands.

GARRIS

Annnnd cut. Beautiful. One more right away.

Doris gets up and starts to walk out.

GARRIS (CONT'D)

Doris? Doris, honey, just one more. That one was so close.

She still has her classy English character on.

MANCHESTER

Dwayne, honey, you have it already in one of the other 22 takes. Call me when you're ready for the close up.

GARRIS

Please.

MANCHESTER

What exactly was wrong with it this time?

GARRIS

You missed your second mark by mere inches. Inches. It was so close. The light was... You don't want your face to be in the dark, do you?

She is steaming now and we see her Brooklyn roots coming through.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANCHESTER

Dwayne, you got me running all over the place hitting your damn marks. I feel like I'm taking Cha-cha lessons at Arthur fucking Murray's.

GARRIS

I know. It's a difficult scene-

MANCHESTER

Difficult. It's a fucking marathon. I am an actress. You have the shot. I'm going to my dressing room.

She sashays away. Now, Dwayne's Bronx roots show.

GARRIS

(Shouting)

So, what am I supposed to do?

MANCHESTER

You're smart. You'll figure it out.

She's off. Dwayne storms back to the crew hanging around the camera. On his way by the Assistant Director MOE heading toward his office...

GARRIS

Next setup.

MOE

We need a stand in, Mr. Garris. You sent her home.

GARRIS

(Shouting)

You're smart. You'll figure it out.

Garris disappears. Moe turns to the cameraman, shaking his head.

MOE

(To All)

All right, ladies and gentlemen, next setup.

A grip pushes the camera out of the SHOT, revealing Barbara standing there, holding the stack of scripts. Her mouth is hanging open. Moe looks up from his clipboard, sees her.

MOE (CONT'D)

Hey, come here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG BARBARA

Me?

MOE

You think I'm talking to the
fucking wall?

YOUNG BARBARA

Sorry.

She steps up.

MOE

What you got?

YOUNG BARBARA

I was told to-

MOE

Oh yeah. Set 'em over there.

She nods and starts to walk away.

MOE (CONT'D)

Wait. Come here.

She does. He studies her smiling face. Takes the stack from
her, sets it down.

MOE (CONT'D)

Hold on.

(Shouting O.S.)

Hey, Harry come here.

(To Barbara)

Step over here.

He leads Barbara over to the set and points to the couch.
HARRY walks up. Barbara sits.

HARRY

(To Barbara)

Look at me.

She does.

HARRY (CONT'D)

Don't move your head.

Harry walks around her, poking light meters in her face
occasionally, twisting her head this way, then that. He steps
back and checks her over. Shrugs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HARRY (CONT'D)
 (to Moe)
 Yeah, what the heck.

He walks off.

MOE
 You want to earn a few bucks?

She smiles bigger than ever.

INT. PARAMOUNT SCREENING ROOM

Dwayne Garris is seated nervously in the back row by the controls, the Producer next to him. Harry and Moe are seated in the row below them, waiting.

PROJECTIONIST
 (Over intercom)
 First reel's ready, Mr. Garris.

GARRIS
 (into intercom)
 Thank you.
 (To the others)
 We can run the color test until Mr. Goldbar shows up.

Garris presses the forward switch. Just then the door opens. Two men enter and walk down the aisle toward Garris. We can't see their faces, because the lights have come down. Garris stands, pasting on a fake smile.

GARRIS (CONT'D)
 LG, nice to see you. We just started the color test. Do you want to-

GOLDBAR
 Keep it rolling.

Louis Goldbar sits next to the controls opposite Garris. His assistant Rex sits next to him. We still can't see his face.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)
 (to Garris)
 What's this I hear about Doris? You having problems with her?

Garris is in an impossible position. He's sweating.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GARRIS

Nothing to worry about, LG. She's just... we... it was a long day. We got it. No problem.

GOLDBAR

I heard she refused to finish a shot. That sounds like a problem to me. What's going on?

GARRIS

We moved on. I can cut around it.

Barbara appears on the screen. She looks beautiful, with her big smiling face. The camera loves her.

GOLDBAR

If you could cut around it, why did you drag her through 23 takes and 6 and a half hours. Doesn't sound very smart to me.

GARRIS

(Sweating big time)

I... I'm trying, LG.

(Trying humor)

You know Doris. You know. She's a case, uh, you know.

Goldbar isn't laughing, he's looking at the screen.

GARRIS (CONT'D)

I admit it was a compromise. I didn't get exactly what I wanted, but we got some fabulous close ups-

GOLDBAR

Who's that?

GARRIS

Who? What?

GOLDBAR

The color test girl. Who is she?

GARRIS

I, umm, Moe?

MOE

She was bringing up the scripts. We didn't have a stand-in so I grabbed her. It's the best I could do.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ANGLE CLOSE ON GOLDBAR

We still can't make out his face, just the twinkle of his eye, a bit of his nose maybe. Silhouetted against the projector light, we can see his ears though, and his pendulous earlobes. He studies Barbara, clapping his fingers together lightly in front of his face.

GOLDBAR
Can she talk?

Moe glances at Harry, a slight shrug.

MOE
Yeah. Sure. She's a good talker.

GOLDBAR
Did you shoot any sound?

MOE
A little.

GOLDBAR
Send what you got up to my office tomorrow.

MOE
Sure, LG.

GARRIS
Would you like to see the dailies?

Goldbar is mesmerized by something.

GARRIS (CONT'D)
LG? The dailies?

The group waits for the word. The color test footage runs out. Garris presses stop. They wait. Finally, Goldbar turns to Garris...

GOLDBAR
That it?

GARRIS
No, no. There's the dailies. Do you want those put up?

GOLDBAR
The dailies.

INT. PARAMOUNT EXECUTIVE HALLWAY

It's long, plush, very intimidating. An elevator opens way down at the far end. Barbara steps out, wearing her best dress. She approaches US, reading the door nameplates along the way.

INT. GOLDBAR'S OFFICE

TIGHT ON HIS INTERCOM as it buzzes. His hand reaches in and hits the switch. We PULL back to reveal the lair of one of Hollywood's leading megalomaniacs.

GOLDBAR
(into intercom)
Yeah.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Barbara Weiner is here, LG.

GOLDBAR
Send her in.

A huge thick door opens across the room and the small figure of Barbara enters. She stands in the doorway for a second in awe, waiting for her next order. It doesn't come. Goldbar is a small man sitting behind a very big desk, saying nothing. She closes the door and steps in.

YOUNG BARBARA
Umm, Mrs. Fern-

GOLDBAR
Shh. Just stand there.

She does. Goldbar examines her for a moment.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)
Okay, walk to me slowly.

She does. Now, we see what Goldbar is after. She's got a nice sexy walk, and it's all natural. In the time it takes her to stroll to Goldbar's desk, it's clear Barbara is the essence of American beauty - Nebraska, corn-fed, pure as the driven snow heart-throb material. And the important thing is, she doesn't even have to try. By the time she gets to his desk, we are in love... and so is Goldbar. He smiles big and lights a cigar.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)
Nice. So, you want to be in pictures?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

YOUNG BARBARA

Of course.

GOLDBAR

Not of course. Are you an actress
or a kid that likes to read movie
magazines?

YOUNG BARBARA

An actress.

GOLDBAR

Good.

The phone RINGS. He grabs it and turns his back to her.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)

(On phone)

What? You got what? Get that
asshole out of there. Fire him.
Fuck it. Fire him.

He SLAMS the phone down and rubs his neck. Barbara notices
something.

ANGLE HER POV TIGHT ON GOLDBAR'S EARS

RESUME BARBARA

Her eyes grow wide.

ANGLE FAVORING BARBARA

As Goldbar swings around back to her.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)

(under his breath)

Oy Vey.

He sees her staring, with her mouth agape and SNORTS a quick
CHUCKLE.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)

Have a seat.

She sits, he stands and paces behind his desk.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)

Let me tell you something. There's
no magic going on here. This isn't
some goddamn art school. This is a
business, just like any other
business. We make movies for a
living.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)

If people don't come to see them, we're out of business. We waste money making them, we're out of business. We're smart, we make pretty pictures, the audience has a good time, everybody's happy, and we get rich. It's simple. Some people don't get it, and they don't work here long. Am I making myself clear?

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh yes.

He stares at her. Barbara begins to shift. He keeps staring. She completes the sentence.

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

Sir.

His face softens a bit, starts to smile.

GOLDBAR

We'll be in touch.

Meeting's over. He looks at something on his desk, sits. She stands. There's something else she wants to say, but doesn't know how without touching this guy off in some way. Goldbar realizes she isn't taking her cue and looks up.

GOLDBAR (CONT'D)

What.

YOUNG BARBARA

Thank you. Umm...

He nods and looks back down. She turns and walks away across the room to the door. Goldbar sneaks a peak. What a dish. He does a silent wolf whistle.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIDE STREET - DAY

Barbara is walking along merrily by the movie lot.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I decided to skip the bus and walk back to the hotel. I remember it was a beautiful, warm, clear day. I felt electric, floating on air. I never even told Mrs. Fernwood I wasn't coming back. It was the most irresponsible thing I'd ever done.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I had no idea what tomorrow would bring, but I somehow knew everything was going to turn out alright. LG never told anyone anything directly. You always had to read between the lines. I suppose it comes from being one of them. But I read him right.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL LOBBY - DAY

As Barbara runs to the payphone and gets good news.

BARBARA (V.O.)
 Starting with the phone call the next morning and lasting for more than 20 years, my life was a blur of activity.

INT. CHARM SCHOOL

A matronly instructor is drilling Barbara in walking gracefully.

BARBARA (V.O.)
 I trained for a couple of months, mostly right there on the lot.

INT. FENCING CLASS

Barbara is sparring with an instructor.

BARBARA (V.O.)
 I learned fencing, dancing, acting, poise, diction... even got a new name.

EXT. STUDIO LOT

She is speaking with a studio MARKETING EXEC, as they walk by sound stages - MOVING.

YOUNG BARBARA
 (wrinkling her nose)
 Barbara Blythe?

MARKETING EXEC
 You don't like it?

YOUNG BARBARA
 No. It's just that I've always been Barbara Weiner.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MARKETING EXEC

Hey, you'll still be Barbara Weiner
to the kids back home in Iowa.

YOUNG BARBARA

Nebraska.

MARKETING EXEC

But to the world you'll be known as
"Barbara Blythe: The Girl You've
Always Known." Fresh and pure,
heart as big as all outdoors, but
watch out guys this dame's got
moxie.

Her eyes are looking off in the distance as she pictures
herself with this new persona. She likes it, sorta.

YOUNG BARBARA

Hmm.

INT. SOUND STAGE

An old-fashioned indoor garden set. OLIVIA HANFORD is facing
the camera, gets the favorable light. Barbara delivers her
lines to Olivia's back.

BARBARA (V.O.)

Before I'd even finished training,
I was given my first picture: More
Amor. I was Olivia Hanford's
younger sister.

OLIVIA - MORE AMOR

(condescending)

You're not worth it. You're nothing
but a little snitch. I thought I
could trust you. I guess I was
wrong. Leave.

BARBARA - MORE AMOR

But-

OLIVIA - MORE AMOR

Leave!

BARBARA - MORE AMOR

Please, hear me-

OLIVIA - MORE AMOR

No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA - MORE AMOR
(shouting, in tears)
Please, just hear me out!

Such acting. Olivia's character is shocked. She turns her head halfway back.

OLIVIA - MORE AMOR
Why Bernadette. You have a soul.
How quaint.

Barbara's character is seething. We HEAR the DIRECTOR O.S.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
One... Two... Three... Turn.

Barbara turns and runs out through a door.

DIRECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Dolly.

The camera arcs around to a close shot of Olivia.

DIRECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Olivia.

Olivia starts a maniacal LAUGH that builds and trails out.

DIRECTOR (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Annd cut. Print. Beautiful. Thank
you, Babe.

Olivia belches.

OLIVIA
Excuse me. All that laughing...

Immediately, a make-up girl starts working her over.

YOUNG BARBARA
Thank you, Miss Hanford.

An assistant hands Olivia a glass of straight Scotch and she takes a gulp.

OLIVIA
You may call me Olivia like
everyone else.

YOUNG BARBARA
Alright. I just wanted to tell you
how honored I am to be working with
you, Olivia.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

OLIVIA
Actually, Miss Hanford sounds
better in that context.

Olivia checks her wrinkles in a mirror held by the make-up
girl. Barbara is edged out by a hairdresser.

OLIVIA (CONT'D)
Bruce, honey, you ARE using my
happy lens aren't you?

BRUCE (O.S.)
Yes ma'am.

INT. STAGE BY WATERCOOLER

Barbara is pouring herself some water in an area where the
crew and lesser actors hang out. Actor SERGE ROCKMAN
approaches her from behind.

SERGE
Believe it or not, she really is a
bitch.

YOUNG BARBARA
(smiles)
I thought maybe if I showed her
some kindness.

SERGE
You're wasting your time. She's
hopelessly lost in herself.

YOUNG BARBARA
I hope I never get that way. It's
so sad.

SERGE
Well, this is one big sad town. How
about cheering me up?

YOUNG BARBARA
What's wrong with you?

He gets face to face with her.

SERGE
Nothing a little dinner wouldn't
fix. How about it?

INT. SOUND STAGE

The set is a small loft bedroom in a country cottage. Barbara is in a narrow bed, unconscious, flanked by DOCTOR and MOTHER.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I was in six more pictures that year, with parts ranging from three pages to one line.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid it's no use.

MOTHER

(tears welling)

Isn't there anything doctor?

DOCTOR

If only we could get through to her. We've tried everything available to modern medicine. Now, all we can do is pray.

The Mother breaks down.

ANGLE CLOSE ON BARBARA

As her eyes blink open. She is very weak, can't focus.

YOUNG BARBARA - DEATHBED MOVIE

Mother. Doctor. Where is everyone?

Doctor and Mother crowd in. She moves her lips, but nothing comes out, then her eyes fade out and her head rolls to the side.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

Annnd Cut, print it.

WIDE BARBARA AND CAMERA

The camera is on a crane poised threateningly over her.

DIRECTOR

Thanks everyone.

AD

Everyone, that's a ten.

YOUNG BARBARA

You know I think I feel better. Yes, I'm definitely going to pull through. Mother? Doctor?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The crew laughs. One guy grabs her around the throat and pretends to choke her.

INT. ROCKMAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE on a framed photo of Serge Rockman on a shelf with others. We PULL BACK and MOVE around the room. It's a high-priced Valley Rambler, very modern, early sixties, a bachelor party house.

BARBARA (V.O.)

It was also the year of my first marriage. Serge Rockman - big, strong, famous, every girl's dream.

We REVEAL Barbara asleep on the couch. The lights are still on. She HEARS a DOOR SLAM somewhere and startles awake. The clock says three am. She gets up and pads out to the...

INT. ROCKMAN KITCHEN - NIGHT

She walks in to find Serge standing in the middle of the floor, trying to light a cigarette, overcoat still on, teetering badly.

YOUNG BARBARA

Serge, thank God you're alright. You didn't call. I was worried.

SERGE

You didn't have to wait up.

YOUNG BARBARA

Well, I wouldn't have if you'd called.

SERGE

I need a light.

He scrambles around, looking in drawers, through stacks of stuff.

YOUNG BARBARA

Serge, I care about you. Please, extend me the courtesy of a call when you're-

SERGE

I wasn't near a phone.

YOUNG BARBARA

I find that hard to believe-

He finds a big crystal lighter and comes to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SERGE

Listen, I know you're the motherly type and you're trying to get this husband/wife routine together, and I'm willing to go along with it to a point. But why don't you do us both a favor and back off a little. You know. Goddamn, you're cute, you're smart, you're a fucking better actor than me...

She starts to cry.

SERGE (CONT'D)

Ah geez.

He puts his hands on her shoulders, holding the cigarette in the side of his mouth.

YOUNG BARBARA

I'm sorry, Serge. This is how I was raised. I'm no good at these Hollywood flings.

SERGE

It's okay, you'll learn.

She looks at him.

ANGLE HER POV

On his shirt collar is a lipstick stain, not Barbara's color.

RESUME THE TWO

He turns away and staggers toward the hall.

EXT. BEV HILLS RIDE - DAY

ANGLE on Barbara through the front window of her convertible sports car. She is wearing a scarf and shades, cruising down Sunset.

BARBARA (V.O.)

Living the life of a movie star is the wildest roller coaster ride there is. Dizzying highs and bottomless pits. But what makes it all so difficult are the transitions. They're always so huge and unexpected. It's all too easy to lose everything in an instant. But the highs are just as difficult to fathom.

INT. RITZY HOLLYWOOD GRILL - DAY

She enters, pulls her glasses off and looks around. MURRAY her agent comes up and takes her arm.

MURRAY

Barbara.

YOUNG BARBARA

Hi Murray, sorry I'm late.

He's concerned about something.

MURRAY

It's okay. Barb, before we sit with the others, there's something I have to talk to you about. Uh, let's get a drink.

YOUNG BARBARA

What's wrong?

He escorts her into the lounge.

INT. RITZY HOLLYWOOD GRILL LOUNGE - DAY

MURRAY

Oh, nothing's wrong. We just have to... You want a drink?

He finds a couple of bar stools.

YOUNG BARBARA

Sure, what is it?

He SHOUTS to the bartender.

MURRAY

Hey, can I have a Manhattan for the lady? Give me a double Scotch.

(To Barbara)

So, you know that picture I was trying to get you?

YOUNG BARBARA

The Truth Be Known.

MURRAY

Yeah, well, I've been going back and forth with LG. He's hot on giving it to Doris. But I told him, hey, the lead is a 20 year old chick from Kansas.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Doris is a great actress and all but, hell, she blew past 20 some time ago. With all that make-up it's hard to count the rings around her eyes. (I didn't tell him that part.) But he knows. Her name's a draw, yours isn't. But I still got his attention, you see, because he's got this thing for you. It's not a money issue at all. You intrigue him or something. Who knows? Anyway, I called early this morning and put an offer on the table, and set up this meeting.

(takes a drink)

Well, I got a call an hour ago. It's him. He wants to cancel the meeting, already made a decision.

He looks at her with "sorry kid" eyes.

YOUNG BARBARA

(crushed)

Murray, you did your best. These things happen. There will be other opportunities.

MURRAY

No. There won't.

YOUNG BARBARA

What do you mean?

MURRAY

There won't be because... you got the part!

Her mouth drops. He loves this part.

YOUNG BARBARA

You mean, I'm...

MURRAY

I mean your career is made. An above the line, featured credit, starring role with none other than Ronald Palkro. You did it babe.

She stands, runs around in circles, hugs him.

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh Murray. You're wonderful.

(swatting him)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

YOUNG BARBARA (CONT'D)

And you had me thinking I'd lost
it. That's mean.

MURRAY

But teasing you is so easy. I can't
help it.

INT. BARBARA'S DRESSING ROOM

It's nice. She's had it painted pink and there are framed
black & whites all over the walls, and a big couch. She's
having her hair done. The hairdresser bends down and talks to
her in the mirror. It's Flo.

FLO

How's that Miss Blythe?

They giggle.

YOUNG BARBARA

Perfect, Miss Tetlow. Now, remember
Flo, they're running the wind
machine in this shot, so I'll need
you there on the set in case
something blows over.

FLO

I think I can handle that.

Flo squeezes her in such a way as to not wreck the hair.

GOFFER (O.S.)

Miss Blythe. We're ready for you.

YOUNG BARBARA

Thanks Barney.

FLO

Oh Barbara, you look so beautiful.

YOUNG BARBARA

Thanks to you.

FLO

Oh baloney.

Barbara leaves with Flo in tow.

INT. SOUND STAGE

As she walks into the huge space, others are attracted to her
like magnetic. It's a large crew, an important movie. We MOVE
with her as she walks the distance. Murray comes up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MURRAY

Barbara, I found something else for you to read. I think it would be good for you. Bob Colfield is attached.

YOUNG BARBARA

Murray, you've already given me two others to read. When am I going to find time?

MURRAY

You only have two? Sorry, I'm falling behind. You should have at least five by now. Olivia has a closet full of unfinished scripts.

YOUNG BARBARA

Oh Murray.

MURRAY

Give 'em hell, babe.

Gives her a peck on the cheek, then peels off. The Director takes her hand.

DIRECTOR

Barbara, how are you doing?

YOUNG BARBARA

Just fine.

We PULL BACK from them to a WIDE SHOT of the set, a tall old building rooftop. We can't HEAR them go over the blocking.

ANGLE ON FLO

As she watches her best friend O.S. She steps behind some seated people, taking in all the energy and excitement around her. Finally, she can no longer contain herself, and the tears of joy begin to overflow.

RESUME WIDE ON SET

The lights, the set, the camera, the people. They all congeal magically. The warning BELL RINGS.

AD

Settle down!

SLATE GUY

Truth Be Known, scene 210, take 1.

CLAP.

DIRECTOR
Annnd action.

ANGLE MOVIE CAMERA

We jump into the movie being shot. We are on Barbara leaning against the ledge, looking out across the bay. There's a cold breeze. She bundles her wrap close. Something has just happened to make her very pensive. She's been on this rooftop before in happier times.

She HEARS something, turns back. It's JAY, stepping out from the fire exit. She turns back to the view. Jay makes his way slowly to the ledge, a safe distance from her. He's equally pensive.

JAY
(In his deep baritone)
Damn, ain't life a bear.

YOUNG BARBARA-TRUTH
A real bear.

JAY
Here we are. A million years have gone by and... here we are.
Bette...
(a painful beat)
I'd give everything, do anything,
to be able to erase those years.

She looks down.

JAY (CONT'D)
Do you believe me? You got to believe me.

YOUNG BARBARA-TRUTH
Believe you?
(taking her time)
Truth is a funny thing, Jay. It's one of those things you can never own. A lie is one of those things you can never get rid of. I'm sorry I ever met you. Good bye, Jay.

The MUSIC PUMPS UP. Jay takes a step forward, then stops, then walks stooped over back into the building.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON BARBARA

She stands resolutely, the wind tossing her hair. An audience O.S. is APPLAUDING wildly.

INT. LARGE AUDITORIUM

TITLE: 1972 ACADEMY AWARDS

The house is packed.

ANGLE ON PRESENTER

She waits for the applause to die down.

PRESENTER

And the winner for Best Female
Actor in a Starring Role is...

(opens envelope)

Who else? Barbara Blythe, "Amy Aims
To Please."

ANGLE BARBARA IN AUDIENCE

The audience goes wild, some are standing. Barbara is no longer the young beauty. But even though she's over 40, she still has IT. She claps her hands over her mouth, truly can't believe it. Her third Oscar.

She makes her way to the aisle, cameras are flashing, walks slowly through the throng toward the stage. Well-wishers pat her, grab her hands. She turns and blows kisses. The orchestra is grandly playing the "Amy Aims To Please" theme.

She makes it to the podium, finally.

BARBARA

Thank you, thank...

The CROWD won't let her get started. Her tears are flowing.

INT. BARBARA'S BEV HILLS BEDROOM - DAY

As she awakens. It's late morning, bright. She gets up, puts on a robe and slippers. The room is large, peach-colored, filled with greenery. We PULL her as she pads out of the room.

INT. BEV HILLS HOUSE WALKTHROUGH

She continues down the long peach hallway to the grand staircase and descends into the well-appointed living room - flower patterns everywhere, big colorful plants.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It is also the repository for flowers and presents from well-wishers. She walks into...

INT. BARBARA'S BEV HILLS KITCHEN - DAY

Big, bright and charming as hell. Husband number three or four CARL is wearing an apron making breakfast on the JennAir built into a center island. A set of twin 10-year-old boys is dressed and eating at the table.

CARL
Kids, mommy's up!

The two get up and run to her. Hug her.

KID 1
We saw you win the Oscar, Mom.

CARL
I let them stay up. Have a seat.
I'm making eggs.

She is overcome, continues standing.

BARBARA
How sweet.

CARL
Well, tell us all about it? How
does it feel to win your third?

BARBARA
What's there to say. It's simply
the most wonderful thing that could
ever happen, even the third time
around, next to being married to a
wonderful man and having two
wonderful children of course.

KID 2
Did they let you keep it?

BARBARA
Oh, of course. I'll put it on the
shelf right next to the others.

Carl comes to her, holding a pan, and gives her a kiss.

CARL
We're so proud of you.
(walking back to the
stove)
And maybe a bit envious.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

Oh Carl, you'll get your shot.

CARL

Ha. The only shot I'm going to get is from a 38.

Barbara starts to droop.

BARBARA

Don't talk like that. Did you get any calls?

CARL

The list's on the desk.

BARBARA

Any about your script?

CARL

Nah.

BARBARA

I'm sorry. I told you I'd make some calls if you-

CARL

Don't bother.

BARBARA

It's no problem, really. I want to help.

CARL

You're doing enough already, babe. Really. I'll just, uh... Don't worry about it.

She watches him for an awkward moment longer, then turns.

BARBARA

Well, I'd better be getting ready. I have a meeting at the studio.

CARL

What about your eggs?

BARBARA

I really shouldn't. I'll be late. I overslept. I'm sorry.

Carl turns his head away, starts to weep.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CARL

Why won't you let me share the moment with you? I can't even make you eggs. I feel so... useless.

He dumps the eggs in the sink.

BARBARA

I'll take off early today and we can all go for a drive to the beach. How about that?

CARL

I'm sure something will come up. It always does.

BARBARA

I promise. Scouts honor. Okay, kids?

KIDS

Yeah!

CARL

When can we expect you?

BARBARA

How about... three. I promise.

She rushes out. There's a KNOCK at the back door and a young blond stud comes in.

KID 1

Hi, Uncle Don.

DON

Hi kids.
(to Carl)
Hi mom.

CARL

Oh, shut up, you...

He throws a towel at Don. Don grabs a slice of toast.

DON

What'cha doin'?

INT. SOUND STAGE

ANGLE on slate.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SLATE GUY

Gay and Unattached, Scene 57, take
4.

CLAP. The slate drops. Barbara is seated, two younger women
KIM and SUE hanging over her. They're in a ritzy hotel room.
It's an out of date musical, bound to flop.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

(bored)

Action.

KIM

You remember Randy, the one with
the hair?

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED

No, not Randy. It wasn't him.

SUE

Rick, Rich, Ron, Rex-

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED

Maybe it's not "R".

She stands and walks around, arms akimbo.

KIM

I give up.

SUE

Ross, Ralph. I know Ricardo.

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED

Stop, I would've remembered
Ricardo.

Playback starts O.S. with the CLICK: POP, POP, POP. It has a
Latin beat.

KIM

You would've remembered Ricardo...
Enardo... Eduardo.

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED

I would've remembered Rodolfo too.
But he's got a name and it's such a
shame to forget...

SUE

Like Brett...

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED

That I won't even try...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KIM & SUE
No, she won't even try...

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED
To remember... his name.

On "his name" they all do a little boom-boom with their hips.

SUE
You would've remembered old Gustav,
or Yustav or blabla-

The playback grinds to a stop.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Cut. Print that. One more, please.

INT. BELAIR PARTY - NIGHT

The party is in some executive's mansion, strictly high class, packed with Hollywood types playing games, making connections, deals. She's with two young FANS, signing autographs.

FAN 1
Thank you so much, Barbara. I mean
Miss Blythe.

BARBARA
You can call me Barbara. That's
okay.

FAN 2
How did it feel to kiss Mario Belo
in Two for the Trolley? He's so
dreamy.

BARBARA
After 32 takes, I may as well have
been kissing a salami. But he's a
very nice man.

FAN 1
How about Serge Rockman?

BARBARA
(Beat, uncomfortable)
He was very nice too.

Murray rescues her.

MURRAY
Barbara, can I talk to you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

Excuse me.

FANS

Thanks Barbara.

Murray pulls her with him. We FOLLOW.

MURRAY

You're not obligated to talk to them, you know. Just give them an autograph and split.

BARBARA

But that would be rude.

MURRAY

It's not rude them asking about Serge?

BARBARA

All they know is what they read in the magazines. I'm a public figure. Rudeness is redefined for people like me.

MURRAY

Just the same, you can't let them get to you.

BARBARA

Don't worry about me, Murray.

MURRAY

Anyway, here's someone who wanted to meet you.

The two back in to a threesome of executives. They look up.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, sorry to break in. I wanted you to meet someone.

BILSON

No intros necessary. I'm Mark Bilson. This is Bob Engelmann and Sam Coombs.

BARBARA

Nice to meet you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MURRAY

With the passing of Louis Goldbar, there's been a shake-up at Paramount as you know, and it's resulted in the freeing up of many of their closely held contracts. And so I'm sure we'll be talking very soon with you Mark and others regarding upcoming projects.

All through this, a short man standing near the group by himself has been watching Barbara intently. It's making her feel somewhat uncomfortable. She glances away, then back, and he's still staring.

BILSON

Well, we're all sorry to hear about LG of course. In many ways it marks the end of era here in Hollywood. But moving forward, I'm sure we'll all benefit from... well from the added elbow room. Barbara.

She turns to him, smiling.

BILSON (CONT'D)

We have some things in the works at Warners that just might dovetail nicely with your current schedule. I'd love it if we could get together. How about it?

BARBARA

I think that would be lovely.

MURRAY

I'll be in touch, Mark. Gentlemen.

They smile and nod. Murray pulls Barbara away.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

Good. I need to circulate you around to a few more and we can take the night off. How you holding up?

BARBARA

My feet are sore, that's all.

MURRAY

We'll get you some new ones. Oh look, there's Greenway.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

He pulls her out of SHOT and we are left on the piano player. We angle up and there's the short man, watching her.

INT. BELAIR PARTY - LATE

Barbara is with a group of working people, retelling shoot stories, all drunk or stoned and laughing.

MAN 1

And so, Barbara, you were in the tank enjoying your swim-

BARBARA

Yeah, right. I was one big prune.

MAN 1

And I'm up in the crane with the cameraman, Bob Creel, you remember him, 50 feet above you. Then this huge seagull or albatross lands right on the camera and in an instant leaves this mess, right in the middle of the take, it's running down the sides and all over Bob.

BARBARA

I remember you guys were screaming something and thrashing around.

MAN 1

It truly scared the shit out of us. We almost went for a swim.

A fourth MAN breaks in.

MAN 4

Hey guys, it's here. You gotta see this car.

MAN 1

You coming, Barbara.

BARBARA

I think I'm going to sit.

The group leaves. Barbara turns and notes an open balcony with a chair. She heads that way.

EXT. BELAIR PARTY BALCONY - NIGHT

She sits and removes her shoes, rubs her feet. It's QUIET and cool. There is movement in the shadows. A man approaches her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's the short man - late sixties, still has a New York accent.

LARRY

Hi Barbara. I'm Larry Schwartz.
We've never had a chance to talk
alone.

BARBARA

Hi Larry.

LARRY

I was an accountant for LG for many
years.

BARBARA

I believe we met a long time ago.

LARRY

(small smile)

I didn't think you'd remembered.
Anyway, when Alvin Kevlar took over
after the passing of LG, I was
promoted to Contracts Administrator
and...

BARBARA

Why don't you have a seat?

Larry isn't there to make casual party talk. Whatever he is
trying to say is coming with some difficulty.

LARRY

Thanks. Barbara, I've seen you come
up through the years. And in case
it's not real obvious, your getting
to where you are today was no
fluke. You are very talented and
all but...

He has a nervous habit of pulling on his earlobes. With his
head turned the way it is, Barbara notes how pendulous they
are.

LARRY (CONT'D)

You had help.

BARBARA

Larry, I think I know what you're
trying to say.

LARRY

You do?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARBARA

Yes. I understand.

LARRY

You're not just some pretty face, like so many other female actors. Your potential is vast. But it took the right, well, push to make that talent pay off. Do you see what I'm getting at?

BARBARA

I think I know. I didn't get here by accident.

LARRY

Right. There was a great investment over the years. I know. I kept the books. And Mr. Kevlar feels you... owe us something in return for that investment.

BARBARA

Is he one to?

LARRY

Is he who, what?

BARBARA

Is he like you and LG and the... others.

LARRY

(Mysterious)

Yes he is. We have plans for you, Barbara. We're not finished with you yet. And it worries us when we hear your agent talking about making deals outside with people like Bilson.

BARBARA

I understand.

LARRY

I'm so glad. We don't want to have to play hardball, but you do still have a contract with us.

She gets up and paces away from him, thinking. He stands, pulling on his ear. She turns back, suddenly, with an uncharacteristic intensity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARBARA

What are your plans? What has all this been about? Why me? I'm in my forties and I still haven't a clue. I almost feel like a caged pet of some sort.

LARRY

Oy vey. Barbara. I don't want to see you get hurt. Listen. Just don't talk to anyone, okay? I'll get you in to talk with Alvin tomorrow sometime. I can't do this. He's going to have to tell you. And... let's leave Murray out of this one.

BARBARA

But I always-

LARRY

I know but-

BARBARA

He trusts me and I trust-

LARRY

Barbara...

(Looking her in the eye)

This is different. Do you read me?

BARBARA

I think so.

LARRY

Thanks. I'll call you first thing tomorrow.

He's off.

INT. KEVLAR'S OFFICE - DAY

This is Louis Goldbar's office, but with all the grandness and class removed. It's now chrome and glass, ugly, cheesy, cold. Alvin Kevlar is behind the big desk. Larry is sitting in one of several thick chairs in front of it. The big door opens and Barbara looks in, just as she did over 30 years earlier. But she sees the new Hollywood now.

Kevlar is tall, dark, unattractive and classless, the product of some New York business school.

KEVLAR

Barbara come in. Have a seat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She takes a seat. He walks around the desk and sits on the corner facing them, real friendly-like, even a hint of a smile, which doesn't look natural on him.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

Barbara, I have a problem that I need your help with... a quandary, if you will. On the one hand you're a very talented artist with a vast following of loyal fans. You command a certain amount of respect in the industry, you're in demand throughout the world. Paramount has a lot invested in you. And you've paid off for us in many ways. You're good for us, we're good for you.

He does a little walk along the desk and behind her.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

On the other hand, the industry has changed. Independents are making it tough for the big studios. We're all having to get smart with our investments in order to survive. Most of them are dropping their contract artists, but we want to keep you.

She looks relieved. He steps around from behind her.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

And... we're going to exercise the option. It has nothing to do with how we feel about you on a personal level. It's strictly business.

BARBARA

I'm not... what option is that? I don't...

LARRY

It's the one in your contract.

BARBARA

I'm afraid I don't... it's been awhile since I've looked at it.

LARRY

It's the one that states-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEVLAR

Barbara, let's look down the road a ways. You hit your peak at the box office, what, mid-sixties? Your pull has been dropping steadily ever since.

BARBARA

I just got an Oscar for God sakes! That should count-

KEVLAR

You and I know the Oscar had nothing to do with that sappy piece of shit movie you were in. Right? It was out of respect for you, and it was rightly deserved.

(shifting tactics)

It's a game. All this is not real. It's all contrived. It's not about art, it's all about box office. We're the manufacturer, you're the product. Boom. When you're on top, we sell tickets, everyone's happy. But you're dying at the box office and we can't afford to take any more risks.

BARBARA

So, you're dropping my contract?

KEVLAR

(turning away from her)

We're exercising the option.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STREET - DAY

Murray and Barbara come out of a tall expensive office building and head down the street. He's boiling, walking fast.

MURRAY

That asshole tricked you, babe. He took advantage of you. He knew without me there, he could get you to agree to anything.

BARBARA

I didn't agree to anything, not without you.

MURRAY

But he thought he could. Why wasn't I there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

I don't know. I'm sorry.

MURRAY

How did he explain the option?

BARBARA

He said I would be well taken care of the rest of my life.

He stops and jabs the air with his finger.

MURRAY

You're not some geriatric case, goddamn it. You want to know the truth? First, he can dump you anytime he wants. So you're NOT well taken care of. Second, you have plenty of years left in you. You're just hitting your stride as far as I'm concerned.

BARBARA

I can still make movies-

MURRAY

Barbara, don't you get it? Don't you get it? What all this is about? The option? They're holding your contract, but you're not going to make anymore movies.

BARBARA

Nothing?!

MURRAY

Maybe the occasional walk-on part, but that's it. And they're making it impossible for you to work for anyone else. You're retired, babe! As soon as you're no longer a threat to them, they'll cut you off.

They start walking again.

BARBARA

How can he do that?

MURRAY

They don't care about you. It's just a numbers game with them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARBARA

I can understand making a profit.
My daddy owned-

MURRAY

Well, LG wasn't a saint, but he at
least had some modicum of respect
and human decency.

BARBARA

Let's fight it. We can fight it.
It's so unfair.

MURRAY

(not hopeful)
We can try.

INT. BARBARA'S BEV HILLS KITCHEN - NIGHT

We are WIDE facing the center island. We HEAR a DOOR CLOSE
O.S. down a hall, then Barbara's hard-souled shoes on the
wood floor.

BARBARA (O.S.)

Carl? Kids?

She walks throughout the first floor calling. There is no
answer. We MOVE slowly in toward the island. We can see the
counter top. She walks on carpet.

BARBARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Carl? Hello? Anyone? Where are you
guys?

We notice an envelope on the counter. Something is written on
it.

BARBARA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Carl?

It says "To Barbara." We HOLD.

INT. BARBARA'S BEV HILLS KITCHEN - NEXT DAY

Barbara is on the phone by the desk. Papers are scattered.
She is distraught.

BARBARA

(on phone)
So you're telling me I have
nothing?

INT. BERNIE THE ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE

The office is big, rich and gray, with big windows overlooking the city. BERNIE is also big, rich and gray. On top of that he is balding and smokes too much. He is on the phone with Barbara.

INTERCUT:

BERNIE

No, no, you're in good shape. You have the equity in your house, some life insurance, a couple of municipal bonds...

BARBARA

Nothing.

BERNIE

No. You have enough to live very comfortably on...

BARBARA

Without working?

BERNIE

Uh, why would you stop working?

BARBARA

Let's just say, what if I were to stop?

BERNIE

Well, I would sell the house first-

BARBARA

What happened to all that land in the valley and the business interests?

Bernie starts to get real nervous.

BERNIE

That was, uh, sold four years ago-

BARBARA

Sold! Why?

BERNIE

You authorized-

BARBARA

I authorized nothing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BERNIE

You needed the cash to pay-

BARBARA

You've been my accountant for twenty years, Bernie. What have you done with my money?

He squirms for a moment.

BERNIE

What's this about you not working?

BARBARA

Answer my question.

BERNIE

I think you'd better have your attorney talk to mine.

He hangs up.

EXT. STUDIO CITY BUNGALOW - DAY

ANGLE on a mover as he carries an end table and lamp from his truck to a small single story duplex. It's old, uninteresting, the one in back.

BARBARA (V.O.)

It was only a matter of weeks. I lost everything. I lost my career. I couldn't fight the studio because I had no money for attorneys. Carl left with the children. They were his from a previous marriage so I didn't contest it. I sold the house, most of the furnishings, the cars, and moved into a small court in Studio City.

INT. STUDIO CITY BUNGALOW

The mover enters. Barbara points to a spot - there aren't many left.

BARBARA (V.O.)

Hollywood gaveth and Hollywood tooketh away. All I had left were memories.

EXT. STUDIO CITY BUNGALOW - EARLY EVENING

Murray is walking down the path, holding a card, looking for addresses. He comes to Barbara's place and KNOCKS. No answer. He tries the door. It opens. He steps in.

INT. STUDIO CITY BUNGALOW

Murray enters. The only light is coming from a room in the back somewhere. The place is packed floor to ceiling with boxes.

MURRAY

Hello? Barbara? Anyone home?

She enters, peering around a box. She is BACKLIT, wearing ragged clothes, a scarf on her head, holding a pail and sponge.

BARBARA

(Brightens)

Murray. I was doing some cleaning.

He looks at her, almost weeping.

MURRAY

I'm getting out of this business. I hate it.

BARBARA

Don't do that, Murray.

MURRAY

There's too much evil in it, too much greed.

BARBARA

This stuff happens. It was my fault. I should've been more-

MURRAY

Stop. How can you say that?

He comes to her and hugs her.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

(meaning it)

I want you to know, if you need anything, anything at all, you just call and I'll be there. I'm your agent. But more than that, I'm your friend. Here's something to cheer you up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He reaches into a sack and hands her a box of chocolate chip cookies.

MURRAY (CONT'D)

I asked myself, what do you get a girl who has nothing?

BARBARA

Oh, Murray that's sweet. Thank you.

MURRAY

Do you need any help here? Do you have enough to eat?

BARBARA

The store's only a block from here. I can walk.

MURRAY

Are you sure there's nothing-

BARBARA

No, no. You've done enough. I just need to figure out what to do with all this stuff and clean up a bit. I have all the time in the world now. So...

They stare at the floor for a beat or two.

MURRAY

Listen. You don't know how bad I feel about this. I feel sick about it. I'm going to get you working again. You hear me? You'll be back on top in no time. Okay?

BARBARA

Thanks, for everything.

MURRAY

Hang in there... babe.

Murray leaves. She goes back to the...

BUNGALOW KITCHEN - NIGHT

She opens the fridge. It's empty.

EXT. STUDIO CITY NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Barbara is walking down the sidewalk, in and out of pools of street light, with her handbag over her shoulder. She passes by a vacant lot, overgrown with bushes and weeds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There are also a few dead trucks and many deep shadows. She holds the handbag close, picks up her pace. Something catches her eye. She glances over. Nothing. There it is again. She takes a longer look and sees it. A pulsating red light. She takes a deep breath and walks faster.

ANGLE PULLING BARBARA - MOVING

She is panicking, glancing to the side, almost running. Out of nowhere, an enormous flashing object drifts down slowly and fills the entire space behind her. It is OUT OF FOCUS but we recognize the colored lights, pulsing and spinning right to left. She doesn't look back, but she knows it's there. She runs. CRACK! In an instant a powerful beam lights her up like the sun. She freezes, covers her face.

DISSOLVE TO:

WHITE

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. MULHOLLAND DRIVE - NIGHT

ANGLE TIGHT HEADLIGHT FLARE from a fast moving car, turning.

ANGLE WIDE as the car, a Caddie, speeds by, skidding in the curves. The lights of the city spread out behind it.

INT. CADDIE - NIGHT

Barbara is driving. The green glow of the dash casts an evil light on her face. The wind WHISTLES. Her eyes are wild, she is out of control, or maybe she is being controlled. Who knows?

EXT. PARAMOUNT GATES - NIGHT

The guard is snoozing with his feet up. The Caddie pulls up, and he awakens, smiles, tips his hat and waves her in.

INT. PARAMOUNT EXECUTIVE HALLWAY - NIGHT

It's dark and deserted. From the far end, the elevator opens and Barbara steps out. She turns and heads with unearthly determination toward Kevlar's office.

INT. KEVLAR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

WIDE. It's still lit. We HEAR the light murmurings of a couple somewhere engaged in foreplay. We PAN AROUND to the big door. It opens. WHUMP. Barbara looks around.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE BACK OF COUCH

Kevlar's head pops up, glasses askew, sees her O.S.

ON BARBARA

BARBARA

Mr. Kevlar. We need to talk.

TWO SHOT

He shakes his head. She's the last person he expected to see.

KEVLAR

Barbara. My God.

A young woman's head pops up from the couch. They scramble, putting on clothes, zipping up, shoes, panties, out of view. Barbara waits patiently, mouth set tight. Kevlar stands, still not 100% together.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

(Angry)

This is a bad time as you can see.
Why don't you make an appointment
tomorrow and we can-

BARBARA

We need to talk now. It's not as if
you're doing anything important.

KEVLAR

(to Bimbo)

Can you give us a second?

The woman throws on a few things and heads out the door, giving Barbara a look as she passes.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

(Calm, cold)

Barbara, you have no right to barge
in here like this.

She approaches him, he moves to the safety of his big desk.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

I'm a very busy man and this is my
private office.

He straightens and tightens his tie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

I'm giving you one minute to say what you have to say, then I'm calling security. I'm going to ban you from the lot. If I have to I'll get a restraining order. Talk.

BARBARA

(Not bullied)

What are you so afraid of? What do you think I'm going to do? I don't have a tenth the power you have. I don't have anything to fight you with. You've taken everything.

KEVLAR

Is that what you came to say?

He lights a cigarette.

BARBARA

Why did you do this?

KEVLAR

Do you think it was some casual decision?

BARBARA

Yes. It's not a decision a normal human being would make.

KEVLAR

(angrily)

If every executive had to worry about hurting someone's feelings every time they made a decision, where do you think this industry would be?

BARBARA

A lot better off.

KEVLAR

Well, I got news for you-

BARBARA

I'm not a threat to you, for God sakes. I just want to keep working.

KEVLAR

If you've come here to negotiate with me, this is-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARBARA

Negotiate with you? I'm pleading with you. If you have any human decency in you, you'll see that what you're doing is... evil. It's inhumane-

KEVLAR

Come here.

They walk over to a Moviola that's set up with a film reel.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

I'll show you what evil is. Evil is making stupid decisions that drive a great company into the toilet. We have stockholders that are trusting me with their millions, trusting that I will do my damndest to turn a profit. Evil is lying to them and pumping their money into projects that are destined to fail. Why? Because some actor is a legend, some Director needs the work, some writer needs a favor. Bullshit. You think I just casually toss out inhumane decisions all day?

He switches the film on and Barbara comes around and looks at the scope. It's some goofy scene from "Gay and Unattached".

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

I look at crap like this and wonder how the hell I'm going to explain it to the people that own this company.

ANGLE SCOPE AS THE MOVIE PLAYS

INT. SWANKY APARTMENT - DAY

In the movie, on the front door as GWENN opens it, revealing Barbara's character standing outside drenched from head to toe in mud.

GWENN

Oh my gawd, what happened?!

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED

Let's just say, I had a run-in with the authorities.

GWENN

What authorities?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED
The ones with the mud.

GWENN
This is terrible!

BARBARA - GAY & UNATTACHED
Well, if you think this is bad, you should see the other guy.

RESUME BARBARA AND KEVLAR

She CLICKS it off and the SOUND grinds down.

BARBARA
Do you think I held a gun to LG's head and forced him to make that movie? You act as if all I can do is repeat cliches and fall in the mud. I've earned three Oscars for this Company-

KEVLAR
I didn't mean to imply you aren't talented-

BARBARA
Then what in the world are you implying? What's all this about?

KEVLAR
It's about box office. Period. You don't have it anymore.

BARBARA
What? Have what?

KEVLAR
The draw. Ten years ago-

BARBARA
When I was younger, yes...

KEVLAR
Alright, if I have to spell it out, yes, you're getting too old, less attractive. You used to be a draw because you were young and cute. Middle-aged people aren't cute. There.

BARBARA
(A little flustered)
Okay. So. I'll play older women.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

What's the problem? I don't have to play cute, young women all the time.

KEVLAR

(Jabbing his finger)
Barbara, you're finished.

BARBARA

I am not.

KEVLAR

For me, you are.

BARBARA

Release me from the contract-

KEVLAR

I can't.

BARBARA

Yes, you can.

KEVLAR

Your time's up.

He turns away. She grabs his tie forcefully and pulls him close.

BARBARA

My time's up, when I say it's up.
I'm going to fight you with everything I got. And I'm never going to give up. And I'm going to win three more darn Oscars and I'm going to come back here and shove them one at a time up your ass.

In one swift move, she opens the track reader on the Moviola, pulls Kevlar down and SLAMS the heavy metal reader closed on his tie, then storms out. Kevlar tries to release the catch, but it's jammed.

KEVLAR

Barbara. Barbara!

She's gone.

KEVLAR (CONT'D)

I'm stuck! Barbara! Goddamnit!

INT. PARAMOUNT EXECUTIVE HALLWAY

Barbara is moving quickly and determinedly down the hall. Her head is high. She has a purpose now. The elevator is ready for her. She goes in.

INT. KEVLAR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Kevlar is struggling. His tie is wound tighter into the mechanism now. His chin is resting on the top plate, so he can't even look down. He brings his right hand up quickly and hits the on switch by mistake. The heavy duty motor feeds the tie right through effortlessly. In a moment, the machine is squeezing the tie as tightly as possible around his neck. He scrambles, panicked, but can't find the switch.

EXT. PARAMOUNT PARKING AREA - NIGHT

Barbara leaves the building, walks past the bimbo. The woman is sitting on the hood of her car, chewing gum, talking to a guard. The woman shoots her a look then turns back to the guard. Barbara gets in her Caddie.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUNGALOW LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Barbara is sitting on her couch, head rolled back, asleep. She is still dressed, but her shoes are off, and she's holding a legal pad covered with writing in one hand. Her eyes open, she yawns, looks at the clock: 5:30. She gets up and pads into...

INT. BUNGALOW KITCHEN - NIGHT

She turns on the stove to heat some coffee, rinses out a cereal bowl.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I had hit bottom. I had lost my temper, used vulgar language, even resorted to violence. I knew there was only one way to go from there. I needed to rebuild my life. I needed a plan. I wasn't after revenge. I still respected Kevlar and understood him. He just had some confused priorities. I felt the same way I did after the first time I met... them. And I was resolved to follow the path that was laid out before me... whatever that was.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KNOCK, KNOCK. Barbara sets down her bowl and goes to the front door.

INT. BUNGALOW LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

She opens the door. Two policemen are standing there, holding up their badges.

COP

Ma'am, I'm Officer Hendricks, this is Officer Brummel. We're with the Los Angeles Police Department. Are you Barbara Sue Jackson, alias Blythe?

BARBARA

Yes, I am.

COP

Ma'am, we have a warrant for your arrest and we'll be taking you into custody at this time. You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you...

INT. JAIL MEETING ROOM - DAY

A heavy door opens and Barbara is ushered in by a police woman, still wearing the same clothes. Her eyes are wide and confused.

ANGLE HER POV TWO SLICK ATTORNEYS

MICHAELSON and GREEN are wearing black suits and Rolexes, standing by the metal table resting their arms on leather briefcases. They turn to Barbara with pitying eyes.

ANGLE THE THREE

The door SLAMS behind Barbara.

MICHAELSON

Miss Blythe, have a seat. We're attorneys. I'm Greg Michaelson, this is my associate David Green. You contacted Murray Levinson and he asked us to... to stop by.

They sit.

GREEN

Miss Blythe, has anyone explained to you why you're here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA
(throat dry)
No.

GREEN
Okay. Apparently there was a death
last evening and the police have
reason to believe it may have been
a homicide. You have been detained
because they apparently have
adequate evidence to place you as a
primary suspect. In fact, the only
suspect.

She is speechless.

MICHAELSON
Miss Blythe-

BARBARA
(croaking)
Barbara.

MICHAELSON
Barbara. Did you go to see Alvin
Kevlar last evening?

BARBARA
Yes.

MICHAELSON
(taken aback)
You did?

She nods.

MICHAELSON (CONT'D)
About what time?

BARBARA
About eleven.

MICHAELSON
(Uncomfortable)
Barbara. Umm, did you... was he...
In what state was he when you left
him?

BARBARA
Oh my God.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Loud TALKING, SLAMMING and CLANGING echo all around. Barbara is still wearing her clothes, lying on a cot, staring at the ceiling. At least she was given a private cell.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I couldn't sleep. I kept asking myself, is this the end? I thought about my options and realized there were none. I had friends, Hollywood friends, working relations, but who could help me now.

INT. COURTROOM

Barbara is standing, flanked by the attorneys, before a stern judge.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I went to court the next morning. The judge figured I was a serious threat to society and set my bail at one million. The attorneys told me they would try to get it lowered. I didn't tell them I couldn't even afford a lower bail. I couldn't even afford them.

INT. JAIL CELL

Barbara is wearing gray jail clothes now, pacing, head down.

BARBARA (V.O.)

The days I spent in jail went by so slowly. All I did was think... think about my life and how lucky I had been, how I never had to try. It was like I was on a conveyer belt, being carried along from event to event, everything laid out neatly before me. All I had to do was show up. Then, before I knew it, my luck had run out.

INT. JAIL CELL - LATE

Another day. She is lying on her back, staring at the ceiling.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I'd figured all anyone had to do was live a good life, be a good person.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But it became painfully clear that
 goodness, talent, honesty, none of
 it mattered. It wasn't something
 you could buy or learn or try for.
 It was all luck.

INT. JAIL CELL - LATE

Another day. She is pacing, reading a worn book.

BARBARA (V.O.)
 I had been chosen. Why? Because I
 was in the right place at the right
 time.

A female GUARD comes to the cell and opens it.

GUARD
 Miss Blythe, collect your
 belongings and come with me. You're
 getting bailed out.

INT. JAIL CORRIDOR

Barbara is dressed in her street clothes being escorted by
 the Guard. A MAN she doesn't recognize is standing on the
 other side of a barred gate, facing her. He is pleasant
 looking, about her age, wears a very non-Hollywood brown suit
 and tie.

The guard stops at the gate and motions to someone through a
 small window. An electric lock SNAPS and the gate slides
 open.

GUARD
 Miss Blythe, please check with the
 desk through there to claim any
 personal items.

BARBARA
 Thank you.

The guard leaves her with the strange man, the gate closes
 behind her.

STRANGE MAN
 Barbara?

BARBARA
 Yes.

STRANGE MAN
 (beat)
 You don't remember me?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

I'm sorry.

STRANGE MAN

I remember you, but I guess it's
from seeing you in the movies.

(beat)

I'm Ron Spurlow.

BARBARA

Ronny?! My God!

RON

Yup. I won't ask you how you are.
That's pretty obvious.

BARBARA

Ronny... did you?

He just smiles.

RON

Come on.

He takes her arm and they walk slowly down the corridor.

EXT. JAIL BUILDING - DAY

ANGLE ON METAL DOOR as it opens and Ronny walks out with
Barbara. A tremendous CHEER RINGS OUT. Barbara is astonished.We PULL BACK to reveal a crowd of a hundred or more, complete
with press and placards, saying "Release Barbara!"Ron ushers her through the throng. People are CHEERING,
crying, SHOUTING support, patting her.

RON

Do you want to talk to the press?

BARBARA

I don't know.

RON

Well, I don't think we can
outmaneuver them. I'll run
interference.A Channel 6 reporter corners them first, followed by her
cameraman and other reporters. Lights flash on, mikes are
thrust their way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHANNEL 6

Barbara, what do you think your chances are?

BARBARA

(overwhelmed)

I don't know.

CHANNEL 6

How are you going to plead?

BARBARA

Not guilty, of course.

CHANNEL 6

Becky Blossom is prepared to testify against you. How do you feel about that?

BARBARA

I'm sorry. I don't know that person. Let me just say... I am overwhelmed by... all this. I want to thank everybody...

A LOUD CHEER.

BARBARA

(shouting)

...From the bottom of my heart. And I want you to know.

(beat)

I did not kill anyone.

CHEER.

BARBARA

(getting into it)

And we're going to win!

A huge CHEER. Arms are raised, you can almost make out a brass band. Ron waves the reporters off, puts his arm around Barbara and moves her up the ramp toward the street, where a black limo awaits. They get in and it pulls away.

INT. LIMO

As it drives through LA.

BARBARA

Umm, Ronny... I have a few questions. What-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RON

Before you start, let me just tell you where we're headed. Your agent Murray has arranged a meeting with the attorneys to go over plans for the trial. That's first. Then we have a brief meeting with some PR people to go over how we're going to handle the press. After that, if you're up for it, we have a real quick press conference at the law firm. Now, I know you're probably not in any kind of shape to handle all this. All you got to do is make an appearance at the meetings, they might have a few questions for you, then Murray can take over and you can go get some rest. Okay?

BARBARA

What do you mean, am I in shape to handle this? I've been sitting around doing nothing for... how long?

RON

Six days.

BARBARA

It's been that long?

RON

How do you feel?

We look at her face. At first, we can't tell. Her head is lowered. Then we recognize it. The transformation. She slowly lifts her head and turns to Ron with eyes glowing with life.

BARBARA

My God. How could I feel any better?

RON

Alright, Barbara. That's very good to hear... very, very good.

BARBARA

Now can I-

RON

One more question.

He gets closer to her, looks her in the eye, takes her hand, holds it tightly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RON (CONT'D)

Barbara. I know you can't lie. I know you. You don't know how. Tell me. Did you kill this guy?

BARBARA

No. He was alive when I left him. I don't even know how he died.

RON

That's all I want to hear.

INT. ATTORNEY CONFERENCE ROOM

Several black-suited attorneys, Ron and Barbara are sitting around a large, expensive table. Michaelson is pacing.

MICHAELSON

Barbara. Tell us. How did he get his tie caught in the Moviola?

BARBARA

I put it there.

MICHAELSON

How?

BARBARA

He was walking away from me to call security and I... stopped him... by holding his tie. Then I pulled him down and stuck it in this... mechanism, and closed the top part on it.

MICHAELSON

Then what?

BARBARA

I left.

MICHAELSON

Was he in pain? Gasping for air?

BARBARA

No. He was angry. So was I. I left. I don't know what happened to him after that.

MICHAELSON

Okay. Why didn't you let him out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

I lost my temper. I feel bad about it now of course. But at the time, I felt it would do some good for him to lose a bit of his dignity for just a little while. May I ask you something?

MICHAELSON

Of course.

BARBARA

What does all this have to do with how he died?

MICHAELSON

You don't know?

BARBARA

No. No one has bothered to tell me.

The attorneys look at each other and ponder this for a moment.

MICHAELSON

Barbara, it's difficult for me to believe you don't know how he died.

RON

Why don't you just answer her question?

MICHAELSON

I'm trying to keep an open mind, but this taxes the imagination, that Barbara would put the tie in the Moviola and leave, then Kevlar would turn the thing on and strangle himself.

It hits Barbara finally.

MICHAELSON (CONT'D)

I'm trying very hard to believe your story, Barbara, because if I don't believe it you can bet the prosecution and jury won't.

RON

(standing)

You're acting as if she's on trial here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MICHAELSON

Mr. Spurlow, as Barbara's attorney it is my job to convince the jury of her innocence. I'm not going to be able to do that unless I have something to work with, and that's why we're here. It doesn't look good. She comes into his office, late at night, angry with him for not letting her out of the contract. They fight. She closes his tie in the Moviola and she turns it on. It doesn't take any stretch of the imagination to draw that conclusion. There are partial finger prints of hers all over the thing.

BARBARA

(standing)

When I left it was off. If he wanted out, all he had to do was turn this little lever. I certainly never thought he would strangle himself.

MICHAELSON

And that's exactly what we have to figure out.

(he sits)

If it was so easy to get out, why didn't he do it? Why would he leave his tie in it, then turn the switch on, the one with your finger prints on it, and strangle himself?

Ron and Barbara sit.

BARBARA

Is it hopeless?

MICHAELSON

What?

BARBARA

The case. Am I going to lose?

MICHAELSON

Oh, hell no.

(smiles)

We got this one licked.

INT. PR FIRM CONFERENCE ROOM

Barbara is flanked by several PR guys, all taking notes. Murray has taken the lead. Ron is seated in the back.

MURRAY

The case is bullshit and we all know it. Our challenge is how to run the media. They're all over it. They love it. The people love it, and they love Barbara. She's the girl you've always known and she's pitted against big money Hollywood. We handle this right and she comes out the other side poised for movie deals, book deals, you name it.

BARBARA

Murray, I don't want to do anything cheap. I want to be honest with people.

He walks behind her and rubs her shoulders.

MURRAY

And people will expect nothing less. No sleaze. The media's hungry for meat, and they're going to find it, whether we give it to them or not. If we play hard to get, they'll be all over you - digging into your past, bothering your friends, your neighbors, your relatives, going through your trash. You don't want that. And neither does the media. They want to sell newspapers. So what we're going to do is throw them a little party. We'll help them sell newspapers. And that'll get them off your back and ultimately get you out of that dump in Studio City. We just need to bake them a little cake.

INT. PRESS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

It has been staged on the steps of a nasty looking courthouse. Barbara is at the podium, wearing something that will portray the right sentiment, her make-up is tasteful. She is just right, the girl you've always known fighting for her life.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REPORTER 1

Were you in Alvin Kevlar's office when his tie was caught in the Moviola?

BARBARA

I'm sorry. I can't talk about that.

REPORTER 1

Are you saying he strangled himself?

BARBARA

(looking upset)

Please, I-

MICHAELSON

(stepping in)

I reiterate, we can't talk about the details of the alleged incident. I'm sure you understand. Any more questions?

REPORTER 2

Is it true Alvin Kevlar was going to prevent you from making movies?

BARBARA

He was going to take advantage of a loophole in my contract with Paramount, which I signed over twenty years ago. He was planning to keep me from making movies at Paramount and wouldn't let me out of the contract to work elsewhere.

REPORTER 2

So this would pretty much ruin your career?

BARBARA

There's nothing I enjoy more than making people happy, seeing them smile and laugh. That's why I make movies. That's why I was put on this earth. Would this ruin my career? Of course not. Eventually, I would find a way to work again. Alvin Kevlar was a good man and he wasn't trying to hurt me. He was doing what he thought was best for the studio.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I've been around for almost half a century and I've been able to do a lot of wonderful things and meet a lot of wonderful people. I would never let a minor setback like this stop me.

REPORTER 3

What do you feel your chances are for winning?

BARBARA

Well, this isn't a game. I've done nothing wrong. It's up to the people to prove that I did something that I didn't do.

There is a scramble of reporters each trying to out-shout the other.

MICHAELSON

That's all for now. We'll...

(Shouting)

We'll have more for you as we progress. Thank you.

Ron takes Barbara's arm and ushers her away from the podium to a waiting limo. Cameras CLICK away trying to grab that one telling shot, but Barbara works the crowd like the pro she is, smiling just enough, with just enough worry in her eyes.

RON

Tired?

BARBARA

Just my feet.

RON

Want some dinner?

BARBARA

Sure.

RON

Where to?

BARBARA

Doesn't matter.

RON

Well you're going to have to pick a place because I'm new around here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

BARBARA
Who's paying?

Ron ushers her into the limo and away from the question.

INT. LIMO

As Ron enters and shuts the door.

RON
How about some seafood?

BARBARA
I can't afford that.

RON
(to Driver)
Hey Herm, do you know of a really
nice seafood place around here?

BARBARA
Ron.

He pulls away.

DRIVER
Sure. Something private with a nice
view, maybe?

RON
And expensive. Very expensive.

DRIVER
Got it.

BARBARA
Ronny, would you explain to me
where the money's coming from to
pay for all this?

RON
(Whispering)
I can't right now.

He points with his thumb toward the O.S. Driver.

BARBARA
(Whispering too)
Give me a hint.

RON
I'd love to.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their faces are close. He reaches around and pulls her in. Then, he closes his eyes and kisses her. He pulls back. Her eyes are still open, trying to figure out what's going on.

BARBARA
I'm missing something.

RON
What?

BARBARA
A critical piece of this puzzle.

RON
There's nothing to it.

She looks into his eyes for a moment longer, then reaches around him. They kiss passionately, longingly, making up for lost years once again.

INT. SEAFOOD CAFÉ - NIGHT

They are sitting at a tiny table for two with red-checked tablecloth. It's not an expensive place, but it is very private. The sunset casts a deep orange glow. They're wearing bibs, eating messy lobsters and shellfish.

RON
I started the bank with the money I got selling the family estate. You remember that worthless shack and hardpan lot.

BARBARA
And you did it all yourself.

RON
Me and my brothers. We lived in total squalor for... I forget how many years. But then finally we started seeing a return. Wasn't easy, let me tell you. But today, I'm proud to say, we have six branches throughout the tri-county area - the Farmingtown Savings and Loan, member FDIC.

BARBARA
Shouldn't you be working?

RON
Oh, I'm semi-retired now. Don't spend much, just sit at home and watch the money pile up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

So, how did you-

RON

A week ago, I was reading in the paper about the girl of my dreams being carted off to jail for murder. Looked up your agent Murray, and we talked, and decided to set up a fund.

BARBARA

A fund. With you being the sole contributor?

RON

Yeah, well, you'd be surprised how many friends you have.

BARBARA

Ron...

She can't think of what to say.

RON

You know, I think this is what I was meant to do. Starting the bank, putting the money away, all those years stuck in Farmingtown, just waiting it out. It's got to be for some reason. And this is it. Right now. It's not philanthropy. It's the way it was meant to be.

BARBARA

How am I ever going to repay you?

RON

Well, let me say two things on that subject. First, I would like nothing more than to live the rest of my life with you. You can go back to work if you want, or we can move off to some rancho someplace and raise llamas and get fat, I don't care. Second, it's payback with interest. I never should've charged you twenty cents for Fluffy. That dog was worth no more than five.

BARBARA

(laughing)

Oh, Ron...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RON

Hey, you don't have to answer now, there's no obligation. Let's see how things go, whatever. But I can't let you out of my sight.

BARBARA

That's sweet, but I-

RON

No seriously. You've been remanded into my custody. I can't afford to have you jumping bail and heading off to Mexico.

He plows in and takes another greasy bite, then looks up. She is watching him with a warm smile on her face.

INT. RITZY HOTEL PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

There's a half-killed bottle of Champaign chilling, the only light comes from the city twinkling below. Their bodies are intertwined on a king-size bed, their love-making filled with passion and longing. They have each found their soulmate.

EXT. CITY NEWSSTAND - DAY

We PAN the newspaper headlines. They're all about Barbara's trial: "Blythe Trial Enters 6th Week", "Blythe Still Hopeful", "Is She Really The Girl You've Always Known?". We HOLD on a pulp magazine cover, showing hopeful Barbara with Ron - "Barbara's high school flame glows again."

NBC NEWS ANCHOR

The anchor is on the news set in the studio.

NBC ANCHOR

Another shocking revelation in the Blythe trial today. We go now to Curt Burrows in Los Angeles.

EXT. LOS ANGELES COURTHOUSE - DAY

Same TV effect.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CURT BURROWS

Becky Blossom, the Production Assistant the defense claims was having a sexual encounter with Kevlar on the night in question, today testified that she saw what she believed to be a handgun in Blythe's possession as she fled the scene. Though in this case it's NOT a smoking gun, it could add fuel to the argument that the murder was premeditated.

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

With the same TV effect, a TV12 News Reporter is doing a stand-up with the Bungalow behind him.

TV12 REPORTER

What exactly happened to Blythe that would force her to sell everything and move into a low rent dive in Studio City?

EXT. BERNIE THE ACCOUNTANT'S OFFICE - DAY

With the same TV effect, the news camera is following Bernie with a long sneaky lens from across the street as he exits his building. Bernie wears sunglasses and tries to hide his face, but that just makes it worse.

TV12 REPORTER (V.O.)

Her Beverly Hills accountant Bernie Bernstein refused to speak with TV12 News. His secretary told us only that the matter was in litigation.

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

TV12 REPORTER (V.O.)

Her neighbor in the apartment says she kept to herself.

NEIGHBOR

I never heard a peep. She moved in and that was the last anyone heard from her. I didn't even know it was Barbara Blythe until I read about it in the paper.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RESUME TV12 REPORTER STANDUP

TV12 REPORTER

So, the mystery surrounding the Blythe case grows. Some speculate she had fallen into a deep depression the days and weeks before the murder, perhaps even turning to alcohol or drugs.

GRAPHIC - COURTROOM DRAWINGS

We SEE an expert witness and a Moviola.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

Today the Moviola expert testified, demonstrating the heavy duty motor in the machine. He showed how it was easily capable of pulling something like a tie with enough force to cause strangulation.

ANGLE FLATBED EDITOR

Shot with a handheld video camera.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

Unlike the current flatbed style editor...

ANGLE EDITOR USING MOVIOLA

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

The older vertical style Moviola is well-known by experts for its power to tear and rend film, as well as inflict injury, from friction burns to broken fingers.

ANGLE MOVIOLA ALONE

Possibly backlit to make it seem evil.

CNN REPORTER (V.O.)

And now we know, it is also capable of murder.

INT. GOOD MORNING AMERICA SET

Barbara is being interviewed.

BARBARA

No, I wouldn't say Hollywood is evil.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (CONT'D)

I think there are some greedy people who are attracted to the industry by the lure of fame and fortune, and they seize on the opportunity to take advantage of people. Hollywood at its core is the artists and craftsmen who write the stories and create the movies we all enjoy.

INT. ANOTHER TALK SHOW SET

It's a more abrasive late night show.

TALKSHOW HOST

There are those who say you were after payback when you went to Kevlar's office. How do you feel about that?

BARBARA

It saddens me. Unfortunately, many people tend to want to believe an interesting story, whether it's true or not. I suppose that's why they go to the movies. I actually felt very positive that evening and I went to his office to simply talk over my contract.

INT. LARRY KING SET

Larry is on his set. Barbara is in LA, in front of a city backdrop, talking with him via satellite.

LARRY KING

The amazing thing, Barbara, is that throughout all this you can still smile. I don't know how you do it.

BARBARA

Well, Larry, I've still got plenty to smile about. I have a lot of good friends and loyal fans.

LARRY KING

But most people would be, you know, depressed at least. What's your secret?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA

Well, let's see... you just get it in your head that as long as you do your best that's about all you can do, and what happens happens. Be hopeful, have faith, you know, don't expect the world to spin to the left just because you think it should.

INT. BARBARA WALTERS SET

It's bright, airy, filled with flowers. The two Barbara's are sitting on comfy chairs, just kinda rapping.

BARBARA WALTERS

Barbara, you receive hundreds of letters everyday, e-mail, gifts, people donate to your defense fund. You're an actress, but you're also an icon. You brought so much joy to people in your movies, in your volunteer work with the Children's Rescue Aid. Aside from what all this has done to you, how will this affect the world of Barbara Blythe?

BARBARA

Goodness. I'm just an ordinary human being with flesh and blood like everyone else. When this blows over, it will go in the books right along with all the other Hollywood scandal stories. But it's sad. People need their icons, their visions of perfection, their escapes from all the pain and rudeness and imperfection and ugliness in their lives. It's sad when their icons turn out to be just as imperfect and ugly as everything else. I think I will continue to act, but I'm too tarnished now to ever be an icon again. Real people were just not made to be icons.

EXT. FREEWAY LOG JAM - DAY

Hundreds of cars are parked and smoking in the ugly LA heat and muck. We HEAR the RADIOS blaring, angry people, the same people who are angry about everything else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We CUT from car to car, TIGHT on the radios. One car radio is situated over an overflowing ashtray - the driver is YELLING back at it in response, another car radio is in an executive's Beemer convertible, etc.

FEMALE RADIO VOICE 1 (V.O.)

It was a simple mistake. She lost her temper for a second and did this thing with the tie, but there's no evidence she turned the Moviola on!

MALE RADIO VOICE 1 (V.O.)

But why the hell else would she put the tie in it!? That's like saying someone isn't guilty because they pulled the trigger and left before the bullet hit!

MALE RADIO VOICE 2 (V.O.)

I just want to see it all end. I'm sick of hearing about it. The news media has blown this whole thing way outta proportion...

FEMALE RADIO VOICE 2 (V.O.)

Kevlar deserved whatever he got! He was a sleazebag and a crook and I'm only sorry Barbara had to take the fall.

INT. BARBARA WALTERS SET

Resuming.

BARBARA WALTERS

And what about your silent benefactor? Is it serious between you and Ron Spurlow?

Barbara just thinks a moment and smiles.

INT. LARGE AUDITORIUM

Another Academy Awards night. At the podium, a very big star is giving his acceptance speech and taking his time.

OSCAR WINNER

Right or wrong, it doesn't matter. She brought joy to so many, lived an... exemplary life and in one... horrible moment did something that I'm sure most of us have thought of doing many times...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A short burst of APPLAUSE.

OSCAR WINNER (CONT'D)
She's a great actor and a great
human being, who doesn't deserve
what she's getting. I dedicate this
Oscar to the girl we've always
known. Barbara.

Before he can even finish the audience is drowning him out.

ANGLE BARBARA IN AUDIENCE

As if SHOT by a TV camera. She stands, big smile, blows
kisses. People reach over and touch her. Then Ron stands and
they hug, and the CROWD CHEERS even more.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Sudden SILENCE. ANGLE on Jury Foreman as he stands and faces
the O.S. court.

FOREMAN
We find the defendant guilty as
charged.

ANGLE DEFENSE TABLE

They are all physically shocked by the news, especially
Barbara who can barely remain standing. The intensity of the
murmuring among the spectators grows and grows out of control
rapidly. People from the media scramble for the doors.

ANGLE THE JUDGE

He raps his gavel to quiet them, but it's no use and he gives
up after awhile. He is as shocked as everyone else.

ANGLE RON

He is standing immediately behind Barbara. He reaches over
the bar. Barbara turns back and they embrace one last time.
The commotion in the courtroom isn't abating. The judge
starts rapping the gavel again.

ANGLE DEFENSE ATTORNEYS

They are at a loss. They gave it their all. Maybe they were
just a little too confident, who knows.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANGLE MURRAY

As he squeezes down the row toward Barbara and Ron. Barbara sees him and reaches over the bar. They hug.

FADE TO BLACK,
THEN FADE UP ON:

INT. PRISON HALLWAY - DAY

Long, cold and echoey. It's also very QUIET. All we HEAR are the hard FOOTSTEPS of a female guard escorting a woman toward us. The woman's head is down.

BARBARA (V.O.)

It wasn't a big tragedy, just a very, very big change. The verdict was appealed and finally after nearly two years, it was reversed and I was released.

We SEE that the woman with flat hair, white old skin and drab clothes is Barbara. The couple turn and walk up to a barred gate.

BARBARA (V.O.)

As I walked out of prison, I realized it was at that very moment my life had begun.

As the gate slides open, there's Ron on the other side holding a subtle bouquet.

BARBARA (V.O.)

I made a few more movies, some personal appearances, but my icon days were over. Ron and I just spent the rest of our lives in each other's arms.

They hug, then walk away from us down a hall into the light.

BARBARA (V.O.)

At the age of 87, Ron died of a heart problem. I died two weeks later, because it was time. Again, I had no control over the events that took place. And there's not a thing I would change.

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - NIGHT

The sky is deep blue. We MOVE down to Barbara's grave. Flowers are still piled on the mound.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

After a moment, we notice a blinking red light from behind some bushes. The small saucer pulls out slowly and flies over the grave. It stops and hovers there. A blinding light beams down on the grave for a few seconds, then shuts off. The saucer hovers a moment longer, then flies up to the sky and far away.

FADE TO BLACK.