

THE MARY JANE GIRLS

Written by  
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In memory of  
The light, love and brilliance  
Of the extraordinary  
Julia Culkier Siegler  
You continue to dance into my mind, everyday  
Inspiring me, and reminding me how precious  
Life is.

*Each friend represents a world in us,  
a world not born until they arrive  
and it is only by this meeting that  
a new world is born.*

*Anais Nin*

THE MARY JANE GIRLS

FADE IN:

CLOSE ON a framed antique black and white circular entitled: "MARY JANE GIRLS, 1862" containing several daguerreotype photos, including an oval photo of young Mary Curtis Lee.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

The Mary Jane's were founded in 1852 by Mary Curtis Lee, daughter of Mary and Robert E. Lee...

WIDEN to include her mother and father, the famous Confederate General.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

...and her inseparable friend, Jane Woodhull, at the beginning of the women's suffrage movement.

CLOSE ON a photo of young Mary and young Jane looking into the camera.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

The two friends were outraged that there were so many organizations for high school boys to join, but none for high school girls.

During the following SLOWLY WIDEN to reveal that Mary and Jane are in the photo surrounded by like-minded girls wearing short white capes with the initials "MJ" embroidered in red. As we PAN the girls' faces

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

They wanted to form a circle of friends united by the highest ideals of sisterhood, not by fashion and the frivolities that women were customarily relegated to, but by the noble principles of friendship, knowledge, loyalty and good deeds.

During the above, we CLOSE IN on the short white capes and embroidered red "MJs" as "DREAM" BY THE EVERLY BROTHERS is HEARD OVER a SLOW MONTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS, GETTING READY FOR THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

SUPERIMPOSE: "TYLER TEXAS, SEPTEMBER 1962"

-- a belly button at the center of high-waisted white panties and a matching white lace cone bra.

Hands adjust the breasts: up, down together, apart - just right. The breasts disappear behind a white sweater with the initials "MJ" emblazoned in ruby red beads.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

In our town it was every girl's dream to be a Mary Jane. To walk around school wearing that sweater with "MJ" in glittering ruby red beads embroidered over your heart - signifying that you belonged, you were a sister.

-- In another bedroom, reflected in a mirror, fire engine red lipstick glides across perfectly puckered lips.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

My great-grandmother, my grandmother, my great-aunts, my mother and my sister were all Mary Jane's. And it was assumed that one day, I'd be a Mary Jane too. That was the world I was born into. That was the world I was supposed to want to be in.

-- another bedroom, sheer stockings climb up shapely legs until they reach a garter belt and get fastened in. A pencil skirt is yanked up, a blouse buttoned and arms go into that same white sweater which is left unbuttoned. A scarf around the neck is tied, and then adjusted so that it doesn't hide the "MJ" initials on the sweater.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

But...as one of my favorite poets, Anais Nin, wrote: "Each friend represents a world in us, a world not born until they arrive and it is only by this meeting that a new world is born."

-- another bedroom, a lacy slip-dress slides over a head with a bobbed hair-do. Fingers with red nail polish shimmy the slip down over stomach, thighs and smoothly into place. Then the dress, and the finishing touch, that white sweater.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

I was about to be born into a new world... on my first day of Junior High.

-- And finally, in *another* bedroom, a white cotton training bra, it feels sad, as it has nothing to train.

END MONTAGE:

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Standing in her training bra, plaid skirt and knee socks is JULIA, 13, she puts on the white sweater with the letters "MJ" monogrammed in ruby red beads. Posing in front of an ornate, sparkling clean full length mirror, she mocks sophistication, then cringes.

On her bed is another sweater, fluffy, fuzzy, bubble gum pink mohair with white pearl buttons. Next to it is a fancy box and tissue paper from a local department store.

Julia grabs the tissue paper from the box, bunches it up, lifts up the sweater and stuffs the paper into the tiny cups of her training bra. The paper is too stiff. When she pulls the sweater back down there are bumps, but in all the wrong places. Julia yanks her sweater back up and tries several paper-wad-falsie re-adjustments. Sweater down, then pin up girl pose, and again she cringes, hopeless.

AUDREY, her mother, late 30s, looks like she just stepped out of the pages of Ladies Home Journal, barges into the room.

AUDREY

Julia! You are going to be late.  
Give me that sweater right now and  
put on the new sweater I just  
bought you.

JULIA

I find that sweater bilious,  
noxious, and repellent.

AUDREY

Sounds like a law firm.

Audrey forces the Mary Jane sweater off. Julia removes the falsies and puts them in her mother's outstretched hand. Julia allows herself to be dressed like a child.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

And I know, young lady, that you fancy yourself a walking dictionary, but if you use all of those fancy words at your new school the other children will think you're a "show off" and a "know it all" and you will not make any friends.

Julia's face falls.

CANDACE ("CANDY") 16, beautiful, a tintype of her mother, rushes into the room.

CANDY

Mom, I can't find my "MJ" sweater!

AUDREY

I was just bringing it to you.

She hands her the sweater.

CANDY

Will you zip up my dress.

AUDREY

"Please."

A loud HONK from a car outside.

CANDY

Oh shoot, that's Troy and I'm not even ready!

Candy bolts from Julia's room, and rushes down the hallway toward her own room, Audrey following close behind.

AUDREY

I know that you and your father think the sun rises and sets over that boy, but I still expect that he come to the door for my daughter, like a gentle...

The DOORBELL RINGS.

CANDY

...gentleman, who rings the doorbell?

Julia races down the stairs to answer the door.

JULIA

I'll receive the gentleman!

AUDREY

He's charmed them all.

Candy emerges from her room and heads for the stairs, with Audrey on her heels.

AUDREY

Candace! Don't forget you have to take your sister to school.

CANDY

Oh Mother, we can't be seen with her in the backseat. I'd just die!

Julia has already let in TROY NORTH, 17, a way too handsome, all American Jock with a wicked grin. He stands at the bottom of the stairs, unbeknownst to Candy, he calls up to her.

TROY

Fine, you can sit in the back, and the Peanut sits up front with me.

Troy gives a tug on one of Julia's pigtails. She playfully hits Troy with her schoolbooks, looks at him: "her Hero." Candy darts out the door. Audrey, pulls Julia in for a quick peck, then lets her go. The phone RINGS and she runs to answer it.

AUDREY

Hello...yes... okay... but not in the store... across the street...okay, see you there.

INT. MELANIE AND LIBBY'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

A dusty old full length mirror with a crack running through it, reflecting legs peeking out of a lightly frayed tight skirt. There is a small run in one of the stockings.

MELANIE, 16, street smart, spirited, has the uneven maturity and vulnerability of a girl who has raised herself. She is trying to get ready for school without waking the Sleeping Bear.

Stirring on a daybed, LIBBY, late 30's, her mother, a mess of a damaged beauty, sleeping in a tattered silk slip, clearly hung over.

Melanie bumps into a chair...

LIBBY

Melanie...? You still here?

MELANIE  
 (cursing herself)  
 DAMN!  
 (to Libby)  
 Yeah, Mama.

LIBBY  
 Can you get me a pack a Luckies?

MELANIE  
 I don't have time. I have to  
 catch the bus to school.

LIBBY  
 Oh? School startin' already?

MELANIE  
 Today's the first day.

LIBBY  
 And that's how you're doin' your  
 make up?

MELANIE  
 It's fine.

LIBBY  
 Fine? Damn. Git back here girl and  
 let me show ya how to make an  
 entrance.

Libby grabs some red lipstick off the top of a make shift beauty table. She grips Melanie's chin with one hand and smears the red lipstick on Melanie's reluctant lips with the other. Followed by some blush and eyebrow pencil.

LIBBY (CONT'D)  
 There! Now you look like a movie  
 star - very glamorous.

Melanie glances at herself in the mirror, hideous.

MELANIE  
 Movie star? I look like a God damn  
 rodeo clown.

LIBBY  
 Nonsense. You look just like  
 Marilyn Monroe...rest her soul...  
 real pretty. Now we could show them  
 Mary Janes a thing or two.

MELANIE  
 Show them Mary whats?...Who's that?



LIBBY

They're nothin' compared to you.  
Believe me. Well, you better git.  
But hey, leave me some change for  
my Luckies, will ya? I'll get 'em  
myself.

Melanie counts the change from her wallet.

MELANIE

Ma, I barely got enough for lunch  
and bus fare.

LIBBY

But I'm meetin' someone about a job  
and if I run out before I get  
there, I'll be a nervous wreck! You  
don't want that, do you? Please  
baby baby baby - Pleeeeeease!!!

MELANIE

You really goin' for a job?

In response to her mother's "I'm hurt you don't believe me" look, Melanie counts out coins and leaves them on her mother's rickety night table, muttering to herself:

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Fine, screw lunch. Guess I can  
afford to lose a few pounds.

INT. TROY'S '56 CHEVY CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Troy is driving, Candy rides shotgun playing with the radio which is blaring 60's rock. The Texas sun burns down on Julia who sits alone in the back seat, scratching.

They pass kids walking and driving to school, including a group of adorable GIRLS wearing MJ sweaters gliding to school, arm-in-arm. The girls smile and wave at them as a bus passes and blocks their view.

INT. PUBLIC BUS - SAME TIME

Melanie sits on the moving, crowded bus. She gazes out the window at the Mary Jane's and takes in their sweet, giddy laughter, and camaraderie.

EXT. ROBERT E. LEE HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

As STUDENTS arrive, by car, by bus, by foot, Troy puts the top up on his car, and Candy bends over to check her make-up in the side-mirror, applying lipstick.

CANDY

... well, anyway, she told me in that phony English accent of hers - granted, she's from England, but you just know she could talk regular if she wanted to - anyway she said she was "never going to see him again" after that...

Troy re-adjusts the mirror, Candy's voice starts FADING as Julia, notices Troy do a double-take into the mirror. Intrigued, Julia turns to see what has caught Troy's eye. It is Melanie getting off the bus. She stops and looks around.

SOUND COMES UP again as Candy drones on with her story:

CANDY (CONT'D)

...but then I saw them at the rink together - after everything she said about him - I thought I was going to die laughing. Don't you think that's funny?

Troy is brought back by Candy's laughing.

TROY

Huh? Do I...? Oh yeah. Very funny.

He joins her, not knowing what he is laughing at. Candy, turning and seeing Julia scratching nervously as she stares at her new school, she swats Julia's hand away to stop the scratching as she sees her clique at their usual spot.

CANDY

There's Rhonda and Paula. Come on.

TROY

Can't. I have a team meeting.

CANDY

Oh, well. See you at the rally.

Pecks him on the cheek.

TROY

Right!

(to Julia, with a grin)

Better see you there too, Peanut!

He sprints off.

HIGH SCHOOL STEPS - CONTINUOUS

Candy approaches her friends RHONDA, a sophisticated, superior, know-it-all, and PAULA, a perky goody-two-shoes. Both wearing the same white cardigan sweater with the "MJ" emblem. Julia tags along, lagging a few steps behind.

PAULA

Did the papers say how many sleeping pills she took?

RHONDA

Doesn't matter. Because she mixed it with all the alcohol. It's like drinking a Coke and aspirin.

(turns and sees Candy)

Where have you been?

CANDY

My mother made me and Troy take her with us. I could have just died! She just doesn't understand that Troy is too important to be chauffeuring my sister around.

RHONDA

Much too important.

PAULA

(to Julia)

So, you ready for your first day of Junior High?

JULIA

Is anyone ever ready for their first day of Junior High?

Julia is nervously scratching again.

CANDY

Will you stop that scratching?! I swear you look like a monkey!

JULIA

You look pretty simian-like yourself.

CANDY

Well, at least I don't look like a monkey. And you'd better get going. You don't want to arrive in the middle of morning prayer.

JULIA

There's not going to be anymore prayers in school.

RHONDA

The kid's right, Cand'. Didn't you read about it?

JULIA

Are you kidding, her read?

PAULA

Julia! Didn't anyone ever teach you to respect your elders?

JULIA

Forgive me. She spends hours reading...the MJ monograms on all her clothes.

CANDY

Well, you better start praying right now that I don't kill you.

Rhonda and Paula see Melanie who appears to be walking toward them. This unusual girl intrigues them.

RHONDA

Holy Cow! What is THAT? And what planet did it come from?

PAULA

Oh Rhond, it's not MJ to make fun of people.

RHONDA

(with an evil smile)

Yeah, but you've got to wonder where she got that outfit.

PAULA

What there is of it.

A shadow of recognition crosses Candy's face, she grabs Julia by the hand and pulls her quickly up the stairs, calling back to her friends.

CANDY

See you at the rally, I've got to get Julia to school. Come on.

Candy yanks her away, Julia looks back at Melanie who stops walking towards the girls.

Looking lost, Melanie lingers on the stairs. Rhonda and Paula walk over to her.

RHONDA

Excuse me, I was just remarking:  
what an exquisite outfit! I'd just  
love to have one like it. May I  
ask where you purchased it?

MELANIE

Well... I... I didn't...

RHODA

You didn't?

MELANIE

I mean... it was my mother's...

RHONDA

You mean your mother bought it for  
you? From...?

MELANIE

(laughing)

My Mother? No, my mother gave it  
to me. Christ only knows where she  
bought it. Probs the Five and Ten.

RHONDA

The Five and? Oh, I understand,  
you don't want to tell us, trying  
to keep your fashion secret -  
secret...

MELANIE

No, no it ain't that at all. It's  
probably a zillion years old...

Trying to turn this conversation disaster around:

MELANIE (CONT'D)

oh man... it's hotter than heck.  
Arn't you melting in those  
sweaters? Hey, the're matching! Are  
you two twins or somthin'?

PAULA

Heaven's no! We're Mary Janes. It's  
a club.

MELANIE

Oh yeah, I heard about them. My  
mother mentio-...

RHONDA

Is that the same mother who only  
"Christ knows" where she shops?

(MORE)

RHONDA (CONT'D)  
 (before Melanie can  
 process)  
 What's your name by the way?

MELANIE  
 My...?

RHONDA  
 Yes, I don't believe I've seen you  
 before...  
 (eyeing her body)  
 ...and I never forget a face.

PAULA  
 This is Rhonda McCain, who doesn't  
 know she isn't funny, and I'm Paula  
 Henderson.

RHONDA  
 Who only looks funny. And you are?

MELANIE  
 Melanie... Woodrow... I just  
 transferred here.

A BELL RINGS. Melanie reacts, starting to move.

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
 Jeez, I better hop.  
 (starts off, then)  
 But, hey!, I'd sure like to hear  
 more about you Mary Janes sometime.

PAULA  
 Well, I just happen to have a  
 flyer.

Paula pulls an organized file out of her schoolbag, and  
 retrieves a flyer which she hands to Melanie. Rhonda gives  
 Paula an "are you out of your mind?!" look.

MELANIE  
 Thank you very much, you've been so  
 nice... both of you.

Melanie heads up the stairs.

Rhonda turns to Paula and puts her two cheer pom-poms up to  
 her chest to mock breasts.

RHONDA  
 Oh, you have been so nice... both  
 of you.

EXT. ROBERT E. LEE HIGH SCHOOL QUAD - NOON

Pep rally. SIX CHEERLEADERS, including Candy, Paula and Rhonda, lead the crowd in a "R-E-B-E-L-S" cheer. They finish the cheer, and Candy comes to the microphone.

CANDY

And now introducing our soon-to-be  
championship football team, the  
Rebels of Robert E. Lee!!!

The FOOTBALL PLAYERS tear through a hand-made paper banner.

Troy charges through spontaneously scooping Candy up into his arms, swinging her around. He turns facing the crowd, sees Melanie and they lock eyes. Troy freezes, and the next FOOTBALL PLAYER crashes into him and Candy, sending them both toppling to the ground.

Troy gets up stunned as the crowd laughs all around him. The football player pulls Candy onto her feet apologizing. Candy saves the moment.

CANDY

(always ON - into mike)  
Troy North, not only talented but  
very graceful too! You better save  
those tackles for the game, Troy!

The crowd goes wild. Troy grins appreciably at Candy, then bows and waves to his fans.

CANDY

Come on everybody, let's give the  
team one more Rebel cheer!!! Give  
me an R - give me an E - ...

Troy looks for Melanie in the crowd - she is gone.

INT. THE RUSH PUPPY DINER - DAY

Audrey is in a booth sipping on a cup of coffee while Libby stands over the juke box.

Libby plunks a nickel into the slot. As VOLARE starts to play, Libby gaily turns and sequels at Audrey.

LIBBY

Our favorite song!!!

Libby sings and dances over to Audrey, pulling at her to get out of the booth and dance with her. Audrey does not budge.

She has done this dance before. Libby gives up and plops down into the booth.

AUDREY

So? To what do I owe the pleasure of your company? What do you need?

LIBBY

Oh, that stings. Can't a person just want to see her sister. And thank her for everything she's done already?

AUDREY

Like what?

LIBBY

Pulling strings so Mel could transfer to Lee.

AUDREY

Well, you're welcome. It wasn't that big a deal. So, if there's nothing else, let's order.

She signals the waitress

LIBBY

Well... there is one other thing.

AUDREY

(here it comes)  
And what would that be.

LIBBY

My old job. There!

She points out the window across the street at a store with a sign that says: "ANDERSON'S SPORTING GOODS"

AUDREY

Are you serious? After what happened the last time?

LIBBY

Oh no, No, Noooooo, don't worry. It's not for me, it's for Mel!...What d'ya say?

AUDREY

I don't know. I mean, it's not up to me.



LIBBY

You could sway Carl. Unless you'd rather get back at me by takin' it out on my daughter!

AUDREY

You honestly think I'd do a thing like that?

LIBBY

Well, it wouldn't be the first time you didn't stand up for me!

AUDREY

(sniffing)

I'm going to disregard that remark. Seeing's how it's barely 3 o'clock, and you're already polluted. So let's order.

LIBBY

(pouting))

I'm not hungry.

AUDREY

Okay, if I promise I'll talk to Carl, will you get off it?

Libby turns and smiles up at the WAITRESS.

LIBBY

I'll have an order of French toast with a side of Canadian bacon...

(to Audrey)

I love foreign food.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Julia is flopped in a big chair in the kitchen reading. Her new sweater is under her head being used as a pillow. IDA MAE, a black woman in her mid 30s, enters from the backyard with her arms full of neatly folded laundry.

IDA MAE

You best not let your mama catch you with that brand new sweater all balled up like that.

Ida Mae yanks the sweater out from under Julia's head.

IDA MAE

Child! I don't know what you got against this sweater.

(MORE)

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

You should be happy to have a pretty new sweater like this one. Why I have a good mind to wear it myself.

Ida Mae hold the sweater up to her chest.

JULIA

Be my guest. It will look much better on you. That sweater is made for someone with boobies. Which I haven't got.

IDA MAE

And shouldn't be talkin' about!

JULIA

How 'bout just thinkin' about? For the future?

IDA MAE

Oh Lord! How about thinking about what is in those school books.

JULIA

Well, while we're conversing about the "b" word, I saw this girl at school today, she must have had the biggest ones I've ever seen. I mean, not like so big they were hanging to her knees... but *nice* big ...you know, firm ones...

IDA MAE

Stop! Oh my, when you get fixin' on a topic! You're makin' me blush. Which is quite a trick for someone of my complexion!

They laugh together, then Julia looks at Ida inquisitively.

JULIA

Do Negro people blush?

IDA MAE

Now that is a good question.

JULIA

Do you think it might be in one of your medical books?

IDA MAE

Well, I don't know. Might be...

They look at each other - really excited.

JULIA

Let's look!

Ida retrieves a shopping bag hidden inside a low cabinet, then removes several textbooks concealed under a coat. She opens one entitled "Journal of Negro Health" and locates the page in the index.

IDA MAE

Well I'll be!

(Reading)

"The physiological causes of redness in the face and/or ears and/or neck are caused by the sudden vasodilatation and intense flow of blood to these areas without there being a natural demand for it"

JULIA

May I continue, Doctor?

IDA MAE

You go right ahead, Nurse.

JULIA

This is accompanied by a characteristic sensation of sudden heat, or flush, in the affected areas. The lighter the skin, the more noticeable it is, however the Negro complexion...

They are interrupted by an abrupt POUNDING at the back door. Ida Mae jumps, and Julia helps her quickly stuff the books back into the bag hiding them with the coat.

Ida opens the door, standing there sweating and out of breath is Ida Mae's son JESSE, 16, charismatic, bright, strikingly handsome, and extremely agitated.

JESSE

Ma, you gotta come right away.  
Honey needs you.

IDA MAE

Julia, you know my excitable son Jesse, don't you? Boy, don't be scarin' this child.

JULIA  
 (he is really cute)  
 Oh, I'm not scared. Hi Jesse!

JESSE  
 (scarcely acknowledging  
 her)  
 Hey. Come on mamma, let's go.

IDA MAE  
 Your sister knows what she's doin'.  
 First babies, they take their own  
 time.

JESSE  
 That's just it. Something's wrong -  
 maybe the baby's comin' out  
 backward - or somethin'... She says  
 she needs you. I got the truck  
 outside. You gotta come NOW.

Jesse grabs her by the arm, and Ida Mae looks torn.

IDA MAE  
 I'll be there as soon as the Missus  
 gets home! I'll come straight away.

JULIA  
 Go with him, Ida. I can take care  
 of myself.

IDA MAE  
 Child, your Mama would have my hide  
 if I left you here alone. And I  
 still have to finish preparing  
 dinner and clean up after.

JULIA  
 She'll be here in an hour. I can  
 have supper on the table by then  
 and I will clean up after.

Jesse looks thankfully at Julia, then pleadingly at Ida Mae.

JESSE  
 Ma, please...

Julia pushes Ida Mae out the door.

JULIA  
 Go, Ida! I'll be okay, I promise!

Reluctantly Ida Mae goes off with Jesse.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - EARLY EVENING

Julia prepares dinner; sets the table; takes biscuits out of the oven; puts fresh flowers on the table.

The front door opens. As Audrey enters the PHONE begins RINGING, and she runs to answer it.

AUDREY

Hello?... Oh, Libby, No, Carl's not home yet... I know... I'll call you as soon as I talk to him... bye.

She hangs up, turns, startled to see CARL standing in the open front door. A handsome man, late 40's, with the meaty look of someone who has played football in his youth, but has gone soft.

CARL

That was your sister, wasn't it? I thought I saw her leaving the Rush Puppy. So what is it she wants you to talk to me about?

AUDREY

Carl, we were talking about that maybe you could give Melanie a job at the store, even something menial, she's willing to do anything...

CARL

I bet. So was her mother.

AUDREY

I am sure Melanie is not like her mother.

CARL

How do you know? You haven't seen her but a couple of times since she was a kid...

AUDREY

Well, we must try to prevent her from becoming like Libby, and I know how they need the money. She can't hold down a job!

CARL

Not many lushes can! Look Audrey, I'm not about to let go of a good employee for your sister's kid who we know nothing about.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

Just so she can support your sister, who we know too much about. And you've got to stop feeling so responsible for her. She's the one who's made so many bad choices in her life... not you!

AUDREY

I know, but please Carl, think about, we just have too...

Carl cuts her off with a look.

CARL

First that President telling us we can't raise steel prices, now my wife telling me to give out jobs like it was the Peace Corps. Might as well live in the Kremlin. We'll talk about it after supper, I'm tired and hungry.

Julia enters, having heard just the end of the conversation.

JULIA

That's good, Dad, 'cuz I have a scrumptious dinner prepared.

CARL

Well, well, well, how's my girl on her first day of Junior High?

JULIA

Ohhh, so many IQ points smarter.

AUDREY

What do you mean you prepared? Where is Ida Mae?

(pushing past Julia)

Ida! Ida Mae! IDA MAE?!

JULIA

Mom, Ida had to leave. It was an emergency! Some cousin was having a baby, but it was coming out sideways or backwards or something! It was really serious. I told her to go.

AUDREY

(with a teasing smile)

And just who are you to tell her to go?

JULIA

I took care of making dinner and everything. Come and look.

Julia is excitedly trying to pull them into the dining room where she turns with the flair of a magician's assistant.

JULIA

TA-DA!

But Audrey is deep in thought, her smile fades, wheels turning. Ignoring Julia, to Carl dramatically:

AUDREY

How could she do this? How could she?!?! Leaving a child alone like this. Anything could have happened!

Julia is shocked at her mother's sudden change of mood.

AUDREY

She's done this sort of thing to me before. Cancelling at the last moment, but she has never gone this far, leaving my baby all alone. I just can't tolerate it, I won't. She has to go.

JULIA

Mother... what are you talking about? You can't let Ida Mae go, she's part of the family.

AUDREY

She places more importance on birthing some colored baby than on being here, taking care of you. And it is my turn to host Bridge club this week! How will I manage?

JULIA

Nothing happened!!!

Sobbing, Julia runs upstairs. We HEAR the bedroom door SLAM.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - DINNING ROOM - NIGHT

Libby and Melanie are finishing dinner, sitting across from them is the boarding house proprietress, SYLVIA, 60, a haggard looking woman, and ROGER, 45ish, a traveling salesman, who dresses in polyester and slicks his hair down with Brill Cream, he talks to Melanie's breasts as if they were her eyes. The three, so called adults, are all drinking heavily.

ROGER

So they let them nigras into your high school now?

LIBBY

No, Melanie's been transferred to Lee so she won't have to be in with that element.

MELANIE

That ain't why I transferred.

ROGER

For whatever reason, good thinkin', wouldn't want her around any kind of riff raff.

Melanie rolls her eyes, and lays down her napkin, having had enough of them.

MELANIE

I gotta finish my homework.

A shadow lurks in the window, a presence is felt - someone is watching them. Roger points to a creamer on the table.

ROGER

Pass that, would ya, cookie?

Melanie picks up the creamer and hands it to him. Libby sways drunkenly, knocking the creamer so that cream spills all over the front of Melanie's blouse which becomes wet, clingy and see through, she quickly covers her chest with her hands.

LIBBY

Now look what I gone and done. Oh Honey Bunny, I'm so sorry! Let me help you clean that off - your mama's a clumsy ol'...

ROGER

No, please, allow me, darlin'.

He grabs a napkin lecherously trying to wipe the cream off Melanie's wet blouse.



Libby and Roger are both trying to clean Melanie's blouse, they look at each other then laugh uncontrollably.

MELANIE

That's alright, Mr. Lawrence. It'll clean up just fine. I'm going upstairs to study.

LIBBY

(more drunken giggles)  
You do that baby doll, sorrrrry!

Melanie gathers her books and goes upstairs to her room. She fumbles for a key in her pocket, unlocks the door.

INT. MELANIE AND LIBBY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melanie enters the room and peels off her wet top and opens a drawer choosing a dry one to put on. A chill races down her spine, Melanie freezes, someone is in the room. A hand grabs her from behind, another hand clamps down tightly over her mouth. As she struggles:

MALE VOICE

Don't open your mouth... unless it's to sing or kiss me.

He releases her and she spins around seeing that Troy is the attacker. Melanie stands dumbfounded and fuming then realizing she is still just in her bra and skirt she quickly pulls the dry top over her head.

TROY

(mischievous grin)  
That's OK - you can leave it off.

Melanie gives him an incredulous look.

TROY (CONT'D)

Hey. I almost broke my neck today at the rally because of you.

MELANIE

Wish you had!...

He attempts to kiss her on the lips, and she breaks free.

MELANIE

Stop that! What the hell are you doing here? Get out!!

TROY

You're just mad 'cause you saw me with some other girl.

MELANIE

Some "other" girl who happens to be my cousin.

TROY

Your cousin???

MELANIE

Yes, I don't think she recognized me, well maybe she did and just didn't want to see me. We ain't seen each other in years. I hope you two are very happy together.

TROY

Come on, Mel, there's nothing serious between us. Really. Her dad's helpin' me with my football scholarship, so I've got to play boyfriend to... wait a minute- Candy's your cousin? Are you tellin' me Mr. Anderson your uncle?

MELANIE

Bingo.

She has been taking her school books out of her school bag. She takes out the Mary Jane flyer. He snatches it from her.

TROY

What's this?

MELANIE

None of your business!

TROY

The Mary Jane's - ha! You thinkin' of joining, are you?

MELANIE

And why the hell not?

TROY

Not to say you wouldn't look great in one of them fuzzy white sweaters.

MELANIE

(cutting him off angrily)  
For your information there's a lot more to being a Mary Jane than just filling out a sweater. Didn't ya hear the way they sang at that assembly today? And me bein' a

(MORE)

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
 singer and all, I'd fit in with  
 them just perfect.

With that Melanie snatches the flyer away.

Troy's eyes are drawn to a framed photo of Troy and Melanie,  
 on a date at a carnival.

TROY  
 I guess you didn't totally forget  
 about me.

MELANIE  
 Don't flatter yourself.

Troy puts his arms around her from behind. The PHONE RINGS.  
 Melanie motions Troy to be quiet, and picks up the phone.

MELANIE  
 Hello?... Oh, hi... sure I remember  
 you...

As Melanie listens, Troy goes over to the record player,  
 starts to sort through a stack of 45s.

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Audrey, on the phone. Carl stands by, realizing he's been  
 manipulated.

AUDREY  
 ...so he said: "I suppose we could  
 manage if we hired that darling  
 niece of yours." I thought, what a  
 wonderful idea, and had to call you  
 right away. So here's what we  
 propose...

She reacts to Carl's rolling of the eyes, with a sheepish  
 "okay, so it's a white lie" shrug.

INT. MELANIE'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Troy is laying on the bed listening to a 45, Barbara Lewis'  
 "HELLO STRANGER," on the record player.

MELANIE  
 ...sure, that sounds very fair...  
 yes, okay, see you tomorrow then.

As Melanie hangs up the phone, holding back tears, turns to  
 Troy.

MELANIE

That was my Aunt Audrey. She wants me to work for her, helping out at luncheons and stuff, baby sitting my little cousin... but she wants me to tell my mamma I'm workin' at my Uncle's store.

TROY

You're kidding. You're not going to do it, are you?

MELANIE

Of course I am. We need the money.

TROY

Well, why don't you and me get our act back together? Troy and Melanie, The Love Birds?

(snapping and singing)

Tweet tweet, sha-bop, tweet tweet.

Then...

Maybe we could try and get some real gigs, make some pretty pennies.

MELANIE

Sounds fun but I need more 'n pretty pennies, mister.

TROY

Hey, you won't let it drop about us, will you?

She gives him an angry look.

TROY (CONT'D)

Melanie, I don't think you're gettin' it, I'm doing this for you too. So we can be together again, for real. I always planned to come and get you.

Troy begins very softly to sing along with the song on the record player.

TROY

"Hello, stranger, seems like a mighty long time... Shoo-bop Shoo-bop, my baby... Ooh..."

This elicits a reluctant smile from Melanie and she sings harmony on the "she-bops".

Melanie is softening and Troy takes this opportunity to kiss her - a damn hot good kiss. It is clear they have kissed before.

INT. ANDERSON LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT EVENING

Audrey is on the couch crocheting. Carl is reading the paper. Candy comes in the front door, carrying pom-poms and a cheerleader bag, she dramatically SLAMS the DOOR behind her and stands at the entrance to the living room, fuming. Neither Audrey nor Carl look up to appreciate her suffering.

AUDREY

Hi Honey, how was your first day of school?

CANDY

How could you dare ask such a question? My life is ruined!!!

Candy runs up the stairs into her bedroom, and SLAMS this DOOR too.

CARL

Her life is ruined? You better go see how much it's going to cost me to fix it.

INT. CANDY'S HALLWAY/BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Audrey knocks on Candy's door.

AUDREY

Honey... was there a problem at the MJ meeting? Maybe I can help.

The door is opened and Candy bellows at her mother.

CANDY

No Mother, there was no "problem" at the meeting. The problem's YOU!!

AUDREY

What on earth???

CANDY

Why didn't you tell me "that girl" was going to my school?

AUDREY

What girl?

CANDY  
 (mimicking)  
 "What girl?" You know very well  
 what girl.

AUDREY  
 Your cousin Melanie?

CANDY  
 Mother, you should have seen her.  
 In her short, tight little skirt  
 looking like a tramp in all that  
 make-up. I've never been so  
 humiliated in my whole life. If I  
 hadn't escaped in time, she would  
 have walked up to me, right there  
 on the steps... or worse, at the  
 rally!!!

AUDREY  
 That's enough, young lady! I won't  
 allow you to speak that way about  
 my sister's child! You have no idea  
 what she's been through.

Julia comes out into the hall, in her pajamas, her eyes  
 swollen from crying.

JULIA  
 I'm trying to sleep.

AUDREY  
 Julia, I'm glad you're awake to  
 hear this. Your cousin Melanie is  
 coming to work for us starting  
 tomorrow.

Both Candy and Julia start to protest in horror...

AUDREY  
 NOT A WORD! She'll do everything  
 Ida Mae used to do.

CANDY  
 What do you mean "used to do?"

JULIA  
 Ida Mae is not gonna be here  
 anymore, Moms going to fire her.

CANDY  
 What? Why??

JULIA

For trying to save a baby.

AUDREY

That's enough, both of you. Your cousin has had a hard life, and I'm expecting you will both be a positive influence on her. This is a Christian home and you will treat her with Christian charity.

Audrey turns on her heels leaving the girls in stunned silence.

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - MORNING

The early morning sun wakes Julia. Her eyes open and something is disturbing her. She climbs out of bed and looks out the window.

EXT. ANDERSON HOME - KITCHEN SIDE DOOR - MORNING

Audrey hands Ida Mae an envelope and goes back into the house closing the door behind her. Julia calls down from her window in a half-whisper:

JULIA

Ida... Ida Mae...

Ida Mae looks up at Julia. A tear slides down Julia's cheek.

JULIA

I'm sorry. It's all my fault.

IDA MAE

That's right, Missy, it was all your fault. All your fault that I got there in time to save that baby girl, and her mama too. If you hadn't made me go, I'd a lost 'em both. Should be more people at fault like that.

JULIA

But Ida, you lost your job.

IDA MAE

Don't you trouble yourself 'bout what happened to me. You did the right thing. I'm proud of you. I'll find another job - so don't go worryin'.

JULIA  
But... I'll miss you.

IDA MAE  
I'll miss you too. Now, git! You  
don't want to be late on only your  
second day of school.

JULIA  
School! Wait Ida - wait right  
there!

Julia shoots down the stairs.

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Racing into the kitchen Julia grabs Ida's shopping bag from  
it's hiding place.

AUDREY  
What are you doing?

JULIA  
(faking nonchalance)  
Ida forgot her coat.

Audrey follows her to the door and watches them.

EXT. ANDERSON SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Ida Mae walks away down the path, Julia sprints up to her,  
lugging the shopping bag containing the heavy medical books.

JULIA  
Ida! Don't forget your coat.

Ida stops, and turns to Julia, seeing the book bag, she  
smiles.

EXT. ROBERT E. LEE HIGH - AFTERNOON

Julia walks down the stairs with a gaggle of giggling girls,  
but she is not really with them heads home, alone.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - AFTERNOON

Julia moves like molasses up the stairs. Audrey is standing  
in the hallway in front of the door to the master bedroom.

AUDREY  
Where have you been since school  
let out?



JULIA

At the library. I have a report...

AUDREY

I told both you girls I wanted you home early. Have you seen your sister?

JULIA

In the library?? Candy?! Are you kidding?

She sees Melanie standing in the bedroom, wearing only a slip. Julia glares at her as though she were the enemy.

MELANIE

Hi there, Cuz.

AUDREY

This is your cousin Melanie. Say hello.

JULIA

Hello.

MELANIE

You don't remember me. But, I remember you... even when you were a little girl, you had them beautiful brown eyes, and them thick eyelashes. I saw you yesterday at school. Damn! I knew it was you. I'd'a remembered them eyes anywhere.

Julia casts her eyes down.

AUDREY

Julia, I've been telling Melanie about the way things work around here. I expect you to help her out, and mind what she tells you.

MELANIE

We're going to get along just fine. I always wanted a little sister.

AUDREY

Come on, Melanie. Let's see if we can find something that'll fit you.

Julia rolls her eyes muttering to herself:

JULIA

Yeah, just what I need. Another  
big sister, and one with big boobs.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - DAY

The next day. Audrey rushes around the house making final preparations for Ladies Bridge Club.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

AUDREY

You get that, Melanie. Show the  
ladies in and I'll be there in a  
minute.

Audrey dashes upstairs.

Melanie takes a deep breath and opens the door to find three impeccably dressed women: MARY, 38, elegant, sour, JOYCE, 38, gossipy, chatty, and PATRICIA, 38 - warm, kind,.

MARY

...Yes, it's just terrible. And  
this Meredith boy...

MELANIE

Won't you come in?

They walk in, familiar with the house.

MARY

I don't know why people put such  
ideas in their heads. Imagine,  
this colored boy walking right up  
the front steps...

As Mary hands Melanie a fancy box of cookies, she looks her up and down.

MARY

Where is Ida Mae?

JOYCE

Didn't Audrey tell you what Ida Mae  
did? Just up and left Julia all  
alone one day.

MARY

Well, there you see, that just  
makes my point. It's like this  
James Meredith thing. This damn  
movement, giving them these ideas.

Patricia hands a bunt cake to Melanie and sees that she is feeling awkward.

PATRICIA

Audrey tells me you're Libby's daughter.

MELANIE

Yes ma'am.

PATRICIA

I remember your mom from when we were kids. She was always a... real live wire.

MELANIE

Really, my mom?

MARY

(sarcastically)

Oh yes, we all remember your mother. How is she getting along?

MELANIE

She... we... we're doing just fine.

Mary doesn't stay around to hear the answer, she moves into the living room. Audrey comes down the stairs.

AUDREY

Come on, girls, sit down and we can get to our game. Melanie, could you put those pastries on serving plates and you can put those little canapes into the oven and start the coffee pot.

MELANIE

Sure thing.

Melanie goes into the kitchen.

The living room RADIO has been playing softly in the background. When the HOURLY NEWS comes on.

NEWSCASTER (O.C.)

...U.S. Supreme Court, upholding the lower court ruling...

Patricia turns up the volume.

NEWSCASTER (O.C.)

...when Federal Marshals and U.S. Troops, called in by President Kennedy, attempted to control rioting on campus which claimed two lives the day before...

MARY

This!!! This is what I was telling you about! Listen...

NEWSCASTER (O.C.)

...Meredith continues to attend classes escorted by U.S. Marshals...

MARY

It's the same as when those "Freedom Riders" came in last spring. Trying to force coloreds on busses of all things. And that Kennedy sending in the U.S. Marshals.

JOYCE

The President?

MARY

No, the other one. The brother. No wonder there were so many people hurt in Birmingham and Montgom-...

JOYCE

Turn that thing off, Mary! And get over here. We came here to have some fun.

Mary turns off the radio reluctantly.

MARY

You may think you can ignore it, but before you know it, our whole way of life'll be changing, and I, for one, intend to fight it.

PATRICIA

Well, fight it somewhere else, and deal the cards.

JOYCE

That's right, we have much more important matters to discuss, Audrey.

(MORE)

JOYCE (CONT'D)

For instance, how are plans coming for the Mary Jane initiation?

AUDREY

They're coming along. Candy and some other actives'll be here Saturday to make preparations...

We HEAR FOOTSTEPS on the stairs. Audrey quiets Joyce with a hand motion.

AUDREY

Jules? Is that you? Come in and say hello.

Julia comes downstairs and stands near the doorway.

JULIA

Hello everyone.

AUDREY

Go on in the kitchen and tell Melanie to give you one of those wedgie pies.

Julia, remembering Melanie, looks reluctant.

AUDREY

Go on...

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The door swings closed behind Julia and she watches Melanie making KOOL AID in a pitcher.

MELANIE

(singing the commercial jingle as she works)

Kool Aid, Kool Aid, a five cent package makes two quarts of, Kool Aid, Kool Aid, nine great flavors of the drink you love, Kool Aid, Kool...

(Seeing Julia, warmly)

I feel so silly. This is your Daddy's shirt. The apron's your Mom's...

She stops when she sees Julia sniffing. Julia runs to the oven, and pulls the door open quickly - grabbing a hot pad - she removes the pan from the oven.

MELANIE

Looks like you got here just in time.

JULIA

Couldn't you smell them burning? You had the oven up way to high.

MELANIE

Are they okay?

JULIA

Yeah. A little brown on the outside. That's all.  
(taking a bite)  
But nice and soft inside.

MELANIE

Lucky you came in when you did. How do you know about this stuff?

JULIA

Ida Mae. She showed me how to make things like biscuits, cookies...

MELANIE

Ida Mae? The colored woman that quit last week?

JULIA

She's been with us since I was a baby. And she didn't quit. She got fired.

MELANIE

Ohhh ... I'm sorry... Sounds like you miss her.

JULIA

I do. SHE'S family...

There is an uncomfortable pause, as what Julia just said hangs in the air. She turns away, sits down at the kitchen table to watch Melanie, who has busied herself to cover the awkward moment, putting the canapes on the plate.

MELANIE

I always try to make food look pretty. Seems like it tastes better...

She picks up the plate and turns toward Julia to show her.

MELANIE

There... now don't that look...?

As Melanie turns, the canapes fly to the floor. For a moment, a look of dismay comes over Melanie's face.

MELANIE

Oh shit! I mean, shoot!

Julia's eyes widen at a forbidden word. Melanie looks down at the mess on the floor, and up at Julia, and breaks into a quiet laugh.

MELANIE

Like I was saying, I always try to make food look pretty...

Melanie is now kneeling down next to the mess... She picks up one of the broken pieces.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Oh my dear, this does look delicious. Why I can hardly wait to taste it... hmmm, has the hearty taste of linoleum with just a pinch of floor wax.

Melanie takes a big bite of one of the crumpled canapes at the very second that Audrey calls from the living room.

AUDREY (O.S.)

Melanie!

MELANIE

(shoves the rest on plate)  
I can depend on you to keep my secret, can't I, cuz?  
(German spy accent)  
No vun from Proctor und Gambles must effer know ze secret formula!

Julia stifles a giggle and gets the dust pan and broom, she sweeps up the remains. Melanie picks up the plate and goes back through the door. Then returns immediately, panicked.

MELANIE

Coffee...

She grabs the pot and moves toward the door.

JULIA

Better take the cups first.

MELANIE

Good thinking...

She puts the cups on the tray then stops, takes a deep breath, trying to calm herself.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I am Suzy Homemaker, I am Suzy Homemaker... okay.

She goes in and out, taking the coffee, returning for the cream and sugar. From the other room we HEAR BREAKING GLASS, and a SHRILL SHRIEK. Melanie hurries in for a sponge and towel. Melanie dashes back into the dining room. Then returns.

JULIA

What happened?

MELANIE

Coffee... all over the skinny one with the glasses.

JULIA

Mary Henderson.

Melanie flops down in a chair at the kitchen table.

MELANIE

Oh well, tomorrow's gonna be a lot easier. Your mother wants me to take you out, some big meeting here.

JULIA

Yeah, the Mary Janes, tons of 'em, to plan their idiotic initiation.

MELANIE

Your mom says there's a matinee you'll like at the Palladium, and after that we can go to a soda fountain. That'll be fun, huh Cuz?

JULIA

Maybe...

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Miles and miles of desert stars and a Texas moon glowing in the sky. Melanie and Troy sit on a blanket nursing beers. Several empty beer bottles lay on the ground near them.



Troy picks and tunes his 12-string blues guitar, he softly starts singing the Diamonds': "Little Darlin'."

TROY  
"Little darlin'..."

Melanie joins in

MELANIE  
"Bom-bom-bomp-ee-dooby-dooby..."

TROY  
"Little darlin' Oh-oh-oh where are you?"

MELANIE  
(speaks sexily)  
Right here. Big boy!  
(sings)  
My love-a, I was wrong-a...

TROY  
(in a castrati-like falsetto)  
Eye, yi-eye-eye-eye...

MELANIE  
"...to try to love-ove two..."  
(speaks)  
That should've been *your* line!

He gives her an arch look, then they both laugh, down their beers. Real toasty. And sing:

TROY & MELANIE  
"A-hoopa, hoopa, hoopa..."

TROY  
"I know well-a that my love-a wa-as just fo-or you...  
(high falsetto)  
...oooo only you-oo-oo..."

As he continues humming and strumming under, Melanie does the talking part in a deep basso voice:

MELANIE  
"My Darlin'...I needs you... "

TROY  
(in falsetto)  
Eye, yi-eye-eye-eye...

MELANIE

(deep voiced)

"...to call my own and never do  
wrong...And to hold in mine your  
little hand..."

TROY

(falsetto)

Eye, yi-eye-eye-eye...

MELANIE

"I'll know too soon that all is so  
grand. Please hold my hand!..."

Troy plucks the notes and sings the fill:

TROY

A-hoopa, hoopa, hoopa...

TROY & MELANIE

"My dear-a, I was wrong-a..."

(both in falsetto)

Eye, yi-eye-eye-eye...

To-oo try to lo-ove two

(nose to nose laughing)

A-hoopa, hoopa, hoopa...

(lips to lips finish)

Know well-a that my love-a

wa-as just fo-or you,

oh-oo only you-oooo.

The song ends.

TROY

Man, I haven't picked up my guitar  
since I moved here. I forgot what  
a good duo we make.

He leans in to kiss her, but Melanie pulls back.

MELANIE

I thought we were just gonna  
talk.

TROY

You know who wrote that song?

MELANIE

Of course, The Diamonds.

TROY

Nope, they just sang it. This negro  
group called The Gladiolas's wrote  
it and they sang it first too.

MELANIE

Wow - so The Diamonds stole there song!

TROY

Yup!

MELANIE

That is so wrong! Someone should do something about that!

TROY

That's why we belong together, cause you feel about music like I do.

MELANIE

(sarcastic)

Doesn't Candy care about music?

TROY

Sure she does! She listens to Pat Boone sing *Love Letters in the Sand* over and over and...

Troy mockingly croons a bit of *Love Letters* to Melanie. They crack up.

He draws her close and kisses her deeply. He pauses and looks at her lit up in the moonlight. An intense current moves between them. They make love on the blanket.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - DAY

Melanie and Julia are watching "Splendor In the Grass." It's a scene where Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty are making out and she pushes him away.

MELANIE

I figured you'd like this better than some old kiddy matinee.

JULIA

Sure. But my Mom would never let me see it.

MELANIE

Then it'll be our secret. I've already seen it three times. But I don't mind seein' it again. Don't you just love Natalie Wood?

JULIA

I guess.

MELANIE

You guess? She's the greatest!

JULIA

I thought you said Marilyn Monroe was the greatest?

MELANIE

Natalie Wood's the greatest living.  
(leans in closer to  
whisper to Julia.)  
You look like her.

Julia looks at the screen intently, wondering if it could really be true. She looks again at Melanie. Did she really say that? Melanie is caught up in the movie... and now, so is Julia.

INT. ROXY MOVIE THEATER - AFTERNOON

Melanie and Julia come out of the theater. Melanie has been crying and blows her nose into a napkin. They walk a few minutes in silence. Melanie's mind is still in the movie.

JULIA

Melanie... did you really mean that? You know, what you said about me and Natalie Wood?

MELANIE

Of course I meant it. You both have those beautiful brown eyes, and thick, shiny brown hair. She wears it a little more grown up than you do, that's all.

Julia stops walking and stands in front of a store window looking at her own reflection.

MELANIE

Wouldja you like me to show you?

Melanie stands behind Julia and holds both of her pigtailed out of sight. They both look at her reflection.

JULIA

You mean CUT my hair???

MELANIE

What do ya think? Wanna do it?  
Could be a kick...

JULIA

My mom n' dad'll have a fit!

MELANIE

And I know just the person who can  
make you look like a movie star.

INT. BOARDING HOUSE - LIBBY & MELANIE'S ROOM - DAY

Melanie knocks, then enters the room with Julia. Libby is lying on the bed holding an ice pack to her forehead. She is still wearing her nightgown and robe, hung over. When Libby sees that Melanie has brought Julia with her, she tries to pull herself together.

LIBBY

Well, is this who I think it is?

JULIA

I hope so.

LIBBY

Honey, it's been way too long. Let  
me look at you... why I hardly  
recognize you. You were just a  
little girl when I saw you last.

MELANIE

I was bragin' to Julia how great  
you are with hair-doo's and make-  
up, an' all. How you used to work  
wonders on all your raggedy old  
friends.

LIBBY

She told you that? And you want  
me to make you "Queen for the Day"?

JULIA

Or at least a lady-in-waiting.

LIBBY

Cute. Come sit down over here.

She sits Julia down at the dressing table, takes out a basket filled with brushes, combs, sprays, rollers, and scissors.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

I haven't done this in so long.

MELANIE

It'll all come back -  
you were always the best.

Libby takes a deep breath, then unravels Julia's long braids, the thick hair falls around her face immediately changing her appearance. Libby gently brushes Julia's hair. She picks up a pair of scissors, her hands start to tremble.

LIBBY

Still time to change your mind...

Julia shakes her head "no," squints her eyes closed, and whispers weakly:

JULIA

Go ahead...

Libby tries to control the scissors but her hands start to shake violently. She looks at Melanie to say "I just can't do this without a drink". Melanie understands and nods her head. Then leans over Julia's shoulder.

MELANIE

Maybe we oughta take your glasses off for this.

Melanie gently removes Julia's glasses. Libby grabs her flask and pounds some down. She picks the scissors up again, but her trembling hands still will not be calmed. Libby looks at Melanie panicked. Melanie gestures "It's okay, mom. I'll help you."

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Now close your eyes until it is all done - no peaking now.

She takes the scissors out of her mothers hand and proceeds to cut Julia's hair and do the make-over.

Melanie finishes the make-over, Libby has dozed off on a chair. Melanie hands Julia her glasses and a hand mirror revealing lipstick, pink blush, and a hair style that is a little too mature for her young face.

JULIA

I sure don't look like me.

MELANIE

Oh really? Then who do you think you look like?

JULIA

(mimicking dramatically  
Natalie Wood in the  
movie)

"Oh Bud... I am not a nice girl...  
I am not a nice girl".

MELANIE

I think maybe we did TOO good of a job, Mama... Mama!

Libby snores in the chair.

JULIA

I guess cutting hair really tuckered her out!

MELANIE

Yea. Artistic exhaustion.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Julia and Melanie walk down the street.

JULIA

I really had a stupendous time today.

MELANIE

I did too. Stupendous.

The girls lock eyes and exchange the warmest, sweetest look in the world.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - EARLY EVENING

The Mary Jane meeting is over. A few of the GIRLS wearing MJ sweaters, and ALUMNI WOMEN remain, talking in the foyer with Audrey, Candy and Paula.

Melanie and Julia enter the house. Audrey sees Julia's haircut and make-up, she is horrified:

AUDREY

Julia!

CANDY

(an I-told-you-so look to her mother)

Who's going to influence who?

Melanie and Julia look at each other, Uh-oh - did we do something wrong?

EXT. ROBERT E. LEE FOOTBALL FIELD - EVENING

The scoreboard shows that Robert E. Lee is playing Tyler.

A SPINNING COIN LANDS IN THE GRASS...

The Robert E. Lee sidelines - one last huddle before the game. The all white hands of the Lee players start to come together.

The Tyler huddle - hands of both black and white skin color come together and then reach for the sky.

The Lee Cheerleaders, including Candy, Rhonda and Paula are on the sidelines cheering wildly.

The Tyler Cheerleaders, an all black squad, do cartwheels and jumps.

All THE FANS STANDING, yelling for kickoff.

In the Tyler stands sits Ida Mae and her family, surrounded by mostly black and only a few white families.

In the Robert E. Lee stands sit Audrey, Carl, Melanie and Julia, surrounded by all white families.

TWENTY TWO PLAYERS in a wide open human collision called a kick off.

JULIA

Daddy, do you think it is awkward for Troy to be playing against his former team?

CARL

Well, hmm, it most likely isn't the easiest thing for Troy playing against his old team. But sometimes you have to seize an opportunity even if it is difficult and that's what Troy did. We were lucky to get him for his senior year.

AUDREY

Luck had nothing to do with it. It's because your Uncle wields a lot of influence on the school board.

JULIA

Did most of the white kids transfer out, like Troy did, when they started busing Negroes to Tyler?

CARL

I think many of them did.



JULIA

But if everyone transfers out when the Negroes transfer in how will the school ever be integrated like it is supposed to be?

CARL

Well, there are many people that don't think it should be.

JULIA

Do you?

CARL

I don't know.

Audrey gives her daughter the look.

JULIA

Is that why you left Melanie?

MELANIE

No, no... it wasn't that at all, I really didn't want to leave, my mom...

AUDREY

Melanie, you do not need to answer that. Julia - enough! Will you let us all enjoy the game.

A player on the Tyler defense takes his helmet off. It is Jesse. Julia recognizes him immediately. Jumps up and down excitedly, cheering:

JULIA

That's Ida Mae's son... Jesse!!!  
Yay, Jesse!

Everyone on the Robert E. Lee side of the stands stares coldly at Julia.

AUDREY

Shhh! Remember where you are!

Julia looks around, sees the glares she's getting from the Robert E. Lee faithful. She grimaces embarrassment, sits down shriveling up and whispers to herself.

JULIA

Yay Jesse...

On the field Troy scrambles in the backfield, looking down field, until he's stopped in his tracks by a hard hit from Jesse. Melanie winces.

Two or three of the Lee players come after Jesse for the hard hit. A little shoving match ensues, and Jesse just coolly turns and goes back to his defensive back position.

EXT. FIELD PARKING LOT - LATER

Carl, Audrey and all the happy, victorious Robert E. Lee fans wait at the gate outside the locker room. A few steps away, Julia and Melanie stand by the Anderson station wagon, Melanie in the shadows.

Troy comes out of the gate with Candy, who waves at her parents. Teammates pass him, patting him on the back and saying, "Way to go! "Great game" etc." He sees Carl.

TROY

I heard there were scouts from SMU  
and TCU there tonight. Plus the  
Aggies. What d'ya think? Did I  
look good out there? Think I  
impressed 'em?

CARL

You sure did, Son.

Putting his arm around Candy and Troy, leading them toward the car.

CARL (CONT'D)

Come on, everybody. We're all going  
to the Whataburger to celebrate.

Troy and Candy see Melanie in the shadows.

CARL

Troy, you know my niece, Melanie?

TROY

Yeah, I think we've seen each other  
around school.

MELANIE

Yes. Hi. Well, I'll be going.

CARL

You'll do nothing of the kind.  
When I say we're *all* of us gonna  
celebrate, that means you too. Pile  
in, Rebels... and Rebel-ettes.

Troy runs around to open Audrey's car door, then opens the door for Candy, Julia, and Melanie, he exchanges a quick look with Melanie who diverts her eyes.

INT. WHATABURGER - NIGHT

In full swing, the JUKEBOX is playing, COUPLES - including Candy and Troy - are dancing to the song "STROLLIN'."

CANDY

I don't know how you can like that rhythm 'n blues. It's degenerate. Only the coloreds like it.

TROY

(shrugs)

Maybe I've got Negro blood in me.

Candy gives him a death look.

TROY (CONT'D)

I'm kidding!

CANDY

Really, Troy. That is not funny! ...even as a joke.

At a nearby table, Julia, Melanie, Audrey and Carl eat and watch the dancers - Carl wolfs down his burger and offers Audrey his hand.

CARL

Come on, baby, let's do the slop.

AUDREY

That's not the slop, it's the stroll.

CARL

Whatever, it'll look like slop when we do it.

Melanie grabs Julia's hand...

MELANIE

Come on, we can't be a pair of wallflowers. Let's dance.

JULIA

I don't know how to do that.

MELANIE

Nothin' to know. Just move.

Melanie and Julia have fun dancing together. Troy cuts in, trying to get Melanie to dance with him - she won't - and he ends up dancing with Julia.

Melanie is left hanging for a moment not sure where she belongs. She watches Candy across the room trading new steps with several girls wearing MJ sweaters and she tries to get up the nerve to join them.

Candy turns and waves her over, Melanie excitedly starts to move towards the group of girls, then realizes Candy is not waving to her at all - she is waving over another girl standing behind her. Melanie moves back and leans against the wall, her face red, mortified.

The song ends. Audrey, Carl, Julia and Troy come back to the table. Audrey sees Melanie and feels her pain, leans over to Troy.

AUDREY

Do me a favor. Dance with Melanie.  
Nobody's asked her to dance.  
Nobody her own age, that is.

After a moment's hesitation.

TROY

Hey, Melanie, wanna dance?

MELANIE

I already said NO.

TROY

Come on. Your Aunt Audrey really wants you to.

She reluctantly follows Troy out to the dance area. They fall into step very naturally, in synch with each others' moves. The song ends and a ballad begins.

Troy and Melanie move to a secluded corner where they press up against each other, comfortable with each others' bodies, moving slowly to the music. There is a palpable heat and tension in the way they dance together.

Candy looks through the crowd for Troy, she thinks she spots him, who is he dancing with...

SEVERAL PLAYERS from Tyler - including Ida Mae's son Jesse come into the restaurant.

A bunch of Good Ol'Boys, wearing Robert E Lee Rebels letterman's jackets, approach them headed up by two particularly virulent rednecks, Burl and Lyle.

BURL

No Tyler trash-burgers served here,  
(turns to Jesse's face)

(MORE)

BURL (CONT'D)  
 'specially ones that are too well  
 done!!

JESSE  
 We just want some food before we  
 get on the bus.

BURL  
 Get it out the back door, boy.

He pushes him in the chest.

JESSE  
 Hey, who d'ya think you're pushin'?

BURL  
 Same boy I been itching to push  
 since the third quarter. When he  
 blind-sided our quarterback.

JESSE  
 That was your doin', peckerwood.  
 Left guard supposed to protect his  
 quarterback's blind side.

At their table, Carl, Audrey, Candy and Troy stand in their  
 tracks. Julia moves around to Melanie.

JULIA  
 Mel - It's Jesse. Ida Mae's son.

MELANIE  
 Troy. Them two. They're on your  
 team. Maybe you could get 'em to  
 cut it out.

He starts to move toward the ruckus, but Candy stops him.

CANDY  
 It's none of our concern. And you  
 can't be side in' with some Colored  
 against your own teammates.

AUDREY  
 She's right, Troy. You might never  
 see that boy again. But you'll be  
 see in' Burl and Lyle every day.

CARL  
 Yeah. And they're your pass  
 protection. You never want to  
 upset your pass protection.

Troy is conflicted. He looks at Melanie, he knows he should jump in the fight, but he backs down. Melanie shakes her head disgustedly.

MELANIE

Well, they ain't my pass protection.

JULIA

Mine neither.

CARL

Stay out of this, young lady. And Melanie, I know you want to help, but trust me, you will only make it worse. I will take care of it. Just stay here.

Lyle and Burl are roughly pushing Jesse to the door. Carl good-naturedly puts his arm around Burl and Lyle's shoulders. Julia and Melanie follow close behind watching intently.

CARL

Come on, guys. You don't want any trouble. It's not worth it, you get into a fight you might not be able to play in the game next week and no way we can win without you. Why don't ya come on over to my store tomorrow, pick out some fishing rods. On me. All right?

Lyle and Earl, reluctantly placated, head back to their table. Carl turns to Jesse.

CARL

Hey son, how's your mom?

JESSE

(With great pride, through gritted teeth)

Fine, Mr. Anderson. She's going to school now, gonna be a nurse.

CARL

That is great to hear, impressive, really. Your mother will make a fine nurse. I remember she got a splinter out of my hand one time and she, well anyway...

(confidential and awkward)

Hey, you played a helluva game tonight.

(MORE)

CARL (CONT'D)

What do ya say we avoid a situation  
why don't you and your buddies get  
yourselves a bite back in Monroe?  
Have yourselves a celebration. On  
me.

He offers him a \$10 bill. Jesse refuses it.

JESSE

It's all right, Mr. Anderson. I  
ain't that hungry.

Jesse starts to leave, then suddenly, jumps up onto a bench.

JESSE (CONT'D)

(passionately)

I'm leave in' hungry today, but I  
believe, that soon I will be  
sittin' and eatin' in this diner,  
in any seat I choose, and I  
believe, there ain't nothin' you  
can do to stop that.

JULIA

Amen!

The diner falls into stunned silence. A WAITRESS, balancing  
a full tray of burgers and fries in her hand, stands gaping  
at Jesse.

Melanie, wanting to show her support grabs one of the burgers  
off the tray and shoves it in Jesse's hand. Julia, so  
inspired by this great act of cheeseburger civil disobedience  
grabs a basket of french fries and gives it to him as well.

JESSE

(taking a big bite)

Why these are delicious, thank you  
ladies! You see, I believe, and I  
receive!

Jesse's team mates cheer.

Melanie grabs the tray of Burgers from the gawking waitresses  
hands, Julia helps her pass the Burgers out to Jesse's  
teammates, who are jubilant.

JESSE & TEAMATES

(chanting)

I believe, and I receive.

Jesse jumps down, burgers and fries in hand. He turns to  
leave, then turns back to Melanie and Julia.

A look of understanding, kindred spirits. Jesse leads his teammates out. Julia looks after Jesse, in awe.

Then, not wanting him to leave yet, she grabs a napkin holder off the table, yanks all of the napkins out.

JULIA

Jesse!

She hands him the napkins. All the players laugh hysterically as they parade out of the diner.

EXT. BOARDING HOUSE - NIGHT

Melanie gets out of Carl's car, waving to him as she runs up to the front porch of the boarding house. She then looks back down the street, sees a car pull up, runs to it, and gets in.

INT. TROY'S '56 CHEVY CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

Troy and Melanie drive in silence.

INT. TROY'S '56 CHEVY CONVERTIBLE - NIGHT

They park in the desert. Troy tries to kiss her, Melanie pulls away. Angry, he hits the steering wheel with his fist:

TROY

I should have done something.  
(off her silence)  
You think so too. Don't you? You think I'm a coward.

MELANIE

I don't know, Troy. But I'm sick about who I've become. A liar! And a cheat! And let's face it, you're doing a good share of lying and cheating yourself!

TROY

What do you want me to do? Work at a damn textile plant like my dad for the next thirty years? And watch you have to take in laundry like my mom?! I'm just trying to get us a new life. Guess you can't understand that.

MELANIE

Why? Don't you think I have dreams too? I do, plenty of 'em.

(MORE)



MELANIE (CONT'D)

And one of 'em is I want my  
boyfriend back - for real. How do  
you think it makes me feel seeing  
you with her?

TROY

The Anderson's expect me to be the  
perfect boyfriend to princess Candy  
so what the hell am I supposed to  
do?

MELANIE

Yes, I know, it's your scholarship,  
it's only to keep in tight with my  
uncle ... blah, blah, blah. No, you  
want her all right - you want her  
and her life... because it's easy.  
I know, because I want it too. But  
we can't let ourselves get lost,  
Troy. I'm so scared we're gonna get  
lost.

TROY

No way. Trust me.

Troy pulls Melanie to him, he tries to kiss her. She  
immediately stiffens and pulls away.

MELANIE

I'm done Troy. We can't do this  
anymore. Take me home.

Troy grabs her face in his hands and kisses her roughly. She  
shakes her head back and forth to escape his kiss, and  
squirms around to avoid his prying hands, she finds the door  
handle and pushes the car door open. She leaps out of the  
car shaking.

TROY

Come on Mel, I want to be with you.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Troy runs after her, grabs her by the shoulders and shoves  
her against the car. His hand climbs under her skirt,  
presses on her thigh, then pushes higher - wedging one knee  
in between her knees, pushing up her dress.

MELANIE

No! No, Troy, don't. Stop!

But he doesn't. It's not long before his strong athlete's  
body has overpowered hers.

INT. CANDY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Candy, Rhonda, Paula and two other Mary Jane's are in Candy's room prepping for the MJ initiation. Surrounded by gold flowers, gold glitter, gold spray paint, gold ribbon and other craft items, the girls are making golden flower wreaths for the Mary Jane initiation.

INT. ANDERSON HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Melanie walks up the stairs. There are bruises on her arms and neck, and slight abrasions on her face and lips. Hearing the LAUGHTER and MUSIC coming from Candy's room, she stops, leans her back against the door and takes in the sounds of the girls' camaraderie, yearning to be a part of the group.

INT. CANDY'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

RHONDA

If she doesn't have all her points,  
then I don't think she should be  
initiated.

CANDY

If she doesn't have all her points  
and still wants to be initiated,  
she'll have to come to Monday night  
chapter dinner dressed in the  
Petunia pig costume and will have  
to oinky oinky oinky eat an entire  
meal with no hands.

Candy grabs Rhonda's hands and holds them behind her back, and pushes Rhonda's face into a container of Jiffy Pop. Rhonda buries her face in the popcorn making crazed PIGGY SOUNDS, causing the popcorn to fly everywhere. The girls throw popcorn at each other, laughing hysterically.

INT. ANDERSON HOME HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Audrey comes up the stairs and sees Melanie leaning against Candy's door. Melanie jumps - busted.

AUDREY

Hi, Mel-...Jeez?! What happened to  
your face?

MELANIE

Oh this? Nothing. I accidentally  
walked into a tree branch out back.

AUDREY

(inspecting her neck)  
A tree gave you a hickey?

Melanie forces a laugh. Further questioning is interrupted by a NEWS BROADCAST from a portable radio.

NEWSCASTER (O.C.)  
 Tonight, President Kennedy, in a nationwide broadcast to the American people...

Julia rounds the hallway carrying the portable radio and runs into Audrey and Melanie.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
 ... show missile sites on Cuban soil capable of accommodating missiles of 2000 mile range...

JULIA  
 (to Melanie)  
 What happened to you?

AUDREY  
 She ran into a horny tree.  
 (to Julia's "hunh?" expression)  
 Skip it. You girls better not hang around here right now.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
 ... in that regard, he informed Soviet Premier Khrushchev of an "interdiction" order against the delivery of such weapons...

JULIA  
 Did you hear what's happening?!?

AUDREY  
 No, what's happening? Julia! Turn that down.

Julia turns the portable radio down.

JULIA  
 These Russian cargo ships are coming to Cuba carrying missiles. So President Kennedy has ordered a quarantine...

AUDREY  
 That has nothing to do with us. It's just all those people on the East Coast, it's their problem.  
 (MORE)

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Why do you always bother yourself with these things that do not concern us.

JULIA

But it does concern us - it concerns the whole worl...

MELANIE

(trying to keep Julia from getting in trouble )  
What are they doing in there?

AUDREY

It's a secret, and a secret is a secret.

JULIA

Who cares anyway about the MJ's idiotic secrets.

AUDREY

Well, hopefully YOU someday.

JULIA

Come on, Mel, let's go back to MY room.

Julia marches down the hall and back into her bedroom. Melanie stands there longingly. SOUNDS of the MJ's LAUGHTER seeps through the closed door.

MELANIE

I'd love to know about being a Mary Jane. I asked my mother, but she won't talk about it.

AUDREY

(evasive, almost guilty)  
Well, it's really too late for this semester anyway... seeing's how the initiation's this Saturday. But there's Spring Rush next semester and if you're still interested..

During the above, the door to Candy's room swings open and the girls come laughing and screaming out the door.

AUDREY (CONT'D)

Candy, your cousin Melanie here might be interested in joining the Mary Janes!...

Candy gives her mother a horrified look. Rhonda rolls her eyes at Paula, who shoots back a "cool it!" look.

AUDREY

...at Spring Rush! Isn't that a wonderful idea, Candace?

CANDY

Yes, just wonderful Mom. Rhonda, wouldn't it be truly divine.

RHONDA

Devine.

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

A few days later. Julia and Melanie are sitting at the kitchen table, both doing homework. The back door is open, revealing the station wagon, parked near the back porch. Candy and Audrey are hurriedly carrying boxes, garment bags and food items out to the car.

AUDREY

Candy, we're gonna be late.

Candy comes through the kitchen carrying a cosmetic case.

CANDY

I just had to get my make-up bag.

She goes out without a look or a word to Julia or Melanie. Audrey pokes her head back in.

AUDREY

We'll be late tonight. The lodge number's in the book, but there'll be a lot going on there, and it's difficult coming to the phone.

MELANIE

Don't worry about us - have fun!

AUDREY

Okay, we're off!

Melanie turns to Julia with determination.

MELANIE

Julia, Do you know anything about the Mary Jane initiation?

JULIA

How would I know anything about something I don't care about?

MELANIE

Do you know where the lodge is?

JULIA

Sure, up on Martin Road...

Julia sees where Melanie is heading.

JULIA (CONT'D)

Uh-uh, I wouldn't go to that  
idiotic thing. And they wouldn't  
let us in, anyway...

MELANIE

They won't even know we're there.

JULIA

Because we won't be!  
(smile forming)  
Candy'll kill us if she catches us.

MELANIE

She won't, nobody will. We'll be  
like spies.

EXT./INT. ELKS LODGE - DUSK

The lodge sits on a hill overlooking the cemetery, lit from  
inside with a soft glow. A window with a crack between two  
pieces of fabric, is just wide enough for a pair of eyes...  
or two.

The lodge has been transformed into a magical fairy land,  
flowing gold fabric covers the walls, candles make the room  
shimmer.

On a platform covered with gold and white flowers are THREE  
WOMEN with their backs to Melanie and Julia, dressed in gold  
and white robes, golden wreaths on their heads. A GIRL in a  
white robe, with a gold sash, stands at a closed door.

MELANIE

It's like a fairy land.

Julia and Melanie press in closer, noses right up to the  
window.

Three women (Mary, Patricia and Audrey) join hands, forming a  
circle, chanting:

MARY

Bonded in friendship...

They step sideways, turning the circle.

PATRICIA  
Bonded in song...

The circle turns.

AUDREY  
Bonded in love...

The circle turns again, revealing to Julia that the third woman is Audrey.

JULIA  
Oh God! It's my Mother!!! Barf!

INSIDE THE LODGE

The TINKLING OF A BELL is heard from behind the closed door. Patricia steps forward.

PATRICIA  
Who ringeth the golden bell at the  
gate of light?

A BELL RINGS again. Through the door we HEAR:

CHORUS OF GIRLS' VOICES (O.S.)  
It is we, sister, who wish to enter  
the gate of light.

The door opens. FOUR GIRLS face each other in the doorway.

PATRICIA  
Who do you bring?

CHORUS OF GIRLS' VOICES  
We bring those of sweetness, those  
of loyalty, those who wish to sing  
in the light.

PATRICIA  
You may enter.

Two by two, rows of Mary Janes enter singing in breathtaking harmony. The Mary Janes are dressed in white robes with golden sashes, a small wreath of golden flowers with ribbons down the back sit like angelic halos on each girl's head.

The INITIATES are in white robes with white blindfolds covering their eyes. Each Mary Jane holds the hand of her initiate, guiding the "new girl" to her place, and helps her kneel down in front of the three women in the golden robes.

The girls kneel blindfolded in a semi-circle, as the Mary Janes move to stand behind them, lit candles in hand, still singing, Candy, Rhonda and Paula amongst them.

THREE WOMEN

We are bonded in friendship.

ALL GIRLS

We are bonded in friendship.

THREE WOMEN

We are bonded in song.

ALL GIRLS

We are bonded in song.

THREE WOMEN

We are bonded in love.

ALL GIRLS

We are bonded in love.

THREE WOMEN

And now we all belong!

ALL GIRLS

And now we all belong!

As the song finishes, the girls are encircling initiates.

PATRICIA

Sisters, you may remove your  
blindfolds.

The young women reach up to remove their own blindfolds. They look around in awe at the candlelit room. There are tears in many eyes. As the Mary Janes continue to hum the melody, Joyce begins reading the names of the new girls.

JOYCE

Julie Albert... Millie Benson...  
Susan Brooks...

A Mary Jane brings each girl forward as her name is called. A wreath is placed on her head and she receives a golden sash. The girls hug. They begin to sing another Mary Jane Song.

Watching from the WINDOW OUTSIDE, Julia stifles giggles at the corniness of the ceremony...

JULIA

This is the big secret?! I'm going  
to regurgitate!



...but Melanie is entranced.

Melanie and Julia run down the road towards town - when the lodge is out of sight they slow down. Melanie is humming the Mary Jane song. Julia puts her hands over her ears:

JULIA

Will you stop that?! It's so imbecilic.

MELANIE

It was beautiful! Did you listen to the words? "Bonded in friendship..." That's what friendship is, you know, a bond. You're linked to that person forever, if you're true friends.

MELANIE

I'd just die to have a chance to be part of that beautiful circle.

JULIA

Oh Melanie, you're unequivocally superior to all of those Mary Janes rolled into one. And who can argue with someone of my acumen when it comes to judging character?!

MELANIE

(laughing)  
Not me Jules, not me.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Melanie puts a book in her locker, then leaning forward, holds on to the door. She is going to be sick.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

Melanie hurries into a stall and throws up. She is about to come out of the stall when she hears familiar voices.

Candy and Rhonda have come into the bathroom. They are wearing cheerleading uniforms and their MJ sweaters. They continue mid conversation as they re-fresh their lipstick at the mirror.

CANDY

Well, I have a secret game day motivator - I told Troy that if he scores on the field tonight I will let him score under my sweater!

They burst into naughty laughter.

RHONDA

Wicked!

They exit the bathroom.

Melanie cautiously comes out and splashes her face with cold water. She Looks in the mirror, her mascara is now in streams under her eyes. She grabs a paper towel, puts soap on it and tries to rub the blotches off making it worse. Sick and frustrated she chokes back sobs.

INT. TROY'S CAR - NIGHT

TROY

Boy, this is so out of nowhere.  
Damn! How could you let this  
happen?!!

MELANIE

(incredulous)  
Me let it happen?! You, you forced  
me!!

Hot tears of rage sting her checks.

TROY

Come on, Mel, I didn't force you,  
you just make me crazy. Don't  
cry... I've got a little money  
saved up and I've heard there are  
places you can go to get rid...

MELANIE

You have gone crazy! Forget it  
Troy - I'll figure it out myself.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - MORNING

Audrey is preparing items for a bake sale. Julia is helping her. The DOORBELL RINGS. Audrey opens the door, revealing Melanie.

AUDREY

There you are! We were worried  
about you.

MELANIE

Sorry I'm late.

Melanie looks terrible. Her eyes are swollen, her skin pale. Audrey takes a plate of fudge brownies past her.

AUDREY

Well, now that you're here, I'd better get going or I'll be late.

Melanie glances at the gooey brownies and looks ill.

AUDREY

You take care of yourself, Melanie, I depend on you.

MELANIE

I will.

The door closes and Melanie turns to Julia with forced cheer.

JULIA

You look terrible!

MELANIE

Thanks a lot.

JULIA

Well, I'm sorry, but you look really pasty.

MELANIE

Oh, I'm fine. I was just up late studying last night, that's all.

(off of Julia's look)

Well, maybe I am coming down with something...

JULIA

Maybe you should go home.

MELANIE

I don't want to... go... home.

Melanie breaks down and sobs.

JULIA

Mel, what's wrong? What happened?

MELANIE

Nothing... it's nothing...

She runs out of the kitchen to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Melanie vomits. After a moment, Julia gets up the nerve to open the door and peek in.

JULIA

You're really sick. Maybe I should call the doctor.

MELANIE

No! No! No doctor, I'll be alright... it's just that... oh, Jules... I'm...

JULIA

You can tell me, Melanie. I'm your friend.

MELANIE

My best friend.

JULIA

So you can tell me anything.

MELANIE

Julia, I'm in trouble. I'm... I'm ... pregnant.

JULIA

You mean with a baby?

MELANIE

No, with a watermelon. Yes, honey, a baby.

JULIA

Are you sure?

MELANIE

I'm sure.

JULIA

Does that mean you're getting married?

MELANIE

I don't know. I doubt it.

Melanie takes an envelope out of her pocket with her name on it. Holds it for a moment, fingering the edges. Slowly she opens the envelope. Enclosed is a piece of paper and cash.

MELANIE

He gave me a number. To get rid of it. I don't know what to do.

JULIA

Get rid of it? What do you mean?

MELANIE

(trying to be gentle)

Well, there are things you can do not to have the baby. There are doctors you can go to.

JULIA

I know someone you can go to who is better than a doctor.

With conviction, she grabs Melanie's hand.

EXT. IDA MAE'S HOUSE - LATER

Ida Mae, Melanie and Julia sit on the porch of a old, well-kept house.

IDA MAE

Miss Melanie, way I see it, you only got the one piece of luck and that is to have this sensible cool-thinkin' youngster for a friend.

JULIA

Oh, Ida Mae...

IDA MAE

Did Missy ever tell you she helped me save a baby girl and her mama?

MELANIE

(looking lovingly at Julia)

No, tell me.

IDA MAE

And then she went and got me fired, so that I would have the gumption to go finish nursing school.

JULIA

(embarrassed)

Iiiidaa...

Ida Mae is thinking, then:

IDA MAE

I have birthed many babies, some right here... done it for most of my life, my mama done it before me, and now I'm going to have a degree and make it official.

Melanie and Julia watch Ida Mae intensely.

IDA MAE

There's nothin' in this world more wonderful than to be there when a lil' one takes that first hungry breath. But that lil' baby deserves a fair shake in life.

Melanie buries her head in her hands.

MELANIE

Sometimes I think maybe this could be my new start... this baby and me, we'd be our own family. But I just don't know if I can do it.

IDA MAE

I reckon you got three choices. All of 'em are hard... some of 'em are hard now, others may be hard later. Your young man, he give you the first choice, but it ain't legal - and that's why it ain't always safe - Second choice, I know some places, they'll give you a place to stay til the baby comes and then find a good home for it. Finally, if you've got your mind set on keeping that lil' one, and you need to live somewhere once you start to show...

Ida Mae leads the girls past the house through a vegetable garden and to the edge of the woods which border Ida Mae's yard.

A small rundown shack of a house, nestled in a few trees. It does not look livable. Melanie and Julia exchange a look: could this be the place Ida Mae means? Seeing the disappointment on their faces:

IDA MAE

I know it ain't much... but you can fix it up... and my son Jesse, he can help out.

(she calls to the house)

Jesse! Come out here, son!

Jesse steps out on the back porch.

IDA MAE

Say hello to Melanie and Julia.

JESSE

Hello.

JULIA

(he really makes her heart  
leap)

Hi, again.

JESSE

Hey.

IDA MAE

(to Melanie)

I know you helped out my boy. I'm  
grateful to you for that, child.  
You have a good heart.

Ida Mae opens the door of the shack.

IDA MAE

Go on in - look around.

JULIA

(with a big hug)

Thank you, Ida.

MELANIE

Yes, thanks, Ida Mae, for  
everything.

IDA MAE

Three choices... You take your  
time, you still got some. I'll  
leave you to think things out.

Ida Mae heads back to her house, corralling Jesse, who cranes his neck looking back to the girls.

INT. GARDEN SHACK - CONTINUOUS

The shack is filled with trash, a filthy old cot, discarded furniture and household items. Everything is covered with dirt, leaves and rust. There's a little kitchen area but the sink is filled with dirty junk. Julia tries to open a cracked window. The wood frame crashes to the floor.

JULIA

I know it looks abysmal, Mel, but  
if we clean it up, get all the junk  
out, it could be nice.

MELANIE

I don't know, Jules. Ida's right.  
I have to think this all through.  
Let's go back. This is so crazy.

JULIA

Don't say that, Mel! We'll make  
this place beautiful for you  
and the baby.

Melanie leans on an old table. It breaks, crashing to the floor.

A FEW DAYS LATER - GARDEN SHACK MAKE-OVER:

--Julia and Jesse carry junk out of the shack and load it onto Jesse's old pick-up truck. Julia hits cobwebs off the ceiling with a broom. Jesse repairs the table.

--Julia carries in a can of paint, Jesse and NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS are holding paint brushes and a ladder, ready to paint. Julia opens the can. It is purple, they all laugh and proceed to paint the walls.

--Julia and Jesse, sifting through old furniture and other items. Julia find a baby cradle and yells to Jesse to come see her amazing find. Julia and Jesse sweeping out the last bit of the dust and dirt from the now purple shack.

--Julia and Jesse sit under a tree and drink lemonade.

END MONTAGE

EXT. GARDEN PATH - DAY

Julia and Jesse drag Melanie down the path, making her keep her eyes closed.

JULIA

Keep them closed, just a few more  
steps...

MELANIE

They're closed, they're closed...

INT. GARDEN SHACK - CONTINUOUS

Julia and Jesse guide Melanie through the door until she stands in the middle of the shack.

JULIA

Okay... open them!

Melanie opens her eyes. She sees the sparkling clean, renovated shack and smiles at this miraculous transformation. What was once an unlivable hoarders nest is now on the way to being a charming cottage hideaway for Melanie and her baby.



JULIA (CONT'D)  
I'd say TA-DA!... but I'm too  
fatigued.

Julia falls onto the cot.

JESSE  
What she said.

Jesse fake passes out and topples onto Julia, who is  
pretending to be asleep - they look at each other and laugh.

MELANIE  
I can't believe you did all this  
for me.

JULIA  
So the plan is, as soon as you  
start to show, you and the baby can  
hideout here. Me and Ida will  
bring you food and take care of  
you.

MELANIE  
But this is crazy - what will you  
tell everyone when I just  
disappear?

JULIA  
Don't worry I'll think of something  
good - like you went to visit a  
sick Aunt.

MELANIE  
Oh boy...I don't know Jules - this  
is amazing what you did with this  
place and all, but I haven't even  
decided that I am going to...

JULIA  
Then it is settled. Welcome to  
your new home!

Melanie puts her hand on her stomach. Is this a sign of what  
she should do - or has her decision just been made for her?

INT. GARDEN SHACK - DAY - A FEW WEEKS LATER

Melanie is sitting on the cot in the shed cutting pictures  
out of TEEN SCREEN MAGAZINES and tacking them to the wall.  
Julia sits on the floor painting the cradle.

JULIA

Would you care for hearts? flowers?  
polka dots?

MELANIE

I'll love whatever you do.

Melanie tacks a large head shot of FABIAN to the wall.

MELANIE

Is he the most gorgeous man alive  
or what?

Melanie plants a big smooch on Fabian's photo lips,  
practically making out with the picture.

MELANIE

And a great kisser! And I love his  
name. Y'know what? If my baby's a  
boy I'm going to name him Fabian.

JULIA

You're gonna what?!

MELANIE

Name him Fabian.

JULIA

Oh, NO! You can't do that - what a  
terrible name for a baby. That's  
like naming your baby Sigfried or  
Galahad or something.

MELANIE

Sigfried no! But Galahad? hmmmm...

JULIA

Melanie, you wouldn't!

MELANIE

You're right, no Galahad! 'Cuz  
Fabian is the most wonderfully  
exotic name for a guy. I just know  
that he would have a fabulous life  
with a name like Fabian.

Melanie takes out a hair brush from her bag and starts  
singing a Fabian song "TURN ME LOOSE," as though into a  
microphone. She gets on the cot and hams it up, provocatively  
moving around Julia, making her giggle uncontrollably.

JULIA

Okay, okay... Fabian! Boy, I hope  
it's a girl!

Melanie stops suddenly and grows serious.

MELANIE

No! I don't want it to be a girl,  
I hope it's a boy.

JULIA

If I ever have a son I am going to  
name him "Jesse" after a man of  
great vision, bravery, and dreamy  
good looks.

Melanie looks at Julia in amazement.

MELANIE

Dreamy good looks? Jesse? My,  
my... you have a crush on Jesse!

Julia looks for her reaction, and Melanie gives her a broad  
grin.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Well, he's not Fabian but...

JULIA

But...? Oh Mel, I know I'm crazy  
because we're, well... *different*.  
I know we could never be something,  
because, well, my parents for one  
thing, the whole town for  
another...

Melanie grabs Julia's hands in hers.

MELANIE

Listen to me Jules. This whole  
town is ass backwards. You can't  
live your life for your parents or  
nobody else. You have to live for  
YOU. You are smarter than any of  
them. You live your life how you  
want it, and be with someone if you  
love them and if they love you.

JULIA

Mel... he makes my stomach quake.

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - NIGHT

Julia and Melanie sit at the kitchen table doing homework,  
listening to music on the radio, and drinking "Yoo Hoos".  
The doorbell RINGS and Melanie goes to answer it. From  
upstairs, we hear Candy's voice.

CANDY (V.O.)  
I'm on the phone... tell him I'll  
be down in a minute.

Melanie opens the door to reveal Troy. He looks startled.

MELANIE  
Your "girlfriend" is on the phone.  
She'll be down in a... well, you  
probably heard her.

Melanie turns to go back to the kitchen. Troy grabs her  
wrist.

TROY  
Wait, I need to talk to you.

Melanie yanks free and looks back at Julia, who appears  
engrossed in her work at the table. Melanie turns the radio  
up louder, and follows Troy outside to the back porch where  
they disappear into the shadows.

Julia looks up, repositions herself so that she can  
eavesdrop.

EXT. OUTSIDE PORCH - CONTINUOUS

TROY  
You've been ignoring me.

MELANIE  
We've got nothing to say to each  
other.

TROY  
What happened with the... you  
know...

MELANIE  
I didn't do it.

TROY  
What do you mean?

MELANIE  
Just what I said. I'm going to have  
the baby.

Troy is dumbstruck and puts his head in his hands, moaning.

TROY  
Melanie, you've got to think this  
through...

MELANIE

I have. I'm gonna finish my semester here - I won't be showing yet - and then I'll just disappear. I'll be out of your way and lucky for you no one'll ever need to know how my baby was made.

TROY

(desperate)

Look, I'm sorry about what happened. I can't stand not seeing you. But, you can't do this to me...

MELANIE

I'm keeping the money, by the way. The baby will need it. I didn't think you'd mind and I don't care if you do.

INSIDE - ON JULIA

Hearing footsteps coming down the stairs, she gets up, lowers the radio, and yells loud enough to be heard from outside:

JULIA

That you Candy?

OUTSIDE

Melanie and Troy barrel guiltily back into:

THE KITCHEN

... just as Candy enters.

TROY

Candy?! Jeez, it's about time...

Candy regards them curiously.

CANDY

You know how hard it is to get Paula off the phone.

(turning to Melanie)

We're going over to Rhonda's for a party. Too bad you have to watch the little one, or you could have joined us.

MELANIE

Maybe another time.

CANDY

Yes. Another time. Come on Troy,  
let's go.

Candy takes Troy by both hands and pulls him towards her, in a sexy, out of character way, laying claim, she whispers something in his ear and he laughs uncomfortably.

TROY

(flustered, to Julia)  
'Bye Peanut!  
(stops, remembering:)  
'Bye Melanie...

Melanie and Troy's eyes meet for a second the tension scorches between them.

MELANIE

Have a good time.

The door closes. Melanie throws her Yoo Hoo carton against the wall and it explodes. Julia stands momentarily frozen.

JULIA

Melanie... is Troy...?

Melanie stands in silence, realizing she's given it all away.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The final bell rings. Students emerge from their classes and on to the front lawn. Rhonda drives her car out of the school parking lot.

INT. RHONDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Rhonda and Candy both have on oversized sunglasses glasses.

CANDY

Oh, I know he's lying to me, I'm not stupid. You saw him last night, all moody and James Deaning all over the place! And I could see the way she looked at him. Everyone knows she's a slut, I've just got to get proof. Rhonda, you're really MJ to do this.

Candy spots Melanie standing at the bus stop. Rhonda pulls over to the side of the road, waiting for Melanie to make the next move. A bus arrives and Melanie gets on.

CANDY (CONT'D)

Follow that bus!

RHONDA  
I feel like Nancy Drew!

Rhonda peels out, so nervous that the car jerks a few times.

EXT. RHONDA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

As they follow the bus into a shabby part of town.

RHONDA  
Candy, we shouldn't be driving  
through this kind of neighborhood.

The bus pulls over at a stop and Melanie gets off carrying a box.

RHONDA (CONT'D)  
Besides, why in the world would  
they be meeting way out here?

CANDY  
I guess so they won't get caught.

Rhonda pulls the car over and parks down the street. The girls get out, they look around, taking in the happenings of the neighborhood. SEVERAL CHILDREN are playing hopscotch, they wave enthusiastically at Candy and Rhonda and the girls awkwardly wave back.

Candy and Rhonda link arms and walk slowly down the street, feeling conspicuous in this all black neighborhood.

Melanie walks up the steps to Ida Mae's house and knocks on the door. Ida Mae opens the door wearing a white nurses uniform, the embroidery on the right pocket reads "Good Samaritan Negro Hospital".

Candy grabs Rhonda and pulls her down to hide behind a bush at the side of Ida's house.

CANDY (CONT'D)  
She must be letting them use her  
place as their lust-nest.

RHONDA  
But where's Troy?

They watch as Melanie and Ida Mae stand on the porch talking.

IDA MAE  
I better git now or I'll be late  
for my shift. Bye now Sugar.

MELANIE

I'm gonna head down to the house.  
Thanks again Ida for everything.

Melanie gives Ida a big hug. Candy looks at Rhonda, shocked.

CANDY

The house? They have a house?!

Melanie walks down the path to the shack.

Candy follows her, running to hide behind a big willow tree on the path. Then she motions to Rhonda who makes a run for the first tree, as Candy dashes to the next tree. Rhonda starts to run, Melanie stops to pick some lemons off a tree, Rhonda stops short, trips and slides head first into the dirty brush behind the tree. She lies there as still as can be.

Melanie looks around. Did she hear something?

Candy and Rhonda, hearts pounding, don't breathe. Melanie continues to the shack. Candy looks down at Rhonda, who wipes the dirt from her mouth and pulls herself up. Her hands are scraped and leaves stick to her clothes and hair.

RHONDA

I want to go home!

CANDY

Be brave Nancy Drew. Be Brave.  
So that's where they meet.

Candy looks at Rhonda knowingly and they creep their way to the back of the shack. They spy a window, then freeze when they hear footsteps running down the path to the front of the shack.

CANDY (CONT'D)

That must be Troy.

RHONDA

Do you really want to see this?

Candy and Rhonda look in the window.

INT./EXT. COTTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Julia and Jesse burst through the door.

JESSE

It's Santa!

JULIA

And his elf!



OUTSIDE -

Candy is trying to figure it all out, she studies the room, notes the bed, pictures on the wall, and the newly painted baby's cradle.

Melanie unwraps her gift from Julia, it's a baby blanket.

MELANIE

Oh, it's beautiful! The baby will love it.

JESSE

That ain't from me, I just helped wrap it. *This* is from me...

Jesse gives Melanie an old stuffed baby bear.

JESSE

His name is Boopity Bear. Sure glad he can't talk cause he knows all my secrets.

JULIA

Are you sure you're going to be able to sleep without him?

JESSE

It's gonna to be tough but I'll try.

Melanie hugs Julia and Jesse, then puts the blanket and stuffed bear into the cradle.

MELANIE

And there is just one more thing I have to do to start out my new life, in my new home on the right track.

She reaches into the box and takes out the photo of her and Troy, pulls the photo out of its frame and rips it up.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I hereby officially give up my pathetic past in favor of a bright and glorious future.

She marches the pieces outside and throws them away on top of an overflowing trash can.

Candy and Rhonda watch her from behind the shed as a few of the pieces of paper are picked up by the wind and float down to the dirt path.

As soon as Melanie is back in the shed Candy scrambles over and scoops up all the pieces from the ground.

CANDY  
 (pointing to the trash  
 can)  
 Get the rest!

Rhonda gingerly picks the scraps of paper off the top of the trash. The girls fly back up the path to the car.

EXT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - NIGHT

Candy smooths down the old photo of Melanie and Troy. The pieces have been scotched taped together like a crude jigsaw puzzle.

TROY  
 Candy, I don't know what to say.  
 I'm sorry.

CANDY  
 You're sorry! We have done  
 everything for you - my father and  
 I - EVERYTHING! - your transfer,  
 your car, your scholarship... You  
 have ruined everything!

TROY  
 Shhh! Your dad could be comin'  
 downstairs any minute.

CANDY  
 I don't care. Everything you have  
 is because of me. You are going to  
 fix this Troy.

Again, Troy gestures her to keep her voice down.

TROY  
 I gave her money to get rid of it.  
 I even got her the phone number of  
 a doctor who does it...

CANDY  
 Then why is she still pregnant?

TROY  
 I'm tellin' you, I tried to get her  
 to give it up.  
 (MORE)

TROY (CONT'D)

She won't listen to me. She says the baby is the most important thing to her now.

Troy lowers his head.

CANDY

It may not be the most important thing to her. Maybe we just need to offer her something she wants more.

INT. LODGE ROOM - NIGHT

The Mary Janes are meeting.

RHONDA

You gotta be kidding! Nominate who? You said she was a trashy whore--...

CANDY

Rhonda! Watch your mouth! You heard me. I nominate Melanie Woodrow. And I'm very serious. I think you all know who she is, but what you may not know, is that she's my first cousin who I've known all my life. She's very sophisticated and would add a lot of glamor to the Mary Janes. Thank you.

RHONDA

(still incredulous)  
Do I hear a second?

PAULA

I second that nomination.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - CANDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

AUDREY

I'm so proud of you, sweetheart. I know it may not have been the most popular of choices, but you're doing the right thing. You'll make those girls come around to your way of thinking, you always do. Melanie will be so thrilled, you'll change her life.

CANDY

I hope so, Mother. It sure feels good to think I might.

INT. ROBERT E. LEE HIGH SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Melanie is sitting at a desk with Troy sitting right behind her, whispering in her ear.

MELANIE

Me?!?

TROY

She hasn't been letting on, but she wanted it to be a surprise. She told me she's actually looking forward to being friends with you.

MELANIE

But I can't...

TROY

Of course, you can. Why couldn't you? Is there some reason you want to tell me?

MELANIE

You of all people know why. I doubt they make MJ sweaters big enough to fit pregnant unwed mothers. Or were you thinking the Mary Janes would throw me a baby shower and give me a monogrammed MJ Moo Moo?

TROY

But I thought you wanted to be in the Mary Janes.

MELANIE

I do. More than anything. But I can't now - it's too late.

TROY

Then no problem, it's not too late, Melanie. Take the money I gave you. If you need any more, I'll scrape it up, whatever you need.

The BELL RINGS. Classes start changing.

TROY

Better make up your mind... fast.

Some Mary Janes enter, each wearing their MJ sweaters, carrying a balloon and scroll, they each give the balloon and scroll to GIRLS in the room. The girls excitedly hug one another - one girl starts to cry.

Candy walks slowly over to Melanie. Exchanging looks with Troy as he saunters out the door. Candy hands Melanie a balloon and scroll.

CANDY

Hey Cuz, I'd like to officially invite you to be a MJ pledge.

Melanie is stunned.

MELANIE

Really?

CANDY

I'm sorry I didn't let on, but I wanted it to be a surprise. Melanie, you'll love the Mary Janes and I'm really looking forward to being super good friends with you.

The BELLS RINGS.

CANDY

I've got to get to first period. Read your scroll. It invites you to the pledge tea, next week, at my house. And you won't even have to serve.

Candy laughs and gives Melanie a quick hug then heads out the door.

Melanie remains in her seat, playing with the balloon ribbon, then takes out the scroll and reads it. She lets the balloon slip through her fingers mindlessly. She tries to retrieve it, but it floats up to the ceiling and pops on the lights.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - DAY

The DOORBELL RINGS, Julia runs to answer it.

JULIA

I'll get it. It's Melanie.

She opens the front door and starts talking before Melanie can even get a "hello" in.

JULIA

(whispering excitedly)  
Wait until you see the rattle I created in art class out of paper mache' with beans inside. It doesn't rattle very loud, but it's real cute anyway. So, should we go?

Melanie doesn't know what to say. This is going to be a lot harder than she thought. Audrey comes into the room with her coat on and her purse in hand.

AUDREY

Congratulations sweet heart, Candy told me the good news.

JULIA

What good news?

AUDREY

Well, your sister has chosen Melanie to be her nominee for the Mary Janes, isn't that wonderful?

JULIA

She what? She couldn't have! She can't!

AUDREY

Of course she can, It was so nice of Melanie to help us in a pinch but I have finally hired a new maid. Don't worry, she'll still have time to baby-sit for you. She'll just be a little busier, that's all. Come on, get your coat. We're going to buy Melanie a new dress to wear to the tea next Saturday.

MELANIE

Oh, Aunt Audrey, you don't have to do that.

AUDREY

I want to, Sweetheart. Besides, you've earned it.

JULIA

I'm not going!

AUDREY

Fine, you can stay home with Candy. We won't be long. Come on, Mel.

Audrey hurries Melanie out the door. Julia stands looking forlorn, then turns and runs up the stairs.

INT. CANDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Julia comes bursting through her door. Candy is lying on her bed studying.

CANDY

Don't bother to knock.

JULIA

Why did you ask Melanie to be a  
Mary Jane?

CANDY

(sarcastic Mickey Mouse  
Club Song imitation)

Why? Because we "like" her.

INT. DRESS SHOP - DAY

Melanie tries on a lovely light blue party dress,  
conservative, with a small white collar. Audrey looks  
ecstatic. Melanie looks miserable. She can't enjoy the  
moment as she knows the price of this dress is far beyond the  
amount on the price tag. They buy the dress.

INT. AUDREY'S CAR - DAY

On the way home from the dress shop. Melanie is in agony...

MELANIE

Aunt Audrey, please please let's  
take the dress back. I am sorry,  
so so sorry to let you down... to  
let all of you down. I can't be a  
Mary Jane. Please, let's just take  
the dress back and forget all about  
it.

AUDREY

Melanie, don't be ridiculous. It  
is my joy to buy you the dress. You  
are going to be an ideal Mary Jane.

MELANIE

(choking back tears)

Noooooo! I'm not! I've messed  
everything up! I don't know what I  
am doing. I thought I could handle  
it, but I can't... I can't. And  
Julia, I never should have gotten  
her involved in this. Never. I'm  
so so sorry.

Audrey pulls over to the side of the road.

AUDREY

I think you better tell me what's going on.

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Audrey and Melanie come in the kitchen door looking somber and united.

AUDREY

Give me the number and I'll call. You go up and talk to Julia right now. Remember, the less you say the better.

Melanie hands her the paper that Troy had given her.

MELANIE

Thank you.

She hugs Audrey.

AUDREY

I am just so thankful you told me. It is unconscionable that you've been dealing with this alone.

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Julia is lying on her bed reading, her eyes are red from crying. There's a KNOCK on the DOOR.

JULIA

What?

MELANIE (O.S.)

It's me, can I come in?

Melanie enters the room.

MELANIE

Hi, Jules. Whatchya doin'?

JULIA

Reading this poetry book. For English. Wanna hear one I like...?

MELANIE

Not right now, Jules. Y'see the thing is, I came up to say I'm really sorry about today... I wanted to tell you myself... about the Mary Janes and everything.



JULIA

She's up to something, Melanie. I know it... she's my sister. But you don't understand what a terrible person she is.

MELANIE

Come on, Jules. Don't be so hard on her. Sisters always fight. Listen, I know this is hard for you... because we're such special friends. But, Julia, it's time we both have friends our own age. Do you understand?

JULIA

I don't want friends my own age. I don't want any other friends.

MELANIE

You will always be the most wonderful friend in the world to me. I'm just saying you also need to make other friends... friends your own age, friends you'll grow up with. I think I'm keeping you from that.

JULIA

Will I still get to come take care of the baby?

MELANIE

Oh, Julia. You don't need to be worrying about babies now. You're the most brilliant person I've ever met. You're gonna make something of yourself, I know it.

JULIA

Please, Melanie. She's not really your friend!

INT. ANDERSON KITCHEN - NIGHT

Audrey opens the envelope Melanie gave her, removing the note. Her hands shake as she picks up the phone.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

Audrey and Melanie sit in Audrey's car, tense, looking out to an old run-down office building. The sky is a gray curtain, the rain has begun.

Audrey and Melanie approach the building, pulling their coats up around them to keep dry, walk up the outside staircase. They find #208. The sign on the door says "MEDICAL SUPPLIES." Audrey knocks on the door. It is opened by a "NURSE" in her 40s.

NURSE

Doc's still with someone, you'll have to wait a few minutes. Take these now.

The "nurse" hands Melanie two pills and a paper cup of water.

AUDREY

It's raining... can't we wait inside?

NURSE

No.

The "nurse" goes back inside, shutting the door behind her. Melanie swallows the pills down with the water. The rain starts coming down harder. Audrey and Melanie huddle by the door to try and keep from getting drenched. A young MAN rushes up the stairs. He's soaking wet.

MAN

Has a woman come out?

Audrey turns her head, not wanting to be seen.

AUDREY

No, I don't think so.

The door opens and the "nurse" helps a WOMAN in her mid-30s out the door. The woman is very weak and can hardly walk.

NURSE

Come on, young lady. You're next.

Audrey takes Melanie's arm to steady her.

AUDREY

It's the medication... you'll be alright.

Audrey, not at all confident anymore that she is doing the right thing, helps Melanie to the door.

NURSE

You'll have to wait out here.

AUDREY

But, I'm her Aunt, can't I go in with her? Surely, she can't go in all by herself...

NURSE

No, I'm sorry, ma'am. No one but the patient is allowed. Doctor's rules. You understand.

Audrey understands, but doesn't like it. The nurse takes Melanie in. Audrey stands alone, petrified.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The nurse helps Melanie down a long dimly lit corridor to an open door, from which shines a warm light.

The medication has distorted Melanie's perception, so through her eyes everything now has a surrealistic quality. Sometimes dreamy and beautiful but mostly nightmarish, bordering on horror.

Melanie walks toward the light, GIRLS VOICES are singing the initiation song. Mary Janes stand holding candles along the corridor, in nurses smocks with the "MJ" initials.

The nurse takes a white surgical gown off a hook. When she turns back, she is now Audrey wearing a golden robe.

NURSE/AUDREY

Put this on.

Melanie touches the gown, it becomes a white robe.

MELANIE

(dreamily)

Oh, thank you.

The nurse, herself again, takes Melanie into the small room and helps her on to a medical table with stirrups. Melanie sees it as the platform for the ritual initiation. She lays back on the table, the DOCTOR enters the room.

Harsh lights turn on overhead. The Doctor and nurse snap on surgical gloves, prepare instruments: Sharp blades and curates, needles and forceps.

The doctor sits down at the foot of the table, and opens Melanie's legs. The nurse hands him an instrument, gleaming, blunt-tipped surgical scissors, and then a suction catheter but to Melanie the catheter becomes a golden sash. The Nurse is now Candy.

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
 (emotional free fall)  
 I need that! I need that to tie my  
 robe closed! I need that - give it  
 to me!

The Doctor gives the Nurse an exasperated look.

NURSE/CANDY  
 Come, you have to be quiet now.

DOCTOR  
 (harshly)  
 Keep her still!

NURSE  
 Yes Doctor.

The nurse stands over Melanie, her face becoming Paula's in her white robe, sash and a golden wreath on her head.

MELANIE  
 You're so beautiful... please sing  
 to me.

The Nurse/Paula sings the Mary Jane song as she covers Melanie's nose and mouth with an anesthetic cloth. Melanie lifts her head weakly to look at the doctor. The room is spinning. On the doctor's white coat, she sees the MJ emblem.

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
 Do I get a sweater?... I want a  
 sweater...

Melanie passes out.

INT. ANDERSON MAID'S ROOM - DAY

Flowers on a night stand warm the otherwise plain room. Melanie is asleep in a small bed. Audrey sits in a chair next to the bed, dozing off.

Melanie stirs, uncomfortable, Audrey shakes off sleep. Melanie opens her eyes.

AUDREY  
 It's okay. It's all over, honey.

Audrey strokes Melanie's head gently with a wet washcloth.

MELANIE  
 I don't remember. Did they... Is  
 the? I think I was dreaming.

AUDREY

It was those pills they gave you,  
made you a little crazy for a  
while. Go back to sleep now,  
sweetheart, you need to rest.

INT. ANDERSON HOME EARLY MORNING - A FEW DAYS LATER

A haggard Audrey sits drinking a cup of coffee at the kitchen table. The house is very quiet. There is pounding on the door. Startled, Audrey jumps up to answer it. It is Libby, drunk and boiling mad.

LIBBY

What in God damn hell have you done  
with my daughter?!!

AUDREY

Libby - you're drunk...

LIBBY

Where is she?!

AUDREY

I told you on the phone, Libby, she  
got the flu and the doctor said it  
was best if she...

LIBBY

Don't you Goddamn lie to me, I  
already found out that she ain't  
workin' at the store! Bitch!  
You're trying to steal my daughter,  
I'm gonna take her home - she is  
not your daughter - she is mine,  
MINE!

AUDREY

Lib, please, come sit down. I'll  
give you some coffee and we can  
talk.

LIBBY

Talk...? oh my! You want to talk  
to me now - too embarrassed to talk  
to me for years, but today... talk,  
talk, talk. Where are you hidin'  
her? Oh, of course, you stuck her  
in the maid's room. I shoulda' seen  
that one comin'.

Libby pushes past Audrey down a short hallway and shoves open the door to the maid's room.

INT. ANDERSON MAID'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Libby stops short at the sight of Melanie sleeping peacefully in the bed.

AUDREY  
Libby, please!

LIBBY  
I shoulda' seen it *all* comin'.  
Hirin' her to do work you'd never  
ask your own daughters to do, like  
she was your damn maid!

Melanie starts to stir.

AUDREY  
You begged me to get her a job.

LIBBY  
At the store! Not as your personal  
house slave! No wonder she was so  
sneaky soundin' when I'd ask: how's  
things at the store? How's Carl?

Melanie is drowsily awake now, struggling to sit up.

MELANIE  
Ma...?

LIBBY  
Why'd you lie to me, Mel? All that  
time I thought you were at the  
store? Why didn't you tell me you  
were my sister's nigra?

AUDREY  
I told her to. It was my idea.

LIBBY  
And I suppose it was you that  
filled her up with all that Mary  
Jane crap, promisin' to get her in.

MELANIE  
No, Ma, I *wanted* to be a Mary Jane!

AUDREY  
For God'sakes, Libby, not now! Can't  
you see she's still sick?!

LIBBY

...promising to get you in!  
(turning angrily on  
Audrey)  
Just like you did with me back in  
high school!

AUDREY

If you hadn't made a mess of  
everything by having relations with  
Mary's boyfriend you would've  
been "in".

LIBBY

I didn't have SEX with Charlie - we  
just made out a little...

AUDREY

A little?

LIBBY

Or maybe a lot. And he wasn't her  
boyfriend either, she just wanted  
him to be. And seriously, that's  
why I was black-balled?! 'Cause  
priggy Mary said I stole her  
boyfriend?

AUDREY

Not just that! It was because *all*  
the boys said you were easy. And  
the girls talked about you like you  
were a trashy slut and not "MJ  
material?!" It was horrible for me.

LIBBY

YOU?! Horrible for YOU?! I was your  
real sister, not them - and you  
just let them ruin me... I looked  
up to you - you were like a  
Goddamned goddess to me! I thought  
you were perfect...

AUDREY

Well, clearly, I wasn't...

LIBBY

But I think I get it now. This has  
nothing to do with Melanie. This is  
all about you! Still feelin' so  
guilty about not standing by me  
back then that you're tryin' to use  
my daughter to make up for it now!

MELANIE

You got it all wrong, Ma - I was in trouble and she helped me...

She stops herself from saying it, but it is too late.

LIBBY

Helped you what?

Libby grabs her shoulders.

AUDREY

Oh for goodness sakes, Lib! Leave her be! She's been through enough!

LIBBY

What kinda trouble were you in?! Tell me!

AUDREY

The kind you ought to be familiar with, unmarried and pregnant. And I... we... took care of the situation.

LIBBY

So you helped MY child get *unpregnant*?! How could you do that?! It was not up to YOU! Why? So she wouldn't embarrass you, like I did?

AUDREY

So she could have her own chance, her own life, Libby. Be a kid, go to school, parties, have friends, be a Mary Jane.

LIBBY

Yes, that'd be the final slap in my face, wouldn't it! For her to turn into one of you!

MELANIE

Mom, don't say that!

LIBBY

Why? Ain't it obvious?! This is what she wanted all along? That you'd come to her when you were in trouble... and not to me!

Audrey gets in her sister's face.



AUDREY

She came to me, because I'm her family, and I love her and care about her - we all do.

Melanie struggles to get out of bed, coming up behind Libby and resting her hand on her shoulder.

MELANIE

Please, please stop fighting. I love you, Mama. Give me a minute to get dressed. I'll go with you.

LIBBY

No, you stay. You're probably better off here with her. You'd probably rather be here too.

Libby starts out, stops. Turns back to Audrey.

LIBBY (CONT'D)

Truth be told, you were a pretty lousy sister. But not half as lousy as I've been as a mother.

INT. ANDERSON GUEST ROOM - DAY

A couple more days have passed. Melanie takes the light blue party dress from its hanger and slides it on over her slip, then struggles with the zipper and winces with pain.

Melanie looks at herself in the mirror and practices a smile. She looks fragile and lovely, she has lost weight so the dress is a little big on her. She picks up a bottle of medication from the dresser, takes the last pill with a glass of water from her bedside table.

INT. ANDERSON LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Mary Jane Tea is in full swing. Active Mary Janes wear their MJ sweaters open over party dresses as they "rush" YOUNGER GIRLS eager to be excepted into the Mary Janes.

Paula and DEBRA, bright and friendly, sit on the couch with Melanie drinking tea. Melanie is run down, she musters up all her energy wanting to make a good impression.

Audrey looks at Melanie having tea with the girls and smiles. A success story.

DEBRA

So, Melanie, you're new this year. Where did you come from?

MELANIE

Tyler.

DEBRA

Oh my goodness, I have a friend that goes there! Terri Gordon?

MELANIE

The name sounds familiar...

DEBRA

I went to camp with her. She is the wackiest girl. Always wore the craziest hats at camp. Seriously, she had a million of them!

As Debra babbles, Melanie tries to keep focused. Her vision blurs for a second, then comes back. She is in serious pain and trying her hardest to keep it together.

PAULA

Oh, Debra. Melanie doesn't care about hats, do you, Melanie?

DEBRA

Sure she does. Right, Melanie?

Melanie doesn't know what to say. All of a sudden it's the most important question in the world.

Melanie looks at Paula, then at Debra. Her vision blurs again. Then she gains control of herself...

MELANIE

Well, personally, I don't wear hats... 'cuz personally I don't think I look good in them... personally. But then again, maybe I just haven't tried the right one on...

(giggling strangely)

I like them sometimes on other people... so maybe I ought to start wearing theirs!

Melanie giggles again, a little out of control, and then reacts as a sharp pain shoots through her abdomen. She takes a hard breath. Paula and Debra exchange looks.

PAULA

Are you alright, Melanie?

MELANIE

Excuse me, please... I have to...  
excuse me, I'm sorry... I... I'm  
really sorry..

Melanie struggles to her feet. Paula and Debra look worried.

PAULA

Can I help you, Melanie? Are you  
sick?

MELANIE

Candy... I... I... need Candy...

Melanie staggers down the hall and into

THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

She closes the door, another stabbing pain brings her to her knees and she curls up in a ball on the floor. The room spins. Melanie starts to panic... she must get out of here... and she uses the bathroom doorknob to hoist herself up.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Melanie opens the bathroom door and looking down the hall sees all of the girls talking and drinking tea. Unable to bear the thought of going back into that room, she makes a decision to leave and runs right into...

CANDY

What in the world are you doing?  
Paula and Debra said you "needed"  
me. Where are you going?

MELANIE

I, I'm sorry, Candy ...I  
...wa...was trying to find you.

CANDY

Well, you found me - Here I am. So  
let's glue that smile back on your  
over-made-up face and go back into  
the tea.

Melanie can hardly breathe, every breath is filled with pain.

MELANIE

I can't - I - I please Candy I'm  
sorry so sorry - I just can't...

QUICK FLASH: Melanie lying on the abortion doctors table.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candy realizes something is really wrong and opens the bathroom door, she shoves Melanie back inside following her in and closing the door quickly behind her.

CANDY

Have you been drinking? I can't believe this, really, I just can't. I give you this one opportunity to be normal and you're going to embarrass me and our entire family. Listen to me, you get yourself together NOW. I mean it! NOW! Do you really want to be just like your mother?

Melanie turns her back to Candy and puts both hands on the sink and that is when Candy sees: blood! RED BLOOD has soaked through Melanie's blue party dress. Candy gasps in horror.

CANDY (CONT'D)

Melanie! You're bleeding! Oh jeez! Is that it - it's your time of the month? Why didn't you just ask for a pad?

Melanie feels the back of her dress, then looks at her hand which is covered with blood, the room spins, she can't speak, she leans against the wall then slides to the bathroom floor. Candy opens a bathroom drawer and takes out a flowered box with a stack of sanitary pads inside and hands one of the pads to Melanie.

CANDY (CONT'D)

Here, take this and go home. You can't go back into the tea like that. I'll make up some excuse for you.

Melanie is trembling, stifling sobs from deep within her.

CANDY (CONT'D)

(softening)

Come on, it's ok. Everyone has had an accident sometime. But, you really need to leave now, really, you're a mess. Don't worry I still think I can get the Mary Jane's to take you.

Candy reaches down to help Melanie up. Melanie grabs onto Candy's white MJ sweater leaving her bloody hand print on the white cashmere.

Candy helps Melanie up, guides her out the bathroom door, into the hallway and then out the side door.

EXT. ANDERSON SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Melanie stumbles down the path and falls to the ground, she cries out.

INT. JULIA'S ROOM - SAME TIME

In her bedroom Julia hears the cry and looks out her window. Seeing Melanie she charges downstairs.

EXT. ANDERSON SIDE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Julia rushes to Melanie's side.

INT. ANDERSON LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Candy returns to the tea, Paula and Debra run up to her.

PAULA

Candy, did you find Melanie? I'm worried about her, she never came back.

Debra notices the blood on Candy's sweater.

PAULA

What's that?

CANDY

(seeing the blood on her sweater)

Oh God.

DEBRA

Where is she? What happened?

PAULA

Is she ok?

From outside they hear Julia screaming.

JULIA (O.S.)

Help!!! Help me!!!

Paula, Rhonda, Debra and Candy race out of the house. They gasp at the sight of Melanie and Julia. Paula bends down and feels Melanie's forehead.

PAULA

She's burning up. Candy, how could you leave her like this??? Get your mom.

Candy stands dumbstruck.

CANDY  
My mom? She's just on the rag...

PAULA  
(a harsh cold order)  
CANDY NOW!

Candy darts back into the house, then returns with Audrey.

AUDREY  
Melanie, sweetheart!

MELANIE  
(whimpering)  
I gave it back... I gave it back...

Audrey feels her forehead. Melanie is delirious now, wet with fever, shaking terribly.

MELANIE (CONT'D)  
You told me I could give it back  
and someday I could get another one  
but not today, not today... no, no  
no... not today...

JULIA  
Mom we've got to take her to the  
hospital.

AUDREY  
No! No hospitals. She can't go to  
a hospital. She just can't.

The ramifications. Audrey is paralyzed with fear.

MELANIE  
(barely audible)  
Ida, I want Ida. Take me to Ida...

AUDREY  
What? What is she saying?

JULIA  
Ida Mae. She's right, Ida will  
know what to do. She works at a  
hospital, and she's in nursing  
school.

AUDREY  
Nursing school? We can't, Julia,  
we can't just take her there.

JULIA  
 (taking charge)  
 Yes we can. We are taking her to  
 Ida, NOW.

AUDREY  
 Alright, Alright. Do you even know  
 where she works?

JULIA  
 The Good Samaritan Negro Hospital.

Audrey, Julia, Paula, Rhonda and Debra help Melanie up and  
 toward the car.

PAULA  
 She has the chills. Here. Take  
 this...

Paula takes off her MJ sweater and puts it around Melanie's  
 shoulder.

PAULA (CONT'D)  
 Candy, go with them - I am going to  
 find your dad.

CANDY  
 Go with them...?

Candy begins to tremble. Now even Rhonda turns on her.

RHONDA  
 Help her, Candy, for Godsake!

All of the other Mary Janes look at Candy now with disdain.

DEBRA  
 What is wrong with you, Candy?!  
 Help her!!

EXT./INT. AUDREY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Candy sits in the front passenger seat, Melanie is lying down  
 in the backseat with her head in Julia's lap.

EXT./INT. GOOD SAMARITAN NEGRO HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS SEQUENCE

Audrey pulls her car up to the small hospital. Julia jumps  
 out of the car and races through the hospital doors. Julia  
 runs to the Admissions desk and talks to the RECEPTIONIST.

Candy and Audrey help Melanie out of the car and through the  
 hospital doors.

The waiting room is filled with BLACK PATIENTS and FAMILIES. Heads turn, people whisper and stare at this out of place threesome. The Receptionist returns with Ida Mae. Ida Mae gasps when she sees Melanie.

JULIA

Ida - Can you help her?!?

IDA MAE

Oh, my sweet Jesus.  
(to the receptionist) )  
Would you find Dr. Phillips for me,  
tell him it's an emergency.

An ORDERLY comes over with a wheel chair but is hesitant to approach them. Melanie, dazed and wobbly, starts to collapse. Candy and Audrey hold her up as best they can.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

Why are you just standing there?!?

The Orderly jumps to it and helps Melanie into the wheelchair.

AUDREY

Oh Ida, I am sorry, so very sorry  
about ...everything. I would be so  
grateful if you could help us.

IDA MAE

(softly to Melanie)  
Oh Missy, you got yourself a bad  
job... didn't you?

Melanie is too weak to speak, she looks up at Ida Mae, shakes her head "yes." Ida Mae looks at Audrey for confirmation.

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

Good Lord! Did YOU take her?

Audrey nods "Yes".

IDA MAE (CONT'D)

You're right - you can't bring her  
to your hospital Miss Audrey. They  
gonna ask you a lot of questions  
and you could end up in jail.  
Understand?

Audrey understands and is trembling now. The look on Ida's face says this is bad, really bad.



IDA MAE

You all hang on, I'm gettin' a doctor friend of mine - he owes me a favor - I think he'll help us.

AUDREY

Thank you Ida, thank you.

Julia and Candy follow after Ida.

JULIA

Ida, wait! Do you think the baby is all right?

IDA MAE

So sorry, Missy... There ain't no more baby.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATER

Melanie lies on a gurney. Ida Mae and Audrey are in the background consulting with DOCTOR PHILLIPS. Julia stands next to Melanie, holding her hand.

MELANIE

Jules, I'm sorry... I know you wanted the baby even more than I did. We were playing house, Cuz. Our little cottage was like a doll house. It was a dream, a really sweet dream.

JULIA

(choking back sobs)

We could have done it, Melanie ...I would have helped you...

MELANIE

That would not have been fair to you. I would never want to take away your childhood - like mine was taken away. I never wanted to let you down, Jules, you are the only person I never wanted to let down, I know I did and I'm so sorry for that. Julia...? Are you still my best friend?

JULIA

Of course, we are best friends ...forever best friends.

MELANIE

Well, then will you promise me something?

JULIA

Yes ... Mel ...anything.

MELANIE

Promise me...

Melanie signals for Julia to come closer - too weak to speak, she whispers into her ear. Julia bits her lip, nods yes, as tears fill her eyes. And then in a breaking voice:

Julia

(laughing and crying)

Yes, I ...I promise.

Melanie smiles weakly at Julia, making one last heartfelt connection.

TWO ORDERLY'S and a NURSE arrive to take Melanie into the surgical room.

Libby rushes in to the hospital, just as Melanie is being wheeled out. Audrey hurries over to her trying to explain.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - LATER

The waiting room is now filling with visitors for Melanie, creating quite an unusual scene at this usually all black hospital.

Julia, Libby, Audrey and Candy are wait anxiously for news.

A group of Mary Janes, including Rhonda and Debra, are in a prayer circle, crying, weeping, singing and prying.

Troy, Carl and Paula hurry in.

TROY

She's going to be all right,  
isn't she?

JULIA

This is all your fault - I despise  
you! We don't want you here!!!  
Get out! Get Out!

Julia attacks Troy pounding on him violently. Jesse has arrived just in time to pry Julia off Troy and he hugs her tightly. Carl sees this and is about to grab his daughter away when...

Dr. Phillips steps through the ER door. He takes off his mask and the expression on his face reveals the devastating news. Julia and Jesse sob in each others arms.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

It is a lovely spot, lush, surrounded by trees. The Priest is leading the large group of mourners in prayer. Melanie's open casket is next to the freshly dug grave. Rhonda, Paula, and Debra step forward.

RHONDA

This is for Melanie.

The Mary Jane girls sing a beautiful cliché' song of friendship in perfect harmony.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

It made me sick to see those girls wailing over Melanie in death when most of them never really cared about her in life.

The Mary Jane's cry excessively and cling to one another.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

And yet, as much as I hated to admit it, some of them really did care. They even made her an honorary Mary Jane.

Paula puts her MJ Girls sweater into the casket. The casket is lowered into the ground. More wailing from the Mary Janes as they hug Libby.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

It was hard for me to make sense of the monumental contradiction of Melanie's life and death. But I tried. How could she have been so fiercely independent and at the same time want so desperately to have a place to belong? A family.

Julia, Ida Mae and Jesse, then Candy, Audrey, and Carl throw flowers into the grave.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

One thing for certain, Melanie changed all of our lives forever.

INT. WHATABURGER - NIGHT

Paula, Brenda, and some other MJs are congregated around the juke box. Troy is with some friends. He sees the girls, starts to approach them and say hello. They snub him - just turn and walk away. Troy is destroyed.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

The MJ Alum's and Actives are enjoying a mother-daughter tea - without Audrey and Candy.

INT. ANDERSON HOME - BATHROOM

Carl stands watching Audrey on her knees on the bathroom floor scrubbing Melanie's blood off the carpet.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

There was a permanent stain on our house - one that could not be washed away...

CANDY'S BEDROOM

Candy is alone, looking into the mirror. She spreads red lipstick on her mouth, as mascara tears stream down her face.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

...or forgiven.

JULIA'S BEDROOM

Julia, looking slightly more mature, pours through a photo album. During the following, we CLOSE IN to see various PHOTOS of Melanie, Julia, and Jesse hamming it up at the "cottage" behind Ida Mae's house.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

Melanie's death...and my family's fall from grace...made it easier for me to follow my own path - it gave me the will to go against the tide - to be the person I wanted to be - to live the life of my choosing.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN NEGRO HOSPITAL - NIGHT

FLASHBACK to Julia shaking her head "yes" to the promises Melanie is exacting from her on her deathbed.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

And although her friendship shook up my narrow world and, though I'll always love and remember her, it hasn't always been easy to keep all the promises I made to Melanie on the night she died. But...

MONTAGE OF PHOTOS

Significant events in Julia's life growing up: demonstrating for Civil Rights and against the Vietnamese War, graduation with honors from college, marching for Women's Rights, etc.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

...I did make sure that I fulfilled many of my own goals and dreams before I brought a baby into the world.

INT. GOOD SAMARITAN NEGRO HOSPITAL - BIRTHING ROOM - NIGHT

It's now ten years later and we are CLOSE on TWO BLACK HANDS delivering a BABY.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

...and I did wait to give my love to a man who was truly worthy of it

Ida Mae beaming with love and pride hands the baby to her son, ADULT JESSE, and he lovingly puts the baby into the arms of his wife, ADULT JULIA, and kisses her. Family.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

And I knew it would have love and security...

The baby takes his first breath and cries a glorious hello to the world.

ADULT JULIA (V.O.)

And although I know that I made those promises to her, I also know that I really kept them for me. All except this last promise, Mel, this one really is just for you.

Julia, Jesse, Grandma Ida Mae are overcome with emotion at the birth of... Painted in big letters on the side of the cradle... **"FABIAN"**.

FADE OUT:

