

SPLENDID

WRITTEN BY SANDRA MAYER

INT. BATHROOM - EARLY MORNING

In Chicago, SKYE RICHARDS (age 16), is kneeling on the floor in front of the toilet vomiting violently into the bowl. When her mother, AMBER RICHARDS (age late 30's), yells, she looks up from the bowl, her face void of color.

AMBER (OS)

Stop sulking, Skye. We're leaving now. You knew hours ago that I wanted to leave by nine.

There is a loud knock on the bathroom door.

AMBER (OS)

Get you butt into gear.

EXT. UPPER CLASS HOUSE - MORNING

The front door opens and Amber exits, dragging her suitcase across the white stones to the luxury vehicle parked in the driveway. The suitcase's wheels get stuck on the gravel and almost overturns.

AMBER

Shit! SKYE, COME ON!

Amber reaches the car and puts her case into the boot. She gets into the driver's seat and leans on the horn until Skye comes out with her own suitcase.

Skye slams the front door behind her and after throwing her suitcase next to her mother's, bangs the trunk lid closed. After Skye climbs into the car it backs out of the driveway, then takes off.

EXT. CAR - MORNING

Amber's car is stuck in traffic and we can see her talking and gesticulating wildly as if trying to make a point. Skye is lost in her own world and totally ignoring her mother. She is listening to her MP3 player while checking the texts on her cell.

EXT. CHICAGO - MORNING

Amber's car leaves suburbia and pulls onto the main highway that leads out of the city.

EXT. TRUCK STOP - EVENING

Amber's car pulls into the drive-through of a fast-food restaurant.

                  AMBER  
                  (Indistinct)  
                  I'll have a Chicken Burger meal,  
                  fries and a Pepsi. What do you want  
                  Skye?

The passenger side door abruptly opens and Skye stumbles from the car falling onto her knees. She retches into the bushes.

                  AMBER  
                  (Indistinct)  
                  Shit!

The driver's side door opens and Amber rushes to Skye's side, comforting her while she is being sick. Skye has tears running down her face, she is shaking and after vomiting, starts to sob. The cars waiting behind them sound their horns in protest at the wait.

                  AMBER  
                  SHUT THE HELL UP! Shush, shush,  
                  you'll be okay, love. Just get it  
                  all out. They can wait...you'll be  
                  fine, just give it a second or two.  
                  Soon it will be all over. Shush.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - MORNING

Amber's car weaves it's way through gentle rolling hills, past peaceful grazing cows in green fields. It slows down at a road sign that depicts a small town near a lake. The sign says "In 250 miles you'll reach *SPLENDID*, The Most *SPLENDID* place in MINNESOTA. Population 3256".

EXT. *SPLENDID* - MORNING

The main street of the small town of *Splendid* is practically deserted. A few people walk down the street and a *MIDDLE AGED COUPLE* sit at the Coffee Shop while *POPPY* (age 16), their waitress, serves them coffee. A farm truck drives slowly past and the *DRIVER* waves out of his window to them. Smiling, they wave back.

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER

Good morning, Good morning.

COUPLE AND POPPY

Morning.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - MORNING

MARY (age 60's), is walking down her old jetty, in her hand is a paper bag filled with torn up stale bread. Her American Gander, BLUEBELL, is following her closely.

When Mary reaches the end of the jetty she scatters the bread to the flock of waterbirds eagerly waiting in the water. CHARLIE (age 60's) is fishing in a small tin boat that is a little way off from the jetty. He waves to get Mary's attention.

CHARLIE

(Speaks loudly)

Mary, Mary, good morning.

Mary waves back.

MARY

Good morning Charlie. Anything biting today?

CHARLIE

(Shakes his head)

Not yet Mary, not yet. But they will, they always do.

Mary smiles vaguely at him.

CHARLIE

Aren't Amber and Skye coming today?

Mary looks a little bit lost.

MARY

Are they? Amber and Skye? Is that today?

CHARLIE

Yes, you told me on Tuesday that you thought that they were coming today.

MARY

Did I? I must have forgot?

Mary looks down at Bluebell.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Did I say that Bluebell?

Bluebell honks in reply.

MARY

Yes, I did, didn't I.

CHARLIE

Well, say hi from me, won't you?

MARY

(Absentmindedly)

Yes Charlie, I sure will.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - EVENING

The lights are on in the kitchen and Mary is singing off key to Tom Jones's *What's New Pussycat* on the radio.

MARY(OS)

What's new Pussycat, whoa, whoa.

What's new Pussycat, whoa, whoa...

Amber's car pulls up outside the cottage. Amber gets out and walks around to the passenger side door and yanks it open for Skye.

AMBER

Come on. Get out. It's going to be different here I know, compared to home. Just give it a chance, okay?

Skye reluctantly climbs out. She ignores her mom and starts walking to the cottage.

AMBER

Don't forget your bag?

Skye keeps ignoring her mother.

AMBER

Sheesh. Don't strain yourself. I'll get it, Miss Madam.

Amber opens up the boot and drags out the two large suitcases.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - EARLY MORNING

Charlie's boat is tied up to Mary's jetty. The lake is very peaceful as a flock of waterbirds land gently on it. At Mary's backdoor we see Charlie leave a small whittled wooden squirrel on her door mat. He hesitates when he hears Mary and Skye talking from inside the kitchen.

MARY(OS)

Good morning Skye. Do you want some coffee?

SKYE (OS)

Yes, Grandma.

MARY(OS)

If you want we can have it on the porch?

SKYE (OS)

No it's fine Grandma. I'll sit here with you.

Skye takes a large sip of her coffee. Her voice becomes louder as if she is going to come out of the backdoor.

SKYE (OS)

Ah, that tastes great.

Charlie rushes down the steps and hurries back to his boat. He unties it and pushes off from the jetty. He starts to paddle across the lake.

INT. AMBER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Amber's bedroom is decorated in an old fashioned floral theme. The walls are covered with faded wallpaper depicting large pink roses. The hand-stitched lace quilt and curtains match.

Amber is sleeping. She looks like she has had a rough night. Her hair is standing up on end and the sheets are twisted up around her legs. She slowly opens her eyes to Bluebell, who is standing on her bed. Bluebell honks very loudly right in Amber's face. Amber screams.

AMBER

ARGH! BLOODY HELL! GET OFF MY BED!

Amber, startled, sits upright on the bed and waves her hands at Bluebell. Bluebell turns her back on Amber and poops on the sheet right beside Amber's leg before flying off the mattress and waddling out of the door.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER  
SHIT! YOU BLOODY BIRD!

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

Mary, with her hair down, still in her nightgown and robe, turns pancakes on the stove. Skye is sitting at the table with her hands around a mug of coffee.

Amber stumbles into the kitchen, she has her robe open over summer pajamas. She looks at Skye and frowns.

AMBER  
Should you be drinking that in your condition?

Skye rolls her eyes, says nothing, but takes a large sip of coffee and gives an exaggerated satisfied sigh.

AMBER  
When I was pregnant with you all I drank was herbal tea. No caffeine went into my body.

SKYE  
(Sarcastically)  
So, that's why I want it now. If you'd have drunk coffee when you were pregnant with me maybe I wouldn't crave it so much now.

AMBER  
Mom, you tell her!

SKYE  
Give it a rest, Mom.

MARY  
(Absentmindedly)  
Tell her what?

AMBER  
Tell her that caffeine isn't good for you when you're pregnant.

MARY  
Why?

AMBER  
(Exasperated)  
Never mind.

Amber helps herself to a cup of coffee brewing on the stove.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

Come on Mom, one cup a day isn't going to kill me or the baby.

AMBER

Well, remember what I said when the baby is born and can't function until it gets its daily hit of caffeine.

Amber takes her coffee and heads out the back to the porch. She opens up the door and steps onto the wooden squirrel. She hops around in pain, spilling her coffee onto her hand and the floor.

AMBER

Ouch! What the hell?

While Amber picks up the squirrel, Mary comes out to see what happened. Amber holds out the squirrel to Mary.

AMBER

What's this?

Mary takes the squirrel, strokes it tenderly, admiring the workmanship and places it up onto a very crowded set of shelves beside the back door. On the shelves there is a very large assortment of small carved wooden animals and human figures, dried up flowers in old food jars, small exquisite paintings lovingly painted on the inside of tree bark, petrified fossils and small carved stone figures.

MARY

It's a gift.

AMBER

What do you mean a gift?

MARY

It's Charlie. He leaves something on the mat everyday for me. I don't know why. He's left hundreds of things and I can't bear to throw any of them away.

AMBER

So, does he sneak over each morning and just leave something?

Mary nods.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

Why? Is he sweet on you?

Mary turns away embarrassed. She opens up the porch door to go in.

MARY

Don't be ridiculous.

Amber sits down on the porch swing and watches the lake. Bluebell flutters her way out of the bushes at the side of the cottage and rudely honks at Amber as she goes past.

AMBER

And honk to you too.

INT. SKYE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Amber and Skye are inside the cottage yelling at each other while Mary is painting outside on the porch with Bluebell at her feet. Amber is holding a tumbler of Scotch and it isn't her first.

SKYE

You don't understand. I want to go home. I want to be with my friends. I want to be back in Chicago with Dad. Not here with you.

Skye slams her bedroom door right in Amber's face. Amber yanks open the door, enters the room and slams it behind her.

AMBER

Well, you're not going back home. Soon it won't be our home it will be someone else's. He's selling it. Okay?

SKYE

What do you mean he's selling it?

AMBER

He's selling it. It's on the market.

SKYE

Well it's not okay. It's my home. I want to live there. With Dad. He didn't tell me that he was selling the house, my home, our home. You're lying.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

No I'm not and stop acting like you're twelve. Just wake up. It's over. The lie that we've been living for the last year is over. The house is gone.

(Sadly - quieter)

Everything's gone.

Amber downs a hefty swallow of liquor.

SKYE

Stop drinking that shit and tell me why. If you want me to act my age you need to tell me what's going on. Stop trying to hide everything. You guys have been arguing for months and you've told me shit. I'm not a child anymore so stop treating me like one.

AMBER

Don't you bloody well swear at me. I'm your mother.

SKYE

A bloody drunk one. How many of those have you had? Three, four?

Amber looks guiltily down at her glass.

SKYE

Is that why he left you? Cause you're a drunk?

Skye flops down onto her bed. Amber goes over to sit beside her. She runs her hand down Skye's hair but pulls her hand back when Skye moves away.

AMBER

I'm sorry love, but it's hard to talk about it.

SKYE

(Quietly)

Well, it shouldn't be hard, not to me.

AMBER

(Sighs)

It's always hard to talk about your mistakes, even to your daughter...especially to your daughter.

(CONTINUED)

(Sighs)  
See, it's partly my fault...

Amber twirls the glass in her hand.

AMBER  
See, I was lonely and I met  
someone...

Skye jumps up.

SKYE  
What? You had an affair...how could  
you?

She runs out of the room with Amber chasing after her.

AMBER  
It wasn't like that. Come back  
here! Would you just slow down and  
just listen to me! Skye! Skye!

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Skye runs down the stairs and out the back porch to Mary.  
Amber slams out the door after her.

AMBER  
Skye!

SKYE  
No, I just don't want to know. I  
knew it was your fault. Everything  
bad that happens to me is because  
of you. Just leave me alone.

Skye runs down the back stairs towards the lake.

MARY  
So, that talk went well then.

Amber throws herself down onto the porch swing and tosses  
back the last of her drink.

AMBER  
(Sarcastically)  
Yeah, swell.

Mary keeps dabbing paint on the canvas in a haphazard  
fashion. Her brush is over full and a large blob falls off  
onto the canvas and trickles its way down the painting.  
Amber gestures at the canvas.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

Oh my God. What on earth is that supposed to be?

Mary steps back and looks at it.

MARY

(Shrugs)

It's that tree over there. Why?

She points to a tree in the distance with her brush. Unnoticed, another blob of paint falls off and lands on Bluebell's head. Bluebell honks in protest and tosses her head.

AMBER

Well it looks like it has a horrible disease.

Bluebell waddles over and wipes her paint splattered head on Amber's jeans, leaving a distinct paint mark.

AMBER

Shit! Oh, you wretched thing, you've put paint on me. You bloody bird, if you don't watch out you'll be Thanksgiving dinner.

Amber grabs one of Charlie's wooden figures and throws it at Bluebell, missing her completely.

AMBER

Take that you bloody bird.

Bluebell waddles off with a flutter of wings over the porch and down the stairs.

Mary, unperturbed by what's happening goes back to her painting.

MARY

I think Bluebell has it in for you and Skye. You'd better watch out, she's a vindictive thing.

AMBER

I'm not scared of a goose.

MARY

(Laughing)

Well, you should be. She has a real mean streak. You should see her go after the postman, just like a

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)  
watchdog she is, chases him all the way down the street and halfway around the lake. Charlie says that he sees her sometimes still chasing him when the post is delivered at his place.

Amber wipes at the paint but it smears further.

AMBER  
Bloody bird!

MARY  
You know, you should tell Skye the whole story.

AMBER  
(Sighs)  
Yeah, I know, but she is going through so much at the moment, the last thing I want to do is upset her further. She doesn't know that her father is a bastard. He's the one that caused all this grief. She thinks that it's entirely my fault and like normal, won't listen to me.

MARY  
Well, if you don't soon, I will. Remember she's going to be a mother soon and she needs to know.

Amber looks off into the distance at Skye sitting on the end of the jetty.

AMBER  
Yeah, I know.

EXT. JETTY - DAY

Skye is sitting at the end of the jetty with her legs hanging over the side. She is shredding leaves off a tree branch and throwing them into the water.

Bluebell honks at her as she swims past. As Skye watches Bluebell, a canoe, being paddled by Poppy and SAM, comes into view.

POPPY  
(Waving with her paddle)  
You hoo! Hi!

(CONTINUED)

SKYE  
(Embarrassed)

Hi.

Skye and Sam's eyes meet. He smiles at her and she shyly smiles back.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mary and Skye are sitting at the kitchen table while Amber is serving up dinner.

SKYE  
So, Grandma, what does everyone do for excitement around here?

MARY  
Oh, we have lots to do here love. There's volunteering at the nursing home. Lots of projects to help with like flower arranging, working in the community garden...

SKYE  
No, I mean, what do people my age do around here?

MARY  
Well, I suppose they go to the lake. In summer we get a few of those motor bike things that scoot over the lake and scare the birds and fish. Charlie...

AMBER  
You mean jet skis?

MARY  
I don't know. Do I?

AMBER  
Yes, Mom.

SKYE  
Go on Grandma, you were going to say something about Charlie?

MARY  
Charlie? Oh yes, Charlie, well he complains every summer about the noise and the fumes. But I think that the kids mainly hang around the Coffee Shop. Why don't you come

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)  
into town with me tomorrow and meet  
some of them?

SKYE  
Mmmm.

AMBER  
So, Mom, what's the go with you and  
Charlie?

MARY  
I don't know what you mean love.

Amber sits down at the table and serves.

AMBER  
Here Skye, pass the vegetables to  
Grandma.  
(to Mary)  
Come on Mom. He brings you presents  
each day. So, do you go out or  
anything?

MARY  
Oh, well, he does take me to the  
local Bridge Club a couple of times  
a month.

SKYE  
Here, Mom.

Skye hands the vegetables to Amber

AMBER  
Thanks, love. No, I mean does he  
take you out, out?

MARY  
(Drifting)  
Bridge is really hard now, I think  
that they have changed the rules  
again. I'm sure Mrs. Demetriou is  
cheating. It's a bit suspicious how  
she gets the good cards every  
hand..

AMBER  
Come on Mom, don't be obtuse.

MARY  
And Mrs. Chang, that old witch, she  
threw me over as her partner last

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)  
week, and behind my back too. She asked Helen, you remember her? She owns the Coffee Shop. Well, I had to team up with Charlie and he's hopeless, doesn't play bridge at all.

AMBER  
(Getting Exasperated)  
Yeah, Mom, but what about Charlie?

Skye picks up her glass and takes a sip. She grimaces at its taste.

SKYE  
Yeah, come on Grandma, what about Charlie?

MARY  
What about him, dear?

Amber and Skye look at each other at the hopelessness of the conversation. Skye takes another sip of her drink then spurts it all over the table.

SKYE  
Argh, yuck, that's gross. Bluebell!

Bluebell waddles out of the corner of the room and turns her back on Skye as if to say, "Suck eggs you deserve it." Skye grabs a bread roll and throws it at the goose and the roll bounces off her back.

SKYE  
You bloody bird. You shat into my drink.

Skye throws another roll at the goose but it misses Bluebell as she flutters her feathers, honks in disdain and waddles out of the room.

EXT. PATHWAY BESIDE THE LAKE - MORNING

Mary and Skye are walking into town. Bluebell is closely following Mary. Every so often Bluebell nips at the leg of Skye's jeans when she thinks that Skye is too close to Mary.

MARY  
So, do you miss him?

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

Who? Dad? Yes I do.

MARY

No, love. The daddy of your baby?

SKYE

Oh, him. Yeah, I suppose so. I don't know. Maybe. How do you know when you really love someone Grandma? How do you know if he's the one and you are going to be together, forever?

MARY

To be honest it's crap-shoot. But when you do find someone, it's magical. You, just feel, inside. Sometimes it creeps up on you like the sun slowly moving across the sky...but other times, a thunder clap.

SKYE

Which one was it for you, with Grandpop?

MARY

I fell in love with him gradually. He romanced me with flowers and gifts and wouldn't take no for an answer. He made me feel special and before I knew it, I was in love.

SKYE

Do you miss him still, Grandma?

MARY

(Lost in her memories)

Miss who, dear?

Once more, Bluebell nips at the leg of Skye's jeans.

SKYE

Bluebell, stop that! Grandpop. Aren't you lonely, you know, at times?

MARY

No, no. I have Bluebell here to keep me company.

(Pauses)

Do you love him?

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

I don't know. I thought that I did.  
I thought that we would be  
together, forever. But...

MARY

But what?

Bluebell take another swipe at Skye's pants leg.

SKYE

Bluebell, stop it!

MARY

Just ignore her, dear.

Skye gives Bluebell a dirty look and tries to ignore her.

SKYE

Even before we left home to come  
here he wasn't returning my calls  
or texts. It's as if he's wiped me.  
The pregnancy was a mistake. I  
haven't even told him yet that he's  
going to be a daddy.

MARY

So, he thinks your relationship is  
over?

SKYE

(Resigned)

Yeah.

They walk on for a small while.

SKYE

Have you been in love with anyone  
else other than Grandpop?

Mary looks off into the distance.

MARY

No, love, I have never been *in* love  
with anyone else...

SKYE

But?

MARY

(Daydreaming)

I did feel illicit passion, once...

(CONTINUED)

At the end of the path they meet the main street of Splendid. The small township lies before them.

SKYE

So, what happened?

MARY

Look, we're almost there?

SKYE

Grandma?

MARY

Not now Skye. Later, I promise.

They start to wander down the main street.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - MORNING

Amber is pacing the floor with her cell pressed tightly to her ear.

AMBER

Don't give me that bullshit, Roger. I don't care what new business is in the pipeline. You bloody got us into this mess, just get us out of it and we'll call it quits.

(Pause)

Just sell the house as quickly as you can. I'm sure one of your whores will put you up for a while so that the agent can bring people through.

(Pause)

Skye? She's doing fine.

(Pause)

What, you want to see her? Over my dead body.

(Pause)

You can't hold that one little thing over my head forever.

(Pause)

Fine, fine, just be here on Sunday.

(Pause)

Oh, fuck off!

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Mary and Skye are walking down the Main Street with Bluebell following close behind. The street is bustling with people going about their business. Mary waves to the people that she knows and says good morning to others. MRS. CHANG calls Mary and Skye inside her Produce Shop.

MRS. CHANG  
Good morning, Mary.

MARY  
Good morning, Mrs. Chang. Meet my granddaughter, Skye.

MRS. CHANG  
Good morning, Skye. You like Splendid?

SKYE  
Morning, Mrs. Chang. Sure, Splendid is just great.

MRS. CHANG  
Sure, sure, say that now, but soon you bored with old folk, soon you meet young ones like yourself. Having baby soon. Good town for bringing up baby.

SKYE  
(Shocked)  
Um.

MARY  
Now, Mrs. Chang, it's a secret. Skye doesn't want anyone to know.

MRS. CHANG  
No, no one knows. But I can tell. Face pale from sickness, eyes puffy from worry. No matter child, I won't tell, but soon everyone know. Soon everyone see baby growing, then won't be secret. Here, eat a peach, they have good vitamins, good for baby. Here...

Mrs. Chang presses a ripe peach into Skye's hands.

SKYE  
Um. Thanks.

(CONTINUED)

Mrs. Chang throws a lettuce leaf to Bluebell who gobbles it up.

MARY

So long, Mrs. Chang. Let's go.

Mary waves as they leave.

MARY

Now, don't you worry child. Mrs. Chang won't tell. Come, let's go and see what's happening at the Coffee Shop.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Amber is sitting on the porch swing with her cell in her lap and a glass of liquor on the table beside her. She is staring at the lake in the distance with tears running down her cheeks.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

The Coffee Shop is busy, At the outside tables there are a couple of MOTHERS with prams. Mary and Skye pause at the door.

MARY

You go in love, I see Mrs. Demetriou and I need to speak to her about that thing...that thing that is happening next week. Whoo hoo, Monica! Monica!

Skye enters the Coffee Shop as Mary and Bluebell walk off down the street.

The Coffee Shop is bright and cheerful with funky decor. Soft rock music is playing. The tables are full with an assortment of customers.

A few elderly patrons sit at the tables nearest to the counter. A couple of POLICE OFFICERS sit at the table that looks out of the front window. HELEN is serving behind the counter while Poppy is taking orders at a nearby table.

Skye finds a chair at a small table near the middle of the room. She sits down and looks around at the other customers.

HELEN

Poppy will be with you in a sec, love.

(CONTINUED)

Poppy, a bright and happy girl, who wears quirky clothes and has multiple piercings comes up to Skye. She gives her a really friendly smile. Skye cannot keep the astonishment out of her face at the way Poppy is dressed.

POPPY

Hi, I'm Poppy. You're Mary's granddaughter aren't you? What ya like to order?

Skye is charmed by Poppy.

SKYE

Hi. Yes. I'm Skye. Cappuccino please. Didn't I see you on the lake the other day?

POPPY

(Pleased)

Yeah, that was us. Nice to see someone new around here. Are you going to be here long?

SKYE

Not sure. Depends.

The bell tinkles on the door as more customers enter the shop.

POPPY

Oops, got to go. I'll be back soon with your order.

Poppy goes back to the counter. Skye's gaze falls onto Sam who is sitting in a corner booth, reading a book. Poppy comes back with a magazine in her hand.

POPPY

Here ya go, something to read while you wait.

Skye indicates her cell on the table.

SKYE

Thanks, but I have my phone here.

(Beat)

Hey, who's that guy in the corner?

They both look at Sam, who feels them looking at him and looks up to meet their gaze. Skye, embarrassed, looks away.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

Oh, that's Sam. He goes to college with me. Hey, are you going to college here next fall? Would be great to have a new face.

SKYE

God no! I'm going back to Chicago as soon as I can get Dad to take me.

POPPY

(Disappointed)

Why, don't you like Splendid?

SKYE

(Sighs)

I'm sure Splendid is just fine. I just miss my friends, that's all.

POPPY

Well, if you stay for a while you can be friends with us.

Poppy gestures to Sam and herself.

POPPY

There's not many kids our age here anymore and it would be great to hang out with you.

SKYE

(Placating)

Well, I'll think about it.

Helen calls Poppy over.

HELEN

Poppy!

POPPY

Looks like I have to go back to work. I'll be back with your coffee in a minute, okay?

Skye grabs her arm just as she is about to turn away.

SKYE

So, you and Sam are just friends, right?

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

Yeah, just friends. We've known each other forever.

After Poppy leaves, Skye glances again at Sam to find that he is still looking at her. He gives her a friendly smile. Skye turns pink and can't help but smile back. She is distracted when her cell beeps with an incoming text. She opens the message to see a guy kissing a girl.

TEXT

Hey Skye. Just letting you know that Jayden and I are together now so STOP texting him. Shame you had to leave. Not.

Britt

Skye pales and reaches down to stroke her stomach.

SKYE

Looks like it's just you and me now, baby.

EXT. BANK - DAY

Mary and MRS. DEMETRIOU are outside the bank. Bluebell is searching through the bushes on the side of the path looking for insects.

MRS. DEMETRIOU

It must be nice to have some company now that Amber and Skye have moved back in?

MARY

What do you mean?

MRS. DEMETRIOU

Well, you've been lonely ever since Jack passed. It must be nice to have someone to keep you company other than Bluebell here.

MARY

(Lying)

I'm not lonely. I'm perfectly fine by myself.

MRS. DEMETRIOU

Of course you are. Everyone knows it. You closed down when Jack died. We didn't see you at the community

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MRS. DEMETRIOU (cont'd)  
center for ages. Luckily Charlie  
was keeping an eye on you and let  
us know that you were okay.

MARY  
(Affronted)  
What! Charlie was spying on me?

MRS. DEMETRIOU  
Oh, no. He just...

MARY  
Well, I was fine. I am fine. Tell  
the old busy bodies in town that  
they needn't gossip about me. I'm  
not lonely and don't need anyone,  
not even Charlie spying on me.

MRS. DEMETRIOU  
Now, no need to get upset. He  
wasn't spying on you, he was just  
checking that you were okay. He  
would never mean to hurt you...

MARY  
Humph. Well I'm fine. I can take  
care of myself. Got to...Skye's  
waiting.

Mary rushes back up the street. Bluebell, caught unawares,  
hurriedly waddles after her.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - AFTERNOON

Amber is down by the lake with a brown paper bag which  
contains torn up stale bread. She is tossing the bread to  
the waterbirds in the lake trying to ignore Bluebell who is  
behind her, hissing, each time Amber tosses a piece of bread  
into the water.

Charlie, in his boat, paddles around the lake's bend.

AMBER  
Hi Charlie.

CHARLIE  
Hi Amber. You settling in?

AMBER  
Yes, Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLIE

(Chokes)

How's...how's Mary doing?

AMBER

(Amused)

Fine Charlie, just fine.

(Pause)

Say, Charlie? Love the squirrel.

CHARLIE

Oh. You knew it was me?

AMBER

Yes. It's really cute.

CHARLIE

Does your mother know it was me?

AMBER

Yes Charlie. She has always known.  
Are you going to ask her out  
sometime?

Charlie shakes his head

CHARLIE

She wouldn't want to go out with an  
old codger like me.

AMBER

How do you know Charlie? How do you  
know?

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - EVENING

Mary, Amber and Skye are sitting around the fireplace  
chatting. Mary and Skye are drinking hot chocolate while  
Amber has a large glass of wine at her side.

SKYE

Grandma, when we were in town you  
hinted that you had a romance with  
someone else other than Grandpop.  
Was it Charlie?

MARY

Oh no, dear. Charlie's only ever  
been a good friend.

AMBER

But there was someone else?

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
(Sighs)  
Yes, yes there was.

SKYE  
So?

Mary turns to Amber with a somber look on her face.

MARY  
Are you sure that you want to hear  
this?

AMBER  
Yes of course.  
(Awkwardly laughs)  
What could be so awful?

MARY  
(To herself)  
You'd be surprised.

AMBER  
Come on Mom. Give us the details.

SKYE  
Yeah Grandma. Was it when you were  
young? Before you met Grandpop?

MARY  
Well, I was young.

Amber and Skye get comfortable, eagerly waiting to hear  
Mary's story of great passion.

MARY  
Well, you remember Skye, when we  
were on our walk I told you that  
when I met your Grandpop he courted  
me, romanced me and over time, I  
fell in love.

SKYE  
Yes.

MARY  
Well, it was just after we were  
married. I met a man, a friend.  
Your father was away  
and...well...he was kind. He  
guessed I was lonely and he  
befriended me.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

So, give us the details. Was he handsome?

MARY

Are you sure you want to know?

AMBER

Yes.

MARY

Well, he was handsome, very charming.

Amber and Skye look questioningly at Mary.

MARY

Oh, all right. It was before you were born, Amber. It was during the war. Jack and his friends had gone to do their first tour of duty. It seemed as if all of the town's, all of the country's young men had left. We had just been married and had just spent a couple of beautiful days at...what's that place called, the one with the big waterfall?

SKYE

Niagara?

MARY

Yes, that's it. It had taken a few days to drive there and the scenery was so beautiful. We took our time going there because I wanted to see so many famous places. Well, places that seemed famous, exciting, to a small town girl. Did you know that the...

AMBER

Mom.

MARY

Sorry dear. Where was I?

AMBER

Dad had just gone off to serve.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Oh, yes. He was in the second call up, some other young men had gone before him. I think that he was given special treatment because of our wedding. Did you know that I had fresh posies plaited into my hair on our wedding day. Jack looked so handsome, I almost burst into tears when I saw him standing in front of the judge...

SKYE

So, when did the other man come along?

MARY

The other man? Oh, that's right. It was about two months after Jack had gone. The first wave of young men had their first home leave. They could do that at the beginning because they hadn't been stationed overseas yet and in most cases home was just a train ride away. Now, you must remember that I was newly married and my generation, we didn't have sex before we were married. Well, of course some did and that's why there were some quickie weddings. But Jack and I didn't, but as soon as we got married, well, we couldn't get enough of each other.

AMBER

And...

MARY

Well, I missed it, you see.

AMBER

Missed what?

MARY

The sex.

AMBER

The sex?

SKYE

So, you had an affair while Grandpop was away?

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Yes.

Amber and Skye gasp at Mary's news.

SKYE

You're kidding?

AMBER

Mom!

SKYE

Well, who with?

MARY

His name was Wendell.

Amber looks confused for a second, then her expression changes as she makes the connection.

AMBER

You. You mean, Uncle Wendell?

SKYE

Who?

MARY

Yes dear. You're father's older brother. When I saw him in his uniform he looked so like your father. They looked so similar. Oh I knew that he wasn't Jack. I wasn't that confused. It was just that he was so nice, so respectful. He saw that I was lonely, I was family and he befriended me.

AMBER

So, why? Cause he reminded you of Dad?

MARY

Oh, no dear. I suppose that, I was lonely. We all were. All of the women in town missed their men. It's no excuse I know, but I was young and frankly, I just missed sex.

SKYE

So, what happened?

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Well, he was very clever about it, see, he knew that I would be lonely without Jack. Newly married and all that. So, when Wendell came home, he firstly acted like a friend, took me to the theater, picnics, dancing. After a while it wasn't just that he was entertaining his new sister-in-law he could see that I was lonely and his friendship turned flirtatious. Oh, I don't put the blame on him, I unashamedly flirted back. It was the supposedly innocent touches, his nearness and attendance to what I was feeling that made him very attractive to me. And that he was forbidden.

SKYE

Forbidden?

MARY

Oh, it was common knowledge that most of the women were having affairs with the soldiers on leave. I was not alone in that. The soldier's farewell of course, but as he was my husband's brother. That made it even more wicked. More forbidden.

AMBER

So?

(Swallows)

What happened?

MARY

Well, time went very quickly, it does when the soldiers are on leave. I suppose that I took full advantage of him leaving. We had a couple of nights of unbridled passion.

Skye's face takes on a dreamy look.

SKYE

Were you in love?

MARY

No love, I wasn't in love with him. Oh, I did love him, but not *in*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MARY (cont'd)  
love. I was in love with your  
Grandpop, but I wanted him. Oh, how  
I wanted him. I guess that he found  
me pretty easy to have but then he  
was just as easy.

(beat)  
But all affairs have consequences.

SKYE  
(Confused)  
Consequences? What do you mean  
Grandma?

Mary puts down her hot chocolate and takes Amber by the  
hand.

MARY  
Are you sure you want to know?

AMBER  
(Cautiously)  
Yeeessss.

MARY  
(Takes a deep breath)  
Well, love, you were the  
consequence.

AMBER  
What!

SKYE  
Oh my God, Grandma!

MARY  
You, are Wendell's daughter, not  
Jack's.

AMBER  
No. You made a mistake. That cannot  
be true. I don't believe it...

MARY  
Of course I made mistakes, dear,  
but I cannot be wrong about the  
timing. Jack had been gone for a  
couple of months and I didn't see  
him again for another three after I  
found out that I was pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

I don't believe it. Dad always treated me like I was his. He loved me like I was his daughter, I know it.

MARY

Yes, he did, dear. He loved you like you were the most precious thing on earth.

SKYE

He obviously knew.

MARY

Oh yes, dear. I had to tell him, not only because he can add like any intelligent man, but for my own conscience. And then Wendell was killed before you were born. A gunshot wound, immediately fatal. You were the last link to a dead brother that he loved and respected. It wasn't until a few years later that we found out that Jack couldn't father a child, so you became even more precious to him. He always loved you like you were his own.

Skye gets up off the couch and takes her mother in her arms while Mary pats Amber's hand. Amber cries quietly into Skye's shoulder.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - MORNING

Skye is in her pajamas searching through the bushes in the back garden.

SKYE

Come on you ratty bird? Where did you lay them?

MARY(OS)

Skye, you found them yet?

SKYE

No, Grandma. You're sure they're out here?

MARY(OS)

Yes love. Keep looking.

(CONTINUED)

Skye pushes back a branch and spots one goose egg on the ground. Bluebell watches her from underneath another bush.

SKYE

Found ya.

She picks up the egg and heads back into the house. Bluebell follows her.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

SKYE

I only found one.

Skye hands the egg to Mary. Mary quickly washes it then cracks it open onto the grill. Bluebell waddles through the kitchen. Mary shakes her finger at her.

MARY

You're slacking off, you naughty girl.

Skye sits down as Amber enters the kitchen. She kisses Skye on the head and moves around to the stove to pour herself a cup of coffee.

SKYE

Maybe she's getting old.

AMBER

Who's getting old?

SKYE

Bluebell.

AMBER

Why?

MARY

Skye could only find one egg this morning. Bluebell lays two a day like clockwork, so, Skye thinks that she is slowing down.

Mary turns to Bluebell.

MARY

But you're not getting old, are you girl?

BLUEBELL

Honks.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER  
Maybe she's just lazy or you  
couldn't find it.

Amber pulls out her chair and sits straight down onto a warm  
goose egg.

AMBER  
What the hell?

MARY AND SKYE  
What?

Amber gets up and broken shell and egg pulp falls from the  
back of her robe onto the floor.

MARY  
(Sniggers)  
You naughty girl, Bluebell.  
Naughty.

Bluebell turns her back on the women and waddles out of the  
room.

BLUEBELL  
Honks.

EXT. GALLERY - MORNING

Mary, Skye and Amber have brought Mary's latest painting to  
the local gallery so that it can be shown with other local  
works in an upcoming fair.

Amber is lugging the painting while Mary opens the gallery  
door. Skye is trying to ignore them, standing outside,  
leaning against the gallery glass checking her cell for  
messages. She has her MP3 player playing loudly in her ears.

When the two older women enter the gallery, Skye takes off  
to the Coffee Shop.

INT. GALLERY - MORNING

AMBER  
No Mom. We are not going to settle  
in Splendid. God this is heavy. We  
just have to wait until Roger sells  
the house and hopefully that will  
be before the you-know-who comes.  
Then I can find a job and a small  
house in the city.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

But Splendid is a great place to live and bring up children. Don't you remember all the fun times that you had here?

AMBER

Not really. All I remember was that it was boring. Nothing to do but swim in the lake. I couldn't wait to get away.

MARY

Now I know that's not true. I know that you snuck around and saw Billy Hamshaw by the oak tree late at night. And remember that year when you were in the running for homecoming queen. That was an exciting year for you.

AMBER

No it wasn't, Mom. It was torture...

MATTHEW, the gallery owner, comes forward and takes the painting out of Amber's arms.

MATTHEW

Here, let me take that for you.

Amber gets flustered when Matthew smiles at her.

MARY

Ah, Matthew, there you are.

MATTHEW

Another one of your masterpieces I hope.

MARY

Now don't bullshit me young man, I know that they are terrible but some fools must like them as they sell every year.

Matthew appreciatively checks out Amber.

MATTHEW

Um. And this is?

(CONTINUED)

MARY

(Confused)

Who? Oh, sorry, this is Amber Richards my daughter. She and my granddaughter, Skye, are visiting for a while.

Matthew offers his hand for Amber to shake. She does, but he holds on just a little too long. His eyes show his interest in her.

Amber blushes as removes her hand from his.

AMBER

You have got to be joking. My Mother's paintings actually sell?

Matthew unwraps the painting and blanches at what is revealed.

MATTHEW

Um, yeah. They sell every year. We could probably sell more if Mary would paint them.

AMBER

(Unconvinced)

You're kidding.

MARY

Now, Matthew, what was it you hinted at when you rang yesterday?

MATTHEW

Oh, yes. I need a volunteer to help with the fair and I was just wondering whether you would be able to spare the time.

MARY

Goodness no. I don't want to sell the things. It's bad enough to paint them let enough to look at them all day. Look, Amber's free and I'm sure she would love to help. Wouldn't you?

AMBER

Ah. No. Not really.

MATTHEW

Please Amber. I really need someone's help, and since your mother's emphatically declined...

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

But I know nothing about art.

MATTHEW

I'm sure you will be fine. There is nothing to it really. You look like a person who knows her own mind, knows when something is good, whether she likes it. Someone who has values. So, I hope that you will ignore all of those superb traits and unashamedly say how wonderful the pieces are to get a sale. The proceeds go to charity. So, can I count on you?

(Persuading)

You will just have to help me with the contracts and hostess duties. Is that okay?

AMBER

Um.

MATTHEW

We also have to keep the artists from setting alight their own pieces or sabotaging their rival's ones.

AMBER

(Smiles)

Is it that bad?

MATTHEW

Yes. So? You're in?

AMBER

(Sighs)

Yeah, I'm in.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Skye is walking towards the coffee shop unaware of her surroundings. Sam comes out of the local hardware store with a package and sees Skye concentrating on her cell. Skye looks upset.

Sam picks up his pace so that he is walking beside her but she is not aware of him until he pulls a bud from her ear. Skye is annoyed at being interrupted. She becomes surprised then flustered but happy when she sees that it is Sam.

(CONTINUED)

SAM  
Hi.

SKYE  
Hi.

SAM  
I'm Sam.

Sam holds out his hand. Skye shakes it. Their hands linger together for a couple of beats.

SKYE  
Skye.

SAM  
Yes, I know. Poppy told me about you.

SKYE  
Oh.

There is a pregnant pause while they walk a few steps.

SAM  
(Nervous)  
Are you going to the Coffee Shop?  
Cause I was just about to get one  
and wondered whether you would like  
to join me.

SKYE  
(Shyly smiles)  
Well, I was going to get one to go  
while Mom and Grandma are at the  
Gallery...

SAM  
(Smiles)  
I'm sure that they'll be a while.  
The Gallery owner, Matthew, loves  
to chat. My treat?

SKYE  
You're sure?

SAM  
Yeah. Come on.

SKYE  
Okay.

They shyly smile at each other and Sam holds the door open for Skye. She is pleased at his gallantry.

INT. GALLERY - MORNING

Mary is talking to an ASSISTANT in the background while Matthew is giving Amber a guided tour.

MATTHEW

Come, I will show you the pieces  
that we have already acquired so  
far.

This way.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - MORNING

Amber follows him to a storage room at the back of the Gallery. She is confronted by a whole collection of mismatched pieces ranging from Mary's painting, paintings from other artists, Art Deco pieces, antique furniture (some of which has seen better days), abstract sculpture and an old penny farthing bicycle.

They walk around the room touching and looking at various items.

AMBER

Wow! You really have a eclectic  
range of items.

MATTHEW

Yes. At this annual fair I don't  
limit the items to just paintings  
or antiques. Anything is welcome.  
In fact, the more unusual the  
better.

Amber moves to a small decoupage table that is decorated with pictures of nude women.

AMBER

(Smiling)

Well, this is certainly unusual.

MATTHEW

(Laughing)

Sure is. But not my taste.

AMBER

Not mine either. Will you really  
get a buyer for my mother's  
painting?

Matthew leans closer as if he is sharing a secret.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

Don't tell Mary, but Charlie buys all of her paintings. Anonymously.

AMBER

He does?

MATTHEW

He doesn't want her to know, but I think that she may suspect something.

AMBER

She may. Did you know that he leaves presents by her back door every morning?

MATTHEW

What kinds of presents? Not racy ones I hope. The man has had a crush on her for years.

AMBER

Years, 'eh. No they're not those kinds of gifts. I'm sure that if he ever did leave something scandalous she would box his ears, knowing my mother. He leaves exquisitely carved figurines of animals, flowers and people. His work would outstrip a lot of the pieces here. I've never seen anything more beautiful.

(Sighs)

He must really adore her.

MATTHEW

I think that he does more than that.

AMBER

You're sure? I spoke to him the other morning and he wouldn't let on much.

MATTHEW

Well, you've seen your mother's paintings. Who else but a man in love would buy every single one.

AMBER

(Laughing)

Too true.

(CONTINUED)

Amber stops to admire a sculpture of dolphins.

MATTHEW

Are you a collector?

AMBER

No, not really, but I do have a couple of pieces that I have picked up in my travels over the years.

MATTHEW

Well, let me know if there is anything that catches your eye. Do you a great deal.

AMBER

I thought that this was for charity and you would want to get as much as possible.

MATTHEW

I do, and we will, but there is nothing wrong in the added incentive of dinner for two to sweeten the deal. Is there?

AMBER

Oh.

(Joking)

Well, it better be a pretty spectacular item for me to be induced.

MATTHEW

I'll see what I can come up with.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Sam and Skye are sitting in a corner booth with their coffees. Skye gets a text and automatically checks it. Her face pales while she reads it.

SAM

Bad news?

Skye immediately wipes the message and after getting a grip on her emotions looks at the handsome guy in front of her. She smiles.

SKYE

Not anymore.

Poppy comes over to their booth.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

So good to see you guys. I told Sam all about you and that you may need some incentive to stay here in Splendid.

SKYE

(Cheekily)

So that's why you said that you would shout for coffee. Just an excuse to keep a new face in town.

SAM

(Protesting)

No.

He steals Poppy's order book and lightly slaps her arm with it.

SAM

Thanks Poppy.

Poppy and Skye giggle. There is a rap on the window beside them and Mary peers in through the glass at them.

MARY

Come on Skye! Get a move on!

Skye takes her last sip of coffee and slips out of the booth.

SKYE

Well, thanks for the coffee.

POPPY

Hey, maybe we'll see you at church on Sunday.

SKYE

Church, hey. Um, I suppose so.

Skye looks straight at Sam.

SKYE

See you.

SAM

Yeah. See you.

SKYE

Bye Poppy.

EXT. COFFEE SHOP - MORNING

Mary is waiting for Skye by the front door. Amber is just walking up. Charlie is passing the florist on the other side of the street.

When he sees Mary he quickly selects a bunch of flowers and presses some money into Mrs. Demetriou's hand. He crosses the road unnoticed by the three women and startles Mary by pushing the flowers into her hand. He kisses her on the cheek then rushes off down the road. Mary flushes.

AMBER

Well, well.

MARY

(Happily)

Well, well.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mary, Amber and Skye are sitting in a pew. Mary is singing loudly off key. Amber is trying to follow the song in the hymn book and is quietly singing. Skye looks bored and is covertly looking around the church at the parishioners.

She sees Charlie, singing robustly, while staring at Mary and then Skye notices Matthew, glancing up every so often at Amber. After another look around she sees Sam and Poppy. Sam smiles at her and she smiles back.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Amber, Mary and Skye are climbing into the car when Poppy yells and smiles at Skye. Skye waves back.

POPPY

See you Skye.

SKYE

See ya Poppy.

AMBER

Who's that?

SKYE

That's Poppy and Sam. We met the other day at the Coffee Shop.

AMBER

She looks...strange. And he looks like trouble.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

Mom, he's really nice and even though Poppy's clothes are a bit out there, she's great too.

AMBER

Humph.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Lunch is set out on the table on the porch. Skye is tearing small bits off her bread and feeding Bluebell under the table.

Every so often, when Skye slows down, Bluebell goes over to Amber and nudges her on the leg and Amber, almost without being aware, feeds her as well. Amber then, absentmindedly, smooths down the feathers on Bluebell's head. Bluebell preens with the attention.

SKYE

Who was that man that kept looking at you in church?

AMBER

What man?

SKYE

The good looking one, sitting a couple of rows down. In the blue shirt.

MARY

Oh, that's Matthew from the Art Gallery. He seems to be quite interested in your mother.

Amber flushes.

SKYE

Reeaallly...

MARY

In fact, she will be helping him with something next week...what was it?

AMBER

The Art Fair Mom.

MARY

You sure?

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

Uh huh.

MARY

Yes, yes of course, the Art Fair, that's right. I think that he was pretty taken with her.

AMBER

Now Mom, you know that that's not true.

Mary grins at Skye.

MARY

If you say so my dear.

AMBER

I do say so.

Amber turns to Skye.

AMBER

And what about that boy you said hello to. Hmmm...

Skye flushes.

SKYE

Argh.

AMBER

Where did you meet him?

SKYE

Outside the Coffee Shop. He invited me in for coffee.

AMBER

Well, I don't know whether you should be seeing boys in your condition.

MARY

Oh Amber, leave her alone. No one in town knows yet and it will be at least another month or so before she starts to show. There's nothing wrong with making a few friends.

AMBER

But, not the wrong kind of friends. Don't forget that's how you got in trouble in the first place.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

(Angry)

I'm not stupid. I'm already pregnant so it's not as if I can make it any worse.

AMBER

But you may give him ideas.

MARY

Stop being such a prude, Amber. Skye's a woman now, soon to be a mother, if she wants to make friends, any kind of friends, she can.

SKYE

Yeah, Mom. I don't need your permission.

AMBER

Yes you do. You're not a legal adult yet, remember. Anyway, we're not staying here for much longer. As soon as your Dad sells the house I'll find us a place to live in the city.

They sit and sullenly eat until Mary nudges Amber. Amber negatively shakes her head. Mary gestures that Amber should get on with it. Amber shakes her head no. Mary motions that if Amber doesn't tell Skye then she will. Amber nods okay. She swallows her last bite of food and gathers her resolve.

AMBER

Skye, do you remember the other night when Grandma told us about the story of Grandpop and Uncle Wendell?

SKYE

Yeah. So what!

AMBER

Well, there is something that I need to tell you before your father comes to visit you today.

SKYE

What Mom? Shit! What else is there? It's about the divorce isn't it?

Amber looks at Mary who smiles encouragingly back.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER  
Well, yes and no.  
(Quietly to herself)  
This is really hard to say.

MARY  
Go on, Amber.

Amber sighs and gathers her thoughts together then blurts out.

AMBER  
Roger left me because he found  
someone else.

SKYE  
What?

AMBER  
He loves someone else. He is not in  
love with me anymore.

Amber chokes back a sob.

SKYE  
Oh, Mom.

AMBER  
And that's not all. The firm has  
gone bust as most of the  
investments that he made with our  
money went south. So, that's why we  
have to sell the house. We may have  
to file for bankruptcy so all of  
our assets will have to go.

SKYE  
But Mom, what will you do for a  
job? How will I be able to finish  
school? How will I be able to look  
after this baby? Won't we ever be  
moving back to Chicago?

Amber reaches across and holds Skye's hand.

AMBER  
Look love, we'll manage. Grandma is  
going to help out until I can find  
a small flat in the city and get a  
job. We'll be able to take care of  
your baby. Promise.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

But, how could Daddy? How could he?

AMBER

He's human, Skye. People make mistakes. Sometimes they can't help what they do, who they love. We need to accept that Roger has made mistakes and get past them.

SKYE

(Wailing)

Oh Mom, we haven't got anything.

Amber looks to Mary for encouragement. Mary nods.

AMBER

We'll be fine. I promise, but that's not all.

SKYE

What else is there?

AMBER

(Blurts)

Roger is not your real father.

Skye sits stunned for a moment. Then she yanks her hand out of her mother's, gets up, knocking the table and making the drinks spill.

SKYE

What?

AMBER

He's not your biological father, I was pregnant with you when we met...

SKYE

I don't believe you. You're lying. Everything you have said is a lie.

AMBER

No, I'm not, dear. It's the truth.

SKYE

Stop it. Stop it! Stop lying! I don't believe it.

AMBER

Sorry, but it's the truth.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

No. No. Grandma, is it the truth?

Mary sympathetically nods.

SKYE

Oh God. No.

Skye bursts into tears. She blindly runs down the steps of the porch past a small hedge of trees. There is a squeal of tires as a car, hidden from view by the hedge, tries to suddenly stop.

There is the sound of metal hitting flesh as Skye is struck by the car her father, ROGER, is driving. She is knocked to the ground screaming.

ROGER

ANGEL!

Amber and Mary rush down the steps. Bluebell flutters close by. When Roger attempts to get out of the car Bluebell hisses and snaps at him. Amber reaches Skye's side and gently cradles her.

AMBER

SKYE! Skye! oh, Skye. You're okay, you'll be fine my love. Call 911.

Mary runs back to the house.

SKYE

Mom. Mom, it hurts.

Skye reaches down to between her legs. Her hand comes back covered in blood.

SKYE

It hurts.

Skye passes out.

FADE OUT

Only the beeping of hospital monitors and subdued voices can be heard.

FADE IN

INT. COUNTY HOSPITAL RECEPTION - DAY

While NURSES and PATIENTS are interacting, the front doors slide open and Sam and Poppy enter. They move to a VOLUNTEER WORKER behind a counter.

POPPY  
Skye Richards, please?

VOLUNTEER WORKER  
Room 54. Colvill Ward.

Immediately Poppy walks off.

SAM  
Thanks.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Amber is sitting on the side of Skye's bed. Skye is lying down. She is looking very pale and sad.

SKYE  
Is Dad here?

AMBER  
No love. He had to go.

Amber brushes a few hairs away from Skye's eyes.

AMBER  
But, he told me to tell you that he loves you very much and once things settle down he'll take you on a trip somewhere. Anywhere that you would like to go.

SKYE  
(Bitter)  
Why didn't you tell me Mom? Why hadn't you ever told me the truth?

AMBER  
I couldn't. You were too young and I didn't want to stuff up your relationship with your father. He loves you, so much.

SKYE  
I know. Did you love him, Mom? The guy who got you pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

(Sighs)

No love. He was just a guy. Someone that I knew for just one night.

SKYE

So, what happened?

Amber shrugs.

SKYE

Come on Mom. Talk to me.

AMBER

Nothing, just a few girlfriends and I went out for some drinks. And...things happened. You know, drinking, dancing, a cool band, a cute guy...

SKYE

So, it was just one night then?

AMBER

Yeah, just one night.

SKYE

And, you don't remember anything about him?

AMBER

Well, I remember that he was funny. I remember laughing at his jokes. They were really corny and my friends didn't find them funny. But, I remember thinking that he was hilarious.

SKYE

Anything else?

AMBER

He was tall. I suppose. I remember having to look up a long way. He had to lean down to talk to me and to hear what I said. But I do remember his smile. You have his smile.

SKYE

So, why didn't you keep in touch?

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

(Shrugs)

Just didn't. At that time I wasn't looking for anyone permanent. I didn't even get his number.

SKYE

What was his name?

AMBER

John.

SKYE

No last name?

AMBER

No love. Sorry.

SKYE

So, he never knew that you were pregnant?

AMBER

No, I never saw him again. By the time I found out that I was pregnant I had already met Roger and I didn't want to go back.

SKYE

How did you meet Dad? You've never told me.

AMBER

No, I haven't have I? I met him the next month at a college function. It was love at first sight and as soon as we graduated, we got married.

SKYE

I'm sorry, Mom.

AMBER

I'm sorry too, love. Sorry that you have lost the baby and had to go through all that pain.

SKYE

I'm sorry too, but...I am a bit relieved.

(Embarrassed)

I didn't really want a baby yet, Mom.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

I know love, I know.

There is a knock on the door and Poppy peers around the corner. When Skye sees who it is she is very pleased but once Amber sees Sam she becomes cold.

SKYE

Oh, hi Poppy. Come in. Poppy, this is my Mom, Amber. Mom, this is Poppy. She works in the Coffee Shop in town...

Sam looks in tentatively then enters the room.

SKYE

And this is...

Sam reaches out to shake Amber's hand but she ignores it. He drops his hand by his side.

SAM

Mrs Richards. I'm Sam.

Amber turns her back on him.

AMBER

Nice to meet you Poppy. Well, I'll go and get some coffee then.

She leans over to kiss Skye on the cheek.

AMBER

Don't be too long.

Amber leaves.

SKYE

Sorry about Mom. She's going through a rough time at the moment.

POPPY

That's fine.

SKYE

Why are you here?

POPPY

Well, your Grandma told us about you tripping over the tree root and hurting your stomach, so, I pestered Sam to bring me over and here we are.

(CONTINUED)

Sam catches Skye's eye and she flushes.

SKYE

Well, that's great. Thanks for coming.

SAM

So, are you going to be okay?

POPPY

Yeah, how's your stomach? Did you hurt it badly?

SKYE

I'm fine. Nothing to worry about.

Skye reaches down and unconsciously rubs her stomach. Her eyes show that she is in pain, not just physically, but feeling the pain of losing her child.

POPPY

How long do you think that you'll be in here?

SKYE

Not sure. Maybe a day or two. Why?

Poppy gestures to Sam and herself.

POPPY

Well, we were wondering, when you were okay and all, whether you wanted to come out with us to a movie. Sam'll drive us and there's a new film with Christopher Walken in it that I want to see.

(Sighs theatrically)

SAM

She just loves him.

SKYE

Sure, that'll be great.

Skye reaches over to grab her cell from the side table. She hands it to Poppy.

SKYE

Here, pop in your number and I'll let you know when I'm out.

Amber returns to the room as Poppy is entering her number. Amber frowns to see that Sam is still there. Poppy senses Amber's hostility towards Sam.

(CONTINUED)

POPPY

Great. Well, got to go. Give me a call, okay?

Poppy grabs Sam's arm and practically drags him to the door.

SKYE

Yeah, sure will. Thanks for coming Poppy, Sam.

POPPY

See, you...and nice to have met you too Mrs. Richards.

Amber smiles at Poppy.

AMBER

Yes. You too Poppy.

SKYE

See you Sam and thanks for driving Poppy over.

Amber frowns again.

SAM

You too, Skye. Get better soon, okay.

SKYE

Okay.

POPPY

Bye.

SKYE

Bye.

After Poppy and Sam leave Skye turns to her mother.

SKYE

What's wrong with you?

AMBER

(Feigning ignorance)  
What love?

SKYE

You were barely nice to Poppy and you were downright rude to Sam.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

Was not.

SKYE

Yes you were. It was embarrassing.

AMBER

That boy. He looked like trouble.

SKYE

What?

AMBER

You've already been in trouble once. I don't want you to go through the same thing again.

SKYE

(Really angry)

Mom, don't you think that I have learned? Don't you think that I can look after myself?

AMBER

Well...

SKYE

Great Mom, just great. Don't you trust me at all? I barely know him, so you think that I'm going to jump straight into bed with him. Just like you did.

AMBER

No, love. It's not you that I don't trust.

SKYE

Well, not all guys are like Jayden. You don't have to treat them all like shit.

AMBER

I can't help it, especially when they look at you that way.

SKYE

What way?

AMBER

You know.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE  
(Pleased)  
Yeah, I know.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Amber is in town running some errands. As she walks past the Produce Shop she is accosted by Mrs. Chang and Mrs. Demetriou.

AMBER  
Good morning ladies.

MRS. CHANG AND MRS. DEMETRIOU  
Good morning Amber.

Mrs. Chang and Mrs. Demetriou whisper to each other while glancing back at Amber. Amber gives them a funny look. The ladies split up and move one to each side of Amber and take one of her arms each. They turn her around and start walking her back up the Main Street towards the Nursing Home.

MRS. CHANG  
Amber, you good woman? You come and help us. Yes, you come and help us, now.

Amber tries to dislodge her arms from their grasp.

AMBER  
No, no, I'm just going to the Bakery. Mom wants one of Hilda's special pies for lunch.

MRS. DEMETRIOU  
You can get a pie later. Hilda has plenty I'm sure. But we need your help now.

MRS. CHANG  
Yes, you come with us and help.

AMBER  
Help with what?

MRS. DEMETRIOU  
They need our help at the Nursing Home. Come, come, you will help us, yes?

AMBER  
No, not really.

(CONTINUED)

MRS. CHANG

What? You not want to help old people?

AMBER

Of course I want to help the elderly, but just not now.

They almost drag Amber down the street until they reach the door of the Nursing Home. Subdued rock and roll music is playing from inside the home.

MRS. CHANG

Come, come, everyone want to help.

MRS. DEMETRIOU

Yes, you come in and help. Everyone is inside helping. Helen from the Coffee Shop, Bill from the Post Office, Matthew from the Art Gallery...

MRS. CHANG

Yes, everyone help.

They drag her inside to the home's common room.

INT. NURSING HOME'S COMMON ROOM - DAY

The room is set up like a 1950's diner with booths, a counter with stools and a jukebox. Most of the RESIDENTS are dressed up in their 50's gear and some are dancing the twist, albeit slowly and carefully, on the makeshift dance floor.

Helen, BILL and Matthew are dressed up as diner waiters and waitresses. They are serving beverages and snacks to the residents. Amber stands stunned, watching the spectacle from the doorway. She is handed an apron by Mrs. Chang and pushed into the room. Matthew smiles at her then shouts over the loud music.

MATTHEW

Hey, everyone. Here's Amber.

RESIDENTS

Hey, Amber. Amber. Good morning.  
Hi.

Amber stands there, she is stunned by not only what is going on in the room but also by the way that she was welcomed by people that she had never met.

(CONTINUED)

HELEN

Hey, put that on and grab a pad  
from the counter. We are overworked  
here.

Helen gestures to the left side of the room.

HELEN

Can you look after those booths so  
that Matthew can help Bill behind  
the counter?

Matthew smiles encouragingly at her. Amber is taken aback  
but she rises to the challenge and dons her apron and cap.

AMBER

Sure, why not.

MATTHEW

That's my girl. Knew you would be  
up to it.

Amber sticks out her tongue at him. Some of the residents at  
Amber's table are chanting and banging their empty cups on  
the table.

RESIDENTS

Amber. Amber.

AMBER

Your girl, ha. You're dreaming.  
You'd better get cracking on those  
drinks or you won't catch up to me  
and it looks like my customers are  
thirsty.

MATTHEW

You're on. Keep those drinks  
coming.

EXT. NURSING HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Amber and Matthew come out of the Nursing Home and turn onto  
the Main Street. They walk towards the Art Gallery and  
Bakery.

MATTHEW

Whew, that was fun.

Amber takes a wipe at her brow pretending to wipe off  
imaginary sweat.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

Those guys are hard work. They really get into the theme of it don't they?

MATTHEW

Yeah, they love it and we love doing it for them.

AMBER

How often?

MATTHEW

Oh, they have some kind of do once a month.

(Laughs)

You should have seen last month's. It was Ancient Greece, everyone was dressed in togas and laying down on chaise lounges. We had a string quartet roaming around the room. Also we roped in some preschoolers to act like cherubs and run around small plates of food, while us adults had to wave these huge fans. We had to quickly break up the party and send the kids home when old Mr. Smithe wanted to find out what an orgy was like.

AMBER

(Laughing)

Weren't they in Ancient Rome?

MATTHEW

Yeah, we told him that, but he didn't care. We got the kids out fast though, just in case he whipped off his Spartacus costume.

AMBER

Spartacus wasn't Greek.

MATTHEW

Mr. Smithe thought he was.

AMBER

Oh, okay.

They stop outside the Bakery.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

So, I'll see you tomorrow night at the fair?

AMBER

Sure.

MATTHEW

Wear something dressy. This is the one event where everyone, and I mean everyone, gets dressed up.

AMBER

(Joking)

Maybe I'll find my Cleopatra costume.

MATTHEW

(Laughs)

I would borrow Mr. Smithe's Spartacus one but I don't think it would fit. So, maybe not...

AMBER

Yeah, maybe not. Wouldn't want the crown jewels showing and have everyone talking.

EXT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

The Gallery is lit up with fairy lights and there is a RECEPTIONIST greeting people as they enter the Gallery.

We hear talking and laughing coming from inside the building and subdued music is playing.

INT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

In the various rooms of the Gallery the local townspeople are looking at the art or standing in small groups chatting.

Mary is talking to Mrs. Chang while Charlie hovers nearby. Matthew places a small dot on Mary's painting then he moves through the room until he sees Amber.

She is discussing the merits of the decoupage table with a middle aged couple. Amber feels Matthew's gaze on her. She turns and smiles at him. Matthew smiles back.

Amber shakes hands with the couple and Matthew goes to join her. He picks up a couple of Champagne flutes on the way and hands her one. Amber smiles happily at him, proud that she has made a sale.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW  
So, how did it go?

AMBER  
They're going to take it.

MATTHEW  
Wonderful. That makes eight sales  
so far.

AMBER  
Really, and the night has only just  
gotten started.

MATTHEW  
Cheers.

AMBER  
Cheers.

They take a sip. Matthew leans in close to Amber.

MATTHEW  
Charlie has just bought your  
Mother's painting.

AMBER  
That didn't take him long. I wonder  
where he keeps them.

MATTHEW  
Probably hidden down in his boat  
shed. That's where I would.

Amber playfully slaps him on the arm.

AMBER  
Don't be mean.

MATTHEW  
Why? Where would you keep them?

AMBER  
(Laughs)  
Too true.

A CLIENT comes up to Matthew and takes him away to talk  
about a piece of furniture. Amber smiles as he leaves. She  
is enjoying his banter and his attention.

INT. ART GALLERY - LATE AT NIGHT

Most of the guests have gone and there is just some of the CATERING/CLEANING crew, Matthew and Amber left. Matthew is tallying up the figures while Amber collects the docketts and invoices.

MATTHEW

What a great night.

AMBER

Yeah? How did we go?

MATTHEW

\$8600. That's better than last year. Must have been your great selling techniques.

AMBER

What? Me, lying through my teeth at how wonderful the pieces were.

MATTHEW

Well, I wouldn't have called it lying. Just your natural talent of seeing the beautiful in even the most mundane of pieces.

AMBER

(Laughs)

So, lying then?

MATTHEW

(Laughs)

No, creative expressions of beauty.

AMBER

Sure, sure.

Matthew pulls her into a quick hug.

MATTHEW

Thank you very much for helping out.

Amber is flustered but pleased.

AMBER

Sure. No problem. It actually was quite fun.

Matthew reaches down to hold her Amber's hand but she quickly takes a step away from him.

(CONTINUED)

MATTHEW

Can I interest you in a cup of coffee?

Amber turns and grabs her coat.

AMBER

No, I'm fine. Thank you.

Matthew takes her coat and holds it out so that she can step into it. He settles it onto her shoulders and stands close so that his breath tickles the hairs on the back of her neck.

MATTHEW

Are you sure?

Amber turns. She is very interested in him but knows that nothing will come of it. They will be leaving town soon and she is going through a painful divorce. She doesn't need another man or complication in her life.

AMBER

(Resolved)

Yes. I'm sure.

She holds out her hand so that he can shake it. He realizes that she is pulling back and complies.

AMBER

Good night.

Matthew cannot resist lifting her hand to gently kiss the back of it.

MATTHEW

(Sighs)

Good night, Amber.

EXT. LAKE - MID-MORNING

Mary and Amber are walking. Skye is on the lake paddling a canoe with Poppy. Sam is in another canoe. They are splashing each other and laughing.

MARY

So, you really will be going?

AMBER

Yes, Mom. As soon as I know our financial situation, we'll leave. Skye needs to be settled back into school and I need a job.

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
(Wistful)  
I'll miss you so much.

AMBER  
Come on now, Mom. You've got your  
friends, Bluebell...and Charlie.

MARY  
Um.

AMBER  
You don't really want us around. Do  
you?

MARY  
Well. Maybe it's that you don't  
want to be here.

AMBER  
No, this isn't about me. It's all  
about Skye and our future. There's  
no job here. No prospects.

MARY  
So you say.

AMBER  
Skye wants to go back to Chicago.

MARY  
Are you sure? Have you asked her  
lately?

AMBER  
What do you mean?

MARY  
Have you asked her lately? After  
losing the baby I think that things  
may have...evolved. She may have  
changed her mind.

They both look out at Skye having fun with her friends.

AMBER  
(Denial)  
No, I know that she wants to go  
back.

MARY  
Um.

INT. KITCHEN - EVENING

Mary and Amber are chatting when Skye comes in dressed ready to go out.

                  AMBER  
Where are you going?

                  SKYE  
Out to the movies.

Skye takes one last look at herself in the microwave's reflective glass.

                  AMBER  
You're going out with that boy.  
Aren't you?

                  SKYE  
          (Exasperated)  
His name is Sam, Mom. Yes I am, and  
with Poppy too. When are you going  
to get over it?

                  AMBER  
Get over what?

                  SKYE  
You know.

                  AMBER  
What?

                  SKYE  
Me, having a boy as a friend.

                  AMBER  
You know that that's not the issue.

                  SKYE  
Yes, it is Mom. You just don't  
trust me.

They turn at the sound of a car pulling up outside. A car door slams and Poppy calls out.

                  POPPY  
Skye? You ready?

Skye leans over and gives Mary a kiss on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE

I'll see you later. Don't wait up.

Skye leaves, practically skipping out of the door.

MARY

Amber, I think that you'll have to give in and realize that Skye wants to stay in Splendid.

AMBER

No, it's too bad what she wants. We've got to leave...and soon.

MARY

Is this really because of Skye and that boy or is this about something else?

AMBER

(Lying)

What else is there? Of course it's all about Skye.

Amber turns away and tends to food cooking on the stove.

INT. MARY'S COTTAGE - MORNING

Mary is walking the house as if she is in a daze. She is singing and mumbling to herself. Bluebell is watchful and is closely following her.

Mary, still in her nightie, enters the kitchen to see Skye eating breakfast.

INT. KITCHEN - MORNING

MARY

(Confused)

Skye? When did you get here, love?

SKYE

What do you mean, Grandma? I've been here all the time.

Mary, off in her own world, goes to the stove to pour herself some coffee. Amber comes into the room. She leans down and pats Bluebell on the head then kisses Skye.

AMBER

Good morning, Mom.

Mary turns around, her expression confused as to why Amber is there.

(CONTINUED)

MARY

Oh, and you're here too.

AMBER

Yeah. Where else would I be?

MARY

Why aren't you with Roger?

Amber and Skye look at each other with concern. They're not sure what is going on.

AMBER

Mom, I left Roger, remember. We're getting divorced.

MARY

Really? You've finally come to your senses. Good, good.

Mary drinks down her coffee. Then picks up her handbag and places it over her shoulder.

MARY

Going into town now. Does anyone want anything?

Skye looks at her Grandma.

SKYE

Aren't you going to get changed, Grandma? You're still wearing your nightie.

Mary looks down at her attire.

MARY

Oh, yes. Silly me.

AMBER

Come on Mom. I'll help you.

Amber assists Mary out of the room.

INT. MARY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Mary is sitting on the bed in a daze while Amber is looking in Mary's closet picking out a dress for her mother to wear. Amber selects one and hangs it on the wardrobe door handle.

AMBER

Mom. Mom!

(CONTINUED)

MARY

What? Oh. Yes dear?

AMBER

How long has this been going on for?

MARY

What, dear?

AMBER

You seem to be getting worse. Becoming more forgetful.

MARY

Um.

Amber sits down beside Mary on the bed.

AMBER

Have you seen anyone about it?

MARY

About what, dear?

AMBER

About you forgetting things?

MARY

Oh, that's just old age.

AMBER

So, it's not getting worse?

MARY

Sometimes. Sometimes I forget what I was doing. I get to a room. I know that I was supposed to do something there but I cannot... remember. It's as if it just slips out of my head. I have good days and everything is where it is supposed to be but I also have bad days.

AMBER

How often are you having bad days?

MARY

Not often, I suppose.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

Are they happening more often now than before?

Mary doesn't want to admit her failings to Amber, but she is frightened that when Amber and Skye leave to go back to Chicago that her memory will keep fading and she won't remember them.

MARY

Yes.

Mary starts crying.

AMBER

Shush, Mom. It'll be okay.

MARY

No it won't. I keep forgetting...keep forgetting names, places, where I've left things, who I was supposed to call, what book I was reading. I cannot remember some little things, things that should come naturally.

She gestures down at herself still wearing the nightie.

MARY

Like getting dressed in the morning. This isn't the first time that I've left home still dressed in my nightie. Sometimes I forget my purse or my house keys. Things I should remember. Second nature things. What about before when I forgot that you were here? How can I forget my own daughter and granddaughter? What if I forget your names? What if I don't recognize you? What would become of me if I ever forgot my own name or Bluebells?

Bluebell jumps up on the bed and settles herself in Mary's lap.

MARY

What if I don't recognize Bluebell here? She is such a comfort to me and she tries to help me remember but she can't help me with all of this. What if I get so bad that I have to leave...

(CONTINUED)

(Hiccups)

Leave my home? I'll have to go to that rotten Nursing Home and Bluebell won't be able to come with me. I don't want to leave here, Amber. I want to live here, in my home with things that are familiar, with people that I love. I don't want to go to a strange place with people I don't know and can't recognize.

AMBER

No one wants you to leave. You don't have to leave.

MARY

No, not yet. But I'm frightened. Frightened of being alone. Frightened of not being able to recognize anything, anyone. Being in a different place with strangers...it scares me.

AMBER

Mom, Mom. No one wants you to leave your home. I'm just worried about you.

MARY

But, I don't want you to leave either. I'm terrified, Amber. Please stay.

Amber is frightened as well. She is not only frightened of her mother's deteriorating condition, she feels herself pulled between caring for her fragile mother, the wants of her daughter and her own desires.

AMBER

Oh Mom, I can't. It's just not enough. We can't, I can't live here again. I just can't...

MARY

Sorry love. I shouldn't have put that pressure on you. I know, I'm sorry. It's just...

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Mary and Bluebell are walking along the main street. Mary is in her own world and is not concentrating on what she is doing or where she is going. Bluebell hovers close by.

Not thinking, Mary turns to cross over the road straight in front of a truck. Bluebell seeing that Mary is going to be hit flies at the truck window startling the driver. The truck pulls away but Bluebell is hit and falls to the ground.

Mary is stunned, but when she realizes that Bluebell is hurt she runs to her side.

MARY

Bluebell! Oh Bluebell.

Mary picks her up and cradles her in her arms. The truck driver and some onlookers gather round. Charlie hears the crash and peers out of the Grocery Store window.

CHARLIE

Mary!

Charlie rushes out of the Grocery Store and hunkers down near Mary gathering her and Bluebell in his arms, consoling her.

CHARLIE

There, there love. She's gone.  
Shush. She's gone.

Mary cries out in anguish.

MARY

Bluebell!

EXT. JETTY - LATE AFTERNOON

Mary is standing at the end of her jetty. She is holding a paper bag filled with torn up pieces of bread. A flock of eager waterbirds screech and flutter at her feet. Some fly in and land on the water nearby.

Mary is distraught. Tears flow down her face as holds a piece of bread in her hand. She puts the bread back into the bag then turns the bag over and tips the whole lot into the water. The birds screech and flurry around her, fighting to get at the bread.

Amber and Skye watch her from the porch. They look at each other in concern.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - EVENING

Mary is sitting in her favorite chair, staring off into the distance, seemingly unaware of Amber and Skye in the room with her.

AMBER

Mom. Mom!

Mary is off in her own world and doesn't hear Amber at all.

SKYE

Grandma.

When Mary still doesn't respond Amber and Skye worriedly look at each other.

AMBER

She's been like this since Bluebell died, I don't really know what to do. Do you have any ideas?

SKYE

(Shrugs)

Not really.

AMBER

She was a bit scatty before, but now...

Amber holds her head in her hands, upset at her mother's lack of response. Skye gets up and crouches down beside Mary. She picks up her Grandma's hand and holds it tenderly.

SKYE

Grandma. Grandma?

Mary finally responds and she looks down at Skye's hand holding hers.

MARY

Oh, you're back love. That's nice.

SKYE

(Tearfully)

Oh, Grandma, we never left.

Mary's eyes fill up with tears.

MARY

But you will.

INT. SKYE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Amber and Skye are arguing.

SKYE

But Mom, I don't want to go.

AMBER

Well, we are going whether you want to or not.

SKYE

I'm not going. What's wrong with Splendid?

AMBER

Nothing...everything. I don't know. It's just...there's no work here. I've got to think of you and get you back into school.

SKYE

But I want to go to school here. Poppy and Sam...

AMBER

That's why you want to stay, isn't it? It's that boy.

SKYE

Why is it always about Sam? He's nice okay, and so is Poppy. They're my friends.

AMBER

What about your other friends? The ones at your last school.

SKYE

What, the guy who knocked me up and the bitch of a best friend who is rubbing it in my face that she's with him now. No thanks. I'll stick with Poppy and Sam any day. Why do you want to leave?

AMBER

I just need to, okay.

SKYE

No it's not okay. Don't you like being here? What about the old folks in the home? You loved

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SKYE (cont'd)

helping out there, and the Art Gallery. You enjoyed helping at the Art Fair and raising money for charity.

AMBER

Sure. But they didn't pay.

SKYE

So what? There would be something you could do I'm sure. So why do you want to leave so much?

AMBER

Oh, love. There is nothing for us here.

SKYE

Do you miss Dad. Is that it? Do you want to try to get him back?

AMBER

God no. I'm glad that that is all over. I don't know. I just think that this town is not for us.

SKYE

Not for you, maybe. Well, I think that it's great. If you want to go back to Chicago, fine. I'll stay here with Grandma, I'm sure she won't mind.

AMBER

You...you don't want to live with me anymore?

SKYE

Mom, sure I do, but not back there. I can get a part-time job after school, Poppy says they need someone at the Coffee Shop. That'll pay for my room and board with Grandma. And I'll be here just in case.

AMBER

Just in case?

SKYE

You know that she's getting worse.

(CONTINUED)

AMBER

(Resigned)

Yes, I've known it for a while, but I wasn't sure whether you knew how bad she was getting. I want to be here for her, but...

SKYE

Bur what? I'm sure that you can find some kind of work. It may not be in a high flying firm like before, but I bet you'll find something. Maybe in the next town?

AMBER

Maybe? You're sure you don't want to go back?

SKYE

No, Mom.

AMBER

I don't know. I've got to think.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Amber is walking down the street. She has no destination in mind. She is just wandering, thinking about her argument with Skye. She is greeted constantly by the townspeople as they go past. They make her feel welcome, like she belongs.

As she passes the local Garage, she sees Sam working on a car. She then passes the Coffee Shop and sees Poppy smiling and taking orders from customers. She is stopped by Mrs. Chang outside the Produce Store.

MRS. CHANG

Good Morning Amber. You looking for some fruit? Maybe some ripe pineapple? You like?

AMBER

No, Mrs. Chang. I'm okay. Thanks though.

MRS. CHANG

Okay then. You come to Bridge on Thursday with your Mom. She needs a new partner. Charlie terrible.

AMBER

I'll think about it Mrs. Chang.

(CONTINUED)

As Amber moves on, she sees Charlie talking to a farmer who has squawking baby geese in a cage on the back of his truck. Charlie sees her and waves.

CHARLIE

Hi Amber.

Amber waves back, but keeps walking. She is greeted by MR. SMITHE from the nursing home.

MR SMITHE

Amber, are you coming to help us next month? We are going to dress up as zombies and walk down Main Street like one of those invasions that you see on T.V.

(Chuckles)

A zombie invasion in Splendid. Maybe they'll put us on T.V.

AMBER

(Smiles)

Can't wait to see that Mr. Smithe.

She stops and has a good look around at the town and the townspeople. Matthew is at the front of the Gallery, helping some delivery men unload a truck. He sees her and waves. She smiles and waves back.

She continues on her way until she reaches the town's boat ramp. She stands on the end looking out at the beautiful lake.

EXT. MARY'S COTTAGE - DAY

Amber arrives back from her walk to find Mary and Charlie sitting on the porch swing. Mary is looking lovely. Her face is animated and flushed with happiness.

Charlie is smiling and holding an old shoe box in his hands. He is looking very pleased with himself. In Mary's hands is a gosling. Mary looks up to see Amber approaching.

MARY

Oh, Amber. Look at what Charlie's brought me.

She holds out the baby gosling for Amber to admire. Amber leans down and looks at the bird. She reaches out and touches it tentatively on the head. The gosling nestles further into Mary's hands.

(CONTINUED)

MARY  
Isn't she lovely?

AMBER  
Yes. She's adorable. Have you  
thought of a name for her?

Mary beams at Charlie.

MARY  
I think that I will let Charlie  
name her.

Charlie blushes and ponders for a second. He then reaches  
over and places his hand tenderly on Mary's arm.

CHARLIE  
I think that she should be called  
Lavender.

MARY  
Oh, Lavender is a lovely name.  
Thank you Charlie.

Charlie and Mary stare lovingly at each other. Amber looks  
at them with longing until her cell beeps with an incoming  
message. She leaves the love birds on the porch and goes  
inside.

INT. LOUNGE ROOM - DAY

Amber opens up the text message.

TEXT  
Sold the house and all debts paid.  
We came out fine. \$140 000 has been  
deposited into your account. Roger

Amber takes a deep breath and sighs with relief.

TITLE CARD : 2 MONTHS LATER

EXT. MAIN STREET - MORNING

Amber is standing outside an empty store, She looks around  
the street to see Mary and Charlie walking together hand in  
hand. Lavender is closely following them. Mrs. Chang and  
Mrs. Demetriou are having an argument on the street corner  
about the zombie invasion. Poppy and Sam are hopping onto a  
school bus with Skye right behind them.

Skye abruptly stops on the steps of the bus. She quickly  
jumps off and races over to Amber and gives her a kiss on  
the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

SKYE  
Love you, Mom.

AMBER  
Love you too, love.

Skye runs back to the bus. She stops on the steps and turns back around to Amber.

SKYE  
Oh, and Mom?

Amber turns back to her.

SKYE  
Congratulations.

Skye jumps on the bus and it pulls away from the curb. Amber turns back to watch a WORKMAN peeling off the backing paper from a new sign that he has attached to a renovated shop front.

The paper is peeled back to reveal  
*Amber Richards*

*Attorney at Law*

Matthew walks up behind her.

MATTHEW  
Here you go.

Matthew hands her a cup of coffee. She smiles

AMBER  
Thanks.

She takes a sip of coffee. They stare into each other's eyes for a moment.

MATTHEW  
So about dinner?

AMBER  
Tonight?

Matthew, smiling, opens up the office door and gestures for Amber to precede him inside.

MATTHEW  
Shall we?

Amber grins back at him.

(CONTINUED)

