

BRONX CHEER

Registered WGAw No. 759908

Written by

MaryAnn Johanson

Contact:

MaryAnn Johanson
914-843-9136
thechick@flickfilosopher.com

"BRONX CHEER"

FADE IN:

INT. HUGH'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - MORNING

HUGH ANWELL'S HEAD

on a pillow -- the rest of him is hidden under the plain, pale-colored covers. (Hugh is 26, tall, lanky, athletic, very good-looking. He speaks with a Welsh accent.) Offscreen, a clock radio BLEEPs on to a soothing, NPR-type voice.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (VO)

--University this morning announced the discovery of yet another extrasolar planet.

THE CLOCK RADIO

reading 7:00, sits on the bare wooden floor. A sleepy groan emanates from under the covers, and an arm reaches out, down to the floor, fumbling for the clock, and misses.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (VO) (con't)

A mere 12 light years away in the system commonly known as Tau Ceti, the planet appears to be of a similar composition and size as the Earth, and in a comparable orbit--

INT. JENNY'S APARTMENT BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

JENNY FITZPATRICK'S HEAD

just peeking out from a colorfully patterned quilt. (Jenny is 33, attractive in a friendly, down-to-earth kind of way.) Another clock radio CLICKS on offscreen, a typical morning drive-time show.

FIRST DJ (VO)

It's a gorgeous early September morning--

SECOND DJ (VO)

Uh oh! Early September? You know what that means--

FX of a SCHOOL BELL from the radio.

FIRST DJ (VO)

That's right, kiddies! New York City
public schools open today!

With her own sleepy groan, Jenny throws her arms out from under the quilt, as if she's miffed it's morning already. The cat snuggled up next to her meows in protest.

A snippet of Pink Floyd's "ANOTHER BRICK IN THE WALL" is heard on the radio: "We don't need no education."

SECOND DJ (VO)

So grab your pencils, grab your books,
and prepare to give your teacher dirty
looks!

Jenny climbs reluctantly from bed. She is wearing boxer shorts and an oversized t-shirt with a picture of Albert Einstein on it. As she moves around we see

JENNY'S BEDROOM

cluttered with books: coffee-table art books, paperback science-fiction novels, and everything in between. A mobile of the solar system dangles from the ceiling. The effect is cozy rather than messy.

Jenny makes a face at the antics of the DJs and exits to the bathroom.

FIRST DJ (VO)

Or hey! Maybe you'll get lucky this
year!

On the radio, a fragment of Van Halen's "HOT FOR TEACHER": "Got it bad, got it bad, got it bad, I'm hot for teacher."

INT. HUGH'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hugh forces himself sleepily from bed. He is wearing shorts and a t-shirt with CARDIFF CITY F.C. emblazoned on it. As he moves around, waking up, we see

HUGH'S BEDROOM

The bed is the only furniture in the small room. The white walls and wooden floor are bare of coverings or decorations. A few open boxes of books and open suitcases of clothes are on the floor, their contents rummaged through. He has just moved in.

Hugh exits to the bathroom, the radio still blaring.

SCIENCE COMMENTATOR (VO)

--so we must consider the possibility that this planet could be life-sustaining. Tau Ceti is practically in our backyard. This new planet is a neighbor.

INT. HUGH'S BATHROOM - A LITTLE LATER

HUGH, IN THE MIRROR

shaving, half his face covered in shaving cream. His hair is damp from the shower. The radio can still be heard in the background from the bedroom.

SCIENCE COMMENTATOR (VO)

--existence of Earth-like planets in other star systems had only been a theoretical possibility... until now.

Hugh catches his own gaze in the mirror, pauses in his shaving, and considers himself for a moment.

HUGH

(rehearsing)

Good morning, boys and girls. I'm Mr. Anwell, your new science teacher.

(trying a new tone)

Boys and girls, good morning! I'm your new science teacher, Mr. Anwell.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - SIMULTANEOUS

Jenny's living room is as cluttered and as colorful as her bedroom: lots of books, science toys, scientific photographs of planets, space, etc. The furniture is worn and old, but has a funky, flea-market sensibility about it. A window looks down onto 236th Street. A botanical painting, by Jenny's father, hangs on one wall.

The room doubles as an art studio: On an easel is an unfinished oil painting, an abstract influenced by Hubble telescope photos of deep-space nebulae. Other finished drawings and paintings of an astronomical nature, both abstract and realistic, are piled against walls, some matted and framed, others not. A laptop computer is open on a small desk. A television is on, tuned to a morning news show.

JENNY

enters from the kitchen. Now wearing a fluffy bathrobe and a towel round her head, she carries a teacup sloshing tea onto its saucer. She was heading for the bedroom, but she stops to glance at

THE ABSTRACT ON THE EASEL

JENNY

is struck by inspiration. She grabs a brush from the utility cart next to the easel and pokes away at the painting, a dab here and there. The teacup is still sloshing tea in her other hand, and she takes occasional sips from it while she works.

TV ANNOUNCER (on TV)

It's 8:00 straight up, and time for a look at the headlines.

Jenny's been ignoring the television, but with this it suddenly impinges on her consciousness.

JENNY

Eight o'clock? Damn!

Jenny throws her brush onto the cart and rushes for the bedroom, gulping the remainder of her tea.

TV ANNOUNCER (on TV)

Construction began this morning on the city's new magnet high school for science and technology. The mayor and schools chancellor were on hand for the groundbreaking ceremony just a few moments ago--

INT. HUGH'S KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Like the rest of his apartment, there is not much here. A single mismatched glass and plate sit in the dishrack on the counter.

Hugh dressed in jeans and shirt and tie, stands at the counter, sipping coffee and eating a bagel. He continues his rehearsing.

HUGH

Science! Boys and girls, that is what we are here to learn. My name is Mr. Anwell.

He shakes his head, annoyed at his own nervousness.

EXT. 236TH STREET WOODLAWN THE BRONX - MINUTES LATER

This is a residential neighborhood, mostly large private houses, set close together, that have been divided into several apartments each.

HUGH

wearing a tweedy jacket and leather backpack, appears from behind the door of one house, locking it behind him.

JENNY

comes out a private entrance at the side of the house directly across the street. She is dressed in a semicasual yet slightly offbeat manner: her skirt and tights are sedate black but her sweater has a wild, colorful pattern, and she lugs a big black bag.

BOTH

walk toward nearby Katonah Avenue, just a few houses away. Each crosses 236th Street, passing each other with a bare nod of acknowledgment.

EXT. KATONAH AVENUE WOODLAWN - CONTINUOUS

This is Woodlawn's main street, lined with bakeries, pizza parlors, delis, a shoe-repair shop, cleaners, post office, many Irish bars, etc. This is a middle-class, Irish and Irish-American neighborhood, and the street is bustling with moms and babies in strollers, kids heading to the elementary school up the street a bit, old men on benches gossiping and drinking tea from styrofoam cups outside the delis, and so on.

HUGH

turns the corner of 236th Street and heads for the school, approaching the mobs of kids loitering on the sidewalk in front of it with a deep breath.

JENNY

crosses Katonah Avenue to wait at a bus stop outside a pub called Marty's.

BLACKOUT - BEGIN CREDITS

INT. CITY BUS - MINUTES LATER

Jenny staring boredly out the window as Woodlawn Cemetery flashes by.

EXT. ELEVATED SUBWAY PLATFORM - MINUTES LATER

This is the end of the line. The platform is all but deserted. Jenny gets on a nearly empty No. 4 train.

INT. SCHOOL CORRIDOR - THAT MORNING

HUGH AND THE PRINCIPAL, DOWN THE CORRIDOR

converse out of earshot as kids swarm the hallway. The principal points Hugh in the direction of his classroom, and Hugh smiles his thanks and shakes the principal's hand.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

A BLANK WALL

to one side of the closed door of the science classroom.

HUGH

approaches the door, checks the number painted on it, takes a deep breath, and opens the door.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

The room -- arranged so that the door is at the students' backs and the teacher must walk its length, past the rows of students, to reach his desk -- is alive with

30 RAMBUNCTIOUS SIXTH GRADERS

jumping around, throwing things at one another, teasing and taunting and yelling. The walls are bare cinderblock, painted institutional green.

THE DOOR

as Hugh enters. He's a little nervous. Most of the kids ignore him, but TWO GIRLS stare at him, dreamy-eyed and giggling to each other, and a few boys, including COLIN, wearing a Yankees cap, glower at him.

HUGH

All right, kids, that's enough. Settle
down.

He shucks his backpack and jacket as he approaches his desk,
which is piled high with old, beaten-up textbooks. The kids are
still mostly ignoring him.

HUGH (con't)

(raising his voice a
little)

Children, class has begun. Take your
seats, please.

It's as if he isn't even in the room. Hugh lifts his desk chair
and BANGS it on the floor.

HUGH (con't)

(yelling)

Shut your bloody little gobs and sit
your arses down!

THE KIDS

stare at him in silent shock, then fall into their seats.

HUGH

smiles at the dumbfounded class.

HUGH (con't)

(sweetly)

Good morning, boys and girls. This is
sixth grade science, and I am your new
science teacher, Mr. Anwell.

INT. UNDERGROUND SUBWAY TRAIN - A LITTLE LATER

Jenny, seated on the now jam-packed train, tries to read her
Scientific American, but the elbows and handbags and backpacks
of the standees keep ending up in her face and banging her
upraised magazine.

EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN SIDEWALK - A LITTLE LATER

Jenny approaches an office building and disappears inside.

INT. OFFICES OF GEEKWEEK MAG. ESTAB. SHOT - THAT MORNING

A corporate office, a sea of cubicles. Blowups of past covers of GeekWeek decorate the walls, giving an idea of the magazine's coverage: computers, the Internet, science fiction, comic books, related TV and movies, etc.

INT. JENNY'S CUBICLE - MOMENTS LATER

Jenny compares two mocked-up magazine covers in her cluttered cubicle.

DYLAN, AT THE CUBE ENTRANCE

24 and baby-faced, he's carrying a cup of coffee, which shakes a little in his hand, and a stapled packet of papers. He tries to be casual, but he's got a big crush on Jenny, and she knows it.

DYLAN

Hi, Jenny.

JENNY

(without looking up)

Hiya, Dylan.

DYLAN

Since you missed the big meeting this morning, I thought I'd bring you these.

He hands her the papers, which she accepts with just a glance at him and tosses onto her desk, already piled with papers, magazines, and plastic sheets of photographic slides.

JENNY

Yeah, thanks. I was just running a little late this morning.

DYLAN

(indicating the papers)

Directives from on high. The new owners showing us who's boss.

JENNY

Right. Thanks.

Dylan shifts uncomfortably on his feet, working himself up to:

DYLAN

So, Jenny, maybe you wanna have lunch today? With me?

Jenny's been dreading this. She looks at him finally and smiles a little.

JENNY

You know, Dyl, I've got a lot of work today. I think I'm just gonna run out and grab something later.

Dylan is crushed but tries not to show it.

DYLAN

Oh. Right. Okay. Maybe another time.

JENNY

Maybe.

He slowly withdraws. Jenny's face is a mixture of dismay and annoyance at having to disappoint him.

BARBARA, OVER THE TOP OF THE CUBE WALL

She is 40 and stylish in a corporate kind of way.

BARBARA

Psst.

Jenny turns to see Barbara grin at her.

BARBARA (con't)

(whispers)

You are a heartless bitch.

INT. MANHATTAN DELI - A LITTLE LATER

Jenny and Barbara traverse the huge salad bar together, filling their plastic cartons as they go.

BARBARA

Dylan is really sweet on you.

JENNY

What, did he say something to you?

BARBARA

It's just obvious.

JENNY

Dylan seems like an okay guy, but...

BARBARA

But?

JENNY

He's not terribly exciting, is he?

BARBARA

Have you ever really talked to him?

JENNY

He sits in his office all day and writes his computer game reviews, and then he goes home and plays with his joystick some more.

Barbara snickers.

JENNY (con't)

How do you talk to somebody like that? "Gee, what's your high score in Quake?"

BARBARA

He's just a kid.

JENNY

Yeah, well, that's the problem. Guys my age are too young for me, never mind anybody younger.

BARBARA

But he's so nice.

JENNY

I don't want nice. I want interesting. Complicated. A little sophisticated. I tend not to find that in anybody born after Woodstock.

INT. DELI SEATING AREA - CONTINUOUS

Jenny and Barbara sit at a table, eating their lunches.

BARBARA

It's so cute, the way Dylan jumps in to agree with you in meetings all the time. Didn't he bring you a bagel the other morning?

JENNY

If I wanted that kind of adoration, I'd get a puppy. Is it too much to ask, for an actual grownup male?

BARBARA

You tell me. Dave and I were still kids when we got married.

JENNY

Obviously, it is too much to ask. By the time they get interesting, they're already taken.

BARBARA

(intrigued)

Oh? Is this someone in particular you're referring to?

Jenny waits a beat. This is not something she's terribly comfortable talking about.

JENNY

Yeah. He's 45, a wonderful songwriter, he makes my heart go pitter patter, and he's married.

BARBARA

Have an affair with him.

JENNY

(a bit reluctant)

I've sort of been trying to. The feeling's definitely mutual, but I suspect he's, like, an actual good guy.

Barbara shakes her head in condolence.

BARBARA

Oh, that's too bad.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

Hugh leans, exhausted and relieved, against the blank wall outside his classroom. The final BELL is ringing, and kids are hurrying through the corridors to get out, pushing and yelling at one another, rushing around him, utterly ignoring him.

STEVEN KOWALSKI, APPROACHING HUGH

Steven, 35, is not a snappy dresser: short-sleeved dress shirt, pocket protector, cheap suit pants.

STEVEN

You're Anwell, right? The new science teacher?

HUGH

That's right.

They shake hands.

STEVEN

I'm Steven Kowalski, sixth grade math.
The little bastards give you a hard
time on your first day?

HUGH

You might say that.

STEVEN

Come on, I'll buy you lunch.

Hugh nods and follows Steven down the corridor.

INT. KATONAH DINER - A LITTLE LATER

TEACUP FILLED WITH STEAMING WATER

sitting on a diner table. A Lipton teabag sits on the saucer.

HUGH

stares forlornly at the teacup before him before sadly dunking
the teabag into the hot water.

HUGH

It is impossible to get a decent cup of
tea on this side of the Atlantic.

Steven sitting across from him, slurps noisily at a soda.

STEVEN

Didn't they tell you that at the
airport? "Enjoy your stay, but sorry,
no tea"?

HUGH

They neglected to mention that.

STEVEN

You're English, right?

HUGH

(annoyed)
Welsh, actually.

STEVEN

Oh, Wales, right? Like the Prince of
Wales?

HUGH

The Prince of Wales is English.

Steven is mystified by this but lets it go.

STEVEN

So how fucked up was your first day?

HUGH

Well, I started off by swearing at my first class, so I fully expect not to have to face a second day.

STEVEN

What did you say to them?

HUGH

I told them to shut their bloody gobs.

A beat. Steven again is mystified.

STEVEN

I don't even understand that. They certainly won't. You've got nothing to worry about.

Hugh's expression shows that he's not sure if this is entirely a good thing. A waitress brings their lunches and they begin to eat.

HUGH

The textbook they expect me to use is hopelessly out of date. It doesn't even mention Voyager or Hubble. Or the Human Genome Project. Or the Internet.

STEVEN

You get the Internet in Wales?

Hugh is really miffed now.

HUGH

(nods)

Hmm. And we've just gotten this wonderful new invention called... Oh, what is it?... Indoor plumbing. It's really quite something.

Steven is embarrassed, tries to change the subject.

STEVEN

So, where you living?

Hugh, reluctant to get off on a bad foot with a new coworker, lets his simmering anger dissipate.

HUGH

Right round the corner, actually.

STEVEN

What, here in Woodlawn?

HUGH

Yeah, it reminds me of home a bit. The pubs all have lager on tap and show English football matches on the telly. Yeah, it's all right.

STEVEN

You bring the wife with you?

HUGH

Not married. And my girlfriend decided she wanted nothing to do with the Bronx, so here I am on my own.

STEVEN

Well, pickings at the school are pretty slim. There's that kindergarten teacher, though, Sara Whatsername...

HUGH

I'm enjoying my solitude, actually. This is the first time I've been on my own. I went from living with my parents to sharing a house with eight flatmates at university to living with Catherine.

STEVEN

I hated living alone.

HUGH

I like the quiet. I like not having to tell anyone where I'm going or what I'm doing.

STEVEN

Well, you know, if you change your mind, my wife's sister is pretty hot. I could introduce you.

Hugh tries to disguise his grimace with a smile.

HUGH

I've had enough of women for a while, I think. Four years living with Catherine, six months planning the move here, and she decides the day before our plane leaves that the Bronx is too scary. Who needs that kind of hassle?

INT. ELEVATED SUBWAY TRAIN - THAT NIGHT

Jenny walks forward through a nearly deserted subway car as the Bronx rumbles by outside. The cell phone she holds to her ear is RINGING on the other end.

INT. MARTY'S - CONTINUOUS

This is a pleasant, homey, slightly upscale bar. The long bar itself is sparsely occupied, as are the many tables about the big room. A small stage for music faces the entrance from the far side of the room. Traditional IRISH MUSIC plays on the stereo, and a Cubs/Mets baseball game plays on the big-screen TV and smaller TVs above the bar, though the TVs' audio is muted.

FIONA RYAN, BEHIND THE BAR

answers the RINGING PHONE. She is 35, a no-nonsense kind of woman.

FIONA (on the phone)

Marty's.

INT. ELEVATED SUBWAY TRAIN - CONTINUOUS

Jenny continues moving forward through the car.

JENNY (on the phone)

It's me.

FIONA (over the phone)

Are you on the train?

JENNY (on the phone)

Yeah, I got stuck in the office again.
I'll be there in about 15 minutes.
Order me a burger?

FIONA (over the phone)

You got it.

Jenny pauses at the connecting door to the next car. She sees

MIKE BARNESLEY, THROUGH THE WINDOW

alone in the next car. He's 45, ordinary-looking, his face lined. He is casually dressed in worn jeans, a white shirt, worn leather jacket. He looks lived-in. A guitar case at his feet is beat-up, well-used. He is scribbling in a small notebook and doesn't notice Jenny.

JENNY

a little disconcerted.

JENNY (on the phone)
I gotta go. See you in a few.

She closes the phone and drops it into her bag.

INT. MIKE'S SUBWAY CAR - CONTINUOUS

Mike scribbles intermittently in his notebook, pausing to sing bits of lyrics under his breath before writing them down.

Jenny enters from the next subway car back.

Mike looks up at the noise, and his face lights up.

JENNY
Hi, Mike.

She smiles nervously and sits down next to him.

MIKE
Working late again?

She nods.

MIKE (con't)
I don't know how you find the time to paint with that killer job.

JENNY
(laughs)
I don't.
(indicates guitar case)
Were you playing somewhere downtown?

MIKE
For a record producer.
(beat)
He wants to buy a couple of my songs.

JENNY
That's great!

She reaches out to give his arm a congratulatory squeeze. He's a little startled, but also excited by his news and her closeness.

MIKE
This could be the big break I've been waiting for all these years.

She's grinning broadly at him. Impulsively, he leans in to kiss her mouth, a quick, friendly kiss. He draws back only a little, caught up in his own daring. Both are surprised by the sparks that little kiss set off. They kiss again, slower, deeper. They're both very turned on. Mike's hand comes up to caress her cheek, and we see

HIS WEDDING RING

glint on his finger.

The subway comes to an abrupt stop at a station, the doors opening, breaking their kiss. Mike is suddenly mortified by what he's done. He leaps to his feet, grabbing his guitar case, his forgotten notebook falling from his lap to the floor.

MIKE

(flustered)

I-- Jenny--

He races from the subway out onto the dark platform.

JENNY

(startled)

Mike!

She jumps up, notices the notebook on the floor, grabs it, runs to the open doors, holding out his notebook.

JENNY

(yelling)

Mike!

But he's gone.

JENNY (con't)

(to herself)

This isn't our stop.

EXT. MARTY'S ESTAB. SHOT - A LITTLE LATER

The exterior of the pub is as friendly and welcoming as its interior.

INT. MARTY'S - CONTINUOUS

JENNY, AT THE BAR

A half-eaten burger and fries sit in front of her. The stools on either side of her are empty. She pokes at her food, sips at a Diet Coke. The baseball game is still on in the background, the PLAY-BY-PLAY now audible.

A GUY about 30, wearing an old Mets t-shirt, slips onto the stool next to Jenny. He thinks he's real slick.

GUY

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Jenny stares at him for a moment. She's really not in the mood for this.

JENNY

Do you know what the Heisenberg
Uncertainty Principle is?

This is not the answer he's expecting.

GUY

What?

JENNY

Do you know what the Heisenberg
Uncertainty Principle is?

A beat.

GUY

No.

JENNY

Then I don't believe in love at first
sight.

FIONA, BEHIND THE BAR

grins and shakes her head as she approaches Jenny. The stool next to Jenny is empty again.

FIONA

That poor dumb schmuck. Did you pull
that Heisenberg crap on him?

Jenny doesn't answer. Has she even heard Fiona?

JENNY

I ran into Mike Barnsley on the train
tonight.

FIONA

Ah, that explains it. Butterflies in
your tummy?

Jenny makes a face at her.

JENNY

We kissed...

This is a big revelation.

JENNY (con't)
...and then he fled in terror.

FIONA
I've been telling you. You've been
flirting with this guy for months.
Nothing's gonna happen. He's too
married.

JENNY
Just my luck. One man with morals left
in America, and I have to fall for him.

Jenny, despondent, pushes her plate away.

FIONA
I feel sorry for you. You've still got
hope. If you didn't still believe in
Mr. Right, you wouldn't be so
disappointed when he keeps failing to
show up.

This doesn't cheer Jenny.

FIONA (con't)
I bet you never asked Mike Barnsley
about Heisenberg.

JENNY
Mike Barnsley proved himself worthy by
being creative and talented.

FIONA
And proved himself unavailable by being
married.

JENNY
What?

FIONA
Well, before Mike there was the writer
who was engaged, and, if I remember
correctly, before him there was the
lawyer who couldn't decide if he was
actually separated from his wife or
not.

JENNY
Are you saying I seek out unavailable
men?

Fiona smiles, shrugs.

FIONA

I just don't know why you're stuck on Mike. You're never gonna get anywhere with him.

JENNY

Haven't you heard? Sex kills. Deprivation is what's sexy nowadays. Anyway, you're a fine one to talk about unavailable men.

FIONA

(laughs)

My bizarre sexual proclivities are my own business.

Fiona moves away to serve a customer.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (on TV)

...it's outta here! A home run! The Mets score again! The Cubs are now down by five!

FIONA

Woo-hoo! Go Cubbies!

An opportunity to pick on Fiona perks Jenny up.

JENNY

(faking Irish accent)

Oh, go on outta here with yer Cubs!

Fiona is pulling a pint for the customer.

FIONA

Hey, you can take the girl out of Chicago, but you can't take the Cub fan out of the girl.

JENNY

I'd have thought one of the benefits of moving to New York was the chance to root for a real ball team? Why'd you ever come here?

FIONA

For all the friendly people.

Fiona winks at her customer.

HUGH, AT THE OTHER END OF THE BAR

He sits by himself, nursing an almost full pint and half-watching the game, but he doesn't really understand it.

THREE IRISH GIRLS, IN A BOOTH

behind him, giggle, two of them urging the third to go talk to Hugh. She gives in and approaches Hugh.

GIRL

(with an Irish accent)

What's a nice fella like you doing in a place like this?

Hugh regards her warily.

HUGH

I beg your pardon?

GIRL

I've always wanted to say that. You English, then?

HUGH

(bristling)

No.

The girl senses the brick wall coming up, but gives it another shot.

GIRL

What's your name?

Hugh waits a beat, but he doesn't want to be out-and-out rude.

HUGH

Hugh.

She steps closer, lowers her voice.

GIRL

Did you know that "Hugh" means "beautiful young warrior"?

Hugh turns his head slightly away and rolls his eyes.

HUGH

I wasn't aware of that.

GIRL

Actually, I have no idea what it means. Can I buy you a drink?

Hugh raises his almost full glass.

HUGH

I'm fine, thanks.

By now, the girl has had enough.

GIRL

Well, then, I'll catch you next time.

She withdraws to her friends, but we can just hear her mutter:

GIRL (con't)

Stuck-up bastard.

Hugh hears her, too, and smiles a little smile to himself.

TWO IRISH LADS

who've overhead his exchange with the girl, surround Hugh, trying to be chummy. Construction workers both, their clothes are worn and paint-splattered. Both speak with Irish accents.

LAD #1 elbows Hugh real comradely, sympathetically.

LAD #1

Girls're nothin' but skanks in this place. A real dump it is.

Hugh nods toward the other end of the bar, where he sees

JENNY, DOWN THE LENGTH OF THE BAR

She is talking animatedly to Fiona behind the bar.

HUGH

She's pretty.

LAD #2

She ain't right in the head.

LAD #1

Go on, tell yer man what she asked ya.

LAD #2

I was only askin' her to dance like, and she says to me, Do you know what the... the ah.... hydrogen somethin'--

LAD #1

Heidelberg--

LAD #2

Heidelberg uncertain... something...

HUGH

The Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle?

LAD #2

Yeah, that's it. When I says no, she says, Well I don't wanna dance with you then. I'm tellin' ya, she ain't right in the head.

Hugh is amused. He catches Jenny's eye and tips his glass to her in a little salute.

FIONA

washing glasses under the bar, sees

JENNY

toast Hugh in return.

FIONA

Ah, I see you've noticed Mr. Cheekbones.

JENNY

I think he moved into that empty apartment across the street from me. You seen him here before?

FIONA

He was in last Sunday to watch the football match. Barely says a word to anyone, far as I can tell. He's not likely to find his kinda company in here, anyway.

JENNY

You mean... You think he's gay?

Fiona shrugs and starts hanging clean glasses over the bar.

FIONA

Not really your type, though, is he?

JENNY

(agreeing)
Too young.

FIONA

Too pretty.

JENNY

Who wants a guy you meet in a bar? You meet drinkers in bars.

Fiona refills Jenny's soda.

FIONA

Still, you're here.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. 236TH STREET - THE NEXT MORNING

Hugh and Jenny pass each other crossing the street, as the previous morning. Again, just a little nod of acknowledgment to each other.

INT. OFFICES OF GEEKWEEK MAGAZINE - THAT DAY

Jenny strolls down a corridor, paging through an especially thick issue of GeekWeek. She is grinning, pleased with herself. She stops at a closed office door, KNOCKS, and immediately opens the door.

INT. BOSS'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A standard corporate office, the severe decor lightened by collectible toys displayed about the room.

THE DOOR

as Jenny sticks her head in.

JENNY

You wanted to see me.

THE BOSS

50ish and casually dressed, he sits behind the desk. He takes a deep breath.

BOSS

Come on in.

Jenny sails in, still flipping through the magazine, to take the guest chair opposite the boss's desk.

JENNY

(still flipping)

This looks great, if I do say so myself.

The boss is very uncomfortable. A beat.

BOSS

You did a great job on that issue,
Jenny.

She grins at him, oblivious to his awkwardness.

BOSS (con't)

So that makes this all the harder.

She's confused now. He works himself up to:

BOSS (con't)

The magazine's new owners... They want
us to cut the budget.

A beat while Jenny considers this.

JENNY

We've already trimmed the freelance
budget to the bones, but I could
probably come up with something else to
cut.

BOSS

That's not going to do it.

(beat)

We have to let you go.

Jenny is thunderstruck.

JENNY

What?

BOSS

I'm sorry.

Jenny seems to remember the magazine in her hands, and she holds
it up.

JENNY

I art-directed this entire huge issue
by myself, and got it done on time and
under budget... and you're firing me?

BOSS

It's no reflection on you or your
abilities. You're the junior person in
the department, that's all. I'll give
you a glowing reference, and there'll
be a generous severance...

Jenny, in a daze, isn't really listening. The magazine slips
from her hands to land on the floor with a THUD.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KATONAH AVENUE ESTAB. SHOT - SUNDAY MORNING

A lovely Sunday morning. A CHURCH BELL rings in the distance. Families in their Sunday best stroll to Mass. People exit the delis with fat Sunday newspapers and the bakeries with bags of rolls and pastries.

INT. KATONAH DINER - CONTINUOUS

The place is mobbed. Jenny and Fiona share a table. Fiona is dressed in a skirt and blouse, Jenny in jeans and a t-shirt -- their days will take them in different directions.

A harried WAITRESS plops a cup of coffee in front of Fiona and

A CUP OF HOT WATER

with a teabag sitting on its saucer in front of Jenny, and hurries away.

JENNY

(calling to waitress)

Miss? Miss?

The waitress looks back.

JENNY (con't)

I'm sorry. This isn't tea. Would you bring a coffee drinker a cup of hot water with a spoonful of Folgers crystals on the side?

The waitress, annoyed, sidles back.

WAITRESS

(sarcastic)

And how would madam like her tea?

JENNY

Well, I'd like some proper English tea leaves brewed in a nice, hearty, brown English teapot, but I'll settle for having boiling water poured over a teabag.

The waitress doesn't even bother to protest, and takes the teacup away.

Fiona is unfazed -- this is a common occurrence with Jenny.

FIONA

So they didn't give you any reason
beyond the corporate bullshit?

JENNY

Nope. It was just, Don't let the door
hit your ass on the way out. After all
the work I put in on that huge special
issue. All the unpaid overtime.

FIONA

Goes to show, no good deed goes
unpunished. Better to just move on to
the bad deeds. They're more fun,
anyway.

The waitress returns with Jenny's tea, the tea tag now hanging
over the cup's rim. She curtsies sarcastically to Jenny.

WAITRESS

Milady's tea.

Jenny smiles sweetly at her, and the waitress leaves.

JENNY

Wait till she sees her tip.

FIONA

So what are you gonna do now? Job hunt
start Monday?

JENNY

No. I am now officially a starving
artist.

FIONA

Great. You can join the rest of us
following our bliss and seeing our
dreams of artistic independence crushed
by the cruel, hard world.

JENNY

(laughs)

I hope that attitude isn't creeping
into those novels you're trying to
write. No wonder no one wants to buy
them.

Fiona pats Jenny's hand.

FIONA

I knew there was a reason you were my best friend. I feel so much better about myself now. So how do you plan to get your hopes dashed first?

JENNY

(optimistic)

A gallery showing. I've got dozens of paintings and drawings ready to show. If I could sell some of them... And I've got some savings and my severance, and Barbara at the magazine knows someone at Scientific American. They're always looking for freelance illustrators. I'll survive.

FIONA

Hope is a terrible thing.

(beat)

I suppose you're pouring all this chipper determination into snagging Mike Barnsley, too?

JENNY

No. You're right. I've been wasting my time with him. I need some guy who's gonna be scared off by a kiss? No, I'm swearing off men altogether.

FIONA

Oh brother.

JENNY

All my energy, all my vital life force is gonna be channeled into my art. My body no longer exists. I am pure intellect.

The waitress plops a huge platter of pancakes in front of Jenny and another breakfast before Fiona. Jenny attacks her food.

JENNY

God, I'm ravenous.

EXT. KATONAH AVENUE OUTSIDE THE DINER - A LITTLE LATER

Jenny and Fiona exit the diner. Jenny is wearing a backpack and begins unchaining a bicycle secured to a lamppost. Fiona waves to Jenny as she (Fiona) walks away along Katonah Avenue, joining the others heading to church.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S R.C. CHURCH - MINUTES LATER

The church is crowded, people gathering for Mass. Low ORGAN MUSIC plays.

Fiona enters, crossing herself at the holy water font.

AUNT MARY AND AUNT ELIZABETH

Jenny's prim and proper aunts, 60ish, in a pew near the aisle, toward the front of the church.

AUNT MARY

(to Elizabeth)

It's that new priest serving Mass today.

The aunts notice

FIONA, IN THE AISLE

walk solemnly past.

Fiona genuflects at the very first pew and slides in, right in front of the pulpit.

FATHER BRIAN

at the altar, preparing for Mass. He is in his 30s, neither particularly attractive or unattractive. He glances up to see

FIONA, GAZING AT HIM

She winks at him, startling him. He's frozen for a moment, then he continues his work, suddenly self-conscious.

Fiona grins wolfishly to herself.

EXT. VAN CORT. PARK RIVERDALE THE BRONX - LATER

A huge green expanse of playing fields for baseball, soccer, and cricket within Van Cortlandt Park. Jenny sits on a small hill, her bike next to her, a sketchpad on her knees, watching a Caribbean League

CRICKET GAME

nearby. Black men in cricket whites on green grass... The action enthalls her, and she sketches loosely, trying to capture the motion of the players. A game of youth soccer is being played in the distance.

A SHADOW

falls over her.

HUGH (OS)

We're neighbors, I believe.

Jenny looks up to see

HUGH, STANDING OVER HER

JENNY

smiles at him.

JENNY

I believe we are.

HUGH

(notices her sketches)

Do you like cricket?

JENNY

I have no idea. I've tried to understand the game, but it's a mystery to me.

As she shows him what she's been sketching, he sits beside her.

JENNY (con't)

But there's order in the chaos. I like that. That's what I'm trying to capture. It's like the universe, seemingly random and chaotic, but there're some guiding principles underneath.

HUGH

(intrigued)

The physics of cricket, eh?

JENNY

Do you?

HUGH

What?

JENNY

Like cricket?

HUGH

(nods)

I played with a club at university. I thought I'd come down here and see if I could convince one of the clubs to let me join, but...

JENNY

But?

HUGH

These guys are good. A stroll down the pub was our favorite gambit. That and trying not to bean one another in the head with the ball.

(indicates cricketers)

I don't think I'm quite in their league. Football was really my game, anyway.

(nods to kids' soccer
game in distance)

But there don't appear to be any leagues for grownups here.

JENNY

You miss home?

HUGH

A bit. I miss the language, speaking it, hearing it.

JENNY

(confused)

You're not English?

HUGH

(sighs)

No, I'm Welsh. We have our own language, parliament, the whole ruddy thing.

Jenny can see that he's annoyed.

JENNY

Sorry.

An awkward silence.

JENNY (con't)

I can see how the language thing would be a problem in Woodlawn. The Irish don't even speak their own language, never mind yours.

HUGH

I hadn't thought of it that way. It's rather sad, isn't it?

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S - A LITTLE LATER

Mass is in progress. Father Brian is speaking from the pulpit.

FATHER BRIAN

...heard the news that scientists have discovered a planet much like our own orbiting a nearby sun. Many scientists are speculating that we may discover that this new world is inhabited by alien beings.

Fiona gazes at him, not really listening. She licks her lips. This catches Father Brian's attention, and he falters in his sermon a bit.

FATHER BRIAN (con't)

Now-- now, Hollywood has given us images of aliens as monsters and evil creatures bent on destroying us. I know many of you are worried that this could perhaps be the case in real life. But the Bible tells us in Psalms 33 that "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth."

Fiona brushes her hair back, gives him a slow wink, causing Father Brian to momentarily lose his place in his notes.

FATHER BRIAN (con't)

Uh, um... Aliens-- aliens if they exist, are certainly the children of God, just as we are. This newly discovered world is a creation of God. Corinthians 15 tells us, "The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another..."

Fiona is pleased with the effect she's having.

EXT. VAN CORTLANDT PARK - MINUTES LATER

Jenny and Hugh stroll along a path near the game fields, she pushing her bike.

HUGH

I know what Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle is.

JENNY

(laughs)

What, did some drunken mick tell you I'm crazy, I ask crazy questions?

HUGH

Something like that.

(beat)

I didn't even have to look it up.

JENNY

You know, not one of the guys I ever asked that came back to me later and said, Hey, I looked this Heisenberg guy up. Not one.

HUGH

"The more precisely the position of a subatomic particle is known, the less precisely the momentum is known, and vice versa."

JENNY

Basically, you can never know everything about anything, at least not all at once.

HUGH

I understand. You want the yobbos to know that you can't be pinned down, that they haven't got you all figured out.

JENNY

No, I just wanted to know if they'd ever read a book, if they were interested in anything beyond beer and sex.

HUGH

Not that there's anything wrong with beer and sex.

JENNY

So long as they're not your only hobbies.

HUGH

So, are you an artist or a scientist?

JENNY

Why couldn't I be both?

HUGH

Like Leonardo.

JENNY

(confused)

DiCaprio?

HUGH

Da Vinci.

JENNY

(amused)

A Renaissance name dropper. Very impressive.

HUGH

Well, I'm trying to figure out how I can work him into my classes.

JENNY

You're a student?

HUGH

A teacher. Science. At the primary school in Woodlawn.

JENNY

Boy, the city must really be desperate.

HUGH

(a little insulted)

Thank you very much.

JENNY

I mean, to be importing teachers from overseas.

HUGH

Ah. Yes, I think they are. I was, too. There just were no teaching positions going at home.

JENNY

It's a long way to come for a job.

HUGH

I've only ever wanted to teach. There's a moment, sometimes, when you can see that a young mind, completely unexpectedly, suddenly grasps a new idea. To see a kid's eyes light up with the sudden realization that the world is even more amazing than she previously thought... I live for that moment.

JENNY

And so far?

HUGH

Well, it's early days yet. There's always a couple hard cases, stubborn little buggers who refuse to be won over.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S - A LITTLE LATER

Mass is over, parishioners are filing out. Father Brian, at the door to the street, is greeting people as they leave. Aunt Mary and Aunt Elizabeth approach him, shake his offered hand.

AUNT MARY

Welcome, Father.

FATHER BRIAN

Thank you.

AUNT ELIZABETH

I think you'll find we're a friendly sort here in Woodlawn.

Fiona has hung back casually so that she's now the last to leave. Father Brian is thrown completely off-keel when he sees her, though there's not much he can do to avoid her without embarrassing himself in front of the parishioners still milling about in the entryway.

Fiona takes his outstretched hand in both her own and shakes it slowly, squeezing it gently.

FIONA

How nice it is to see a new face in the parish, Father.

Father Brian has that deer-caught-in-headlights look.

FATHER BRIAN

Er, thanks.

EXT. VAN CORTLANDT PARK - MINUTES LATER

Jenny and Hugh have reached the edge of the park.

JENNY

Well, it's been nice meeting you,
neighbor.

HUGH

(holds out a hand)
Hugh. Hugh Anwell.

JENNY

(shakes his hand)
Jenny Fitzpatrick.

They both notice that their handshake has lingered a little too long and disengage self-consciously.

JENNY (con't)

Well, Mr. Science Teacher Anwell, if a
scientist slash artist can be of any
assistance to you, you know where to
find me.

HUGH

You've already been of assistance.

JENNY

Oh?

HUGH

The physics of cricket...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - A MORNING THAT WEEK

As the last few kids straggle into classrooms, Hugh comes down the corridor, wearing his jacket and backpack and with a cricket bat leaning against his shoulder, the way a baseball bat might rest. He pauses outside his classroom to consider

THE BLANK EXPANSE OF WALL

for a moment.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

A few decorations now adorn the walls -- a poster of the periodic table, reproductions of Da Vinci's sketches for a flying machine -- but they're mostly still bare. The same class we saw before occupies the seats, noisy but not as rowdy as previously. As before, Colin is here, wearing his Yankees cap.

Hugh enters, more confident now than when we saw him first enter this room. The kids settle down, except for Colin, who shifts in his chair, throws one arm over the back of the chair -- a real tough guy.

As Hugh passes Colin, the kid throws a glance at a friend.

COLIN

(grins)

Hey, it's Mr. Asswell.

The friend snickers.

Colin's comment is just soft enough that Hugh can pretend not to have heard it. He continues to his desk, where without warning he swings the bat down on the desk with a huge CRACK! The kids jump in their seats.

HUGH

What happened?

The kids glance uneasily at one another -- was it something they did?

COLIN

You went postal on us.

Laughter from the class. This is new slang to Hugh but he gets the meaning.

HUGH

(nods, grins)

I went postal. And then what?

The rest of the class is too scared to speak up.

COLIN

You hit the desk with that thing.

HUGH

(removing backpack and
jacket)

And then what?

No response.

HUGH (con't)

It made a sound. Why?

Hugh starts writing on the blackboard WHAT IS SOUND?

HUGH (con't)

Why is there a crack when a bat meets a ball? Or a desk? Or somebody's head?

The class laughs, except Colin, who looks uncomfortable as he readjusts the ballcap on his head.

INT. LOUISE'S HOUSE SUNROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

This is like Jenny's apartment writ large: more art, more cats, more books, plus overgrown plants everywhere. But where Jenny's art and decor has an astronomical bent, here the theme is natural history: the paintings and sketches (these are by Jenny's long-dead father) are mostly landscapes and botanicals, with some anatomical drawings of animals thrown in. This is a cozy, cheerful, sun-drenched place.

LOUISE FITZPATRICK, AT AN OLD DESK

pounding away at a manual typewriter, passionate about what she's writing. Louise, 60, is an older version of her daughter Jenny, dressed in a casual if slightly offbeat manner.

A radio is playing CLASSICAL MUSIC in the background. A well-thumbed and refolded newspaper lies next to the typewriter.

Offscreen, a door BANGS open and shut.

JENNY (OS)

Mom?

LOUISE

(continues typing)

In here, sweetheart.

A moment later, Jenny enters, dressed in a business suit and carrying a large portfolio, which she drops near the door. She comes up behind her mother, throws her arms around Louise's shoulders in a hug, kisses her cheek, and peeks at the paper in the typewriter. Louise has not stopped typing through all this affection.

JENNY

(cheerful)

What are you ranting about now?

LOUISE

Have you heard what they're going on
about this new planet?

(picks up newspaper)

In here.

(waves to radio)

And on that thing. On the talk station.
I switched it. It was driving me crazy.

JENNY

What?

LOUISE

The religious implications. If there
are aliens, will they believe in God?
Or Allah? Or will they be Buddhist? How
come no one's asking if they'll worship
Odin or Osiris? Or maybe they'll have
proved there is no God.

JENNY

Now that's wishful thinking.

LOUISE

(shakes paper)

If the Times can print an editorial by
that cardinal, whatshisname, they can
sure as hell print mine.

(notices Jenny's clothes)

Where were you that you had to look
like a corporate drone?

JENNY

(sighs)

I'll tell you all about it. But first,
I could murder a cuppa tea.

Louise pats Jenny's hand in a warning.

LOUISE

My sisters are coming to lunch.

Jenny moans.

INT. LOUISE'S KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

The kitchen is cheerfully cluttered. Louise, Jenny -- her jacket
off and her top blouse button undone -- and Aunt Mary and Aunt
Elizabeth sit around the table, drinking tea and eating
sandwiches.

JENNY

--and then he said, "Have you shown your work to Marvel Comics? This is just the sort of thing they're looking for."

LOUISE

(disgusted)

And the man calls himself an artist's agent?

AUNT ELIZABETH

Seems like that was time wasted that could have been better spent job hunting. Have you tried the temp agencies?

JENNY

Aunt Elizabeth, I'm not looking for another job. I'm an artist, and I haven't been acting like one. I've spent the last ten years moaning and complaining that I had no time for my art, but that's bullshit. It's amazing I have anything to show an agent or a gallery when I've been pouring all my creativity into making other people rich.

LOUISE

I knew you were never really happy at that magazine. So are you trying galleries next?

JENNY

Saturday I'm storming Soho.

AUNT MARY

There's no shame in giving up, Jenny.

JENNY

It's only been a week, Aunt Mary!

AUNT MARY

Life isn't all about following your dreams.

JENNY

That's all it's about! What, I should marry some schlub, get a mortgage, and pump out 2.7 kids?

Louise is amused by this exchange.

AUNT ELIZABETH

Well, Jennifer, it is about time you were married. There's plenty of fine young men in Woodlawn. You can't walk down Katonah Avenue without tripping over some nice Irish Catholic boy.

JENNY

(mimes drinking a pint of beer)

There's a reason why you're tripping over them.

AUNT MARY

And it wouldn't hurt you to go to church once in a while, either. Like that friend of yours, Fiona Ryan. I used to think she was a bad sort, but she's right there in the first pew every Sunday.

Jenny tries not to laugh at this.

AUNT MARY (con't)

(to Louise)

It wouldn't do you any harm, either. If your husband, God rest him, was still here, you wouldn't be seeing this sort of nonsense in Jenny.

LOUISE

Kevin was the one who encouraged Jenny the most in this nonsense.

JENNY

Mom, you were adopted, weren't you?

JENNY AND LOUISE - A LITTLE LATER

The aunts are gone. Jenny and Louise are at the sink, Louise washing the lunch dishes, Jenny drying. Jenny looks up to see, on a shelf over the sink

AN OLD FAMILY PHOTO

of Louise, Jenny's dad, and a young Jenny.

LOUISE

notices

JENNY

gazing sadly at the photo.

JENNY

Seventeen years next week.

LOUISE

Yeah.

JENNY

Should we go up to the cemetery?

LOUISE

Yeah.

JENNY

You okay?

LOUISE

Well, you know this time of year isn't my favorite.

JENNY

I know.

LOUISE

(beat)

The bed still feels too big without him.

Jenny drapes a comforting arm around her mother's shoulders.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

The final BELL is ringing. Kids pour out of classrooms. Hugh, wearing his jacket and backpack, enters the corridor from his classroom, hurrying the last dawdlers from the room so he can lock the door. The two dreamy-eyed girls from Colin's class are in the mob of kids, giggling to each other when they spot Hugh.

TWO GIRLS (simultaneous)

(running by)

Goodbye, Mr. Anwell!

He waves to them, making them giggle again, then he starts down the corridor only to stop once again to stare again at the blank wall.

EXT. OUTSIDE JENNY'S APARTMENT - MINUTES LATER

Hugh KNOCKS on the door, waits a moment, then KNOCKS again. Jenny opens the door, still in her business suit.

HUGH

Do you paint?

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Hugh and Jenny, carrying her big black bag, look at the blank wall together.

HUGH

My classroom, the corridor... they're so lifeless and bare.

(indicates wall)

I thought, I don't know, perhaps a mural of the solar system.

JENNY

(amused)

On a somewhat compressed scale, obviously.

HUGH

Yes, well, obviously. Something bright, colorful, maybe even a little cartoony.

Jenny is nodding -- she's enthusiastic about the idea.

HUGH (con't)

I suppose we'll need permission from the school, but I thought I'd see if you were interested before I spoke to the principal.

JENNY

I'd love to do it.

HUGH

I don't know if there'd be any money...

JENNY

No, it'll be fun.

She shrugs as she rummages through her bag and comes up with

MIKE'S SMALL NOTEBOOK

She stares at it for a moment, surprised and disconcerted, then digs out a pen, opens the notebook to a blank page, and starts making quick sketches. Hugh stands back against the opposite wall to give her room.

STEVEN KOWALSKI, ENTERING THE CORRIDOR FROM A CLASSROOM

notices Hugh watching Jenny and sidles up to him.

STEVEN

(whispers)

I thought you were enjoying your solitude.

HUGH

(whispers)

What? Her? Hired help, that's all.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SOHO MANHATTAN ESTAB. SHOT - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Weekend street life in the trendy part of town.

EXT. CITY STREET SOHO - CONTINUOUS

A series of shots of Jenny, dressed all in arty black and carrying her big portfolio, as she enters and exits various art galleries, her face longer after each one.

INT. SOFA STORE MANHATTAN - LATER THAT DAY

A seemingly endless series of sofas in all shapes, sizes, and colors fills the huge store. Hugh, dressed in jeans and a white shirt, looking glum, sits on one sofa, bouncing a little as if to test it, while looking at another one. Then he shifts to the other one, testing it as well. He can't make up his mind. Nearby, there is a green sofa and a denim sofa.

Jenny enters the store, still carrying her portfolio, her gaze sweeping the store till she finds Hugh. She smiles and waves to him as she works her way over. He looks relieved to see her.

HUGH

I'm so glad you could make it.

JENNY

(sits opposite him)

You don't look like you're having fun.

HUGH

I'm hopeless when it comes to decor or clothing or anything that requires fashion sense.

JENNY

You seem to be able to dress yourself all right.

HUGH
Everything goes with jeans.

JENNY
(points to denim sofa)
Well, how about that one, then?

HUGH
With all the denim in my wardrobe, I'd
be invisible against it.

Jenny jumps up to pinch Hugh's cheek.

JENNY
(playful)
You're so cute, we wouldn't want that
to happen.

She starts wandering, her back to Hugh, looking at sofas. Hugh's not sure how to take her comment, but he smiles a little to himself.

JENNY (con't)
Any candidates at all?

HUGH
(in Welsh, pointing)
I kind of like the green one.

JENNY
(turns to stare at him)
What?

HUGH
(in English, pointing)
I said, I like that green one there.

A beat. Jenny is confused.

JENNY
Was that Welsh?

HUGH
(surprised)
Did I speak Welsh?

JENNY
It sure wasn't English.

HUGH
(worried)
I've never done that before.

Jenny comes back to sit next to him. He seems distracted, and she places a concerned hand on his knee.

JENNY

You okay?

He looks from her hand on his knee to her face, trying not to show the effect her touch is having.

HUGH

Yeah.

(beat)

So how was your luck today?

JENNY

Oh, don't ask.

She pushes herself to her feet using his knee as leverage and wanders away again toward the green sofa.

JENNY (con't)

It seems that unless your work looks like you had to be on drugs when you painted it, Soho is just not interested.

Hugh rises and joins her.

HUGH

I'm sorry.

JENNY

I guess Fiona has the right attitude after all.

HUGH

Fiona?

JENNY

Oh, you'll love Fiona.

EXT. MARTY'S ESTAB. SHOT - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

A beer company banner is tacked across the front of the bar. In the allotted space, written in fat black marker, is: ENGLISH PREMIERE LEAGUE FOOTBALL: ARSENAL VS. LIVERPOOL. ON SATELLITE 12 NOON.

INT. MARTY'S - CONTINUOUS

The pub is packed with a rowdy crowd watching the match on the big-screen TV.

HUGH, AT THE BAR

is caught up in the game, as are, near him, the two Irish lads who earlier warned Hugh about Jenny.

JENNY AND FIONA

move around the crowded tables, picking up empty glasses.

FIONA

I thought you swore off men.

JENNY

Hugh's not men.

FIONA

Oh, so he is gay?

JENNY

No, he's not gay. He's just a kid. He's on his own for the first time and he's enjoying his independence and he needed some help furniture shopping. He's like the little brother I never had. How could I refuse?

FIONA

Picking out furniture with a guy's supposed to come after you sleep with him.

JENNY

(exasperated)

I'm not gonna sleep with him. I'm just... helping him be more independent.

A beat.

FIONA

Am I the only one who sees the irony in this? You're helping him be more independent?

HUGH, AT THE BAR - A LITTLE LATER

still watching the game. Jenny now sits next to him, bored, slurping the last of the soda in her glass. The Irish lads stand behind Hugh, also intent on the game.

On the TV, an Arsenal player with ANWELL 16 on the back of his jersey is heading with the ball to the goal, and scores.

FOOTBALL ANNOUNCER (on TV)
Number 16, Tarran Anwell, scores for
Arsenal!

Hugh and the lads cheer, as do scattered others in the bar.
Fiona appears to refill Jenny's soda.

FIONA
(to Hugh)
Typical. Another Arsenal fan. They're
like the Yankees of English football.
Sure, it's real easy to cheer for the
guys who always win.

HUGH
Actually, my club is Cardiff City.
They're Division 3. They never win. As
my students would say, they suck.

FIONA
A man after my own heart. You sound
like a Cubs fan.

HUGH
(indicates the TV)
It's just that Number 16 is my little
brother.

Jenny reacts thoughtfully to this news.

LAD #1
(amazed)
Tarran Anwell is your brother?

LAD #2
(slaps Hugh on the back)
Anwell's fuckin' brilliant!

HUGH
Well, he's only fuckin' brilliant
because I played him hard in the garden
when we were kids.

Jenny considers this thoughtfully, too.

HUGH, PUTTING HIS JACKET ON - LATER

The game is over, the bar quieter. The Irish lads are still at
the bar near Hugh. Lad #2 nods toward

JENNY, NEAR THE DOORWAY

who smiles at Hugh. She's waiting for him.

HUGH

grins back at her.

THE IRISH LADS

nudge each other.

LAD #2

(to Hugh)

You going round with the crazy lady?

HUGH

(proudly)

She thinks I'm cute.

JENNY AND HUGH AT THE ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They approach the door. Jenny's eye is caught by

A HANDWRITTEN POSTER

adorned with musical notations, hanging next to the door. It reads: FRIDAY 9/13: TRAD IRISH MUSIC WITH JOHN REDMOND + JOHN DOYLE / FRIDAY 9/20: MORNING STAR WITH SHEILA O'LEARY / FRIDAY 9/27: SINGER-SONGWRITER MIKE BARNESLEY.

HUGH

Something wrong?

JENNY

No.

(taps Mike's name on
poster)

Mike Barnesley's a friend of mine. I'll
have to come see him play.

HUGH

(probing)

A good friend?

JENNY

(sighs)

Oh, it's a long story.

Hugh reacts with concern at news of possible competition, but
Jenny is oblivious.

EXT. MARTY'S - CONTINUOUS

A dog, its leash tied around a parking meter on the sidewalk outside the pub, jumps up expectantly as the pub door opens and Hugh and Jenny exit. She sees the dog and approaches it, its tail wagging hopefully.

HUGH

(nervous)

Jenny, I thought perhaps we could...

Jenny, crouched down next to the dog, scratching its ears, is ignoring him.

JENNY

(to dog)

Did your person leave you out here while he went in to have a beer? That's just awful. How could anybody do that to you? You're so cute.

Jenny is using the exact tone of voice with which she told Hugh the same thing.

HUGH

looks as if he's been punched in the stomach.

JENNY

stands up from the dog and, without looking at Hugh, starts walking toward home.

JENNY

Isn't that terrible? People are so thoughtless.

She realizes Hugh isn't walking with her, and turns around to see

HUGH

looking angry and hurt now. He hasn't moved.

JENNY, A LITTLE CONFUSED

JENNY

I thought you were gonna walk me home...

HUGH

(pointing the other way
up the street)

I just remembered, I have to pick up
something at the grocery.

JENNY

Oh. Okay. I'll see you, then.

She turns her back and walks away, leaving Hugh looking
devastated.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KATONAH AVENUE ESTAB. SHOT - ONE MORNING THAT WEEK

Kids heading to school, moms with babies, old men drinking tea,
etc., as before.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - THAT MORNING

The same class -- including Colin with his Yankees cap -- that
we've seen before, paying attention to Hugh, standing behind his
desk, which is piled with assorted science books. The cricket
bat is in a corner in the front of the room.

HUGH

--so start thinking about what kinds of
projects you'd like to do for the city
science fair--

The end-of-class BELL rings, and the kids gather their things
and rise.

HUGH (con't)

(indicates books on desk)

I've got some books here with project
ideas we can look through tomorrow.
Don't forget, exam on Friday.

The kids groan, and Hugh smiles as he turns and begins to erase
the blackboard, covered with diagrams and notes. A SQUEAK of
sneakers offscreen makes him turn around to discover Colin
lingering near Hugh's desk as the other kids file into the
corridor.

HUGH

Something I can do for you, Colin?

COLIN

(indicating the cricket
bat)

What is that thing? You never told us.

HUGH

(goes to bat and picks it
up)

This is a cricket bat.

COLIN

What's cricket?

HUGH

(feigning shock)

What's cricket?

(swings the bat)

Cricket is a marvelous game. It's probably 500 years old, and people all over the world play it. In Britain and India and South Africa and Australia and the Caribbean. Anywhere there are English-speaking people, there's cricket.

COLIN

(skeptical)

Not in America.

HUGH

Oh, you think not?

(beat)

I'll make you a deal.

(indicates Colin's hat)

Yankees, right? Baseball?

Colin nods.

HUGH (con't)

I don't know anything about baseball.
I'll teach you about cricket if you'll
teach me about baseball.

COLIN

(smiles a little)

Okay.

The start-of-class BELL rings.

HUGH

You're late!

As Colin runs out, Hugh grins, pleased with himself.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM STUDIO - THAT AFTERNOON

Jenny, in paint-splattered work clothes, sits at her easel, staring at

A BLANK CANVAS

Reference images are taped to the easel around the edges of the canvas: planets, starscapes, her sketches of the cricketers. Uninspired, she sighs.

She moves to the desk, where the laptop is open and running, its screen showing

AN INTERNET SEARCH ENGINE

Next to the computer sketchbooks are piled, and at the top of the pile is Mike's small notebook. She picks it up, flips past Mike's scribbles to her sketches of the school mural. She considers these for a moment, and then the barest hint of a smile crosses her lips.

Into the search engine's search field, she types WELSH AND NEW YORK CITY and presses Enter.

JENNY'S DELIGHTED REACTION

to the results that come up offscreen.

INT. HUGH'S LIVING ROOM - SATURDAY AFTERNOON

A new green sofa, just delivered, sits at an angle on the bare floor. A lamp on the floor in the corner is the only other furniture. Protective padded wraps, like movers use, are piled on the floor.

Hugh stands in the open door, alternately admiring his new sofa and looking expectantly out the door. He smiles at something offscreen, and then Jenny appears, carrying a large envelope, and pokes her head in the door to check out the sofa.

JENNY

Hey, it looks great!

HUGH

Yeah. Thanks for your help picking it out.

JENNY

If you want some help with the rest of the room, let me know.

HUGH

All right.

JENNY

(hands envelope to Hugh)

I really came by to give you these.

Hugh opens the envelope and pulls out several prints of Jenny's more realistic astronomy paintings.

JENNY (con't)

I've had prints made of some of my work. I thought a couple of them might help brighten up your classroom.

HUGH

(looking through the prints)

Yeah, they're marvelous. Thank you. Thanks very much.

JENNY

Say, are you doing anything tomorrow afternoon?

HUGH

Sunday? I was gonna grade some exams.

JENNY

(grins)

Come with me for a few hours.

HUGH

Where to?

JENNY

It's a surprise.

HUGH

All right.

JENNY

Great! See you tomorrow.

She kisses his cheek quickly, purely in a friendly way, but he's delighted -- he has hope again. She exits just as a DELIVERY GUY enters, carrying four padded sofa feet, which he hands to Hugh.

DELIVERY GUY

Here you go. You can put those on if you want, but personally I think they ruin the aesthetic line of the piece. But it's up to you.

The delivery guy starts gathering up the wraps.

DELIVERY GUY (con't)

I'll get these outta your way, and
we're all done.

HUGH

Isn't there something I have to sign?

DELIVERY GUY

Your girlfriend took care of that
outside.

HUGH

She's not--

Hugh's protest is automatic, but then he realizes he liked the
way "your girlfriend" sounded. The delivery guy, carrying the
wraps, pushes past him into the hallway.

DELIVERY GUY

Enjoy.

EXT. KATONAH AVENUE ESTAB. SHOT - SUNDAY MORNING

As before: CHURCH BELLS ring, families stroll to Mass, and so
on.

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - THAT MORNING

Mass is in progress. Father Brian is at the pulpit.

FATHER BRIAN

...Ephesians 4 says: "Be kind and
compassionate to one another, forgiving
each other, just as in Christ God
forgave you." Remember this the next
time you are tempted to condemn
another's sins. Just as Jesus refused
to condemn the adulterous woman, so we
should not presume to do what Jesus
would not.

FIONA

in the first pew again, smiles as she gazes at

FATHER BRIAN

returning her smile shyly, not missing a beat in his sermon.

FATHER BRIAN (con't)

Forgiveness of sins -- not punishment
for them -- is the message Jesus
preached, and it's one we must keep in
mind even when it comes to ourselves.
We all sin. We must seek Jesus'
forgiveness and move on. We do
ourselves no justice when we punish
ourselves unnecessarily...

INT. SUBWAY CAR - SUNDAY AFTERNOON

The train is moderately crowded. Hugh and Jenny sit together.

JENNY

I'm not keeping you from a football
game, am I?

HUGH

(shakes his head)

None of the pubs is showing the Arsenal
match today.

JENNY

Must be pretty exciting, having a
brother who's a big football star.

HUGH

Gets me good seats in the stadium, for
all the bloody good that does me now.

JENNY

(probing)

I bet you're a better player than him.

HUGH

(grins)

I'm pretty good, yeah.

JENNY

Did you ever think about playing
professionally?

HUGH

Yeah, when I was about eight. Every
eight-year-old boy in Wales wants to be
a footballer, or a rugby player.

JENNY

But your brother actually went for it?

HUGH

He doesn't mind cracked ribs and torn ligaments.

JENNY

And you do?

HUGH

(grins)

Just a bit.

EXT. MANHATTAN SIDEWALK NEAR A CHURCH - A LITTLE LATER

Jenny is pulling Hugh by the hand along the sidewalk toward the church.

JENNY

Come on, we're late!

HUGH

You're taking me to church? Look, I should tell you, I'm an atheist.

JENNY

Hey, me too! Come on!

She pulls him to the church.

INT. PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - MOMENTS LATER

A small, plain church. A hymn played on a piano on the altar fills the church. People of all ages -- all Caucasian -- fill the pews. Jenny and Hugh slip into a pew at the rear. He looks doubtful, she can barely contain her excitement.

A congregant at the pulpit indicates for the congregation to stand, and all begin singing the hymn -- in Welsh.

Hugh turns to Jenny, dumbfounded, and a huge grin spreads across his face.

HUGH

It's Welsh.

He shakes his head, at a loss for further words. She pats his arm happily as he picks up a hymnal from the bench and begins singing, overjoyed to hear his language again.

Jenny watches him sing, her expression thoughtful and a little scared.

INT. THE CHURCH ENTRYWAY - LATER

Jenny waits while Hugh chats excitedly in Welsh with a few of the congregants. We haven't seen Hugh so animated, and neither has Jenny. As she watches him, an expression that's equal parts fear and excitement crosses her face: realization is dawning that maybe he's not just a kid, and maybe she's feeling something more than friendship.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - MINUTES LATER

Jenny and Hugh exit the church.

HUGH

(excited)

They have dinners and picnics and concerts...

JENNY

And everyone speaks Welsh?

Hugh nods and grins. He is absolutely delighted.

JENNY

You should smile like that more. It suits you.

They stop on the sidewalk, standing close.

HUGH

(in Welsh)

Thank you.

(in English)

That means thank you. I think that's the nicest thing anyone's ever done for me.

Jenny smiles at him as he gazes at her. As the moment lingers, Jenny's smile falls away as she realizes what's happening. Hugh leans in to kiss her, pausing before reaching her mouth to gauge her reaction, and when she doesn't draw away, he kisses her.

She surrenders to his kiss, returning it, but by the time he draws back, she's totally discombobulated. He's relaxed and satisfied, gazing at her, but she blinks at him, speechless for a long beat.

JENNY

I, ah, I just remembered--

(glances at watchless wrist)

I have, er, a thing to do.

Hugh stares at her as she turns away. He grabs her arm, and she looks back.

HUGH

(angry)

So, I'm just... some puppy for you to pat on the head and tell me how cute I am? Is that all I am?

JENNY

(beat)

I'm sorry.

With a long last anxious look at Hugh, she turns tail and trots off down the street. He stares after her, then sighs and rolls his eyes.

HUGH

(mutters)

Damn.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KATONAH AVE. ESTAB. SHOT - ONE LATE AFTERNOON THAT WEEK

Golden afternoon sunlight bathes the quiet city street.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hugh sits behind his desk, trying to grade test papers, but he's distracted and can't concentrate. He looks up.

HUGH

Class, here's another idea for a project for the science fair: How to Fuck Up Your Life By Leaving Everything You Know and Love Behind to Teach a Bunch of Spoiled Yank Kids.

ROWS OF EMPTY DESKS

HUGH, CHAGRINED

HUGH (con't)

Or how about a Self-Test for Insanity? Question number one: Do you talk to empty rooms?

The door opens and Steven sticks his head in, takes in the empty classroom.

STEVEN

I thought you were cursing out your students again. They've got you talking to yourself now, huh, Anwell?

HUGH

No. Driven insane by women.

Steven comes in, slips into a desk near Hugh.

STEVEN

Oh, they're good at that. Your little hired help?

HUGH

Yeah. "You're so cute." I didn't think that was open to a lot of interpretation.

STEVEN

She said you're cute? Forget it, man. You're fucked. Girls think kittens are cute. Girls don't wanna go to bed with kittens.

HUGH

Or puppies.

(beat)

I don't know why I thought she was different.

STEVEN

None of them are different.

HUGH

That can't be true.

STEVEN

Trust me, it's true.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE - A LITTLE LATER

A subdued Hugh, wearing his jacket and backpack, eyes downcast, walks toward 236th Street. He glances up and frowns as he sees

JENNY, DOWN THE STREET

just reaching the entrance of Marty's. She glances his way and notices him, but she ducks into the bar without acknowledging him.

HUGH

looking angry and bitter.

INT. HUGH'S LIVING ROOM - MINUTES LATER

The door swings open, revealing Hugh, with his keys in his hand, standing over a pile of mail, just outside the door, including a small box and a postcard. Hugh gathers the mail, comes into the living room, and closes the door.

INT. HUGH'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The mail sits on the kitchen counter. Hugh, his jacket and backpack gone, slits open the box with a scissor. Inside is a note and a plastic bag of small Welsh cakes, like little biscuits. Hugh opens the bag and eats a cake as he reads the note, a slow smile spreading across his face.

THE NOTE

written in a flowery feminine handwriting, reads: SWEETHEART-- I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE MISSING MY WELSH CAKES. ALL MY LOVE, MUM.

Eating another cake, Hugh picks through the rest of the mail till he finds the postcard.

THE FRONT OF THE POSTCARD

A Cardiff city scene with GREETINGS FROM CARDIFF or somesuch imprinted on it.

Hugh turns the card over to read the message, and an uneasy half-smile crosses his face. He considers the card for a moment, then sticks it to the fridge with a magnet.

THE POSTCARD, SECURED WITH AN "I LOVE NEW YORK" MAGNET

The message reads, in handwritten block letters: REMEMBER THIS PLACE? REMEMBER ME? I MISS YOU! RING ME! LOVE, CATHERINE.

INT. MARTY'S - LATER THAT EVENING

The place is not terribly crowded -- half the tables are empty, as is half the bar. A seisun -- a casual music session of traditional Irish musicians -- is in progress near the stage: an accordion player, a guitarist, a fiddler, a TIN WHISTLE PLAYER, etc, sit around, jamming, playing impromptu reels and jigs.

Fiona, off-duty, and Jenny sit in a booth, eating burgers. Fiona drinks beer, Jenny soda.

FIONA

So what happened on Sunday?

JENNY

What do you mean?

FIONA

Well, the Welsh Mass, with Hugh.

JENNY

Nothing happened. Why would anything happen? What would happen?

FIONA

I just wondered if he got a kick out of it.

JENNY

I guess so. He seemed to enjoy it. I don't know.

FIONA

You're spending an awful lot of time with him.

JENNY

I'm not spending a lot of time with him. I hardly know the guy.

FIONA

I don't blame you. He's pretty hot.

JENNY

You've changed your tune.

FIONA

It was when you first told me about the Mass. I imagined him in a priest's collar.

Jenny makes a face.

JENNY

How can I possibly take seriously some guy who's like twenty years old?

FIONA

I think he's a little older than that.

JENNY

I mean, have you looked at him? He looks... I dunno, unfinished. Your eyes just kinda slide right off him, he's so smooth. He needs some weathering.

FIONA

Leave him out in the rain.

JENNY

Now, in ten or fifteen years, he's gonna be gorgeous.

By this point, the musicians have switched gears. The tin whistle player has started playing, solo, a melancholy tune called "I'm Bound Away."

FIONA

In ten or fifteen years, he's not gonna be available. Then he'll be perfect for you. Just like Mike Barnsley.

Jenny shrugs, then turns her head to listen to the music, enthralled by the sad tune.

THE MUSICIANS NEAR THE STAGE - MOMENTS LATER

Jenny pulls a chair up close to the tin whistle player and listens, enrapt, as the player finishes the tune.

JENNY

That's beautiful. What is it? Is it Irish?

TIN WHISTLE PLAYER

Actually, it's an old English sailing tune called "I'm Bound Away."

JENNY

It's so sad... longing.

TIN WHISTLE PLAYER

Those sailors, they'd be out at sea for weeks or months at a time. They left wives and sweethearts behind. Nobody really knows, but one of those poor bastards probably wrote the song.

JENNY

(nods)

It's awful, missing somebody that much.

(beat)

Play it again?

The tin whistle player obliges, and the other musicians join in, improvising accompaniment. We linger with Jenny for a moment as she listens, then the music continues over a montage of short scenes:

EXT. MARTY'S - LATER

Jenny and Fiona exit the pub onto the darkened sidewalk. Fiona waves goodnight and walks offscreen. Jenny stands for a moment by herself, sighs, then walks off slowly toward 236th Street.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Jenny, in her work clothes, sits at her easel, which holds a big pad of sketch paper. The top sheet has a loose sketch for the school mural on it. Jenny is holding Mike's small notebook, referring to her sketches in it as she recreates them on the big pad. She pauses in her work, stares at the notebook for a moment, then flips back to Mike's scribbles and caresses them forlornly.

INT. SCIENCE CLASSROOM - THE SAME DAY

Hugh is at the blackboard -- TYPES OF STARS is already written there -- lecturing to a class. He writes O B A F G K M.

HUGH

--and an easy way to remember the order
the different types of stars come in is
like this:

(points to each letter in
turn)

Oh Be A Fine Girl--

Hugh's attention is suddenly distracted by something offscreen:

JENNY'S PRINTS

arrayed on a corkboard on the side of the room.

HUGH (con't)

--Kiss Me.

A few girls in the class giggle.

HUGH (con't)

(grins)

Or, for the ladies, Oh Be A Fine Guy,
Kiss Me.

Hugh's gaze again drifts to Jenny's prints.

INT. KATONAH AVENUE DELI - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Jenny, looking glum, in a business suit and carrying her portfolio and a small bag of groceries, approaches the exit. She smiles to herself when she sees

A XEROXED FLYER TAPED TO THE WINDOW

near the door. It reads: WOODLAWN'S OWN MIKE BARNESLEY FRIDAY 9-27 9PM MARTY'S KATONAH AVE.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - THAT AFTERNOON

End of the school day, the final BELL ringing. Hugh makes his way from his classroom through mobs of rowdy kids, pausing to gaze at the blank wall.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - A LITTLE LATER

Lost in thought, Jenny, holding the cat, stands at the window overlooking the street. She sees

HUGH, WALKING DOWN THE STREET

from Katonah Avenue toward his house.

She draws back from the window.

EXT. 236TH STREET - CONTINUOUS

Hugh, also lost in thought, glances toward Jenny's window just in time to see

THE CURTAIN MOVE

He sighs and looks away.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Jenny stands near the now-closed curtain, stroking the cat.

JENNY

(to the cat)

We like it just us, don't we,
Schrödinger? Just you and me.

EXT. VAN CORTLANDT PARK GAME FIELDS - SUNDAY MORNING

Jenny sits again on her hill sketching cricket players. She looks up and notices

HUGH AND COLIN, IN THE DISTANCE AND OUT OF EARSHOT

The boy holds a cricket bat and ball. They are watching the game: Hugh points out players and movements to the boy, explaining what's happening.

HUGH AND COLIN

HUGH

Toss me the ball, and back up.

Colin throws the ball to Hugh and backs up.

COLIN

How's this?

HUGH

Good. Now hold the bat how I showed you, and we'll see if you can hit the ball properly.

Colin positions himself and the bat. Hugh is preparing to pitch the ball to Colin when he sees

JENNY, IN THE DISTANCE

After a brief moment of indecision, he looks back to Colin.

HUGH

Hang about a moment. I'll be right back.

Hugh jogs off toward Jenny.

JENNY, SKETCHING

A shadow falls over her.

HUGH (OS)

Jenny?

Jenny looks up to see

HUGH, STANDING OVER HER

She puts her sketchbook aside and reluctantly rises to stand next to him.

JENNY

Hi.

An awkward beat.

HUGH

Look, I was just wondering if you were still interested in doing the school mural. I got the okay from the principal.

JENNY

Yeah. Yeah, of course.

HUGH

All right.

JENNY

I've been working on some sketches. Why don't you come by after school one day this week and take a look at them?

HUGH

Fine.

Another awkward beat.

HUGH (con't)

I guess I'll see you then.

JENNY

Yeah.

COLIN

a curious expression on his face as he watches

HUGH AND JENNY, IN THE DISTANCE AND OUT OF EARSHOT

saying their uncomfortable good-byes. Hugh turns to jog back to Colin, and Jenny drops back to the ground, watching Hugh depart.

Colin observes them with interest.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - ONE AFTERNOON THAT WEEK

Several large colored-pencil sketches for the school mural -- all cartoony representations of the solar system -- are pinned to the easel and the wall around it. Jenny and Hugh, both still uncomfortable with each other, are looking at them.

JENNY

(points to one)

I kind of like this one best.

(points to another one)

Or maybe this one. What do you think?

HUGH

(looks at sketches)

They're all wonderful. I think you should choose, though. You're the artist, after all, and I'm the bloke who can't pick out a sofa by himself.

Jenny laughs at this, and the ice is broken.

JENNY

Hugh, I'm sorry about... outside the church.

Hugh nods, tight-lipped.

JENNY (con't)

You drink tea? You must drink tea. Let's have some tea.

INT. JENNY'S KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

The kitchen is like the rest of the apartment, cluttered but comfortable. Jenny and Hugh sit at the small table, teacups, a teapot, and a tea strainer before them. A creamer and a covered sugar bowl also sit on the table. The kettle is heating on the stove.

JENNY

I'm sorry if I acted like a real bitch.

HUGH

You did.

JENNY

I didn't mean to give you the wrong idea. I do like you, but... I really just need to concentrate on my art and trying to make a living at it right now.

HUGH

(beat)

I suppose I know what you mean. My classes are taking up all my time.

The kettle starts WHISTLING, and Jenny rises, turning her back on Hugh. He watches her, the expression on his face a mix of anger and attraction.

HUGH (con't)

I don't even know if I'm gonna stay here in the States.

JENNY

Oh?

Jenny prepares the tea: warming the pot by pouring in a bit of hot water from the kettle and swishing it around, pouring that water out, putting several heaping spoons of loose tea into the pot, and pouring more hot water over it. Meanwhile, Hugh continues talking and watching her.

HUGH

Until I get tenure there's no guarantee the city will rehire me next year. I think I'd rather be out of a job at home, if it came to that. I might just turn around and move back across the Atlantic.

Jenny brings the teapot back to the table and sits down.

JENNY

Oh. I hope not.

HUGH

Catherine, my girlfriend -- my ex, I suppose -- she's been writing me and leaving phone messages, and I don't know if I should ring her.

JENNY

This has been hard, hasn't it?

Hugh is puzzled.

JENNY (con't)

Moving here, I mean.

HUGH

Yeah, it has.

JENNY

Fiona says, no good deed goes unpunished.

Hugh laughs bitterly.

JENNY (con't)

So that's what you get for trying to inform and enlighten the future generation.

HUGH

Perhaps I should have gone for the football after all.

JENNY

I thought you didn't want to play professionally.

HUGH

I didn't. I don't. But my father has this bizarre idea in his head. I don't know where he got it...

Jenny pours tea, using the strainer, as she listens.

HUGH (con't)

My dad, you know, he's a laborer, not terribly well educated, but intelligent, not a stupid man at all.

Jenny nods that she's listening.

HUGH (con't)

I suppose he must regret what he missed, because when we were growing up, Tarran and I, it was always, "My sons are going to university, my sons are going places in the world."

Jenny offers Hugh the sugar bowl as she removes the lid.

JENNY

Sugar?

THE SUGAR BOWL

filled with rough lumps of sugar.

Hugh smiles as he takes a couple of lumps and drops them into his tea.

HUGH

Just like home.

JENNY

(preparing her tea)

Go on. Your dad?

HUGH

Well, I was a good footballer, perhaps even better than Tarran. We both played on teams at school. I could have played professionally, and Dad knew it. He cheered on our matches often enough to see that for himself.

Hugh pauses to sip his tea.

JENNY

Does this have a tragic ending?

HUGH

Oh, hardly tragic. More one of those biting ironies life throws at you.

Jenny smiles.

HUGH (con't)

Dad loved the football but he still talked about university for us, which was fine with me. I knew I wanted to teach. Tarran, on the other hand, knew he wanted to play football. And not go to university.

JENNY

That must have upset your father.

HUGH

(nods)

Tarran left school after his O levels, and I was still at university when he was already playing on the Arsenal squad, the hot young star.

JENNY

That certainly qualifies as "going places in the world." Did that make your dad happy?

HUGH

Yeah, Dad loved that Tarran was doing so well. He still does. Tarran does adverts for Coca-Cola, for Christ's sake.

JENNY

So what's your father's problem?

HUGH

Well, after Tarran was so successful so quickly, Dad got it into his head that I'd really wanted to play as well, and that I only went to university to please him.

JENNY

Oh no.

HUGH

Nothing I say can convince him otherwise. And now he thinks it's his fault that I had to move to America to take a job that he's sure I never wanted in the first place. My father thinks I hate him.

(beat)

So there you go: I'm doubly punished for my good deed of bestowing wisdom upon impressionable children.

JENNY

Your dad's remembering the eight-year-old who wanted to be a footballer.

HUGH

When I was eight, I also wanted to be a cowboy and an astronaut, and my father isn't too upset that those haven't panned out for me.

JENNY

Ah, but if your highly successful little brother was a cowboy or an astronaut...

Hugh smiles broadly, then looks down into his teacup as he drinks. Jenny reacts to that smile with a look of regret.

JENNY (con't)

We can still be friends, can't we?

HUGH

Only if you keep making tea like this. This is the first decent cup I've had since I got off the plane.

JENNY

You'll have to come to my mom's for tea. She'll do a proper English tea, with scones and little sandwiches and everything, if we ask her nicely. Or can a Welshman attend an English tea?

HUGH

Well, I'll have to check with the embassy, but I think there's some sort of visa they can issue me.

Jenny laughs.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - LATER

Jenny is clearing up her mural sketches while Hugh, pulling his jacket and backpack on, notices

THE BOTANICAL PAINTING

on the wall.

HUGH

This isn't like the others. Is it one of yours?

JENNY

My father's. One of my favorites of his.

HUGH

He's a painter, too?

JENNY

He was. He died when I was 16.

HUGH

Oh. That couldn't have been easy.

JENNY

No. It was... very sudden. It devastated my mother. I don't think she's really recovered yet. They were together a long time.

(beat)

I don't know why I'm telling you all this.

HUGH

It must have been hard watching your mother suffer.

JENNY

Hard for me, worse for her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRYANT PARK MANHATTAN ESTAB. SHOT - THE NEXT DAY

The park, behind the New York Public Library, bustles with lunchtime crowds.

EXT. A BENCH IN BRYANT PARK - CONTINUOUS

Jenny, in business attire, her big portfolio leaning against her legs, sits next to Barbara. Both are eating takeout sandwiches and sipping sodas.

BARBARA

--it's an absolute disaster. The new owners have no idea what they're doing. They've fired half the staff. There aren't enough bodies left to do the work. Your old boss quit this morning. There's no way this issue's gonna be finished on time. No way in hell.

JENNY

Sounds like I got out just in time.

BARBARA

So, how's the artist's life?

JENNY

Not much better, actually. I visited about my hundredth gallery this morning. No one's interested in my work. The only freelance assignment I've gotten is painting a mural of the solar system in an elementary school.

BARBARA

That sounds interesting.

JENNY

(shaking her head)

It doesn't pay a penny, and the handsome young science teacher thinks he's in love with me.

BARBARA

Not another one! Dylan's been moping, you know, since you left. Oh, you poor thing. The boys are just dripping off you, aren't they?

JENNY

"Boys" is right. And just for fun, I'm gonna torture myself by seeing my married friend on Friday night.

BARBARA

Oh, so he turned out not to be such a good guy after all?

JENNY

Oh, no, not seeing like a date. He's a musician, he's playing in a bar in my neighborhood. I'll go watch him demonstrate his creativity, talent, and intelligence, maybe have a drink with him, we'll gaze at each other for a while, and then he'll go home to his wife. And I'll go home to my cat.

Barbara pats Jenny's hand sympathetically.

BARBARA

Thank God I'm married.

Jenny laughs as she crumbles up the packaging from her finished sandwich and drinks the last of her soda. She glances at her wristwatch.

JENNY

Well, I'm off to humiliate myself at another gallery. Say hi to whoever's left at GeekWeek.

BARBARA

You know, Jenny, if the art thing isn't working out, I bet they'd take you back at the magazine, especially now with your boss gone. There's nobody left in the art department who knows what's going on.

A beat while Jenny considers this.

JENNY

I'll think about it. I really will.

BARBARA

We'd all love to have you back. Especially Dylan.

JENNY

(grins)

I bet he would.

INT. ELEVATED SUBWAY TRAIN - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Jenny, tired and disappointed, sits by herself, her portfolio at her feet, surrounded by rowdy kids heading home from school.

EXT. KATONAH AVE. BUS STOP NEAR MARTY'S - A LITTLE LATER

Jenny gets off a city bus, lugging her portfolio, and heads for Marty's, passing more after-school kids, laughing and talking.

INT. MARTY'S - CONTINUOUS

The place is nearly deserted. Father Brian, in civvies, sits at the far end of the bar, nursing a pint and chatting out of earshot with Fiona, behind the bar.

The door BANGS open and Jenny enters, dragging herself to the near end of the bar and collapsing onto a stool, dropping her portfolio with a THUD. Fiona leaves Brian and approaches Jenny.

JENNY

The bad thing about suddenly being unemployed is that you forget that in the middle of the afternoon, when the subway and the streets should be quiet and empty, they're actually mobbed with ankle-biters.

FIONA

Unemployed?

JENNY

The good thing about being unemployed is that you can visit your friend working in the pub, which actually is quiet and empty in the afternoon, and be assured of getting her attention.

FIONA

Unemployed? I thought you'd moved directly on to self-employed.

JENNY

See, that term is a misnomer. If I were really self-employed, I'd be paying myself a salary. But in reality, you know, a third party needs to be involved, and I've yet to find that third party willing to pay for goods or services I can offer.

FIONA

You sound like you could use a good stiff one.

JENNY

Yeah, but he's too married, remember?
How about, instead, like the biggest
Diet Coke you can give me?

Fiona takes out a pint glass and starts filling it from the soda fountain. She glances back at Brian while the glass fills and winks at him, which makes him smile shyly. Jenny notices this exchange.

FIONA

(to Jenny)

Are you gonna go all the way and go for
the lemon, too?

JENNY

Oh, what the hell. I'm living life on
the edge these days.

Fiona puts a slice of lemon in the glass and slides it in front of Jenny.

JENNY (con't)

(whispers, nodding toward
Brian)

Who is that down there? He looks
familiar.

FIONA

That's Brian. Father Brian. I lured him
in here.

JENNY

Ah, my aunts the church ladies pointed
him out to me. I didn't recognize him
out of uniform. What is this thing with
you and priests?

FIONA

I like the challenge. Where's the fun
in laying some puppy who follows you
around panting? That's just too easy.

JENNY

So, then you can kinda understand where
I am with Mike Barnsley. Deprivation is
sexy.

FIONA

Who said anything about deprivation?

JENNY

Oh, you haven't corrupted another nice
priest, have you?

FIONA

You think the Pope's keeping his vow of poverty?

JENNY

Well, I guess you'll be burning in Hell with all us atheists.

FIONA

Yeah. It'll be fun.

JENNY

You know what?

(pushes glass toward
Fiona)

Put some rum in that.

FIONA

(obliging)

Wow. You must've had a rough day.

JENNY

D'ya know, I'm actually considering going back to GeekWeek. Apparently, they need me there.

FIONA

Don't do it. Things will turn around.

JENNY

Oh? And how are your creative endeavors doing? How's the book coming along?

FIONA

It's fucked. I've got the baroness and the gardener on the yacht together, but her husband is insisting on coming along, and I don't know how to get rid of him.

JENNY

Have you considered that maybe you're not the right person to be writing romance novels?

FIONA

I am the perfect person to be writing romance novels. My head hasn't gone all mush with the bullshit.

JENNY

The romance, you mean?

FIONA

See, even you know it's bullshit. It's all just about chemistry and pheromones and lust. It's just sex. Why the hell else would a baroness leave her rich old husband who's about to croak to run off with a penniless young gardener? Because they can't not fuck each other.

Jenny laughs.

FIONA (con't)

And that's why you and Mike Barnsley are never gonna happen. If you two couldn't not fuck each other, you'd have done it already.

JENNY

Oh really?

FIONA

And that's why you and Hugh are destined to get together.

JENNY

Hugh?

FIONA

I don't care what you say about him. I see the way you look at each other. You two can barely keep your hands to yourselves.

JENNY

(amused)

If you say so.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - FRIDAY AFTERNOON

School's out for the day, and except for a few kids straggling by, the hallway is quiet. The formerly blank wall is now covered by a line sketch of Jenny's mural, and Jenny sits on a stool before it, just starting to paint one corner, a palette of brightly colored paints near to hand.

The two giggly girls from Hugh's class saunter by Jenny, chattering. With a glance back at Jenny, one stops the other and they hold a whispered conference not far from Jenny.

1ST GIRL

That's her.

2ND GIRL

Are you sure?

1ST GIRL

Colin said he saw them together in the park.

Jenny continues painting, pretending not to listen, but she can't help but overhear.

1ST GIRL (con't)

That's Mr. Anwell's girlfriend.

2ND GIRL

Ask her.

1ST GIRL

You ask her.

JENNY

(smiling)

Ask her what?

The girls giggle and try to push each other toward Jenny till the first girl gives in and approaches Jenny.

1ST GIRL

(giggles)

Mr. Anwell... Is he a good kisser?

JENNY

(grins)

Yeah.

(more thoughtful)

Yeah, he is.

A CLASSROOM DOOR DOWN THE HALL

opens, and Hugh and Steven exit into the hall, carrying folders of test papers, as the two girls run past, giggling all the harder when they see Hugh.

STEVEN

I'm glad I was never the object of little girls' fantasies.

HUGH

It is a little disconcerting.

Steven nods toward

JENNY, DOWN THE HALL

painting, oblivious to their presence.

STEVEN

So what new shit has she pulled on you lately?

HUGH

Ah. She used the F word.

Steven is confused.

HUGH (con't)

Friends. As in "let's just be."

STEVEN

(winces)

Oh, they have no idea how that stings, do they?

HUGH

(shakes his head)

Between those two

(indicates direction the girls ran)

and my ex at home, I've got more than enough female attention right now.

Steven slaps Hugh on the back.

STEVEN

Spoken like a trooper.

Hugh frowns.

EXT. MARTY'S ESTAB. SHOT - FRIDAY NIGHT

A ROWDY CROWD and recorded MUSIC can be heard from inside the pub. A chalkboard sandwich board on the sidewalk reads: TONIGHT LIVE MUSIC WITH MIKE BARNESLEY 9 PM.

INT. MARTY'S - CONTINUOUS

The pub is crowded. A dance floor, cleared near the stage, is being put to good use. Jenny and Fiona, nursing drinks, sit at a table near the dancers. There is an empty seat at their table. On the stage, a stool, microphone, and amplifier sit unused.

FIONA

(ribbing)

You're sure you don't mind my hanging out with you? I'm not gonna cramp your style with Mike?

JENNY

Please. You said it yourself: I haven't got a chance with him.

FIONA

Just so long as you don't blame me when nothing happens.

JENNY

As if I'd do that.

Jenny sees

HUGH, ENTERING THE BAR

He looks around. Jenny waves to him and points to the empty seat. Hugh's face lights up, and he begins picking his way across the room.

FIONA

(whispers to Jenny)

Look at that face. No wonder he hasn't made any other friends. He's too crazy about you.

(to Hugh as he arrives)

Hi there!

HUGH

(sits)

No Cubs game tonight?

FIONA

I only get to control the remote when I'm behind the bar. Can I get you a drink?

HUGH

Thanks. My usual.

Fiona rises and walks behind Jenny toward the bar, giving Jenny a nudge-nudge, wink-wink elbow as she passes. Jenny scowls at her friend. Hugh, glancing around the room, is oblivious.

HUGH

All these people came to see your friend?

JENNY

Yeah, he's got a bit of a following in the neighborhood.

(beat)

There he is now.

Jenny sees

MIKE, ENTERING THE BAR

He carries his guitar case. He walks around the edge of the crowd toward the stage. He doesn't notice Jenny.

Hugh watches Mike with concern for a moment, then watches Jenny watching Mike, a little smile on her face. Hugh tries to distract her.

HUGH

Wanna dance?

JENNY

Well, now, we've already established that you know who Heisenberg is...

HUGH

I could explain Einstein's theories of relativity, both General and Special. Or Newton's Laws?

Jenny leaps to her feet and holds out a hand to Hugh.

JENNY

Showoff.

Hugh rises and lets Jenny lead him to the dance floor. The music is medium-paced, allowing them to dance close but not too close. When she turns and dances with her back to him, he places his hands lightly on her waist, swaying with her.

Fiona, back at their table with a fresh round of drinks, watches this, shaking her head.

FIONA

(to herself)

I told her. Can't keep his hands to himself.

Hugh maneuvers Jenny toward the stage, where Mike is setting himself up. Hugh wants Mike to see them together. Mike does notice Jenny, and gives her a tentative wave and a smile, which she returns. Hugh observes them with a frown. They ignore him even as Jenny continues to dance.

FIONA, HUGH, AND JENNY - A LITTLE LATER

They sit at their table and listen appreciatively to Mike singing a song onstage, accompanying himself on the guitar. The dance floor is empty and the crowd's noise is down to a murmur.

THE DOOR

as CATHERINE DAVIES enters the bar. She is Welsh, 26 years old. She wears a coat and carries a garment bag slung over her shoulder. She stands near the door, her gaze searching the room till it falls upon

HUGH, ACROSS THE ROOM

facing away from her toward the stage

Catherine grins.

HUGH, APPLAUDING

as Mike's song ends.

CATHERINE (OS)

I let you out of my sight for a second,
and already you've got two new
girlfriends.

Hugh swings around to face her.

HUGH

(shocked)

Catherine!

CATHERINE

Surprise.

Jenny looks to Fiona with a frown as the applause dies down.

MIKE (ONSTAGE)

Thank you. This next one is fairly new.

Mike starts playing.

CATHERINE

(to Hugh)

Why don't we go in the back so as not
to interrupt?

Catherine takes Hugh's hand and Hugh lets himself be led back toward the end of the bar near the door. Hugh is distressed by her sudden appearance, and it's all he can do to keep from looking back at Jenny. Over his shoulder, we see

JENNY

watching Hugh and Catherine with a frown.

HUGH AND CATHERINE - MOMENTS LATER

They find two empty stools at the far end of the bar. Mike is singing unintelligibly in the BG.

HUGH

What are you doing here?

CATHERINE

Your landlady said I might find you here.

HUGH

No, I mean, what are you doing here in New York?

CATHERINE

Well, you didn't return my calls or my letters. I thought I'd come over and see if you were still alive.

Hugh stares at her, dumbfounded. She's not pleased with this reception.

CATHERINE (con't)

Aren't you gonna kiss me?

With a tiny sigh, Hugh leans in and kisses her mouth, though not terribly passionately.

JENNY, STILL FROWNING

watches

HUGH AND CATHERINE, ACROSS THE ROOM

as they kiss.

FIONA, WATCHING JENNY

FIONA

Don't worry. It doesn't mean anything.

JENNY

I'm not worried. She's his girlfriend. They're cute together.

FIONA

Look how stiff he is. He's not enjoying that. She'll be gone in a week.

JENNY

I hope she stays. Then he'll have another friend, won't he?

Jenny turns her full attention to Mike onstage.

MARTY'S - LATER THAT NIGHT

The bar has emptied out quite a bit. The stage is now dark and empty, except for Mike's guitar case sitting next to the amplifier.

HUGH AND CATHERINE, AT THE BAR

Catherine yawns widely.

CATHERINE

Oh, I'm so tired. Does this new flat of yours have a bed?

HUGH

No, Catherine, I'm sleeping in a cardboard box. Of course it has a bed.

Catherine, amused, kisses his cheek sleepily.

CATHERINE

You're just as cranky as ever, aren't you? It's nice to see America hasn't changed you.

As she leads him from the pub, he looks back across the bar and sees

JENNY AND MIKE, AT THE OTHER END OF THE BAR

talking. Jenny looks up at Hugh for a moment, her face expressionless, then she turns back to Mike.

JENNY AND MIKE

Both have nearly empty drinks before them. Both look glum. Jenny looks at his hand as he raises his glass to finish his beer and sees

MIKE'S WEDDING RING

glinting in the light as he drinks.

JENNY

Doesn't your wife ever come to your shows?

Jenny looks back up at

HUGH AND CATHERINE, NEAR THE DOOR

as they exit together.

MIKE

MIKE

She doesn't like bars, so no, not usually. I thought maybe tonight she might come. You know, last chance to see me in a small, intimate setting before I get rich and famous...

(grins briefly)

But her mother's sick and she's gone to spend the weekend with her.

A beat while Jenny finishes drinking her soda.

JENNY

You know, I still have your notebook that you left on the subway that night.

MIKE

Oh God, I thought that was lost forever.

JENNY

It's back at my place if you wanna come and get it.

A long beat while Mike stares at Jenny, considering this.

MIKE

Okay.

FIONA, IN A BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

She sits with two friends, chatting and drinking. Jenny approaches them.

JENNY

(to Fiona)

I just thought I'd let you know that I'm leaving now. With Mike.

Jenny gives Fiona a "so there" look, and then she looks offscreen to see

MIKE, STANDING ON THE STAGE

near his guitar case. He pulls his wedding ring off and slips it into his pocket. He then picks up his guitar case.

FIONA, SHAKING HER HEAD

FIONA

You're making a mistake. Hugh's the one. The girlfriend's not hanging around, I'm telling you.

JENNY

This isn't one of your novels, Fiona. Real life's messier than that.

INT. HUGH'S LIVING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The room is slightly more furnished now. A bookshelf is stuffed with books. The lamp now sits on an end table next to the sofa.

The door opens and Hugh enters, carrying Catherine's garment bag. Catherine enters behind him, closing the door. He drops her bag near the sofa.

HUGH

This is it. It's not much--

Catherine throws herself into Hugh's arms, sending them both falling to the sofa. She's on top of him, kissing him passionately, throwing off her coat. He's overwhelmed momentarily but then pushes her gently away.

HUGH

I thought you were tired.

Catherine snuggles closer to him, and his arms fall away from her.

CATHERINE

(kissing his face)
Oh, I've missed you so much.
(unbuttoning his shirt)
Make love to me.

Hugh rolls his eyes in resignation as his arms come up to embrace Catherine.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

The cat is asleep on the quilt. Mike and Jenny fall onto the bed, kissing passionately. The cat leaps away, annoyed. Mike and Jenny are tearing at each other's clothes. Mike, on top of Jenny, moves down to kiss her neck.

JENNY, CLOSING HER EYES

as Mike moves further down her body. She sighs her pleasure.

JENNY

Oh, Hugh...

Jenny's eyes fly open, and she stares at the ceiling, mortified.

MIKE

oblivious to her faux pas, continues kissing her belly.

MIKE

Oh, you...

Jenny bites her lip to keep from laughing.

INT. HUGH'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The room is illuminated only by a streetlamp outside, its light spilling in the window. Catherine is fast asleep, a bit of a contented smile on her face. She is facing away from Hugh, lying next to her. He is wide awake, staring at the ceiling.

Catherine sighs and stirs in her sleep, rolling over and groping for Hugh. He shifts away from her, but she keeps reaching. As if he has been debating and this has decided him, he gets up from the bed, taking his pillow, and grabs a blanket folded at the end of the bed.

INT. HUGH'S LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Hugh, now ensconced with pillow and blanket on the sofa, reaches to the end table lamp and turns it off. He stares up at the dark ceiling with a sigh, then he closes his eyes.

INT. JENNY'S BEDROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

A light is on low. Mike snores gently next to Jenny, who tosses and turns, unable to get comfortable. She stops, frustrated, and rises from the bed.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

The room is dark. Jenny, wearing her fuzzy bathrobe, enters from the bedroom, closing the door quietly behind her. She grabs the TV remote control on her way to the sofa, where she lies down facing the TV. She clicks it on, flipping around channels. She stops for a moment on a talking head show.

1ST TALKING HEAD (on TV)

--as a New York Times editorial pointed out this week, in all the debate over the religious beliefs on the supposed aliens, the one possibility that's been neglected is that they won't have any religious belief.

2ND TALKING HEAD (on TV)

But isn't it likely than any intelligent species is going to want answers to the big questions: Why are we here? Why do we fall in love?--

1ST TALKING HEAD (on TV)

Now you're assuming that love is universal--

Jenny flips away, skipping more channels till she comes to a showing of The Graduate: It's the wedding scene at the end of the movie, Dustin Hoffman banging on the church window, shouting.

Jenny watches for a moment, but now her eyes are drooping, and they close finally and don't reopen. She dreams:

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH - DAY

Jenny, wearing a wedding gown, looks puzzled.

HUGH (OS)

Dearly beloved...

Jenny's eyes go wide as she sees

HUGH, DRESSED AS A PRIEST

performing the ceremony.

HUGH (con't)

We are gathered here today to witness the union of Jennifer and Michael.

Jenny looks to her side, bewildered. Mike, in a tux, is standing beside her, desperately trying to pull a wedding ring off his finger.

MIKE

No, wait! Not yet!

Hugh shrugs and looks past Jenny and Mike, waving and smiling to someone behind them. Jenny swings around to see

FIONA, IN A PEW

winking and blowing kisses to Hugh. Aunt Mary and Aunt Elizabeth sit behind Fiona, nodding approvingly.

A DRONING noise in the back of the church draws Jenny's attention: Rubbery, fake-looking gray aliens, dressed in cricket whites, are picketing in the rear, marching in a circle and chanting in an unintelligible alien language. They carry signs that read THERE IS NO GOD and JENNY LUVS HUGH.

The sound of sobbing distracts her, and Jenny turns to see

DYLAN

dressed as a little-boy ring-bearer, standing in the aisle, crying. Catherine, dressed as a flower girl, stands next to him, comforting him.

DYLAN

(sobbing)

I finished a hundred levels of Quake
for her!

CATHERINE

There, there.

Catherine glares at Jenny.

Jenny swings around again, dizzied by it all:

HUGH FLIRTING WITH FIONA

MIKE STRUGGLING WITH HIS RING

THE AUNTS, LOOKING SMUG

THE ALIENS CHANTING

DYLAN SOBBING

CATHERINE GLARING

She looks up at the sound of BANGING. ANOTHER JENNY, dressed like Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate*, is pounding on a window.

WINDOW JENNY

(shouting)

Jenny! Jenny! Jenny! Don't do it! It's
Hugh! Hugh!

JENNY
(bewildered)

Me?

WINDOW JENNY

No! Hugh! Hugh!

Window Jenny points feverishly at Hugh, now sitting in the pew with Fiona, leaning into her and leering at her.

JENNY
(to herself)
Oh God, I'm too late.

Mike finally pulls his ring off and throws it aside triumphantly. He grabs Jenny and plants a rough kiss on her.

MIKE
So, ya got somethin' for me, kid?

Jenny looks around desperately for an escape. Dylan steps up, still crying, with Mike's notebook on a little ring pillow. Jenny snatches it and throws it at Mike.

JENNY
Take it!

Pulling herself away from Mike, Jenny takes one last look at

HUGH, KISSING FIONA

then Jenny runs down the aisle, pushing past Dylan and Catherine and the aliens, and out of the church.

INT. JENNY'S LIVING ROOM/STUDIO - DAWN

Jenny's eyes open to see

MIKE, SITTING NEARBY

wearing only his shorts, smiling. The TV behind him shows a test pattern.

MIKE
What're you doing out here?

Jenny stares at him for a long moment.

JENNY
I just realized that I don't want the kind of man who'd cheat on his wife.

INT. KATONAH DINER - THAT MORNING

A CUP OF HOT WATER

on a diner table, a teabag on its saucer.

Jenny dunks the teabag in the water, too upset to notice what she's doing. Fiona sits with her, facing toward the diner entrance.

JENNY

Oh God, it was so pathetic. He was sitting there in his underwear looking like I'd just slapped him.

FIONA

Well, you kinda did.

JENNY

Months of wanting him, and then I couldn't even stay in the bed with him. He must think I'm such an idiot.

FIONA

You are an idiot. Wasn't he any good?

JENNY

Yeah, he was... He was great. It was just that in the middle of it, I found myself wishing he was Hugh.

FIONA

Ah, but that's just because you think he's suddenly unavailable.

JENNY

Oh, you're right! There's something wrong with me. Why do I only want the ones I can't have?

FIONA

Maybe you just need to admit to yourself that you're happy on your own.

JENNY

I was happy on my own. Now I want Hugh.

FIONA

You'll get him.

Fiona looks up and sees

HUGH AND CATHERINE, ENTERING THE DINER

Catherine notices Jenny and Fiona and waves, which makes Hugh smile in their direction.

FIONA, LOOKING WORRIED

Uh oh. FIONA

What? JENNY

(beat)
They fucked. FIONA

You can tell? JENNY

Look at that. FIONA

They both look as

HUGH'S HAND

at the small of Catherine's back, out of habit, guides her into a booth.

JENNY, NOT HAPPY

You said she'd be gone in a week. JENNY

So, you're gonna start paying attention to me now? FIONA

With a groan, Jenny bangs her head into her arms, folded on the table.

HUGH

playing with the salt and pepper, his utensils, anything to keep from having to look at Catherine.

Why did you sleep on the sofa last night? CATHERINE

HUGH

I-- I didn't want to disturb you.

CATHERINE

You never worried about that before.

HUGH

I was restless. I couldn't sleep.

Hugh looks up at

FIONA AND JENNY, ACROSS THE ROOM

eating their breakfast.

CATHERINE

follows Hugh's gaze with suspicion.

CATHERINE

You've been seeing someone else,
haven't you? That [physical reference
to Fiona, ie, blond] one, is it?

HUGH

No. I promise you, there's nobody after
me except a couple of 11-year-old
schoolgirls.

CATHERINE

And me.

Hugh smiles uneasily.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - ONE AFTERNOON THAT WEEK

Jenny sits near the mural, about half completed, painting. The
hallway is quiet and empty -- school is over for the day. The
door to the science classroom opens and Jenny looks up to see

HUGH, EXITING HIS CLASSROOM

wearing his jacket and backpack.

JENNY

Hey.

HUGH

Hi.

An awkward silence.

HUGH (con't)
(indicates the mural)
It's brilliant.

JENNY
Thanks.
(beat)
You still coming to my Mom's for tea?

HUGH
Sure.

JENNY
If you wait a minute for me to clean
up, I'll walk with you.

HUGH
Ah. I told Catherine I'd retrieve her
from my flat and walk her over. She
hasn't really sussed the neighborhood
yet.

JENNY
Oh. Okay. I'll see you there, then.

HUGH
Right.

Jenny watches

HUGH, WALKING DOWN THE CORRIDOR

then turns back to her work.

HUGH

turns briefly and looks back over his shoulder at Jenny, dabbing
at her painting half-heartedly.

INT. LOUISE'S SUNROOM - A LITTLE LATER

The desk has been pushed aside and a table moved in to
accommodate the tea-partyers. Around the table sit Hugh and
Catherine, Fiona, Aunt Mary and Aunt Elizabeth, drinking tea.

FIONA

...but the Cubs are the only ballplayers who make their fans feel better about themselves. I mean, you watch the Yankees, and all you can think is, Wow, I'm a nobody, I'm never gonna accomplish anything. But you leave a Cubs game thinking, There but for the grace of God go I...

INT. LOUISE'S KITCHEN - SIMULTANEOUS

Louise and Jenny prepare trays of sandwiches and scones.

LOUISE

He's awfully handsome.

JENNY

He's a lot younger than me.

LOUISE

Sweetheart, you don't have to say it like he has a fatal disease.

JENNY

What's that supposed to mean?

LOUISE

Five years ago, I'll grant you, a guy five years younger than you would have been too young. But maybe you haven't noticed that you're getting to the point when younger people aren't kids anymore.

JENNY

So you're saying I'm getting old?

LOUISE

Getting old's not so bad. But I'd hate to see you get old alone.

Louise and Jenny take the trays and head toward the sunroom.

JENNY

Anyway, it doesn't matter. He's taken.

INT. LOUISE'S SUNROOM - CONTINUOUS

CATHERINE

...I see obsession with sport is just as rampant here as it is at home.

Jenny and Louise enter. They see

HUGH, SCOWLING AT CATHERINE

LOUISE

(whispering)

He doesn't look very taken.

Jenny throws her mother a glare as they set the trays on the table and sit down.

AUNT MARY

(to Fiona)

Have you heard, dear? Father Brian is leaving the parish. I know he was a favorite of yours.

Jenny and Fiona exchange a glance.

FIONA

I-- I hadn't heard. Do you know why?

AUNT ELIZABETH

Apparently he wants to be near his elderly mother in Florida. Such a nice man.

EXT. STREETS OF WOODLAWN - LATER

Hugh and Catherine walk back toward his apartment after the tea party. Hugh has his hands shoved into his pockets and keeps his distance from Catherine.

HUGH

So, have you thought any more on how long you're going to stay?

CATHERINE

(ignoring his question)

You don't seem very friendly with your supposed new friends.

HUGH

It takes time to get to know people.

CATHERINE

(suggestive)

It didn't take us much time.

HUGH

Maybe that was part of the problem.

A beat.

CATHERINE

Come home with me, Hugh.

Hugh doesn't answer.

CATHERINE (con't)

I'm worried about you. Your father is worried about you.

HUGH

(angry)

Did Dad send you over here to bring me back?

CATHERINE

No! We all care about you. We just want you to be happy.

HUGH

I bloody well am happy!

(beat)

Even if Jenny doesn't want me.

CATHERINE

Jenny? Jenny?

(a beat, then resigned)

Right.

EXT. KATONAH AVENUE DELI - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

Jenny, walking by the deli, sees

MIKE, INSIDE

taking down from the window the now sun-faded flyer announcing his show at Marty's.

JENNY

after a moment's hesitation, enters the deli.

INT. KATONAH AVENUE DELI - CONTINUOUS

Mike, crumpling up the flyer, looks up at the sound of the bells over the door to see

JENNY

entering the deli. She smiles briefly at him.

JENNY

Mike.

MIKE

Jenny.

She steps closer to him.

JENNY

I just wanted to say that I'm sorry about the other night. What I said to you. It was... really rotten, and I feel awful about it.

MIKE

No, you were right. It was a mistake. Well, not a mistake, but...

Mike moves closer to her.

JENNY

(nods)

Yeah. Who knows? Maybe in some parallel universe somewhere...

MIKE

I hope so.

They gaze at each other for a long moment, and it seems for a second that they might kiss, but they don't.

JENNY

Good luck with your music.

MIKE

Good luck with your art.

Jenny moves toward the door but looks back at Mike as she pulls the door open.

JENNY

I'll see you around.

MIKE

Yup.

Jenny exits the deli.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL ENTRANCE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

School has just been dismissed for the day. Kids throng on the sidewalk. Hugh is kicking a soccer ball around on the sidewalk with a few of his students, all of them laughing and having a great time.

COLIN, IN THE CROWD

carrying a piece of rolled-up poster board, makes his way through the mob toward Hugh.

COLIN
Mr. Anwell! Mr. Anwell!

HUGH
(still kicking the ball
around)
Hello, Colin.

COLIN
I finished my project for the science
fair! Wanna see?

HUGH
(stepping away from the
game)
Yeah, of course.

Colin unrolls the poster to reveal a series of illustrations depicting

THE PHYSICS OF BASEBALL

HUGH, DELIGHTED

HUGH
That's bloody marvelous, Colin! You're
sure to win with that.

Colin beams with joy at the praise.

INT. MARTY'S - FRIDAY NIGHT

A normally busy Friday night at the pub. A Yankee game is on the TVs. Jenny sits at the bar by herself, sipping a soda, an empty stool next to her. The Mets fan she blew off earlier steps up behind her.

GUY
Is this seat taken?

He sees

JENNY, TURNING AROUND TO FACE HIM

His eyes go wide with terror as he recognizes Jenny.

GUY
Uh, never mind.

He scurries off.

FIONA, BEHIND THE BAR

uses the TV remote control to switch over to a Cubs game.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (on TV)

Oh! What a disaster! The Cubs give up
another run!

An annoyed roar rises from the pub crowd, and a flurry of
napkins is thrown over the bar at Fiona.

FIONA

(laughs)

Okay, okay!

She switches back to the Yankee game and slides down the bar to
Jenny.

JENNY

You're like the patron saint of lost
causes: the Cubs, priests...

FIONA

(subdued)

Yep.

JENNY

So, did you talk to Brian?

FIONA

Yeah.

JENNY

What happened?

FIONA

What always happens to the Catholic
boys eventually: Guilt.

JENNY

Ah. Sorry.

Fiona shrugs.

HUGH, IN A BOOTH

sitting with the two Irish lads, drinking beer.

LAD #2

...and do you remember that match when
Anwell busted his leg up?

LAD #1

Ow. Yeah.

Hugh sees

JENNY, SITTING ALONE AT THE BAR

He rises, taking his beer with him.

HUGH

Excuse me, lads.

JENNY, AT THE BAR

HUGH (OS)

Is this seat taken? "The more precisely
the position of a subatomic particle is
known--"

JENNY

(laughs)

Sit.

Hugh sits.

HUGH

Sorry I missed you at school today.

JENNY

There wasn't much left to finish up on
the mural.

HUGH

It's fabulous. Thanks very much. The
principal loves it, too.

JENNY

Thanks.

HUGH

So what's your next project?

JENNY

You know, I was thinking about getting
in touch with whoever's in charge of
that new science and technology school
they're building downtown. Maybe see if
they want some cool murals for the
walls there.

HUGH

That's a great idea.

A long beat of uncomfortable silence.

JENNY

So, where's Catherine?

HUGH

She went home.

JENNY

Oh.

Hugh glances at his watch, but Jenny doesn't notice, and he stands.

HUGH

You know, I think I'm going to go home.

Jenny closes her eyes, gathering her courage for a beat.

JENNY

Don't go.

HUGH

(mystified)

Why not?

Jenny stares at him for a long moment.

JENNY

Because I-- I don't want you to leave.

HUGH

I've had a long day. I'm really tired.

JENNY

You mean... you're just going... home?

HUGH

Isn't that what I said?

JENNY

You're not going back to Wales?

HUGH

No. Why on Earth did you think I was?

JENNY

I thought Catherine came over to take you home.

HUGH

She did.

JENNY

But--

HUGH

I didn't want to go.

They gaze at each other for a long beat.

JENNY

She's gone? And you're staying?

HUGH

That's right.

Jenny stands, takes his face in her hands, and kisses him, long and passionately. He is surprised but quickly overcomes it to wind his arms tightly around her. When they finally break their kiss, she can barely move in his arms.

JENNY

(pretending to gasp)

Hugh, ah, I can't breathe.

HUGH

(loosening his hold)

I just don't want you to run away again.

JENNY

Try and get rid of me.

INT. HUGH'S BEDROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

JENNY'S HEAD

as she dials her cell phone before her face.

HUGH'S SLEEPING FACE

as a phone RINGS offscreen. He reaches and brings the receiver to his ear without opening his eyes.

HUGH (on the phone)

Mmm?

JENNY (over the phone)

It's Jenny. Wanna have breakfast with me?

HUGH (on the phone)

That's a smashing idea.

JENNY (over the phone)

Come on over.

HUGH AND JENNY, TOGETHER IN HIS BED

as he rolls over to wrap his arms around her, and they snuggle close.

HUGH

On second thought, let's stay here a while.

INT. KATONAH DINER - LATER THAT MORNING

RADIO, OVER THE COUNTER

NEWS ANNOUNCER (on the radio)

...where embarrassed researchers announced that it was a case of misaligned, miscalibrated equipment that led them to believe a planet was orbiting Tau Ceti. Guess we'll have to keep looking for ET after all.

HUGH AND JENNY, AT A TABLE

JENNY

I have no job, no paying work, and I don't care.

HUGH

And I have a job that could disappear at the end of the school year. Maybe you'd like Cardiff.

Jenny reaches across the table to clasp his hand.

JENNY

Maybe I would. But then, Heisenberg says we can't be a hundred percent sure about anything. Maybe everything'll work out.

HUGH

(puzzled)

That's not what Heisenberg says.

JENNY

(beat)

No. But it sounds good.

A waitress plops

TWO TEACUPS OF HOT WATER, TEABAGS ON THE SIDE

on the table and hurries away.

Hugh and Jenny glance at the cups, at each other, and then turn to the escaping waitress.

HUGH AND JENNY

Miss!

BLACKOUT - CREDITS ROLL

alongside a montage of scenes:

INT. ST. MICHAEL'S - SUNDAY MORNING

Fiona, sitting in the front pew, winks at

THE NEW PRIEST, AT THE PULPIT

startled and befuddled by her.

Fiona grins her wolfish grin.

EXT. A BASEBALL FIELD IN WOODLAWN - A SUNNY AFTERNOON

Colin and a group of friends play a game of cricket on the baseball diamond.

INT. SCHOOL HALL NEAR SCIENCE ROOM - ONE AFTERNOON

Kids rush past Jenny's mural as a bell RINGS. A gap in the crowd lets us see the finished painting.

FADE OUT