

Ludlow

by
craig houchin

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David Permut, Permut Presentations
permut@permutpres.com

Joel Millner, Larchmont Literary Agency
jm@larchmontlit.com
323.856.3070

WGA #1521345

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO NEIGHBORHOOD - 1971 - NIGHT

Rain pounds the dark neighborhood.

AT THE TOP OF THE STREET

A FAMILY STATION WAGON, bruised and faded, rounds the corner and rolls slowly downhill with a drunken weave.

About half-way down, we spot a narrow gap between the bumpers of two parked cars, and the station wagon curves lazily toward it.

The space is clearly too small for the station wagon to park, but it just keeps coming anyway; and, as it lines up perpendicular to that gap, we finally realize that parking was never the plan. It's coming through!

And with just the slightest bit of metal on metal screeching, the station wagon scrapes through the gap, bumps over the curb, and rolls slowly across the sidewalk into the front yard of a house, where...

THE BUMPER gently pushes over a freshly-planted YOUNG SAPLING about two feet tall. The supple tree slowly b-e-e-e-e-n-d-s over backwards under the bumper, but doesn't break.

And the station wagon creaks to a stop.

INSIDE THE CAR

THE SILHOUETTE OF A MAN looks out the driver's side window at the dark houses. Rain drums deafeningly on the roof.

The man pulls a half-pint bottle of gin from his jacket pocket, tilts his head back and drinks. A street lamp lights his face and we meet...

HARRY. Unshaven, soggy and drunk.

He lowers the bottle and looks again at the houses. And then, seeming to have made some decision, he drains the last of the gin, tosses the empty bottle onto the passenger floor and steps out into the rain.

OUTSIDE

Harry is instantly drenched, but pauses anyway to turn up the collar of his jacket against the rain before staggering off toward the house in front of him.

But after only a few steps he stops. He frowns.

It's the wrong house.

He looks at the house on the left - now back at the house in front of him. Rain pelts him mercilessly.

He sways unsteadily and looks at both houses again - settles for the house on the left and splashes toward it.

INT. HOUSE - NIGHT

THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

Harry reaches for the door knob. It's locked.

He looks in the window. Nothing but dark. So he heads back into the rain and around the side of the house.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Two twin beds are shoved against opposite walls of the room, a bare window between them. THREE YOUNG GIRLS are sleeping: two in one bed, one alone in the other.

Harry presses his face to the window and peers in at them. His eyes turn to the LONE GIRL. She is turned away so we don't see her face, just dark hair on a white pillow.

Harry's eyes linger on her...and then he moves on.

INT. BACK DOOR - NIGHT

THROUGH THE GLASS-PANED BACK DOOR

We watch Harry round the corner of the house, leap onto the porch, skid on the wet surface and fall out of sight.

A moment later he stands up, rubbing his elbow. He shakes the water from his hair and jacket and tries the door.

Locked.

Dammit! He jerks his head in a silent curse and just stands there frowning at the ground - trying to think - but that's not really working too well for him right now.

So -- he just slams his elbow against a pane of glass.

It doesn't break.

He tries again.

Nope.

So this time he really winds up...and SMASHES his elbow through the glass!

Shards skitter across the floor.

Harry freezes, his elbow hanging into the room. He waits...And nothing happens. The hammering downpour drowns all other sound.

Relieved, Harry gingerly pulls his elbow away from the broken glass, reaches in and opens the door.

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

A TRAIL OF WET FOOTPRINTS across the wooden floor leads to Harry. He stands at a closed door. Listening. Dripping.

He eases the door open and looks into the room.

ON THE BED

A NAKED WOMAN and a BIKER-DUDE with long-hair and tattoos, sprawl recklessly - more passed out than merely asleep.

Harry scowls angrily and pulls the door shut.

But then he stops. He thinks about it - and gently pushes the door back open. Just a crack. Just enough so that the door-edge cuts the biker-dude out of the picture, leaving only the naked woman in view.

She lays on her back, her arms flung open, her breasts on display.

Harry smiles as his eyes drift slowly over her body, recalling fond, lustful memories...And then she snorts and rolls her back to us.

Harry sighs wistfully and shuts the door.

INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harry stands silhouetted against the bare window, looking down at the LONE GIRL, watching her sleep.

Her dark hair frames a young face that, even in sleep, wears a troubled frown. This is VICKY (11) the oldest sister.

Harry kneels beside her and puts his hand over her mouth. Her eyes snap open with alarm. Harry grins. Vicky frowns.

VICKY

Dad?

HARRY

(whispers)
Hey kitten.

VICKY

What are you doing here?

HARRY

(whispers)
Shh. C'mon. Get dressed.

Harry throws her covers off and Vicky snatches them back.

VICKY

No.

Undaunted, Harry drags the pillow from under her head, peels off the pillow case, and takes it to the dresser where he begins stuffing clothes into it.

HARRY

C'mon. We gotta go.

VICKY

Go where?

Harry turns to the other bed where a small, blonde head pokes up out of the covers. This is REBECCA (8) the youngest sister. Harry shakes her.

HARRY

Becca. C'mon. Wake up.

She rolls away.

REBECCA

(sleepily)
Do-o-o-on't.

HARRY

C'mon, sweetie. Get up.

Harry kisses the top of her head and goes back to packing.

Rebecca sits up, rubbing her eyes. She notices Harry and just looks at him -- puzzled.

Harry turns back to Vicky and throws off her covers again.

HARRY

Let's go.

Vicky huffs and grudgingly slides out of bed.

VICKY

Where are you taking us?

Harry turns to the girls, spreads his arms dramatically and with a big grin announces...

HARRY

WE -- are going on a family vacation!

Vicky frowns.

VICKY

Family?

Rebecca lights up.

REBECCA

Vacation!

Harry dismisses Vicky's frown and turns to Rebecca.

HARRY

Yes. Vacation. That's why you gotta get up, so we can go.

VICKY

Does Mom know?

Harry turns to her.

HARRY

Of course she knows. We just...we don't want to wake her up right now, all right? So just...
(he leans close)
Shhhhhhhhhh.

Harry goes back to packing as Vicky waves away the foul wind of gin and cigarettes. And now she understands. She rolls her eyes to Rebecca and mimes drinking from a bottle.

Rebecca looks back at Harry, now with less enthusiasm.

Harry drops Vicky's loaded pillow case, peels off Rebecca's, and moves to the closet where he pulls down clothes, hangers and all, and stuffs them into Rebecca's pillow case.

HARRY

Girls! Let's go! Rebecca, wake up Rachel. Victoria, get dressed.

Vicky frowns.

VICKY

I don't like that name.

HARRY

What name?

VICKY

Vic-TOR-ria.

HARRY

I gave you that name. What's wrong with it?

VICKY

I just don't like it, that's all.

HARRY

Yeah, well. Tough shit. Names are like families. You don't get to pick 'em. Now c'mon, get dressed.

Harry notices Rebecca sleepily staring into space and impatiently SNAP-SNAPS his fingers in her face.

HARRY

Becca! Let's go. Wake her up.

Rebecca blinks and turns to RACHEL (10) the middle sister. She sleeps with her face to the wall, her dark, curly hair tangled across her face. Rebecca rocks her back and forth.

REBECCA

Rachel. Wake up.

Vicky looks for her clothes, but Harry has already packed everything so she has to dig through a pillow case to find something to wear.

VICKY

Why do we have to leave now? Why can't we leave in the morning?

Harry keeps packing and doesn't look up.

HARRY

It is morning.

Vicky looks out the window into the dark and then at Harry. She decides not to fight it.

Rebecca shakes Rachel, but she's not waking up. Harry notices.

HARRY

Becca!

REBECCA

I'm trying.

HARRY

Well, try harder. Get her up!

Rebecca shakes Rachel harder - repeatedly thumping her forehead against the wall - and still she doesn't wake up.

REBECCA

(whining)

I ca-a-a-n't.

Harry turns to her.

HARRY

What?

Vicky shakes her head from long experience.

VICKY

She's not gonna wake up.

HARRY

What are you talking about?

VICKY

You can never wake her up.

HARRY

Oh, c'mon.

Harry kneels next to the bed and gently shakes Rachel.

HARRY

(sweet and gentle)

Rach. Rachel.

(now louder and harder)

Rachel!

She's dead asleep. Harry stands back.

HARRY

Jesus. Is she all right?

VICKY

Yeah. She just sleeps like that.

Harry gives Vicky a skeptical look. She shrugs.

EXT. GIRLS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Harry staggers out the front door - herding Vicky and Rebecca in front of him - and carrying the still-sleeping Rachel and three pillow cases full of clothing.

Rain dumps as heavily as before.

HARRY

Let's go!

He steps off the porch into the rain and hurries for the car.

Rebecca and Vicky stay behind, looking at the rain with sour expressions. Harry is half-way to the car before he realizes they haven't followed him. He stops.

HARRY

Vick. Becca. C'mon!

Rebecca steps back, shaking her head. Vicky looks at the downpour and then at Harry.

VICKY

It's raining!

Harry splashes back to the porch.

HARRY

Oh, c'mon. It's not that bad. Look,
Rachel doesn't mind.

He turns so they can see Rachel draped over his shoulder. She's soaked to the skin - and still asleep.

HARRY

C'mon. Just run fast and you won't
get wet.

Vicky and Rebecca exchange skeptical glances as Harry herds them off the porch into the rain.

HARRY

Go! Go! Go!

They dash for the car. Vicky throws open the driver's door, jumps in and scoots across to the passenger side. She's drenched.

Rebecca gets to the back door - but it's locked!

REBECCA

Open it! Open it!

Harry yanks on the door handle a few times, confounded that it won't open. Rebecca screams bloody-murder.

REBECCA

Open it! Open it!

So Harry reaches in through the front door, pulls up the lock and throws the door open. Rebecca dives in. Harry dumps Rachel onto the seat next to her and tosses the wet pillow cases in on top of both of them.

He then slams the door, falls backwards onto the spongy lawn, crawls into the driver's seat and shuts his door.

INSIDE THE STATION WAGON

Harry turns to the girls with a manic grin.

Rebecca and Vicky look like soggy kittens, shivering and crying. Harry laughs and revs the engine.

HARRY

Let's go!

THE STATION WAGON lurches forward...

And the young sapling scrapes and bumps along the bottom of the car, until finally springing back up as the rear bumper passes over it.

It's beat up, minus a few leaves and not quite as straight as before - but it's still alive.

The station wagon continues along the sidewalk, plowing aside some trash cans before bouncing back into the street through an open driveway.

It picks up speed, swerving unsteadily to the bottom of the hill, where it coasts through the STOP sign, turns right, and disappears behind a neon sign that flashes: LIQUOR STORE.

In the distance, the Golden Gate Bridge glows dimly through the downpour.

A moment later, we hear the sound of squealing tires, a revving engine and...

The station wagon hurtles back through the intersection, now headed in the opposite direction.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE PARK - MORNING

Under a clear blue sky...

The station wagon sits in a meadow...surrounded by BUFFALO.

A piece of fencing lays across the hood of the car with a crumpled sign attached to it that reads:

DO NOT FEED THE BUFFALO

INSIDE THE STATION WAGON

Vicky looks out her side window into the enormous face of a buffalo, chewing cud and looking right back at her.

She wins the staring contest when the buffalo lowers its head to get another bite. Vicky then turns to

Harry - dead asleep in the driver's seat, his head thrown back against the side window at a painful angle.

She pokes him roughly. No response. She pokes him again. He groans, tries to move his neck - and groans louder.

Vicky looks at him with zero compassion.

Harry's bleary eyes reluctantly open and settle on her. He blinks. Then frowns, confused. What the hell is she doing here? And where is here?

Vicky offers no help but just glares at him.

And then - the buffalo outside Vicky's window raises up chewing a mouth full of grass - and now Harry is *really* lost.

A rustling in the backseat draws his attention and he looks back to see

Rebecca, rolling over on a pile of clothes. She's wearing a sweater with the hanger still in it. And then...

Rachel rises from the back seat floor - groggy, eyes half-lidded, her hair tossed wildly, and the imprint of the plastic floor mat etched into her cheek. She looks around briefly and then drops back to the floor.

Harry turns back to Vicky and it all starts to make sense - even the buffalo - and Harry drops his head against the window with a dull thud.

EXT. PARK FOUNTAIN - DAY

Harry washes his face in the fountain and cradles his head in his hands like it was full of nitroglycerine.

Rachel and Rebecca sit on the fountain edge, barely awake. Vicky stands apart from them, scowling at Harry.

VICKY

I should call mom.

HARRY

What?

VICKY

I should call mom. Tell her where we are.

HARRY

Call her, then.

Vicky huffs. Looks for a pay-phone and spots one.

VICKY

I need some money.

HARRY

What?

VICKY

Money. For the phone.

Harry groans and searches his pockets for coins. Nothing. So he fishes some out of the fountain and thrusts them at her.

HARRY

Here. Knock yourself out.

Seeing this, Rachel perks up, follows Harry's example and starts rooting coins out of the fountain. Rebecca joins her.

Vicky takes the wet coins and heads for the phone booth.

EXT. PARK PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Vicky dries a dime on her shirt, drops it in the slot and dials a number. It rings - several times - until the other end picks up and fumbles clumsily.

VICKY

Mom?

We only hear Vicky's side of the conversation, but it's quickly apparent that her mom is still wasted.

VICKY

Mom? It's Vicky ... I said it's Vicky ... Yeah, Vicky ...

(MORE)

VICKY (CONT'D)

No, I'm not at the house. I'm with
... No, I'm with dad ... Yeah, dad
... I don't know. I guess he got
out.

The word "asshole" comes through slurred, but audible.

VICKY

Yeah, I know -- But Mom, he wants
to take us ... He wants to take us
on vacation. But I don't wanna go.
I wanna stay home. Okay? So we'll
be home soon. Okay, Mom?...Mom?...

Vicky pulls the phone away from her ear. DIAL TONE. She
clings anxiously to the receiver...

EXT. PARK FOUNTAIN - DAY

Rachel and Rebecca are knee and elbow-deep in the fountain,
scooping up coins and having a blast.

A FROWNING WOMAN with cat-eye sunglasses watches Harry and
the girls disapprovingly.

A BOY tries to get into the fountain to join the game, but
his mother pulls him away crying.

Harry walks around the edge of the fountain, spots a new
mother lode and yells.

HARRY

Over here! Here's some more!

Rachel and Rebecca look up simultaneously and splash across
the fountain, neck and neck, until Rachel shoves Rebecca
behind her and gets to the coins first.

Rebecca protests noisily - but only briefly - as she soon
finds her own rich claim and resumes scooping up coins.

Harry steps off the fountain and drops onto a bench, rubbing
his temples. He pulls a wrinkled, hand-rolled cigarette from
his jacket pocket and lights it.

The frowning woman gives Harry a dirty look. He smiles and
blows her a kiss. She recoils indignantly and walks away.

Harry hangs his throbbing head into hands and barely notices
when Vicky sits down on the other end of his bench. She sits
quietly for a moment and then glances at Harry...

A few strands of his hair hang down into the burning end of his cigarette.

Vicky watches his hair smolder - and looks away.

A moment later, perhaps feeling guilty or just curious, she looks back at Harry and sees a thin line of smoke now rising from his hair. She watches it. Thinks about it. And reluctantly speaks up...

VICKY

Dad.

(no response)

Dad.

Harry growls in bad-temper without looking up.

HARRY

What?

Vicky glances at the rising smoke - and changes her mind.

VICKY

Nothing.

Annoyed, Harry looks up at her - and sees his smoking hair.

HARRY

Dammit!

He swats it out and shoots Vicky an angry look. She coolly turns away, and they each withdraw to their corners.

Rachel and Rebecca continue dredging coins from the fountain.

Harry - calmer now - glances at Vicky. Once. Twice. And then, reluctantly, he breaks first.

HARRY

So. Did you talk to her?

VICKY

Who?

HARRY

(irritated)

Your mom.

VICKY

Yeah.

Harry waits...but Vicky doesn't offer any more.

HARRY

Well? What did you tell her?

VICKY

I told her you were gonna take us home.

Harry sits up.

HARRY

You did? What'd she say?

VICKY

She said "good." She wants us to come home.

Harry looks out across the lawn. His drunken courage now gone, he feels oddly strung between relief and disappointment. Neither one a clear winner.

HARRY

Well. I guess that's what we ought to do then, huh?

Vicky nods without looking at him and Harry nods with her.

HARRY

(softly)
Yeah.

He takes a drag from his cigarette and watches the girls in the fountain. Then, tentatively...

HARRY

Did she -- wanna talk to me?

Vicky answers definitively.

VICKY

No.

Harry shrugs. He figured as much.

HARRY

Yeah. All right. I'll take you home.

He flicks away his cigarette and goes to the fountain.

HARRY

Rach! Becca! C'mon!

Rachel ignores Harry and keeps rooting up coins. Rebecca wades to the edge of the fountain and Harry lifts her out.

REBECCA

Look what I got!

She dumps her coins into Harry's hand and sits down to put on her sandals. Harry counts her coins, nods approvingly...

And Vicky watches as he slips the coins into his pocket.

REBECCA

Can we stay longer?

HARRY

Sorry, sweetie. I gotta take you home.

REBECCA

But I thought we were going on vacation.

HARRY

Yeah, well... I wanted to. But your mom says I gotta to take you home.

REBECCA

Awww!

HARRY

Rachel! C'mon!

Rachel wades toward Harry, scooping up more coins along the way. The coins in her rolled-up shirt-front sag like a bowling ball in a wet dish towel.

HARRY

Whoa! Look at you. How much you get?

Rachel eyes him suspiciously, cracks open her shirt just enough for Harry to peek in - and then snaps it shut!

HARRY

Mmm.

Rebecca finishes buckling her sandals and looks around for her coins. Harry watches her innocently.

Rachel pours her coins into one of her SOCKS and knots the end. She then puts on her other sock and both shoes, and announces...

RACHEL

I'm hungry. I wanna eat.

REBECCA

(now forgetting her coins)
Oh, me too! Me too! Can we go to a
restaurant!?

VICKY

We can eat at home.

RACHEL

We don't have anything at home.

Vicky glances at Harry and then shoots an angry "shut-up"
look at Rachel. Rachel responds with a "make me" glare.

REBECCA

Pleeease! Can we?

Harry looks at Vicky, putting her on the spot.

HARRY

It's okay with me.

Vicky faces the three of them - realizes she's not going to
win - and stomps away toward the car.

Harry claps his hands.

HARRY

All right then! Breakfast it is.
Rachel, you're buying.

Rachel scowls and clutches her SOCK OF COINS as Harry laughs
and leads them toward the car.

INT. ED'S DINER - DAY

Harry and the girls enter and the CASHIER - a matronly, no-
nonsense business owner - waves them in.

CASHIER

Anywhere you want.

Rebecca hops into the first booth they come to, but Harry
pulls her out.

HARRY

Not that one.

He steers them toward a booth near the back, next to a FAMILY
OF FOUR.

This family is well-scrubbed and neatly dressed - a sharp
contrast to the scruffy appearance of Harry and the girls.

A contrast that the MATRIARCH of the clan notes with a disdainful glance as they pass her table.

Harry picks the booth next-door to them, nudges Rebecca into the window seat, and then slides in beside her with his back to the wall and a clear view of the room.

Vicky takes the window seat across from Rebecca and Rachel flops down across from Harry.

RACHEL

I want pancakes.

REBECCA

Oooh, me too! Can we?

HARRY

(grandly)

Sure. Get whatever you want.

REBECCA

Really?

HARRY

Yeah. Hell yeah. Whatever you want.

Rebecca claps excitedly. Vicky slouches into her corner, determined to NOT enjoy any of this.

The WAITRESS, 40's and curvy, arrives and hands out menus. Her name is EVELYN.

EVELYN

Good morning. Can I get you some coffee or juice?

Harry's eyes move up the curves of Evelyn's body to her face. He smiles. Even through the scruff he's a charmer.

Vicky rolls her eyes and looks out the window.

HARRY

Why, yes you can, uh...

He makes a show of reading her name tag.

HARRY

...Evelyn. I would love a cup of coffee.

She returns his flirtatious smile and fills his cup.

EVELYN

How about some orange juice for the girls?

RACHEL

Yes!

REBECCA

Please!

Evelyn looks at Harry.

EVELYN

Daddy?

HARRY

Whatever my angels want.

Rebecca quivers with excitement.

EVELYN

All right. I'll be right back with your juice and get your orders.

Evelyn walks away and Harry leans out to watch her hips swing down the aisle.

Rachel looks back over her shoulder at the receding waitress, and then turns to Harry...

His eyes shift from Evelyn's ass...to his daughter's face, looking at him more knowingly than a ten-year-old should.

He frowns, looks away uncomfortably, and lights a cigarette. Rachel just smiles, watching him squirm.

REBECCA

Dad.

HARRY

Hmm.

REBECCA

Do you still live in San Francisco?

HARRY

Sure I do. Why?

REBECCA

Well why haven't we seen you for so long?

RACHEL

Yeah. It's been like a year or something.

HARRY

Oh, c'mon. It hasn't been a year.

Harry takes a drag, does a quick bit of mental math, and realizes -- huh, maybe it has.

REBECCA

Where have you been, then?

HARRY

Oh, you know, just around. Working. Stuff like that.

VICKY

He's been in jail.

Harry looks coldly at Vicky. She doesn't flinch. The Matriarch next door glances up, listening.

REBECCA

In jail?

HARRY

Well. Yes. I was in jail for a little while. But that's all over now.

REBECCA

What were you in jail for?

Rachel pours sugar into her palm and licks it.

RACHEL

(needling him)

Yeah. What'd you do? Kill somebody?

Harry gives Rachel a dismissive look and then notices Rebecca looking at him with concern.

HARRY

(emphatically)

No. I didn't kill anybody.

He scowls at Rachel "see what you've done." She just smiles and licks the rest of the sugar from her palm.

RACHEL

So, what did you do?

Harry shrugs.

HARRY

Nothing.

The girls just look at him. They know there's more.

HARRY

It was nothing. Okay?

The girls wait. The matriarch waits.

HARRY

It wasn't even my fault. I just...I had a little argument with a guy... and...I hit him.

He glances at Vicky and she turns to the window. Behind her, the matriarch arches a disapproving eyebrow.

REBECCA

That's all?

HARRY

Pretty much.

REBECCA

And they put you in jail for that?

Harry shrugs like he can't believe it either.

HARRY

Crazy, right?

REBECCA

I wish they could put kids in jail. 'Cause Rachel hits me all the time. And for no reason!

Rachel swats across the table and Rebecca dodges it.

RACHEL

Do not!

REBECCA

Do too!

Rachel starts to swing again when Evelyn returns with the orange juice.

HARRY

All right! All right! Knock it off! Both of you, sit down. -- Sorry about that, Evelyn.

EVELYN

Oh, that's all right...

She hands out the orange juice - and slides Harry a sultry smile.

EVELYN

...I don't mind a little rough-housing now and then.

Harry smiles in return.

EVELYN

All right, who knows what they want?

RACHEL

I do!

EVELYN

Okay, we'll start with you.

INT. ED'S DINER - DAY

Everyone is finished but Rachel. She's an eating machine, picking over the scraps of everyone's plate, mopping up the last drops of syrup, crusts of toast and bites of egg.

Harry smokes and watches her with amused disbelief.

Vicky keeps to herself - her face turned to the window.

Rebecca, meanwhile, blows into a straw, trying unsuccessfully, to blow off the paper wrapper, but it has a hole in the end and just flaps around each time she blows.

Harry watches her a moment and then reaches over and folds up the end.

HARRY

Try now.

Rebecca takes a deep breath and blows. The paper missile rockets off the straw and smacks into the side of Vicky's face! Surprising both her and Rebecca.

VICKY

Quit it!

REBECCA

I didn't mean to.

Harry laughs. Vicky scowls and turns back to her window.

Harry studies her a moment, and then starts in...

HARRY

So I saw your mom had a guy over
last night. Is that her boyfriend?

Vicky doesn't answer, so Rachel does.

RACHEL

(her mouth full)
I don't know. I never seen him
before.

Vicky turns sharply from the window, speaking in strange
code.

VICKY

Shut-a-fut up-a-fup!

RACHEL

You-di-foo shut-a-fut up-a-fup!

HARRY

Hey! Hey! Hey! What the hell is
that?

Vicky and Rachel look away, not answering.

REBECCA

It's Hog Latin - and they won't
teach me.

HARRY

Hog Latin? You learn that in
school?

Rachel shrugs.

RACHEL

At school.

HARRY

Yeah, well...keep it to English,
all right. I like to know what's
going on.

He glances at Vicky - before turning again to Rachel.

HARRY

So anyway. This guy last night...
Is he some new guy?

RACHEL

I guess.

Vicky huffs and Harry presses on.

HARRY

Does she have any other boyfriends?

RACHEL

Pff! About a hundred.

Vicky turns from the window!

VICKY

That's not true!

RACHEL

It is, too!

(she counts on her
fingers)

There's Richard. And Eddie. And
that blonde guy she met in the
park....

Each name is like a slap to Vicky and she sinks into the booth, more and more humiliated. The Matriarch raises another judgemental eyebrow.

RACHEL

...that guy with the little car
that we couldn't fit into. Ar-man-
do or whatever. That stupid guy
from the stereo store...

VICKY

All right!

Rachel smirks victoriously. Rebecca peeks up at Harry, not sure how he'll react.

Harry just nods thoughtfully and stubs out his cigarette.

HARRY

Well...I guess it's no secret. Your
mom loves to screw.

Rachel and Rebecca's mouths drop open and they giggle. Vicky sinks into her seat, mortified - and the Matriarch peers around her husband's head right at Harry.

He just smiles and shrugs.

HARRY

Can't really hold that against her.

The offended Matriarch gathers her family to leave and Harry sees his opportunity.

HARRY

C'mon. We're going.

RACHEL

(her mouth full)
I'm not finished.

Harry sweeps her scraps into a napkin and hands it to her.

HARRY

You're finished. Let's go.

He pulls Rachel out of the booth and blocks the aisle, keeping the Matriarch and her family in their booth while Vicky and Rebecca slide out and head for the register.

AT THE REGISTER

Rachel and Rebecca peer into the glass case.

RACHEL

Oooh. I want gum.

REBECCA

Me too.

HARRY

All right, I'll get you gum. Go
wait in the car. Go on.
(to the cashier)
Couple packs of Juicy Fruit.

The girls leave the diner, and Harry watches them walk across the street to the car.

The Matriarch and her family get in line behind Harry as the CASHIER sets the gum on the counter and looks at Harry expectantly.

CASHIER

Your check?

HARRY

Hmm?

CASHIER

Do you have your check?

Harry pats his pockets and makes a silly face.

HARRY

I must have left it at the table.

The Matriarch rolls her eyes, annoyed.

HARRY

Why don't you help these folks and
I'll be right back.

He swipes the gum from the counter and heads back to the table.

The cashier rings up the Matriarch and watches them leave. But when she turns to look for Harry - he's gone.

Evelyn passes by with two breakfast plates in her hands.

CASHIER

Evelyn. Where's that fella with the
little girls you were waiting on?

Evelyn looks around, disappointed when she doesn't see Harry.

EVELYN

Oh. I don't know.

At that moment the cashier sees Harry - OUTSIDE - scurrying past the windows.

CASHIER

Son-of-a-bitch! Ed! We got a
runner!

EXT. ED'S DINER - DAY

The girls lean against the car, waiting for Harry...

Who dashes around the corner, waving and shouting!

HARRY

Get in the car! Get in the car!

The girls react slowly until they see the CASHIER and ED, the cook, burst through the front door in hot pursuit!

They scramble into the car! Harry jumps in right behind them and revs the engine. Vicky looks out the back window... The cashier and cook are closing in.

The station wagon lunges into street and the cook hurls his SPATULA after it!

In the backseat, Rachel and Rebecca duck as the spatula bounces off the back window. Harry laughs and watches the cook and cashier in his rear-view mirror fall away behind him.

Vicky scowls angrily.

EXT. GIRLS' HOUSE - DAY

Harry double parks and Vicky immediately gets out of the car.

Rachel slides out of the backseat with her pillow case full of clothes and calls after her.

RACHEL

Vicky! Get your clothes. I'm not carrying 'em.

Rebecca scoots across the backseat to get out, but stops and turns to Harry.

REBECCA

I wish we could go on vacation.

HARRY

Yeah. Me too, sweetie. Maybe next time.

Rebecca reaches over the seat and surprises Harry with a hug.

REBECCA

Bye, daddy.

Harry just nods, unbalanced by her affection.

Rebecca slides out with her pillow case just as Vicky leans into the backseat to grab hers. She is about to close the door when...

HARRY

Hey.

She stops and looks at him. He smiles sheepishly.

HARRY

Love me?

Vicky just looks at him - and shuts the door.

Harry watches her drag her pillow case up the porch and into the house. The front door closes behind her.

And then Harry just sits - looking at that closed door - unwilling to drive away.

INT. GIRL'S HOUSE - DAY

Rachel is on the couch watching television when Vicky enters.

VICKY

Where's mom?

Rachel shrugs without looking away from the TV and Vicky heads down the hall.

VICKY

Mom?

AT HER MOTHER'S BEDROOM she looks inside.

The dresser drawers and closet door hang open as if someone has hastily packed. Vicky spins and hurries down the hall to the back room.

VICKY

Mom!?

No one. Just the broken glass from Harry's break-in. She runs into the KITCHEN and sees...

THE NOTE - taped to the refrigerator.

She pulls it down, not liking what she reads.

Rachel enters and Vicky quickly turns away, concealing the note behind her. Rachel opens the fridge, sighs and slams the door.

RACHEL

I told you we didn't have anything.
(she notices the note)
What's that?

VICKY

Nothing.

Vicky walks to the door. Rachel blocks her.

RACHEL

What is it?

VICKY

Nothing!

She tries to move past but Rachel grabs her arm.

RACHEL

Gimme that!

VICKY

No!

Rachel wrestles the note away from Vicky and quickly reads enough of it before Vicky snatches it back.

RACHEL

What the hell!

Rebecca enters.

REBECCA

What's going on?

RACHEL

Mom's gone!

VICKY

She'll be back!

RACHEL

In a week! Maybe!

REBECCA

A week!

WE HEAR an angry CAR HORN blast from the street outside.

RACHEL

Yeah, a week. And now dad's gone.

VICKY

We don't need dad!

RACHEL

We need to eat!

VICKY

I'll take care of it!

RACHEL

What are you gonna do?

VICKY

We've been alone before. It's not a big deal.

RACHEL

Yeah. But mom usually leaves us something - at least some money.

VICKY

Well she didn't this time! All right! You gonna cry about it?

RACHEL

No! I'm not gonna cry about it. But we should have gone with dad.

VICKY

I'm not going with dad!

Rebecca, more panicked than hopeful, bolts for the door!

REBECCA

Daddy! Daddy!

EXT. GIRLS' HOUSE - DAY

Rebecca bursts from the front door...

REBECCA

Daddy! Da...!

...and stops abruptly - surprised to actually see Harry still there.

He's standing in the street in a heated shouting match with a driver trying to pass him on the narrow street.

Rebecca leaps from the porch and runs to him.

REBECCA

Daddy!

Harry stops in mid-curse and turns just in time to catch Rebecca as she jumps into his arms, crying.

The other driver gives up and walks back to his car.

Rachel runs onto the porch, sees Harry and quickly recovers her "cool indifference."

Vicky stops on the porch, sees Harry - and stomps back into the house.

INT. GIRL'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Harry sits at the kitchen table silently reading his ex-wife's note. The girls sit across from him.

REBECCA

What does it say?

Harry looks at the girls, clears his throat and reads aloud.

HARRY

(reading)

"Harry, You asshole."

Rachel stifles a giggle and Harry continues.

HARRY

(reading)

"When were you going to tell me you were out? You are such an asshole."

(he takes a breath - and continues)

"I know you are reading this, because I know you will try to crap out and dump the girls back on me."

Vicky's eyes turn to the floor.

HARRY

(continues reading)

"Not this time. It's your turn. I'll be back in a week or so. Take the girls like you promised. And fix my door, you asshole."

(he then adds cheerily)

Love, Helen.

He lays the note on the table and looks at the girls.

VICKY

It doesn't say "love, Helen."

Harry just looks at her.

REBECCA

So...are we going on vacation now?

EXT. GIRLS' HOUSE - DAY

Rachel walks out the front door carrying a large lamp. Harry follows her with the TV and takes a last look around.

INSIDE - there are a lot of blank spots where furniture and knick-knacks used to be. Harry pulls the door shut with his foot and walks to the car.

Rachel carries the lamp to the back of the car, but it's jam-packed. She shakes her head skeptically, sets the lamp by the tailgate and steps back to watch Harry try to fit it all in.

Harry is able to shove enough things out of the way to get the TV in - but the lamp is another story.

Rachel watches him try it one way and then another. It's frustrating to him, but amusing to her. She giggles and Harry gives her a testy glance, and then gives up on the lamp.

HARRY

Just get in the car.

She smiles and gets in the car, and they drive away - leaving the lamp on the sidewalk behind them.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

The girls wait in the car outside the pawn shop. Vicky kicks something on the floor and reaches down to find Harry's empty gin bottle. She shows it to Rachel with a "told you so" look.

Rachel shrugs and Vicky drops the bottle back onto the floor.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - Vicky watches Harry exit the pawn shop, counting cash. He gets in and starts the engine.

VICKY

Mom's gonna be mad about you stealing her stuff.

HARRY

Yeah, well. She'll just have to add it to the list of shit she's already mad about.

He pulls the shift lever into drive and Rebecca pipes up...

REBECCA

Now are we going on vacation?

What choice does he have? Harry sighs.

HARRY

I guess we are.

And the battered station wagon joins the flow of traffic headed toward the Golden Gate Bridge.

INT. STATION WAGON - DRIVING - DAY

They drive in silence.

Rebecca looks out at the passing scenery with optimistic excitement. Vicky scowls. Harry sips a can of beer, and Rachel chews a wad of gum - breaking the silence from time to time with a loud, smacking pop.

After a particularly loud pop - Vicky glances back with an annoyed glare. Rachel just looks at her - and smacks her gum.

Harry drains a beer and...

HARRY

Bombs away!

Drops the empty can over the seat at Rachel's feet.

RACHEL

Hey!

HARRY

I said bombs away.

Rachel kicks the can under the seat, as Vicky watches Harry pull the tab on another beer and take a swig. Harry notices her disapproving glare, raises his beer to her in a mocking toast, and takes another swig. Vicky turns away.

Rebecca sees a sign ahead for PLAYLAND AMUSEMENT PARK and perks up.

REBECCA

Look! Playland! Can we go?

Harry glances disinterestedly.

HARRY

Naw. Those places are rip-offs.

He takes another swig and keeps driving. Rebecca deflates and watches Playland pass by.

EXT. GAS STATION/CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

The station wagon veers off the highway into the station.

INSIDE THE CAR - The girls are asleep.

HARRY

(playfully)

Wake up! Wake up! We're here!

The girls jolt awake and try to get their bearings.

REBECCA

(groggy)

What?

(then excited)

Where are we!?

(MORE)

REBECCA (CONT'D)

(then disappointed)

Oh.

The station wagon stops alongside the pumps and Harry gets out, stretches and lights a cigarette.

Rachel gets out behind him and empty beer cans tumble out with her. Harry looks at the cans and then at Rachel.

HARRY

You gonna pick those up?

RACHEL

They're not mine.

She kicks the cans and looks at Harry challengingly.

Harry pins her with a hard look as he walks to the gas pump.

HARRY

Don't you start.

RACHEL

You started it.

HARRY

Rachel! I mean it. You don't want to tangle with me.

Rachel's defiant look says otherwise.

Harry lets it go - for now. He unhooks the pump nozzle and turns to Vicky, sitting in the front seat.

HARRY

Vick! Come here. I wanna show you how to do this.

VICKY

No thanks.

HARRY

I'm not asking. Get your butt out here.

Vicky huffs and slides out of the car. Rebecca pokes her head out the window.

REBECCA

I need to go pee.

HARRY

All right, come on. Get out.

Harry, his cigarette dangling from his lips, sticks the pump nozzle into the tank, wraps Vicky's hands around the handle and starts the pump.

HARRY

Hold it like this until it's full.
And don't spill any. You don't want
to blow the place up.

Vicky looks at him nervously. Is he kidding? But Harry has already turned to Rebecca.

HARRY

C'mon.

She follows Harry into the store, doing the "I really gotta pee" dance.

Vicky holds tightly to the gas nozzle and glances nervously after Harry.

INSIDE THE STORE

The CLERK anxiously watches Vicky at the pump as Harry enters.

HARRY

Where's your restroom?

CLERK

Uh - 'round the side.

Harry points and gives Rebecca a little shove out the door.

The clerk nods toward Vicky.

CLERK

She know how to use that thing?

Harry shrugs.

HARRY

I think so.

The clerk doesn't like that answer and goes out to pump the gas himself, reluctantly leaving Harry alone in the store.

Harry picks up a Styrofoam cooler, some bread, bologna and a six-pack of beer - he glances out at the clerk - and casually slips some Twinkies, candy and Slim Jims into his pockets.

AT THE RESTROOM

Rebecca dances urgently around the corner, opens the restroom door and stops - horrified.

The floor, walls and toilet look like a Jackson Pollack done in diarrhea.

Rebecca just stands in the doorway afraid to go inside - but she really, really has to pee.

BACK INSIDE THE STORE

Harry stands at the counter ready to check out as the clerk comes back in from the pump. Harry smiles.

HARRY

How'd she do?

CLERK

(annoyed)

Fine.

HARRY

Glad to hear it.

The clerk rings him up.

INSIDE THE STATION WAGON

Rachel hangs over the front seat, fighting with Vicky for control of the radio dial. Harry opens the door.

HARRY

Hey! Knock it off!

He shoves Rachel into the back, turns off the radio, sets the cooler on the front seat and gets in next to it.

He fishes a couple of Twinkies out of his coat pocket and tosses them into the backseat.

HARRY

Here. Don't say I never gave you nothin'.

He notices Rebecca looking a little green.

HARRY

What's wrong with you?

She glances at him, but is too shell-shocked to speak. Harry shrugs and offers Vicky a Twinkie. She shakes her head and turns to her window.

HARRY

Suit yourself. Rach, Vicky doesn't want hers.

He tosses the Twinkie over the backseat to Rachel - which quickly gets Vicky's attention.

Rachel tauntingly waves the Twinkie at her. Vicky frowns. Harry grins and starts the car.

INT. STATION WAGON - DRIVING - DAY

Harry drives and sips beer. The girls stare out their windows. A Top-40 station fills the silence.

Rachel smacks her gum, and Vicky shoots her a nasty look. A new song starts and Rachel perks up.

RACHEL

Oooh! I like this song.

Vicky immediately changes the station.

RACHEL

Hey! Put it back.

Vicky gives Rachel a cold look and spins the radio dial.

RACHEL

I said, put it back!

Vicky ignores her and keeps spinning through the stations.

RACHEL

Put it BACK!

Rachel lunges over the seat at Vicky!

THE STATION WAGON swerves onto the shoulder. The tires spit up gravel.

HARRY gets the car under control and tries to lift his ass out of a cold pool of spilled beer.

HARRY

Goddammit, Rachel!

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

TIRES lock-up and skid.

FROM ACROSS THE HIGHWAY we watch the station wagon slide to a stop on the far shoulder. Cars pass between us in both directions.

A beat later, the station wagon lunges angrily back onto the highway...leaving Rachel on the roadside.

INT. STATION WAGON - DRIVING - DAY

Vicky looks back at Rachel, getting smaller and smaller. And then she turns to Harry, but he just keeps driving like he has no intention of ever going back.

This is a test of wills, goddammit. And he will not be beaten by a 10-year-old girl.

He looks into the rearview mirror and sees...

Rachel turn and start walking back to San Francisco.

Harry scowls and turns to the road ahead.

Rebecca looks back now. She can't even see Rachel anymore. She turns to Vicky to do something.

Vicky turns back to Harry. Is he bluffing? She doesn't want to get suckered - but she's starting to worry, too.

VICKY

Dad?

Harry ignores her - and Rebecca cries out.

REBECCA

Daddy! Don't leave Rachel!

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Rachel is marching back to San Francisco with a determined scowl when Harry swings a u-turn, drives up the shoulder and stops in front of her.

He was expecting a chastened young lady in tears, but what he sees in front of him is a bull dog, squared-off against him with her hands on her hips and a glare that could crack glass.

Shit. But Harry has no choice but to blunder on and try to salvage this failed experiment in parenting.

HARRY

Are you though being a little twit?

Rachel doesn't answer or move - and Harry can feel the tide of the battle begin turn against him.

HARRY

Rachel. I want you to get in this car now.

Rachel crosses her arms and scowls even harder. Harry glances at Vicky and Rebecca who watch this contest closely.

HARRY

Rachel! Get in the car!

She doesn't move. She's won. She knows it and Harry knows it.

HARRY

Dammit, Rachel!

Harry throws open his door and goes after her, but she easily avoids him by running to the opposite side of the car, and each time he moves toward her, she counter-moves, keeping the car between them.

He should quit now - he knows it - but he just can't help himself, and chases after her.

INSIDE THE CAR - Vicky and Rebecca watch Harry chase Rachel round and round.

AND FROM ACROSS THE HIGHWAY - Cars rush to and fro between us, as we watch Harry, like a drunken bear, stagger and lunge and fall and get up and do it all over again - yet never come close to nabbing Rachel.

INT. STATION WAGON - DRIVING - DAY

Harry drives, holding a bloody napkin to his nose. He scowls into the mirror at Rachel - who defiantly scowls right back.

EXT. HAPPY TRAILS MOTEL - EVENING

The station wagon careens angrily into the parking lot past the "Happy Trails Motel" sign.

INT. HAPPY TRAILS MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

The door crashes open and Harry angrily herds the girls into the room. It is small, dingy and cheap.

RACHEL

What a dump. There's not even a TV.
What are we supposed to do now?

Harry sets the cooler on the dresser.

HARRY

I don't give a shit.

And heads for the door.

VICKY

Where are you going?

HARRY

Out.

RACHEL

You're just gonna leave?

Harry slams the door behind him. Vicky runs to the window and watches Harry get in the car and drive away. Rebecca looks at her sisters with concern.

REBECCA

Is he coming back?

Rachel and Vicky glance at each other. They're pretty sure he'll be back, but not a hundred percent sure.

RACHEL

I'm gonna eat.

Rachel grabs the bologna and bread out of the cooler and makes a sandwich. Vicky looks out the window and tries to convince herself.

VICKY

Yeah. He'll be back.

Rachel bites into her sandwich as Vicky goes to the cooler.

VICKY

Is there any mayonnaise?

RACHEL

(chewing dryly)

No.

Vicky slaps a piece of bologna between two slices of white bread, sits on the bed across from Rachel and glumly eats.

Rebecca stands by the door - very uncertain about her future.

INT. HAPPY TRAILS MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Headlights burn an outline around the curtains as a car pulls up to the room. The engine stops. Car doors open.

A WOMAN giggles. Footsteps. A key fumbles in the door and...

Harry staggers into the room with a giggling woman in tow. They are both very drunk.

HARRY

Shhhhh.

The woman notices the sleeping girls all piled into one bed.

GIGGLING WOMAN

Who's that?

HARRY

Nobody.

He leads her by the hand into the bathroom where he shuts the door and turns on the light.

THROUGH THE CRACK UNDER THE DOOR - their feet move together and the giggling quickly turns to panting. Clothes rustle and fall to the floor.

HARRY (O.S.)

(whispering delightedly)

Goddamn! Look at those titties!

A devouring growl. Giggling. Panting. And now thumping, rough and rhythmic, against the wall. We hear the shower curtain rip from its rings. More thumping. More grunting.

INT. HAPPY TRAILS MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The room is dark except for a little morning light creeping in around the edges of the curtains.

Rebecca, still mostly asleep, slides out of bed and stumbles to the bathroom, not noticing the woman in Harry's bed.

IN THE BATHROOM - She closes the door and turns on the light. Shutting her eyes against the brightness, she feels her way to the toilet, sits down and starts to pee.

Only then does she slowly open her eyes and - in a blink - she's wide awake!

The bathroom looks like a battlefield. Towels on the ground. The shower curtain torn down. Toilet paper rolled out across the floor.

She just looks at it, startled.

EXT. HAPPY TRAILS MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The motel room door opens and Harry, bleary-eyed, ruffled and unshaven quickly and quietly herds the girls out of the room, leaving the woman asleep in bed behind them.

REBECCA

Who's that lady?

HARRY

Nobody.

He shuts the door and hustles the girls to the car.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The station wagon is parked on the shoulder of the highway, on the outskirts of some small town.

Harry leans against the hood, nursing a hangover and smoking a cigarette. Vicky and Rebecca sit in the car waiting for Rachel who is squatting in the tall grass, taking a pee. She calls out to Harry.

RACHEL

Hey! Are we just gonna drive all day again?

HARRY

I don't know. Why?

RACHEL

'Cause it's boring.

Rebecca leans out her window.

REBECCA

Yeah. We wanna do something fun.

Vicky listens but doesn't join in.

HARRY

Like what?

REBECCA

I don't know. Something.

Rachel walks out of the grass and leans against the car.

RACHEL

Why do we have to keep driving all the time?

HARRY

It's a driving vacation. That's what you do. You drive. How the hell else you gonna get anywhere?

RACHEL

Where are we trying to get to?

Harry looks at her dumbly. He doesn't have an answer - and that pisses him off. He flicks away his cigarette.

HARRY

Get in the car.

Rachel frowns and drags herself to the car door.

RACHEL

Well we better do something soon, 'cause this is rotten.

EXT. WORLD'S LARGEST REDWOOD - DAY

Harry and the girls stand before a giant slice of Redwood, rising nearly 15-feet to a pointed apex. It looks like a giant slice of pie standing on end.

Harry reads the plaque.

HARRY

Says this came from one of the largest trees they pulled out of this area about a hundred years ago. Says they built a whole hotel down in San Francisco out of this one tree. Huh.

Harry turns to the girls.

HARRY

That's pretty goddammed impressive, don't you think?

Rebecca's not sure how to answer that, so she doesn't. Rachel rolls her eyes and walks away without comment.

Harry turns to Vicky.

HARRY

I guess you think it's shit, too?

VICKY

(shrugs)

It's all right.

Harry looks up at the slice of tree, trying to think of something else to say and then...

HARRY

Aw, fuck it.

He strides off to the car with the girls trotting after him.

EXT. LAZY MOON MOTEL - EVENING

The station wagon skids to a stop in front of a motel room door. The girls pile out, and the station wagon drives away, leaving them standing in the parking lot with their pillow cases and fast-food bags.

INT. LAZY MOON MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The girls lay on the beds watching morning cartoons.

Harry sits by himself at the dinette table, sipping a breakfast beer and rolling cigarettes. He sets a finished one in a neat row next to two others and starts a new one.

From the bed, Rebecca watches Harry roll the cigarette, and then goes to the table and sits down next to him.

Harry glances at her but is still recovering from whatever he did the night before and isn't interested in talking.

REBECCA

Can I do one?

Harry looks at her, slightly annoyed by this intrusion on his morning routine.

HARRY

Yeah, okay.

He hands her a rolling paper and brusquely walks her through the motions as they each roll one.

HARRY

Here. Lay the paper out like this.
Sprinkle in tobacco...roll it...
Lick it. And...

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

(he holds up his finished
cigarette)

That's what it ought to look like.

He starts another while Rebecca carefully finishes hers. When she's done, she holds it up.

REBECCA

How's this?

Not expecting much, Harry takes the cigarette from her and looks it over. Rachel and Vicky watch from the bed.

HARRY

Huh. That's pretty damn good.

Rebecca smiles proudly.

REBECCA

Can I do another one?

HARRY

Yeah.

Rachel comes over.

RACHEL

Can I try one?

HARRY

Sure. Make yourself useful.

He hands out rolling papers to Rebecca and Rachel, sets the tobacco in the center of the table and starts again with his instructions. A little more attentively this time.

HARRY

So lay the paper out in front of
you like this. Take a little
tobacco. Yep, that's good. No, not
so much. Put some of that back...

Vicky watches a moment, and then sits next to Rachel.

Harry holds up a rolling paper questioningly. Vicky shrugs. Harry sets it down in front of her anyway and continues with his instructions. Vicky quietly joins in.

HARRY

Okay. Now that you've got the
tobacco in the paper, you wanna
kinda hold it in place, see, with
your fingers, like this, while you
roll the paper up around it.

(MORE)

HARRY (CONT'D)

Try to make it good and tight.
That's right. Now, you gotta lick
this part. Paste it down and there
you go.

The girls hold up their cigarettes for inspection.

HARRY

All right. Very good. Very good.
You girls are gonna be good for
something after all.

They all smile, enjoying their first family activity
together. Even Vicky.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Harry pushes a shopping cart as Rebecca stands on the front
wheels, facing him. Vicky and Rachel pull items off the
shelves and toss them into the cart.

HARRY

Grab some of those pickles there.

Rachel grabs the pickles. Rebecca surveys the chip selection.

REBECCA

Can we get two kinds of chips?

HARRY

Sure. Get three or four.

Rachel puts the pickles in the cart as Harry glances up and
down the aisle mischievously, and then pulls her close.

HARRY

Here.

He stuffs a pack of mini-donuts under her shirt.

She looks at him, surprised and nervous. He winks and grabs
more snacks and hides them on Vicky and Rebecca, under their
shirts and in their shorts.

The danger is exhilarating and the girls giggle. Harry
shushes them and they move off down the aisle, trying to be
nonchalant.

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Harry and the girls hustle out of the store laughing and then
break into a run toward their car.

The girls hobble awkwardly as they try to hold onto their contraband. A package of donuts slips out of Vicky's shorts. She laughs and goes back for it.

INT. WAGON WHEEL MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The girls are freshly bathed and sitting on the bed with wet hair, watching television and sharing a carton of ice cream.

Harry walks out of the bathroom drying his hair and tosses the wet towel at the girls. They laugh and Rachel throws it back at him. Harry then pulls on a shirt, grabs his jacket and heads for the door.

REBECCA

Dad. Can you watch TV with us tonight?

Harry hesitates. Vicky watches him.

HARRY

I don't know. What are you watching?

REBECCA

The Brady Bunch.

HARRY

Is it any good?

Rachel and Rebecca nod fervently. Harry shrugs.

HARRY

What the hell. I'll try anything once.

He drops his jacket, pulls a beer out of the ice chest and squeezes in between Rebecca and Rachel. Vicky smiles.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - DAY

A bowling ball slams into the pins. They fly. A strike.

Harry swaggers back to his seat. The girls are impressed.

HARRY

You're up, Becca.

Rebecca lugs her ball to the foul line, sets it down with a heavy thud and, two-handed, shoves it down the lane.

The ball s-l-o-w-l-y r-o-l-l-s toward the pins - and miraculously knocks down most of them.

She cheers! Her sisters groan. Harry laughs and marks her score.

Rachel lines up for her roll as Harry stands up...

HARRY

Who wants a Coke?

THE GIRLS

(in unison)

I do!

HARRY

All right. I'll be right back. Try not to break anything.

He heads for the bar as Rachel rolls...a gutter ball.

RACHEL

Shit!

Harry looks back at Rachel with a reprimanding frown.

She meets him with a frown of her own and it's another tense stare-down...until Harry breaks into a big "got you" grin!

They laugh and Harry heads for the bar.

IN THE BOWLING ALLEY BAR

Harry orders from the BARMAN.

HARRY

Four cokes.

And turns to watch the girls play.

DOWN THE BAR - a YOUNG WOMAN with long legs and short shorts gives Harry a sultry smile.

He smiles back. The barman returns.

BARMAN

Here're your Cokes.

Harry pays him and turns to the woman. She tips her drink to him, smiling. Harry smiles back and turns to the girls.

They are laughing and playing with the hand-dryer on the ball return, letting the air stream blow their hair and fill up their shirts like balloons.

He turns back to the woman, raises his Coke to her in a friendly farewell and walks out of the bar - shaking his head like he doesn't know what's come over him.

EXT. HIGHWAY - DRIVING - DAY

The roadside scenery floats past as the tinny, AM radio sound of Fats Domino's "Whole Lotta Loving" comes closer and closer...

...And then the hood of Harry's station wagon moves into frame alongside of us. We see the windshield...the driver's side window...

...And now we see Harry, driving and bobbing his head to the music, but we don't see Vicky in the front seat with him...

...We'll come back to this DRIVING SHOT later, but right now, as the station wagon continues slowly passing us...

THE TINNY AM RADIO SOUND BLOSSOMS TO FULL-STEREO AND BECOMES THE SOUND TRACK FOR...

OUR MONTAGE: DRIVING, PLAYING AND GAMBLING UP THE COAST

- IN A CAFE. Harry and the girls walk toward the register past a row of booths with attached coat racks. As the cute, giggling girls run ahead, drawing the attention of everyone in the place, Harry uses the distraction to check the pockets of each jacket along the way. He scores a wallet in one, and tucks it away.

- IN A MOTEL ROOM. NIGHT. Looking in through the curtains, we see Harry and the girls jumping from bed to bed. Laughing.

- IN AN ALLEY. DAY. Harry runs a craps game with a few guys. He shakes the dice. Rebecca blows on them and Harry throws...A winner!

- AT A DRIVE-IN MOVIE. NIGHT. Harry and the girls lay on the hood of their car, munching popcorn and watching a movie.

- BACK ON THE HIGHWAY. THE DRIVING SHOT CONTINUES and we now see that the backseat is also empty. No Rachel. No Rebecca. Where are the girls...??

- IN A LAUNDROMAT. Harry and the girls sit on a bench against the wall. Harry, wearing only his boxer shorts, reads a news paper. Vicky, Rachel and Rebecca huddle together under a blanket staring blankly, waiting for their laundry.

- ON A BEACH. Harry digs up clams and hands them to the girls who inspect them dubiously and drop them into a bucket.

- IN A MOTEL ROOM KITCHENETTE. Harry stands at the stove with a towel tied around his waist like a chef's apron. He's boiling a pot of clams and playing the flamboyant chef, tossing in spices and kissing his fingers. The girls lean over the pot with a mixture of interest and disgust.

Harry pulls a clam out of the pot, cracks it open, and slurps it down. The girls make "eee-yew" faces and laugh.

- BACK ON THE HIGHWAY AGAIN. THE DRIVING SHOT CONTINUES. The station wagon is now almost past us and we still haven't seen the girls...

...And then we do. All three are kneeling side-by-side at the tailgate window, looking out at the road behind them.

The station wagon pulls ahead and we now see the girls in front of us, framed in the open tailgate window, their elbows on the sill, their smiling faces propped in their hands, their hair blowing wildly.

WHOLE LOTTA LOVING FADES OUT as the station wagon moves up the highway, leaving us behind.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The station wagon glides along a ribbon of asphalt through a sea of rolling grassland. Nothing and no one for miles.

INSIDE THE STATION WAGON

Harry drives and the girls play Rock, Paper, Scissors.

Vicky kneels on the front seat, facing her sisters in the backseat as they play.

Rachel wins the round and Harry, keeper of the prize, hands her a tall bottle of root beer. She takes one swig, hands the bottle back and they start another round.

Harry suddenly spots something on the side of the road and hits the brakes.

Vicky squeals and grabs the seat-back to keep from falling backward against the dashboard.

AND THE STATION WAGON skids to a stop on the empty road.

Harry, grinning mischievously, backs up and turns onto a short driveway that leads to a closed cattle gate.

A rusty "NO TRESPASSING" sign greets them.

VICKY

What are you doing?

Harry just smiles and gets out of the car. The girls watch through the windshield as he opens the gate and walks back to the car. Rachel leans out her window.

RACHEL

Where are we going?

HARRY

(smiling excitedly)
Camping!

Harry gets in and Vicky looks at him with concern.

VICKY

Can we go here?

HARRY

Do you see anything stopping us?

Vicky looks through the open gate at miles of rolling grassland. She smiles and shakes her head.

HARRY

All right then.

Harry drives the station wagon through the gate.

EXT. PASTURE - DAY

The station wagon bounces across the open pasture.

INSIDE THE CAR

Harry and the girls bounce and squeal and laugh at each bump.

HARRY

Keep a sharp look out.

VICKY

For what?

HARRY

I'm not sure. We'll just have to know it when we see it.

EXT. PASTURE - HILL TOP - DAY

The station wagon noses over the hill and stops. Harry and the girls take in the view, smiling.

In the valley below lies a pond, ringed with large, gracefully arching oaks.

HARRY

Whaddya think?

The girls nod enthusiastically and Harry drives down the hill to the pond.

EXT. POND - DAY

The station wagon stops under the trees, and they all get out - tentative, yet brimming with excitement.

RACHEL

What are we gonna do here?

Harry turns to her with a smile.

HARRY

Anything we want.

Rachel gets it instantly, grins ear to ear and, whooping loudly, dashes into the pond with all of her clothes on.

Harry laughs, kicks off his shoes and races Rebecca and Vicky into the water.

EXT. POND - DAY

Harry stands on the bank in his underwear, drying off with a motel towel and watching the girls play in the water.

EXT. POND - DAY

Harry and the girls lay on a blanket in the sun, eating sandwiches. Harry uses his bread crust to make a silly moustache and the girls laugh at his stupid joke.

EXT. PASTURE - DAY

The girls follow a butterfly - running, turning and bumping into each other as they try to follow the butterfly's erratic, floating path across the field.

EXT. PASTURE - LATE AFTERNOON

COWS come to drink but are unsettled by these interlopers at their pond and pause in the distance, mooing. Harry and the girls walk out to greet them.

RACHEL AND HARRY try to pet a cow - but it spooks and tosses its head, spewing an arcing string of slobber that makes Rachel jump back, squealing. Harry laughs.

HARRY runs at the cows, scattering them, and then he veers off after the girls. They run, screaming and giggling.

REBECCA'S SMILING FACE floats against the deep blue sky, veering one way and then the other, as if she were flying.

Match cut RACHEL'S FACE and then VICKY'S FACE, all flying like angels above the earth.

And then we see Harry laying on his back with Vicky supported in the air on his feet, playing "airplane." He tilts her one way and then the other, as she screams delightedly.

EXT. POND - SUNSET

A soft afterglow settles over the pond. Harry stands beside a small campfire near the water's edge, watching the girls gather firewood under the trees.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Harry and the girls sit quietly around the campfire in a post-marshmallow-feast stupor. Their fingers and lips sticky with cooked marshmallow.

Harry rolls the last two marshmallows out of the bag and holds them up.

HARRY

Last ones.

Vicky and Rebecca shake their heads. Rachel shrugs.

RACHEL

I'll take one.

She pokes her stick through it and sticks in the fire. Harry takes the other, and they all quietly watch the marshmallows turn brown in the flames. Rachel decides that hers is done enough and pops it into her mouth.

Harry lets his go a bit longer, keeping an eye on it as he speaks.

HARRY

You know, the Indians around here used to roast marshmallows just like this.

RACHEL

(her mouth full of hot marshmallow)

Unh-uh.

VICKY

They didn't have marshmallows back then.

HARRY

How do you know?

VICKY

How do you know?

HARRY

I know because my great-grandmother was a full-blood Cherokee, that's how.

The girls look at Harry skeptically.

RACHEL

You're lying.

He crosses his heart and holds up his hand.

HARRY

Honest. It's true. That makes you girls part Indian, too.

REBECCA

Really?

HARRY

You bet.

The girls look at him now with more interest. He pulls his charred marshmallow from the embers and pops it in his mouth.

HARRY

Yeah. Indians used to be all around here. They'd come out to places like this for their ceremonies.

RACHEL

What ceremonies?

HARRY

Oh, all kinds. You know: good crops, good hunting. That kinda thing. But this place. There's something special here. You feel it?

The girls look at each other with little shrugs, "maybe."

HARRY

I sure do. I'll bet you anything this is right where they did it.

VICKY

Did what?

HARRY

Oh, probably just the most powerful, most sacred ceremony of all time.

RACHEL

Really? What is it?

He glances around and lowers his voice.

HARRY

They call it the Blood Ceremony.

REBECCA

The Blood Ceremony?

Harry nods. Firelight dances across the girl's faces.

RACHEL

What's that?

HARRY

Well, when the time came for young braves to prove their courage, they'd come out here, and sit around a fire just like we're doing now. And they'd make an oath to each other. A sacred oath. To defend one another, no matter what. Even to their own death.

The girls' eyes widen.

RACHEL

Did they have girl braves?

HARRY

You bet they did. Maiden Warriors.
That's what they called 'em.

The girls look at each other, electrified.

HARRY

They were beautiful and wise. As
strong as any of the boys.

Rachel's eyes alight.

RACHEL

How'd they do the blood ceremony?

HARRY

Well now...That's a pretty
carefully guarded secret. I just
don't know if I can tell you.

The girls groan and plead. Harry shakes his head
melodramatically.

HARRY

I don't know. This is pretty
powerful stuff.

THE GIRLS

Please. Please. Please.

Harry holds up his hands to silence them.

HARRY

All right. All right. Settle down.
Now, I'm not promising anything,
but - there might be a way.

He looks at them, one by one, reeling them in.

HARRY

I mean...Seeing as how you are part
Indian. I suppose - if you were
willing to take the oath - we could
just do the ceremony. For real.

The girls look at each other, excited, frightened.

VICKY

Does it hurt?

Harry shrugs. He can't say.

The girls look at each other and come to a silent agreement.
Vicky turns to Harry and nods.

VICKY

Let's do it.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

Harry dips his finger in the mustard jar and - with great ceremony - adds the final stripe to Rebecca's ceremonial ketchup and mustard face paint.

Vicky and Rachel, already painted, watch with silent reverence as Harry sets down the mustard jar and takes Rebecca's right hand in his - palm up.

He looks into her eyes.

HARRY

Are you ready?

She nods nervously.

Harry takes a paper plate, folded into the shape of a knife, and slowly draws it across her palm, squeezing out a thin line of ketchup "blood."

Rebecca looks at her hand with wide eyes as Harry turns to Vicky and draws the "knife" across her palm, and then Rachel's palm.

He lays down the "knife" and looks steadily at each of them.

HARRY

Now you take the oath. If you promise to love, defend, and protect, to your own death, the maiden warriors here with you tonight, then mix your blood and swear it now.

Vicky breathlessly turns to Rachel and they clasp hands, mixing their "blood."

VICKY

I swear.

RACHEL

I swear.

Rachel grips Rebecca's hand.

RACHEL

I swear.

REBECCA

I swear.

And then Rebecca takes Vicky's hand.

VICKY

I swear.

REBECCA

I swear.

Harry smiles and nods.

HARRY

It's done. You're Maiden Warriors
now. Bound by blood.

The girls smile and look at each other proudly.

EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT

The fire is now just a soft orange glow beneath black coals. Rebecca and Rachel are asleep. Harry and Vicky lay beside them, looking up at the stars.

VICKY

I think this is the latest I ever
stayed up.

HARRY

Kinda fun, huh?

VICKY

Yeah. What time is it?

HARRY

I don't know. Let's have a look.
(he lights his lighter and
looks at his watch)
About 1:30.

Vicky holds up his arm to look at his watch.

VICKY

That's an old watch.

HARRY

Yeah. Belonged to my father.

He closes the lighter and it's dark once again.

VICKY

I didn't know you had a dad.

HARRY

(chuckles)

Oh, I had a lots of dads. They were all shit mostly. Just had the one father, though.

VICKY

How come we've never met him? Where is he?

HARRY

I don't know.

VICKY

Is he alive?

HARRY

I don't know. I suppose he could be. I never met him either.

VICKY

You never met your dad?

Harry shakes his head and looks up at the stars.

HARRY

Naw. Thought about him a lot. I always imagined he was tall. Good with his hands maybe. Like a carpenter, or mechanic or something.

(he laughs at himself)

I don't really know, though.

VICKY

How'd you get his watch?

HARRY

Stole it outta my mom's drawer. When she found out, she told me what it was and made me give it back.

(he shrugs)

Maybe it's true. I don't know.

VICKY

How'd you get it back?

HARRY

I stole it again. I figured, if it really was my father's, he'd want me to have it - not her.

Vicky looks up at the stars, thinking about this.

VICKY

Is your mom alive?

Harry doesn't answer. He is quiet for so long that Vicky turns to him in the dark but can't read his face.

VICKY

Dad?

Harry pulls the blanket up over her face and tickles her.

HARRY

You better get some sleep, or
you're gonna be too tired to have
fun tomorrow.

VICKY

(giggling)
Okay.

She rolls onto her side and Harry pulls the blanket around her shoulders.

He watches her a moment - and then lays back and looks up at the black sky. A dark heaviness settles over him.

EXT. CATTLE GATE - DAY

Vicky holds the gate open as Harry drives through. He gets out to help her shut it, and Vicky rides the gate as Harry pulls it closed. It bangs against the post.

Silently, they both look out across the pasture.

VICKY

I wish we could stay here.

HARRY

Me too.

Harry lingers a moment longer, and then shoves the gate bolt into place.

HARRY

C'mon.

He lifts Vicky down from the gate and they walk toward the car. She takes his hand.

VICKY

Where are we going today?

HARRY

I don't know. Where do you want to go?

She shrugs and smiles.

VICKY

I don't know. I don't even know where we are.

Harry chuckles and THEIR HANDS separate, as they split to different sides of the car to get in.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The station wagon is parked and Harry is under the hood, pouring a quart of oil into the engine.

The girls have a road map spread open on the front fender and Rachel is playfully tracing their route with her finger.

RACHEL

So I think we came up this way through here, and here, and here, and now we're sort of somewhere around...here.

Her sisters shrug and nod. Sounds reasonable to them.

RACHEL

So it looks like the next few towns we're gonna come to are...Baxter... Riveredge...Port Smith...Ludlow...

At "Ludlow," Harry looks up as if Rachel had just poked him with a sharp stick.

Rachel holds up the edge of the map and jokes...

RACHEL

...and then we go off the map.

The girls laugh and Harry tries to laugh with them, but it's hollow. That poke has opened a small but distracting wound.

Harry dribbles the last of the oil into the engine, caps it, tosses the oil can into the weeds and shuts the hood.

EXT. MINIMART - DAY

The station wagon rolls into the parking lot and parks.

The girls immediately leap out, giggly, playful and full of energy. Harry crawls out more slowly, detached and distant.

As an afterthought, Rachel goes back to the car, reaches over the backseat into the cargo area and comes up with her sock of coins.

IN FRONT OF THE MINIMART

Vicky and Rebecca stop at the gumball machines lined up by the front door, and as Rachel walks up behind them, they turn to her with expectant smiles.

Rachel immediately sees what they're after - and tightly hugs her sock of coins - but a moment later she softens and half-grudgingly, half-willingly doles a few coins to her sisters.

Harry notices this exchange with a distracted grin and enters the market.

INT. MINIMART - DAY

Harry enters, picks up a hand-basket and idly strolls through the aisles, picking up a few basics: bread, bologna, chips...

He turns an aisle and finds himself facing a full wall of liquor bottles. Clear, brown, red. All colors. All sizes.

He looks at the bottles for a long time - not trying to choose one brand over another - but trying to choose the path he's going to take.

He glances out the window at the girls.

They are all squeezed onto a mechanical horse that rocks them back and forth, clutching one another and giggling.

Harry turns back to the bottles...and makes his choice.

Glancing over his shoulder at the clerk, he lifts a half-pint bottle of gin from the shelf, slips it into his coat pocket and strolls on.

A loud burst of joyful laughter comes from the girls outside.

AT THE CASH REGISTER, Harry hands his basket to the clerk and glances out at the girls, now back at the gumball machines.

CLERK

Is that everything?

Harry turns to him.

HARRY

Yeah. That's it. What's the damage?

CLERK

That'll be \$7.42.

Harry opens his wallet, thumbs through the bills - and stops. He has only \$14-dollars, and still needs to get a motel room.

The clerk watches Harry check through his pockets, one after the other. He reaches for the pocket with the stolen gin but stops - glances at the clerk - and checks a different pocket. That's it. He's almost broke.

CLERK

You need to give something up?

Harry flashes an angry, humiliated glance at the clerk - just as Rebecca skips into the market.

REBECCA

Hey, Dad. Can we get some more ice cream?

Harry turns to her, feeling suddenly ashamed, leaves everything on the counter, and hustles her out the door.

HARRY

Not now. Let's go.

INT. HOLIDAY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Harry, in a sullen mood, slicks back his hair in the mirror. Vicky watches him.

VICKY

You going out?

Harry glances at her in the mirror - and turns to the door.

REBECCA

Watch TV with us again.

HARRY

Not tonight.

THE GIRLS

Ple-e-e-ase.

HARRY

NO!

The girls fall silent. Harry doesn't know where that burst just came from - but he knows it's too late to take it back.

HARRY

Just...Not tonight. Okay? We're running low on dough. I gotta try to find a game or something. Here.

He leaves a few bills for them on the TV and walks out.

INT. HOLIDAY MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The girls are squeezed together onto one bed, watching TV and eating burgers. Their mood is now as sullen as Harry's.

Rachel reaches across Vicky for the french fries and Vicky shoves her back.

VICKY

Move.

RACHEL

You move.

Rebecca hears a car pull up and runs to the window. She leans across the TV to pull aside the curtain and look out, blocking Rachel's view of the TV.

RACHEL

Hey! Dumbass! Outta the way!

Rebecca sheepishly moves aside. Vicky elbows Rachel.

VICKY

You don't have to be a jerk.

RACHEL

You don't have to be a crap-head.

Rachel snatches the bag of fries and stuffs a handful into her mouth as she jumps to the other bed. Vicky goes after her.

VICKY

Give 'em back!

RACHEL

Make me!

Vicky grabs for Rachel but she evades her and jumps back to the other bed, with Vicky in close pursuit.

Rebecca sadly watches her sisters fight.

OUTSIDE IN THE DARK PARKING LOT

We watch through the window as the two girls chase each other from bed to bed, screeching and arguing.

INT. STATION WAGON - MORNING

The girls watch Harry come out of a convenience store with ONE Hostess pie in his hand.

He gets in the car, opens the pie on the dashboard, cuts it with his pocket-knife into three pieces and - without looking at them - hands the meager pieces to the girls.

He's angry, ashamed, silent.

Rachel and Vicky take their small pieces and quietly eat them. Rebecca holds hers in her lap, just looking at it.

Harry pulls a cigarette from his pocket and starts to light it - when he feels a small hand on his shoulder.

He looks back to see Rebecca offering him half of her piece.

At this moment, Harry should be feeling pride and tenderness, but it's shame and anger that find their way out.

HARRY

What are you doing?

REBECCA

I'm giving you half.

He shrugs her hand off his shoulder.

HARRY

I don't want it. Just...Just eat the fuckin' thing!

He throws open his door and stomps away from the car, swarmed with conflicting emotions - none of which he controls or understands.

EXT. ROADSIDE PICNIC AREA - DAY

The girls sit at a picnic table. Harry stands apart from them, silently smoking and staring at the ground.

Rebecca has her shoe on the table and struggles with a knot in the lace.

Across from her, Rachel and Vicky are coaxing together a single sandwich made with the heel pieces of a bread loaf and a nearly empty jar of jelly.

Vicky watches as Rachel scrapes the dregs from a jelly jar onto the bread.

Rebecca fights with the knot, growing more and more frustrated.

Harry watches her for a moment and then looks away. Rebecca slams the shoe onto the table in frustration.

REBECCA

(under her breath)

Dammit!

Harry looks at her, thinks about it, and then sits down next to her.

HARRY

Here. Give it to me.

Rebecca gives him an angry glance and keeps wrestling with the knot herself.

Harry softens his approach and reaches out with an open hand.

HARRY

Becca, c'mon. Let me help you.

Rebecca looks at him - and then slaps the shoe into his hand.

Vicky and Rachel look up to see what happens next.

Harry doesn't react and doesn't say a word. He just takes the shoe, puts his cigarette in his mouth and starts working at the knot.

Rebecca, still glowering at him, watches him loosen the knot and open the laces.

HARRY

Gimme your foot.

She slaps her foot into his hand as hard as she can and, once again, Harry takes it without a word.

He slips the shoe onto her foot, ties a bow, and looks up at her. She scowls at him, her foot in his lap. And they sit like that, staring at each other until...

Harry slowly molds his expression into a very silly sad face.

Rebecca doesn't like that, and with her foot in his lap, she kicks him in the stomach.

Harry now makes a comically pained face.

And Rebecca kicks him again. He groans louder and his face contorts even more over-the-top.

Rebecca suppresses a smile and kicks him again. He doubles over in mock-pain and rolls off the bench onto the ground.

Rebecca laughs and jumps on top of him. Vicky and Rachel pile on, too. And now they are all laughing.

EXT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP - DAY

The station wagon stops in front of the open garage door.

INSIDE THE CAR

The girls watch Harry get out, open the back tailgate, shove aside their blankets, cooler and pillow cases, and pull out the spare tire.

He bounces it on the ground and rolls it toward the garage, winking playfully at them as he passes.

The shop owner meets him at the door.

Through the front windshield, the girls watch but can't hear as Harry puts on a smile and launches into a sales pitch about the tire. The shop owner listens skeptically and shakes his head. Harry makes another offer.

The shop owner considers it, hands Harry a few bills, and rolls the tire into his garage.

Harry walks back to the car, waving the bills playfully so the girls won't see him straining to keep up his smile.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Overcast and cold.

The girls are layered up against the chill with an odd assortment of shirts and sweaters. They dart here and there along the beach, throwing stones, picking up driftwood, and checking out tide pools.

Harry, his jacket pulled tight, hands in his pockets, walks slowly behind them, smoking and watching them distractedly. Behind him, an abandoned pier leans into the sea.

He stops and shouts ahead to the girls.

HARRY

Hey! I'm cold. I'm gonna go sit in the car. Stay away from the water.

They wave and Harry walks toward the car.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - we watch Harry walk to the car. He opens the door, gets in behind the wheel and closes the door.

Inside it's quiet, isolated. The sound of the surf, the wind, and the girls now far away.

He rubs his hands to warm himself and watches the girls through the windshield.

Rebecca holds a piece of sand-polished glass to her eye and looks at the sky.

Harry's eyes shift to the glove box. He opens it and pulls out the half-pint bottle of gin he stole from the minimart.

Rachel hurls a stick of driftwood into the surf.

Harry breaks the new paper seal and takes a drink.

Vicky chases Rachel, tags her and then turns and runs back in the opposite direction, with Rachel now chasing her.

Harry takes another drink.

When he lowers the bottle, Rebecca waves to him. He waves back. And when she turns away, he takes another drink.

The girls head toward the car, so Harry screws the cap onto the bottle and puts it back in the glove box.

Vicky playfully runs up to Harry's window, breathes on the glass and, in the condensation, DRAWS A HEART.

Harry smiles. Touched. And then his smile distorts into a playful growling monster face. He claws at the glass.

Vicky backs away screaming excitedly.

VICKY

Monster!

WE WATCH THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD as Harry gets out of the car, growling playfully, and chases the girls back to the beach.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Harry and the girls enter and look for a booth.

RACHEL

(joking with Harry)
Should we sit near the back for a
quick getaway?

Harry smiles and playfully shoves her into the nearest booth.

HARRY

Sit down, smart ass.

Rachel laughs and slides into the booth next to Vicky. Harry and Rebecca sit across from them. A waitress brings menus.

Vicky looks at Harry tentatively, aware of their finances.

VICKY

What can we get?

Harry spreads his arms in mock grandeur.

HARRY

Anything you want...
(and the grandeur falls)
...so long as it's under a buck.

The girls nod and scrutinize their menus as Harry lights a cigarette and glances idly around the room.

His attention stops on three people at a booth nearby: a BOY, his MOTHER, and the DRUNK MAN with them.

The drunk man sits across from the boy and mother, watching with growing irritation, as the boy pokes sullenly at his food without eating.

Harry's eyes shift to the MOTHER.

She huddles in the corner of the booth with her arms wrapped tightly about her. Her eyes dart incessantly between the man, the boy, the room, and back again to the man.

As her eyes make another sweep, she finds Harry looking at her with such intensity that it stops her cold.

Their eyes lock - and she becomes trapped with him in some dark memory of his, that she was never a part of.

But then a sudden movement breaks the spell and they both turn to see...

The man explode across the table at the boy with a hard slap!

DRUNK MAN

Stop playin' with it and god damn
eat it!

Harry flinches. Everyone turns. And the cafe goes quiet.

The mother glances nervously at the man and grips the boy's
arm tightly.

MOTHER

(whispering desperately)
What'd I tell you about makin' Ray
mad!? Just stop it now! Stop it and
eat that dinner.

The man reaches across the table and shoves the mother back
into her corner.

DRUNK MAN

Shut up! I don't need you repeatin'
every goddamn thing I say. He heard
me. Didn't you?

The boy looks down at the table without answering.

DRUNK MAN

I know you did. Nothing like a good
pop in the head to get your
attention, huh?

Harry watches the cowering mother intently, a slow, burning
anger starting to rise. The man notices Harry looking at
them.

DRUNK MAN

You got something to say?

The boy looks over his shoulder at Harry and their eyes meet.
Dark, hopeless, familiar eyes.

Something dangerous and uncontrollable then moves over Harry
and he turns on the mother with seething anger.

The girls watch Harry's fists clench...

The man barks again.

DRUNK MAN

Hey! I'm talking to you!

And in a searing flash, Harry turns his anger from the mother
to the man and explodes across the room at him...

The man rises to meet him...Plates crash, chairs topple...

Harry swings viciously - but his arm is stopped short by another man who jumps between them. More men step up, struggling to hold Harry back.

The drunk man's bravado wilts in the face of Harry's burning rage and he steps back nervously. No one needs to hold him back.

The cafe manager now rushes in, shoving them both.

CAFE MANAGER

Back off! Back off! I want you
outta here! Both of you! Let him
go.

The men cautiously release their grip on Harry and step back.

Harry stands, quivering with trapped rage, breathing heavily, his fists clenching and unclenching.

He turns on the mother with a hurt, accusing, venomous glare.

She withers and turns away.

And then Harry sees the girls.

They are confused and frightened. And so is Harry. He doesn't know what to say to them, so he simply walks out.

The dark-eyed boy watches Harry leave as the girls slide out of the booth and hurry after him.

INT. STATION WAGON - SUNDOWN MOTEL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Harry stops hard in front of the motel room door. Vicky turns to him, frightened and confused.

Harry won't look at her. He just grips and twists the steering wheel in his hands, barely containing his eruptive anger. He thrusts the room key at Vicky.

HARRY

Here.

VICKY

Dad?

HARRY

Just get out.

VICKY

But...

Vicky flinches as Harry lunges across her and throws open her door.

HARRY

Get out!

The girls hurry out of the car and Harry peels away even before their doors have closed, leaving them standing alone in the parking lot.

EXT. SUNDOWN MOTEL - NIGHT

The rooms and parking lot are all dark except for a single cut of light where Vicky stands at her window, holding back the curtain. She looks out into the darkness. Waiting.

EXT. SUNDOWN MOTEL - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Rain. The falling drops splash into a puddle in the parking lot, forming oily rings on the surface.

INT. SUNDOWN MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The room is dark. Vicky wakes to the sound of rain dripping in the gutters.

She sits up and looks at Harry's bed. He's there, sprawled face down.

She goes to the window, pulls aside the curtain and looks out at the rain. When she turns back, she notices something strange about Harry's face and lifts the curtain back further.

Grey morning light falls across Harry's battered face. His left eye is bruised and swollen, his lip split. Dried blood on the pillow.

On the night stand is a nearly-empty bottle of THUNDERBIRD.

The moment seems to take something from her. Vicky sags and lets the curtain fall closed.

EXT. SUNDOWN MOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING

The motel room door opens and the three sisters scurry through the rain to the station wagon.

INT. STATION WAGON - SUNDOWN MOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING

The girls hustle into the car, taking their usual places: Vicky in front, Rachel and Rebecca in back. They have come here to be alone, away from Harry. Wet and cold, they shiver quietly - each alone with her thoughts.

Rachel looks out her window. Anger, fear and frustration simmer just below the surface, ready to explode. She speaks softly, almost to herself.

RACHEL

What happened to him?

VICKY

(bitterly)

What do you think, stupid? He got drunk and got in a fight.

RACHEL

Screw you!

VICKY

Screw you!

Rachel explodes over the seat at Vicky, swinging her fists. Vicky blocks her punches with raised arms, but as quickly as it began, Rachel's anger burns out and she falls back onto her seat, burying her face against her arm to hide her burning tears.

Vicky scowls angrily and turns away. But as quickly as Rachel's, her own anger dissolves and, with some effort, she apologizes.

VICKY

I didn't mean it. I'm sorry.

Rachel keeps her face buried in her arm but, eventually, she too softens and her strangled sobs fade.

RACHEL

I meant -- what happened to make him change? Everything was fine.

Vicky's eyes drift to the floor.

VICKY

It's just what he does. It's what he always does.

They are silent for a long time. Just the sound of the rain on the roof. Rebecca looks at Vicky.

REBECCA

(timidly)

What are we gonna do?

Rachel's eyes ask the same question. Vicky looks at her sisters, realizing their need for her to do...something.

INT. SUNDOWN MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The room is dark. Harry is still passed out on the bed.

Vicky, dripping wet, stands over him, watching him sleep. She then takes the bottle of Thunderbird and goes into

THE BATHROOM

In the dark, she kneels next to the tub and empties the bottle down the drain.

EXT. GAS STATION/LIQUOR STORE - DAY

The station wagon pulls alongside the pumps and Vicky quickly gets out.

VICKY

I'll pump the gas, Dad.

She motions urgently for her sisters to get out with her.

VICKY

We'll clean the windows, too. Okay?

Vicky mans the pump while Rachel and Rebecca clean the windows.

Harry watches them numbly. And then, without a word, he walks to the back of the car, opens the tailgate door and digs through the girls' pillow cases until he finds...Rachel's sock of coins.

RACHEL

No! That's mine!

Harry takes the coins and walks to the liquor store. Rachel intercepts him, but he just pushes her aside.

She chases after him, hits him! But he doesn't react or defend himself. He just keeps walking.

RACHEL

You can't take that from me! That's mine!

Vicky pulls Rachel back to the car and the girls watch Harry enter store. He goes out of sight and a moment later, returns to the counter - with two bottles of THUNDERBIRD.

The clerk rings him up - and Rachel watches as Harry dumps her coins onto the counter and shoves them across. He never once looks at the girls.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

The small station sits alongside an isolated stretch of rural highway. In the distance, the station wagon weaves toward us.

It rolls into the station, stopping abruptly before the pump lane, readjusts its approach, and then lurches and stops, lurches and stops into position alongside the pumps.

The station owner, a big man about 60, watches curiously from the office.

A teenage boy walks from the garage, wiping his hands on a rag.

Harry swings his door open and struggles to stand up. The girls lower their faces with embarrassment as the teenage boy approaches. His name is DAVE.

DAVE

Uh...Hi. Can I help you?

Harry turns to him - red-eyed, bruised and very, very drunk. He tries to form a sentence but can't.

Dave looks at his father, the station owner, standing calmly alert in the office doorway.

His name is JOHN and he looks like the kind of man who could give you good advice or beat you silly, depending on whichever he thought you needed most.

The girls watch John slowly walk around the car and stand next to Harry with an appraising look.

JOHN

Hello there, young fella.

Harry turns to John, nods, and tries unsuccessfully to straighten up and tuck in his shirt.

JOHN

You look like you been doing some drinking.

Harry shakes his head and sways.

HARRY

No sir. No. I just...
(he takes a breath and
starts over)
I just need some gas.

John's voice is calm. His gaze steady.

JOHN

Well son, I'm not gonna sell you
any gas.

Harry straightens up like he's been insulted.

HARRY

What?

JOHN

I said I'm not giving you any gas.

Vicky watches the two men anxiously.

HARRY

(nonplussed)
Well...Fuck you, then. All right.
Just...Just... Fuck you.

Harry staggers and catches himself on the car door. John sighs like an annoyed father.

JOHN

And I'm not letting you get back in
that car either.

Harry scowls, unfocused, in John's general direction.

HARRY

You can't tell me what to do. You
just...
(he runs out of steam)
You just...Fuck you.

JOHN

Yeah. I know. You said that
already.

Harry takes offense at this, puffs himself up and throws a looping swing at John, who, in one swift motion, grabs Harry's wrist, twists his arm behind his back and pulls his head back by the hair.

Harry groans painfully and struggles as John walks him toward the side of the station house.

The girls get out of the car and run after them.

JOHN

(to Dave)

Open the storeroom.

Dave hustles to the door and opens it with a key. John walks Harry into the storeroom, sits him down firmly on a pile of tires and walks out.

JOHN

Lock it.

Dave pushes the door closed, locks it and steps back as Harry pounds on the door.

HARRY (O.S.)

(muffled)

Goddammit! Let me outta here! You son of a bitch! Open this door!

John puts his hands on his hips and considers the girls. They look back at him with a confused mix of fear and gratitude.

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

It's closing time. Dave pulls down the garage door while John locks the office. The girls then follow John around the side of the building to the storeroom.

He opens the door. Harry is laid out on the tires, snoring deeply. John tapes a note to the inside of the door.

JOHN

That's so he'll know where you are.
I'll leave it unlocked in case he
wants to come up to the house.

He notices Rebecca's concern.

JOHN

He'll be all right. He just needs a
good sleep.

He shuts the door and turns to the girls.

JOHN

You hungry?

The girls look at each other for consensus and timidly nod.

JOHN

C'mon then.

John leads them up a dirt path behind the station to his house.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

John, his wife SUZY, Dave, and the girls are squeezed in around a small dinner table set with a simple meal of fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans and ice tea. Still, it's more and better food than the girls have ever seen - and they're impressed.

Suzy smiles at them.

SUZY

Give me your hands.

They hold hands around the table. Suzy and her family close their eyes and bow their heads. The girls glance at each other, shrug, and bow their heads, too.

SUZY

Dear Father, thank you for this food that you so lovingly provide. Thank you for our family, for our friends, and for our livelihood. And, Father, we give special thanks this evening for our sweet young guests, that we may reflect your love upon them. In Jesus' name.

JOHN, SUZY, DAVE

Amen.

Suzy opens her eyes and smiles at the girls. They timidly smile back.

JOHN

All right. Let's eat.

John and Dave serve themselves while Suzy serves the girls.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The girls sit together in a cozy, warm bubble bath. It's all so wonderfully surreal that they just quietly sit, looking at the bubbles, at the flowered wallpaper, at each other.

IN THE HALLWAY - Suzy sits in a chair next to the bathroom door. It's cracked open a bit and she calls in to them.

SUZY

Everything all right in there?

THE GIRLS (O.S.)

Uh-huh.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

John sits in his recliner, Suzy on the couch, and the girls on pillows on the floor in front of her. They watch "The Lawrence Welk Show" on TV.

Suzy gently brushes Rebecca's hair while Rebecca glances uncomfortably at her sisters, not sure how to feel about this. Vicky just shrugs - so Rebecca decides to enjoy it.

INT. JOHN'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The TV is off and the girls are bundled in blankets on the floor. Suzy kisses each of them good night, another strange event for them, as John watches from the doorway.

SUZY

Sleep tight, girls.

She stands and goes to John.

JOHN

Good night.

THE GIRLS

Good night.

John turns out the light and he and Suzy walk to their bedroom.

Only a thin wall separates the living room from John and Suzy's bedroom and Vicky can hear their muffled voices through the wall.

SUZY (O.S.)

It just breaks my heart that those sweet girls have a father like that.

JOHN (O.S.)

Yeah. I know. But we don't know the whole story.

SUZY (O.S.)

We know enough. Are you just gonna let 'em leave with him tomorrow?

JOHN (O.S.)

He'll be all right by then.
Besides, there's nothing else to
do. They're family. They're gonna
have to find their own way.

Vicky lays awake, conflicted and confused. Angry at them for talking that way about Harry and, at the same time, agreeing with them.

EXT. GAS STATION - MORNING

John stands at the storeroom door with the girls. He holds a glass of water in his hand and turns to Vicky.

JOHN

What's his name?

VICKY

Harry.

JOHN

Harry. This is John. I got your
girls with me. Are you ready to
come out?

There's no answer so John opens the door.

Harry sits on the tires like he's just been waiting for them. He looks up, shielding his eyes from the sunlight.

JOHN

Can you stand?

Harry stands slowly, but he's steady. He steps outside and John hands him the glass of water.

JOHN

Here. You're probably pretty dry.

Harry takes the glass, barely glancing at John or the girls, drinks it down and hands it back.

John holds out Harry's car keys. Harry reaches for them but John doesn't let go and Harry is forced to look him in the eye.

JOHN

(quietly, just between
them)

You do right for these girls.

Harry glances at the girls and back to John.

John lets go of the keys, and Harry looks into his hand to see that John has also slipped him a \$20-dollar bill.

He looks at John. Then, without a word, he walks to the station wagon and gets in. The girls follow after him, waving to John.

RACHEL

Goodbye.

REBECCA

Goodbye.

VICKY

Thank you.

John nods and watches them get into the car.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY

Harry sits silently as the girls get in. He doesn't look at them, but once their doors have closed, he speaks: quietly, coldly.

HARRY

Don't ever take sides against me again.

The girls just look at him, speechless.

Harry reaches across Vicky into the glove box, pulls out one of the Thunderbird bottles he bought with Rachel's money, and guns the station wagon onto the highway.

INT. STATION WAGON - DRIVING - NIGHT

Harry drives, surly and drunk. Rachel and Rebecca are asleep in the back. Vicky hugs her door and stares into the dark.

Harry drinks. He drives. He drains the bottle.

He rolls down his window. At the rush of air, Vicky turns.

Harry glares at her with a defiant look, but Vicky only turns away. She doesn't care anymore.

Harry hangs the empty bottle out the window and hurls it up into the air, jerking the steering wheel sideways as he does.

THE STATION WAGON swerves side to side and then straightens out. And as the tail dwindle into the darkness...

THE BOTTLE smashes onto the pavement behind them, scattering broken shards across the highway.

INT. STATION WAGON - DRIVING - NIGHT

Harry drives, his eyes red and heavy-lidded. Vicky, no longer able to keep up her vigil, is asleep like her sisters, her head against the glass.

Harry's eyes close...then slowly open.

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - the headlights send dim beams into the darkness.

Harry shakes his head and sits up - only to immediately sag once again. His eyes close...then open...close...then...

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD - The road curves but the headlights continue straight ahead.

A RAIL FENCE races toward us and we SHATTER through it. The station wagon bucks violently and Harry and the girls are tossed like rag dolls until we SLAM to an abrupt stop against something hard.

Harry pulls his bruised forehead away from the steering wheel and looks for the girls.

Vicky is on the floor. He reaches for her. She is stunned and wide-eyed -- but unhurt.

Harry then kneels on the seat and reaches back for Rebecca, who is crying and holding her head. He pulls her hand away. No blood. Just a bump.

He then finds Rachel, face-down on the backseat floor. Unconscious. He lifts her onto the backseat.

HARRY

Rachel!

He checks her body for injuries - and turns her face to him.

HARRY

Rachel! Rachel!

She's limp and unresponsive.

HARRY

Rachel! C'mon baby.

He shakes her desperately.

HARRY

Rachel!

Vicky and Rebecca watch with growing concern.

HARRY

Rachel! Rachel!

SHE MOVES! She moans groggily and then -- frowns.

RACHEL

Wha-a-a-t? What do you want? Leave
me alone.

She was only asleep. And now she curls back up and continues to do so.

Harry falls back against the steering wheel, sick and relieved.

HARRY

Goddammit, Rachel.

He cries, and then laughs, and then cries and laughs at the same time. Vicky and Rebecca don't know what to make of him.

And then Harry suddenly rushes from the car, staggers away a few steps, and vomits.

EXT. FIELD - MORNING

The station wagon sits in the middle of an empty field, its front end shoved upwards by the tree stump that stopped it.

Rachel and Rebecca sit in the car. Vicky leans against the hood and watches Harry under the car, inspecting the damage.

HARRY

Oil pan's kicked in. Axle's
cracked. I don't know what else.

VICKY

Can you fix it?

Harry laughs and stands up.

HARRY

Not here. And not me.
(he looks at the car)
No. This thing's dead.

VICKY

How are we supposed to get home?

HARRY

Home?

VICKY

Yeah. Home.

HARRY

I don't know. We'll figure something out.

VICKY

I don't want to figure something out! I wanna go home!

Vicky turns away, frustrated and angry. She presses her hands against her eyes to force back the tears.

VICKY

This always happens! Why did you bring us here?

HARRY

What do you mean? We're here because you wanted to go on vacation!

VICKY

I didn't want to go! You took us! And you almost killed us!

HARRY

This wasn't my fault!

VICKY

Not your fault!?! You were drunk! You crashed! It is your fault! It's all your fault. Everything bad that's ever happened to us is your fault!

Harry steps toward her angrily.

HARRY

Goddammit, Vicky! Don't you talk to me that way!

She holds her ground and Harry stops. Rebecca and Rachel watch from the car.

VICKY

What did you think was gonna happen, huh? Are we supposed to be a family now because we're on some stupid family vacation?

HARRY

We are a family, goddammit!

VICKY

No! We're not! You're just a drunk that we got stuck with. I don't have a family! I don't want a family!

Her tears overwhelm her and she storms away crying, and then Rachel and Rebecca begin to cry with her.

Harry, seething with strangled emotion, just turns away and walks off into the field.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Rachel leans against the back of the car, staring morosely at the ground. Rebecca sits in the backseat, her back to Rachel.

A short distance away Vicky sits on the grass, with her back to the others.

ACROSS THE FIELD

Harry stands near the fence where they broke through. He looks up the road one way and then the other. Empty in both directions.

He puts his hands in his pockets and sags against the fence. He feels something and pulls out...

John's \$20.

He scowls, crumples it and throws it to the ground.

He steps into the road and looks both ways again. It's still empty. He turns back to look at the girls and the dead station wagon in the field behind him.

John's crumpled \$20 lays on the ground.

Harry sighs angrily, snatches up the \$20 and reluctantly starts his long walk back to the girls.

AT THE STATION WAGON

Rachel slouches against the tailgate door. Harry walks up to her brusquely.

HARRY

Move.

Rachel slides out of the way. Harry opens the back door and throws their pillow cases out onto the ground. He grabs the blankets and his own small bundle of clothes and tucks them under his arm.

HARRY

(to Rachel)
Get your stuff.
(yelling to Vicky)
Vicky! Get your stuff! We're
leaving!

He goes to Rebecca's door and raps on the glass.

HARRY

C'mon.

He then walks back to the road as the girls gather their belongings and follow him.

AT THE ROAD

Harry waits for the girls to catch up.

VICKY

Where are you taking us now?

HARRY

Home.

Without another word, he turns and walks up the road. The girls shoulder their pillow cases and follow him.

EXT. SMALL TOWN CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY

Harry and the girls walk down the road to the first store on the edge of town. Harry stops them at the entrance.

HARRY

Wait here.

The girls sit on the curb as Harry goes inside.

INSIDE THE STORE

Harry goes to the counter and hands the STORE CLERK the \$20.

HARRY

Break that for me. A ten, a five
and five ones.

STORE CLERK

I can't open the register 'less you buy something.

Harry glares at the clerk like he wants to tear his head off - grabs a pack of gum and slams it onto the counter.

BACK OUTSIDE

Harry throws open the door and walks out.

HARRY

C'mon.

He strides toward town with the girls trotting after him.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

An elderly woman stands at the bus stop. Harry stops next to her and digs through the trash can.

She watches him cautiously - and quietly shuffles to the other side of the bus bench.

The girls watch Harry pull an old newspaper out of the trash, tuck it under his arm and strike off walking again.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Harry and the girls sit on a bench in the public park.

The girls watch Harry take a one-dollar bill from his wallet and lay it on a stack of newspaper. He then takes out his pocket-knife and cuts the newspaper, using the dollar bill as a guide.

When he finishes, he takes the cut-out stack of newspaper, and puts it into his wallet with the real bills lined up in front: first the ones, the five, the ten, and then the newspaper.

He fans the wad with his thumb to smooth the edges and then bangs his wallet on the bench to settle the bills and paper as deeply as possible. He inspects his handiwork.

His wallet now looks like it's stuffed with money. He stands and pockets the wallet.

HARRY

Let's go.

EXT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Harry stops and looks at his reflection in the window glass. Between the bruises and not having shaved for a few days, he looks like shit.

INSIDE THE BEAUTY PARLOR

Women under hair dryers look out at the scary man in the window, nervous and repulsed. What a sight!

They watch him smooth his hair back and try to neaten himself up. And then he and the little girls walk on.

INT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

Harry enters. A bell above the door rings.

The MOTEL CLERK comes out of the back room with a napkin in his shirt, sucking his fingers. A TV soap opera plays in the background. He looks Harry over dubiously.

MOTEL CLERK

Yeah?

HARRY

I need a room for me and my girls.

The clerk glances over Harry's shoulder into the parking lot. He sees the girls...but no car.

MOTEL CLERK

(suspiciously)

Where's your car? I don't rent to vagrants.

HARRY

Our car's in the shop.

He points to his bruised eye and shrugs.

HARRY

Little accident.

MOTEL CLERK

Uh-huh.

Harry pulls out his wallet.

HARRY

I got money.

He turns and motions to the girls to come inside, intentionally letting his wallet hang open. The clerk glances down at the "wad of cash."

The girls enter and Harry turns back to the clerk.

HARRY

See. We're on vacation.

The clerk looks at Harry and the dour little girls...but it's the cash that seals the deal.

MOTEL CLERK

How many nights?

HARRY

Hopefully, just one. Depends on the repair shop.

The clerk nods.

MOTEL CLERK

That'll be eight dollars for the first night. Plus a two dollar towel deposit.

Harry stops and looks at the clerk like he just got scammed but can't do anything about it.

HARRY

Yeah. All right.

He carefully thumbs out the ten and hands it over.

INT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Harry stands shirtless at the bathroom mirror, shaving. The girls sit on the bed, watching him with suspicious frowns.

He washes his face and runs his wet hands through his hair, slicking it back. He appraises himself in the mirror.

Except for the beat-up left-side of his face, he looks almost handsome again. It'll have to do.

He sniffs a couple of shirts, picks the least stinky, pulls it on, grabs his coat and heads for the door.

RACHEL

Where are you going?

HARRY

Out.

VICKY

Figures.

HARRY

Hey! You wanna get home don't you?

Vicky looks at him without answering.

HARRY

Well that takes money and I don't have it. So I gotta get it. Stay here. I'll be back.

He walks out the door and the girls look at each other, worried and uncertain.

EXT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL - DUSK

Harry looks up and down the main drag, assessing his bleak prospects in this small town. He lights a cigarette, picks a direction and starts walking.

EXT. BUS STATION - DUSK

Harry stops to read the schedule and fares taped to the window and then he moves on.

Passing a pay-phone, he swirls his finger in the coin-return. Nothing. He keeps walking.

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Harry sits at the counter, a coffee cup in front of him. He smokes and casually, but thoroughly, scans the room for opportunity.

A man hangs his jacket on the coat rack by the door...and then sits down in the booth next to it.

An open purse on the outside edge of a booth...gets closed and moved to the inside.

A tip left on a table...gets scooped up by the waitress.

The register rings and the drawer pops open...full of cash...and then closes.

And then...there it is.

A fat wallet rides up out of the back pocket of a man sitting at the counter just a few stools away.

Harry scans the room one more time and is about to make his move when...

Two men with bowling ball bags come in and call to the man with the wallet.

BOWLER

Steve!

The Wallet Man turns and stands up.

WALLET MAN

Hey. I'll be right there.

He pulls out his wallet, drops a \$5-dollar bill on the counter and goes out with the bowlers.

Harry watches them leave...and then turns back to see the man's plate and the \$5-dollar bill snatched up by the waitress. Harry stubs out his cigarette and walks out.

EXT. PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

The word "PAWN" glows in bright neon in the window. Harry stops -- and then goes inside.

INT. PAWN SHOP - NIGHT

Harry goes to the counter, takes off his watch and hands it over. The Pawnbroker gives Harry and the watch a dismissive glance.

PAWNBROKER

It's kinda old. I'll give you five bucks for it.

Harry doesn't like it but he needs it.

HARRY

Yeah, okay.

The pawnbroker pulls the watch across the counter and replaces it with a \$5-dollar bill.

But Harry's eyes stay with the watch as it drops into a shoebox filled with many others. A lid goes on the box, and the box goes under the counter - buried away.

Harry starts to say something...but stops. Finally, he just takes the money and walks out.

EXT. INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Harry stops at the intersection in the center of town. The stop light suspended above it slowly blinks red in all directions.

Harry watches the blinking light...

Until a burst of noise and music turns his attention to a BAR across the street. A man walks out followed by garish light, music and noise.

Harry watches until the door closes and the sounds again become muffled.

He then crosses the street and goes into the bar.

INT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The girls sit apart from each other. Silent. Waiting. Vicky sits on the dresser next to the window, holding back the curtain and looking out.

REBECCA

What time is it?

VICKY

I don't know.

Rachel watches Vicky.

RACHEL

You don't think he's coming back,
do you?

Vicky looks at her sisters. They're worried. She turns back to the window rather than answer.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

It's a drinker's bar. Small, smoky and crowded. A juke-box plays country. Harry sits at the bar, twisting his glass, staring into his drink.

BARMAN

Want another?

Harry downs the drink.

HARRY

Sure.

He opens his wallet to pay and the MAN next to him glances at the "wad of cash."

Harry pulls out a single, pays the barman and puts his wallet away. The man next to him extends his hand.

DEREK

I'm Derek.

Harry looks at the man's hand, and then his face. He's blond and a little younger than Harry, with a car dealer smile.

Harry shakes his hand.

HARRY

Harry.

DEREK

Good to meet ya, Harry. You live around here, or just passing through?

HARRY

Just trying to get home.

DEREK

Where the heart is, huh?

Harry just looks at him without answering. Derek smiles.

DEREK

How 'bout you finish that drink and let me buy you another one.

Harry studies Derek a moment, and then raises his glass and tosses back the rest of his drink in one gulp. He sets the empty glass on the bar and gives Derek his professional smile.

HARRY

Okay. I'll let you.

Derek laughs and waves for the bartender.

INT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Vicky sits at the window, looking out. Rebecca sits alone on a bed and Rachel sits at the dinette table.

REBECCA

(timidly)
I'm hungry.

RACHEL

Who isn't?

Vicky looks at them - and makes a decision.

VICKY

We can't just wait around here. Who knows if he's coming back.

She goes to the door.

VICKY

Stay here. I'll be back.

Rachel jumps up!

RACHEL

No! I'm tired of hearing that. I'm coming with you.

REBECCA

Me too.

Vicky hesitates...

VICKY

All right. C'mon.

They leave the room together.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Vicky stands in a phone booth next to the road, her sisters outside, looking in.

She dials "0" and waits.

VICKY

Hello.... Hi. Um, I want to call somebody but I don't have any money... A collect call?... Okay... Yeah, it's in San Francisco. 9-8-3...

OUTSIDE

Rebecca idly runs her finger along a crack in the glass. Rachel notices.

RACHEL

Don't. You might cut yourself.

Rebecca takes her finger away from the glass. And then they look at each other, both suddenly aware of the oddity of Rachel looking out for her little sister.

Rachel is embarrassed by the vulnerable moment and tries to cover it.

RACHEL

Do it if you want. Just don't bleed
on me when you cut yourself.

BACK IN THE PHONE BOOTH

Vicky waits for the call to connect. It rings and rings.

VICKY

Okay. Yeah, I'll try later.

She hangs up the phone, looks at her sisters through the glass and shakes her head. She walks out of the booth.

VICKY

C'mon.

She strides down the street with her sisters trotting behind.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

Vicky pushes through the door, followed by her sisters.

The CLERK looks up. Vicky nods a greeting, and he goes back to his crossword.

IN THE SNACK AISLE - Vicky browses casually.

RACHEL

(whispers)

What are you doing? We don't have
any money.

Vicky glances at the clerk - and stuffs a Hostess pastry into her shorts.

She motions to Rachel and Rebecca to do the same and watches the clerk as they each stuff a couple of pastries under their shirts.

Vicky grabs another one and pushes her sisters toward the door.

VICKY

(whispers)

Go.

She opens the refrigerator and grabs a quart of milk.

When Rachel and Rebecca get to the door, the clerk looks up...

Vicky calls to him.

VICKY

Hey. How much is the milk?

The clerk turns to Vicky - and Rachel and Rebecca scurry out.

CLERK

Thirty-five cents.

She brings the milk to the counter and he rings it up. Rachel and Rebecca watch anxiously through the window.

Vicky notices the paper bags on the shelf behind the clerk.

VICKY

Can I have a bag?

CLERK

Yeah, sure.

He turns to get a bag - and Vicky grabs the milk and bolts out the door!

CLERK

Hey!

OUTSIDE

Vicky slams into her sisters.

VICKY

Run!

She shoves them and they run off down the dark street.

INT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Vicky sits by the window, eating her pastry and holding back the curtain to look out. She gives up, lets the curtain fall and turns to her sisters.

Rachel and Rebecca sit on the bed together, eating their pastries. Rachel teaches Rebecca Hog Latin.

RACHEL

My-di-fy.

REBECCA

My-di-fy.

RACHEL

Name-a-fame.

REBECCA

Name-a-fame.

RACHEL

Is-a-fiz.

REBECCA

Is-a-fiz.

RACHEL

Ree-da-fee bec-a-fec ah-dee-fah.

REBECCA

Ree-da-fee bec-a-fec ah-dee-fah.

Rebecca smiles.

RACHEL

All right. Now say it all together.

REBECCA

My-di-fy name-a-fame is-a-fiz Ree-
da---bah-bah-bah-bah. I don't know.

They laugh.

RACHEL

Like this.

(slowly)

Ree-da-fee bec-a-fec ah-dee-fah.

REBECCA

Ree-da-fee bec-a-fec ah-dee-fah.

Vicky watches them and smiles.

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

A swell of music, voices and laughter follows Harry and Derek out of the bar. They're laughing and both a little drunk.

DEREK

...So the guy says, "No thanks,
doc. I already have a wife!"

It's not funny but they both burst into staged laughter.
Hearty and hollow.

DEREK

That's killer, right? C'mon, my car's back here.

Derek leads Harry down the alley along-side the bar.

HARRY

So, where is this big game of yours?

DEREK

It's at a buddy's house.

HARRY

Is it far?

DEREK

Naw. Nothin's far in this town.

Derek slips around the back corner of the building, but when Harry gets there...

There's no Derek. Just a faded-green DODGE DART parked in the dirt.

Harry turns...

And a BEER BOTTLE swings down onto his head!

Harry staggers forward as Derek knocks him onto his stomach, sits on his back, and pins his arms with his knees.

He pulls out Harry's wallet and stands up, leaving Harry bleeding and moaning on the ground.

He opens the wallet and pulls out...the wad of newspaper.

Derek just looks at it uncomprehendingly.

DEREK

What the...?

Harry stands up slowly, holding his bleeding head. He leans against the Dart.

DEREK

What the fuck is this?

Derek separates six dollars from the newspaper.

DEREK

Six bucks! Six lousy bucks! I wasted a whole goddamn night on you!

He stuffs Harry's money into his pocket and throws the wallet and newspaper against Harry's chest.

Harry lets them fall. His eyes focused on Derek.

DEREK

Get off my car. You're bleeding on it.

Harry steps away from the car as Derek walks toward it. They pass and Derek glares at him with disgust.

DEREK

Fuckin' loser.

Harry explodes! - driving Derek's face against the side of the car...shattering bone and glass.

Derek goes limp. But Harry isn't through. Seized by rage that has been years in the making, he forces Derek to stand up against the car as he rains a flurry of vicious punches into his face and body.

Derek sags again, but Harry just keeps punching. And when he can no longer hold Derek up, he follows him down the side of the car, punching and punching, all the way to the ground.

But even then Harry doesn't stop. He stomps on Derek, over and over, until his limbs just give out - completely spent.

Only then does Harry stagger back, breathing heavily.

Slowly his anger subsides...Slowly he comes back to himself...And sees what he has done.

Derek is horribly beaten. Unrecognizable. And not moving.

Harry looks closer, worried now. Is he dead!?

But just then - a loud wave of music and laughter rolls out the front door of the bar, pulling his attention away.

Voices! People are coming!

Harry kneels next to Derek, retrieves his six dollars and takes Derek's wallet and CAR KEYS.

Derek groans and makes a feeble grab for Harry but is too weak to hang on, and quickly falls back into unconsciousness.

Harry empties Derek's wallet and stuffs the cash into his jacket pocket.

He then snatches his own wallet from the ground and opens the car door...but then he stops.

He looks down at Derek and his eyes swell with regret - not for Derek - but for his own life. His own wasted life.

And then the BAR PEOPLE round the corner - and stop.

Harry dives into Derek's car and roars backwards, slamming into a dumpster that knocks out the LEFT TAIL LIGHT.

He then guns the engine and speeds away.

INT. SPLINTER COVE MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The girls are asleep. Rachel and Rebecca on the bed, Vicky in a dinette chair by the window.

Headlights shine into the room. A car door opens. Quick footsteps...and Harry opens the door.

He rushes to the sink, turns on the light and runs water over his hands and through his hair.

Vicky wakes up to see him washing out blood. He holds a towel against his head and turns to her.

HARRY

We gotta go.

INT. DODGE DART - DRIVING - NIGHT

Harry drives, gripping the steering wheel with his right hand while holding the bloody towel against his head with his left. He checks his rear-view mirror repeatedly.

Vicky looks back to see what he's running from. The road behind them is dark and empty.

Turning back to the front, Vicky notices the raw, bloody knuckles of Harry's right hand, and the CASH sticking out of his coat pocket. She's frightened.

ON THE HIGHWAY

The Dart's ONE RED TAIL LIGHT dwindles into the darkness.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

It's overcast and drizzling. The Dart is parked off the road, concealed in a stand of trees.

Through the mist-beaded windows, we see the sleeping shapes of Harry and the girls inside.

Harry stirs, opens his door and steps out of the car.

Gulls cry. Tiny beads of drizzle cling to Harry's hair and clothes.

He leaves his door open, walks a few paces away and takes a piss. When he finishes, he looks up and sees in front of him a simple road sign that reads:

LUDLOW

Harry just looks at it, stunned and bewildered to find himself back in the last place he ever wanted to be.

INT. DODGE DART - DAY

Harry and the girls silently cruise the dreary streets of the boarded-up town. Only a few storefronts look occupied. Everything else slowly decays.

EXT. OLD HOUSE - DAY

The Dart stops in front of a peeling, weather-beaten old house. Harry looks at it for a long time. As if looking for courage that never comes. The girls quietly watch him.

Then, Harry opens his door and steps out.

HARRY

C'mon.

He stands next to the car, soggy and unshaven. His jacket collar is stained with blood and his bruises have turned dark. He tucks in his shirt and smooths back his hair.

The girls wearily get out of the car and stand with him.

Harry turns to Rachel and tries, unsuccessfully, to smooth down her frizzing hair and straighten her sweater.

He does the same for Vicky and Rebecca, but they still look like combat-weary ragamuffins.

Harry looks them over one last time.

HARRY

All right. Let's go.

VICKY

Go where?

Harry turns to the house.

HARRY

Home.

He leads the puzzled girls across the street to the house.

ON THE PORCH

The ragged family climbs the steps and Harry poses them before the front door like a family portrait: the girls in front, Harry in back, his hands on their shoulders.

Harry then steels himself with a deep breath, leans over the girls and knocks on the door.

From inside, we hear shuffling feet, annoyed grumbling and...

The door is opened by a 60-ish, hard-used WOMAN, wearing a slip and a hastily thrown on robe. She has a cigarette dangling from her lips and a rattling cough to go with it.

HARRY

Mom.

Mom!? Vicky looks at Harry.

But then the woman steps into the light -- and Harry doesn't recognize her. She notices the girls and attempts to cover herself better with the robe.

WOMAN

(frowning)

Who are you? What do you want?

HARRY

I'm... I'm looking for Louise Dutton?

WOMAN

There ain't nobody here by that name.

She starts to close the door.

HARRY

Wait. It's - it's been awhile but I'm pretty sure this is her house.

WOMAN

It ain't. I've lived here for four years and there was an old Chinaman in here before that.

A man yells drunkenly from the darkness behind her.

MAN (O.S.)

Who the hell is it!?

WOMAN

It's nobody. Just shut up!

MAN (O.S.)

Tell 'em to go away!

She rolls her eyes.

WOMAN

(over her shoulder)

I will, goddammit! Just shut your g.d. mouth!

(back to Harry)

I told you, there's nobody here with that name.

She starts to close the door and again Harry stops her.

HARRY

Wait. Please.

The man shouts again from the dark.

MAN (O.S.)

What'd you do with my bottle!

WOMAN

It's by the bed. And it's not your bottle! It's mine!

Harry presses her more urgently.

HARRY

Please. You must know her. Her name's Louise. Louise Dutton. This was our house. I grew up here.

The girls watch Harry with stunned expressions.

A loud crash of toppled furniture and broken glass comes from the darkness inside.

MAN (O.S.)

God--dammit!

The woman turns and yells into the dark.

WOMAN

What did you do!? Did you break
that bottle!?

(back to Harry)

That's all I know. I gotta go.

She shuts the door in Harry's face.

WOMAN (O.S.)

What did you do!?

MAN (O.S.)

Don't yell at me like that, woman!

Harry stands on the porch, listening to the muffled row
inside. Dark and painful memories swirl behind his eyes.

He notices the girls staring at him, but says nothing and
simply turns and walks back to the car as they follow.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

The Dart is parked next to a phone booth.

FROM INSIDE THE CAR - the girls watch Harry run his finger
down a phone book page, turns it, and scan the next one.

INT. DODGE DART - DRIVING - DAY

Harry drives through town looking for anything familiar. It's
mostly boarded up. A dead coastal lumber town.

He sees a dingy bar and stops. He recognizes it, but the
memories it stirs aren't good ones.

HARRY

Wait here.

He gets out of the car and goes inside.

EXT. CEMETERY ENTRANCE - DAY

The entrance gate lays open, hanging from one hinge. The Dart
drives through.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

The Dart stops. Harry gets out, looks around and starts walking among the neglected headstones, searching. The girls stand by the car watching him.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

In the distance, Harry is still searching the graves.

Vicky and her sisters are by themselves, walking among the headstones, playing a game with the headstone dates to kill the time.

REBECCA

What's mine, again?

VICKY

1963.

REBECCA

Oh, yeah.

She keeps searching the headstones.

RACHEL

1961! Found mine.

REBECCA

Awww!

Vicky moves down a row, reading the death dates.

VICKY

1948. 1966. 1960! I got mine!

REBECCA

(whining)

No fair! I can't find mine.

ACROSS THE CEMETERY

Harry comes to a headstone and stops. He looks at it with a puzzled frown, like he's not sure how to react. Without taking his eyes from it, he calls the girls.

HARRY

Over here!

The girls walk to Harry and stop a short distance behind him. He stands quietly and they follow his gaze to the headstone.

It's a simple, county-issued grave marker that reads:

Victoria Louise Dutton

Born September 13, 1908 - Died May 1960.

Vicky stares intently at the name.

Rachel and Rebecca look at each other with silent surprise -- and then Rachel leans close to Vicky and whispers.

RACHEL

That's your name.

Vicky looks from the gravestone to Harry. He has his back to her and just stands quietly looking at the grave.

EXT. CEMETERY - LATE AFTERNOON

Vicky and Rachel sit together on the grass beside the car. Rebecca sleeps on the backseat with the back door open.

Vicky looks across the cemetery.

In the distance, the small figure of Harry stands, looking down at his mother's grave. He drinks from a bottle.

Vicky watches Harry as Rachel picks at the grass, trying to puzzle through these new revelations.

RACHEL

Did you know her?

VICKY

How could I? She died the year I was born.

RACHEL

Oh, yeah.
(she thinks some more)
But that was so long ago. He didn't know she was dead. That's kinda weird, isn't it?

VICKY

I don't know.

Rachel yanks at a tuft of grass.

RACHEL

Why did he give you her name?

Vicky wonders this herself, but says nothing, and just watches Harry.

Rachel looks up at Harry, and then turns to Vicky.

RACHEL

Do you think he hated her?

Vicky's eyes stutter as she considers the consequences of this sad possibility.

She turns to Rachel and they just look at each other. When she turns back, she sees...

Harry on his knees, his shoulders rising and falling in deep, shuddering sobs.

INT. DODGE DART - DUSK

The girls sit in the car wrapped in blankets. They silently watch Harry through the windows, keeping their thoughts to themselves.

In the distance, Harry sits motionless beside the grave.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Harry slumps beside the grave, drunk, and haggard, and lost in thought. His eyes are red and swollen but the tears have stopped. He is drained.

Vicky walks up behind him and lays a blanket over his shoulders. He doesn't move. She stands with him for a moment, and then quietly turns and walks back to the car.

EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

The Dart sits among the headstones, shrouded in fog.

Harry leans on the hood, smoking a cigarette. His anger and grief now washed away.

INSIDE THE DART

The girls are asleep. Vicky wakes up and sees Harry leaning against the hood. She gets out of the car and Harry looks up.

HARRY

Morning.

VICKY

Morning.

She leans against the car next to him, and they both look into the fog.

HARRY

I'm gonna take you home today.

Vicky nods and looks away.

After that, they just stand together silently looking out across the foggy cemetery.

INT. DODGE DART - DRIVING - MORNING

Harry drives slowly through the fog. Rebecca and Rachel are asleep in back. Vicky quietly stares out into the white.

As Harry drives, Vicky looks into the rearview mirror at Harry's reflection. His face is like two halves. The left side bruised and beaten. The right side clean. No bruises, no cuts, no pain.

She looks from the mirror to the near, pure side of Harry's face, as if she might find there some kind of answer. But Harry is lost in his own thoughts, so Vicky just turns back to her window and looks out into the fog.

Harry glances into the rearview mirror. Nothing there.

He looks back at the road ahead and his eyes drift through unseen thoughts that lead him to Vicky.

He wants to say something to her, but no words come, so he gives up and turns back to the road.

He glances again into the mirror and...

A HIGHWAY PATROL CAR materializes out of the fog behind him.

Harry tenses.

INT. PATROL CAR - DRIVING - MORNING

THE COP'S POV: The Dart cruises through the fog with a busted-out LEFT TAIL LIGHT.

INT. DODGE DART - DRIVING - MORNING

Harry watches the patrol car in his rear-view mirror. The roof-lights come on. Followed by a short siren blast.

HARRY

Shit.

Vicky looks at the patrol car and then at Harry.

He tightens his grip on the steering wheel - prepares to run for it - and then he sees the fear in Vicky's eyes...

And makes a different decision.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

The patrol car follows the Dart onto the shoulder.

INT. DODGE DART - MORNING

Harry stops the car and watches the cop pull in behind him.

HARRY

Looks like you were right. I fucked it up again.

He looks into the mirror at the cop. He's on the radio. It's just a matter of time now.

HARRY

Shit. I've had eleven years to get this right and now I got 10 seconds.

He struggles for the words and then they just come...

HARRY

Vick. I love you. You, and Rachel, and Rebecca. More than you know.

Vicky lowers her eyes.

HARRY

You don't have to love me back. You can even hate me, if you want. I wouldn't blame you.

He glances back. The cop opens his door.

HARRY

All I ever wanted was to give you girls a family. Just something you could hold onto. I'm just no damn good at it -- But that doesn't mean you can't be. You are. All of you.

The cop walks toward them. Harry looks at Rachel and Rebecca, asleep in the backseat.

HARRY

They're gonna need you. And you're gonna need them.

(he smiles playfully)

Remember. You're Maiden Warriors now. Bound by blood.

Harry glances into the mirror. His time is almost up.

HARRY

I'm not giving up, Vick. I want you to know that. I don't know when -- but you'll see me again.

(he grins)

Even if you don't want to.

Before she can speak, Harry steps out of the car.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

The cop glances at the busted-out tail light, flips open his ticket book -- and is startled when Harry steps out of the car with his hands raised.

HARRY

Morning, officer. I'm just gonna go ahead and surrender now. If you don't know why already, you will soon enough.

The cop stops, perplexed, and puts his hand on his gun.

EXT. HIGHWAY - MORNING

A SECOND PATROL CAR has arrived and is parked across the road from the first one.

A DEPUTY leads the girls across the highway to the second car. They are wrapped in the blankets they used at the pond.

Vicky turns back to look at Harry sitting in the backseat of the first patrol car, his hands behind his back. He watches her walk away.

The Deputy opens the back door for the girls and they crawl in. Rachel and Rebecca get in first and then Vicky. The officer shuts the door.

INT. GIRLS' PATROL CAR - MORNING

Vicky turns to the window and looks across the highway at Harry. He looks back at her with a subdued, hopeful smile.

Vicky lowers her eyes and turns away.

Harry nods, sadly accepting her decision.

Vicky looks out the front window into the fog. Her eyes search through the tumbled memories and emotions of the past weeks, and then turn to her sisters...

Rachel and Rebecca huddle together next to her, sharing affection that they never did before...and a realization dawns in her eyes...

He did that. In his own lunatic way, he made them love each other. He gave them a family.

She looks across the highway at Harry.

His head hangs down, showing only the beaten side of his face. She watches him quietly, thoughtfully. And then he looks up and their eyes meet.

Harry searches her face, but she is unreadable, undecided. The moment hangs between them...

And then, Vicky leans forward, breathes on the glass and
DRAWS A HEART.

Harry smiles gratefully.

A patrolman gets into Harry's car, starts the engine, and a moment later...

He is gone.

Two Deputies get into the front seat of Vicky's car. The DRIVER starts the engine, pulls onto the road, and follows the car carrying Harry.

The Deputy in the passenger seat turns to them, trying to be comforting.

DEPUTY

You girls are gonna be all right
now.

Vicky nods politely, and turns to her sisters. Rebecca sits between her and Rachel, cradled in Rachel's arms. Vicky slides closer to them and holds out her hand.

VICKY

I swear.

Rachel just looks at her a moment, and then she understands. She seizes Vicky's hand and holds on tightly.

RACHEL

I swear.

Rebecca, embraced between them, places her hand on theirs.

REBECCA

Me, too.

THE DRIVER wipes the front window against the thick fog.

DRIVER

I can't see where the hell we're going.

THE THREE SISTERS hold tightly to one another and...

WE STAY ON THEM as the deputy responds to his partner.

DEPUTY (O.S.)

That's alright. Just keep going.
We'll get there.

With her arms firmly around her sisters, Vicky looks out at the road ahead...and softly smiles.

FADE OUT.