

Heart Soul & Rock'n'Roll

by

Janet R Stafford

FADE IN:

SEQUENCE OF SCENES

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The main drag through the center of a typical New Jersey bedroom community on a summer morning.

**SUPER: Cuylerville, New Jersey**

**SUPER: 2013**

The only traffic in sight is an older-model car which has slowed to stop for a traffic light.

INT. LINDSAY'S FOUR DOOR SEDAN - DAY

MUSIC: Rock plays on the car radio.

LINDSAY MITCHELL, 40, sings along with the music as she looks impatiently at the red light and hopes that it will soon change.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The light changes to green and the car moves on.

EXT. CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY FRONT - DAY

A sign in front of the church: Church of the Epiphany;; Rev. Drew Palmer, Minister; Lindsay Mitchell, Assistant Minister; Worship 11:00 a.m., Sunday School 9:30 a.m.

EXT. CHURCH of the Epiphany PARKING LOT - DAY

LINDSAY'S car pulls in. She exits car and enters the church.

INT. CHURCH KITCHEN - DAY

LINDSAY is stopped by a MIDDLE-AGED LADY.

LADY

Do you know where we keep the coffee pot, Lins?

LINDSAY

Sure. It's in here.

LINDSAY opens a cupboard and pulls out an ancient coffee urn.

LADY  
Can you help me set it up?

LINDSAY looks at the clock - 9:20. She smiles and takes a deep breath.

LINDSAY  
Sure.

INT. CHURCH YOUTH ROOM - DAY

A group of EIGHT LOUD TEENS are laughing and fooling around as LINDSAY hurries in.

LINDSAY.  
Good morning, everyone!

The TEENS ignore her.

LINDSAY  
Hey!

The TEENS look up.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
A little courtesy, okay, guys?

The TEENS exchange glances. HARRIET, ROSA, and LENA ABBEY suddenly break off from the pack and swallow LINDSAY up in a group hug.

ABBEY SISTERS  
We love you, Lins!

LINDSAY rolls her eyes in exasperation and then gives in.

LINDSAY  
Aw, I love you, too!

INT. CHOIR ROOM - DAY

LINDSAY races in and joins the CHOIR, already rehearsing the Sunday anthem.

INT. CHURCH HALLWAY - DAY

LINDSAY stands and prays with a WEEPING PARISHIONER.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

DREW PALMER, 60s, the church's pastor, is already in his clergy robe. LINDSAY rushes in, grabs the Sunday bulletin from her mailbox, pulls on her robe, and turns to DREW. Pencils in hand, they lean on the secretary's desk.

DREW

Why don't you take the call to  
worship, the invocation, the  
Epistle reading, and the  
confession?

LINDSAY nods as she makes notes on her bulletin.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

LINDSAY reads from the Bible, prays, and sings with the choir.

INT. CHURCH HALLWAY - DAY

A YOUNG DUDE pushes a cart, on which sits the coffee urn. A weary LINDSAY walks past him.

YOUNG DUDE

Hey, Lins! Can you help me clean  
this thing? I got no clue.

LINDSAY stops, forces a tired smile, and follows him.

END SEQUENCE

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

LINDSAY enters and flops onto the swivel chair at her desk.

PATTI CAMPBELL, 40, LINDSAY's best friend, enters carrying a briefcase.

PATTI

Well, we finally managed to get  
the "take" counted correctly.

LINDSAY

It's called the "offering," Patti.

PATTI

Take, offering, it's all money.

PATTI puts the things away in a closet.

Church secretary SUE DeLUCA, 30s, enters, grabs a piece of paper and a pen, scribbles furiously on the paper, and slaps the note down on her desk.

SUE

Why do people insist on giving me stuff to do on Sunday morning?

PATTI

You're the church secretary, Sue.

SUE

Do they see a notebook in my hand? Am I carrying a pen?

PATTI

Maybe you should.

SUE

Oh, then they'd never leave me alone.

LINDSAY leans back in her chair, shuts her eyes and heaves a weary sigh.

LINDSAY

Knock it off, you guys.

SUE

What's up, Lins? You turned forty last week and suddenly you're all cranky.

PATTI

Do you want to tell us what's wrong? Or shall we guess?

SUE

You won't like it if we guess.

LINDSAY

Okay, okay. I keep wondering what the next twenty years will be like. And, Patti, I keep thinking of our old college band.

PATTI

It was. I never did understand why you quit.

LINDSAY

I was starting seminary and it felt like oil and water. I love rock. It's all energy and fun. It doesn't fit with ministry.

SUE  
Because it's energy and fun?

LINDSAY  
No! Because rock's too, I don't  
know, dark sometimes? Secular?

SUE  
There's always Christian rock.

LINDSAY winces.

PATTI  
Sounds like you're in a rut. What  
you need is a change of pace.

LINDSAY  
Such as?

PATTI  
Such as a few days at my lovely  
Point Pleasant Beach shore house.

LINDSAY  
I don't know.

SUE goes to a calendar on the wall.

SUE  
All the big summer stuff is over.  
Vacation Bible School, the youth  
mission trip, the 4-H Fair booth.  
When will you be leaving, Patti?

PATTI  
Wednesday.

SUE runs her finger down the dates.

SUE  
Looks like you're clear for the  
next three weeks, Lins.

DREW enters the Church Office.

LINDSAY  
Sue! I can't go to the Shore. I  
have to work.

DREW unlocks the door to his office.

DREW  
As long as there are no conflicts,  
you can do what you want. It's  
summer.

DREW disappears into his office.

PATTI

There! The pastor agrees. No excuses, sister. You're coming with me.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS:

In the parking lot of LINDSAY's condo, a reluctant LINDSAY throws her suitcase into the trunk of PATTI'S convertible. She turns to PATTI, who smiles and opens the passenger side door for her.

PATTI's car speeds down the highway. PATTI turns on some music. A high energy rock song starts. PATTI starts to sing. She grins at LINDSAY and emphasizes a particular line. LINDSAY finally grins and sings with her.

Establishing shots of the main street of Point Pleasant.

**SUPER: Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey**

At the beach now, PATTI and LINDSAY frolic in the surf.

END SEQUENCE

EXT. FLYING FISH CLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

LINDSAY and PATTI stand in front of a seedy looking bar with a neon flying fish in the window.

LINDSAY

Patti, I thought you said we were going to dinner.

PATTI

We are. I hear they have the best burgers in town.

LINDSAY

No offense, but this place looks like a dive.

PATTI

Ah, but looks can be deceiving, Lins.

(jokingly)

Take Harold, my husband. He was handsome and intelligent and a lawyer like me. We seemed perfect for each other. So I married him.

(MORE)

PATTI (CONT'D)  
 Turned out he couldn't keep his  
 pants zipped up so I divorced him.  
 That's how I got my lovely Shore  
 house. Shall we go in?

LINDSAY laughs. She and PATTI enter the Flying Fish Club.

INT. FLYING FISH SHOW FLOOR - NIGHT

LINDSAY and PATTI sit at a table and sip beer as a KARAOKE  
 SINGER murders a song.

PATTI  
 Yow! Is he bad!

LINDSAY  
 Well, at least he's trying.

PATTI  
 Do you want to do it?

LINDSAY  
 I don't know.

PATTI  
 Oh, come on!

PATTI pulls LINDSAY to her feet.

NEIL GARDNER, 40s, scraggly hair and wearing an old  
 t-shirt, worn jeans and beat up sneakers, enters and plops  
 down at a stool by the bar. BILLY the bartender waits for  
 his order.

NEIL  
 I'll have a Yuengling, Billy.

BILLY  
 Coming up, Neil.

NEIL winces at the noise coming from the singer.

NEIL  
 Jeez, what the hell is that?

BILLY  
 Karaoke, my friend. Karaoke. My  
 ears bleed every Monday. Your band  
 can't be here more than three  
 nights a week, so the boss did  
 this. People actually like making  
 asses of themselves. Who knew?



NEIL grunts. BILLY slides a bottle of Yuengling at him.

The song changes. We hear PATTI and LINDSAY start singing a punkish song. NEIL's eyebrows go up. He swivels around on the stool to look at the stage.

CUTAWAY:

LINDSAY and PATTI are singing their hearts out.

BACK TO SCENE:

NEIL is watching LINDSAY and PATTI with great interest. BILLY points at LINDSAY.

BILLY (CONT'D)

That one's pretty good, huh?

NEIL

Yeah.

BILLY

You should talk to her.

NEIL

Nah. When did that ever go well?

BILLY reaches across the bar and pushes NEIL off his stool.

LINDSAY and PATTI return to their seats after the song.

PATTI

That was like being in college!

LINDSAY

Total fun!

NEIL (O.C.)

Hey, you two are good.

The women look up. NEIL swings an extra chair around, and plops onto it, resting his forearms on the chair's back. Despite his casual pose, he is nervous.

NEIL

Hi, I'm Neil Gardner.

PATTI

Hello. Patti Campbell.

LINDSAY

Lindsay Mitchell.

NEIL  
So, listen, I'm in this band. The  
Grim Reapers.

LINDSAY  
Nice name.

NEIL  
I think we were drunk when we  
thought it up. Anyways, we do a  
little hard rock, a little metal,  
some punk, the occasional  
Carpenters song.

LINDSAY and PATTI exchange a confused frown.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Kidding. Sorry. No Carpenters.  
Anyways, Lindsay, I was thinking.  
I mean, would you be interested,  
that is, would you want to...

He fades out. PATTI smiles knowingly.

PATTI  
Why, Lins, our new friend would  
like to sing a song with you.

LINDSAY  
I don't know.

PATTI  
Oh, come on. You said you wanted  
to rock out. Here's a real rocker.  
Go to it.

PATTI nods at NEIL, who stumbles to his feet. LINDSAY casts  
an evil look at her friend, gets up and walks to the stage.

NEIL suggests a rock song to the karaoke machine operator.  
As NEIL and LINDSAY get into the song, NEIL becomes  
assertive in a way that he is not in real life, and LINDSAY  
becomes take-charge and sexy.

CUTAWAY:

PATTI watches, a knowing smile playing on her lips.

BACK TO SCENE:

LINDSAY and NEIL finish the song. The AUDIENCE applauds  
with palpable gratitude. NEIL and LINDSAY leave the stage  
and return to their seats at the table.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
I detected a little chemistry.

LINDSAY  
Chemistry?

NEIL  
Really?

PATTI smiles smugly and stands up.

PATTI  
Well, this little lawyer must go  
powder her little nose.

PATTI exits. LINDSAY and NEIL sit awkwardly as ANOTHER  
KARAOKE SINGER begins to murder a new song.

LINDSAY  
Sorry. It's Patti. What can I say?

NEIL  
But she's right! There was  
chemistry.

LINDSAY self-consciously looks down at the table.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
So, you just visiting? I don't  
think I've seen you around.

LINDSAY glances up, nods. NEIL is encouraged.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
You've got an amazing voice.

LINDSAY  
Thanks. I haven't sung like that  
in years. You've got great stage  
presence. You're a pro.

NEIL  
I am. Well, kinda. I mean, I do  
play in a band. Been in one since  
I was a kid.

LINDSAY  
Singing with you was fun.

NEIL  
Yeah. So, Lindsay...

LINDSAY  
Everybody calls me Lins.

NEIL  
 Okay. So, Lins, how about, I mean,  
 that is, how about doing it again?  
 You know, singing?

LINDSAY  
 Sing again?

NEIL  
 Or maybe we could go somewhere  
 tomorrow night. You know, talk  
 about music, our influences, and  
 stuff.

PATTI abruptly enters and plops back down on her chair.

PATTI  
 She'd love to.

LINDSAY  
 Patti!

LINDSAY looks at NEIL. He flashes her an uneasy smile.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
 Look, I really don't know anything  
 about you.

NEIL  
 Not a problem. I mean, we could  
 meet someplace public and talk.  
 Get to know each other orally.  
 Verbally! I mean, verbally...

NEIL fades out.

PATTI  
 Oh, my poor, dear Neil Gardner.  
 Allow Auntie Patti to help you.  
 Say, "Do you want to go out?"

NEIL  
 Do you want to go out?

PATTI  
 And you, Lindsay, you say yes.

LINDSAY  
 Patti...

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

SUE, DREW, and LINDSAY are having a staff meeting in Drew's office.

DREW  
How was the beach, Lins?

LINDSAY  
Fine.

SUE  
Patti says you met a guy.

DREW  
Oh? What's his name?

LINDSAY  
Neil. But it's nothing.

DREW  
What's he do?

LINDSAY  
I don't know. He has a band. Patti and I went to Karaoke night and Neil liked the way I sang. No big deal.

SUE  
Patti says you agreed to go on a date when you get back tomorrow.

DREW  
A date, huh? Well, why don't you take a week or two off? See where this goes.

LINDSAY  
Guys, it's not a big deal. And it's not a date. There's no "seeing where this goes."

SUE  
Patti says there was chemistry.

LINDSAY  
Remind me to have Patti sign a confidentiality form.

DREW  
Listen, Lins, regardless of whether this is or is not a date, you need a real vacation. Take the two weeks anyway.

LINDSAY  
You sure, Drew?

DREW nods.

DREW  
Do it before the fall activities  
kick in. I'll give you a call if  
anything comes up. Just relax and  
have fun.

INT. PATTI'S GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

PATTI is doing LINDSAY's nails in preparation for her date.

PATTI  
I don't know why you don't polish  
your nails.

LINDSAY  
Because I'd only chip them up.

PATTI  
Your cuticles are a mess. We need  
more girly-time sleepovers so we  
can address these issues.

LINDSAY rolls her eyes.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
You're terrified of Neil, aren't  
you?

LINDSAY  
Me? No!

PATTI  
Really, Lins? Because I googled  
the word "panic" this morning and  
a picture of you popped up.

LINDSAY  
Look, since I've been a minister,  
the difficulty level of dating has  
gone way up. What if Neil asks me  
about my job? What should I do?

PATTI  
Tell the truth.

LINDSAY

Oh, that always goes well. When a guy learns I'm a minister he either runs away or wants to have sex with me on the restaurant table.

PATTI

Men are such pigs.

LINDSAY

Let me get this straight. Men are pigs so you set me up with one.

PATTI

I could set up you with a woman if you'd like.

LINDSAY

Sorry. Not even bi-curious.

PATTI

Too bad. I know some lovely women.

PATTI looks LINDSAY in the eyes.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Neil is cute if you like a clumsy, beta kind of man, which you do. Just relax and have fun for once.

LINDSAY

I have fun!

PATTI

Oh, tons of it and all with church people. And then you want a change. Well, this is a change, Lins. Embrace it.

INT. FLYING FISH CLUB BAR - NIGHT

LINDSAY enters and anxiously looks around. She has trouble locating NEIL until a man in the middle of the room gets out of his chair and waves. LINDSAY looks him up and down.

CUTAWAY:

LINDSAY'S POV:

Camera tracks from NEIL's head to his feet: He has washed his hair, put on a shirt with buttons, and a pair of new

jeans. On his feet, however, are the same old ratty sneakers.

BACK TO SCENE:

A relaxed and smiling LINDSAY approaches NEIL.

NEIL  
Wow! You look great.

LINDSAY  
You clean up pretty well yourself.

LATER:

NEIL and LINDSAY sip on glasses of beer. A semi-empty bowl of nuts sits on the table between them.

NEIL  
So the band plays Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. It's our main gig. Actually it's our only gig.

LINDSAY  
Why not play the whole week?

NEIL  
Me and the guys have other jobs. Plus, Joey and Yankee are married and have kids.

LINDSAY  
Yankee?

NEIL  
Last name's Doodle. Real first name's Shadrack. Why not?

LINDSAY  
I guess. So you guys are a part-time rock gods.

NEIL  
Part-time, yeah. Not so sure about that rock god thing. We'd be making a whole lot more money if we were real rock gods. We had big dreams, though, once upon a time.

LINDSAY  
Didn't we all.



NEIL  
 Hey, let's get down to brass  
 tacks. Favorite 60s band?

LINDSAY  
 The Beatles, hands down.

NEIL  
 Yes!

LINDSAY  
 Favorite classic punk band?

NEIL  
 Aw, come on. Don't even go there.  
 The Sex Pistols.

LINDSAY  
 Best band ever?

NEIL  
 Led Zeppelin, of course.

LINDSAY  
 Of course.

NEIL tosses a nut in the air and catches it in his mouth.

NEIL  
 Complete this sentence. "Disco..."

LINDSAY  
 "Sucks." But that's not entirely  
 true. Some of it's pretty good.

NEIL  
 I like the way you think.

LINDSAY tosses a nut in the air and catches it.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
 Not bad. For a girl.

LINDSAY  
 Don't give me that "for a girl"  
 stuff. I learned that from one of  
 the girls in my youth gr-

NEIL looks curiously at her.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
 That is, I learned it from one of  
 the girls in my class.

NEIL  
Oh, so you're a teacher!

LINDSAY avoids his eyes.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I knew it! Where do you teach?  
What do you teach?

LINDSAY  
Religion.

NEIL  
Religion? I expected you to say  
music or something. Anything but  
religion.

LINDSAY  
Something wrong with religion?

NEIL  
Yeah. All those crazy haters for  
one. They're against everything  
and for nothing.

LINDSAY  
Not all churches.

NEIL  
Well, I had a bad experience with  
a church full of haters and  
judgers.

LINDSAY  
I'm sorry. But, Neil, my church  
isn't like that. And I'm not like  
that, either.

NEIL realizes he's sabotaging his date.

NEIL  
I didn't mean you, Lins! Really. I  
meant them, those other people.  
You're nice. You'd never, I mean,  
oh, shit! I'm sorry. I didn't mean  
it, it just came out.

LINDSAY  
It's all right. You have a right  
to your opi -

NEIL  
(interrupts)  
Damn it! I suck at dating.  
(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)  
 Look, I'm really sorry. I didn't  
 mean to rant. You just hit a  
 nerve.

NEIL stands and pulls his wallet out of his pocket

NEIL (CONT'D)  
 This was a bad idea. I'll just pay  
 the bill and -

LINDSAY  
 (interrupts)  
 No! Don't go. It's okay.

NEIL hesitates.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
 Sit back down, Neil. Please.

NEIL sinks into his chair.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
 Rant or no rant, we learned that  
 we both like music and share a lot  
 of the same influences. Neil,  
 people who have disagreements and  
 strong opinions can still be  
 friends.

NEIL  
 You're right. I'm sorry.

BEN  
 (O.C.)  
 Yo, Neil! So this is what you do  
 with your time off!

NEIL'S band (BEN ROMAN, JOEY SAKS, and SHADRACK "YANKEE"  
 DOODLE, 40's) enter. NEIL winces as JOEY plops onto one of  
 the extra chairs at the table.

JOEY  
 So what is this? Some kinda date?

BEN  
 I thought Neil on a date was the  
 first sign of the apocalypse.

YANKEE sits on the other chair at the table.

NEIL  
 Who let you guys out of your  
 cages?

BEN

Yankee and Joey's wives are at a baby shower. The kids were invited, too. So, aren't you going to introduce us to your lady?

NEIL heaves a sigh.

NEIL

Lindsay Mitchell, these are my band mates: Ben Roman, bass. Joey Saks, lead guitar. Yankee Doodle, drums.

LINDSAY

(to NEIL)

And you play...?

NEIL

Guitar and lead vocals.

(to the BAND)

You ought to hear Lins sing, guys. She's amazing!

BEN

Oh, no. No, man. You're not saying-

NEIL cuts BEN off with a pointed look.

NEIL

I'm not saying anything. Okay?

BEN

Suit yourself.

YANKEE

(to LINDSAY)

So, did Neil tell you that he manages a music store?

NEIL

I was going to, but now you have.

BEN

He tell you he lives over that store in an efficiency apartment?

NEIL

No, I haven't told her that, either. Thank you for giving her that piece of information, Ben.

JOEY

And did you tell her about your -

NEIL

(interrupts)

Enough, already! Have some mercy. This is our first date, the purpose of which is to get to know each other a little bit at a time.

BEN

Uh, huh. So, Lindsay, I guess you don't know that when the zombie apocalypse happens Neil plans to be on the zombie side.

NEIL

You guys are such morons.

JOEY

How's the date going so far, Lins?

LINDSAY

On a scale of one to ten? With one being "I want to go home" and ten being "this guy is awesome"?

JOEY

I like this woman, Neil!

BEN

Yeah, how'd you ever convince her to go out with you? 'Cause, you know, you got that zombie thing.

NEIL

Will you guys please shut the fu-

LINDSAY

(interrupts)

Eleven.

The REAPERS are quiet for a beat.

BEN

Huh?

LINDSAY

Eleven. On a scale of one to ten, the date is an eleven.

NEIL smiles slowly. He stands and indicates that LINDSAY stand, too. She smiles and gets up.

NEIL  
(to LINDSAY)  
I know we were thinking of having  
dessert here but the room is a  
little crowded. So why don't I pay  
the bill and we take a stroll on  
the boardwalk?

LINDSAY  
Sounds perfect.

NEIL offers LINDSAY his arm and they walk away.

BEN  
(calls after them)  
Hey, Neil! If you want to get to  
first base, let me know. I can  
give you pointers.

NEIL just waves over his shoulder at BEN.

EXT. BOARDWALK - NIGHT

LINDSAY and NEIL walk away from an ice cream stand and stop  
near the fence separating the boardwalk from the beach.  
They eat their ice cream as they talk.

LINDSAY  
I like the sound of the waves.

NEIL  
Me, too.

LINDSAY  
How come you let your band push  
you around?

NEIL  
It's just how we relate. Anyways,  
I like to lead by example.

LINDSAY  
I think you might need to add a  
whip and chains to that example.

NEIL  
(laughs)  
Not a bad idea.

NEIL and LINDSAY are quiet for a beat.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You know, my mom used to take us to the beach. She was kind of a flake, but she had a good heart. I miss her. Died from breast cancer eight years ago.

LINDSAY

I'm sorry to hear that. My mom's gone, too. Car accident. She didn't have an easy life. Dad was in the Marines. That meant we moved all over the place. Then he went to Beirut. He was killed when the barracks were bombed in 1983. I was ten.

NEIL

Wow. How did you handle that?

LINDSAY

I cried. A lot. So did my brother Dale. He's two years older than me. The chaplain at the base got Mom through the first shock. Then we moved to New Jersey to live with my grandparents. Grampa was a minister.

NEIL

That explains the religion thing.

LINDSAY

Yeah. Sort of.

NEIL

Was his church nice?

LINDSAY

They were wonderful. Neil, all Christians aren't crazy, mean, or bigoted.

NEIL

When my mom got sick her church said it was because God was testing her. As if life is a big exam you gotta pass to get to heaven. One even said she got sick because she and Rowdy weren't married.

LINDSAY

That's terrible!

NEIL

When my mother died, they told me it was God's will. Come on. No God in his right mind would give somebody cancer. That just would be plain sadistic. Poor old Corn Flower.

LINDSAY

Corn Flower?

NEIL

My mom was a hippie. Long hair, granny dress, the whole nine yards. She called herself Corn Flower and moved to a commune when she was eighteen. Shacked up with Rowdy, who eventually got her pregnant.

NEIL pulls out his wallet and shows LINDSAY a faded photo.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Take a gander at my family.

CUTAWAY:

FADED COLOR PHOTOGRAPH OF A HIPPIE COMMUNE FARM.

A young long-haired woman in a granny dress stands next to a long-haired, bearded man wearing jeans, t-shirt, and sandals. The young woman is holding a one-year-old baby.

RETURN TO SCENE:

LINDSAY

You were an adorable baby!

NEIL

Thanks. It's so weird. My mother changed her first name, kept her last, and didn't use Rowdy's. I never did find out what his last name was.

They have finished their ice cream. LINDSAY slips her arm through NEIL'S.

LINDSAY

Come on. Walk me home.



EXT. STREET - NIGHT

NEIL and LINDSAY walk quietly down the boardwalk for a few beats.

NEIL  
Sorry.

LINDSAY  
What for?

NEIL  
Making you listen to my tale of  
woe.

LINDSAY  
That's what people do. They share  
stuff, the good and the bad.

NEIL stops walking.

NEIL  
Hey.

LINDSAY looks curiously at him.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
How'd you like to see the Grim  
Reapers in action?

LINDSAY  
Sounds like fun.

NEIL  
Good! I'll pick you up at seven.

LINDSAY stops in front of a house.

LINDSAY  
Well, this is it. Patti's lovely  
shore house.

LINDSAY and NEIL chuckle. There is an awkward pause.

NEIL  
Well, goodnight.

NEIL leans in and kisses her on the cheek. LINDSAY is  
touched.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I had a good time.

LINDSAY  
Me, too.

NEIL  
See you tomorrow.

LINDSAY smiles and nods. Neil turns and starts to walk to the street. Then he turns and waves goodbye once more and ambles off. LINDSAY watches him disappear.

EXT. BEACH MUSIC STORE - DAY

LINDSAY is out for a stroll. Homeless veteran KENNY JAMESON, 30s, gets off the bench in front of the store and approaches her.

KENNY  
Hi, miss. I'm homeless and I haven't had a meal all day. Anything you could do would help.

LINDSAY  
Okay. Why don't I buy us lunch?

KENNY  
You serious?

LINDSAY nods.

KENNY (CONT'D)  
Thanks! There's a sandwich shop a couple doors down. My name's Kenny Jameson, by the way.

LINDSAY  
Lindsay Mitchell. Call me Lins.

LATER:

LINDSAY and KENNY enter and sit on the bench. LINDSAY opens a bag and hands out sandwiches and bottled iced tea. They start to eat.

KENNY  
You know, you're different. It's not every day a white woman shares her lunch with a homeless Black man. Believe me. I know.

LINDSAY  
You needed a meal. No biggie. So what's your story, Kenny Jameson?

KENNY  
I was a Navy Hospital Corpsman.

LINDSAY

A what?

KENNY

Sort of a paramedic. I did two tours of duty in Iraq and one in Afghanistan.

LINDSAY

Wow. Thanks for your service!

KENNY

You're welcome. I was two semesters short of getting my Master's degree in psychology when I enlisted. After I decided not to re-up again, I thought I'd finish the degree and look for a job in counseling.

LINDSAY

What happened?

KENNY

Post-traumatic stress disorder, that's what. I got help for the PTSD but my money ran out quick, couldn't find a job, and next thing I knew I was on the street. Been on it for two months now. Well, actually, I've been in my car. On the street. What's your story?

LINDSAY

I work in a church. I'm an assistant minister.

KENNY

Why does that not surprise me? Good listener. Compassionate. Do you like your job?

LINDSAY

It's been a good ride.

KENNY

Interesting. "It's been a good ride." Does that mean it's not one now?

LINDSAY

I've been kind of, well, antsy lately. I think it's mid-life crisis.

KENNY

You? You're a mere child!

The door to Beach Music suddenly flies open. CLAIRE GARDNER, 30s, thin and pale, storms out. She stops and looks back over her shoulder.

CLAIRE

Screw you! Who needs you anyway?

CLAIRE marches off down the street. NEIL bolts out the door and stares at her as she goes.

NEIL

Yeah, well, do me a favor and don't come back!

NEIL turns, sees KENNY and LINDSAY, and blanches.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Oh. What? How? Lins? Oh, my God, I'm sorry. It's just...

LINDSAY

Don't apologize. It looks like you were really angry.

NEIL

She's never on time, rude to the customers, and I'm not so sure she isn't stealing from the till. Long story short, I just now fired her.

LINDSAY nods at the store.

LINDSAY

And this is where you work?

NEIL

(nods)

What're you doing here?

LINDSAY

Went for a walk, met Kenny, and we decided to snag a little lunch.

NEIL frowns.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Kenny's homeless.

NEIL

Oh.

LINDSAY

He's a Navy vet. Served in Iraq and Afghanistan. Had PTSD, got overwhelmed by medical bills, couldn't find a job, and now he needs a place to stay.

(to KENNY)

Did I forget anything?

KENNY

My girl broke up with me and my dog died.

LINDSAY

Oh, my gosh! Really?

KENNY

Nah. Just playing with you. But put it all together and it makes a damn fine country song.

LINDSAY

(to NEIL)

Besides having a great sense of humor, Kenny also is only two semesters short of a master's degree in psychology. Do you know anyone who's hiring?

NEIL

Not at the moment. But I'll be glad to let you know.

KENNY

Thanks.

LINDSAY holds up half of her sandwich.

LINDSAY

Would you like half, Neil? This thing is huge.

NEIL

Sure, I'm starved. Hey, look, why don't we all go inside? I'll brew a pot of coffee.

INT. BEACH MUSIC EMPLOYEE BREAK ROOM - DAY

At the table, KENNY is telling a story and making NEIL and LINDSAY laugh. They each have a mug of coffee. Sandwich wrappers litter the table.

KENNY

So the dude is stark raving naked and running around the base. We couldn't risk him getting outside the wire, so four of us grabbed a blanket, hid around a corner, and executed an ambush. We threw the blanket over him and dragged him into the hospital. I mean, we thought the guy was crazy!

NEIL and LINDSAY guffaw.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Turned out he wasn't nuts at all. Drunk as a skunk, but totally sane.

KENNY lifts his coffee mug and signs nostalgically.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Good times, man.

The door chime sounds from within the store.

NEIL

Oops! First customer of the day. I'll be back.

NEIL exits. KENNY refreshes his cup of coffee.

KENNY

I think Neil has eyes for you.

LINDSAY

Aw, come on. We only met a couple days ago.

KENNY

Ever hear of love at first sight?

LINDSAY

I don't even live here, Kenny. I'm on vacation.

KENNY

Ah, the lady protests. I saw Neil eyeing me when we were outside. I could see his mind working. Who is this guy? Why is he with Lins? Should I be worried?

A frustrated NEIL enters the break room.

LINDSAY

What's wrong? Did you lose a sale?

NEIL plops down on his chair.

NEIL

Nah. Sold guitar strings.

NEIL broods as KENNY & LINDSAY talk.

KENNY

It's never 'sold guitar strings,'  
brother. A sale is a sale.

LINDSAY

(to KENNY)

Sounds like you know about that.

KENNY

Put myself through college working  
retail.

NEIL

(blurts)

That guy was from another band! He  
didn't even have money for  
strings!

LINDSAY and KENNY trade confused glances.

NEIL (CONT'D)

He's got two part-time jobs and a  
gig and he's broke. Meanwhile, the  
filthy rich get tax cuts so they  
can get filthy richer.

KENNY

Hey, man, you did the best for  
your friend.

NEIL

(to KENNY)

And you! You risked your life  
serving our country. Only one  
percent of our people are doing  
that dirty work — one percent! You  
end up dealing with PTSD, you  
can't find a job, and you don't  
have a place to stay. A grateful  
nation ought to raise taxes so we  
could thank vets like you just a  
little bit better, don't you  
think? But no!

NEIL stops, takes a breath, and continues in a calmer tone.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Sorry. I was raised by hippies.  
Share-and-share alike idea, you  
know?

NEIL takes a slug of coffee and slams the cup on the table.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Screw it! Here's the upshot:  
Kenny, this is your lucky day.

LINDSAY and KENNY exchange confused glances.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I just fired someone. I need a  
sales floor clerk and you know  
about retail.

KENNY'S mouth falls open.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I'm offering you the job, dude.  
Stay in the break room until you  
can afford a place of your own. I  
live upstairs in the efficiency. I  
can fix a bed for you down here  
and you can use my kitchen and  
take a shower up there. Sound like  
a deal?

KENNY  
Whoa. Thanks, man.

NEIL polishes off his coffee.

NEIL  
Welcome to Beach Music. Well, I  
need to go back up front so I  
don't get robbed blind. Join me  
when you're finished with your  
lunch break. We'll fill out the  
paperwork.

As NEIL stands, LINDSAY gets to her feet and hugs him.

LINDSAY  
Neil, you're amazing!

NEIL smiles, closes his eyes, and hugs back. Seeing the  
chemistry, KENNY grins and sips his coffee.



INT. FLYING FISH CLUB SHOW FLOOR - NIGHT

LINDSAY, NEIL, PATTI, and KENNY enter and approach a table near the stage. YANKEE, JOEY, and BEN are already seated.

NEIL  
Hey, guys!

YANKEE  
'Sup, dog?

NEIL  
Introductions, that's what. Ben Roman, Joey Saks, Yankee Doodle, meet Patti Campbell. You know Lins. And this is Kenny Jameson, my new employee.

BEN  
Glad to meet you.

BEN and KENNY shake. Everyone sits down. KENNY stands and pulls a chair out for PATTI.

KENNY  
Would you care to sit, my lady?

PATTI  
Well, a man with manners. How refreshing.

KENNY  
My mama taught me right.

KENNY takes a seat next to PATTI and smiles at her. She smiles back.

LATER:

The GRIM REAPERS finish playing a metal song. The AUDIENCE applauds enthusiastically. NEIL takes the mic.

NEIL  
Thanks! What we'd like to do right now is ask a friend of ours to sing with us.  
(to LINDSAY)  
You up for it, Lins?

LINDSAY hesitates, but PATTI gives her a nudge. LINDSAY gets to her feet, walks on stage, and stands uneasily in front of the crowd. NEIL takes the mic stand and puts it in front of her.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
 (to LINDSAY)  
 Don't be nervous. You're gonna do  
 great. How about a classic? "Twist  
 and Shout," Beatles style?

LINDSAY nods.

The band launches into the number. NEIL and LINDSAY alternate lines and verses. LINDSAY loses her inhibition as she sings.

The song ends. The AUDIENCE, KENNY, and PATTI leap to their feet as they applaud and cheer. NEIL nudges LINDSAY, who grins and takes a bow.

LATER:

The GRIM REAPERS are taking a break at the table. PATTI signals to the WAITRESS.

PATTI  
 (to WAITRESS)  
 A round of Yuengling for the  
 table. On me.

NEIL  
 (to LINDSAY)  
 I'll be right back.

Once NEIL exits, the REAPERS suddenly turn to LINDSAY.

BEN  
 Okay, Lins, you proved your chops.

JOEY  
 Super good, by the way.

YANKEE  
 We acknowledge your super  
 goodness.

JOEY  
 The deal is Neil's gonna ask you  
 if you wanna join the band.

LINDSAY  
 What?

BEN  
 Come on. Don't tell me you didn't  
 know.

LINDSAY  
 I didn't. Really.

BEN  
My God, what are you? Blind? We  
gotta replace our lead singer.

LINDSAY  
You do?

YANKEE  
Yeah. She's strung out again. Neil  
had enough, so he fired her.

BEN  
Our boy finally grew a pair. It  
took him like forever.

YANKEE  
Now we need a female singer. Tag,  
sister. You're it.

LINDSAY  
What is this? An audition?

JOEY  
Kind of. Don't let Neil down,  
Lins. He's had a rough five years.

KENNY and PATTI watch the exchange. The WAITRESS arrives  
with two pitchers of beer.

LINDSAY  
A rough five years?

BEN  
We need a break. If you join the  
band we'll be able to keep this  
gig and maybe score some bigger  
stuff.

JOEY  
We could even play the Jersey  
Shore Rock Festival. Hell, we even  
might become self-supporting.

LINDSAY is speechless. BEN rolls his eyes.

BEN  
(to JOEY)  
Pipe dream, man.

PATTI  
Lins, your nose is getting shiny.  
For that matter, so is mine. Come.

PATTI takes LINDSAY's arm and pulls her to her feet.

NT. FLYING FISH CLUB WOMEN'S ROOM - LATER

LINDSAY and PATTI enter. LINDSAY is in full panic mode.

LINDSAY

Patti, what am I going to do? They want me to join the band!

PATTI

I guess it all boils down to whether you want to join the band.

LINDSAY

I'd love to, but I can't. I'm on vacation. I've got to get back to the church in two weeks.

PATTI

Do you?

LINDSAY

Yes! I can't support myself on the money we'd earn doing gigs. I'd have to find another job.

PATTI

Maybe God's giving you a second chance to rock out.

LINDSAY

Don't bring God into this. I don't think God has anything to do with...

PATTI

(Interrupts)

Don't you?

LINDSAY

This is crazy.

(protesting)

I can't deal with this. I'm out of here.

PATTI

What about Neil?

LINDSAY

I just need to go.

LINDSAY bolts out of the women's room and nearly collides with NEIL in the hall outside the restrooms.

NEIL

Where were you? We need to talk.

Before she can protest, NEIL takes her by the arm and pulls her out the door.

EXT. FLYING FISH CLUB ENTRANCE - NIGHT

NEIL pulls LINDSAY to the grubby wall that separates the Flying Fish Club from the bookstore next door

NEIL  
I understand the guys told you  
that I want you to join the band.

LINDSAY nods.

NEIL (CONT'D.)  
That wasn't supposed to happen. I  
was the one who was supposed to  
ask you. Did they pile on?

LINDSAY  
A little bit.

NEIL  
They're such morons!

LINDSAY  
It's all right. They did it  
because they care about you.

NEIL  
Yeah? Well, okay, so anyways -

NEIL is interrupted when LINDSAY's phone rings.

LINDSAY  
Excuse me.

NEIL  
Lins, let's finish this first.

LINDSAY glances at her phone. The display reads: "DREW."

LINDSAY  
I'd love to, Neil, but this is  
important.  
(answers the call)  
Hello, Drew.

As LINDSAY listens, she becomes shocked, then concerned.  
NEIL listens worriedly to her end of the conversation.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
 What? Oh, no. Oh, my gosh! Yes. Of course, I'll be there. What hospital? Okay, give me about two hours. Bye.

LINDSAY hangs up.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
 (to NEIL)  
 I've got to go.

She starts to go back inside, but NEIL grabs her arm.

NEIL  
 What's wrong?

LINDSAY  
 Emergency. I'll explain later.

Confused, NEIL watches LINDSAY rush inside.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

LINDSAY and PATTI hurriedly enter the ER waiting room. They look around and see DREW sitting with MONA GRANBY, 40s. MONA'S face is bruised and her arm is in a sling.

LINDSAY rushes over and sits beside MONA, while PATTI stays discreetly to the side.

LINDSAY  
 Mona! How's Adam doing?

MONA  
 The doctors are still with him. They said something about internal injuries and his spleen. They might have to remove it. Oh, Lins! The car flipped over two times!

LINDSAY puts her arms around MONA and lets her cry on her shoulder.

LATER:

A DOCTOR enters and looks around.

DOCTOR  
 Mrs. Granby?

MONA anxiously stands. DREW and LINDSAY follow suit.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

Your son is going to be all right, Mrs. Granby. He had a splenic rupture and we had to remove the spleen, but Adam is going to be just fine. He came through the surgery with flying colors.

MONA

Oh, thank God! Thank you, Doctor!

LINDSAY and DREW glance at each other and heave enormous sighs of relief.

INT. CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY OFFICE - DAY

LINDSAY enters. SUE is sitting at her desk.

SUE

How's Adam?

LINDSAY

It was a late night. He's pretty racked up. Had to have his spleen removed, one leg's in a cast, and he has a couple broken ribs, but he's going to make it.

SUE

I'll send a card. Do you think we should send flowers, too?

LINDSAY

I think he'd really like a big sandwich from Stinky's Deli. But check with Mona in a day or two to make sure he can have one.

SUE makes a note in a book and then looks up.

SUE

So how's the vacay been going?

LINDSAY

Fine.

SUE

Just "fine"? I don't think so.

SUE picks up her cell phone, opens a picture file, and holds it up for LINDSAY to see.

CUTAWAY:

A photo of NEIL and LINDSAY singing at each other.

RETURN TO SCENE:

SUE (CONT'D)

Patti texted me last night. This looks like more than "fine". Do you like him?

LINDSAY

Sue, he's practically an atheist.

SUE

You're making excuses again. You do that every time you meet a decent prospect. Lins, sometimes you just have to close your eyes and dive in.

LINDSAY

Dive in? Me?

SUE

Yes, you.

DREW enters.

SUE (CONT'D)

And while you're at it you should join the band.

DREW

What band?

DREW pulls his mail out of his box and looks it over.

SUE

The Grim Reapers.

DREW

Nice name.

SUE

They want Lins to be their new singer.

DREW

(to LINDSAY)

Don't tell me you're going to add rock star to your resume.



LINDSAY

Will everyone please stop? A guy I met has a band and I've sung a couple of times with them and, oh, this is so darned complicated!

DREW

I'm good at complicated. Why don't we step into my office?

LINDSAY follows DREW. DREW turns, smiles at SUE, and shuts the door. Unable to eavesdrop, SUE frowns.

DREW sits and indicates that LINDSAY sit down, too.

DREW (CONT'D)

You can tell me to go jump in a lake at any time. Remember, I love you.

LINDSAY nods.

DREW (CONT'D)

So this Neil guy wants you in his band?

LINDSAY

Yeah.

DREW

Sounds like fun.

LINDSAY

It was. It is.

DREW

You know that's one thing I never saw coming. Job at another church, sure. Position with the denomination, maybe. But rock band? Clueless.

DREW sits back in his chair.

DREW (CONT'D)

What did you say?

LINDSAY

Drew, seriously. A rock band?

DREW

You did it in college.

LINDSAY

And I gave it up when I went to seminary.

DREW

Let's see. You've been in ministry, what? Fourteen years?

LINDSAY nods.

DREW (CONT'D)

And you've been here ten. Sometimes people change, situations change, callings change. People go from one type of ministry to another.

LINDSAY

But this isn't like getting ordained or going to work in the denomination's offices. It's singing in a rock band. How is that ministry?

DREW

Come on, Lins, you know God doesn't work only through church.

LINDSAY

Yeah, but rock?

DREW

It's been known to happen. U-2, Mumford & Sons, Creed. Want me to go on?

LINDSAY waves for him to stop.

LINDSAY

I just don't know if I'm being called to that.

DREW

So test it. Play with the band. Get to know them better. If it isn't right, you'll know.

LINDSAY

But Drew, the band is part-time. I'd have to find another job, sell my condo, look for a new place to live in Point. I'd be crazy to do that.

DREW

God's called people to do crazier things. Like move to a new land, lead people out of Egypt, die on a cross.

LINDSAY

What's really going on here? Do you want me to leave or something?

DREW

Of course not. But it's obvious you're searching.

LINDSAY

Fair enough. I am. Turning forty's made me think about my calling and my life. But, let's be honest, those questions aren't new. I've been through this before.

DREW

We all have. Just remember, God works on God's time. Got it?

LINDSAY nods.

DREW (CONT'D)

Good. Now get outta here.

LINDSAY starts for the door, but hesitates and turns back around.

LINDSAY

Drew? Thank you.

DREW

You're welcome. Hit the road.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. BEACH MUSIC - DAY

NEIL has just finished waiting on a customer. The door chimes and LINDSAY enters. NEIL looks up.

NEIL

Lins!

NEIL hurries over and gives LINDSAY an affectionate hug.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You okay? What happened? You left in a big hurry.

LINDSAY  
A friend and her son were in a bad  
car accident.

NEIL  
Are they all right?

LINDSAY nods.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
That's good.  
(beat)  
So, this Drew person who called  
you. Girl?

LINDSAY  
Guy.

NEIL  
'Kay. Friend?

LINDSAY  
Colleague.

NEIL heaves a relieved sigh.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
Neil, I think we need to talk.

NEIL  
Yeah. We do. Come on.

LINDSAY and NEIL enter the break room. NEIL shuts the door  
behind them and turns to face her.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
So, would you like to join the  
band, Lins?

LINDSAY  
I'd love to do that, Neil, but  
it's not a full-time job. I work  
an hour away in Cuylerville. It's  
not as if I don't like you guys,  
because I do, but...

NEIL paces away from her.

NEIL  
I should be honest, Lins. This  
isn't just about the band. I like  
you.

LINDSAY  
I like you, too.

NEIL stops pacing and turns.

NEIL  
Really?

LINDSAY  
Yeah.

NEIL walks back to her.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
But I think we should take things  
one step at a time.

NEIL  
Good idea. Because, well, I need  
to tell you something kind of  
important.

LINDSAY is anxious.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I was married. We got divorced  
four years ago. I wanted it to  
work, but it just didn't. She  
wanted more. More house. More  
money. More man. One with a  
huge...  
(beat)  
...bank account. But that's Ginger  
for you.

LINDSAY  
Ginger?

NEIL  
I know. The name should've tipped  
me off.  
(nervously)  
But there's more than just Ginger.

LINDSAY  
More?

NEIL  
We have a daughter. Her name's  
Penelope, but we call her Penny.

LINDSAY  
(relieved)  
You're a father? That's so cool!  
How old is Penny?

NEIL  
(relieved)  
Nine. She's beautiful, smart, and talented. I never imagined I'd have a kid this great.

LINDSAY  
I'd love to meet her sometime.

NEIL  
Then this is your lucky day.

INT. PATTI'S GREAT ROOM - DAY

PATTI is sitting on the couch and working on her laptop. A breathless LINDSAY enters via the front door.

LINDSAY  
He's divorced!

PATTI  
By "he," I presume you mean Neil?

LINDSAY plops onto the couch beside PATTI.

LINDSAY  
He's got a daughter, too. Her name is Penny. She's nine years old.

PATTI  
Wonderful. In a year or two she'll be a raging mass of hormones.

LINDSAY  
Stop. Neil's taking Penny to her softball game today. And he invited me to come to dinner with them and watch the game. Patti, I think I really like this guy!

PATTI  
Saw it coming.

LINDSAY gives her friend a playful push on the arm.

INT. BEACH MUSIC - DAY

LINDSAY is waiting on the store's sales floor. BEN, JOEY, and YANKEE are lounging around.

JOEY  
So, he's taking you on an outing with Penny, huh?

LINDSAY nods.

YANKEE  
Sounds serious.

BEN  
Do you guys think we should let Neil go out with our new female singer? I mean, we ought to protect her, right?

LINDSAY  
I can take care of myself, thank you very much.

BEN  
Yeah, something tells me you can.

JOEY  
Well, I for one, am glad you're going out. This is good for Neil. He never goes out anymore.

YANKEE  
Yeah. That was one nasty divorce.

JOEY  
Ginger was just the wrong woman for him.

BEN  
Plus he got her pregnant. How did that even happen? I mean, Neil's the monk of rock.

YANKEE  
Case of mistaken identity. She thought he was Jon Bon Jovi.

JOEY  
The ex-Mrs. Gardner obviously was wearing beer goggles.

BEN  
And Mr. Gardner forgot to wear something else.

Footsteps pound down the stairs from the apartment. A door at the end of the sales floor opens and NEIL cheerfully enters the room.

NEIL  
(to LINDSAY)  
Ready?

LINDSAY  
Brother, you don't know how ready.

EXT. GINGER'S HOUSE - DAY

NEIL's car pulls up before an ostentatious McMansion.

NEIL turns in his seat to talk to LINDSAY.

NEIL  
Ginger was a fan. She knew I was  
no Jon Bon Jovi. She'd had too  
much to drink and so had I.

LINDSAY  
You realize your band has created  
a legend about you, right?

NEIL  
Unfortunately, it's a lame legend.  
The least they could have done was  
make it sexy.

LINDSAY  
Not happening. They call you the  
"monk" of rock.

NEIL  
The truth is I'm not into casual  
sex. I saw too much of that when I  
lived with the hippies. I mean,  
sex shouldn't be used as an ice  
breaker, right?

LINDSAY  
My sentiments exactly.

NEIL  
Still, Ginger and I ended up at  
her place. One thing led to  
another and six weeks later she  
told me she was pregnant. I wanted  
a family. I liked Ginger. I  
thought we could grow to love each  
other.

NEIL takes a breath and goes on.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Anyways, she got full custody of  
Penny. Now I have to go  
hat-in-hand to see my daughter.



LINDSAY  
You really love that little girl.

NEIL  
She's the best thing in my life.

NEIL gets out of the car and walks to the front door of the McMansion and rings the bell. ROSIE the maid answers.

CUTAWAY:

LINDSAY looks compassionately out the window of NEIL's car.

BACK TO SCENE:

NEIL, ushering PENNY before him, comes out of the house. PENNY is dressed in a softball uniform and cap. She carries a mitt. NEIL takes her hand as they walk to the car.

NEIL gets behind the wheel next to LINDSAY. PENNY sits in the back seat.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Lins, this is Penny. Penny, this is my friend, Lindsay Mitchell.

PENNY  
Pleased to meet you, Ms. Mitchell.

LINDSAY  
Pleased to meet you, Penny. But call me Lins. That is, if your dad doesn't mind.

NEIL  
He doesn't.

NEIL starts the engine and they begin to drive.

PENNY  
Are you coming to the game, too, Lins?

LINDSAY nods.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
Cool!

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS: DINNER AND A SOFTBALL GAME

PENNY, NEIL, and LINDSAY laugh and fool around at the pizza parlor.

Later, at the softball game, NEIL and LINDSAY sit on the bleachers and watch PENNY as she pitches, bats, and hits a

double. Neil stands up and cheers his daughter on. LINDSAY cheers, too, all the while watching NEIL's reactions. He clearly is a doting father.

Later, NEIL, LINDSAY, and PENNY take an evening stroll on the boardwalk. They enter a pavilion.

END SEQUENCE

INT. BOARDWALK PAVILION - NIGHT

NEIL is ordering LINDSAY and PENNY's ice cream orders. PENNY and LINDSAY sit down at a table.

PENNY

Did you like the game, Lins?

LINDSAY

It was fantastic. You guys really pulled it out in the last inning. Great win!

PENNY

Thanks.

(beat)

So do you like my dad?

LINDSAY

Of course. We're friends.

PENNY

I don't mean "friends" like. I mean the other kind. "Boy-girl" like.

LINDSAY

Oh. Okay. Well, yes, I like your dad with "boy-girl" like.

PENNY

I knew it! Ever since he and Mom got divorced, he's been sad, you know? But he's been smiling a whole lot more now. I think it's because of you.

PENNY leans confidentially toward LINDSAY.

PENNY (CONT'D)

I think he likes you, too.

LINDSAY

So do I.

PENNY  
This could be good, Lins.

NEIL, juggling three ice cream cones, interrupts them.

NEIL  
Hey! Some help here! It's starting  
to run down my fingers.

Both LINDSAY and PENNY rush to help.

EXT. STREET BY PATTI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

NEIL, LINDSAY, and PENNY stop in front of the house.

LINDSAY  
I had a great day with you guys.

PENNY gives LINDSAY a big hug, which surprises and delights her. When they finish the hug, NEIL leans over and kisses LINDSAY on the cheek.

NEIL  
Later.

LINDSAY smiles and goes into the house.

INT. PATTI'S GREAT ROOM - NIGHT

LINDSAY enters dreamily through the front door, but suddenly stops short. She gapes and drops her keys.

CUTAWAY:

LINDSAY'S POV:

PATTI and KENNY are sitting on the couch. Both wear bathrobes and hold glasses of wine.

PATTI  
What? You're not the only one  
allowed to date, you know.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Neil is tuning his guitar. LINDSAY sits nearby in a chair.

LINDSAY  
I had no idea they were seeing  
each other.

NEIL  
It happened while you were away.  
They discovered they had things in  
common.

LINDSAY  
Like what?

NEIL  
Like voting rights, giving  
veterans their due, and  
eradicating poverty. Now it seems  
they've discovered a few other  
things.

NEIL turns the amp on and adjusts it.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Anyways, I thought you might like  
to learn a couple of songs and  
sing with us tonight.

NEIL hands her a sheet of paper.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Lyrics. I'll sing the chorus.

Accompanying himself on guitar, NEIL sings the chorus of a  
hard rocking, angry song about broken love.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Now I'll slow it down so you can  
sing along with me. Don't worry if  
you make mistakes.

They sing together. LINDSAY goofs up here and there, but  
gamely keeps singing through the chorus.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Good job! Let's do the verses now.

LATER:

NEIL and LINDSAY sing the complete song. They have fun  
trading lines and verses.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
You rock, lady.

LINDSAY  
You're no slouch yourself.

NEIL starts to put his guitar away.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
I can't wait for the gig tonight.

NEIL  
Me, either.

NEIL takes off his guitar and bends to unplug it from the amp. LINDSAY ogles his backside. NEIL abruptly looks over his shoulder, almost catching her in mid-ogle.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
How about big greasy Jersey  
breakfast?

LINDSAY  
Sounds good.

LINDSAY hesitates a beat as NEIL puts his guitar in its case. Finally, LINDSAY makes up her mind.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
Hey, Neil?

NEIL  
Mm?

LINDSAY  
You know how I said one step at a  
time?

NEIL turns. LINDSAY steps up and boldly kisses him on the lips.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
This is the next step.

NEIL  
Okay.

NEIL leans in and gives her a warm kiss on the lips.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Next steps are good.

NEIL holds his hand out. LINDSAY takes it.

INT. BEACH MUSIC SALES FLOOR - DAY

KENNY is arranging a display of harmonicas in a glass case. LINDSAY is next to him, spraying the top of another glass display case and wiping it down.

KENNY

You and Neil seem to have a thing going.

LINDSAY

Yeah, it's a thing. But not as thingy as what you and Patti have.

Laughing, KENNY takes the spray bottle and paper towels from LINDSAY and begins to wipe off his counter. When he finishes, he tosses the paper towel in the sink and gazes out the window. Suddenly he frowns.

KENNY

Hey, Lins? Look. It's her.

LINDSAY looks out the window.

CUTAWAY:

EXT. OUTSIDE BEACH MUSIC - DAY

CLAIRE is standing on the sidewalk. She has been watching them work. When she realizes she's been noticed, CLAIRE turns and hurries away.

BACK TO SCENE:

LINDSAY

Oh, my gosh. What should we do?

NEIL enters and sees KENNY and LINDSAY.

NEIL

Something wrong?

KENNY

That woman you fired was just outside.

NEIL rushes to the door, throws it open, and looks around.

LINDSAY

Should we call the police?

KENNY

No. She was just staring at us.

LINDSAY

In a really creepy way.

KENNY

Ain't no law against that last time I heard.

NEIL closes the door and walks across the sales floor.

NEIL  
I don't see her anywhere.

LINDSAY  
Should we be worried?

NEIL  
Nah. I don't think she'll come back.

LINDSAY looks doubtful.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Relax, Lins. She probably wanted to see if I'd hired anyone yet.

INT. FLYING FISH CLUB STAGE - NIGHT

LINDSAY and the GRIM REAPERS are rocking Neil's song about broken love. The AUDIENCE loves it.

LATER:

The REAPERS and LINDSAY, KENNY, and PATTI are sitting at a table.

JOEY  
That was fantastic! Please tell me you're gonna stay, Lins.

LINDSAY  
Well...

YANKEE  
Hey! None of that "well" bull. You're staying.

LINDSAY  
Guys, I've got a full-time job back in Cuylerville and a condo.

NEIL  
Plus, she's a teacher. She can't just quit a couple weeks before school starts.

LINDSAY looks uncomfortable. She hasn't told NEIL what she really does.

JOEY

Baloney. I'm a teacher. Believe me, it's been done.

(to LINDSAY)

Listen, we've got an opening in the history department. What do you teach?

NEIL

Religion.

JOEY

Oh, private school, huh?

LINDSAY

Kind of.

JOEY

Well, I'll ask around for you.

LINDSAY

Thanks.

JOEY

Pure self interest. You're part of the band.

BEN

Just don't become a junkie.

YANKEE

Look, man, we tried to help her, but no good.

JOEY

Besides, Lins isn't her.

BEN

Thank God for that.

NEIL's expression clouds. He picks up his beer. LINDSAY watches NEIL take a sip and stare morosely into space.

LATER:

The GRIM REAPERS and LINDSAY are singing again. As LINDSAY gazes at the audience, her eyes suddenly widen.

CUTAWAY:

Arms crossed over her chest, CLAIRE is standing by the door. She is thin and looks unwell.

BACK TO SCENE:



LINDSAY casts a worried glance in NEIL's direction. He is focused on the song and hasn't noticed CLAIRE. LINDSAY gazes at the door again.

CUTAWAY:

CLAIRE is gone. A TALL GUY is now standing in her place.

BACK TO SCENE:

LINDSAY is concerned but continues to sing.

INT. SANDWICH SHOP - DAY

LINDSAY and KENNY wait for their orders.

KENNY

Neil still thinks you're a teacher.

LINDSAY is quiet.

KENNY (CONT'D.)

Why don't you tell him what you really do?

LINDSAY

(beat)

Because he's an atheist.

KENNY

And?

LINDSAY

And what if he thinks I'm some sort of religious fanatic? I'm not. I'm just a person who wants to follow Jesus.

KENNY

And Neil is just a guy who questions church.

LINDSAY

I don't know if you've noticed this, Kenny, but those are two very different viewpoints.

KENNY

Wise ass.

LINDSAY stares at the menu posted on the wall.

LINDSAY

I think I'll have the chicken salad.

KENNY puts a finger on LINDSAY'S cheek and gently turns her head so she is looking him in the eyes.

KENNY

Come on, Lins. This is Dr. Kenny.

LINDSAY

Okay. I don't want religion to be a wall between Neil and me. I want to build a bridge. I just don't know how.

KENNY

It's simple. Have a little faith.

LINDSAY

Do you have faith?

KENNY throws an arm around LINDSAY'S shoulders.

KENNY

Sistah, how do you think I got through three tours of duty?

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

LINDSAY is quietly playing guitar and singing a pop-rock song about hope. NEIL enters but LINDSAY doesn't notice. He listens as she finishes the song and then steps forward.

NEIL

So you play, too.

LINDSAY

(caught)

Oh! Yes. A little.

NEIL

The girl sings and plays. You are turning into my dream woman. That song you were singing. Yours?

LINDSAY

Yeah. I used to write our band's songs.

NEIL

Why don't you sing it through for me?

LINDSAY sings her song again. She is self-conscious.

LINDSAY  
It's not the Reapers' style.

NEIL  
But it's you. It's full of light,  
you know? Strong and positive.

They stare at each other for a long moment.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Hey, Lins?

LINDSAY  
Yeah?

NEIL  
Time for another step.

NEIL leans in and gives her a slow, sensuous kiss. They gradually break apart.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Wow.

LINDSAY  
Yeah. Wow.

NEIL  
I have Penny tomorrow. Would you  
like to go to the beach with us?  
It's not very romantic, but -

LINDSAY  
(interrupts)  
I'd love to go to the beach with  
you and Penny.

They kiss again, a bit deeper this time.

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

LINDSAY carries a beach bag as she thinks and prays about her relationship with NEIL. She stops, leans against the boardwalk railing, and observes people swimming and playing. Then she turns and faces the shop behind her and watches people go in and out of the buildings. The scene is full of relationships: couples, friends, and families.

With a grin, LINDSAY looks heavenward.

LINDSAY  
(to God)  
Okay. You win. I'll dive in.

LINDSAY continues her walk until she sees NEIL and PENNY waiting by an entrance to the beach. She grins, waves, runs up to them.

NEIL  
You ready?

LINDSAY  
You don't know how ready.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS: Beach Day

MUSIC: A rock song plays throughout

EXT. BEACH - DAY

Scenes of NEIL, LINDSAY, and PENNY having fun at the beach and around the boardwalk.

END SEQUENCE

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

KENNY has just finished waiting on a customer. NEIL, LINDSAY, and PENNY enter through the door.

KENNY  
Hey! Have a good day?

PENNY  
Yeah. The best!

NEIL  
Thanks for watching the shop.

KENNY  
My pleasure. I'm closing up in fifteen. Got plans with my lady.

GINGER enters. PENNY runs excitedly into her arms.

GINGER  
Did you have a nice day, punkin?

PENNY  
The best ever, Mom!

PENNY indicates LINDSAY.

PENNY (CONT'D)  
Mom, this is Lindsay, Dad's  
girlfriend. Isn't that cool? Dad's  
actually got a girlfriend!

GINGER glances at a grinning NEIL. She smiles.

GINGER  
Well, it's about time.

GINGER holds out her hand. She and LINDSAY shake.

GINGER (CONT'D)  
It's nice to meet you, Lindsay.

LINDSAY  
Good to meet you, too, Ginger.

PENNY  
Lins is awesome, Mom! She's in  
Dad's band!

GINGER  
(to NEIL)  
In the band? What happened to  
Claire?

PENNY  
Dad had to fire her 'cause she's  
using again.

NEIL  
Penny!

PENNY  
Well, she is. You said so.

GINGER  
I'm sorry to hear that, Neil. Is  
it heroin again?

NEIL  
Yeah. What else?

GINGER  
That explains your new employee.

GINGER gestures at KENNY, who standing by the cash  
register. He waves.

KENNY  
Name's Kenny.

GINGER  
Nice to meet you, Kenny.

KENNY  
Same here, Ginger.

PENNY runs to KENNY to say hello. LINDSAY watches in confusion as GINGER addresses NEIL.

GINGER  
Remember, Neil, if Claire shows up again, you can't allow her to be anywhere near Penny.

NEIL  
I won't.

GINGER  
And Claire's drug use would affect our visitation agreement.

NEIL  
I understand.

PENNY returns to her parents.

PENNY  
Can you, me, and Lins go to the beach again, Dad?

NEIL  
If your mom agrees.

GINGER  
I don't see why not, as long as Claire stays away from here.

PENNY gives her father a hug and kiss and does the same for LINDSAY.

GINGER and PENNY exit.

NEIL  
Wow. That was the nicest Ginger's been to me since I don't know when.  
(to LINDSAY)  
So. Up for some dinner?

LINDSAY  
You bet. I'm starved!

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - LATER

NEIL's apartment: The kitchen/dining area (with small refrigerator, stove, sink, cabinets, and small table that can seat four) is to the right of the entrance, the

bathroom is straight ahead, and the bedroom (with a double bed, nightstand, and dresser) is to the left.

Dinner is finished. LINDSAY and NEIL sit at the table.

LINDSAY  
That was great! Lemon chicken,  
fresh string beans with almonds,  
garlic mashed. You can cook for me  
any time.

NEIL  
I'd love to.

LINDSAY  
You're on.

LINDSAY gets up, clears the plates, and takes them to the sink. NEIL follows her.

LINDSAY puts the plates in the sink.

NEIL  
Lins, this may be kind of sudden,  
but...

NEIL screws up his courage.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I don't just like you, Lindsay  
Mitchell.

LINDSAY looks questioningly over her shoulder.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I love you.

LINDSAY turns around.

LINDSAY  
Wow. Neil...

NEIL  
Stay, Lins. Please.

NEIL pulls her close and kisses her.

LINDSAY  
I so didn't expect this.

NEIL  
What? Us?

LINDSAY  
Yes. And the band. All I wanted  
was a vacation.

NEIL  
What do you want now?

LINDSAY  
I want this. I want us.

They kiss again.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
And I want beach dates with your  
daughter and ice cream on the  
boardwalk and -

NEIL cuts her off with a kiss.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
You. I want you.

NEIL puts his arms around LINDSAY. They kiss with growing  
passion.

NEIL  
Let's go to bed.

LINDSAY hesitates. NEIL gets nervous.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Don't feel you have to say yes.  
You can tell me no. I won't mind.

LINDSAY simply smiles, takes his hand, and leads him toward  
the bed. NEIL abruptly breaks away.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Wait. Hang on a minute.

LINDSAY sits on the bed and watches NEIL root through a  
bunch of plastic bags. When he finds what he is looking  
for, he triumphantly holds it up: a pack of condoms.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Bought 'em today. Just in case.

LINDSAY  
(laughs)  
So did I! Get over here, bub.

LINDSAY pats the space beside her. NEIL dives onto the bed.  
They embrace and kiss. NEIL then stops.



NEIL

Lins, I just want you to know. I haven't done this since my divorce.

LINDSAY

And I haven't done this in a long time. A really long time.

They kiss again and there is no more conversation.

LATER:

NEIL AND LINDSAY are lying in bed in each other's arms.

NEIL

When I first heard you sing, I thought, "Wow, what a beautiful, powerful voice. This woman has got to be in my band." Then I got to know you better and thought, "Wow, what a beautiful, powerful woman. She has got to be in my life."

LINDSAY

The first time I sang with you, you were so passionate and joyous. It was completely sexy.

NEIL

Me? Sexy?

LINDSAY

Most definitely.

LINDSAY runs a finger along a scar on his upper left arm.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

So how did this happen?

NEIL

Old fencing accident.

LINDSAY

Oh, yeah, right.

NEIL

Hey, we have all the time in the world for me to tell you about that. Let's just enjoy the moment.

LATER:

LINDSAY and NEIL are fast asleep. All is quiet. Then: CRASH! The security alarm starts blaring.

LINDSAY and NEIL awake with a start.

LINDSAY  
What is that?

NEIL fumbles under the covers and pulls his shorts on.

NEIL  
The alarm! Someone's broken into  
the store.

The phone rings. NEIL bolts out of bed and hurries to it. LINDSAY moves to get up, but NEIL motions for her to stay where she is. He picks up the phone.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Hello? Yeah. Beach Music. That's  
right. A break in. Hurry.

NEIL hangs up the phone and goes to the door. LINDSAY is in her undies and tee-shirt now.

LINDSAY  
You're not going downstairs.

NEIL  
Are you kidding? I'm not insane.

We hear someone yank open the door to the store sales floor. Next we hear someone climbing the stairs.

NEIL quickly throws the dead bolt on the door to his apartment.

As the footsteps slowly grow closer. NEIL turns to the dresser.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Help me move this, Lins! Quick!

He and LINDSAY push the dresser to barricade the door just as someone starts pounding on the door. NEIL puts his arm around LINDSAY and pulls her to the tiny bathroom. He grabs a baseball bat and takes a defensive position in front of the bathroom.

LINDSAY steps out of the bathroom.

LINDSAY  
Neil, are you protecting me?

NEIL  
Damn straight.

NEIL pushes her gently back into the bathroom.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Now let me do my job, hon.

LINDSAY  
Hon?

NEIL  
Yeah. I love you. I'm calling you  
hon.

LINDSAY  
Okay, toots.

NEIL keeps his eyes trained on the door.

NEIL  
No. Not toots, Lins. Toots is  
definitely not okay.

As the wail of police sirens can be heard, the pounding on the door abruptly stops and footsteps thud down the stairs. NEIL heaves relieved sigh. LINDSAY looks out of the bath.

LINDSAY  
Gone?

When NEIL nods, LINDSAY flies out of the bathroom and throws her arms around his neck.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
My hero!

LINDSAY gives NEIL a big kiss. NEIL is surprised and pleased. Trying to look cool, he shoulders the bat.

NEIL  
Yeah, well, all in a day's work.  
Caveman protect cavewoman.

There is a sharp rap on the door.

OFFICER JONES (O.C.)  
It's the police. You all right in  
there?

NEIL goes for the door.

NEIL  
Yes! Yes, we're great.

INT. MUSIC STORE - DAY

NEIL, LINDSAY, and OFFICER JONES look the place over. The front window is broken, shattered glass is strewn over the

floor, and some of the guitars have been knocked off the wall.

OFFICER KUEHL walks out of the storage room.

NEIL

A Gibson acoustic and a Stratocaster are gone. I've got all the info on the computer.

OFFICER JONES

Your insurance should cover the loss.

OFFICER KUEHL

Looks like whoever it was went out the back exit. Probably someone who knows the place. That door is hard to find.

NEIL's expression darkens.

OFFICER JONES

Any idea who might have done this, Mr. Gardner?

NEIL

Yeah. Maybe.

OFFICER JONES

Got a name?

NEIL

Claire.

LINDSAY reacts when she hears the name.

OFFICER JONES

Claire what?

NEIL

Gardner. Claire Gardner.

OFFICER JONES looks up.

OFFICER JONES

She a relative?

NEIL looks down at his feet.

NEIL

Yeah. My sister.

LINDSAY reacts to this revelation.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

NEIL sits at the kitchen table. LINDSAY has just finished pouring two glasses of wine. She brings them to the table, puts one in front of NEIL and keeps the other for herself.

NEIL

I should have told you.

LINDSAY puts her hand over his as NEIL's eyes fill with tears.

NEIL (CONT'D)

The thing is, Lins, Claire's a junkie. She got clean eighteen months ago. I thought after eighteen months she'd beat it. But a few weeks back, I noticed money disappearing from the till and her performance with the band had gone to crap. And I had to face facts.

LINDSAY

I'm so sorry, Neil.

A dam breaks inside NEIL.

NEIL

What the hell, Lins! Why can't she get clean?

NEIL sobs. LINDSAY says nothing, but waits for him to get control of himself. After a few beats, NEIL takes a shaky breath and wipes at his nose with a hand.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Goddamn heroin! Claire's been through rehab three miserable, stupid times! And she never changes, Lins. Never! You have no idea how this is killing me. I love her but I just can't help her. I'm powerless.

LINDSAY gets up, goes to the bathroom, and returns with a wad of toilet paper, which she hands to him.

NEIL wipes his eyes and blows his nose.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I decided to be Mr. Tough Love, right? No more messing around 'cause I didn't want to enable her.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT'D)

So I fired her from the store and from the band. I know she has to hit rock bottom but, Lins, what if rock bottom for Claire is death?

LINDSAY takes his hand.

LINDSAY

This is not your fault, Neil. You have a store to run, a band to lead, and a daughter to protect.

NEIL

I know you're right, but it still hurts like hell.

(beat)

So there it is. That's the big, bad skeleton in my closet.

LINDSAY hesitates then takes a big breath.

LINDSAY

Want to see my skeleton?

NEIL

Don't tell me you're an ax murderer or something.

LINDSAY

No. I'm a minister.

NEIL

A what?

LINDSAY

A minister, as in I work in a church.

NEIL

But you said you were a teacher.

LINDSAY

I let you assume I was a teacher. Neil, when I heard all that stuff about your mother and her church, I was afraid to tell you. I was afraid you'd run away.

NEIL

Why would I do that? Cut me some slack, Lins. I'm not a complete asshole.

LINDSAY

I should have been honest with you. I'm so sorry. I never wanted to hurt you. Please forgive me.

LINDSAY starts to cry.

NEIL

Don't, Lins. So you're a minister. So what?

NEIL goes into the bathroom and brings her a wad of toilet paper. LINDSAY blows her nose.

LINDSAY

Do you mean that "so what" thing?

NEIL

Of course I do. I love you.

NEIL puts his hand over LINDSAY'S.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Hey, look at us. We're a couple of saps.

LINDSAY looks down at the table top. NEIL softens.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Tell me why you became a minister.

LINDSAY

My boyfriend dumped me. Okay. Not true. After we broke up, I went to my Grampa. He told me to write every day in a journal. I thought he was crazy, but I did it anyway. A few months later, I read the journal and realized God was calling me.

NEIL

Calling?

LINDSAY

It's a sense that you're supposed to do something. It dogs you and won't go away. So you try stuff out until things feel right and they come together.

NEIL

And working in a church came together for you?

LINDSAY nods.

NEIL (CONT'D)

So you really believe in God and Jesus and all that stuff?

LINDSAY

I do. I believe a big, mysterious God loves me. I believe Jesus is God's love on two legs. And I believe God loves us no matter how stupid or angry or awful we are. The trouble is we just don't get it.

NEIL

Would God see my sister the way I do? As an incredibly messed up human being, but someone worth saving?

LINDSAY

Absolutely.

NEIL

I hope that's true.

(beat)

Lins, you're so good on stage. I know this sounds weird, but maybe God wants you to rock.

LINDSAY

Anything's possible.

NEIL

Really?

(beat)

And would God want you to be with a guy who doesn't believe in God?

LINDSAY

Patti says God's specialty is not making sense.

NEIL whistles.

NEIL

Wow! That's one funky deity.

INT. PATTI'S GREAT ROOM - DAY

PATTI is in the kitchen area. The front door opens. A weary LINDSAY enters.



PATTI

Well, I never thought I'd see you  
doing the walk of shame.

LINDSAY

What a night.

PATTI

Obviously.

LINDSAY sits at the breakfast bar.

LINDSAY

Someone broke into the music store  
around three this morning.

PATTI

What?

LINDSAY

It was Neil's sister, Claire.  
She's a heroine addict. She's also  
the woman he fired from the band  
and the store.

PATTI pours coffee and slides the cup toward LINDSAY.  
LINDSAY reaches for the milk and adds some to her coffee.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

We didn't get much sleep after the  
police left.

PATTI

What about before it?

LINDSAY

We did the deed, if that's what  
you want to know.

PATTI

And?

LINDSAY

And he was tender, considerate,  
appreciative.

PATTI

Gee, how I hate that in a man.

LINDSAY

Oh, Patti, I'm a goner! I love  
him. I even love the way he  
smells!

Beset by emotions, LINDSAY puts her head down on the bar.

PATTI  
Ah. The power of pheromones.

KENNY (O.C.)  
You can't smell pheromones.

Dressed in a pair of shorts, KENNY pads into the room and gives PATTI a kiss.

KENNY  
Morning, babe.

PATTI  
Morning yourself, handsome.

PATTI pours him a cup of coffee. KENNY takes it and sips.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
Our Lindsay is in love.

KENNY observes that LINDSAY's head is on the bar.

KENNY  
Is this a good thing or a bad thing?

LINDSAY  
I told him I'd stay!

KENNY  
So stay.

LINDSAY looks up.

LINDSAY  
Oh, just like that. Quit my job. Find a new one. Get an apartment.

KENNY  
What about Neil's place?

LINDSAY  
It's the size of a postage stamp! What about my stuff?

KENNY  
Storage.

LINDSAY  
Kenny! This is complicated. I love Neil. I want to be with him. I want to sing in the band. But how do I know it'll work out?

KENNY

You don't.

LINDSAY

And the church! What do I do about that? I love those people. They're my community. They've been my calling, my life.

KENNY

Sounds like you have a decision to make.

LINDSAY

Can't you come up with something better than that?

KENNY

No.

LINDSAY

Psychologists!

She puts her head back down on the bar.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The GRIM REAPERS are rocking a punk number about deception. LINDSAY is keeping pace with them and trading solos with NEIL. The song ends.

BEN

Lins, you're fitting right in.

LINDSAY

Thanks for the compliment.

NEIL's cell phone rings. He fishes it out of his pocket. As he talks he becomes visibly upset.

NEIL

Hello? Yeah. Yeah. I understand. I'll call him right away.

NEIL hangs up.

LINDSAY

What's wrong?

NEIL

The cops caught Claire trying to fence the guitars from the store. I've got to call Mike.

NEIL exits.

BEN  
Mike owns the store.

JOEY  
He'll probably press charges.

YANKEE  
Damn heroin.

BEN  
Claire's looking at jail time.

LINDSAY quickly takes off her guitar and exits after NEIL.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

NEIL and LINDSAY enter.

NEIL  
She's going to be in a foul mood.

LINDSAY  
I've seen foul moods before.

The station is full of all kinds of people: well-off, broke, hustlers, hookers, housewives, messed up kids.

NEIL  
Nice place, huh?

LINDSAY  
And I've been in police stations before.

NEIL  
Really?

LINDSAY  
Yeah. I've also broken up fights between kids, helped abused wives find a safe house, gotten threats from angry husbands, visited hospitals, and done funerals.

NEIL  
You do have a funky deity.

NEIL walks to the BOOKING SERGEANT, talks to her, fills out a form, hands over an envelope, and returns to LINDSAY.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
They're getting her now.

A door opens. CLAIRE enters, escorted by a gruff OFFICER. NEIL and LINDSAY walk over. LINDSAY notes the track marks on CLAIRE'S arms.

OFFICER  
She's all yours, Mr. Gardner.

NEIL takes CLAIRE by the arm. CLAIRE glares at LINDSAY.

NEIL  
Claire, this is Lindsay. Lindsay,  
this is Claire.

LINDSAY  
Hi.

CLAIRE  
Suck it, bitch.

NEIL  
Shut up, Claire!

CLAIRE  
(coughs)  
Oo! Look who suddenly grew a pair.

NEIL  
You're lucky I frickin' paid your  
bail. It totally wiped out what  
little savings I had. And here's  
the part you really need to hear,  
Claire. Mike's going to press  
charges.

CLAIRE  
What?

NEIL  
What did you think? He's happy you  
broke in? He's pissed big time.

CLAIRE  
The jerk.

NEIL abruptly stops walking.

NEIL  
Claire, you frickin' robbed the  
frickin' store. The guitars didn't  
just fall into your hands! Why the  
hell did you do that, anyway? You  
knew what you were doing. Cut me a  
break!

CLAIRE  
 Jeez, Neil.  
 (coughs again)

NEIL  
 And you need to see a doctor.

CLAIRE  
 Oh, like you care.

NEIL  
 Actually, I do care, Claire. I'll  
 always care! But I'm done cleaning  
 up your messes.

CLAIRE  
 Then why did you bail me out?

NEIL  
 Call it one last good deed. You're  
 looking at jail time, sis, unless  
 you get yourself into rehab. Mike  
 says he'll drop the charges if you  
 do.

CLAIRE  
 He's so full of it.

NEIL  
 Are you not hearing me? You're  
 going to jail if you don't get  
 your ass to rehab. Don't you care?

CLAIRE  
 Maybe I don't care, okay? I mean,  
 why should I? All my friends  
 dumped me. You kicked me out of  
 the band and out of my job. Now  
 you won't even help me.

NEIL  
 Stop with the pity party, Claire!  
 You're not the center of the  
 universe. It's time you grew up.

CLAIRE  
 Oh, yeah? What about you, Mr. Rock  
 Band? You're over forty! Isn't it  
 about time you stopped acting like  
 an over-aged slacker?  
 (To LINDSAY)  
 Good luck with Peter Pan, bitch.

NEIL  
 Claire, for the love of -

CLAIRE marches to the door.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
You're gonna leave?

CLAIRE  
Yep.

NEIL  
But you don't have a car.

CLAIRE  
Yep.

NEIL  
How're you gonna get back to  
Point?

CLAIRE  
None of your business.

CLAIRE exits. NEIL wearily rests his head against the wall.  
LINDSAY gently rubs his back to soothe him.

NEIL  
See what I have to put up with? I  
wipe out my savings to bail her  
out of jail and she walks away.  
Damn it!

NEIL lands an angry kick on the wall. He yelps in pain and  
grabs his foot.

INT. BEACH MUSIC SALES FLOOR - DAY

PATTI and LINDSAY are standing by the register.

PATTI  
She sounds utterly charming. Did  
her head spin as she puked pea  
soup?

KENNY enters through the door leading to NEIL's apartment.

LINDSAY  
How is he?

KENNY  
Looks like he just stubbed his big  
toe. I put a bag of ice on it,  
gave him some Motrin, and told him  
to lie down.

LINDSAY  
Neil's really got his hands full.  
I had no idea.

PATTI puts an arm around LINDSAY.

PATTI  
Are you okay, Lins?

LINDSAY  
Yeah, I think so.

INT. FLYING FISH CLUB SHOW FLOOR - NIGHT

The GRIM REAPERS are performing a punk number to an appreciative crowd. PATTI and KENNY are sitting at the band's table. The song ends. The audience breaks into applause.

When the REAPERS return to the table, KENNY cracks open a bottle of champagne and pours glasses for all.

JOEY  
Wow! Bubbly? Were we that good?

KENNY  
I have some news to share.

EVERYONE looks expectantly at him.

KENNY (CONT'D)  
I soon will start a job working  
with kids at the community center.  
Between that and my little gig at  
Beach Music, I will become  
financially stable.

EVERYONE applauds.

KENNY (CONT'D)  
And I couldn't have done it  
without everyone's encouragement.  
(to PATTI)  
And without your contacts, my  
dear.

KENNY lifts his glass. The OTHERS toast him then break into conversations.

LINDSAY  
(to NEIL)  
I'll be right back.



NEIL  
Don't be too long.

NEIL smiles as he watches her go.

LINDSAY enters the women's room. She is about to go into a stall when the restroom door opens and CLAIRE enters.

LINDSAY  
Oh! Hello, Claire.

CLAIRE  
Hello yourself.

CLAIRE takes a couple of steps toward LINDSAY.

LINDSAY  
Look, if you want to talk to Neil-

CLAIRE  
(interrupts)  
No. I want to talk to you.

LINDSAY  
About what?

CLAIRE  
Money.

LINDSAY  
I'm sorry, but I left my purse on the table.

CLAIRE  
I need money because you stole my job.

CLAIRE steps forward and a wary LINDSAY steps back.

LINDSAY  
Claire, I didn't steal it.

CLAIRE  
Neil fired me because he wanted you around. Now I don't have a job, I don't have any money, and I'm living in a piece of shit hotel. This is all your fault.

LINDSAY  
You were skipping gigs and missing time at work.

CLAIRE begins to cough. It is deep and rattling.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
Listen to you. You're sick.  
Claire, you need a doctor.

CLAIRE  
What I'm sick of are people  
telling me I'm sick!

LINDSAY  
Look, why don't we just go  
outside, find a table, and talk?

CLAIRE takes another step toward LINDSAY. LINDSAY nervously backs away.

CLAIRE  
Why don't I just beat the shit out  
of you instead?

CLAIRE throws herself at LINDSAY, who tries to dodge her. CLAIRE grabs LINDSAY by the arm, swings her around and throws her toward a sink. LINDSAY slams into the sink and falls to the floor. Before she can get up, CLAIRE is on top of her, scratching, slapping, and punching.

LINDSAY cannot fight her off. Consumed by fury, CLAIRE takes LINDSAY by the shoulders and slams her head onto the floor. She then lifts LINDSAY up and slams her onto the floor again. LINDSAY loses consciousness.

CLAIRE stands up. Realizing what she has done, she looks around in panic and then runs out the door.

After a few beats, PATTI enters the rest room and sees LINDSAY lying on the floor.

PATTI  
Oh, my God!

PATTI runs to her and pats LINDSAY's face.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
Lins. Lins!

PATTI throws the door open and sticks her head out.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
(shouts)  
Neil!

No answer.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
Neil!

NEIL answers from within the men's room.

NEIL (O.S.)  
I'm busy!

PATTI  
Neil, it's Lins. Something's  
happened to her.

After a beat NEIL, zipping his jeans, bolts out of the men's room.

PATTI (CONT'D)  
In here. Quick!

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

LINDSAY lies in an emergency cubical. One eye is swollen and bruised. Her lip is split and swollen. There are scratch marks on the side of her face. NEIL sits on one side of the bed, PATTI on the other.

LINDSAY moans softly and tries to open her eyes.

NEIL  
Lins?

LINDSAY winces and squints at NEIL, who is relieved.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Hi, welcome back.

LINDSAY  
My head hurts.

PATTI  
You've got a concussion, Lins.  
You've been in and out, but the  
doctors say you'll be all right.

LINDSAY  
How'd I get a concussion?

PATTI  
We were hoping you could tell us.

LINDSAY  
I can't remember. Why can't I  
remember?

NEIL kisses LINDSAY's hand.

NEIL  
It's all right, hon. Your memory  
will come back.

INT. NEIL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

NEIL sits miserably at the kitchen table. A glass of  
whiskey is in his hand. A half-empty bottle sits nearby.

There is a knock at the door.

NEIL  
Come in.

KENNY enters, plops onto an empty chair at the table, and  
gives NEIL the once over.

KENNY  
Now, that's a productive way to  
handle a problem.

NEIL  
Care to join me?

KENNY  
Sure. I'm free.

NEIL stands up, staggering a little, and fetches a glass  
from the cabinet. He sits back down, pours whiskey into the  
glass, and shoves it in KENNY's direction. KENNY picks it  
up, sniffs, and then sips.

KENNY (CONT'D)  
I see you like the good stuff.

NEIL  
If I'm gonna get drunk, I wanna  
enjoy it.

KENNY  
Interesting. Getting drunk is  
going to help, how?

NEIL  
Indulge me.

KENNY  
Oh, I hear you. I had nights when  
I got loaded so I wouldn't  
remember the war. It didn't work.

NEIL  
Claire did it, Kenny. She's the  
one who beat Lins.

KENNY

I kind of thought that might be the case.

NEIL

She had a motive. I fired her and then brought Lins into the band.

KENNY

I took Claire's place at the store. Think she'll be after me?

NEIL

I don't know. I just know she disappeared. Her super said she moved out of her apartment this afternoon. I can't even reach her through her cell phone.

KENNY

You tell the cops?

Neil nods.

NEIL

Hope they find her so she won't be able to go after Lins again.

(beat)

Nine'll get you ten Ginger won't let me see Penny anymore 'cause Claire's running wild. Dude, my life is going down the toilet.

KENNY

Right.

KENNY takes the bottle off the table and puts it on the kitchen counter.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Time to stop, brother. Numbing your head ain't gonna help any.

EXT. PATTI'S BACKYARD - DAY

LINDSAY, wearing sunglasses, sits in a lounge chair. PATTI pokes her head out the door.

PATTI

Hey, kid, you have a visitor.

NEIL enters. LINDSAY smiles at him. He gives her a kiss.

LINDSAY  
Hey, Neil. Pull up a chair.

NEIL does and sits down.

NEIL  
You look better than you did  
yesterday at the hospital

LINDSAY  
My head still hurts a little, but  
it's getting better.

There is an awkward silence.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
Have you heard anything about  
Claire? Patti told me she  
disappeared.

NEIL  
Haven't heard a thing.  
(beat)  
I'm so sorry, Lins.

LINDSAY  
Not your fault.

NEIL  
It is. I should have had Claire  
arrested long ago.

LINDSAY  
Why? She didn't do anything until  
the other day.

NEIL  
Actually, she has. About six years  
ago, she asked me for money.  
That's when she attacked me the  
first time.

LINDSAY  
Oh, dear Lord...

NEIL  
She hit me with a beer bottle two  
years later. And last year she did  
this.

NEIL pushes his t-shirt up to reveal the scar on his upper  
left arm.

NEIL (CONT'D)

The fight was about money. She always needed her damned fix. Tried to grab the wallet right out of my pocket. I threw her off and began to call 911. My back was to her. Claire must have got a knife from the sink. Lucky I moved or that knife would have been in my chest.

LINDSAY

What did you do?

NEIL

I punched her. I punched my little sister in the face and knocked her cold. Then I took the keys to my place out of her purse. When she came around I kicked her out. I should have called the cops. I should have had her arrested for assault and battery. But I didn't.

LINDSAY waits for NEIL to gather his thoughts.

NEIL (CONT'D)

I never get it right. I'm a loser. I had big dreams for the band. The job at Beach Music was supposed to be temporary. Twenty years later, I'm still there. I married Ginger only because she was pregnant and I ended up living over the store after the divorce. Child support bleeds me dry. My junkie sister landed you in the hospital. And few hours ago, I got a call from my lawyer. Ginger won't let me near Penny as long as Claire's on the loose.

LINDSAY

Neil, none of that matters to me. I love you.

NEIL

You deserve better. You deserve a life without all this stuff. Go home, Lins. Please. Go back to Cuylerville and be safe.

LINDSAY

Are you breaking up with me?

NEIL  
I just can't handle having you  
here and worrying that Claire will  
find you and try something worse.

LINDSAY stares at him in disbelief.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I want you to be safe.

LINDSAY  
But you love me.

NEIL  
Yeah. That's the hell of it.

NEIL gets up, goes to her chair, gives her a tender kiss on  
the forehead.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I'll call you if things change.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

SUE is at the computer. The door to DREW's office is open.  
LINDSAY enters. SUE smiles compassionately at her friend.

SUE  
Hey. How are you?

DREW comes out of his office and gives LINDSAY a hug.

DREW  
Oh, Lins, I heard what happened.  
I'm so sorry.

DREW steps back, looks her over, and teases gently.

DREW (CONT'D.)  
That's one heck of shiner.

LINDSAY  
Yeah. Yeah, it is.

DREW  
If you need to talk, Lins, my  
door's always open. And take your  
time easing back into things, all  
right?

LINDSAY nods. DREW returns to his office. LINDSAY walks to  
her desk and sits down. SUE follows her.



SUE  
Are you okay?

LINDSAY  
No.

SUE  
I'm here if you need to talk.

LINDSAY  
Everyone keeps saying that.

SUE  
I mean it, Lins.

As SUE returns to her desk, LINDSAY opens her laptop and stares numbly at her tired, bruised reflection on the screen.

INT. LINDSAY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

LINDSAY sits on her couch with a Bible as she reads Romans 8:28.

LINDSAY  
We know that all things work  
together for good for those who  
love God.

LINDSAY looks heavenward.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
(to GOD)  
Seriously? Tell me how any of this  
is good! I thought you were  
calling me, so I jumped in. I fell  
in love. I joined a band. I had  
sex with a guy I'm apparently not  
going to marry. Then I get the  
crap beat out of me by his sister.  
And Neil sends me home. Go ahead.  
Tell me how I'm supposed to handle  
this! How is this supposed to be  
good? What the hell do you want  
from me?

No answer. LINDSAY slams the Bible shut.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
Fine! You know where to find me if  
you want to talk.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

The end of the worship service. LINDSAY and DREW stand in the foyer. PARISHIONERS pause to greet them on the way out.

An OLDER WOMAN gives LINDSAY a warm hug.

OLDER WOMAN  
We love you, Lins.

LINDSAY  
Thank you.

The next in line, a well-dressed WIFE gives LINDSAY a hug. Her casually-dressed HUSBAND gives LINDSAY a brotherly "punch" to her shoulder.

HUSBAND  
Hang in there, Lins!

Baffled, LINDSAY watches them go out the door. When she turns around, the ABBEY SISTERS are standing before her. They swallow LINDSAY in a group hug.

ROSA  
We're sooo sorry, Lins.

HARRIET  
We love you.

LENA  
We're praying for you.

HARRIET  
(with maturity)  
You're gonna be all right.

The ABBY SISTERS break the hug and move out the door. LINDSAY turns to DREW.

LINDSAY  
So, Drew, it seems everyone knows what happened.

DREW  
What makes you say that?

LINDSAY  
I'm being love-bombed.

DREW  
Well, you know how word gets out.

LINDSAY

Yes. Yes, I do. It was Sue, wasn't it?

DREW

Okay. Yes. Yes. It was Sue. I should have a talk with her.

LINDSAY

A little too late for that, don't you think?

LINDSAY leaves the foyer and walks down a side aisle, where she runs into PATTI.

PATTI

Listen, Lins, I'm not trying to stick my nose into your life, but the two of you really had -

LINDSAY

(interrupts)  
Chemistry. I know.

PATTI

Don't give up. Please. Neil's in so much pain.

LINDSAY

Patti, I've done a lot of praying. I've haven't gotten much in the way of an answer. But I know one thing: if there's going to be a next move, Neil has to find the strength to make it. I can't do it for him. Right now all I want is for him to find peace. So do me a favor. Pray for him, please.

PATTI puts her arms around her friend. LINDSAY gives in and weeps on her shoulder.

INT. BEACH MUSIC STORAGE ROOM - DAY

NEIL cuts opens a box with an X-acto knife. He begins to take packs of picks, guitar strings, and other things out. He lays them in groups on the table.

JOEY stands beside him and opens a box of sheet music, while BEN and YANKEE lounge nearby.

JOEY

You need to call her. It's been a week.

NEIL grunts.

YANKEE

Dude, you can't just drop your lady like this.

NEIL

What am I supposed to do? Bring her back and get her a 24-hour guard? On my salary? Maybe I'm just a loser.

JOEY

You're not a loser.

NEIL abruptly stops what he's doing.

NEIL

Let's think about this, shall we? You, Joey, you and Susie are teachers. And you, Yankee, you're a plumber and Vonda is a nurse. And Ben, you're a drive-time deejay.

BEN

It's only a local station. Ain't like it's New York or Philly.

NEIL

It pays enough for you to have a nice one-bedroom condo, right? But me? Look at me!

BEN

Okay. So your life ain't perfect. So money's tight.

A worried KENNY looks in the doorway to the storage room.

KENNY

Hey, Neil? Someone wants to see you.

KENNY steps back to let a POLICE OFFICER enter the storage room.

POLICE OFFICER

Mr. Gardner? I have some news about your sister.

INT. CHURCH OFFICE - DAY

LINDSAY and SUE are at work at the their stations.  
LINDSAY's phone rings. She checks the display and answers.

LINDSAY  
Hello, Patti. What's up?

PATTI (O.S.)  
I think you need to come down to  
Point. It's Claire.

LINDSAY waits.

PATTI (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
The police found her unconscious  
in a hotel room. Might be an O.D.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

LINDSAY enters, goes to the front desk, shows her  
identification, and gets a pass. She the looks around,  
spots the REAPERS and PATTI, and hurries over.

LINDSAY  
Any news?

The REAPERS and PATTI shake their heads.

BEN  
This is bad. A cigarette would  
come in handy.

YANKEE  
Yeah, bro, handy to kill yourself.

BEN  
Okay, okay. Anybody got gum?

LINDSAY digs through her purse and hands him a pack of  
mints.

LINDSAY  
Here. It's not gum, but it might  
help.

BEN  
Thanks.

JOEY  
Neil's with Claire, right now.  
They let him bring one other  
person with him. So he took Kenny.

LINDSAY holds up her pass.

LINDSAY  
I told them I'm Neil's minister.  
They'll let me in.

PATTI stands up and gives her a hug.

PATTI  
I'll pray for you. And with any  
luck, these lugs'll do the same.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

LINDSAY enters and finds KENNY waiting by Claire's room.  
KENNY sees her, smiles, and gives LINDSAY a hug.

LINDSAY  
How is she?

KENNY  
Subacute infective endocarditis.

LINDSAY  
What's that? I thought she O.D.'d.

KENNY  
No. She has an infection of the  
inner heart lining and valves. It  
sometimes happens to IV drug users  
who share needles.

LINDSAY  
That's why she was coughing.

KENNY  
The infection developed slowly.  
She's had it for a while.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

The area is stark, brightly lit, and sterile. CLAIRE is lying on the bed. She looks pasty and terribly thin. NEIL sits on a chair beside her, one hand laid on her arm.

NEIL sees LINDSAY and makes an attempt to stand up, but she puts a hand on his shoulder and he relaxes back into the chair.

LINDSAY finds another chair and drags it over beside his as NEIL strokes his sister's arm.

NEIL

I don't understand how I took one path and Claire took another. I mean we both put up with Corn Flower's crazy life, Rowdy's abandonment, poverty, a nut-job church. Even got smacked around some by Rowdy and a couple of Corn Flower's boyfriends.

LINDSAY waits.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Then this one guy showed up. He was dating our mother. But he took a shine to Claire. I was eighteen then. When I realized what was going on, I got Claire the hell out of there. I took care of her after that, but it was too late. The damage had been done.

LINDSAY puts her hand over CLAIRE'S and prays.

LINDSAY

God, circle Claire with your love. Hold her in your hand. Let her know she's not alone, that others love her, and that you love her so very, very much. Amen.

NEIL brushes some of CLAIRE'S hair off her forehead.

NEIL

Hey, Claire? Remember when you were five and I was ten? We were playing in the woods. There was this little stream behind our house. It was really full and running fast, and you were too little to get across.

CLAIRE stirs.

NEIL (CONT'D)

So I carried you through the stream. You held onto my neck like you were afraid I'd drop you. But I didn't drop you, Claire. I never wanted to drop you. I guess I dropped you this time. I'm sorry.

CLAIRE opens her eyes, looks at NEIL, and smiles gently. The fury and resentment are gone, but she is very weak.

CLAIRE  
 You didn't drop me, Neil. I  
 dropped myself. I'm sorry. Sorry  
 about everything.

NEIL  
 I love you.

CLAIRE  
 I love you, too.

A NURSE enters.

NURSE  
 I think we should let Claire rest  
 now.

LINDSAY nods and stands up. NEIL leans over and kisses  
 CLAIRE on the cheek and stands up, too.

LATER:

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

KENNY, LINDSAY, and NEIL are waiting. NEIL sniffs and wipes  
 at his eyes and nose. LINDSAY gives him a tissue.

A DOCTOR enters.

DOCTOR  
 Neil Gardner?

NEIL  
 Yeah?

DOCTOR  
 I'm sorry.

NEIL  
 Oh.

DOCTOR  
 Would you like to see her?

NEIL nods yes.

KENNY  
 (to LINDSAY)  
 Go with him.



INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

NEIL and LINDSAY walks to the bed where CLAIRE's body is lying. NEIL pulls up a chair, sits down, and gently caresses CLAIRE's face. LINDSAY stands beside him with her hand on his shoulder. NEIL fights tears for a moment and then gives in.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS: A Memorial Concert

MUSIC: LINDSAY and the REAPERS perform a moving rock song as a tribute to CLAIRE.

INT. FLYING FISH CLUB - DAY

The club is decorated with large posters featuring photos of CLAIRE with the GRIM REAPERS. Claire's urn sits on a makeshift altar near the front of the stage.

The room is crowded. MOURNERS sit around the tables. NEIL sits at the band's table with PATTI, KENNY, and the GRIM REAPERS.

GINGER, looking strained, enters with PENNY. PENNY walks to the front, sits on a chair next to NEIL, takes his hand, and puts her head on his shoulder. NEIL tenderly kisses the top of her head. Ginger's expression softens as she watches.

JOEY, BEN, YANKEE, and LINDSAY finish singing a number. As the AUDIENCE'S applause subsides, JOEY steps to the microphone.

JOEY

When we were planning this concert, Lins offered to write a song in memory of Claire.

(to LINS)

The stage is yours, my sister.

LINDSAY steps up to the mic as the REAPERS leave.

LINDSAY

As Joey said, I wrote this in memory of Claire. It's called 'Fare Well.'

LINDSAY sings the song and accompanies herself on guitar.

When it is over, there is a respectful pause and then the AUDIENCE break into applause.

LINDSAY looks up to see that NEIL is onstage with her. He opens his arms. LINDSAY pushes her guitar behind her and walks into his embrace.

END SEQUENCE

INT. FLYING FISH SHOW FLOOR - DAY

NEIL is standing at the back of the room. LINDSAY walks over to him.

LINDSAY  
How are you doing?

NEIL  
I've been better. Do you have a moment?

When LINDSAY nods, NEIL leads her to an empty table. They both sit.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I need your opinion. Claire's done some bad stuff. Your God wouldn't send her to hell or anything, would he?

LINDSAY  
No, Neil. The God I know is love.

NEIL  
Do you think she's okay?

LINDSAY  
I do. I think she's at peace.

NEIL  
I miss her, Lins. I feel so alone.

LINDSAY puts her arms around him and they share a cry. After a couple of beats, LINDSAY breaks the hug, searches her pocket, produces two tissues, and gives one to NEIL while she uses the other to wipe her own eyes.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
I failed her, Lins.

LINDSAY  
Neil, you were there at the end for her. She felt your love. You didn't fail her.

NEIL

Think so?

LINDSAY nods.

NEIL (CONT'D)

You know, I'd like to do something so other people don't go through this with their loved ones. I just wish I knew what it was.

LINDSAY

You'll figure it out. Have faith.

NEIL gives her a smile.

NEIL

You're in pastor mode, aren't you?

LINDSAY

Occupational hazard. Sorry.

NEIL

It's who you are. And I need it right now. In fact, I kind of like it.

The two sit quietly for a moment.

LINDSAY

Look, I've got to get going. Tomorrow's Sunday and -

NEIL

(interrupts)

And you've got pastoring to do.

LINDSAY nods and stands up. She hesitates a beat and then lays a hand on his head.

LINDSAY

(whispers in his ear)

May you find comfort, Neil. May you find peace. May you find purpose.

NEIL stands and tenderly hugs LINDSAY. She takes his hand.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

Give me a call sometime, okay? I want to know how you're doing.

NEIL

I will. I promise.

LINDSAY releases his hand and exits.

FADE TO BLACK:

ESTABLISHING SHOT: A typical New Jersey diner.

SUPER: "The Chow-Down Diner"

INT. THE CHOW-DOWN DINER - DAY

A WAITRESS has just finished placing food on the table for LINDSAY, DREW, and Drew's wife, CAROLINE, 60s. They smile and thank her.

LINDSAY  
Thanks for inviting me to lunch,  
guys.

CAROLINE  
Our pleasure. You mean a lot to  
Drew and me, and we thought this  
was the least we can do. I'm glad  
you were there for Neil.

LINDSAY  
I wanted to do it.

CAROLINE  
Do you love him, Lins?

Surprised, LINDSAY looks up from her meal.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
Come on. It's not a hard question.

LINDSAY  
Yes. I love him.

CAROLINE  
Do you think you'll ever get back  
together?

DREW  
(to CAROLINE)  
Now, dear -

CAROLINE holds her hand up, stopping DREW cold.

CAROLINE  
I don't mean to be insensitive,  
but now that Claire's gone...

LINDSAY

I don't know. I think the only one who knows the answer to that is Neil, and he's too broken up to do much thinking at the moment.

CAROLINE

I understand.

DREW

Well, I don't. How smart is this guy, anyway? I mean, what's the matter with him? Is he a dope or what?

CAROLINE

Drew!

DREW

I'm serious! If he's a smart man he'll realize what he's got.

(beat)

Lins, stuff happens. You're a bright woman, a solid theologian, and a fine pastor. But you over-think everything.

LINDSAY

Really? Sue told me to jump in. So I did. Look where it got me!

DREW

Yeah. You fell in love, you had fun, you found a community of people you care about.

LINDSAY grunts and picks at her food.

DREW (CONT'D)

All I'm saying is don't slam the door shut. I don't think this story is over just yet. God doesn't work on our time.

INT. BEACH MUSIC - DAY

EXT. CUYLER PARK - DAY

Camera focuses on sign "CUYLER PARK" and then pans across the ball field and surrounding trees.

LINDSAY, dressed in a jacket, enters and walks across the ball field. She strolls onto a pathway, which takes her beside a stream.

LINDSAY stops walking and sits beside the stream. She watches the water go by for a few beats. Finally, she looks heavenward.

LINDSAY  
(to God)  
First of all, I'm sorry I was so  
angry with you. I apologize.

LINDSAY watches the water again for a beat. She laughs softly.

LINDSAY (CONT'D)  
So... go with the flow, huh? I  
have no idea what you mean, you  
funky deity, you, but thanks.

Smiling, LINDSAY leans back against a tree.

EXT. BOARDWALK - DAY

NEIL and PENNY are eating ice cream cones and watching the people pass them: couples, singles, friends, families. NEIL turns and leans on the railing to face the beach. PENNY does the same.

PENNY  
I'm glad Mom decided to let us be  
together every weekend and every  
other holiday, Dad.

NEIL  
Me, too, Henny-Penny.

People are laughing and shouting as they play in the sand and surf. NEIL focuses on one family in particular: mom, dad, and little girl. They are running down to the ocean together. PENNY is watching, too.

PENNY  
Remember when you, me, and Lins  
did that?

NEIL  
Yeah.

PENNY cuddles up to NEIL.

PENNY  
I thought maybe you'd get married.

NEIL  
Me, too.

PENNY  
I miss Lins, Daddy.

NEIL  
Yeah. I do, too.

PENNY  
Dad?

NEIL  
Mm?

PENNY  
If I miss Lins and you miss Lins,  
why don't we do something about  
it?

NEIL  
Hmm...

NEIL thinks a moment.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Today's Sunday, right?

PENNY  
All day

NEIL fishes his cell phone out of his pocket and checks the screen.

NEIL  
It's ten-thirty.

PENNY  
So?

NEIL  
So... we've got just enough time  
to get there by noon.

PENNY's eyes widen. NEIL holds out his hand. PENNY takes it and the two sprint down the boardwalk.

INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

DREW and LINDSAY follow the ACOLYTE up the aisle.  
(RECESSIONAL MUSIC)

DREW and LINDSAY enter the foyer and stand side by side for a beat.

LINDSAY

You know, you were right, Drew.  
God doesn't work on our time.

DREW

Never has.

LINDSAY

Know what? I think I'm going to  
call Neil.

DREW

What do you plan to say to him?

LINDSAY

I don't know. Maybe just let him  
know I miss him and I'd like to  
see him again. Do you think that  
would be okay?

DREW notices something to his left.

DREW

Well, why don't you ask him?

DREW points to the church door.

NEIL and PENNY are standing in the entrance.

As the PARISHIONERS begin to file in, NEIL and PENNY  
approach an astonished LINDSAY.

NEIL

I know this is a surprise, Lins.  
We sort of parted without, you  
know, making a decision. But,  
well, it's just that...

NEIL fades out as he sees the PARISHIONERS.

LINDSAY

Let's go over here. More privacy.

LINDSAY threads her way through the growing throng of  
curious parishioners. NEIL and PENNY follow. They pause in  
a less crowded section of the foyer. LINDSAY takes off her  
robe, drapes it over a table, and turns to face NEIL.

NEIL

Lins, I apologize.

LINDSAY

For asking me to leave?



NEIL

Yeah. It was cowardly. Can you find it in your heart to forgive me?

LINDSAY

Oh, Neil, I already have.

The crowd in the foyer is watching the proceedings with great interest.

NEIL

I mean, I was such a dope. Didn't even think of your feelings. I honestly thought I was being sensible. But you know what? When did sensible and love ever go together? That's crazy. I mean, what was I thinking?

PENNY

Dad. Finish the job.

NEIL takes a deep breath.

NEIL

Okay. Okay. So, Lins, remember how you told me a calling was something that dogged you and wouldn't let you go?

LINDSAY nods.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Well, I don't know if this is a calling exactly, but it sure won't let me go. And I know I'll never have peace if I don't do this.

NEIL drops to one knee and takes LINDSAY'S hand.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Lindsay Mitchell. I love you. And I want to marry you. Would you do me the honor of becoming my wife?

LINDSAY

(looks heavenward)

Wow. You really meant that "go with the flow thing," didn't you?

The CROWD in the foyer encouragingly nods "yes" as LINDSAY stares in astonishment at all their faces.

NEIL  
Lindsay?

LINDSAY looks back down at NEIL.

NEIL (CONT'D)  
Will you marry me?

DREW sidles over beside LINDSAY.

DREW  
(*sotto voce*)  
I believe the correct and proper  
answer to the man's question is  
"yes".

LINDSAY finally looks into NEIL's imploring eyes.

LINDSAY  
Oh, yes, Neil. I will marry you!

NEIL leaps up, sweeps LINDSAY into his arms, and as he presses his lips to hers, tips her back a la Rudolph Valentino. The CROWD breaks into applause while PENNY jumps up and down.

PENNY  
Yay, Dad! You did it!

NEIL brings LINDSAY upright again. He and LINDSAY each put an arm around PENNY.

As if out of nowhere, HARRIET, ROSA, AND LENA ABBEY enter and swallow LINDSAY, NEIL, and PENNY in a group hug.

ROSA  
We told you we were praying.

LENA  
It worked.

HARRIET  
Now we'll be able to visit you at  
the Shore every summer.

NEIL  
Lins? Who are these kids?

LINDSAY  
Part of my church family. And  
you'd better get used to them.

DREW claps his hands to get the crowd's attention.

DREW

Looks like we're having a celebration! To Fellowship Hall, everyone. Maybe somebody can run to the supermarket for balloons and a cake.

SUE

I'm on it!

SUE hurries out the door while the CONGREGATION begins to file out of the foyer.

The ABBEY sisters let go of NEIL, LINDSAY, and PENNY.

ROSA

(to PENNY)

Hey, kid, what's your name?

PENNY

Penelope. But everyone calls me Penny.

LENA

So Penny, want to go downstairs with us? We usually have all sorts of stuff to eat.

ROSA

Looks like we're having cake, too. You don't want to miss cake!

PENNY looks at NEIL for permission. He nods his approval. PENNY walks off with her new friends and disappears with the dispersing crowd.

Once they are alone NEIL cradles LINDSAY in his arms.

LINDSAY

Now I know what I'll be doing for the next twenty years.

NEIL

Twenty years? Are you kidding?

NEIL kisses her.

NEIL (CONT'D)

This is for life, baby.

LINDSAY

Funky deity and all?

NEIL

Funky deity and all.

SUPER: ROLL END CREDITS

EXT. STORE FRONT - DAY

A sign in the window proclaims: "Claire's House"

GINA KELLY approaches the door, and then hesitates. After a beat, she finds her courage, takes a breath, opens the door, and goes inside.

Inside, LINDSAY is talking to the RECEPTIONIST. They both look up at GINA enters. LINDSAY smiles and steps forward.

LINDSAY  
Gina Kelly?

GINA  
Yes.

LINDSAY  
Hi! Welcome to Claire's House. I'm Lindsay Mitchell, the Director. Come on. Let me give you an overview of what we do here and then I'll introduce you to your counselor.

LINDSAY ushers GINA into an office, just as NEIL comes out of another office. NEIL stops by LINDSAY's side.

NEIL  
I gotta get to Beach Music, hon, but I just want you to know that the deal went through. The band'll be doing a benefit for Claire's House. And it'll be at the Stone Pony in three months.

LINDSAY  
Awesome!

NEIL  
You won't be too far along to play that date, will you?

LINDSAY pats her little baby bump.

LINDSAY  
Nope! We're good to go. Besides, we've got a couple of rockers in here.

NEIL gives her a kiss.

NEIL

Love you.

He kisses his finger tips next and touches LINDSAY'S abdomen.

NEIL (CONT'D)

Love you guys, too.

A smiling LINDSAY watches NEIL go. Once he is out of sight, she turns and walks into the office.

END.