

SHELBY'S VACATION

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FADE IN:

1 INT. SHELBY'S BEDROOM - DAY

1

SHELBY, mid-to-late 30's, is in bed -- she looks terrible, hair is a mess, she hasn't been out of the house in a few days. Her CELLPHONE RINGS. An eye cracks open. Yes, she hears it but ignores it. After it stops... she ponders whether to check the voicemail. She finally does:

VELMA (V.O.)

Shelby, it's Velma, we're worried.
We're coming over to break down
your door if you don't call us
today. Marion's just beside
herself.

We'll learn who Velma is later. Shelby tosses the phone aside. She stares at the ceiling... then her eyes inadvertently catch a poster on the wall. It's been there for years but it's as if she's just seeing it for the first time.

CLOSE ON

The poster, a landscape from the Sierra Nevada Mountains. With a quote from John Muir: "Nature... All scars she heals, whether in rocks or water or sky or hearts."

ON SHELBY

Moved by those words. She weakly pulls the covers off. A beat. Then she slowly sits up... and gets out of bed.

2 INT. SHELBY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

2

She toddles out to the living room... which is immaculate, every item hand-picked, every book alphabetized, every throw-pillow sitting just so. But none of that concerns Shelby now... well, except for a book that's sticking out of its row, so she nudges it back in to place on her way over to a wall or bookshelf where some framed photos from childhood are displayed.

CLOSE-UP - PHOTOS

Of Shelby, her older sister and their parents in a series of vacation pictures. Shelby ranges from age 7 to 14 or so. Shelby was holding her breath and aiming for perfection even then. Her sister was the rebel with the crazy-dyed hair and punk outfits.

The photos are labeled "Zion National Park 1975," "Glacier National Park 1982," Great Smoky Mountains 1984," and finally "Yosemite National Park 1989."

Shelby picks up that last one, touches it fondly, smiles. Her blue mood starts to shift.

3 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY 3

A perfect panorama: a blindingly sunny day in the desert, cerulean blue skies, a few jet vapor trails stretching high overhead, in fact, a great day to start a vacation.

Mellifluous JAZZ plays on a car CD player. Driving into view on the highway: a sensible sedan.

4 INT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 4

Here's Shelby again, back to her perky on-point self. She checks her mini-clipboard. It's got her handwritten itinerary on it: 6:00 breakfast, 6:15 shower, 6:45 pack car, 7:20 get gas, 7:30 Interstate 5 etc. According to the dashboard clock it's almost 10 o'clock and the itinerary says "snack" next to 10:00. Shelby eyes the Tupperware container sitting on the passenger seat.

5 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - DAY 5

Now appearing on the highway a half mile behind the sedan: a flashy convertible, driven by a BLONDE whose hair is blowing like crazy. In the audio distance: the Blonde's ROCK 'N ROLL on her car STEREO begins to CREEP UNDER the JAZZ.

6 INT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 6

The clock ticks to 10:00. Shelby happily moves aside her Mapquest printout, her California map, brochures etc. and opens the Tupperware container with the neatly cut cheese and crackers lined up in perfect rows inside.

Shelby puts a cheese 'n cracker "sandwich" in her mouth. A few moments later, the LOUD ROCK 'N ROLL SWOOPS IN and there to Shelby's left is the Blonde in the convertible.

Shelby looks up, mouth full of food, and the Blonde looks over and nods. Shelby: Wow, who are you??

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Shit.

A few tense beats, then, resigned, Shelby takes off.

Shelby then decides she's had enough of the wind blowing her hair, so she tries to roll her window back up -- but the button isn't working. The window is stuck.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Shit!!

She sighs and JACKS UP THE VOLUME on the MUSIC to drown her sorrows as she speeds up the road.

12 EXT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 12

On the highway behind Shelby's car: the brochure for her destination: "John Muir Historical Tours." It now has a tire track on it.

13 EXT. TWO-LANE HIGHWAY - DAY 13

The scenery has changed, we're well north of the desert by now and into the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Shelby's car pulls up to an unmarked intersection with her two-lane highway.

14 INT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 14

Shelby's checking the GPS on her phone and her latest directions she scribbled on some paper. Her brow furrows. She makes a decision and turns the steering wheel.

15 EXT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY 15

Shelby comes to another intersection, smaller road, middle of nowhere.

16 INT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 16

She checks her cellphone... no reception. She opens up a brand new California map, tries to orient it to where she is... yikes, this is hard....

SHELBY

Oh, boy...

She sighs, gives up, makes a guess and turns the steering wheel.

- 17 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY 17
 Shelby's car creeps along.
- 18 INT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 18
 Mid-afternoon. Shelby's brow is furrowed, she's a ball of nerves. She's scanning the road for any clues. Finally a sign up ahead catches her eye.
- ANGLE ON SIGN
- "Sierra Glen Cabins, 1/2 mile"
- 19 INT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 19
 SHELBY
 What the heck...
- 20 EXT. SHELBY'S SEDAN - DAY 20
 Shelby pulls into a parking space.
- 21 EXT. SIERRA GLEN CABINS - DAY 21
 Shelby gets out of her car, slamming the door. She angles for the main building, which sits among quaint, inviting, somewhat rustic cabins.
- 22 INT. SIERRA GLEN MAIN BUILDING - DAY 22
 Meet CAROL, the manager here -- 40's, a down-to-earth can-do kind of gal, your favorite camp counselor and that cute teacher you had a crush on in high school rolled into one. She's currently pulling a fish hook out of the top of a BOY's ear. He's about 15 years-old and is fairly humiliated.
- CAROL
 Hold real still...
- BOY
 Ow, ow, ow...
- Shelby enters and stares, wondering what the heck is going on.
- CAROL
 Wiggle your toes...

BOY

What??

CAROL

Wiggle 'em.

He does, which distracts him, which is what Carol wanted. She yanks the fish hook out. He gasps but doesn't scream, looks amazed. Carol puts some gauze squares already coated with Betadyne around his ear.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Hold this.

He does.

CAROL (CONT'D)

It'll sting a little but the orange stuff will keep it from getting infected. Here's a Band-aid for when it stops bleeding, and ask your mom if you've had a tetanus shot.

He hesitates.

CAROL (CONT'D)

What?

BOY

... I was gonna say it was a bee sting.

Carol rolls her eyes, sees Shelby, they smile.

CAROL

Guys and their egos. Okay, you're good to go, try to hook a trout next time, okay?

He nods yes and quickly trots out of there.

SHELBY

Wow.

CAROL

Oh, it's not that bad, you just gotta pull it all the way through, can't have the barb at the hook-end catching on things.

(then, smiles)

How can I help you?

SHELBY

No fishhooks, but boy, am I lost.
Have you heard of John Muir
Historical Tours?

CAROL

Yes, I have.

SHELBY

Great, oh, thank God! Where are
they? Are they near here?

CAROL

As the crow flies, yes. But since
I assume you're driving, you'd
need to head all the way back out
to 395, then head north to Tioga
Pass Road -- that's another couple
of hours -- and then just before
Tioga Pass curves into Yosemite,
you turn right and slog up a bumpy
gravel road for about 45 minutes.

Shelby looks like Bambi getting some bad news.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Well, if you left now, what is it --
(checks her watch)
-- Four, you could make it by
dinner, well, a late dinner.

SHELBY

... I can't drive any more. I'm
driven out.

CAROL

... Tell you what. I've got a
couple of cancellations, would you
like a cabin for the night, maybe
leave early tomorrow when you're
feeling a lot fresher.

SHELBY

That... sounds like the best idea
I've heard all day.

CAROL

(smiles)

Okay then.

(checking room
list)

I do believe cabin eight is ready
and waiting. Wanna sign in?

Shelby does so.

CAROL (CONT'D)

And how would you like to pay for that?

Shelby gets her charge card, hands it over.

CAROL (CONT'D)

If you ever come back, we've got some great hiking trails, there's horseback riding, bird watching, and, of course, fishing, but you knew that.

They smile, connect.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I'm Carol, the manager, welcome to Sierra Glen...

(reading the register)

... Shelby. Let me know if you need anything.

SHELBY

Thank you so much.

Carol hands her a key and points out the window.

CAROL

Number eight's down that a ways and happy hour is going on til seven.

SHELBY

Second best idea all day.

Smiles as Shelby takes the key; Carol watches her go. Shelby's registered with her in more ways than one.

23 EXT. CABINS - DAY

23

Shelby, with her backpack and soft-sided tote bags, walks along, finds number eight. She unlocks the door and enters.

24 INT. SHELBY'S CABIN - DAY

24

Shelby drops her stuff, opens the curtain, turns on a light. When she does, she looks around: the place is much nicer than she expected. There's a big fluffy comforter on the bed, a large western motif throw-rug, decent watercolor landscapes or photographs on the walls, fresh flowers in a vase.

Shelby visibly relaxes... and begins to set up home for the night, pulling out her books, snacks, cleansers, lotions etc.

25 EXT. PATIO - DAY

25

Late afternoon. A wooden deck off the side of the modest restaurant on the premises. Low key but fun. Everyone's drinking and munching while DARCY, 40's, a guitarist with a quiet intensity, strums in the corner for ambiance.

Off to the side, PAL, 40's, comes up, wiping her hands on a towel. Pal leans towards the butch end of things and has a habit of saying exactly what she thinks. She spots JULIO, 40's, the restaurant manager.

PAL

Hey, Julio, installed your car's water pump.

JULIO

Thanks. What do I owe ya?

PAL

Forty.

JULIO

Ooo, my kind of price.

He hands her a couple of twenties and then sees the WAITER going by with a tray of margaritas. He grabs one and hands it to Pal.

PAL

My kind of tip.

JULIO

Thanks again.

Pal toasts him, then drinks. Darcy, who has finished her song, laughs.

PAL

What? It's not like I'm out on the highway with a sign: Will Work for Booze.

They laugh.

PAL (CONT'D)

Carol come out and say boo to ya?

DARCY

Na. 'S okay.

PAL

It's not okay. This is ridiculous.
Want me to give her what for?

Darcy shakes her head no, Pal sighs, moves on. Darcy takes out her frustration at Carol by quietly singing the beginning of a song about a glorious past relationship that's unresolved. We hear phrases like "mountain girl" and "climbing a trail only you can see."

Shelby wanders up, wearing a nice outfit. She stops to appreciate the song. Darcy stalls out as she tries to remember the lyrics... looks up, sees Shelby, smiles. Finishes the song... no one but Shelby applauds.

SHELBY

Wow, that was great. How does it end?

DARCY

Hell if I know.

They laugh.

SHELBY

Well, keep at it, I'll bet you could have a career in music.

Darcy answers with a speedy guitar lick. Shelby: oops.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Which I'm sure you already have.

A grin and another spiffy run on the strings.

DARCY

Darcy.

SHELBY

Shelby.

DARCY

And thank you. It's been weeks since someone's bothered to compliment me here.

SHELBY

Man. Are they deaf?

DARCY

Na. They're just excited about the hike they're gonna do or the trout they're gonna bag.

They laugh.

Darcy goes back to playing, some wind in her sails. From nearby comes a big laugh from BUNNY, 30's and an appetite for life. Shelby turns and moves towards her in time to hear:

BUNNY

(to a man)

Okay, so I hear you saying it heightens the pleasure, but goddamn, I don't know if I could stand the initial pain!

Shelby wonders what she just walked into.

BUNNY (CONT'D)

Nipple piercing.

SHELBY

Oh. Pass.

BUNNY

Not right this second. In general.

MIKE, 30's, Bunny's easygoing, blue-collar boyfriend, just buries his head in his hand.

SHELBY

Got it. Still passing.

They laugh. Shelby lays out some cash and grabs a margarita from the waiter.

BUNNY

Me, too. I like my pleasure without the pain. In fact, we're on our way to Redrock Hot Springs. They have these mineral baths and mud baths -- lots of chances for skinny dipping!

Mike rolls his eyes.

BUNNY (CONT'D)

Oh, you. He thinks it's too touchy feely.

MIKE

I like mud -- when I'm four-wheelin'.

BUNNY

I think it's gonna be a blast. I can't wait to feel all that mud between my toes and then all those tingly bubbles...

Shelby's mind is reeling with possibilities...

SMASH CUT TO:

26 EXT. PATIO - DAY - FANTASY 26

The crowd is gone, it's just Bunny and Shelby on the patio dancing intimately to the now-unseen GUITARIST'S MUSIC. Bunny twirls Shelby away, then twirls her back, and suddenly Bunny has become:

27 INT. OFFICE - DAY 27

Marion. Dancing with Shelby, who leans in and kisses her.

BACK TO SCENE

BUNNY

Tingly wingly. I'm Bunny.

Shelby snaps to.

SHELBY

Shelby.

They toast their drinks. Then Shelby looks over and notices Pal watching her. Pal grins. Her radar picked up on Shelby digging the Bunny Vibe. Pal winks at her.

Shelby takes a swig of her drink and tries to ignore Pal.

BUNNY

We had someone recommend this place -- a guy that Mike works with -- how ya doin' Mikie?

MIKE

Fine, honey-bunny.

BUNNY

Anyway, he said it was great. How'd you hear about it?

SHELBY

Uh, by accident. I was actually on my way to the John Muir Historical Tours.

BUNNY

Ohhh, cool.

SHELBY

Yeah, they retrace various routes
John Muir took in the Sierra Nevada
Mountains.

Pal sidles up.

PAL

(sing-song rhyme)

John-Muir-Tour. I like it. How'd
you end up pickin' the John-Muir-
tour?

SHELBY

Oh, I... needed a change of pace.

PAL

Trapped in an office all day?

SHELBY

Something like that.

28 INT. MARION'S OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

28

MARION, 20's, a sharp dresser and an equally sharp thinker,
is working with Shelby at a table with a large piece of
paper spread before them. On the paper are circles
representing tables and little post-its with names on
them. The women configure a seating chart for a huge
dinner.

They're standing side by side, elbows practically touching.
Both are incredibly focused although Shelby's focus is
more on the fact that she's THIS CLOSE to Marion.

MARION

... If we put the Melvilles here...
we can put Roberta Wilson there...

SHELBY

... Did you overhear Roberta Wilson
at the last Alumni Dinner?

MARION

God, Roberta Wilson is such a --

SHELBY

-- Whiner, I know --

MARION

-- She couldn't get over the whole --

MARION/SHELBY

-- Centerpiece thing!

SHELBY

It wasn't even a thing, it was her personal --

MARION

-- TASTE, I know. I mean, really, what were we supposed to do, run to the flower district --

MARION/SHELBY

-- DOWNTOWN --

MARION

-- With an hour's notice and pick up 200 --

MARION/SHELBY

YELLOW ROSES!

They giggle themselves silly. Then Shelby looks at the seating chart, eyes go wide:

SHELBY

Omigod, Roberta Wilson can't sit next to --

MARION

-- Crap --

MARION/SHELBY

-- Cindy Ward! Ahh!

Marion quickly moves the Roberta Wilson name post-it... and then grabs Shelby's hand

MARION

Shelby! Lifesaver Assistant!

They giggle bunches again.

MARION (CONT'D)

You know, you would make a great manager.

SHELBY

Oh, Marion...

MARION

I mean it. Why haven't you stepped into those shoes? You've been here how long?

SHELBY

Since I graduated...

MARION

Let's get you on it! The university
is lucky to have you! I'm lucky
to have you.

SHELBY

Oh, gosh...

MARION

So, tonight we are going back to
our favorite restaurant --

MARION/SHELBY

(seductively)

'Lotus flower.'

They giggle again.

MARION

And over --

MARION/SHELBY

-- Sizzling rice.

Shelby does a "sizzle" sound effect.

MARION

-- with a touch of saffron, we
will be discussing your future.
Our future.

SHELBY

... Our?

SMASH CUT TO:

29 EXT. WHITE-PICKET FENCE HOUSE - DAY - FANTASY

29

Shelby holding hands with Marion in front of a cute house
with a white-picket fence in front. Gosh, there may even
be a U-Haul trailer parked on the street.

BACK TO SCENE

MARION

Yes. I need a good manager.

A big decision for Shelby. She goes a step further.
Seductively:

SHELBY

... Is that the only thing you
need?

Marion blinks. Oops. What just happened?

MARION
(polite but still
pleasant)
... No. I need a dinner
reservation.

SHELBY
I'll go make a dinner reservation.

She exits happily. Marion centers herself, feels she handled that well and goes back to the seating chart.

30 EXT. PATIO - DAY

30

Pal gets a little too close to Shelby.

PAL
Boss drivin' ya nuts?

Shelby takes a step away.

SHELBY
Something like that.

PAL
Don't hold back. That's what happy
hour is for, right?

Pal looks to Bunny, Bunny enthusiastically nods.

SHELBY
No, no. I, I just, just need to
leave her behind.

PAL
Because?

SHELBY
It was complicated.

PAL
It always is.

SHELBY
(annoyed)
Could... could we talk about...
trees and mountains and fish hooks
and not...

PAL
Your boss.

SHELBY

... I need to go mingle.

Shelby chugs the current margarita, grabs another one and goes to mingle elsewhere. Pal grins and keeps her eye on her, totally intrigued.

Meanwhile, Carol just watched Pal move too close to Shelby and Shelby angle away from her.

JULIO

... Generator's working great.
Dinner at full speed tonight.

CAROL

(distracted)
... Thank God. Cold cuts weren't
gonna cut it much longer -- excuse
me.

Carol goes over to Pal.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Ummm...

PAL

Ummm?

CAROL

Were you hitting on one of our
guests?

PAL

I was making conversation.

CAROL

Uh huh.

PAL

Christ on a crumb-heap, Carol,
relax.

CAROL

Keep your hands where I can see
'em.

PAL

Yeah, yeah. Felicia and Veronica
on their way?

CAROL

Yeah. Be here about 7:15.

PAL

Til then...

And she holds her hands up and out as if to say "Nothing going on here."

Carol looks around, Shelby's not in sight, so she turns to leave -- and nearly faces Darcy. She then purposefully avoids going in her direction. Darcy catches her out of the corner of her eye but pretends not to see her. A few beats, then she tinkers with the song we heard earlier...

31 EXT. PATIO - EARLY EVENING

31

Everyone's gone, save Darcy, who's still working on that relationship song. She finally gives up, starts to pack up and notices Shelby, who's had one too many drinks.

DARCY

... You gonna be okay? Those margaritas have some kick to 'em.

SHELBY

Yeah. More sad than... I just need to... is it time for bed?

DARCY

It could be.

SHELBY

... Do you know 'Crazy'?

SHELBY/DARCY

... Patsy Cline.

DARCY

I do, did you want me to sing it for you right now?

A beat. Shelby looks around, realizes everyone's gone.

SHELBY

I guess that would be pathetic.

Darcy nods, Shelby sighs then shuffles off.

32 EXT. CABINS - EARLY EVENING

32

Shelby makes her way toward her cabin. As she approaches her door, she fumbles for her key. Then she fumbles trying to get it in the lock. Meanwhile, NOISES are coming from O.S.

Shelby finally stops fumbling and listens. These aren't just any sounds, they're deep, guttural, passionate.

Shelby straightens up, forgets the lock for a moment and slowly moves toward the sounds. She realizes they're coming from the cabin next door: Bunny and Mike's.

She carefully looks in the front window from a little distance, through the space between the curtains. She's curious and a little embarrassed all at the same time. She starts to walk away and then BUNNY'S CRIES OF ECSTASY pull her back for another look.

33 INT. MARION'S OFFICE - DAY - FANTASY

33

Shelby and Marion are kissing to beat the band.

34 EXT. SIERRA GLEN PARKING AREA - EARLY EVENING

34

Next to a couple of pick-up trucks: Carol, Pal, Darcy and FELICIA-and-VERONICA, 30's, a madly in lust couple who dress alike in t-shirts, baggy shorts, white socks and basketball shoes.

They're laughing over some silly argument.

PAL

... You can't say 'attic items' --
'Things you throw away,' you don't
throw away attic ite --

FELICIA

-- Okay, okay, we know, we know...

PAL

And a jukebox is not an appliance!

FELICIA

Well, what the hell is it!? A
vegetable?!

VERONICA

We still kicked your butt.

PAL

Scategories rematch!

FELICIA

We will STOMP you!

Just then Carol notices Shelby spying on Bunny and Mike across the way. Pal notices Carol and squints to see what's up.

PAL

What the...?

The gals all take a few steps so they can see and hear better. A few beats as they tune in...

CAROL

Am I hearing..?

FELICIA

Oh my God...

VERONICA

How open is that curtain...?

They all start to giggle.

DARCY

We should ask her for a blow-by-blow replay since she's got a front row seat there...

In a big way, BUNNY CLIMAXES O.S. The gals crack up. Their laughter causes Shelby to spin around and see them.

PAL

Holy shit!

Everyone turns, tries to stop laughing and pretend to talk amongst themselves as Carol tries politely covering.

CAROL

Hey, Shelby!

Shelby waves very tentatively, embarrassed to the max. What did they see?

SHELBY

Hey.

CAROL

Ah, how was happy hour?

PAL

(sotto)

I'll bet she's happy now.

CAROL

(to Pal)

Shhh!

Carol leads the gals over to Shelby's direction.

SHELBY

... Good. It was good.

CAROL

So, ah, heading to dinner?

SHELBY

Yes. Yes, I am. Then I'm gonna...
head to bed so I can head to my
tour... bright 'n early. Tomorrow.

PAL

(sing-song)
'John-Muir-Tour.' I just like
saying it.

FELICIA

You're on a tour?

SHELBY

Oh, not yet. Soon. I hope.

PAL

Hell, we can give you a tour.
We're on our way to Porcupine Ridge.
It's our summer tradition. Full
moon, dinner in the cooler. Felicia
and Veronica's fresh basil, buffalo
mozzarella, pasta with pine nuts...

SHELBY

(torn)
Ohhhhhh, gosh... thanks. But
really. I was just gonna curl up
with a good book.

PAL

You're in God's country and you're
gonna read a damn book?

Carol swats at Pal, then:

CAROL

(to Shelby)
Bookworms unite. When I was a
kid, I had a book glued to my hand,
even at dinner.

Shelby smiles, charmed.

SHELBY

Me, too.

CAROL

What are you reading right now?

SHELBY

Wild by Cheryl Strayed.

CAROL

I LOVED IT! The hiking boot --

SHELBY/CAROL

(overlapping)

-- the hiking boot over the edge
of the cliff!

SHELBY

(gesturing)

And then her huge --

SHELBY/CAROL

-- backpack Monster!

CAROL

And the blisters! Omigod!

SHELBY

(overlapping)

Omigod! I don't do that kind of
backpacking but if I did, I --

SHELBY/CAROL

-- Would've been PREPARED!

They laugh, shades of Marion with the overlapping and
finishing each other's sentences.

PAL

You two gonna start a book club
here in the parking lot?

SHELBY

Is she always like this?

CAROL

Pretty much.

(then)

Look, we have plenty of food and
it is stunning up there on the
Ridge. You'll be able to see the
Milky Way.

SHELBY

Wow, mozzarella and the Milky Way...
Okay, sure, it sounds like fun.

Pal is annoyed Shelby was won over by Carol and not her.

CAROL

Okay, dinner for six it is. Hop
in, everyone.

Pal, Felicia and Veronica angle for the back of Carol's
pickup truck and obviously Carol is going to drive. That
leaves Darcy and Shelby both wondering who is going to
ride in the passenger seat.

35 EXT. CAROL'S PICKUP TRUCK - EARLY EVENING - FANTASY 35

With a few notes of CELTIC MUSIC to accompany them, Shelby and Carol both hop in the front seat, slam their doors simultaneously... and then smile at each other.

BACK TO SCENE

This was CAROL'S FANTASY. And then reality plays out:

Shelby starts for the passenger door, realizes Darcy is used to sitting there because she's standing next to the door... but Darcy is hesitating. Shelby wonders what's up with that. Finally Darcy offers:

DARCY

Shotgun?

SHELBY

No, no, I can ride in back, you go ahead.

Darcy nods, but it's not exactly a nod of thanks.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Unless you... uh, never mind.

Shelby smiles and heads for the tailgate to hop in.

Carol sighs, gets in, slams her door shut.

36 INT. CAROL'S PICKUP TRUCK - DAY 36

As Carol drives, an uneasy silence. Finally:

CAROL

... We just got the new generator for the restaurant today.

DARCY

Great. Julio must be thrilled.

Carol nods "He is." More polite silence. Carol reaches for the fan knob.

CAROL

... Need some air?

DARCY

No, I'm good.

More silence. Finally, with some anxiety:

DARCY (CONT'D)

... Remember that song I wrote on
my birthday?

Carol nods.

DARCY (CONT'D)

The lyrics... I want those pages
back.

CAROL

'Back'?

DARCY

Out of your book.

CAROL

You want me to... rip them out?

DARCY

Yes.

CAROL

... The book is mine.

DARCY

The words are mine. And I don't
want them in there.

CAROL

I thought they were... for me.

DARCY

They were. But I told you I didn't
want you writing some story, some
mythological thing afterwards.

CAROL

... You wrote stories in the book,
too.

Darcy looks guilty as charged.

DARCY

... I know.

37 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CAROL'S PICKUP TRUCK - EARLY EVENING

37

Traveling down the road, Shelby is in polite-newcomer
mode... plus she's trying not to stare at Felicia and
Veronica necking, although it's hard not to.

PAL

... It's short for Palomino. My dad was a horse rancher just outside of Bishop.

SHELBY

You're lucky they didn't name you Appaloosa.

Pal and Shelby chuckle. Then they look at Felicia and Veronica.

PAL

'And what do you do for a living, Veronica?' 'I teach at the high school.' 'And how about you, Felicia?' 'Oh, thanks for asking. I work at the BLM.'

SHELBY

(ah, who to address...?)

What does she, what do you teach?

PAL

The dyke specialty: Science and --

The kissers come up for air, a little sheepish.

VERONICA

-- Science and gym.

FELICIA

I handle environmental education plus I coordinate volunteers.

SHELBY

At the Bureau of Land Management.

FELICIA

Yeah.

PAL

Wow, she knew what BLM stood for. You L.A. chicks are a bright bunch.

SHELBY

We try. Ever been there?

PAL

No, but I get over to San Francisco a couple three times a year.

SHELBY

Yeah, they have some great restaurants, and there's City Lights Bookstore.

PAL

I go for the sex.

Shelby: did she just say that? Everyone else laughs.

PAL (CONT'D)

So, what do you do?

SHELBY

Ahhh, I work at a college and coordinate Alumni Events.

PAL

And deal with The Boss.

SHELBY

Yeah.

PAL

So, why all the drama? Did you have an affair?

SHELBY

If only.

38 INT. OFFICE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

38

Later. At her desk, Shelby puts on fresh lipstick, checks her teeth in a mirror, fixes her hair, sprays on a little perfume, undoes her top button. All set.

Then she goes over to the door of Marion's office to see if she's ready and hears she's on the phone. She starts to walk away... but something in the tone of Marion's voice catches her attention....

MARION (O.S.)

The dinner party back in June?...
Ohhhh, right, right, right! The
grilled salmon and the fabulous
red dress with the lightning bolts.
So, how are you? Uh huh... Uh
huh... You won tickets, awesome!
I love the El Rey, it's so intimate.

(then)

Tonight?

Now Shelby's ears really perk up.

MARION (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Oh, wow, I've already got plans...
 What time does the concert start?...
 Oooo, an opening act, so, like 9,
 9:30 for the main event?... Hell
 yeah, I can swing that. Thanks
 for calling, Jane! Can't wait to
 see you!

(she hangs up)

Yes!!

Marion comes out of her office on Cloud 9. Shelby has quickly backed away from her door and tries to be nonchalant.

MARION (CONT'D)

Hi!

SHELBY

Hi.

(then)

Do you need to cancel our dinner?

Uh oh. Marion realizes Shelby overheard all of that.

MARION

No. No, no. No. I'm... it's,
 we, I, dinner's still...

SHELBY

Maybe we should just have lunch
 later in the week?

MARION

Ahhhh, okay. You're sure?

SHELBY

Sure.

Shelby grabs her purse.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

No worries. See ya tomorrow!

She hustles out of there. Marion looks a little guilty and then relieved.

FOLLOW SHELBY

Who then stops abruptly.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Crap. Car keys are in my jacket.

She heads back and arrives as Marion is talking on her cellphone, with her back to us and Shelby:

MARION

... Yeah, I've already got reservations at 6:30. You'll love it, Asian fusion. Bring your lightning bolts.

Shelby is anguished, grabs her jacket, runs out of there.

39 EXT. PORCUPINE RIDGE - NIGHT

39

A clearing in the woods where Carol's truck pulls up. Darcy gets out of the cab, pulls out her guitar. Pal vaults over the side of the truck bed with the ease of an Olympic athlete, opens the tailgate and pulls the cooler out. Felicia and Veronica hop out. Shelby's contemplating exactly how to jump down. Fortunately Carol comes to her rescue and offers her a hand.

SHELBY

Chivalry lives.

CAROL

It does.

Shelby jumps, loses her balance a little, Carol steadies her, they hold hands for a moment... which sends Carol to:

40 EXT. WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON - FANTASY

40

Carol and Shelby hold hands and go running through the woods, laughing, jumping over tree logs, spinning past rocks... with some CELTIC MUSIC to accompany them.

BACK TO SCENE

Then Carol slams the tailgate shut, their hands part.

CAROL

The Pacific Crest Trail -- what Cheryl was hiking in her book -- overlaps with the J.M.T -- the John Muir Trail -- and right over there --

(pointing)

-- is where it cuts across, so you've got a two-fer by being up here tonight.

SHELBY

Nice.

CAROL

Are you a Sierra Nevada history buff?

SHELBY

Not exactly...

CAROL

A John Muir Tour seems so... specific...

SHELBY

I have fond memories of vacations up in Yosemite with my family... It was the one time of year we all got along... I was hoping... being here would make me feel better...

CAROL

Is it working yet?

SHELBY

Well... I'm glad to be here with you and your friends. Yeah, better than being alone tonight.

CAROL

Good. Glad we could help.
(then)

Wanna help me collect some fire wood?

SHELBY

Are there any wild animals up here?

CAROL

Just Pal.

They laugh.

41 EXT. PORCUPINE RIDGE - NIGHT

41

Pal lifts her shirt and lets her bare breasts take in the moonlight as she howls. Meanwhile, Darcy tunes her guitar and Carol tends the fire she started in a circle of stones.

As Carol works with the fire, Shelby stares at her with budding affection.

42 EXT. PORCUPINE RIDGE - NIGHT - FANTASY

42

Shelby's fantasy, she kneels next to Carol, helps her move a log. The fire crackles and flares up, Shelby and Carol kiss. Meanwhile, reality's dialogue plays out:

DARCY (V.O.)

There's supposed to be a lunar eclipse some time this summer, we should come up here then, too.

FELICIA (V.O.)

You ever write any moonlight songs?

DARCY (V.O.)

Not yet. Good idea but gotta find a unique angle.

BACK TO REALITY

Darcy puts a capotasto on the neck of her guitar.

CAROL

(without thinking)

Oh, I found your capo. I should've brought it.

DARCY

That's okay, I've got a bunch of 'em; where was it?

CAROL

Next to the uh...
(oh shit)

PAL

'The bed'? So, the chapter hasn't closed on that book.

The nice moment turns awkward with Darcy looking away, Shelby snapping to and wondering what the hell that was about, and Carol quickly changing the topic. To Shelby:

CAROL

Ever see a lunar eclipse? Not as dramatic as a solar eclipse, but still. You need the Sun, the Earth and the Full Moon to line up in the same, ah, well, Darcy's actually the expert on it, I'm just...

PAL

Making mindless small talk to cover the capo thing.

Darcy, guitar in hand, has backed away from the group.

CAROL

Darcy, I'm sorry.

DARCY

No worries.

CAROL

I'll... bring it to work, give it to you when you're playing at happy hour.

DARCY

Got a bunch, like I said.

CAROL

Ah, o-kay... how about dinner...

Darcy distracts herself by playing a little tune. Carol, Felicia and Veronica unload the cooler. Veronica pulls out the buffalo mozzarella, picks out a slice to eat, Felicia looks happily at her, Veronica feeds it to her, Felicia licks Veronica's fingers. They laugh, then start kissing... Shelby's pretty impressed with their lack of inhibition.

PAL

You into the voyeur thing?

Carol shoots Pal a look. Felicia and Veronica stop kissing.

SHELBY

Huh?

PAL

Like with Bunny and Mike?

SHELBY

I-I... no!

PAL

Nothing to be ashamed of.

SHELBY

No, no, no, no, no, no. They were just kinda... loud, and I was, kinda... you know, Margaritaville...

PAL

Did it look like they were having fun?

SHELBY

(sadly)
... Yeah.

PAL

Wish you were havin' that much
fun?

SHELBY

... Yeah.

PAL

The boss didn't like you back?

SHELBY

... Nope.

PAL

What can we do to help?

A few beats, as Shelby looks really depressed. Then Pal
kisses her. It's a good kiss. Carol can't believe she
just did that, the other gals are staring wide-eyed.

PAL (CONT'D)

Feel better?

SHELBY

Actually... yes.

PAL

Want to go a little further?

CAROL

Oh, boy...

PAL

Did someone die and appoint you
hall monitor?

CAROL

No, but she's a guest at my place
of employment.

PAL

And she's on vacation. This is
what vacations are for, right?
I'm sure Bunny would agree.

Before Shelby can discuss this, Pal is in action:

PAL (CONT'D)

I'll get the blanket out of the truck, Shelby-cakes, meet me over there under the pine tree in two shakes of a lamb's tail.

(goes to the truck)

So long, John Muir. Gonna be a helluva lot more fun than inching your way up El Capitan.

Carol looks at Shelby as if to say, "What's up?" Shelby grapples as she tries to explain...

SHELBY

I... I thought I had a thing with my boss -- we really did have a synergy, we could say two words and crack up laughing.

CAROL

Which two?

SHELBY

... Dessert topping. Guitar lick. Front-loaded. White sauce.

(then)

You had to be there.

CAROL

No, actually I'm getting it.

SHELBY

But I was an idiot. And she's just the latest in a series of... I really need to... to...

CAROL

... And taking a walk on the wild side with Pal would qualify as...?

Across the way, Pal flips open up the blanket and spreads it on the ground... and then lights a lantern.

PAL

Soft blanket... a little romantic glow light... Here we go...

(calls to Shelby)

All set!

Shelby looks over at Pal. Then looks at Carol. Looks at Pal. Looks at Carol.

SHELBY

Uhhhh...

PAL

What happened?

(walks over to
Carol)

I was gone eight seconds and...??

SHELBY

(to Carol)

Could you give us a moment?

CAROL

Sure.

Carol steps away.

PAL

(to Carol)

Did you throw a bucket of cold
water on the fire?

SHELBY

See, I have this long history of --

PAL

-- You're over-thinking it, Shel.
You're on vacation, remember?

She kisses Shelby... and again, Shelby enjoys it.

Carol, irritated and a little jealous, looks back as Pal
is undressing Shelby...

PAL (CONT'D)

Time to kick back, relax... Mmm,
what could be better?

MOVE IN ON Shelby enjoying the ride...

43 INT. OFFICE - DAY - FLASHBACK

43

Marion stands next to JANE, late 20's, a woman conversant
in sharp as well. Admiring office STAFFERS including
VELMA, 50's the Office Manager are gathered 'round. Shelby
approaches the crowd's perimeter carrying a pretty birthday
gift bag and wearing a brave face. She joins HOWIE and
RANDALL, two gay co-workers (not lovers), 30's. Howie's
the smaller and louder, Randall's the taller and smoother.

RANDALL

What'd you get her?

SHELBY

Her favorite truffle oil.

RANDALL
Thoughtful but not over the top.

SHELBY
Exactly.

RANDALL
Classy but not romantic.

SHELBY
Precisely.
(then)
I'm being an adult.

RANDALL
I'm proud of you.

MARION
Is everyone here, Velma?

VELMA
I think so. Are you ready for our
tone-deaf rendition of "Happy
Birthday?"

Laughter as Marion puts her arm around Jane and shows off
an engagement ring:

MARION
... I've got something way better
than that: Look what Jane got me
for my birthday...

The crowd "oohs" and "ahhs." Shelby looks horrified and
backs away...

RANDALL
Uh oh...

HOWIE
(to Shelby)
Should we call 911?

SHELBY
What?!

HOWIE
Just don't let Marion make you
plan the wedding.

SHELBY
My God!

RANDALL

Shelby... Shelby... Get down off the ledge. A school girl crush isn't a real relationship.

SHELBY

We had a THING. A, a synergy. We finish each other's sentences, we're a well-oiled --

She sees the truffle oil in her hand.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Truffle-Oiled Machine.

MARION

I didn't think I could be this happy!

SHELBY

Happy? They barely know each other.

MARION

Y'know, I just read this great quote from Dr. Seuss -- of all people!

Shelby rolls her eyes.

MARION (CONT'D)

'You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.'

SHELBY

Love? They've known each other six months! That's not love, that's, that's --

RANDALL

-- Hello? Pot. Kettle. Black.

SHELBY

Randall, back me up here.

RANDALL

How many crushes have you had that you thought were true love?

SHELBY

She doesn't even know Marion's shoe size!

RANDALL

Keelie, Barbara, Megan, Amy --

SHELBY

Stop!!

RANDALL

If the shoe size fits...

SHELBY

Ahhhhhh!

She throws the bag with the truffle oil in it at Randall's chest and storms out.

PAL (V.O.)

Mmm... what could be better?

44 EXT. PORCUPINE RIDGE - NIGHT

44

Shelby suddenly pulls away from Pal.

SHELBY

A real girlfriend.

PAL

Huh?

SHELBY

That's what could be better. No more fantasies.

PAL

This isn't a fantasy. I'm real.

SHELBY

But when I go back to L.A. it'll seem like a fantasy and I won't be any closer to having a real girlfriend.

PAL

Hey, we're on the same page. I'm not into being anyone's real girlfriend.

SHELBY

Ahhh!

PAL

Okay, okay. That's cool. I thought you were, y'know, on vacation, but hey, major life shift thing, go for it.

SHELBY

Thank you.

PAL

You bet. As long as you know what you want.

SHELBY

I do.

(a few beats)

Well, not specifically... but, goddamn it, I'm gonna get there.

PAL

Excellent.

(then)

... Sure you don't want to have some hot sex just to unwind?

Pal goes in for a kiss, Shelby swats at her, laughs.

ANGLE ON CAROL

Somewhat relieved Pal and Shelby aren't "doing it."

45 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - CAROL'S PICKUP TRUCK - NIGHT 45

Later. Everything is lit by moonlight. The trees whiz by. Carol and Darcy are up front, everyone else in back. Everyone is silent and contemplative.

46 INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 46

By candlelight, in fits and starts, Carol writes in a large hand-made journal. We can't quite see the details of it or her home yet. Her face is a range of emotions, frustration, sadness... but then an idea grabs her... and she writes with renewed energy.

CAROL (V.O.)

'A wood sprite? A tree sprite? A spark from the campfire come to life? Dancing in the air and then landing in my heart...'

47 EXT. CABINS - DAY 47

Super early the next morning. Carol quietly comes along, carrying a little Igloo cooler. She sets it outside cabin eight, walks away.

MONTAGE

Of Carol going about her day --

Checking in guests, talking to Julio about the latest menu, showing fishermen where to go with a map.

She looks over at the Igloo cooler on Shelby's doorstep a couple of times... the second time checking her watch, wondering what to do... Ultimately she sighs and doesn't do anything.

Finally, she's eating her tuna fish sandwich lunch at a picnic table while reading a book.

48 INT. SHELBY'S CABIN - DAY

48

Shelby awakens, stretches a big stretch, looks at the clock: 12 noon.

SHELBY

Oh, shit!

She flings off the covers and jumps up.

49 EXT. SHELBY'S CABIN - DAY

49

Fresh from the shower, wearing mismatched clothes, Shelby emerges from her cabin with her luggage... and nearly trips over the little cooler. She stares at it and then opens it. On ice is a tuna sandwich, an apple, water, cake... and a note.

INSERT - NOTE

"Enjoy your tour! Carol."

BACK TO SCENE

Shelby smiles, is touched. She closes the cooler, pushes her luggage back into her room, and then, cooler in hand, sets out to find a place to dine.

As she walks, she sees a man and woman strolling hand-in-hand. They kiss, Shelby ducks her head down and angles away from them...

SHELBY

Stay present... focus...

But as she does, a beautiful, confident TOURIST WOMAN in classy turquoise jewelry, mid-40's, crosses in front of her. Shelby ducks her head again, blocks her vision with her hand.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Don't go there, she's not
available...

Julio sees Shelby walking carefully holding her head.

JULIO

...Gift shop has Alka Seltzer.

Shelby looks up smiles, nods thanks.

ANGLE ON PICNIC AREA

Shelby approaches a picnic table and then sees Carol at a nearby table reading and eating. Carol looks up, gives her a smile and a wave. Shelby does likewise.

CAROL

Hey. How ya doing?

SHELBY

Good. Totally overslept. Thought
I'd set the alarm clock.

CAROL

I'm sorry, we could've done an
early morning wake-up call.

SHELBY

That's okay. I needed the rest.
(sets down cooler,
unpacks it)
Thanks for this, though.

CAROL

You're most welcome.

SHELBY

So what are you reading right now?

CAROL

(holding up book)
Magic in the Celtic Otherworld:

SHELBY

(reading the
subtitle)
... *Irish History, Lore and
Rituals*. Nice, and to use your
phrase, that seems so specific.

CAROL

I nearly have my *Masters in Celtic
History*.

SHELBY

Cool, great. Working on finishing your degree?

CAROL

Mmm, not right this second....

(changing topics)

Uh, about last night... Pal can be really obnoxious, I'm sorry if she overstepped --

SHELBY

-- No, no it's all right. She helped me decide to turn a corner... and I did.

CAROL

Good.

SHELBY

I'm ready for the real world. Well. Marginally ready. But willing.

Smiles from both, then:

SHELBY (CONT'D)

So. Got any dating advice?

CAROL

... I shouldn't be the one handing out advice.

SHELBY

... The thing with Darcy?

Carol nods.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Well, I figure just about anyone has more experience than I do.

CAROL

What experience do you have?

SHELBY

A variety of women... dated each for a few weeks or a few months... Each time I think she's The One... and then...

CAROL

... And then?

A few uncomfortable beats.

SHELBY

Look, I don't know you. This is,
ah, embarrassing.

Carol smiles sympathetically. Shelby finally admits:

SHELBY (CONT'D)

When those little bumps in the
relationship road come along... I
end up eyeing someone new... and
start picturing some whole fantasy
that's better than...

CAROL

Anywhere But Here.

SHELBY

Yeah.

The next question is not just idle chit chat:

CAROL

... When did your fantasies start,
if it's okay for me to ask.

SHELBY

.... The day my mom threw a crystal
vase at the wall telling my dad
she wasn't moving to any more
military bases. I was about 12.
I holed up in my room and read...
Made up a different life. Lives.

CAROL

What kind of lives?

SHELBY

Oh, I was Amelia Earhart,
SuperWoman, a Pony Express rider
and Sir Edmund Hillary all rolled
into one.

Carol smiles, charmed, Shelby smiles.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Of course I gave those up. And
now... the dating fantasies have
to go, too. So. How did you know
you wanted to date Darcy, if it's
okay for me to ask?

Carol nods, a little sad.

CAROL

I knew I enjoyed her company, she was easy to talk to. Great guitar player, soul of a poet.

SHELBY

And right now..?

CAROL

We're in a rough patch.

SHELBY

What are you guys going to do?

CAROL

I don't know.

(changing topics,
and with some
sadness)

... So. Ready to hit the road and find the John Muir Tour?

SHELBY

Yeah.

(then)

... Man, they were hiking out at nine... I'd have to figure out where I could meet them... I've so messed up this vacation.

CAROL

... No you haven't.

Shelby looks at her...

CAROL (CONT'D)

... Uh, how about this: cabin eight is available the rest of the week. I could even give you a discount, since you're out some money on the tour.

SHELBY

Ohh, that's so sweet, Carol. I, you don't have to do that...

CAROL

I don't have to. I want to.

Their eyes meet. The connection now has a spark to it.

SHELBY

Okay then. Sign me up for cabin eight.

50 EXT. THE FOOD BASKET - DAY

50

Pal and Darcy drink coffee on break outside, Pal is wearing her "Food Basket" shirt or name tag.

PAL

Okay, let's say Carol gives you the lyrics out of the book. Then what? Does that mean you patch things up? Or does that mean it's over?

DARCY

... I don't know. And if she gives me the pages will she give up the whole THING?

PAL

You asked her to?

DARCY

The Birthday Morning After.

PAL

Well, I'd say the ball's in her court.

DARCY

I hate waiting for the ball to come back.

PAL

Play ball somewhere else.

DARCY

You're so cut and dried about everything.

PAL

You don't see me dying of angst, do you?

DARCY

I like her.

PAL

Yeah, yeah. Speaking of angst, you must have a boatload of song material after being up here a couple of years.

DARCY

I do. In fact...

PAL

What?

DARCY

I got to thinking last night at happy hour... I'm itching to do this new stuff in front of a REAL audience.

PAL

I thought you swore you were never gonna --

DARCY

-- The INDUSTRY part I don't give a rat's ass about, and I don't know if I'll ever get another recording deal --

PAL

'Fuckheads who don't know diddlycrap about releasing music.'

They laugh.

DARCY

To quote me, yes. But I gotta see if these new tunes work... and then... who knows, I could build my own studio in Eddie's garage --

PAL

-- Yeah, baby!

They laugh, then:

PAL (CONT'D)

So gonna find a club back in L.A.?

Darcy hesitates big time.

DARCY

Ahhhh... not quite... When I picture L.A... the molten lava starts to boil in me again.

PAL

Smokin' hot woman, good stuff.

DARCY

Not that kind of hot, but thanks...

(MORE)

DARCY (CONT'D)

(then)

... I was thinking about asking Carol if I could do a real concert at the cabins, advertise around town. Bigger than happy hour but low key. No pie in the sky fantasy, no stakes, no egos.

PAL

Sounds perfect. Can I play drums?

They laugh and just then Shelby exits the grocery store, loaded down with protein bars, trail mix etc. She looks over, sees the gals.

SHELBY

Just the person I wanted to see.

PAL

All right! She's changed her mind!

SHELBY

Oh, stop. I need to get my car window fixed.

PAL

Man, you know how to hurt a girl.

SHELBY

(to Darcy)

Is she really hurt?

DARCY

I doubt it.

PAL

O-kay. Window it is. That it? Any other plans? I was expecting big things out of you.

SHELBY

Workin' on it.

PAL

That doesn't sound very... Pro... what's the word, pro athlete?

DARCY

Pro-active.

PAL

That's it.

SHELBY

First the window, and then since
I'm skipping the John-Muir-Tour, a
night out on the town. With you.
I'm buying.

PAL

You're sending mixed signals.

SHELBY

No, I'm thanking you for being my
catalyst. Is that okay?

PAL

(to Darcy)

Should I do this?

DARCY

Yeah.

SHELBY

Where's the garage, I'll swing by
after my hike.

PAL

We're on Elm, just off the main
drag as you head north out of town.

SHELBY

Great. See ya.

Shelby heads off. They look after her, a bit suspicious.

PAL

... Hmmm.

DARCY

Yeah....

51 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY

51

Shelby hikes up a trail that ends in a panoramic view of
towering 14,000' peaks. She takes it in, takes a deep
breath... then sits and gets out paper and pen... and
writes.

INSERT:

Names as Shelby writes them: Keelie, Barbara, Megan,
Amy. And then she writes a few more: Jamie, Patty, Robin.
The pen poises... stops.

BACK TO SCENE

SHELBY

... O-kay...

Shelby places the paper in a small circle of stones. She takes some matches out of her backpack, lights the paper. As it burns, Shelby looks wistful.

52 EXT. WHITE-PICKET FENCE HOUSE - DAY - FANTASY 52

Marion and Shelby in front of the white-picket fence house. Shelby lets go of her hand, walks towards the front door, looks back once, then goes inside the house.

53 EXT. MOUNTAINS - DAY 53

Shelby, resigned, writes "Marion" on a small scrap of paper as well and tosses it on the flames. She closes her eyes and takes some deep breaths.

54 EXT. EDDIE'S GARAGE - DAY 54

Shelby pulls up in her car, gets out.

PAL

Hey, babe.

SHELBY

Hey.

PAL

How was your hike?

SHELBY

Stunning. God's country.

PAL

Told ya.

(then)

Eddie, here's the window I was tellin' you about.

EDDIE, 40's, is covered in grease.

EDDIE

Hey.

SHELBY

Hey.

He goes to look at her door window, meanwhile:

SHELBY (CONT'D)

So, tonight, where could we go?

PAL

I've seen it all and done it all
12 times 20, why don't you pick?

SHELBY

What's there to do in Little Pine?
Is there a movie theatre? A park
that has summer concerts? A wine-
tasting festival?

Pal just laughs, "You've got to be kidding."

PAL

We have two restaurants and three
bars. You missed the 4th of July
fireworks and Gold Miner Days aren't
til the end of the month. So,
does that help narrow it down?

SHELBY

Sounds like we're doing some bar
hopping.

55 INT. BAR - NIGHT

55

The locals' watering hole. Shelby has her glass of wine
and her agenda, Pal has her whiskey...

SHELBY

Did you know you wanted to be a
mechanic when you grew up?

PAL

No. I wanted to be an astronaut,
but I didn't have the math skills.

SHELBY

Seriously? Did you at least try?

Pal looks a little hurt.

PAL

If you're gonna live in the real
world, you gotta accept it as it
is. I'm not an astronaut.

SHELBY

Sorry.

PAL

No, I didn't try. But I knew I was good at fixing things. I can break down an engine and put it back together with my eyes closed.

SHELBY

That's great. Boy, I couldn't do that.

PAL

So, I do okay. I know who I am.
(then)
What did you want to be when you grew up?

SHELBY

I wanted to be a travel agent 'cause I thought that sounded fun.

PAL

Did you at least try?

SHELBY

Yes, I did, smarty pants, so there. I majored in business, thinking I'd start my own travel agency, and then the internet really knocked that profession for a loop. But I fell in love with my school and decided I'd stay there.

(back to her
agenda)

Speaking of school, I just learned that Carol was a Celtic history major and almost has her Masters.

PAL

Well, there's a dream that went south.

SHELBY

Why's that?

PAL

She's stuck in the past. Heartache and shit. That's what I like about you, Shel, you're movin' on.

SHELBY

Thank you.

(then)

I had lunch with her today.

(MORE)

SHELBY (CONT'D)

She seemed to be in some pain about things with Darcy.

PAL

She caused the pain, she needs to do the fixing.

SHELBY

Mm.

(then)

How's Darcy feeling?

PAL

Annoyed as hell but too tied up in knots to say anything. Except for last night, Carol hasn't spoken to her since her birthday.

SHELBY

Huh. Doesn't sound like there's much hope.

PAL

Newp.

56 EXT. LITTLE PINE MAIN STREET - NIGHT

56

They head down the quiet main drag.

PAL

... Thanks for the drinks.

SHELBY

Sure.

PAL

Am I gonna be a part of your 'What I did on my summer vacation' paper?

SHELBY

In a big way.

PAL

If you want to spice up that paper, I'm tellin' ya, a quickie with a car mechanic. Zoom zoom.

Shelby laughs.

SHELBY

Thanks anyway, but I'm a bookworm at heart.

Pal sees the agenda finally.

PAL

... Like Carol.

SHELBY

Maybe.

PAL

What the hell are you doing?

SHELBY

I like her.

PAL

So did Darcy. It did not go well.

SHELBY

I just want to get to know her.
No crime in that.

PAL

Hey, if you're just going for the
Five-Day Fling like some of the
other tourists Carol has hooked up
with, no judgments from me. But
if you're hoping for something
else, red flag alert.

SHELBY

I'm just getting to know her.

PAL

And then?

SHELBY

I'm just getting to know her.

PAL

Okay, let's say by some FREAK
accident you and Carol hit it off,
exactly what happens after you
head back home? You think mountain
girl is gonna move to the exhaust
fumes of L.A.? You're gonna give
up your nice salary and benefits
for minimum wage at the Tastee
Freeze?

SHELBY

You're just brutal. Where's your
sense of romance?

PAL

Where's your sense of reality? I thought that was your new motto, no more fantasies.

SHELBY

This isn't a fantasy!

PAL

O-kay... Let the court record show this isn't a fantasy.

Shelby shoots her a look: I'm gonna show you, buster.

57 EXT. SIERRA GLEN - DAY

57

Carol gives directions to a MAN and WOMAN in hiking gear as Shelby approaches, carrying to-go bags of food.

CAROL

... It's too late in the day, but for tomorrow I recommend Stoneybrook Falls. It's about 10 miles round-trip. You'll each need three liters of water, a solid lunch and a good walking stick, the trail crosses the creek at least a dozen times.

SHELBY

And for tonight I recommend Porcupine Ridge for a moonlight view. It'll change your life.

The hikers smile, Carol is happy to see her.

CAROL

You'll find that by going out to the highway, go south about three miles, take Ridge Road on the right.

They nod thanks, move off.

SHELBY

You're so good with the customers.

CAROL

Well, thank you. It didn't come easily.

SHELBY

No.

Carol nods, finishes closing up her building for the day.

CAROL

When I was little, I barely spoke.
My parents were kinda worried.

SHELBY

You've made quite a turn-around.

CAROL

Thank you. When I started here, I
actually had to practice making
eye contact.

They make eye contact, smile, then giggle.

SHELBY

Well done! Hey, I picked up dinner,
fresh trout; you know, when in
Rome. You in?

CAROL

I'm in.

They walk towards the picnic tables together.

REVEAL: Darcy watching them. She looks a little jealous.

58 EXT. PICNIC AREA - NIGHT

58

A lantern, wine and dinner.

SHELBY

... So where's your favorite place
to hike?

Carol ponders this.

CAROL

Mmmm...

(eyes light up)

There's a stand of Redwoods about
two hours northwest of here. The
trees are at least 500 years old.
Primeval. I stand there and I am
back in time.

They let that moment resonate....

SHELBY

Okay. Favorite movies.

CAROL

Hey, now, I'm doing all the talking.

SHELBY

Okay, okay, ...Mmmm, *Casablanca*,
The English Patient, *Shakespeare*
in Love, *Amelie*... I'm a sucker
for a romance with an international
backdrop.

CAROL

Ah, I can see that in you.

SHELBY

Is that a compliment?

CAROL

Absolutely.

Their eyes meet, hold for a moment, then:

SHELBY

Okay, your favorites?

CAROL

Oh, gosh, Shelby, my DVD player's
broken, and I only go to a theatre
when I'm visiting my niece and
nephew in Stockton --

SHELBY

-- C'mon, c'mon --

CAROL

-- So I've seen a bunch of cartoons --

SHELBY

-- C'mon!

CAROL

Okay... don't laugh. *Braveheart*.

SHELBY

Hey, why would I laugh?

CAROL

A history major falling for a lot
of spectacle and hokum?

SHELBY

That's why we go to them, isn't
it?

CAROL

Exactly. It's what you want history
to be. Raving mad heroes, fighting
'til their death for what they
believe.

Wearing pieces of a Celtic costume, YOUNG ADULT CAROL fights off an imaginary foe with a sword, then victorious, runs to a COLLEGE AGE WOMAN, similarly dressed. They join hands, run, plop down, then fling open the home-made journal and write in it.

CAROL (V.O.)

'They breathed fire at the dragon-headed beasts of judgment and leapt over the stone walls of conformity into a world of their own...'

BACK TO SCENE

Shelby didn't see that flashback, of course, but she senses she's on to something.

SHELBY

What are you fighting for?

Carol is silent.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

... Or who?

Carol hesitates. After a few beats, she opens up.

CAROL

We were in grad school at Chico State. She left to go Chicago to design sets and then fell in love with the theaters, the Art Institute, the El, the bars... I couldn't imagine going to such a big city. I was so depressed, I dropped out of school when she moved. To buy some time, I took a job here at the cabins. And my one summer became a full-time gig.

Shelby takes that in, then kindly:

SHELBY

Well. Here's to breaking with the past and new beginnings.

She picks up her wine glass, Carol is nervous, hesitates, Shelby notices, then Carol joins her in the toast. They clink glasses and drink.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

How many days in a row have you had dinner alone?

CAROL

... Too many. Thank you.

SHELBY

You're welcome.

Shelby tries to keep it casual...

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Soooo, the night is young... How about a cup of coffee?

CAROL

Sounds good.

SHELBY

Maybe... we could go back to your place?

CAROL

Ahhhh... my place is kind of a mess, I mean, I wasn't expecting...

SHELBY

I'm sorry, I just sort've sprang that on you.

CAROL

Well, no, it's a reasonable request.

(then)

God, I haven't had company over in...

She's very sad. And ashamed.

SHELBY

I'm sorry, maybe that was too --

CAROL

No, no, it's okay, coffee is what people --

SHELBY

-- No, you don't have to, I shouldn't have --

CAROL

-- No, really, please come over. I'd love to have you.

SHELBY

You're sure?

CAROL

Yeah.

Good eye contact, solid smiles from both of them.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Just... don't judge.

They smile.

60 EXT. CAROL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

60

Shelby and Carol have just gotten out of their respective vehicles. Shelby looks up to see a small cabin on a few acres of land, surrounded by trees.

CAROL

When I first started working at Sierra Glen, I used to rent a room in the house you passed on the way in.

(gesturing to
her cabin)

My landlady's husband poured the foundation and put up the walls to build a workshop, but he passed away before he could finish it. So I asked if I could.

SHELBY

Wow.

CAROL

It's not real fancy but it's home.

Shelby nods, then notices something off to one side.

SHELBY

What's that?

CAROL

(trying for casual)

Oh... a sword.

SHELBY

Like from... Xena, Warrior Princess?

CAROL

... Kinda.

SHELBY

Where'd you get it?

CAROL

Drama Department in college.

SHELBY

Your ex-girlfriend?

CAROL

Yeah.

Carol goes inside, Shelby eyes the sword with curiosity.

61 INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

61

Shelby looks around: worn furniture, the DVD player that's pulled apart, a lot of books scattered around, dust coating things. More lived-in than pathetic, but still, Shelby is taken aback. She puts on her polite game face, though.

CAROL

... Like I said, I don't have people over much... Well, coffee?

SHELBY

Decaf?

CAROL

You got it.

Carol goes to the:

62 INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

62

INTERCUT as needed with LIVING ROOM.

Shelby looks at some of the books... straightens up a few under the guise of looking at the titles...

SHELBY

You weren't kidding. You are a history buff.

CAROL

Yeah.

SHELBY

I once went on a first date where we spent two hours wandering the aisles of Vroman's Bookstore in Pasadena.

CAROL
That's a great first date. Strange
it didn't pan out.

SHELBY
Her taste in books didn't exactly
jive with mine.

CAROL
Gothic romance?

SHELBY
Stop!

CAROL
Hers, not yours.

They laugh.

SHELBY
She liked Young Adult. She was
kinda stuck there. It was like
dating a 15 year-old.
(then)
The sex was pretty good, though.

They laugh, then:

CAROL
Cream or sugar?

SHELBY
Both please.

Shelby finally gives in. She starts stacking the books
more earnestly. After a few moments, she looks up: Carol
is watching her.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Sorry. Once the Captain's daughter,
always...
(then)
Bathroom?

CAROL
Down the hall, to the right.

Shelby heads for the bathroom. Carol comes into the living
room now feeling pressured to clean up a bit. She makes
a few adjustments but isn't really sure what good it's
doing. She does turn on some MUSIC, though, something
CELTIC flavored.

64 INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

64

Moments later, Shelby comes out of the bathroom. She sees another room and discreetly peeks in. She has only the overflow lighting from the living room to see by... so she goes in further to see. After a few beats:

CAROL (O.S.)

Sight-seeing?

Shelby wheels around, caught.

SHELBY

Uh, yeah. It looks fascinating.

Carol steps by her and enters the room, turning on a small light.

CAROL

C'mon in.

SHELBY

You're sure?

Carol nods. Shelby enters.

65 INT. ROOM - NIGHT

65

Shelby looks around: a kilt, a cape, potion bottles, masks, leather boots... It should seem cool, a little geeky but not creepy.

Carol nervously waits.

SHELBY

Did you collect all this during your Masters' research?

Carol looks sheepish.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

... More for fun?

Carol nods, Shelby smiles.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

It's beautiful.

Shelby picks up a beautiful large feather.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Owl?

CAROL

Hawk.

She runs it against her fingers, then her cheek. Shelby realizes that was a turn-on for Carol.

SHELBY

... How rough is the rough patch?

CAROL

We've been apart for about three months.

SHELBY

When was the capo incident?

CAROL

(gulp)

June.

SHELBY

... That's just last month.

Carol nods.

CAROL

It was her birthday. We'd had a little wine. She was playing her guitar. What can I say? We were both a little stir crazy for contact.

(sighs)

It's such a small town.

(then)

Maybe I should go with Pal on her forays to San Francisco.

SHELBY

... If I kiss you and Darcy found out, would she be angry?

CAROL

She won't find out.

SHELBY

That's not the question.

CAROL

... She wouldn't be angry about the kiss. She's mad at me for other things.

Okay then. Shelby steps closer and kisses Carol. Carol kisses her back. They both smile.

Carol takes the feather and runs it over Shelby's face. They smile and then go in for a more intense kiss.

When it's over: Shelby can see a faraway look in Carol's eyes.

SHELBY

Where'd you go?

CAROL

... The woods.

SHELBY

What's happening there?

CAROL

I'm running...

We start to hear FEET RUNNING through a forest.

66 EXT. FOREST - DAY - FANTASY

66

Carol, at her current age, runs, dressed in some Celtic pieces, holding a big journal and a sword. CELTIC GUITAR MUSIC PLAYS.

CAROL (V.O.)

... Would you like to join me?

SHELBY (V.O.)

Doing..?

CAROL (V.O.)

Whatever we want. Running, jumping, playing, magic of our own making...

Carol runs... and then comes upon Darcy, who is wearing a Celtic piece of clothing and playing the song we hear. Shelby does not hear the following:

CAROL (CONT'D)

(to Darcy)

'We call upon the great and wise creative muses of the universe... to guide us in this next grand adventure. May we make a world of OUR OWN, wrought by our own passion and commitment...'

She writes in the journal and the WORDS APPEAR ON SCREEN:

CAROL (CONT'D)

I see a singer...

DARCY

... I see singer whose insides have liquefied into molten rage...

CAROL

I see a singer who takes the hot,
molten rage and finds some chords
that sing sweeter and higher than
she ever thought possible...

Darcy pauses, vulnerable, and then plays a few chords...

CAROL (CONT'D)

And with those chords vows to
vanquish her foes....

DARCY

I see a singer vanquishing her
foes with the help of the all-
powerful Celtic goddess...

Carol drops the journal, picks up her sword and cuts
through the air with all her might as Darcy accompanies
her with a few final chords.

CAROL

Let's go get 'em.

Darcy puts down the guitar and they run off into the woods
with high spirits and full voices -- "Yahhhhh!"

BACK TO SCENE

CAROL (CONT'D)

Become other people. Dragon
slayers... ambassadors to other
worlds, Amelia Earhart landing on
a lush new planet. Just for the
fun of it.

Shelby is both entranced and nervous.

SHELBY

So... is this just in your mind's
eye... or...

Shelby looks at the costume pieces and props in the room.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

For real?

CAROL

Sometimes for real. You don't
have to do anything. Unless you
want to.

The Celtic souvenirs now seem overwhelming to Shelby.

CAROL (CONT'D)

What would you like to do?

SHELBY

... Have a cup of coffee.

CAROL

Sure.

Carol smiles, sets the feather on a large journal, takes Shelby's hand, leads her out.

67 INT. SHELBY'S CABIN - DAY

67

Next day. Shelby slowly folds clothes, packs her backpack... alternating with unpacking... She's torn.

SHELBY

Don't really need the Celtic
Renaissance Fair Xena reality...

(stops)

Could just go hiking by myself.

(then)

Don't wanna go hiking by myself.

(packs, stops)

Could go find the John Muir trail...

(then)

Can't find the John Muir trail on
my own.

(packs, stops)

... Could read a good book under a
big tree. Yeah.

That seems to be a good fit. She turns to her book supply.

68 EXT. SIERRA GLEN MAIN BUILDING - DAY

68

Carol's getting ready to give a talk to tourists -- she's putting up a display that'll be revealed in the next scene. Darcy comes up, a little nervous but feeling upbeat and forthright.

DARCY

Hey.

CAROL

Hey. I'm gonna get you those
lyrics. I'll rip 'em out.

DARCY

Oh -- okay, sure. Either way,
I'm good. I'm... letting them go.

Carol's a little sad at this pronouncement.

CAROL

... Oh -- okay.

DARCY

... I've been thinking... Let's make up a story about the future. A real future.

CAROL

What?

DARCY

Like with your book, we create something on paper and then... let's do it. Go out and do it for real.

CAROL

I'm not... following...

DARCY

Carol, I'm starting to feel the need to connect to an audience again.

CAROL

I thought you despised the music business.

DARCY

I do. But not music.

CAROL

I thought you hated all the hustle and struggle and waiting and game playing and --

DARCY

-- I do, I do. But...

69 EXT. WOODS - DAY - FLASHBACK

69

Carol and Darcy are in the woods, Carol has her sword. Darcy looks uneasy.

CAROL

Who do you want me to play?

DARCY

... The snarky 27 year-old with the spiky wrought-iron-fence hair.

CAROL

Who told you...?

DARCY

(falters)

... Who told me... his company wanted a whole 'package'... not just music. Looks... sexy flash.

CAROL

'Love the songs... but could you sex it up a little.'

DARCY

No, my songs are... they're what I'm about.

Carol toys with Darcy's clothes using the sword.

CAROL

'I think you can be about a lot more. A lot.'

Darcy knocks the sword away, Carol taunts her with it again.

CAROL (CONT'D)

'People tune into the image, too, babe. Get with the program.'

DARCY

You can't tell me what to do --

CAROL

'Oh yeah?'

Darcy grabs her own sword and goes after Carol who steps aside and lets her attack a tree or tree stump instead.

CAROL (CONT'D)

'We're in the driver's seat.'

DARCY

NO, I AM. And I'm not making myself into YOUR idea of a singer!

Carol picks up the journal and writes:

CAROL (V.O.)

'... She breathed her own fire back at the dragon... an epic battle that lasted for days...'

Some of Darcy's WORDS APPEAR ON SCREEN as she goes on the attack:

DARCY

... Who do you think you are!? I earned my shot more years than you've been alive! What gives you the right?! I'm tired of eight miles of broken promises! I hope you and your minions rot in your own little corner of hell for people with no honor and no morals!

She throws the sword at the tree, completely spent.

BACK TO SCENE

DARCY (CONT'D)

I contributed those hellfire retribution stories to your book. But now I need a new story. I have to do things differently. Carol, I spent the first 20 years in music angry. I can't spend the next 20 that way. By writing it out first, it'll be different. We'll write it out first, in the book... and then we'll pack up and go.

CAROL

Go where, though?

DARCY

Wherever.

CAROL

I'm too old to do that, Darce.

DARCY

No, you're not. And by writing it out, you can, we can figure out the where, the what, the how, the when.

CAROL

How much time...?

DARCY

Well, I think we should set a deadline. So things don't get away from us.

CAROL

... Like when?

DARCY

Give notice to the owner end of this season. Winterize the cabins in October, close things up, hit the road.

Carol's really torn. She at least nods she hears her.

CAROL

... I've got to think about it.

DARCY

Okay, sounds good. Um, got one more request, while you're thinking about all that. I want to do a real concert here at the cabins -- do up flyers, advertise around Little Pine. I've got enough material... time to try it out.

Carol nods again, feeling the ground shifting under her.

CAROL

... Yeah, we can do that.

DARCY

Thanks.

CAROL

You're... a concert... you're... making plans...

DARCY

I am. You could be a part of them.

Darcy gives her a kiss and a smile, then heads off, Carol looks after her, confused, What To Do?

ANGLE ON

Shelby, book in hand and half way between her cabin and the main building, just watched that whole exchange from afar, not sure of what transpired. Except for that kiss.

SHELBY

... And then again, if I leave now, I could be home by bedtime.

She turns on her heel and walks briskly towards her cabin.

70 EXT. SIERRA GLEN MAIN BUILDING - DAY

70

A short while later, Carol is in mid-talk in front of a small group of tourists. A poster of Yosemite and a portrait of John Muir are on display next to Carol.

CAROL

... Then when John was in his 20's, he worked at a carriage factory in Indiana, but that wasn't a great fit. He started to worry. He wondered if he was doomed to stay there.

Carol hears what she just said, then continues.

CAROL (CONT'D)

And then one fateful day, the point of a file broke off -- and flew into his eye.

ANGLE ON

Shelby who is on the edge of the group, listening. She and the other tourists are riveted.

CAROL (CONT'D)

He was temporarily blind for a month, and during that time, he had awful dreams, he was shook up. He really pondered his fate. And you know what?

SHELBY

What?

The crowd giggles a little, Carol sees Shelby, then she sees Shelby's backpack and the key she was about to turn in and is momentarily thrown. She pulls it together and resumes:

CAROL

John Muir realized he had to be true to himself. He didn't want to be in a factory, or settle down or conform. He decided to become an explorer. In 1867 he set out on a thousand mile walk from Indianapolis to the Gulf of Mexico.

SHELBY

Wow.

CAROL

(smiles)

Yeah. Then the next year, he sailed into San Francisco and then walked all the way to Yosemite Valley. It took him two months.

Shelby mouths "Wow" again. Carol smiles. Then gestures to the poster on display.

CAROL (CONT'D)

He'd never seen anything like it. He found his home.

(a beat)

And he changed us. He told us we could find ourselves by getting lost in the beauty of nature. 'All scars she heals...

SHELBY/CAROL

Whether in rocks or water or sky or hearts.'

They stare at each other, the tourists wonder what the heck is up, then Carol snaps to:

CAROL

Come back at five and I'll tell you how John Muir helped found Yosemite as a national park.

The group applauds, disperses, as Shelby goes up to her.

SHELBY

... Do you normally talk about John Muir or was that prompted by my visit?

CAROL

He's in my rotation... I pick my talks based on how I'm feeling...

SHELBY

You were great.

CAROL

Thanks.

Carol smiles, then packs up her props.

SHELBY

... Do you feel like John Muir -- that you've found your home here?

CAROL

In a way, yes.

SHELBY

Do you think... you'll stay here
forever?

That hits the same nerve Darcy hit in Carol, she doesn't
know how to answer that.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Never mind, I'm sorry.

CAROL

'S okay.
(shyly eyeing
the luggage)
Taking off?

SHELBY

I was thinking about it. But after
hearing you talk, I'd like to see
some more of the mountains up here.

CAROL

Would you like directions to a
hike... or your own personal tour
guide?

SHELBY

... You've got time?

CAROL

Tomorrow's my day off.

They both smile.

ANGLE ON

Darcy, several feet away, who just watched THAT exchange
and wonders what went on.

71 EXT. SIERRA GLEN PARKING AREA - MORNING

71

Shelby hands stuff to Carol as they load up the back of
Carol's pick-up truck. Carol tosses things in with gay
abandon, Shelby cringes as she does.

SHELBY

Water.

CAROL

Water.

SHELBY
Food.

CAROL
Food.

SHELBY
Sunscreen.

CAROL
Sunscreen.

The bottle lands loudly. Shelby cringes even more.

CAROL (CONT'D)
It's not breakable, is it?

SHELBY
... No.
(beat)
Hats.

Shelby tosses them in with abandon.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Hiking poles and boots.

She tosses hers in, CLUNK, CLUNK.

CAROL
Poles and boots.

Carol tosses hers in, CLUNK, CLUNK

CAROL (CONT'D)
Map and compass.

SHELBY
You know how to use a map and
compass?

CAROL
I do.

SHELBY
I'm sticking with you.

Carol carefully puts the topo map and compass into her
backpack, which pleases Shelby.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
You did it that way just for me,
didn't you?

Carol nods, then they both hoist the backpack into the truck with care. Then Shelby pulls out a gold-tinfoil wrapped chocolate bar from a sack:

CAROL

Mmm, chocolate.

SHELBY

And not the cheap kind.

CAROL

I'm sticking with you.

SHELBY

You should.

Shelby carefully puts the chocolate into her pack and they both lift that into the truck. Together they slam the tailgate shut. They kiss.

72 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

72

Carol and Shelby drive along in Carol's pick-up truck.

73 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

73

They continue driving.

74 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

74

The truck is parked. Carol is glancing at a highway map but is mostly studying the road in front of them as it climbs into the mountains. Shelby looks a little nervous.

SHELBY

... Are we lost?

CAROL

No.

SHELBY

... Do you need help?

CAROL

No.

(then)

I don't think this is the road.

SHELBY

Oh.

CAROL

It's been awhile since I did this hike.

SHELBY

Well, this looks pretty. Can we just hike here?

CAROL

I really wanted to show you the trees.

SHELBY

I'm okay without the trees.

CAROL

Let's go back to the main highway and go a little further north.

SHELBY

How much further?

CAROL

It's hard to say.

SHELBY

Ummmm, I really don't want to spend all day driving. I spent a long time driving to get up here.

CAROL

It's not that far.

SHELBY

But you don't know how far.

CAROL

The point of the trip was the ancient trees.

SHELBY

I'm fine without the trees. The trees around here look suitably old.

Carol steams.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Carol, c'mon, I wouldn't know a 200 year-old tree from a 500 year-old tree, can we just go hiking?

CAROL

I know the difference.

SHELBY

How about, just, take me back to the cabins and I'll drive myself somewhere.

CAROL

You're quitting??

Uh oh. Shelby back-pedals.

SHELBY

No, no. I'm-I'm just trying to salvage the day.

CAROL

It's only 10 o'clock. The sun doesn't set til after nine.

Shelby softens.

SHELBY

... Okay.

Then Carol softens, looks at the map for a bit.

CAROL

I have another place we can go. I don't need to re-create the past.

SHELBY

Thank you.

They both smile and get back in the truck.

75 EXT. WOODS - DAY

75

They hike along in the woods wearing small backpacks.

Carol sees a tree stump or a log or large rock that calls to her. She jumps up on it, just to feel the power of jumping. She looks around, surveying the beauty.

CAROL

... In the days of the Celts, Northern Europe was covered with forests so thick, a squirrel could hop from branch to branch without touching the ground.

Shelby looks at her, "Really?" Carol shrugs, smiles, "Could be." They laugh. Carol hops down, with a flourish, maybe bows to Shelby. As they continue walking:

SHELBY

When did the whole costume fantasy thing start?

CAROL

... Grad school. It grew out of Dungeons and Dragons. Had a big group totally into it. But then we got tired of playing indoors, sitting around our dorm rooms... so... outside we went... And pretty soon, Gillian and I were going out on our own and had left Dungeons and Dragons behind.

She laughs, Shelby smiles.

CAROL (CONT'D)

The school had a lot of glens and woods, so it was perfect. We'd run around at midnight on a Saturday night...

SHELBY

It actually sounds like fun.

CAROL

It was. The best was spring break one year... most of the campus was deserted, we had the whole place to ourselves... for days and days...

Carol looks off in the distance, wistful. Shelby goes a few steps ahead and comes to a grove of big trees. Angelic beams of sunlight filter down.

SHELBY

... Omigod... Look at these! C'mon, these are terrific! I don't care how old they are!

Carol grins, then embraces Shelby from behind. They stare up at the cathedral of trees and light.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Thank you.

CAROL

The pleasure is mine.

MONTAGE

Of the two running through the woods. Carol brandishes a hiking pole as a sword every now and then, jumping and spinning and fighting off imaginary invaders.

Shelby laughs as she tries her hand at fencing with her pole.

They run some more... and Shelby eventually has a hard time keeping up. Winded, she finally just stops in her tracks. Carol notices and runs back to her, gets a cape from her backpack, opens it with a flourish and places it on the ground. Shelby looks utterly charmed at the cape. They fall to it, into each other's arms.

Things heat up, buttons are undone, belts are unbuckled, shirts are torn off, pants are shucked, mutual lust energy ramps up. They make love in the magical afternoon light.

76 INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - DAY

76

Early morning. Shelby makes coffee. As she's waiting for it to brew, she slowly wanders out to the

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

looks at various artifacts... and the clutter.

77 INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - FANTASY

77

It's all neat and tidy. Shelby hands a cup of coffee to Carol, who enters. They kiss, happy as a couple of meadowlarks.

BACK TO SCENE

Shelby, still by herself, straightens a few things but doesn't go crazy. Then she takes a deep breath, centers herself, feels good that she can let things be... for the moment.

Then she wanders into the

HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

... then wanders into the

CELTIC ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She opens a curtain so she can see better. Sunlight filters in. She first sees the hawk feather from before... and then the very large homemade journal it sits upon. She opens it, peeks inside. This is the book we've seen Carol carrying as she runs through the woods.

INSERT

of journal pages, filled with stories. Shelby flips through the pages... the handwriting changes... the dates roll by... the stories accumulate. Shelby flips to the end, reads a little, smiles, flattered, shuts the book.

ANGLE ON SHELBY

a little nervous and deep in thought.

78 INT. CAROL'S KITCHEN - DAY

78

A few minutes later. Shelby has her coffee and is still pondering. Carol enters, having just gotten up.

SHELBY

Hi.

CAROL

Hi.

SHELBY

I made coffee. Leaded.

CAROL

Good. Thanks.

They kiss deeply. Carol has a whole new lease on life.

CAROL (CONT'D)

... I've had a good time this week.

SHELBY

Me, too.

CAROL

And I loved hiking with you yesterday.

Shelby nods happily in agreement. A few beats.

CAROL (CONT'D)

... Whatcha thinkin'?

SHELBY

... I loved everything, from just watching you help folks at the cabins to how you run through the woods at full tilt...

CAROL

But?

SHELBY

The costumes, the sword....

CAROL

That's okay. It's a little far out.

SHELBY

I need to stay in the here and now.

Carol nods. Shelby puts her arms around Carol, kisses her.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

(then, carefully)

I saw the book. In the room. With all the stories in it. I'm- I'm flattered you wrote a little about me, I like being called a sprite... But, ah, the whole thing... it's so detailed...

CAROL

... I'm proud of that book.

SHELBY

Why?

CAROL

I came alive then. Before I met Gillian, like I said, I was a bookworm, practically a hermit. I certainly hadn't dated anyone. I really became a whole person by being with her. We created some amazing stories.

SHELBY

(nods, then)

I saw other handwriting... Did you get other girls to... write in there?

CAROL

Sometimes.

SHELBY

Darcy?

CAROL

A little.

SHELBY

... Look, I get it. We all do what we can to... get through life. I was Nancy Drew more summers than I care to admit. But it wouldn't be good for me to write in your book, I-I've got to stay in the present if I ever hope to --

CAROL

-- Sure. And once your vacation is over, you'll be gone. So, no worries about the book.

SHELBY

(hurt)

Okay.

(a few beats,
then carefully:)

... Have you ever given up the fantasies?

She's hit a vulnerable spot in Carol. Carol takes her coffee and exits.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Have you?

Shelby follows her into the

LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

CAROL

What does it matter??

SHELBY

Well, it matters because... how can you make room for someone if your life is taken up with...

She gestures to all of the stuff around.

CAROL

-- Excuse me, you're on vacation --

SHELBY

-- I know it's a vacation, but I like you --

CAROL

-- You don't know me from Adam --

SHELBY

-- I'd like to get to know you,
and how can I if your head's off
in the woods with a cast of
characters from the past!

CAROL

When I brought you here, I said no
judging.

SHELBY

... Do you like me?

CAROL

What does it matter?

SHELBY

What does it matter? We have a
connection, I want to see where it
goes. Do you like me?

CAROL

Shelby, this is Smalltown, U.S.A. --
wait, it's not even a town. It's
the middle of nowhere. We don't
have your nice offices and book
groups and movie theaters, so what
are you thinking?

SHELBY

Never mind the location logistics!
Jeeze, do you want to spend the
rest of your life eating tuna fish
alone?

Carol looks away or moves away, scared to admit her fears.

Shelby is unnerved by the tension, doesn't know what else
to do or say, so she gets her backpack and exits out the
door. Carol hears Shelby's CAR START, watches out the
window as Shelby heads down the driveway.

79 EXT. SIERRA GLEN CABINS - DAY

79

Shelby is standing in an odd place near her cabin angling
this way and that to get cellphone service. Finally she
does and her call goes through.

SHELBY

... Hey, Randall.

80 INT. RANDALL'S OFFICE - DAY

80

INTERCUT with SHELBY as needed

RANDALL

Shelby?! Where the hell are you?
Aren't you supposed to be in the
mountains with a bunch of trees?

SHELBY

I am, but right now I could use
your advice.

RANDALL

Honey, I couldn't start a campfire
with a bottle of lighter fluid and
a box of matches.

SHELBY

Not that kind of advice. So. I
never found the tour....

RANDALL

What?!

Just then Howie is walking by. Randall hits "speaker" on
the phone.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Howie, get in here, Shel's lost
and needs our advice.

SHELBY

Hi, Howie.

HOWIE

Hi, baby, how's the tour?

RANDALL

She never found it.

HOWIE

What?! You're the queen of
organization. You did a Mapquest,
right?

SHELBY

I mapped, I quested. But it was
no big loss. I landed at these
cute little cabins instead and...
there's this woman.

The guys exchange a concerned look.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

I think it could be more than a
crush. A real thing.

The guys exchange a look of cautious optimism.

HOWIE

("The Little
Drummer Boy")

'Do you hear what I hear..?'

RANDALL

(singing as well)

'I think Shelby-girl mentioned
thing.'

HOWIE

Lord have mercy! Details, we want
details!

SHELBY

Her name's Carol.

RANDALL

And when do we get to meet the
lovely and vivacious Carol?

SHELBY

Ah, she lives eight hours north of
L.A.

HOWIE

Eight hours??

RANDALL

Have you thought of rendezvousing
in Fresno?

HOWIE

Randall, Fresno?

RANDALL

Okay, Santa Cruz. Huge lesbian
community, you can stroll hand-in-
hand on the pier, ride the roller
coaster....

SHELBY

That's not exactly the problem,
well, eight hours is a problem,
but...

RANDALL

But?

SHELBY

Let's say I get to know her better
and my first impressions were on
target...

RANDALL

Good start...

SHELBY

She has this thing for fantasies...

Howie opens his mouth to crack a joke and Shelby cuts him
off.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Howie, no comments, and I'm afraid
she won't make room for me because
of them.

RANDALL

... Once she gets to know you,
she'll give them all up. Because
you'll be the best thing that's
ever happened to her.

SHELBY

... And I'm afraid I'm not capable
of a real relationship.

RANDALL

Shelby, I'm sure you --

SHELBY

-- You called me on it, Randall!
Keelie, Barbara, Megan, Amy. Untold
others. I have a terrible track
record.

A beat.

RANDALL

Okay. You're right. Be a quitter.
Be a failure. Live in fantasy-
land instead.

Long silence, Shelby's teary-eyed.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Are you ready to quit?

SHELBY

No.

RANDALL

Do you like her?

SHELBY

Yes.

RANDALL

There's your answer. You won't know til you try. Dive in.

A beat. Shelby takes a deep breath.

SHELBY

... Okay.

Shelby ends the call. She looks over. Carol has just arrived in her pick-up truck, ready to start her day. Shelby takes another deep breath... and then nervously goes over towards her.

81 EXT. SIERRA GLEN MAIN BUILDING - DAY

81

A moment later. Carol is unlocking the front door as Shelby approaches. Neither knows what to say for a few moments. Finally:

CAROL

... Did you want to check out?

SHELBY

No, um, just the opposite.

CAROL

Check in?

SHELBY

I wanted to... get to know you. Could I... just... hang out with you today, just... see what you and your day are like.

Carol blinks. An odd request. And yet...

CAROL

Ah... sure. It's not very exciting.

SHELBY

If I wanted excitement, I'd go hang out with Pal at Eddie's garage.

They laugh.

CAROL

Okay.

MONTAGE

Of Carol going about her day -- exactly as before, but with Shelby nearby:

Checking in guests (Shelby sits on a stool), talking to Julio (Shelby throws in her two cents' worth about the menu items, Julio is appreciative), giving directions to fishermen with their map (Shelby listens attentively).

END MONTAGE.

82 EXT. SIERRA GLEN - DAY

82

Carol struggles with fixing a window screen, Shelby watches.

CAROL

... Julio was impressed with your knowledge of wines.

SHELBY

My friends Randall and Howie back home have taught me well.

(then)

I hope I wasn't a butt-in-ski.

CAROL

You weren't.

(then, re: the screen)

... It's been forever since I tackled one of these.

SHELBY

My dad would tape them down. I'll bet you're the kinda gal who has duct tape.

Carol laughs, reaches in the tool box for duct tape. Shelby shows her how to tape down the screen frame to a picnic table... they work well together.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

You got the roller thingie for the spline?

CAROL

Sure do.

SHELBY

Who invented the word 'spline' and what were they thinking?

CAROL

It sounds like a cross between
spine and line.

SHELBY

'Lu-cy, you got some 'splinin' to
do.'

They crack up laughing.

83 EXT. PICNIC AREA - DAY

83

Finally, they eat lunch at a picnic table, Carol with her tuna, Shelby with a sandwich from the restaurant... both are reading their books. They each sneak glances at the other one. Then they look up at the same time -- and giggle at being caught. Carol goes back to her book, Shelby reaches in her backpack and pulls out one last square of tin-foil wrapped chocolate, slides it over to Carol, who looks up.

CAROL

For me?

Shelby nods.

CAROL (CONT'D)

I thought we ate it all.

Shelby shakes her head no.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Is this the last piece?

Shelby nods.

CAROL (CONT'D)

You'd do that for me?

Shelby nods. Carol smiles.

SHELBY

So, what's on tap for the afternoon?

CAROL

More of the same.

(then)

You really did just want to hang
out.

SHELBY

(nods)

Real life, in all its mundane glory.

Carol smiles. A few beats, a huge step:

CAROL
... I do like you.

Shelby smiles her thanks.

SHELBY
Y'know, I think I'll head to town
this afternoon, I haven't really
seen it yet.

CAROL
More mundane glory.

SHELBY
Exactly.

And with that, they go back to their books... although
Shelby isn't reading... she's thinking...

84 EXT. LITTLE PINE MAIN STREET - DAY

84

She looks at Little Pine's main street.

SHELBY
Okay. Really. Could I live here?

A few beats, then with a small paper tablet and pen in
hand, she heads down the street, carefully looking at
various business establishments. There's a timeless bygone
era feel here, and Shelby smiles at the small-town-ness
of it all.

85 EXT. MAIN STREET, LITTLE PINE - DAY

85

MONTAGE

Of Shelby talking to locals and owners about their town,
the pharmacy, the grocery, the hotel, the taverns, the
hardware store. As she comes out of the hardware store,
she's holding paint samples, admiring them.

MONTAGE ENDS.

86 EXT. STREET, LITTLE PINE - DAY

86

Shelby, deep in thought, looks at her jottings on the
tablet as she heads back to her car....

PAL
Look who's here.

SHELBY

Oh -- hey.

Pal is coming over to her from Eddie's garage.

PAL

Whatcha up to?

SHELBY

Just... sight-seeing. Little Pine's cute as a button, isn't it?

PAL

Uh huh. What's that?

SHELBY

Ah, nothing. Making a little grocery list.

Pal tips the top of the tablet so she can see some of the jottings.

PAL

The drugstore and the State Farm office?

SHELBY

Fiber for my diet.

PAL

Let me take a wild guess. You've fallen for Carol and you're thinking of getting a job here.

SHELBY

Well, not exactly.

PAL

Okay. What exactly?

SHELBY

Um, okay, should I decide, we decide, should there be any future, which, yes, is really premature, but I thought, I'm up here now, I might as well --

PAL

-- I thought you were just getting to know her!

SHELBY

I am, I am! But I'm trying to live in the real world, so I'm trying this on for size!

PAL

And does it fit?

Silence.

PAL (CONT'D)

Yeah. Didn't think so.

Shelby doesn't have anything to counter that, so leaves.

87 EXT. EDDIE'S GARAGE - DAY

87

Pal goes back to the garage.

EDDIE

... Why're you so mean, Pal?

PAL

I'm not mean. I'm just a realist.

Pal glances inside the garage and sees on the wall above the computer/desk an old poster with a rocketship on it that she hung up years ago. The caption says, "Go Places." She goes inside, pulls it down and throws it away.

PAL (CONT'D)

Goin' right here. Little Pine fits me just fine.

EDDIE

Huh?

PAL

You got the number eight socket wrench?

He hands it to her.

88 EXT. SIERRA GLEN CABINS - DAY

88

Carol finishes up the screens, Darcy arrives with her guitar for happy hour.

CAROL

... Hey.

DARCY

Hey.

A few beats. Carol realizes Darcy wants to talk about something. Darcy hands her a flyer. Carol looks at it.

INSERT

Announcing the concert Saturday night featuring Darcy.

BACK TO SCENE

Carol takes a breath, yes, it's really happening.

DARCY (CONT'D)
... Saturday okay?

Carol slowly nods.

DARCY (CONT'D)
C'mon. It'll be a lot like happy
hour. Actually, it'll be better.

Carol feels uneasy, scared... Darcy sighs and leaves her
be.

89 EXT. SIERRA GLEN MAIN BUILDING - DAY

89

A short while later... the window screens just sit there
as Carol contemplates Darcy moving on with her life.
Shelby comes up.

SHELBY
Hey, look at this...

Carol looks up and puts on a brave face.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
Found my own feather. What kind
is it?

CAROL
Red-tailed hawk.

SHELBY
Hey, just like yours.

Carol nods, smiles. Shelby waves it magically.

CAROL
How was your visit to town?

SHELBY
(dodging a bit)
Oh, fine. The pizza place has
games from my childhood, Candyland,
Monopoly, Uno...

They smile. Just then, the couple that got directions a
few days ago walks up.

MAN

Hi.

CAROL

Hi.

WOMAN

We loved the hikes -- both of them!

MAN

Tomorrow is our last day here --
do you have one more?

WOMAN

We'd like to go out with a bang.

Shelby and Carol glance at each other. They're thinking
the same thing....

CAROL

If you're heading south anyway...

They nod they are.

CAROL (CONT'D)

... Take the turn off at Crowley
Lake Road and head up Rock Creek
Lake Road. The Little Lakes Valley
hike.

SHELBY

The trees and lakes up there are
enchanted -- it's a magical, sparkly
world.

CAROL

Not a lot of elevation gain but it
does start at 10,000 feet.

SHELBY

Be sure to jump off the big logs
like you're eight years-old and
then brandish your hiking poles
like you're fighting dragons and
conquering the world.

MAN

Will do -- thanks!

WOMAN

Thanks!

They happily head off. Carol and Shelby look after them.
Then:

CAROL

You liked playing in the woods?

SHELBY

I did. But not full time with the swords, thanks.

(then)

... Have you ever thought of leading your own tour group, like the John Muir Tour?

CAROL

It's a lot of logistics taking people out in the mountains, at least here things are already in place -- food, water, shelter, bathrooms.

SHELBY

... I'm great at logistics. With your trail knowledge and my organizational skills, we'd make a great team. I could get a cute little hat and vest. Or borrow from your collection of Celtic Couture.

Carol smiles.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

So Little Pine. Tried to figure things out. See if it's a fit.

CAROL

You're really thinking of..?

SHELBY

I thought since I was up here.... If somehow I could combine selling decent coffee, cheap liquor, outdoor equipment, and hair cuts... And then driving back here I thought of Leading Our Own Tours, which you didn't exactly jump at.

CAROL

Shelby, I appreciate all you're trying to do. Honest. But I know how bleak it is seven, eight months out of the year. When winter comes, and it's ten below with ten feet of snow and a few cross country skiers. That's no fantasy. That's reality. Are you ready for that?

Shelby hesitates.

CAROL (CONT'D)

-- Are you ready for that?

(then)

... I used to date a substitute teacher who was at the high school. Then she found a permanent job in Sacramento. And a horseback riding instructor. She lasted two summers. They already had jobs up here and still didn't stick around. No one ever does!

SHELBY

So what's the alternative? Living through the stories in the big journal? How do you know those women didn't stick around because you wouldn't jump in a hundred per cent? How do you know they didn't feel those stories had more pull than they did?

Silence.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Did you try and give up the fantasies for them?

No answer.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

You said you liked me.

CAROL

It's not enough. A relationship isn't built on simply liking --

SHELBY

It's a start! And if you're not willing to start --

CAROL

-- I had a great relationship once! I know what it's like!

SHELBY

WELL, SHE'S GONE, ISN'T SHE??

Carol looks down, "Yes."

Shelby leans over, grabs Carol's face and kisses her passionately. Carol's knees buckle.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Put that in your storybook.

And then she grabs her backpack and goes. Carol looks after her, heartbroken.

90 EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT 90

Shelby drives in the black night.

91 INT. SHELBY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY 91

Shelby sets her backpack and tote bags down, looks at all of her meticulously arranged furnishings.

And then she flings knick knacks, books and pillows, enraged. The final thing she throws: the paint samples from her backpack, letting them scatter on the mess. She's now crying and spent.

92 INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 92

Carol, distraught, tries writing in her big journal... and after several false starts, throws the pen down. We see a few of the words she's scribbled: "On the road..." "Concerts..." "Where are the trees...?"

93 INT. SHELBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 93

Shelby sleeps on top of the covers, in the clothes she drove home in.

94 INT. SIERRA GLEN MAIN BUILDING - DAY 94

Carol waits on a 20something BOYFRIEND and GIRLFRIEND, who are holding hands, she's all smiles for them. But as soon as they have their room key and exit out the door, her smile fades and her shoulders sag.

95 INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY 95

Shelby quietly talks on her cellphone, making sure she doesn't run into Marion. She's worse for wear in the jeans and t-shirt she drove home in yesterday.

SHELBY

Hey, Randall, where are you guys?
Okay... Cool. Meet you back at
your office in five.

She hangs up as Velma, the Office Manager, comes around the corner carrying paperwork.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Oh -- hey, Velma.

VELMA

Shelby! What are you doing back?
Is everything okay?

SHELBY

Yeah... everything's... great.

VELMA

I don't believe you but okay. Why
are you back so soon?

SHELBY

I need to talk to Randall and Howie.

VELMA

I think they're just wrapping up a
meeting.

Shelby nods... then:

SHELBY

... How are things with...?

As if on cue, from way down the hall:

MARION (O.S.)

If Alex Demetrios calls again, I
want you to send up flares, wave
flags and get out a bullhorn. I
will drop everything including
speaking to the Chancellor to take
that call.

VELMA

Making life hell for the temp.

SHELBY

... Is that how you would describe
the way she treats me?

A few beats.

VELMA

When we have stars in our eyes
it's hard to see reality.

Shelby nods, Velma moves on, Randall and Howie appear
down the hall.

RANDALL

(calling)

She's baaa-ack!

HOWIE

Look at this, au natural. Finally left the iron at home.

RANDALL

How did it go?

She shakes her head, "Not well." The guys cringe and they all go into:

96 INT. RANDALL'S OFFICE - DAY

96

SHELBY

... I stopped well short of renting a U-Haul-It but I did get paint samples from the hardware store. I allowed myself the tiniest of fantasies about giving her home a make-over, it's in desperate need.

HOWIE

I call that having good taste.

They all nod in agreement, then the guys wait. Shelby thinks... she can't come up with anything else.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

That's it??

SHELBY

Yes. I mean, okay, I researched jobs -- and, yes, maybe I should've hung out with her for like a MONTH to get to know her even better, but damnit, looking for a job up there is not a fantasy, it's nuts and bolts stuff.

(hefty pause,
realization)

You know what?? I didn't go into fantasy world with Carol. I didn't write in her journal! I begged her to give up her fantasies! I hung in there until... she wouldn't budge. And I haven't had a Marion fantasy in days. I-m-I'm making progress. I am. I am. I am...

She falls into Randall's arms crying.

RANDALL

You are. Absolutely. You are.

97 EXT. SIERRA GLEN CABINS - NIGHT

97

Darcy performs before a packed and enthusiastic crowd, sailing on their energy. The lyrics to the song she's singing reflect back on the wonderful times she had playing in the woods with Carol... with a touch of wistfulness in there for good measure.

98 EXT. FOREST - DAY - FLASHBACK

98

Carol and Darcy running through the woods -- hopping over logs, dodging unseen chasers, falling into each other's arms deliriously happy.

ANGLE ON

Carol at the back of the crowd... happy and sad all at the same time.

99 EXT. SIERRA GLEN CABINS - NIGHT

99

The crowd is dispersing and congratulating Darcy, who is grinning from ear to ear. When they're all gone, she finally has a moment to angle over to Carol.

DARCY

... Well?

CAROL

You're amazing.

DARCY

Thank you.

CAROL

We should have done this last summer. We should have done this once a month.

DARCY

Na. That would've been too much like what I wanted to get away from. The fantasy build-up and then the crash and burn. This was perfect.

CAROL

Okay.

DARCY

... Did you think about my offer?
Make a plan for the future?

CAROL

Darcy... I can't just pack up and
leave.

DARCY

But we didn't write it out first.

Carol sighs.

DARCY (CONT'D)

... What about Seattle? Cool but
low key, music scene, arts scene...

Carol still dithers.

DARCY (CONT'D)

C'mon, let's do it right now.

CAROL

What??

DARCY

Everyone's gone, c'mon, look, I've
got my notebook...

(pulls it out of
a bag)

... and a pen... C'mon, we can do
this.

Carol freezes.

DARCY (CONT'D)

I'll go first.

(closes her eyes,
conjuring mode)

'We call upon the great and wise
creative muses of the universe...
to guide us in this next grand
adventure. May we make a world of
OUR OWN, wrought by our own passion
and commitment...'

(opens eyes)

You taught me that.

Carol nods.

DARCY (CONT'D)

I see... two women heading north
up Interstate 5...

Darcy jots in the book.

CAROL
(following along
with the ritual)
I see two women heading north up
Interstate 5... and they have the
car packed with guitars and music
and books and leaves and feathers...

DARCY
Guitars and music and books and
leaves and feathers... and they
find themselves in... Seattle.

CAROL
And they find themselves in
Seattle... where they... get a cup
of coffee...

They laugh. Darcy hands Carol the book to do the writing.

DARCY
And over Seattle's finest... the
singer songwriter phones her old
friend Jeremy... who has a recording
studio up there... and she picks
his brain to see what's up.

CAROL
(falters)
She phones Jeremy... checks out
his recording studio... and the
Celtic historian storyteller...
looks out at the ocean...

A few beats as Carol looks out.

DARCY
You can do it.

Carol hesitates, then she hands the book back:

CAROL
It's... that's... your story, Darcy.
It's not mine. I don't know what
Seattle has for me.

DARCY
You just gotta put some time and
energy in to it -- like your other
stories! You can do it, Carol, I
know you can!

CAROL
I'm not gonna do it in five minutes
right here right now!

A beat.

DARCY

Okay then.

(then)

I'm sorry, Carol. I can't stay.

(looks around)

As beautiful as it is here. As beautiful as you are.

(picks up her stuff, then)

... I'm gonna be writin' songs about these couple a years for a long time.

CAROL

... I'll bet they'll be great.

Darcy nods, heads off. Carol stands there, fighting back tears.

100 INT. SHELBY'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT 100

Shelby has a candle lit at the dining room table. She toys with a pen. This is agony. She finally, slowly, writes "Carol" on a piece of paper... takes some deep breaths... and then she puts the name into the flame.

101 INT. CAROL'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 101

Carol by candlelight stares at her journal. We can see that she's written out the conjuring "preamble," and below that is "I see a Celtic historian who goes to..." She's torn, she's lost, but at least she has the pen in her hand.

102 INT. OFFICE - DAY 102

A few days later, a sunshiny day in L.A. Shelby, in spiffy yet less button-down office attire, walks down her office hallway. She looks ambivalent.

As Shelby arrives at her desk, Marion comes out of her office. Marion's guard is down and she's actually warmer than we've seen her before.

MARION

Hey, welcome back.

SHELBY

Hi, thanks.

MARION

Uhhh, I need the Metrics Report for today's two o'clock. Then maybe we can grab a cup a coffee and you can tell me all about your trip; Randall said it was life-changing.

SHELBY

It was.

MARION

I'd love to get the name of where you stayed, I could use a little R and R myself.

SHELBY

... Uh, okay...

Marion's CELLPHONE RINGS. She answers the call and goes into her office. Marion tries to modulate her tone until she can't.

MARION

What?

Shelby toys with the idea of settling in to her desk... but of course, curiosity gets the better of her and she leans in to hear what Marion's saying.

MARION (O.S.) (CONT'D)

... I think that's stupid, I think we just casually tell our friends and acquaintances as we run into them... Jane, for Christ's sake, no one SENDS OUT announcements to announce an engagement is OFF!

Shelby blinks. Holy shit.

MARION (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We can talk about it after work... No, I don't want to get dinner, because if I'm shouting, everybody and their brother in the damn restaurant will hear me!!

CRASH. Shelby jumps and nearly freaks out, shades of the vase hitting the wall from her childhood.

MARION (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Shit. I think I broke my phone.

Shelby takes some deep breaths, then tiptoes in to Marion's office.

SHELBY

Do... you... want me to... get you
another phone?

MARION

That would be great. Thank you.
(sighs, then)
Never mind the Metrics Report, I
could use that coffee now. How
about you?

SHELBY

Uhhhhh, sure...

Marion gets her purse.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

Soooo the wedding..?

Marion shakes her head.

MARION

... Got a little ahead of ourselves.

SHELBY

I know the feeling.

MARION

.... It's a little embarrassing.

SHELBY

Mmmhmmm.

MARION

... It's a lot embarrassing.

Shelby nods.

SHELBY

No judgment from me.

MARION

Thank you. Thank you.

They connect.

MARION (CONT'D)

Is that a new outfit?

SHELBY

Yeah. I needed something for my
new start and all.

MARION
 (genuine, sweet)
 Looks really sharp.
 (then)
 Y'know, I just got an email about
 a three-month Career Advancement
 Program they offer here. It could
 get you ready to be a manager.
 We're re-organizing this department
 in the spring and there's going to
 be an opening.

SHELBY
 Ahhhhhhh....

103 INT. MARION'S OFFICE - DAY - FANTASY

103

Replay: Marion and Shelby leaning over the seating chart,
 Shelby starts to kiss her.

BACK TO SCENE

Shelby shakes her head to clear it.

SHELBY
 I, uh, I've already been making
 some changes...

Marion nods supportively.

SHELBY (CONT'D)
 ... thanks to my vacation... So,
 uh, yes, I'd love to be a manager,
 but I think... it'll be somewhere
 else. Yeah. So, uh, this is...
 gonna be... goodbye. But thank
 you. Really. I grew a lot here.

Shelby sees her name plate on the side of the cubicle,
 pulls it off, and starts to walk away.

MARION
 Was it... something I said?

SHELBY
 Yes.

MARION
 What?

SHELBY
 (tenderly)
 Everything.

And then she leaves.

104 EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - DAY

104

Shelby, Randall and Howie over lunch again. She's got some renewed energy.

RANDALL

... My friend Steve is getting ready to expand. It won't be great money at first, but you'll be getting in on the ground floor.

SHELBY

Uh huh...

HOWIE

How about pet grooming?

Shelby and Randall stare at him.

HOWIE (CONT'D)

(to Randall)

Okay, so I don't have your corporate contacts.

(to Shelby)

But Teddy can do wonders with even the mangiest and he's willing to train.

RANDALL

She doesn't even own a pet.

HOWIE

She has a good heart!

SHELBY

Guys, focus.

RANDALL

How about FedEx or UPS -- I have friends at both. In fact, both of 'em do a lot of travel to branch offices to do corporate presentations.

SHELBY

Travel, that sounds good. Just not to the mountains, ha ha.

RANDALL

Your heart'll mend. Plenty of fish out there in the ocean.

Shelby nods... and stares at the LOUD TRAFFIC going by, winces. And then she hears what he just said.

SHELBY

... What was that place you guys mentioned last time, by the ocean, up north...

RANDALL

Santa Cruz.

SHELBY

... Maybe I should make a really clean break.

RANDALL

You're abandoning us??

HOWIE

I thought you just joined that chat group at the Gay & Lesbian Center and liked it.

SHELBY

I did, I do. But I got to enjoy the small-town feeling this summer. Maybe I don't need to go as small as Little Pine, but still.

RANDALL

How will we survive?

SHELBY

You can form a support group with Marion.

They all laugh.

105 INT. OFFICE - DAY

105

A distinguished caring professional named HERBERT, 40's, with a resume in front of him, is speaking to the camera... we can't quite tell where we are or what the context is.

HERBERT

... I see it's been a few years for you. So what made you decide to go back to school?

ANGLE ON

Carol. Sitting across from him. We're in the Dean's Office in the History Department of a college.

Carol seems a little nervous, a little fish-out-of-water. But she's glad to be here.

CAROL

I needed to get back to this. I'd always intended to finish my Masters, I just got... sidetracked.

HERBERT

I see you've been managing a mountain resort...

CAROL

Yes. I'm still going to do it in the summers.

HERBERT

Any plans beyond finishing your degree, or is that too far in the future to tell?

CAROL

I'd love to teach. I've given a lot of workshops, introducing our guests to the history of the Sierra Nevada... I'm pretty good with the customers.

(a beat)

Or so I've been told.

HERBERT

Connecting with people -- that's the key to teaching. It's not all about facts and artifacts.

Carol nods.

CAROL

Absolutely.

HERBERT

Well, we'd love to have you consider our department, it's topnotch.

Carol nods.

106 EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

106

Shelby walks along a tree-lined sidewalk with BETH, 40's, upbeat. Both women are in suits.

BETH

Well, the private sector can deliver you buckets of money if you hit the right field. But if you're not behind what they're manufacturing or selling, at the end of the day, where are you?

SHELBY

That's why I wanted to stay in education. And I love the college atmosphere.

BETH

Me, too. I've been here ten years.

SHELBY

I hope I'm here that long.

BETH

How long are you in town this visit?

SHELBY

A couple more days, I want to get over to the pier and have some fun there.

PULL BACK to REVEAL we're on a college campus.

BETH

Santa Cruz is a great town and the university is a gem. You're going to love it.

SHELBY

Wonderful. Thanks again.

BETH

The paperwork should be to you by the end of next week.

SHELBY

Great.

They shake hands. Beth walks off, Shelby turns and admires the campus before her. And as she turns to walk back to her car... she sees across the way... yep... there's Carol walking down the steps of the History Department's building.

Shelby just stands there, stunned, blinking...

Carol looks as if she's a little disoriented and can't remember where she parked.

She looks at a map in her hand, looks around... and sees Shelby... coming towards her. And now it's her turn to be completely floored. She blinks.

SHELBY (CONT'D)

(calls out)

... I thought you could read a map!

They move towards each other, laughing.

CAROL

I'm looking for the parking lot.

SHELBY

So, your car is here? Sorry, that was stupid. You're visiting?

CAROL

Yes. I'm... going to finish my degree.

SHELBY

... Here??

CAROL

Maybe. I'm trying to find the right school.

SHELBY

That's so wonderful, congratulations.

CAROL

Thank you. What brings you here?

SHELBY

... I just accepted a job. Manager in Alumni Relations.

CAROL

(smiles)

I can see you doing that.

SHELBY

Yeah, it's a really good fit.

A beat then:

CAROL

I threw everything out. Everything.

107 EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

107

CLOSE ON

A fire.

PULL BACK and REVEAL: Carol watching... and throwing things into the fire. It's all of the Celtic props and costumes [no history books]. Carol pauses and then after a few moments, tosses the journal, which lands hard and causing SPARKS to FLY. The book goes up in flames.

BACK TO SCENE

Shelby is stunned, trying to take that in.

SHELBY

Every... the, the whole... the everything...

CAROL

Even the book.

SHELBY

Carol... my God... Are you... okay?

Carol shrugs, nods "Yes, sort've." Shelby embraces her, Carol gives her a ferocious hug back. After a bit:

SHELBY (CONT'D)

You're... okay?

CAROL

Yeah. Big, weird, empty space in my home... in me. Sometimes... I just... ache. But I took Darcy's advice and started writing about my future, a real future. I'm getting there.

SHELBY

Good.

CAROL

Darcy's gone. She's living the music scene in Seattle.

They take all that in, then:

SHELBY

How is...

She stops herself, is really torn.

CAROL

What?

SHELBY

... I was going to ask... how good the program here is, how much you like it. But I'm not. I don't want to start building a whole THING in my head.

(then, anguished)

Do you know how hard I worked to forget you?!

Now Carol embraces Shelby. Eventually:

CAROL

... Maybe that's why we're both here. We let it all go.

Shelby nods.

SHELBY

If... if this isn't the school for you... if it isn't a good match, please, dear God, do the right thing -- for you.

CAROL

I will. I promise.

(then, whispers)

I think I'm going to like it here. A lot. Look up.

Shelby looks up. Tall Redwoods tower over them. Carol's looking up, too. She puts her arms around Shelby as they gaze at the majesty above them.

FADE OUT.