

MOMMIE DEAREST

A screenplay by

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SHOOTING SCRIPT

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**For Educational  
Purposes Only**

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MOMMIE DEAREST

FADE IN:

1 INT. JOAN'S BATHROOM - BRENTWOOD HOUSE 1938 - 1  
PRE-DAWN

UNDER TITLES a SERIES OF EXTREMELY CLOSE SHOTS:

EXTREME CLOSEUP a hand turns a light switch in the darkened bathroom;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hand plugs one end of an electrical cord into a wall socket;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hand takes the other end of the cord and plugs it into an early General Electric coffee percolator, 1937 model;

EXTREME CLOSEUP a large electric clock; it reads 4:15;

SOUND EFFECTS BIRDS CHIRP in the darkness outside the window;

EXTREME CLOSEUP two hands turn on steamy hot water from a fancy gold tap;

EXTREME CLOSEUP two hands open a refrigerator and remove a cannister of ice cubes and a bottle of distilled water;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same two hands empty ice cubes into a large, elegant porcelain bowl and place it next to the steamy basin;

EXTREME CLOSEUP the coffee begins to perk;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hands pour distilled water over ice cubes and sprinkle rock salt on the mixture to make it colder;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same hands scrubbing furiously with soap, water and scrub brush;

EXTREME CLOSEUP same two soapy hands come up to Joan's face which she soaps furiously. This is our first view of JOAN CRAWFORD.

CLOSEUP the coffee, like Joan, is perking furiously;

EXTREME CLOSEUP the hands which are now rinsed, plunge into the bowl of ice;

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

EXTREME CLOSEUP the hands lift icy water and ice cubes onto Joan's face which is a few inches over the porcelain bowl. We feel the brutal shock of the icy water as it hits her surgically clean face.

CUT TO:

2 EXT. CRAWFORD BRENTWOOD HOME - DAWN

2

MAIN TITLES continue to roll as Joan comes out of her house and gets into the back seat of a waiting studio limousine. There is a trace of dawn in the east -- but it's still quite dark. The car drives off and down Bristol Avenue in the direction of Culver City.

CUT TO:

3 CLOSEUP - JOAN

3

in the back seat of the limousine, not letting a minute go to waste. Under the dim overhead light in the car, Joan is autographing a stack of 8 x 10 photos of herself. One after another, she writes in her bold flourishing script, the same legend:

"Yours always, Joan Crawford."

While she works and TITLES CONTINUE, the car wends its way through the sleepy streets...

4 EXT. METRO GATES

4

... and pulls in through the Metro gates.

The lot is not yet alive as the limousine drives down the long narrow streets between the giant sound stages.

5 EXT. SOUND STAGE

5

The car pulls up. Joan gets out and moves...

6 INT. STAGE

6

... across a vast stage which contains an enormous ice rink. This is the set for Ice Follies of 1939 which Joan is currently shooting.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

It is still one-and-a-half hours before the crew call so the stage is empty, quiet and dark. Joan continues to her onstage dressing room.

MORE MAIN TITLES as Joan steps up to her dressing room, whose door swings wide for her and she gives a workman-like nod to her hairdresser, dresser and maid.

7 INT. DRESSING ROOM

7

The routine here is unvarying and her staff is practiced. Joan takes off her coat and blouse, puts on a smock and sits in elaborate makeup chair. Like drones buzzing around the queen, or handlers preparing a race horse or prizefighter, the three go to work on the star.

SERIES OF EXTREME CLOSEUPS. Her makeup being applied: big detail on lipstick, mascara, eyebrows, etc. At the same time hair preparation for an elaborate, glamorous coiffure.

SERIES OF CUTS continue as Joan is dressed in a sexy military skater's costume.

FINAL TITLE rolls over the lacing and tightening of a pair of high white kid-glove leather figure skates. As the final lace is tightened and meets with Joan's satisfaction, MAIN TITLES END.

CUT TO:

8 INT. MGM SOUND STAGE - ICE RINK - LATER THAT MORNING 8

A production number for the Ice Follies is approaching its climax. Joan, skating well, leads a team of costumed women skaters who whirl behind her in a difficult ice number. The conceit is battle. The skaters wear sexy toy soldier costumes.

The playback SPEAKERS BLARE a rousing military MARCH, complete with snare drum rolls, tympani and tubas.

Joan leads a gymnastic battle. The action increases in pace and difficulty.

SERIES OF CUTS as we set up an impending accident: a skater's epaulet comes loose, dangles by a thread. This is established while we CUT BACK AND FORTH between flips, turns, spins, leaps of combat. Then we CUT BACK to the epaulet which drops off and lands on the ice.

CUT TO:

8 CONTINUED:

8

Joan, who is skating all stops out, heading right for the epaulet which she doesn't see.

SEVERAL QUICK CUTS of the number and back to CLOSEUPS of Joan's skate heading for the epaulet.

She takes a terrible spill, windmilling across the ice, landing in a crumpled heap. The number is cut immediately as the director, various assistants, technicians and fellow skaters crowd around the fallen star. It doesn't look good for Joan as we...

CUT TO:

9 INT. DRESSING ROOM - MGM - DAY

9

Joan is in great pain. She is stretched out on a chaise. An air of calamity is elsewhere.

Her dresser, her maid, the film's director, TED AMES, and a trainer hover anxiously as the studio DOCTOR completes the examination. Now the trainer packs ankle and foot in ice, blankets Joan against shock.

FULL SHOT -- the dressing room doors open and BRIAN GOLD, the producer, appears. He is 45, smart, successful, fashionable.

REVERSE ANGLE - FULL SHOT FAVORING Joan as all eyes turn upon the producer, he closes the door gently. ANGLE NARROWING as vivid with concern and sympathy he goes to Joan, takes her hand, squeezes it tenderly.

He kneels compassionately beside her.

BRIAN

Joanie...

(soothing her)

Pain. Dear girl. Pain. Lots of pain?

JOAN

(a bruised smile)

Let's say it hurts, Brian.

TIGHT TWO SHOT face to face, their clasped hands between them as he kneels there.

BRIAN

Relax, take it easy. Brian's here.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

BRIAN (CONT'D)  
(without looking back)

Doc.

ANGLE WIDENS as the Doctor's face ENTERS THE FRAME and Joan and Brian look at him.

DOCTOR  
Possible fracture, Mr. Gold.

Joan is watching Brian.

DOCTOR  
(continuing)  
We need an x-ray.

BRIAN  
Very possible?

DOCTOR  
We need an x-ray.

ANGLE WIDENS LOW, SHOOTING past Joan to Brian Gold. He still holds a hand to comfort her as he stands up to face the Doctor who is now IN THE FRAME again.

BRIAN  
Say we're lucky, Doc, when can she go on again?

DOCTOR  
Two... three weeks, depending.

FULL SHOT FAVORING Joan who watches now in a totally different way. Brian is shooing everyone out.

BRIAN  
Everybody, please?

REVERSE ANGLE, never losing Joan as Brian closes the door behind them.

The door is shut. Brian is facing Joan who very slowly, always watching him, leans back against her clustered pillows. The Doctor observes quietly from across the room.

ANGLE NARROWS as Brian comes up. They both look at her foot encased in ice and then each other. Brian begins to pace, furiously.

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

(without a pause)

Let me think out loud for you. We're only four days into the picture. We can start over with Betty Grable. The insurance will cover the loss. The cast is set, the skaters are rehearsed. We're in business. I can still have my picture. I always wanted Grable anyway. I went with Crawford because I couldn't say no. I'll smile at her. I'll hold her hand and I'll dump her.

(a pause)

How am I doing?

Brian sits down without saying a word but smiles.

BRIAN

Facts.

He gets up. He's there, he's being polite but he's on his way. He's going and in his mind she's gone.

BRIAN

(continuing; with feeling)

You'll get lots of sympathy. Letters, fan mail, lots of press to cover you. L.B. will say it's a great loss.

JOAN

Bullshit. I'm not getting dumped from this picture.

BRIAN

(pointing to her foot)

Talk to it, not me.

He's at the door.

JOAN

(exploding)

Where the hell you going?

BRIAN

I can't hide this from L.B.

JOAN

For Christ's sake, Brian.

(CONTINUED)

BRIAN

What choice have I got?

JOAN

You're not throwing me off the picture. No one's replacing me. I'll get out there and we'll do the wide shot and after that you can put me on a platform with blades and you can do the tight stuff and move me around with a couple of grips below the frame line.

(to the Doctor)

You got novocaine?

BRIAN

Wait a minute.

JOAN

Brian, you want your picture made? Get down on the set and tell Ted I'll be there in a half hour. And, Brian... I'll skate the hell out of it.

Brian exits. Joan turns to the Doctor, who is preparing the injection.

DOCTOR

You're only buying a few hours. I think you're hurt pretty bad.

JOAN

I'll take what I can get...

CUT TO:

Joan makes her entrance from dressing room, in fierce pain, limping badly. Word has spread like wildfire so that a number of people from other productions including actors in various costumes have come to witness what has the potential to be a major moment in Metro's history and Crawford's career. Crawford, playing the heroine to the hilt, stops and asks solicitously about members of the crew, walking gingerly, as if nothing unusual had happened. She's doing "stiff upper lip" with a vengeance. It's not difficult to see why every stagehand she ever worked with adores her.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

She passes camera crew, gives them a big smile. She moves out to her mark on the ice. The rest of the cast and dress extras are all in place worshipfully. A great silence falls on the set.

TED

We'll try to get it in one take,  
Joan.

JOAN

We'll do it until it's right.

The great Crawford gives him a wink and the Hollywood litany begins: "QUIET ON THE SET!" "LET'S HAVE BELLS!" (BELLS GO.) "CAMERA!" "SLATE IT!" (The sticks slap.) "PLAYBACK!" The MUSIC STARTS and comes to speed. Now, finally, "ACTION," and Joan Crawford is skating and Joan Crawford has never been better. She is extraordinary, fighting through her pain, super-conscious of her audience, transported by the admiration of all who are witnessing her courage. There isn't a person on the sound stage who doesn't know that this is a movie star.

CUT TO:

11 THE STAGE

11

The number finishes.

TED

(bellowing)

Cut!

And he leads the applause as the entire sound stage erupts in cheers.

CUT TO:

12 INT. SOUND STAGE - LONG SHOT - HIGH ANGLE - NIGHT

12

Night lights. Emptiness. The big doors open. Strange shadows. The eerie sense of unknown space. Only Joan's dressing room is lit and now, like ants, a wheelchair is lifted out of Joan's dressing room.

12A CLOSE MOVING SHOT

12A

Two powerful grips set the wheelchair down gently with Ted and trainer nearby. All men. The women are gone.

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED:

12A

Joan wears a coat over her shoulders, her bared ankle is stretched out and packed in ice.

JOAN  
(pointing outside  
through the open  
doors)

Who's out there?

TED

Nobody.

JOAN  
Any word from Brian or Mayer?

TED

No.

JOAN

You call?

TED

You told me not to.

JOAN

It's damn quiet around here.

MOVING LONG SHOT

FAVORING Joan, SHOOTING toward the open doors as they wheel her toward them. Now headlights suddenly appear and a chauffeured car stops behind the one waiting for Joan. A door opens and closes in the shadows and, as the little entourage reaches the edge of the stage, a VOICE comes out of the shadows.

GREG'S VOICE

Joan?

Joan is transformed.

JOAN  
(crying out)

Greg.

She bursts into tears and everybody fades slowly as a man appears out of the shadow.

GREG

Excuse us a minute, please.

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED: (2)

12A

GREG SAVITT is a top labor lawyer, currently at the height of his power. He's rugged, handsome, virile and exudes self-confidence and self-esteem; in short, a formidable figure, and an important player on the Hollywood scene. He is impeccably dressed in a dark suit.

ANGLE NARROWING until Greg is beside Joan and leans down toward her and kisses her weeping face. They are all alone now except for the two cars outside and the emptiness of the cleared sound stage on one side and the quiet studio street on the other.

GREG

Why did I have to hear from a friend?

JOAN

(both self-pity and anger in her broken voice)

He wants to dump me from the picture.

GREG

Who?

JOAN

Mayer.

GREG

(quietly)

I've already talked to Mayer. He'll wait if he has to.

She is startled. She is pleased. She is triumphant. She seizes him and kisses him which he ignores and touches the ice around her foot.

GREG

(continuing; tenderly)

How bad?

JOAN

It's not broken. It's twisted, ripped, something.

GREG

(standing away from her a little)

L.B. said if some of his male stars had your balls, MGM would be a lot richer.

(CONTINUED)

12A CONTINUED: (3)

12A

JOAN

Then why do I get the bad scripts?

GREG

(very cool)

I didn't leave an important conference to come here and discuss your acting career. I'm here because I was worried about you.

Her emotional color changes like a chameleon. Now she's all tender, loving, touching, deeply moved.

JOAN

Come home with me.

GREG

I have to get back to my business.

JOAN

After?

GREG

After.

JOAN

What time?

GREG

When I get there.

JOAN

(reaching a hand out to him tenderly)

I'll be waiting for you.

He wheels her out into the street and the others come out to take her.

CUT TO:

13 EXT. MGM LOT - NIGHT

13

as Joan's limousine nears the main gate. Joan is in the back seat with her bandaged leg resting on a satin cushion in front of her on the jump seat. As the limo passes the gate, a cluster of fans (twelve to fifteen), several holding signs -- "We Love You, Joan," etc. -- are lined up along the drive, waving and calling to their idol. The limousine passes them.

CUT TO:

14 INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

14

JOAN

Jim, stop.

JIM

Miss Crawford, you're hurt. I've got to get you home.

JOAN

Please stop. Those are my fans.

JIM backs the car up a few yards. Joan rolls down her window and fans press forward, several thrusting autograph books through the window. The famous Crawford smile as she begins to sign. One fan in particular is prominent in the window.

JOAN

(continuing; as she signs this fan's book)

Carol Ann, dear, not again. What do you do with these? Trade them?

A hush falls over the other fans as one of them has been singled out -- her name remembered.

CAROL ANN

(bewitched)

Miss Crawford, I would never do that. I save them. Every single autograph you ever gave me.

JOAN

That's lovely.

CAROL ANN

(summoning her courage)

We've heard about the accident and how brave and wonderful you were today.

JOAN

Thank you, Carol Ann.

CAROL ANN

If only we could help you. If I could...

JOAN

(softly)

That is so dear of you. So dear.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

She takes a long thoughtful moment, studying the woman.

JOAN

(continuing)

Jim. Please help Carol Ann into the front seat. I'd like her to come with me.

ON Carol Ann's astonished face, we...

CUT TO:

15 EXT. BRENTWOOD, NORTH OF SUNSET - DAY

15

CAMERA STARTS TIGHT ON the back of a dilapidated bus, which bears the banner: "Hollywood Wonderland Tours. See the Homes of the Stars."

As the bus works its way north on Bristol Avenue, CAMERA MOVES UP and INTO the interior to reveal fifteen or twenty tour customers, all dressed in their touristy 1939 best. They are spellbound as they listen to bored BUS DRIVER/cum tour guide.

DRIVER

And on our left, just ahead, the palatial home of movie queen Joan Crawford -- whose new movie Ice Follies of 1939 is currently playing in your own hometowns.

The bus moves in front of Joan's large white home surrounded by an ivy-covered six-foot fence. Tourists lean out the windows to get a better look as the bus inches along --

DRIVER

(continuing)

Miss Crawford was first married to movie star Douglas Fairbanks, Jr....

The bus has stopped and the passengers are all on one side trying to get a look into the private world of the Crawford estate.

DRIVER

(continuing)

... and is just recently divorced from her second husband, actor Franchot Tone.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

DRIVER (CONT'D)

Miss Crawford has made over forty-eight films since coming to Hollywood in 1925 as a chorus girl, Lucille La Sewer...

A thin, middle-aged MAN, the true fan, corrects the Driver.

MAN

Pardon me, young man, that's Lucile Le... Sir.

DRIVER

Right, right...

He puts the bus in gear and starts to move on towards the next attraction. At the same time, and while his monologue continues, the CAMERA MOVES UP and AWAY from the bus and begins inexorably to move to the Crawford home.

16 EXT. CRAWFORD HOME

16

CAMERA CIRCLES the house to reveal the elaborate back yard, complete with a stunning swimming pool. On one side of the pool is a separate house for a projection room. On the other a matching building for dressing rooms/showers, etc.

Not hesitating an instant, the CAMERA MOVES past all this and OVER a lovely back terrace and INTO the house itself. Meanwhile, growing fainter, we continue to hear the DRIVER'S O.S. VOICE.

17 INT. LIVING ROOM

17

By now our disembodied CAMERA has gone past the elaborate Christmas wreath on the front door and invaded the living room and is CLOSING ON what appears to be the backside of an industrious cleaning woman who is hard at work scrubbing the black and white marble floor of the entrance hall. Now the last of the Bus Driver's SPIEL:

DRIVER (O.S.)

Joan Crawford is one of Hollywood's most popular stars.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

17

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

She is truly a queen of the silver screen for many years now. Her life is the epitome of glamour and elegance...

By this time, of course, CAMERA and we have discovered that the sweat-soaked cleaning lady is none other than the mistress of the house. She is in a pair of cotton work pants and she's working the soapy brush in a series of tight hard swirls. We get the feeling that the floor is already immaculate, but Miss Joan Crawford wants it cleaner!

After a beat, HELGA, the maid, appears, walking gingerly over the gleaming floor. After a moment, Joan looks up.

JOAN

Yes?

HELGA

Finished in the dining room, Miss Crawford.

JOAN

(calls out as she gets to her feet)

Carol Ann!

CAMERA MOVES with Joan and Helga past the sparkling foyer into the dining room. Carol Ann joins them. This is an immense formal room. Quite Greek revival in feeling -- it was built to the specifications of the young Eastern aristocrat, Franchot Tone -- and it looks it.

JOAN

(continuing; inspecting)

Everything seems in order.

Joan crosses the dining room and goes to an enormous potted tree in the corner.

JOAN

(continuing)

Carol Ann, help me with this!

The two women struggle to move the tree which reveals a circle of unpolished wood where the tree tub stood. Joan turns to Helga who has been watching apprehensively.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (2)

17

JOAN

(continuing)

Jesus Christ. God damn it! When you polish the floor, you have to move the tree! If you don't appreciate this job, there are plenty of other maids who would love to work for Joan Crawford.

(turning to Carol Ann, sweetly)

You see, dear, you have to stay on top of them every single minute.

HELGA

I'm sorry I missed it, Miss Crawford. It won't happen again.

DOORBELL RINGS.

JOAN

(sighs)

I'll get it. Carol Ann, make sure she does it properly.

Joan crosses back through the hall to the front door. She pauses in front of a mirror and takes a moment to check her appearance and tuck in a wisp of hair. She opens the door to reveal Greg Savitt. He is impeccably dressed.

JOAN

(continuing; her brightest smile)

Greg, darling! You're early!

GREG

Just an hour-and-a-half.

JOAN

Come in.

Greg does so.

JOAN

(continuing)

Take off your shoes. I just cleaned that floor...

Still relaxed, Greg uses his foot to slip off his loafers, lining them up neatly.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED: (3)

17

GREG  
 (a half smile)  
 Should I take off my socks?

JOAN  
 I can handle the socks.

Heavy beat.

CAROL ANN  
 Come, Helga, we'll finish up in  
 the kitchen.

18 REVERSE SHOT - HIGH ANGLE

18

FAVORING Greg, Joan standing up, slowly dropping off one of her shoes, and then the other. There is a tantalizingly smile as she backs away from him, turns and starts toward the stairs. CAMERA MOVES with Greg as he follows. At the stairs, she unbuttons her blouse and discards it. He drops his jacket on the clean marble floor. Joan starts up the stairs, nice and easy. She is moving with exquisite command and sensual grace. Greg's face is expressionless. She stops again, and slips out of her slacks, dropping them over the bannister INTO THE CAMERA. He takes off his tie and his shirt.

JOAN  
 Catch up.

He takes off his trousers and drops them.

Now she continues on up the stairs, followed by Greg, but at the top she turns and removes her bra with great grace and make-believe shyness, of hide and seek. Joan LEAVES THE FRAME as she goes down the hall. ANGLE NARROWS as Greg reaches the top of the stairs, still watching her. He removes his socks and leaves them there.

GREG  
 (with a sudden  
 charming grin)  
 I'm running out of clothes.

18A FULL SHOT OF BEDROOM

18A

where Joan stands, her BACK TO US, slipping out of her pants, so she is nude.

(CONTINUED)

18A CONTINUED:

18A

She looks back over her shoulder.

JOAN

You're not going to need them.

CUT TO:

19 INT. BEDROOM

19

etc., PANNING SHOT that will take them through the bedroom which holds many wrapped Christmas presents for the orphanage scene to come, into the dressing room and finally the shower.

CUT TO:

20 EXT. CATHOLIC ORPHANAGE - DAY

20

The backyard of a classy orphans home. Joan is sitting on throne-like chair holding a two-year-old child on her lap as flashbulbs pop. Joan is radiant as Christmas gifts are handed to her which she gives to the various children. CAMERA CIRCLES to reveal lots of tiny tots and nuns lined up with a rosy MOTHER SUPERIOR smiling beatifically at the proceedings. Greg, like a prime minister, is slightly to the rear of her majesty.

In the foreground, hard at work, a group of photographers and a Movietone Newsreel cameraman along with a couple of studio publicists and flunkies.

In single file, by size and age, is the lineup of orphans; each one breathlessly awaiting their turn for the imperial blessing. As Joan helps a three-year-old boy open his gift, the Mother Superior moves forward.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

(smiling for the  
camera -- she's no  
slouch either)

Miss Crawford, words cannot  
express our gratitude for the  
happiness you bring our children.

Joan's eyes are moist. Graciously, she helps one child off her lap and reaches for the next.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

JOAN

It's one of the things I look --  
forward to every Christmas.

As the new orphan settles into place and flashbulbs pop, Joan is looking with intensity and feeling at the child's guileless face.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. ESCONDIDO BEACH - DAY

21

A lovely deserted strand of beach, a spindly pier in the middle distance and in the b.g. the cliffs and rocks of Point Dume. Greg and Joan walk along the beach. They're enjoying the solitude and each other's company. Both are barefoot and dressed informally. After a few moments deep in thought, Joan speaks quietly.

JOAN

You know what's missing in my  
life?

GREG

A hit movie.

JOAN

You bastard.

GREG

Come on, you've got everything  
you want.

JOAN

No I don't. I want a baby.

Greg stops. Lifts an eyebrow and looks at her quizzically.

GREG

A baby?

JOAN

You know I've always wanted a  
kid...

GREG

You're too vain to be pregnant.

(CONTINUED)

JOAN  
Vain? Do you know how many  
miscarriages I had with Franchot?  
Seven. Goddamnit, I tried. I'm  
going to adopt one.

GREG  
Out of the question.

JOAN  
What's that mean?

GREG  
It means no agency would give  
you a baby.

JOAN  
How do you know?

GREG  
I'm a lawyer.

JOAN  
Bend the law.

GREG  
Bend the law! You're an actress,  
you've been divorced twice.  
Adoption agencies are brutal.  
(softening a bit)  
Besides... a baby needs a father.

JOAN  
(a flash of temper)  
A father? A father? I grew up  
without a father. I grew up with  
a mother who changed husbands like  
you change bedsheets.

GREG  
Maybe you could. One thing's  
certain: you'd sure get a lot  
of publicity.

JOAN  
You miserable bastard. All anyone  
in Hollywood can ever think of is  
publicity, box office, movies,  
scripts. How could you hope to  
understand a woman?

CUT TO:

22 INT. ADOPTION AGENCY - LOS ANGELES - DAY

22

CLOSE ON A BABY sleeping in crib. Joan's hands gently reach for the baby. Joan lifts baby out of crib, holding the child in her arms. Next to Joan stands a young NURSE who watches Joan with awe. Joan holds the baby, smiling and whispering.

JOAN

You dear, dear thing... look at her hands... so perfect... and tiny... Let me see, now... what would be a good name for you? I'd like to call you Joan, Jr., but they don't do that with girls do they?

BETH SIMPSON enters. She is a social worker with the adoption agency. She is about 45, conscientious and smart. She crosses immediately to the Nurse.

BETH

What is she doing in here?

NURSE

She said you...

BETH

Miss Crawford. Your appointment was in my office.

(to the Nurse)

... and you should know better.

JOAN

(all her charm)

Mrs. Simpson, it's not her fault. It's my fault.

CUT TO:

23 INT. SIMPSON OFFICE - DAY

23

A wooden desk, three chairs and a file cabinet. The desk is neat, but there are piles of folders at one end. Joan enters first, Beth follows. Beth smiles pleasantly, retaining a businesslike manner as she sits in her chair. Joan takes the chair nearest her. Beth takes the top folder off stack, opening it and setting it on the desk in front of her.

(CONTINUED)

BETH

(studying contents  
of folder)I have some difficult news for you,  
Miss Crawford.

(sympathetically)

The agency has denied your application  
for adoption.

JOAN

(shocked)

How could they?

BETH

I understand your disappointment.

JOAN

(interrupting)

Why would they?

BETH

(picking up folder)

Well, you live alone, and there  
are no other family members in the  
home. You have two previous  
divorces. You're a busy active  
woman. You travel a lot and...  
the candidate is recommended as  
unsuitable.Joan is up, grabbing the folder, staring at it, not  
reading.

BETH

(continuing, reaches  
for the folder)

Miss Crawford!

JOAN

How dare you?

She throws folder at Beth.

BETH

Please...

JOAN

(leaning over the desk  
and exploding)Who the hell do you think you're  
talking to?! You can't judge me!

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

BETH

(tough right back)

We have a moral and legal  
responsibility in this job!

JOAN

To whom!?! Obviously you don't  
understand. What you're really  
doing is denying one of your orphans  
the opportunity to have a wonderful  
and advantaged life. How sad that  
is! Good afternoon.

Joan exits.

CUT TO:

24 INT. LIVING ROOM/BAR AREA OF THE BRENTWOOD HOUSE - DAY 24

Joan, dressed to the teeth, smoking furiously. Greg,  
amused, sits casually in a chair watching her. Joan  
continuously stops at various mirrors and checks her  
appearance.

JOAN

Do I look alright? Am I dressed  
alright?

GREG

Oh, for Christ sakes.

JOAN

I want to be perfect.

GREG

The kid is two months old. It's  
not going to know.

JOAN

I know. Why aren't they here?

Greg is fixing a drink. She smashes her cigarette out.

JOAN

(continuing)

Please don't drink. I don't want  
whiskey on your breath.

GREG

(suddenly angry)

Goddamn it, Joan. I got you the  
baby. It's yours. You have it.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

JOAN  
 (as suddenly tender)  
 I know... I know...

DOORBELL RINGS.

JOAN  
 (continuing)  
 They're here.

As Greg and Joan move through the living room, CAROL ANN opens the front door to reveal a DOCTOR and NURSE. The Nurse is carrying the infant, CHRISTINA. Greg and Doctor stand back. Joan is frozen in her steps. As always, a master performer, she plays the moment to the hilt.

JOAN  
 (continuing; a long,  
 slow intake of breath)  
 She's beautiful. She's so beautiful...

Reverentially, she slowly approaches the infant. Gently, delicately takes her from the Nurse's arms as though the tiny bundle was in fact the holy grail.

JOAN  
 (continuing; clasping  
 the infant to her  
 breast)  
 Oh, Greg, how beautiful she is.  
 How beautiful...  
 (and she begins  
 to weep)  
 My child, my own daughter.

Greg, moved and embarrassed, goes to Joan and gently touches her.

25 INT. NURSERY - TINA - TWO MONTHS OLD - DAY

25

It is wildly over-decorated, precisely what you would expect. Metro's art department really did their job on this one.

Greg enters room, stops in the doorway admiring the new mother holding her child and overhears:

JOAN  
 (crooning to the infant  
 in her arms)  
 My beautiful little baby.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

JOAN (CONT'D)

I'm going to give you all the things  
I never had. I'm going to make a  
perfect life for me and my little  
darling.

Aware of Greg's presence in the doorway, she turns to  
him.

Greg moves to Joan and speaks softly to Christina.

GREG

You're a lucky little girl. And  
very expensive. You cost me a  
lot of favors.

Joan is hugging the baby tight, almost too tight. She  
steps away. She slowly starts to turn. When she  
speaks at last it is very soft and we have to strain  
to hear her.

JOAN

(creating her own  
new world)

I'm going to call her Christina...  
Christina Crawford. My darling  
daughter... My own Christina  
Crawford...

26 OMITTED  
thru  
30

26  
thru  
30

31 EXT. BACK YARD - BRENTWOOD HOUSE - TINA - SEVEN YEARS OLD - CLOSE SHOT - DAY 31

A spinning mini-carousel, loaded with laughing children.  
As the faces whirl past, there are Joan and her daughter,  
Tina, dressed in identical gingham dresses and pinafores.  
Each time Joan and Tina pass, the cameras click, as  
the ANGLE WIDENS to disclose:

Christina's seventh birthday party extravaganza under-  
way. There is a pony ride, the HANDLER dressed in a  
hobo costume as he leads CHILDREN around on two Shetland  
ponies. A CLOWN is surrounded by half a dozen children  
as he juggles and balances things on his big red nose.  
THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS take pictures.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

31

Among the guests are a dozen or so perfectly turned out Hollywood youngsters, along with assorted MOTHERS. We also see, prominent in their awkward discomfort, several ENLISTED MEN in the Armed Services. They've clearly been invited as window dressing and are thoroughly out of place. Several should be decorated with combat medals... others are fresh from boot camp.

MED. SHOT, CAMERA ON CAROUSEL, whirling around, as Joan embraces her laughing daughter.

JOAN

Are you haveing a happy birthday,  
Tina darling...

TINA

This is the best party I ever had.  
I love you, Mommie!

LONG SHOT LOW ANGLE SHOOTING TO CAROUSEL, as the photographers snap away, and Joan steps lightly off to join the watchers. Among them Carol Ann, holding little CHRISTOPHER and a group of worshipful G.I.s Joan takes Christopher, her second adopted child who is an angelic looking one-year-old. She is smiling happily as she poses for the photographers while chatting with the enlisted men.

JOAN

This is Christopher, my second  
child. I would adopt every unwanted  
child in the world. No one should  
be unwanted. Heaven knows, life  
is difficult enough when you are  
wanted.

The carousel halts. Laughing, happy, euphoric, Christina alights and runs to join a group of her friends by the side of the pool.

CUT TO:

32 LONG SHOT - FAVORING JOAN

32

A look of concern crosses her face as Christina draws close to the edge of the pool. Joan hands the baby, Christopher, to Carol Ann.

JOAN

Time for Christopher's nap. Ask  
Nanny to tuck him in properly.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

Not missing a beat and with a radiant smile for the photographers who are still snapping away, she calls to Christina.

JOAN

(continuing)

Christina! Christina, darling,  
not too near the edge!

Christina smiles and begins to run towards her mother, as photographers snap away. Christina flings herself into Joan's waiting arms...

Big hug to Joan, photographers scramble to get into position and capture the moment. Joan repositions Christina in the hug so their faces are cheated toward the camera -- both mother and daughter locked in frozen smiles.

A second photographer comes towards them. Christina follows him with her eyes but holds the mother/daughter pose, maintaining her wide smile. They continue to freeze until he gets his shot.

JIMMY

(MGM photographer)

Could we get some of you and  
Christina in the rose garden, Miss  
Crawford?

Joan stands up, is about to say yes, but Christina interrupts.

CHRISTINA

(she looks down at  
her pinafore)

I've got a spot!

JOAN

(glances at the  
child's dress)

That won't show, Christina.

CHRISTINA

I'll just run upstairs and have  
Nanny take care of it.

JOAN

No, you'll stay down here because  
Jimmy's ready.

(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED: (2)

32

JIMMY

Actually, Miss Crawford -- it  
might read...

Christina looks angelically up at her mother, savoring  
her victory.

JOAN

(not batting an  
eyelash)

Perhaps you're right, Jimmy.

(a smile to  
Christina)

Run along. Have Nanny see to it.  
We'll be in the rose garden.

CUT TO:

33 OMITTED

33

34 EXT. ROSE GARDEN - DAY

34

The birthday celebration continues in the background  
while Joan and Christina are frozen in position in the  
rose garden. Christina is holding a straw basket and  
looking up at Joan, who is reaching out to cut a rose  
with clippers. They are wearing sunbonnets that match  
their dresses. Jimmy, the photographer, snaps pictures,  
talking as he shoots.

JIMMY

Good, that's great. Reach for a  
high flower, Christina -- and look  
at Mommie.

The photographer gets down in a crouching position and  
focuses on Christina, who turns towards him with a  
winning smile. He clicks off several shots.

JIMMY

(continuing; to Joan)

That's great. She's fabulous, a  
real natural.

ANGLE ON JOAN

who is holding the straw basket, realizes she is no  
longer the center of attention. Joan breaks her pose.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

The enthusiastic photographer is now snapping solo pictures of Christina who is hamming it up like a little pro.

JOAN

(smiling)

That's enough, Christina. Run along and play with your little friends, darling.

(as Christina runs off, Joan turns to Jimmy)

After all she's only a child, Jimmy. Let her enjoy her birthday.

JIMMY

The studio said they'd like some good stuff when she blows out the candles.

JOAN

(almost to herself,  
as she watches  
Christina run off)

Yes. Of course.

CUT TO:

35 INT. CHRISTINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

35

The room has been redone; now it's every young girl's dream, dominated by a pink four-poster bed. Christopher's crib is against the wall. Christina is sitting on her bed with unwrapped presents surrounding her. Christina has a particularly large doll which she holds on her lap.

CHRISTINA

She's so beautiful! What should I name her?

Joan is lifting Christopher out of his crib.

JOAN

(turning to Christina while holding Christopher)

You like her best?

CHRISTINA

Oh, yes.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

JOAN

Then that's the present you can keep.  
The rest we'll take to the poor  
children who don't have anything.  
And tomorrow we'll do our thank you  
notes.

Christina's face falls. She glances longingly at her  
other gifts.

JOAN

(continuing)

You may pick one for Christopher,  
though.

Greg appears in doorway holding his present for  
Christina. Christina quickly unwraps the small box.  
It is a beautiful gold charm bracelet.

GREG

Happy birthday, darling.

CHRISTINA

Oh, Uncle Greg. Just what I wanted!  
I love it.

(a reluctant smile)

But you see I'm keeping only one  
present. All the rest I'm going  
to give to the poor orphans who  
don't have anything.

Christina looks to Joan for approval. Joan crosses,  
sits with Christina on the bed with Christopher in her  
arms. They are surrounded by presents and wrapping  
paper.

GREG

I've already read that in the  
papers. And it's wonderful.

(he gently takes  
back the bracelet)

So I'll keep it for you until you  
don't have to choose.

He plays with it, and lets Joan have one of his ironic  
smiles.

GREG

(continuing)

I thought a long time about this  
before I picked it for you.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED: (2)

35

With infinite sweetness Joan puts an arm around her daughter. Joan is touched, or at least does the scene.

JOAN

This time we'll just make an exception. You can keep that bracelet and the doll.

CHRISTINA

Oh! Mommie, dearest!

Greg with complete ease, puts the bracelet on Christina's wrist, kisses her and Joan.

JOAN

Now. Remember what I told you about adopted children?

CHRISTINA

Adopted-children-are-luckiest-  
'cause-they-were-chosen.

JOAN

Right, darling. Shall we sing our song for Christopher?

And Joan begins to sing an old lullaby. Christina joins in when she remembers the words.

JOAN/CHRISTINA

'When at night I go to sleep,  
Fourteen angels guard my sleep...'

Greg Savitttt watches as they go on with the old song.

CUT TO:

35A EXT. BRENTWOOD HOUSE POOL AREA - FULL SHOT - DAY

35A

The remains of lunch at a table set up near the pool. Greg and Joan are at the table, both watching Tina who is at the pool, getting ready to dive. On the grass nearby, Carol Ann plays with little Chris who is harnessed and controlled by a long rein. Joan is wearing a short white terry cloth robe, a swim suit, her fabulous legs and ankle strap sandals. Greg is in street clothes, his jacket nearby, his collar open and tie loose. The air is relaxed except for Tina.

35B REVERSE ANGLE - FAVORING TINA

35B

Christina is perched on the edge of the pool, her arms out behind her, bent over in preparation to dive. She looks tired and water-logged. She's waiting for her mother's orders.

JOAN

(calling out)

You keep arching your back! You mustn't do that! Okay, one, two, three, dive!

CHRISTINA

(whining)

But I'm tired, Mommie.

JOAN

Quitter!

Christina returns to take her diving position at the edge.

JOAN

(continuing)

Good. Now. One, two, three, dive!

And Tina does.

JOAN

(continuing)

Better.

GREG

She's only a kid.

Joan gives a derisive snort.

JOAN

So was I. Only a kid -- and I learned early -- you grow up too goddamned fast. You gotta know how to compete and win. I don't want her growing up a spoiled Hollywood brat -- just because she's Crawford's daughter!

She leans back, smiles at Greg, for the moment content. She takes a deep breath.

JOAN

(continuing;  
looking around)

Lovely, isn't it?

(CONTINUED)

35B CONTINUED:

35B

GREG

Oh, yes... It's been a great Sunday,  
at home, with a star.

Joan looks around at the restful scene, the sun bright,  
little Chris laughing, Tina climbing out of the pool.

JOAN

I hardly ever have nice days like  
this.

GREG

(looks at watch)  
I've got an appointment.

JOAN

They call. You run.

He was about to get up, to lean over and kiss her, but  
now he just sits down again, easily, leans quietly over  
the table and looks steadily at her.

GREG

Who calls and I run?

She is suddenly full of conciliation, the words which she  
may have felt, simply escaped. She leans over and touches  
his hands. He doesn't resist, he simply ignores her  
gesture.

JOAN

You're here, you're not here.  
You're in my life, you're not in  
my life. It drives me crazy. I  
don't want you to go.

GREG

Then act that way. Who calls and  
I run?

JOAN

Nobody.

GREG

Then why do you say that?

JOAN

Because I'm damned mad with you.

GREG

Why?

(CONTINUED)

35B CONTINUED: (2)

35B

JOAN

Because you haven't delivered...  
The one good script I've seen this  
year. You could help me.

GREG

Joan, that's Mayer's business. I  
never tell a man I respect how to  
run his business.

JOAN

(passionately)

But I want it. I need a big budget  
hit. My fans need a big budget hit  
from me and that picture's going to  
be a hit.

GREG

How do you know?

JOAN

My God, I'm an actress. Look at me.  
I need a big change now and all I  
have is a plastic face, great legs and  
L.B. Mayer written all over my ass.  
You've got to help, Greg.

GREG

I'm not your agent. I'm your lover.  
So don't ask me as a favor to be  
your agent. You want that script,  
get it. You're an alley cat. Fight.

JOAN

I have fought.

GREG

Fight harder.

JOAN

They think I'm slipping.

GREG

Are you?

JOAN

No.

GREG

So.

JOAN

Yes.

(CONTINUED)

35B CONTINUED: (3)

35B

GREG

Fight harder, or give up but don't  
attack someone who cares for you.

JOAN

I just want that picture.

He takes his jacket, comes over and kisses her fondly.  
She holds him back.

JOAN

(continuing)

I want you, too.

GREG

You got me.

He walks off and she watches as Christina runs to him,  
dripping wet. He laughs, kisses her cautiously, and  
the child waves as Greg leaves.

GREG

(continuing)

Have a good time, Tina.

CHRISTINA

Thanks, Uncle Greg. I love you.

JOAN

Now who wants to go swimming?

CHRISTINA

I do!

JOAN

I'll race you!

CUT TO:

35C EXT. POOL AREA - IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

35C

Joan and Christina are side by side in the water, hold-  
ing onto the pool's edge with one hand and staring fixed-  
ly across at the other end. Christina is totally con-  
centrated. Carol Ann stands at the far end of the pool.

CAROL ANN

On your marks, get set, go!

Christina pushes off furiously. Joan is smiling.

(CONTINUED)

35C CONTINUED:

35C

We assume she is letting her daughter get a head start so she can win. But when Joan pushes off, her expression is as determined as the child's. Joan is a strong swimmer and quickly reaches Christina and plows right on past her, traversing the pool's length in a dozen powerful strokes. Christina reaches the edge, pulls her head out of the water and looks crestfallen when she sees her mother is already there, wearing a winner's smile. Christina looks hurt, and slightly puzzled. Joan looks at her, apparently oblivious to the child's feelings.

JOAN

Again? I'll give you a bigger head start.

Christina nods and her expression brightens. She assumes that she will win this time, that her mother was just teasing. Carol Ann moves back to the shallow end of the pool.

CAROL ANN

On your marks, get set, go!

Christina pushes off. Joan gives her the bigger head start she promised -- but then pushes off and using every ounce of her strength, she swims full speed towards the other end. Christina is swamped by the wake of waves her mother leaves behind.

Christina gamely storms to the finish. Joan has pulled herself up and is triumphantly waiting for her daughter.

JOAN

You lost again!

Christina, gasping for breath, pulls herself up on the coping and furiously goes to her mother. Her young body is shaking with anger.

CHRISTINA

That's not fair! You're bigger than I am. It's not fair to win twice!

JOAN

Nobody ever said life was fair, Christina. I'm bigger and faster, I can always beat you!

CHRISTINA

(angry as hell)  
Well. Then I'm not going to play with you any more. Ever!

(CONTINUED)

35C CONTINUED: (2)

35C

Joan is furious.

JOAN

Don't you ever use that tone of voice with me, Miss! Who do you think you're talking to? I'll tell you what you're going to do. You're going to march yourself to your room and stay in there until I tell you to come out.

CHRISTINA

(as strong as Joan)

No! I won't!

Joan grabs Christina, spins her around and slaps her on her rear end four times as hard as she can. Christina is fighting tears.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

I won't go! I won't go! I won't go!

Joan picks her up and bodily marches her toward a cabana, opens the door and flings the child inside.

JOAN

You can stay in here until you're ready to behave and to apologize!

She slams the door.

CUT TO:

36 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAWN

36

The room is dark. It is five a.m. and there are the isolated SOUNDS of a couple of BIRDS CHIRPING outside, where the sun has yet to come up. The ALARM RINGS and Joan shuts it off and turns on the bedside lamp. She lies there for another minute. Black eyeshades. An elastic chin strap circling her neck. A band holding her hair back from her face, which is covered with greasy cream. White cotton gloves that have the same cream inside. She looks like a refugee from a medieval torture chamber.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

She takes off the eyeshade and cringes at the light. She gets up slowly, every bone of her body feeling that it is inhumanly early.

CUT TO:

37 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM/BATH - DAWN

37

In a brief reprise of the opening title sequence, Joan leans over a sink full of steaming hot water, her face lathered with sudsy cleansing cream. She splashes her face with the hot water. She dabs at her face with a towel, then pours coffee from the percolator. She breathes in the steamy aroma of the coffee with a grateful smile. She takes a sip, shuts her eyes in pleasure, sips again. Then with a sigh she opens the ice bucket on the counter and dumps ice into the big empty bowl beside it.

Sighing, Joan moves closer to the mirror. She puts her fingers to the outside corners of her eyes and stretches the skin back, in the classic gesture of a woman seeing signs of the ravages of approaching middle age. Her self-scrutiny is merciless. After several long BEATS of this, we...

CUT TO:

38 INT. DRESSING ROOM - LATER

38

Coffee mug in hand, Joan stands in front of an open closet door where there are a dozen exercise suits hanging in a row. She stands for a moment in front of them, unable to decide which color to wear. She bends over, her body still not fully awake, and picks out a pair of tennis shoes from the row beneath the suits. She grabs a red sweat suit and starts into the bedroom, her nose nuzzled inside her coffee mug.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. STREET IN BRENTWOOD - EARLY MORNING

39

The sun is barely illuminating a lushly green, tree-lined street. A LONG SHOT of the peaceful street, with sleeping houses on either side. Elaborate landscaping fronts every house. A light fog hangs low to the ground.

The nose of Joan's Cadillac convertible appears through the fog at the far end of the street. The CAMERA MOVES TOWARDS the car.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

As the car and the CAMERA COME CLOSER we recognize Crawford doing vigorous roadwork keeping pace with her car and driver.

The CAMERA ANGLE CHANGES TO A TWO SHOT of Joan and the driver, Carol Ann. They talk as she continues to run.

JOAN

(drenched with  
sweat)

This five a.m. crap sure doesn't  
get any easier.

CAROL ANN

Your fans should know the price  
you pay.

JOAN

What good is it when Mayer keeps  
sticking me in losers?

She gets angrier, runs faster, gets louder.

JOAN

(continuing)

I'm the biggest female star that  
bastard's ever had and he's  
burying me alive...

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

39A EXT. BRENTWOOD HOUSE - PANNING SHOT - DAY

39A

The Cadillac drives in and Joan trots ahead of it, through the driveway to the rear of the house, through a gate, and into the kitchen.

39B INT. BREAKFAST AREA - FULL SHOT

39B

Joan arrives sweating, exhausted. Helga hands her a towel which she wraps around her shoulders and head while she drinks a tall glass of orange juice. A glance at the kitchen clock: 7:25. Christopher is having breakfast, seated in a modified high chair.

JOAN

Where's Tina?

HELGA

She'll be down in a minute, Miss  
Crawford.

(CONTINUED)

39B CONTINUED:

39B

JOAN  
 (kissing Christopher  
 on head)  
 Eat everything, darling.

Carol Ann comes in from the outside. Joan starts to leave.

JOAN  
 (continuing; aching)  
 God. My muscles.

The TELEPHONE RINGS, but Joan leaves as Carol Ann answers.

CAROL ANN  
 Hello. Oh... Yes, sir...  
 (calling)  
 Miss Crawford.

Joan shows her towelled head back in the room.

JOAN  
 What, who, at this time?

CAROL ANN  
 It's Mr. Savitt.

Joan is quickly at the phone. There is a terrible sense of dread as she looks at Carol Ann, before she suddenly changes herself and says with joy:

JOAN  
 Greg, dear.

GREG (V.O.)  
 Hello, Joan.

JOAN  
 Something wrong?

GREG (V.O.)  
 Why?

JOAN  
 It's so early.

GREG (V.O.)  
 I've talked to you earlier.

JOAN  
 In bed. Not on the telephone.  
 What is it? You all right?

(CONTINUED)

39B CONTINUED: (2)

39B

GREG (V.O.)

Checking to see if you're on time  
in your training schedule. You  
in shape?

JOAN

For bad news, no. Is it me or  
you? Where are you.

GREG (V.O.)

We had a sudden little labor  
problem so we had a sudden little  
early meeting. By the way, Mayer  
thinks you'd be terrific in the  
picture you wanted.

A jet charge of exhilaration erupts in Joan. It trans-  
forms her into youth again, into strength, vitality,  
exclamation.

JOAN

Greg!

GREG (V.O.)

Tried to talk him out of it, but  
I couldn't. 'Bye.

And the PHONE GOES DEAD.

JOAN

Greg! Greg!

She turns and grabs Carol Ann, and wheels her around.

JOAN

(continuing; crying  
out wildly)

I have it. I have it.

She lets go and dances around wheeling, leaping, and  
they follow her into the foyer and to the stairs.

39C INT. STAIRWELL - LOW ANGLE PANNING SHOT

39C

The women watch Joan taking the stairs two at a time.  
At the top, she executes two wild tap kicks in air  
and is gone down the hallway.

39D INT. HALLWAY - MOVING SHOT

39D

Joan opens Christina's door.

(CONTINUED)

39D CONTINUED:

39D

JOAN  
Tina, Tina... Darling. Great  
news.

But the room is empty.

CUT TO:

40 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY (7:30 A.M.)

40

Christina is dressed for school. She is seated at Joan's elaborate vanity table, brushing her hair, doing a devastatingly accurate parody of her mother, posing and smiling.

CHRISTINA  
'Oh, yes... it was thrilling...  
I'm so very grateful to all of  
you who made me a star...'

She holds her hairbrush, admiring it like an award. She smiles adoringly at her public then looks at herself in the mirror.

CLOSE SHOT - JOAN IN HALLWAY

absorbing this scene which like a violent acid, dissolves her triumph into defeat and frustrated fury. She moves OUT OF FRAME.

FULL SHOT - CHRISTINA AT MIRROR

Suddenly Joan appears in the mirror behind Christina. Christina, startled, whirls around to see Joan, standing directly behind her.

JOAN  
What are you doing?

CHRISTINA  
Mommie!

JOAN  
And who do you think you are?

CHRISTINA  
Nobody, Mommie... I was... just...  
playing.

JOAN  
Why do you insist on spending so  
much time in front of the mirror...  
Why?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

Terrified, Christina mumbles something.

JOAN  
(screaming)  
Answer me!

CHRISTINA  
(desperately)  
Because you do.

Out of the buried rage of every soul, a flame of death leaps free in Joan. Wildly, she opens a drawer and grabs a pair of scissors.

CHRISTINA  
(continuing; absolute terror)  
Don't.

JOAN  
You're vain and spoiled...  
(she grabs  
Christina's hair)  
You refuse to listen or obey...

Joan begins to hack at Christina's hair.

CHRISTINA  
(weeping)  
No, Mommie... please...

Joan cuts methodically. Hair falls to the floor in clumps..

CHRISTINA  
(continuing)  
I'll never do it again. I promise  
... I promise.

JOAN  
(to herself as  
she cuts away)  
Spoiled. I've let you spoil.

Joan continues to chop as we...

CUT TO:

41 INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY 41

Joan is seated across from the PRINCIPAL, MR. THOMPSON.

PRINCIPAL  
But Christina said --

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

Both turn as Christina is led into the office.

JOAN

(to Principal)

Tina has a vivid imagination.  
Why would you make up such a  
story, darling?

CHRISTINA

(small voice)

It's true.

JOAN

Tina, really.

(to Principal)

She tells herself stories and  
comes to believe them. It's my  
fault, really. I work in a world  
of make-believe. It's catching  
for children.

CHRISTINA

(even smaller voice)

It's true.

JOAN

There's a difference between  
make-believe and the truth. Now,  
tell Mr. Thompson who cut your  
hair. Tell him the truth. I  
won't be angry. I understand,  
Tina.

Christina hesitates. She looks from her mother to the  
Principal, down at the floor, then back at them. Both  
look so large to her, so powerful. She surrenders.

CHRISTINA

I did. I cut it.

Joan smiles a sweet smile.

JOAN

That's my good girl. Now, I  
think Mr. Thompson and I deserve  
an apology.

CHRISTINA

I'm sorry, Mr. Thompson. I'm  
sorry, Mommie, Dearest.

CUT TO:

41A EXT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - HIGH ANGLE LONG SHOT - NIGHT 41A

Except for a narrow corridor of people through which arriving dinner patrons can get in, the sidewalk's alive with a loose crowd of fans, waiting for stars. These fans converge on each arrival, and then come apart again when it's a Nobody. This happens once or twice, but the third time, the loose molecules converge into a solid mass of noise and excitement.

41B TIGHT MOVING SHOT 41B

Of first, Greg, and then Joan getting out of the limousine. The fans are wild. They call her name. Neither valet nor Greg can protect her and, in fact, as she slowly makes her way through, she is turning on her smile, her welcome, her love of fans for all to see. She signs her name. She shakes hands. When Greg sees this, he just drifts into the crowd, CAMERA MOVING WITH HIM. At entrance to Chasen's, the door is opened for him, and he takes a look back.

41C FULL SHOT - FAVORING JOAN 41C

her face in a sea of faces, no bodies, just faces and hands.

JOAN  
(happy in her  
universe)  
Thanks, thank you, everybody.  
You're all so dear to me. I  
love all of you.

41D CLOSE MOVING SHOT 41D

Greg makes a face and disappears within.

41E CLOSE MOVING SHOT 41E

Joan with great skill is signing, laughing, and saying goodbye, all the while heading for the entry, where three valets, two waiters are making room for her, and she in effect stays with them as she leaves them, with the whole art of someone who has done this for over twenty years.

JOAN  
Goodnight, goodnight. And thank  
you, thank you.

She's in.

42 INT. CHASEN'S - FULL SHOT

42

Joan is there, royally present and then DAVID CHASEN ENTERS THE FRAME, ANGLE NARROWING. He is ready to escort her to her special table.

CHASEN

Miss Crawford, welcome, good evening. We're ready for you. Please.

REVERSE LONG SHOT

She stands and looks around. Her table is empty except for two waiters standing by. CAMERA PANS, table after table. Some Hollywood personalities wave to her, others who don't actually know her, just smile in appreciation of the privilege of being in the same restaurant with Joan Crawford.

CLOSE MOVING SHOT

Joan takes a slow step forward, but she scans the place through her ever-present friendly smile, and then sees Greg.

TIGHT GROUP SHOT

At a middle table of the main aisle, Greg is seated with L.B. MAYER, and two other middle-aged MEN, impeccably Eastern in dress and attitude. They are all attention to each other. No one has looked up to see her.

FULL SHOT

Joan waiting as the help wait for her next move.

FULL SHOT AT MAYER TABLE

No one is thinking of Joan, that's clear.

TIGHT SHOT - FAVORING JOAN

Chasen a step behind her. She is growing angrier with each passing second. Her smile becomes more and more fixed and vacant but never falters. A signal from Chasen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

REVERSE PANNING SHOT

The CAMERA SWEEPS PAST table after table until it STOPS at Mayer's where an alerted waiter leans respectfully over to whisper something to Greg. They all turn as one and look INTO CAMERA. Greg excuses himself. CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM PAST table after table, until Joan is there.

GREG

Did your fans let go of you at last? We were about to send a rescue squad.

LONG SHOT from Mayer's table as they all stand up as Greg arrives with Joan. ANGLE NARROWS.

JOAN

This is a happy surprise, L.B.

Mayer kisses and introduces the strangers.

MAYER

Joanie, I want you to meet a few financial friends from New York. They're bankers. Miss Crawford, Mr. Lubin, Mr. Dodd.

After some polite murmurs, Dodd takes a menu and smiles at Joan apologetically.

DODD

My daughter, Ellen, would love to have your signature, Miss Crawford.

JOAN

I'm so happy to meet all of you. May I have a pen, please.

MAYER

You see, Joan, she didn't want L.B. Mayer's signature.

JOAN

She's not as smart as her father.

The banker hands her a gold pen. She signs.

JOAN

(continuing; aloud)  
For Ellen, from Joan Crawford,  
with affection. There you are.  
Greg, shall we?

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

She makes a move to leave, but Greg doesn't move, and so for a moment it all hangs there, unbalanced. But Mayer knows what he wants.

MAYER

Where you going? We're having dinner, join us. It's our privilege.

The bankers say their please Miss Crawford. She is directed inside the booth, a prisoner of the men and the table. She is seated. They all sit.

MAYER

(continuing)

It's a joy to have you with us. You know I love you. And you're one of the reasons bankers love Metro.

So they laugh, and she smiles her fake smile, while her fury rages within her.

MAYER

(continuing; to banker)

I discussed it with Schenck. I'm sure you'll be satisfied with the interest arrangements. They'll talk to you in New York.

ANGLE NARROWS, LOSING face after face until only Joan is left, her expression fixed in a smile as in the photo she signed.

CUT TO:

43 OMITTED

43

44 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM SUITE, BRENTWOOD HOUSE - LONG SHOT - LOW ANGLE - FAVORING GREG

44

He's jacketless, his tie open, slouched in the elegant chair watching Joan still in her fancy clothes raging around the room. Now and then she takes a gulp from a tall glass of vodka.

JOAN

Hauling me off to Mayer's table like some picked-up floozie...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

JOAN (CONT'D)

... or one of those little starlets  
out to give the big shots a nice  
night in town.

ANGLE NARROWS as she closes in on Greg.

JOAN

(continuing)

Is that the way you think of me?

GREG

Is that the way you think of  
yourself? A floozie who broke  
the star barrier?

JOAN

Goddamnit, Chasen's is my place.

GREG

(still amiable)

Nobody wanted my signature, so I  
walked in.

JOAN

You expect me to turn away my  
fans. They're life and death to  
me.

GREG

(sits up now)

I expect you to walk in with me,  
sit down at your table with me.  
Then Mayer would have to bring  
his bankers over, introduce them,  
get your autograph and leave.  
That's what you should have done.

JOAN

Maybe that's what I would have  
done if you weren't so busy  
kissing L.B.'s ass.

GREG

Why are you screaming?

JOAN

How could you put him over me?  
You know that man is trying to  
destroy my career.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (2)

44

GREG

He's not destroying your career, Joan. If your career's in trouble it has nothing to do with him.

JOAN

I can't get a good script from that bastard.

GREG

He's given you everything you've asked for. It's not the scripts, Joan.

JOAN

Then what the hell is it?

GREG

Joan, the last script you begged for... and got... that part should have been played by a younger girl.

JOAN

(deadly)

What are you talking about?

GREG

(as gentle as he can be -- because he's telling the truth)

You're destroying your own career. You were always the shop girl who fought her way to the top and made a great success. Well, you're not a little shop girl anymore. And that's the truth to face and deal with if you want to survive. The truth is... you're getting old.

JOAN

(screaming)

And you're nothing but a crooked lawyer, with connections you'd be afraid to name, supplying the grease that makes this shitty movie system work. That's what you are. You think you're life's a mystery. There isn't a dirty cover up in this industry that I don't know about, and your hand is in every bit of it. You stink of it.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (3)

Powerful, he jumps half across the room and has her in his hands, ready to break her.

GREG

No sane person would dare talk to me that way. No one anywhere.

(shaking her)

Are you crazy?

She is scared beyond resistance. She wilts.

GREG

(continuing;  
yelling)

Are you crazy? Are you crazy?  
Tell me!

JOAN

I'm crazy.

He is suddenly ice cold again, and lets go of her. She collapses on the floor, and half lies there while he ties his tie and puts on his jacket.

GREG

Get up. There's no camera here.

JOAN

Greg, where are you going?

GREG

Where I belong. Out of here.

She is up, ready to fight, to tear him apart, then suddenly changes, moves to her bed, lies down on it, her head against the pillows, her voice, her bearing, every movement, sensuous and welcoming.

JOAN

Why? You belong here. And I'm waiting for you.

He is at the door and her voice enfolds him there, wrapping itself around him, pulling him back, soft, easy, wanting.

JOAN

(continuing)

I am, Greg.

GREG

(takes a look)

Good night, Joan.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (4)

44

The door opens.

JOAN

(tenderly)

Darling, please, don't leave.  
Because if you do...

She is up out of the bed like a wildcat, screaming  
and raging.

JOAN

(continuing)

If you do, you'll never never  
come back in again, no matter what  
you say and what you ask and what  
you do. I mean never. Never.  
Never. And I never change my mind.  
And I never forget. Never.

He waits till the last sound dies out.

GREG

(reasonably)

I wish you well, Joan. I'll only  
speak well of you.

JOAN

(suddenly frail  
and helpless)

Greg, please. Don't leave me this  
way. Please.

GREG

If you're acting, you're wasting  
your time. If you're not, you're  
wasting mine. Good night and good  
luck. Goodbye.

He closes the door softly.

CUT TO:

45 OMITTED

45

46 INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - LONG SHOT - FAVORING CHRISTINA AND CHRISTOPHER 46

watching through their half open door, listening.  
They see Greg in the hallway and as he goes downstairs.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

REVERSE LONG SHOT FAVORING Greg who takes a look back and sees the tiny children. He shakes his head and leaves.

INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT

The forlorn faces of the children, as ANGLE WIDENS.

Inside Joan's room something CRASHES. The children scurry for safety. Christina straps Christopher in his bed and then she jumps into her own and they are still.

CUT TO:

47 OMITTED

47

48 INT. UPSTAIRS LANDING OF MAIN STAIRCASE - EARLY MORNING

48

Christina's door opens and she comes out dressed for school. Halfway down the stairs she glances over to the framed photograph of Joan and Greg which we saw last night. Christina passes it, stops and then comes back. Greg's face has been torn out of the picture. The image remains of Joan embracing a man's headless body. A flash of recognition goes across Christina's face as she continues down the stairs and towards the breakfast room.

CUT TO:

49 INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY

49

A bizarre sight. Christopher sits silently in his high chair watching as Joan and Carol Ann are busily at work on a pile of photographs. Photograph albums and other memorabilia are spread open in front of them on the breakfast table. Systemically and methodically, the two women are removing every evidence of Uncle Greg. There is a small pile of Greg's heads between them in the center of the table. Christina stops and takes in the scene, appalled by what's going on. Joan looks up and offers Christina a dazzling smile.

JOAN

(pointing to Christina's  
place at the table)

Good morning, dearest heart.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Hurry up and eat your breakfast  
-- mustn't be late for school...

CUT TO:

50 OMITTED

50

51 EXT. CRAWFORD GARDEN - MORNING (SATURDAY)

51

Christina and Christopher are playing a game of tag in the garden, attempting to suppress their noise. Christina tackles Christopher. He lets out a loud shriek. Christina clamps her hand on Christopher's mouth to stifle the noise but too late. Joan's window slams open. We see Joan framed in the upstairs window with chin straps and her eyeshades hanging around her neck.

JOAN  
(bellowing)  
Goddamn it!

CUT TO:

CHRISTINA AND CHRISTOPHER

freeze with terror.

CUT TO:

52 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM

52

Joan storms across her room, opens bedroom door, goes to the head of the stairs and shrieks.

JOAN  
Carol Ann! I've told you to keep  
the children quiet. Now for  
Christ sakes, get them out of  
the garden!

CAROL ANN  
(from the foot  
of the stairs)  
I'm sorry, Miss Crawford.

JOAN  
(mutters)  
Forget it. I'm awake now. Have  
Tina bring me my coffee.

CUT TO:

53 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

53

Christina entering room with tray and coffee. Joan is propped in her bed on a pillow. On her lap is a basin filled with ice and water which she applies to her face. Christina tentatively sets the tray down.

CHRISTINA

I'm sorry. I tried to be quiet, but we were playing and I forgot.

JOAN

You promised last night. I told you why. I told you how important it was.

CHRISTINA

I'm sorry, Mommie dearest.

JOAN

Go to your room and stay there until I come for you.

CUT TO:

54 INT. CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - DAY

54

Christina is in her room playing with her beloved dolls. In a quiet but stern voice she is admonishing them.

CHRISTINA

(shaking her  
finger)

You were very, very bad to wake Mommie up like that. Very naughty. I told you Mommie had to sleep and be rested. Mommie has to be very beautiful Monday. Monday she has to see Mr. Mayer. Monday is so important. You were selfish and thoughtless and all you ever think of is yourself and you must learn to think about other people. You are bad, bad, spoiled children.

(CONTINUED)

54 CONTINUED:

54

During this, CAMERA MOVES UP to find Joan in Christina's doorway observing the scene. A small ambiguously amused smile drifts across her face. Still unobserved by Christina, she EXITS the SCENE.

CUT TO:

55 INT. STAIRCASE - CRAWFORD HOME - LATER THAT DAY

55

Christina coming up the stairs in a bathing suit. She is happy, singing to herself as she skips across the landing and into her room. When she enters the room, she sees that every single one of her dolls is gone. Disappeared. She puts her hands up to her face. She turns and bolts out of the room, crossing the landing into Joan's room, barges in the room, trying not to cry.

CHRISTINA

My babies! Someone stole my babies!

Joan is at her dressing table rubbing cream into her elbows. Joan turns to face Christina with her most reasonable smile.

JOAN

That's good, darling. Now your babies won't wake you up when you need your rest...

CUT TO:

56 EXT./INT. THALBERG BUILDING - DAY

56

Joan, dressed in her absolute movie star best, goes up the stairs and into the building.

57 IN THE UPSTAIRS HALL

57

she slows down as she passes blown-up stills from her movies.

A MAN in a business suit comes up behind Joan and walks with her a few paces.

MAN

Joan, you look like a million!

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

57

JOAN

Thank you. Nice of you to say.

The Man turns into a doorway. Joan goes through double glass doors at the far end of the hall.

CUT TO:

58 INT. L.B. MAYER'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

58

There are two SECRETARIES at adjoining desks outside the closed door to Mayer's inner office. One Secretary is on the phone as Joan walks in. The other stands up deferentially.

CONNIE

Good morning, Miss Crawford.

JOAN

Hello, Connie. That's a lovely blouse.

CONNIE

Thank you, Miss Crawford.

Connie, flattered and flustered at the compliment, comes around her desk and opens the door to Mayer's office, knocking first.

59 INT. L.B. MAYER'S OFFICE - REVERSE LONG SHOT - LOW ANGLE - DAY

59

Mayer's giant figure blocks the CAMERA but as he approaches Joan she is revealed, entering, the door closing behind her, where she pauses, luminous, beautiful, the Star. Mayer joins her, embraces her, and arm in arm leads her to a seat in front of his desk where he deposits her like something precious, before LEAVING the FRAME. Happiness, a touch of relief, and real expectation turn Joan into the daughter and Mayer, loving father who will now bless all her hopes.

PROFILED TWO SHOT

Mayer sits, leans forward toward Joan. She is close enough so that when he stretches his hand toward her, she can receive his affectionate pat with ease.

(CONTINUED)

MAYER

Joan, I asked you to come to see me today because I'm in trouble. And you can help me.

JOAN

I'll do anything to help you.

MAYER

Good. I want you to leave Metro.

CLOSEUP - JOAN, ETC.

She doesn't pretend to think it's a joke. The shock is real and even unconsciously expected. But it's immense. Her face dissolves for a moment only to reform into a pretense of a social smile that keeps on fading.

JOAN

(in a small,  
desperate voice)

Leave Metro? Leave Metro? I've been here 17 years.

MAYER

Your pictures, one after another, are losing money. The Theatre Owners voted you box office poison. Even so, for years I paid no attention. You know I don't give up easy, Joan. We'll pay you off on the contract. You can't afford to make three or four more losers for us. Then, it'll be too late for you to try elsewhere.

CAMERA MOVES WITH him, his body blocking out Joan again, until at her side she is revealed standing up to face him, and then turn away in an explosion of protest.

JOAN

It's the scripts. Bad pictures. Bad directors.

MAYER

Bad with you. Good with others.

There are sudden tears in his eyes, and he pats his eyes with a handkerchief.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (2)

59

TIGHT TWO SHOT - FACE TO FACE

tears in her eyes.

JOAN

I keep begging you for a script with some balls. Write it for Gable and I'll play the hell out of it.

MAYER

Listen to me, Joan. Listen with your ears and not with your pride. With me feeling is more important than money. You're a great star. You're Hollywood Royalty. You're still beautiful. Look at yourself now. Who can ask more of a woman, a dancer, an actress, a symbol for all the world. But styles change. You'll leave. We have creative differences. We don't want to argue and fight with each other because we love each other. Every studio will think they're smarter than me. They'll try to finesse L.B. Mayer. You'll get one, two, three, four, five pictures. You may get a hit. They'll laugh at me.

JOAN

(in tears)

And will you be sorry then?

MAYER

I'm sorry now. But here there's no confidence anymore. There's no hope. No one can work without hope. It's time for change. Let's be friends, Joan. I wish you prove us wrong. I wish you success. New voices, new faces, a breath of fresh air. Who knows?

But she knows and she breaks down, sobbing, and he holds her tenderly, comforting her.

MAYER

(continuing)

Joan, Joan, don't do this to yourself.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (3)

59

She stops. ANGLE WIDENS as she moves from him. That power in her recovers, begins to fight. -A transformation. She faces him, noble, an aristocrat facing her executioner.

JOAN

I have no one to defend me when  
you don't believe in me anymore.

She faces the inevitable, gracious, above the pettiness of small things like life, career, money.

JOAN

(continuing)

I'll leave then. I'll have my  
maid and studio people clear out  
my cottage. I have a lot of  
years to collect.

Mayer closes in, takes her hand, enormously sympathetic and helpful.

MAYER

It's done, Joan. Your things are  
packed. They're loading your car.

This shakes her with a sudden dismay, a sudden shame.

JOAN

You mean everybody already knows?

MAYER

That we parted friends because we  
didn't agree.

Like a great athlete she finds the strength for her final effort.

JOAN

You always treated me with  
understanding and love.

A little cheek kiss. Then she starts out of the room, and he follows to open the door for her.

JOAN

(continuing)

Will you walk me to my car?

Mayer hesitates. He balances the significance of this.

(CONTINUED)

59 CONTINUED: (4)

59

JOAN

(continuing)

I thought you said I was still  
royalty.

Face to face, they estimate each other. Then he  
kisses her and closes himself away in his office.  
There is the door.

60 EXT. MGM LOT - DAY (SHORTLY AFTER)

60

Joan stands by the door of her convertible, outside  
her dressing room door. The car is filled with boxes,  
paintings, the paraphernalia of years. Mary, Joan's  
wardrobe lady, slams the trunk shut. Her eyes are red  
from crying. She walks hesitantly towards Joan,  
fighting more tears. They give each other a big hug.  
Tears trickle down both their faces. They stand back  
and muster a brave smile. No words. Joan gets in  
behind the wheel, starts the car, and begins to drive  
slowly down the street. A MAN in the door of the prop  
department waves at Joan with a big smile.

PROP MAN

Good luck, Joan!

Joan waves at him, keeps driving slowly. She passes  
a MAN ON A BICYCLE.

MAN ON A BICYCLE

See ya, Joanie.

JOAN

Thanks, George.

Joan smiles. She turns the corner and stops the car  
in a private place. She closes her eyes and takes a  
deep breath. She bows her head down on the steering  
wheel. Suddenly she stops and sits up very straight  
taking another deep breath.

She throws her shoulders back like a champion. She  
twists the rearview mirror to see herself and wipes  
under the eyes. She sets her jaw and gives herself a  
big smile in the mirror. She puts the mirror back in  
its original position and starts driving again. She  
turns a corner and begins to head down the long road  
towards the studio gate. She drives slowly down the  
avenue, which has people on either side of it, waving  
to her, coming to see Crawford leaving the studio.

(CONTINUED)

60 CONTINUED:

60

They wave, blow kisses and call out AD LIBBED comments like: "We love ya, Joan," "Good luck!", "Goodbye, Joanie!" Joan smiles and waves to them regally as she makes the long, slow drive off the lot, going into exile. She approaches the gate itself. She sits up even straighter and holds her chin high.

GUARD

Good luck, Miss Crawford.

JOAN

Thank you, Frankie.

Joan drives through the gate, her teeth clenched in a tight smile. She turns the corner and pulls the car over to the curb. She takes a deep breath and exhales it in exhaustion. She lets her head rest on the steering wheel, worn out by the superb performance she has just given.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. CRAWFORD ROSE GARDEN - BACK YARD - BRENTWOOD - NIGHT 61

Pitch black except for pale shafts of moonlight. We see nothing in the darkness, but can hear an eerie SOUND OF METAL SHEARS hacking away -- methodically, with a rhythmic, disjointed beat.

CAMERA FLOATS DOWN to discover a large section of the rose garden has already been decimated.

CAMERA MOVES to find Joan's figure hacking maniacally away at the remaining rose bushes with giant hedge shears. Joan is bloody from scratches on her face and arms as she viciously whacks away at the rose bushes. Her breath comes in gasps.

CUT TO:

62 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 62

Christopher is asleep, strapped in his bed. Christina is also asleep as Carol Ann bursts through the door. She pauses for an instant, backlit in the door, and then moves to Christina's bedside.

CAROL ANN

Wake up! Wake up!  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED:

62

CAROL ANN (CONT'D)

Your mother wants you downstairs  
in the rose garden. You, too,  
Christopher.

CHRISTINA

What? What's happening?

CAROL ANN

(moving to untie  
young Christopher)

Come along. Put on your robes and  
slippers. Your mother wants you  
right away.

CUT TO:

63 EXT. ROSE GARDEN - NIGHT

63

As Christina and Christopher followed by Carol Ann  
arrive, Joan whirls to face them.

JOAN

(pointing to fallen  
rose bushes with a  
sweeping motion)

I want those branches cleared out  
of here. Now. Tina, get the  
wheelbarrow and rake. Carol Ann,  
Christopher, start gathering the  
branches up.

She immediately turns and attacks next bush.

JOAN

(continuing; to  
herself)

Goddamn... goddamn lazy gardener.

(pause for breath)

Only comes once a week...

(pause)

Doesn't give a damn...

(pause)

Lets the place go to hell...

(pause)

No loyalty... They're... all Judas'.

(pause; breath)

Lazy, unfaithful... Bastards!!!

(CONTINUED)

63 CONTINUED: 63

Joan savagely attacks another rosebush, flattening it with one powerful slice of the shears. CAMERA IS TIGHT ON Joan as she smiles and advances to the next one.

CUT TO:

64 CHRISTINA 64

who has returned with wheelbarrow, stares at her mother, paralyzed with terror. Joan glistens with perspiration and blood. She continues to demolish the bushes even more ferociously.

JOAN

(over her shoulder  
as she hacks away)

Tina! Bring me the axe!

Christina runs to the tool shed and quickly returns with a lethal looking axe. By this time Joan has cut down every single rosebush. Left standing in solitary dominance of the garden is a lovely tall full orange tree, laden with ripe and near-ripe fruit. It is a beautiful, healthy, mature specimen, nearly 12 feet high. Not hesitating an instant, Joan grabs the axe and furiously begins to attack the tree's trunk.

CUT TO:

CHRISTINA, CHRISTOPHER AND CAROL ANN

as they watch, horrified. Too frightened to object, they can only stare, as we...

CUT BACK TO:

65 JOAN 65

chopping away until the tree begins to topple. As the giant tree goes down, Joan stands triumphantly holding her axe, as she surveys the havoc she has wrought.

CUT TO:

66 INT. BRENTWOOD HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY 66

Sitting in the living room is a delegation of ten LADIES. Their ages range from late twenties to mid-sixties. They are the executive council of presidents of midwestern Crawford fan clubs. Joan is their idol. There are also two PHOTOGRAPHERS. All wait with a hushed expectancy for her arrival.

CUT TO:

67 INT. TOP OF STAIRS - DAY

67

Joan, dressed to the nines in a stunning new day suit, makes one of her entrances down the staircase, met at the bottom by Carol Ann. The ladies have risen to their feet reverentially.

JOAN

How lovely of you to take the time to come see me. It's ladies like you who make it possible. I depend on all of you.

MRS. MORGAN

(moving toward a floral tribute in the center of the room)

On behalf of the millions of fans in the Midwest, please accept this token of our esteem.

The heart-shaped garland of flowers reads "ALWAYS IN THE HEARTS OF MID-AMERICA. WITH LOVE, JOAN CRAWFORD FAN CLUBS."

MRS. MORGAN

(continuing)

Two years are too long, Miss Crawford. We're waiting for your next picture.

JOAN

I'm waiting too. Until I find one to make us all happy.

PANNING SHOT

A round of applause and faces ending on Joan.

CUT TO:

THE TEN LADIES

posed by the floral tribute as the president in the foreground presents the heart to Joan. The Photographers are popping their flashes as usual.

Joan is choked with emotion. Tears brim.

JOAN

I don't know how I can thank you, all of you, for your loyalty and your love.

A beat as Joan looks admiringly at the flowers, then up at the worshipful faces of her visitors. Joan reaches out, overflowing with emotion, and hugs Mrs. Morgan. Flashbulbs still pop. Joan begins to speak but her voice cracks.

(CONTINUED)

67 CONTINUED:

67

JOAN  
(continuing)

I...

Joan touches the flowers and looks down at them, overcome with emotion.

JOAN  
(continuing)

It's you... my fans... that... keep me going...

CUT TO:

68 EXT. BACK YARD - BRENTWOOD HOUSE - DAY

68

SHOOTING ACROSS the freshly-raked and cleaned earth -- which used to be the rose garden. There are two long tables set up between the house and pool. At each table sit five women. Each table contains a stack of autographed 8 x 10 glossies of Joan. Woman #1 puts cardboard around the photo, passes it to woman #2 who stuffs it into an envelope, woman #3 addresses the envelope, woman #4 seals the envelope, woman #5 licks the stamp and hands it to Christina who smashes her little fist down to affix the stamp. The second table is a match, right down to little Christopher repeating Christina's actions. Standing next to Christopher, Carol Ann is supervising the operation.

CAROL ANN

Isn't this fun, Christopher? You're doing such a wonderful job!

Joan enters from the house. She stands proudly and surveys the efforts of her troops. Because of her presence, the tempo of the assembly line increases.

JOAN

Ginny, are we running short? Shall I sign some more photographs?

GINNY

Oh no, Miss Crawford, we have plenty.

JOAN

Good. You're all so gracious to help.

COOK

Miss Crawford -- lunch is ready.

CUT TO:

69 OMITTED

69

70 INT. BREAKFAST ROOM! - DAY (A FEW MINUTES LATER)

70

Christina, Joan, Christopher and Carol Ann are in the middle of lunch.

(CONTINUED)

70 CONTINUED:

70

Each has a plate of rare roast beef half eaten. Christina's plate has not been touched. Visible through the windows in the back yard are the fans still busy at work in the hot sun.

JOAN

Christina, you haven't touched your lunch.

CHRISTINA

It's raw.

JOAN

It's rare, not raw.

CHRISTINA

But it's got all this red juice when I push on it.

JOAN

Then don't push on it. Rare meat is good for you, darling. The doctor said so.

Christina cuts a small piece of meat, which is terribly rare. She starts to put a piece into her mouth, can't do it, and lowers the fork.

JOAN

(continuing)

Darling, meat loses its vitamins if it's overcooked.

CHRISTINA

I had my vitamins this morning. Pills.

Joan speaks to Carol Ann with a strained smile.

JOAN

She negotiates everything like a goddamn Hollywood agent.

(to Christina)

Christina, stop acting like a spoiled brat.

There is a deadly silence as mother and daughter stare at one another in a test of wills. Christina won't give in. Finally, Joan breaks the silence.

JOAN

(continuing)

You're not getting up from this table until you've eaten that meat.

CUT TO:

71 INT. JOAN'S BREAKFAST ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON (SEVERAL HOURS LATER) 71

The late afternoon light slants across Christina, who is sitting alone at the table. Her untouched plate of meat is in front of her.

This is one stubborn little girl.

Joan comes into the breakfast area and stands in front of Christina. Joan studies her for a moment.

JOAN

You may get up from the table now.

Christina slowly gets up and starts to leave.

JOAN

(continuing)

Just a moment, young lady. Put your plate in the refrigerator.

Christina picks up her plate and goes into the kitchen. She walks to the refrigerator and starts to put the plate in. Joan is right behind her.

JOAN

(continuing)

I'm having a dinner party tonight, Christina, and I don't want to be disturbed. You'll have dinner in your room.

(points to the plate)

You will finish everything on that plate.

CUT TO:

72 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 72

Remnants of dinner party. Joan finishes off a stiff vodka, refills and turns out lamp, starts up the stairs. Pauses. She continues up and opens the door of the children's room.

CUT TO:

73 INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT 73

Joan walks over to Christopher, adjusts his sleep safe, tenderly brushes a wisp of hair back from his forehead.

(CONTINUED)

73 CONTINUED:

73

She crosses to Christina, sees the untouched plate of roast beef. She looks from roast beef to the sleeping Christina, shakes her head as if to say, "what am I doing to do with this child," reaches toward Christina and gently tucks the blanket closer to her chin. Then she sighs and picks up the offending plate of uneaten beef and exits the room. Apparently she's given in.

CUT TO:

74 INT. CRAWFORD BREAKFAST ROOM - CLOSEUP - DAY

74

on the same plate. The beef is now covered with congealed fat. It looks ghastly. It is still untouched. Joan, Christopher, Carol Ann and Christina are at the table. Everyone is enjoying a breakfast of scrambled eggs, bacon, orange juice and milk except Christina. In front of her is the same plate of meat.

Christina's willful, determined expression remains as it was at lunch yesterday. Christina and Joan stare at each other, their eyes locked in a further escalation in the contest of wills. Finally Joan speaks.

JOAN

You may drink your glass of milk  
and then you are excused from the  
table. Hurry or you'll be late  
for school.

Christina gulps down the milk, stands up angrily and starts to leave.

JOAN

(continuing)

Christina! Put that plate back  
in the refrigerator!

Christina takes her plate and goes through the swinging doors into the kitchen. Joan stands staring at the swinging doors. This child is a handful. Joan lets out a sigh of frustration and exhaustion.

Joan turns to Carol Ann.

JOAN

(continuing)

Why must everything be a contest?

CUT TO:

75 EXT. BRENTWOOD STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

75

Joan is driving slowly down a residential street. She peers carefully up and down the street, looking nervously for Christina.

Joan turns a corner, driving slowly. She sees two ten-year-old girls from behind, one of them blonde. She speeds up, but slams her fist on the steering wheel as she gets closer and realizes it isn't Christina. She drives to the end of the street, turns again, having circled the block.

She turns down another street. She pulls alongside a MAN walking a dog.

JOAN

Have you seen a blonde girl,  
about ten?

MAN

Say, aren't you...?

Joan accelerates before he can finish.

76 ANOTHER ANGLE - JOAN

76

She turns another corner. Christina is up ahead, trudging along the side of the road. Joan speeds to the child, then hits the brakes. She cuts the engine and jumps out. She runs toward Christina, who turns and cringes reflexively, unsure whether to run or freeze. Joan's relieved tone of voice reassures her. Joan hugs her tightly.

JOAN

Oh, God, you scared me.

(angry)

What do you mean, running off  
like that?

(relieved)

You had me worried sick.

(angry)

I ought to blister you.

(relieved)

Jesus! What if the papers got  
hold of this?

Joan holds Christina away from her, to inspect her, to reassure herself that she's got her back. Joan smiles; Christina doesn't return the smile. She doesn't trust Joan, doesn't know what to expect. Joan smiles again, pleadingly. Christina offers a tentative smile and Joan gathers her back into her arms in an almost suffocating embrace.

Joan whispers to Christina as the child is squeezed against her, looking out over Joan's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

76

JOAN

(continuing)

When will you understand? I do things for your own good.

Christina is half smothered in her mother's arms. Her face is blank. Joan loosens her grip and holds Christina away from her again. Christina looks down at the ground and Joan gently raises her chin so their eyes meet. Joan smiles at Christina seductively. Joan senses something is still wrong.

JOAN

(continuing)

Tina?

Christina smiles self-consciously. Then she speaks cautiously.

CHRISTINA

I'm hungry.

Joan bursts out laughing, gives her a kiss.

JOAN

I'll bet you are! Okay -- let's us sneak over to Pinkie's and I'll buy you a delicious hot dog and a great big chocolate malt.

Christina nods enthusiastically. Joan gets serious.

JOAN

(continuing)

I love you more than anything, Christina. I love you very much.

A beat as Christina looks at her mother and knows just what she's supposed to reply.

CHRISTINA

I love you, too, Mommie dearest.

Joan grabs her back into that crushing hug.

CUT TO:

76A INT. CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT

76A

Christina asleep, a dim light from the hallway, peace on her face, but angry words, muffled by many walls, but sometimes clear, shake her awake.

(CONTINUED)

76A CONTINUED;

76A

JOAN'S VOICE

You've been snooping around ever  
since I got this job...

(a long pause, now  
more furiously)

You've been snooping around since  
I got this job, trying to find  
out what it is.

Christina sits up with fright at that familiar tone  
of family fury.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

Well, now you know! You know,  
don't you?

Every word isn't clear, but enough for the violence  
to come through. ANGLE WIDENS to show the nighttime  
bedroom, Christopher asleep and strapped into his bed,  
the bedroom door open to the dimly lit hallway, and  
the Brentwood silence outside. The fight goes on, but  
Carol Ann's words are just sounds, Joan's the same un-  
til they suddenly yell out.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

... And you know it now!

A muffled REPLY from Carol Ann, and then the SOUND of a  
BLOW. Suddenly Joan's voice erupts with laughter.

CLOSE SHOT ON CHRISTINA

who shrinks back in her bed, and lies there, wondering,  
terrified. Her mother's voice is low now, just the  
timbre of her speaking, speaking, suddenly it is sharp  
again, cutting through the walls.

JOAN

Veda!

The exchange with Carol Ann continues now, rising with  
growing anger and therefore growing clearer, although  
Carol Ann's answers are dim, just sounds lost in the  
walls. ANGLE WIDENS as Christina gets out of bed, and  
the CAMERA MOVES WITH HER as like a thief she makes  
her way to the hallway, ready to run back to bed at  
the slightest alarm. The fight going on in her mother's  
bedroom is clearer now, her mother getting angrier and  
angrier in her typical way while Carol Ann's words are  
just said, without much expression, as if, as is usual,  
afraid to assert herself. But the words are clearer.

76B INT. HALLWAY - MOVING SHOT

76B

Christina makes her way slowly to her mother's closed door.

JOAN'S VOICE

In my closet?

A MURMUR from Carol Ann.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

All your handkerchiefs are in your own top drawer where they always are. What were you doing snooping around in my closet?

There is a long MUMBLE of unclear words from Carol Ann and by now Christina is at her mother's door, listening in the silence of this enormous house where the only sounds are the fury about to erupt again behind the door. Suddenly a chair falls over inside Joan's room. Christina runs away but stops as she hears her mother yell again.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

You've been snooping around ever since I got this job, trying to find out what it is.

This unknown job startles and interests Christina, and at the same time, the anger which isn't directed at her makes her lean closer to the door.

JOAN'S VOICE

(continuing)

Well, now you know! You know, don't you?

CAROL ANN'S VOICE

Know what. Know what, Mother?

This even reply and strange use of mother brings Christina firmly against the door, listening avidly.

JOAN'S VOICE

You know that's my uniform.

CAROL ANN'S VOICE

Your uniform?

Suddenly the voices die down inside. They are speaking but quietly to each other. Joan is urging something.

(CONTINUED)

76B CONTINUED:

76B

JOAN'S VOICE

Just louder!

CAROL ANN'S VOICE

(with anger)

I'm really not surprised. You've never spoken of your people -- who you came from -- so perhaps it's natural -- maybe that's why Father...

And now a great blow, a slam against something, and Christina, terrified for her mother, swings the door open, crying aloud with anxiety.

CHRISTINA

Mommie!

76C FULL SHOT

76C

FAVORING Christina's head and shoulders and in Joan's bedroom, Carol Ann standing up, surprised, a movie script open in her hands while Joan is near the wall which she has just struck.

CHRISTINA

(running to mother)

What's wrong, what's wrong?

Joan catches her in her arms and breaks into laughter.

JOAN

Oh my darling. Sh... I'm just rehearsing with Carol Ann for a new picture. Oh, sweetheart, you were frightened...

She kisses and hugs her as the CAMERA CLOSES IN on them and Carol Ann pats Christina's hair.

JOAN

(continuing; leading Christina to her bed)

Now, be a good girl and sit quietly, while Mommie does her work.

She props Christina up in her bed and takes a position, while Carol Ann sits down at a make-believe piano, but reads from the script. Joan, of course, knows her lines.

(CONTINUED)

76C CONTINUED:

76C

JOAN

(continuing)

And for God's sakes, Carol Ann,  
try to get some expression in  
your lines, or read them faster.  
Don't keep me waiting or I lose  
the emotion. Let's go.

The child watches as Joan gets ready.

JOAN

(continuing)

I won't slap the wall this time.  
I'll just clap my hands. Like  
this.

(claps)

Let's start where I grab you by  
the shoulders and yank you around.  
I'm going to start real high up,  
and don't hold me up.

Joan does as she said and Carol Ann is pulled violently  
around, holding her script ready to read.

JOAN

(continuing)

You've been snooping around ever  
since I got this job, trying to  
find out what it is. Well, now  
you know! You know, don't you?

CAROL ANN

Know what? Know what, Mother?

JOAN

(softly)

You know that's my uniform.

CAROL ANN

Your uniform?

JOAN

Yes, I'm waiting on tables in a  
Glendale restaurant. And you  
know it, now.

CAROL ANN

My mother, a common waitress...

Christina's face is fascinated. This is her mother  
and it isn't. In a way it's true, yet false. The  
CAMERA MOVES IN ON HER, LOSING THE OTHERS while a vi-  
sion takes its place, the vision of Christina herself  
being an actress... something so incredibly wonderful.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

76D INT. CHRISTINA'S BEDROOM - CLOSE SHOT

76D

Christina back in bed, under covers, listening as Carol Ann speaks quietly not to wake the boy. ANGLE WIDENS.

CAROL ANN

Your mother's been practicing and practicing. You know how perfect she always wants to be, but now she must be perfect. You understand?

CHRISTINA

She wants everything to be perfect.

CAROL ANN

That's why sometimes she can be hard on people she loves, like you and Christopher.

CHRISTINA

She loves you, too, Carol Ann.

CAROL ANN

Well this time it's even more important. They're making your mother take a screen test... you know what that is?

CHRISTINA

When they aren't sure they want you?

CAROL ANN

That's right. You know how shameful that is for her? How brave she is... She's doing it for all of us. She wants this film. She knows she's right. She is this character, Mildred Pierce. She knows, she knows, and we have to help her. We will, won't we?

CHRISTINA

I will, I will...

Carol Ann kisses the child, and leaves the room, the ANGLE WIDENING with her, until it is there as earlier, the footsteps going down the hall, a door closing and suddenly the voice of Joan, once again.

JOAN

Veda!

CUT TO:

76E INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE SITTING ROOM, BAR, ETC. - CLOSE SHOT - NIGHT 76E

An elaborate radio phonograph is broadcasting the Academy Award program. ANGLE WIDENS. The lights and shadows of the living room reveal Christina and Christopher wearing their nightclothes and bathrobes, sitting side by side on a sofa, listening, happy to be up so late and at the same time a little edgy. Joan, in a beautiful dressing gown, is stalking the room, and Carol Ann is close to the set, listening avidly. It's very late for the children, but the electricity in the room is intense.

ANNOUNCER

... He is now opening the sealed ballot.

A new VOICE breaks in.

VOICE

The winner for the best male actor is...

Joan has just put away half of her vodka drink, and glass still in hand, listens...

VOICE

(continuing)

Ray Milland, in The Lost Weekend.

Joan makes herself a new drink as the APPLAUSE breaks out from the loudspeaker in the grand phonograph.

JOAN

He was good.

She walks around the room, takes a Kleenex and ostentatiously blows her nose. Everybody watches her. The radio will continue on, announcing the next set of awards for the Best Actress.

JOAN

(continuing)

You think I was right not to be there, Carol Ann?

CAROL ANN

Yes I do.

JOAN

It's a lot of bull anyway, the way they vote. They make deals, the studio votes in blocs.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOAN (CONT'D)

(drinks)

Well, the best actor is a vote for a lush. That figures. God, I hate this night. It turns every damn year into a crisis.

The Radio Voice now goes on to announce the nominations for the best actress: Ingrid Bergman, in The Bells of St. Mary's; Joan Crawford, in Mildred Pierce; Greer Garson in The Valley of Decision; Gene Tierney in Leave Her to Heaven.

JOAN

(continuing)

I wish I really did have the flu bad. I wish I was raving mad with fever and didn't even have to listen.

CHRISTINA

You're going to win, I know, Mommie.

ANNOUNCER

He is getting the envelope now. He is opening it.

Suddenly Joan sits down on the couch, puts her arms around her children, and closes her eyes.

CHRISTINA

Everybody said you were so wonderful.

CAROL ANN

The picture's a hit.

JOAN

Oh, shut up!

ANNOUNCER

And the winner is Joan Crawford in Mildred Pierce...

The shouts of the audience from the set is drowned out by Joan leaping from the couch with a great yell of triumph, Carol Ann applauding. Joan is dancing round, and Christina runs around her, just as from outside there comes a tumult of APPLAUSE, HORNS BLOWING, VOICES. The NOISE INCREASES and Joan just stands there, Christina nearby. Joan kneels, embraces her, kisses her, then is up.

(CONTINUED)

76E CONTINUED: (2)

76E

She runs to a mirror, studies her face, her looks, a few touches. Outside the VOLUME BUILDS.

Joan is in all her glory now. For a moment, the future and the past glory are one with the present. And she goes to the foyer, following Carol Ann.

76F INT. FOYER/EXT. FRONT OF HOUSE - NIGHT

76

At a signal from Joan, Carol Ann opens the door. The gates are open, the lawn is filled with the fan club ladies as well as just the curious. Behind are headlights, horns, cars. The TELEPHONE RINGS AND RINGS in the house. The children watch, and Christina drinks in the glory of stardom that now like a heavenly radiance floods upon her mother and, therefore, on her. As Joan appears, the applause is deafening, while behind dimly, occasionally, the radio goes on with the Academy presentations.

JOAN

Please...

And the voices die down. Joan is Camille, ill, but brave, happy, but frail, standing there. She suddenly holds out her arms to her fans.

JOAN

(continuing)

I would rather be here with you than anywhere else in the world.

Joan, Joan they shout at her.

JOAN

(continuing)

You, all of you here and everywhere gave me this award. I accept it from you, and you alone. I love all of you. And please, excuse me, good night.

They applaud and Joan retires, as if she can barely walk. Carol Ann waves to the fans and closes the door as Joan suddenly takes off, spinning and turning, alive, happy, triumphant, gathering Christina in one hand, whirling, whirling, while the crowd applauds outside, the PHONE RINGS inside, and RADIO GOES ON AND ON. Now, Christina is up in Joan's arms, held tight, face to face, whirling, whirling.

DISSOLVE TO:

77 INT. CRAWFORD'S HOUSE - BRENTWOOD - NIGHT

77

The DOORBELL RINGS. Christina opens the door to admit a handsome stud, rather younger than Joan. The man is CHARLIE DUVAL. Charlie flashes his lovely white teeth in a winning smile.

CHARLIE  
I'm Charlie. You're Christina?

Christina ushers him in.

CHRISTINA  
I'll tell Mommie you're here.

Christina goes to foot of stairs.

CHRISTINA  
(continuing)  
Mommie, 'Uncle' Charlie is here.

JOAN'S VOICE  
(yells downstairs)  
Be a darling and mix him a drink.

Christina smiles sweetly at Duval and crosses to the bar.

CUT TO:

78 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (LATER)

78

Joan and Duval are in bed. On the nightstand, empty glasses. He is fast asleep with a smile of satisfaction on his face. Joan is lying on her back rigid, eyes wide open. Suddenly her hand reaches out and nudges Charlie. He rolls over and puts his arms around Joan.

CHARLIE  
(half asleep)  
What's the matter, baby, still hungry?

She smiles and turns to him. Charlie leans up on one elbow waiting to service the Queen of the Screen. Joan reaches out, lightly caresses his cheek, flashing a lovely Crawford smile.

JOAN  
Get dressed. Get your ass out of here.

Charlie is astonished.

(CONTINUED)

78 CONTINUED:

78

CHARLIE

It's four a.m. Are you crazy?

JOAN

Get out. Now.

CHARLIE

(rolls over)

I'm going back to sleep. Wake me at nine.

Joan shifts her position in bed, places both feet in the small of the man's back and violently kicks him out of bed.

JOAN

I said get dressed and get the hell out!

CHARLIE

(picking himself up off the floor, he does what he can to salvage his dignity)

What a bitch!

JOAN

I can buy men like you anytime!

CHARLIE

Women your age have to!

THWACK! She slugs him. THWACK! He slugs her back. Twice. Joan is stunned, not prepared for this violence. Scared, she races to the French doors and goes onto the porch, closing the doors behind her for protection.

JOAN

(through the glass)

Get out or I'll scream and get the cops up here.

CUT TO:

79 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

79

Christina and Christopher. Their eyes wide open.

CUT TO:

80 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

80

Duval putting on his pants. Joan is still on the balcony.

CHARLIE

(yells at Joan while  
he finishes dressing)

You goddamned screwed up selfish  
actress bitch!

JOAN

(yelling back  
through the  
glass)

Get out of here, you soft pecker!  
Soft pecker!

CUT TO:

81 INT. HALL OUTSIDE JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

81

Charlie exits the bedroom, crosses the hall and down the stairs. Christina and Christopher peer out the door at his departing figure. They rush to their window to watch him...

82 EXT. HOUSE

82

... leave and see Joan fling a shoe which glances off his shoulder. Joan is still on her balcony. She hurls the second shoe. This one bounces off the hood of his car. He looks up at her, still half dressed.

CHARLIE

Missed, bitch!

JOAN

Up yours, soft pecker!

83 THE CHILDREN

83

rush back to their beds. Christina hurried straps Christopher back into his bed.

CUT TO:

84 JOAN

84

She is trying to get back into her bedroom through the French doors, which have locked from the inside.

JOAN

(muttering)

Son of a bitch... rotten bastard...

She looks for something to break the window with, finds nothing.

JOAN

(continuing, muttering)

Should have saved one shoe.

She begins to laugh at the incongruous situation. She gets to the children's balcony door which is also locked. She --

85 ANGLE

85

-- taps on the door. Christina gets up and lets her in. Joan stands there laughing.

CHRISTINA

Mommie? Mommie?

Joan has difficulty coming down from laughing. She cups Christina's face in her hands.

JOAN

Oh, my God, Tina, it's all so crazy. Life is crazy, men are crazy. Let's be crazy, too.

CUT TO:

86 EXT. BEACH - DAWN

86

The scene is pristine and lovely as the two walk along the beach hand in hand; the pre-dawn light makes the sea silver. This is the same stretch of beach she walked with Greg early in the film. Joan is more open than we've ever seen her.

JOAN

Do you miss not having a father?

CHRISTINA

Sometimes.

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

Hell, I never had one either. My mother married three times, but they all went away. Things were hard then.

MOVING TWO SHOT

They watch the rise and fall of the surf. Soft and sad it floats along with them.

JOAN

Things are always hard. They're hard when you begin, and they're harder and full of pain when they keep trying to end. But you can't let them end, because that's the end of you.

(real loud to the sea)

I've won an Academy Award. And it still gets harder all the time.

(drawing Tina  
close, gently)

Do you understand, darling?

CHRISTINA

I do, Mommie.

JOAN

I keep remembering now, Tina. All those big Metro years I never had to remember. I had no time to remember. I didn't want to remember. I remember how I wanted to dance. God, how I wanted it and how I loved it. I was good. Life was bad but when I danced it was good. I was free.

She takes a few whirls on the sand and then sits down beside Christina, an arm around her.

JOAN

(continuing)

How do you make strangers care enough to let you dance, so you can live and dance? I tell you how, Tina, darling. You eat dirt.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOAN (CONT'D)

And you keep eating it and living  
it. And you have to be lucky.  
And never never give up.

(embracing Christina)

You must never give up. Remember.  
Mommie knows and Mommie told you.

CHRISTINA

I won't, Mommie.

Joan lies down on the rise of sand, looking up into the starry sky and Christina gazes down at her, enthralled, happy to be so close, happy to be part of her.

JOAN

I made the chorus line and lived  
in a New York dump. I danced at  
the Roseland with anybody who  
bought a ticket.

She puts her hands around Christina, draws her close, holding her like a small child which Christina is not.

JOAN

(continuing;  
tenderly)

You were born here, sort of. It  
was here I said I wanted you. I  
wanted to find you somewhere in  
the world and make you mine. You're  
really all I have now, darling.  
It's hard to be alone! I always  
was really alone until you came  
into my life. You were a perfect  
baby. You were mine. I could love  
and not be afraid to love and be  
betrayed by love. You musn't  
change, darling. You must be mine  
and never change, and I'll give  
you anything you want in the whole  
world.

Christina feels loved, wanted, safe. She clings to her mother.

CHRISTINA

I'll always love you, Mommie  
dearest.

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (3)

86

JOAN

And you'll have everything, anything  
you want.

Christina gazes with grave intensity at the beautiful  
face near hers. The distant surf sounds eternity around  
them.

JOAN

(continuing)

Tell me. It's yours.

CHRISTINA

I want you to love me.

Joan is overcome with tears. They cling to each other  
like two wrecks at sea.

JOAN

You can never lose that love,  
Tina, darling. It's yours like  
yours is mine, always, always,  
always and forever.

CAMERA PULLS BACK SLOWLY until beach and surf and sound  
loom up and those two are specks in the night of vast  
forces and time.

CUT TO:

87 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - BRENTWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

87

Joan is wearing a long black nightgown and robe. She  
is preparing for bed. She takes a sip from her vodka  
glass and tissues off the layer of cold cream on her  
face. She applies lotion with a cotton ball, then takes  
a paper Japanese fan and fans her face to dry the lotion.  
She then hooks on her chin strap. She scrutinizes her  
face, pulling closer to the mirror. She pulls the skin  
back on her cheeks and eyes, smoothing out the lines.  
Then she puts on a cream that leaves her face ghostly  
white.

Next she puts her black satin eyeshade over her head,  
leaving the eye patches at her hairline, like a pair  
of sunglasses propped on her head. She takes another  
swig of vodka, sucks in her stomach and stands tall,  
examining herself in the mirror. With a sigh, she walks  
out.

88 INT. CHILDREN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

88

Joan stands at the door to their bedroom, light streaming in behind her. She sees they are both sleeping. She bends down to pick up a sweater on the floor.

She turns on a light in the closet and begins to hang up the sweater when she freezes. She stares at a dress that is on a wire hanger, just back from the dry cleaner, then yanks it off the rack. Her eyes widen as she pulls the dress off the hanger.

JOAN

(shouting)

A wire hanger!

Christina sits up in bed, startled awake.

CHRISTINA'S POV - JOAN

Her view of Joan is of a monstrous figure in a flowing black nightgown, stark white face, and black eye mask up on her forehead, chin strap below. Joan's eyes are glittering with rage.

JOAN

How many times do I have to tell you, no wire hangers!!!

Joan turns back to the closet and in a frenzied rage pulls all the clothes off the bar they're hanging on and flings them into the room. She grabs the sweater boxes from the shelf and hurls their contents into the room. Christina holds her pillow against her. Christopher, trapped in his harness, lies still as a possum, only his fear-widened eyes following his mother's movements. When Joan has emptied the closet she strides to Christina, who cringes as her mother's hand reaches out for her. Joan grabs Christina by the hair and pulls her out of the bed. The child yells in pain and fear as Joan drags her towards the closet.

Joan then lets go of her and starts attacking her bed, ripping off the sheets and blanket and tossing them into the middle of the room where some of them fall on top of the cringing Christina, burying her. Christina pokes her head out from under, scared to look, but scared not to.

ANGLE ON JOAN

who suddenly spies another wire hanger on the floor.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

88

She snatches it up and starts beating Christina through the covering of bedclothes.

JOAN

(yelling)

No wire hangers!

CHRISTINA

Stop, Mommie! Please stop!

JOAN

Why do you always defy me? When will you learn! No wire hangers!

Joan stops pounding on Christina. She grabs the child by the wrist and drags her out from under the blankets.

JOAN

(continuing)

Now clean up your mess!

Joan turns towards the open bathroom door and her expression becomes even more crazed. She pulls Christina towards the bathroom, the child dragging behind her along the carpet.

JOAN

(continuing)

Did you scrub the bathroom today?

Christina, too frightened and shocked to let herself cry, staggers to her feet as they reach the bathroom door and Joan turns on the light.

CHRISTINA

Yes, Mommie.

Joan whirls on her, raising her hand as if to slap her. Christina shies.

JOAN

'Yes, Mommie' what?

CHRISTINA

Yes, Mommie dearest.

Joan lets go of Christina and kneels down beside the sink, running her fingers across the floor, which is immaculate.

JOAN

You call this 'clean'?

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINA

(quivering)

Miss Jenkins said it was clean.

Joan yanks open the cabinet under the sink, pulls out a can of cleanser and stands up, grabbing Christina again.

JOAN

Is that all you can do? Contradict your mother?

Joan smashes the cleanser can down on Christina's head and hits her several times with it until the cardboard can bursts open and the white powder goes flying everywhere, mostly onto Christina.

CHRISTINA

(screaming)

Help! Stop! No! Please!  
Stop! Help!

Joan flings the broken can against the wall and shoves Christina further into the bathroom.

JOAN

You'll get no help. You'll clean up your mess by yourself. And I'll inspect in the morning, you lazy defiant little bitch!

Joan storms out of the room, slamming the bedroom door behind her. There is a beat. Nobody moves. Christopher slithers out of his restraint. He gets up and goes to the bathroom, from whence comes MUFFLED SOBBING NOISES. Christina looks up at him, wiping her face with a washcloth, the white gritty powder all over her.

CHRISTOPHER

I'll help you.

Panicked, Christina stops crying.

CHRISTINA

Go strap yourself in. She'd kill me if she found out.

Christina takes a deep breath, looks around at the tornadoed room. She shakes her head in amazement. Her next words are ones she's rarely used, grown-up, forbidden ones.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED: (3)

88

CHRISTINA  
 (continuing)  
 Jeezis Christ.

CUT TO:

89 INT. CRAWFORD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

89

The room is dominated by a magnificent Christmas tree. The tree is completely decorated and the packages are placed carefully around it. Joan, Christina and Christopher are being interviewed for radio. The children sit stiffly, hoping they will remember their lines, knowing a performance is expected of them.

The (non-twin) twins are tucked at her feet.

Once again, flashbulbs pop. A TECHNICIAN counts 6,5,4,3,2,1 -- now.

INTERVIEWER  
 (effusive and phony  
 -- but America  
 bought it)

No report on Christmas would be complete without a description of how one Hollywood family spends this holiday... so now let's hop into an imaginary sleigh and whisk out to the home of one of America's foremost actresses, Miss Joan Crawford.

JOAN  
 (her most gracious,  
 movie star manner)  
 We are so very happy to have you with us. This is my daughter, Christina.

CHRISTINA  
 (so brightly)  
 Hello, everybody.

JOAN  
 And my son, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER  
 Hi.

(CONTINUED)

INTERVIEWER

Miss Crawford, could you tell us about what you would call your most exciting Christmas?

JOAN

I think the happiest moment of my life was the first Christmas the children came into my life. I don't see how Christmas can be enjoyed without children around.

INTERVIEWER

Well, all America knows of your generosity in adopting both homeless children -- and I'd like to tell our listeners that they are beautifully behaved.

JOAN

I feel that discipline mixed with love is such a good recipe.

INTERVIEWER

What time do you expect your youngsters will awaken tomorrow morning?

JOAN

(indulgent)

I'm afraid they are likely to be up by six-thirty at the latest.

INTERVIEWER

Will they come straight into your room and waken you?

JOAN

I'd be disappointed if they didn't! -- Christmas is our favorite day of the year.

INTERVIEWER

Christina, do you and your brother get lots of presents at Christmas time?

CHRISTINA

(perfectly memorized)

Yes, we do. Mother's fans send us so many beautiful things.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

But we like to share them with other boys and girls who aren't so fortunate.

INTERVIEWER

Miss Crawford, would you tell us what's to happen after we leave you tonight?

JOAN

Well, the children and I will probably just watch the Christmas tree lights for a while. Then, later, we'll welcome some of the children's friends, who'll be in to help us sing some carols.

INTERVIEWER

And then surely you finish up by reading 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'?

JOAN

Oh, no Christmas Eve would be complete without that.

INTERVIEWER

As a Christmas present to our listeners, would all of you like to say the last two lines for us?

JOAN/CHILDREN

(she leads the  
chorus -- all  
three in unison)

'And I heard him exclaim as he  
drove out of sight,  
Merry Christmas to all, and to  
all a good night.'

INTERVIEWER

And good night to you, Miss Crawford, and thank you for allowing all of us to share your Christmas Eve.

JOAN

Thank you. And a very merry Christmas to you and all of your listeners.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED: (3)

89

And, by God, there is so much warmth in Joan's voice as she speaks her last lines that we believe she means them with all her heart.

CUT TO:

90 INT. BRENTWOOD BAR - NIGHT

90

Christina is standing behind the bar doing her best impression of a miniature Joan, playing hostess. The object of her attentions is another NEW UNCLE, TED GELBER.

CHRISTINA

Mommie's not quite ready, Mr. Gelber. Will it be scotch and water tonight?

Ted walks to the bar.

TED

(smiling)

Please -- but easy on the scotch, honey.

Christina smiles flirtatiously. She fills the glass with scotch, a splash of water and three ice cubes.

CHRISTINA

(teasing)

But, Mr. Gelber, I fix all my 'Uncles' drinks that way.

TED

(laughing)

I... am... not your uncle!

Christina studies him for a moment, then hands him the drink.

CHRISTINA

Mommie asked that you come upstairs now.

Christina turns and begins to walk out of the room. Ted tastes his drink, makes a wry face, looks at his very strong drink then at Christina who is at the foot of the stairs, smiling. He smiles, shakes his head, and follows Christina up the stairs.

CUT TO:

91 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

91

Joan, seated at mirrored dressing table, fully made up, is wearing a light robe, loosely wrapped, revealing her bra, panties, and garter belt. She touches perfume over her neck, shoulders and legs. SOUND OF APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS. She quickly checks her hair and makeup in the mirror, and turns with a charming smile as Christina appears in the doorway.

CHRISTINA

Mommie, Mr. Gelber is here.

Joan stands, still smiling. Christina steps aside to allow Ted to enter. He is several years Joan's junior.

JOAN

Christina, by this time you know  
you can call him Uncle Ted!

CHRISTINA

Yes, Mommie Dearest.  
(she smiles at him)  
'Uncle Ted.'

Christina leaves.

JOAN

(holding out her  
arms, inviting  
his embrace)

Ted, darling.

Joan's robe slips open further as she goes hungrily into Ted's arms.

CUT TO:

92 INT. DOWNSTAIRS LIVING ROOM/BAR - NIGHT

92

Christina crosses the living room and goes to bar, taking Joan's bottle of vodka and a fresh icy glass out of the refrigerator, pouring her a good strong belt. Then she smiles into the mirror, winks at herself.

CUT TO:

93 INT. JOAN'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

93

Ted is sitting on the chair in front of the vanity table. Joan has her leg up on the edge of the table, provocatively right in front of Ted's face, as she pulls on a stocking. She pulls back the lace edge of her slip to get the black garter strap.

(CONTINUED)

93 CONTINUED:

93

She caresses her leg as she smooths the stocking. Ted is eyeing her and getting turned on, which is her intention. Ted reaches out his hand to touch her leg and Joan playfully taps it away, teasing him further. She then rolls up her other stocking and inserts her foot, pulling it slowly, sexily, onto her leg. Ted can stand it no longer, and goes down on his knees as he moves in on Joan. He begins kissing her passionately. His hand slides up her leg.

Vodka in hand, Christina arrives through the bedroom. She comes to a sudden stop, fascinated by their embrace. Joan's back is to the entry, so she doesn't see Christina arrive.

TED

We've got company.

Joan pulls away from the kiss and gets up. Joan smooths her slip, fixes a stray strand of hair. Christina is riveted by what she's seen.

CHRISTINA

(graciously)

I brought you a freshener, Mommie dearest.

JOAN

Looks like my baby is growing up.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - PALOS VERDES - RUNNING SHOT - DAY 94

Giant eucalyptus trees line the side of the road. Joan's car WHIZZES BY, and we CUT INSIDE to find Joan and Christina both dressed for an occasion.

JOAN

Tina, I am your mother and you are my child. I do know what's best for you.

CHRISTINA

(mounting panic)

Whatever I did, I won't do it again. I promise. I can be better. I promised God last night when I said my prayers -- I told him I'd be good and that I'd blow him a thousand kisses if I didn't have to go. I can be better.

(a beat; desperate)

Please tell me what I should do.

CUT TO:

95 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - PALOS VERDES - DAY 95

Joan's car turns into a blacktop driveway. Beside the driveway we see a sign reading: "CHADWICK COUNTRY BOARDING SCHOOL."

JOAN (V.O.)

(brightly to Christina)

You'll see, darling, the time will fly by. You can call me collect any time.

CUT TO:

96 EXT. CHADWICK SCHOOL - DAY 96

The car pulls up in the circular drive and MRS. CHADWICK, the headmistress, comes out to greet them. She is fiftyish, with a kind face and a splendid posture. Joan and Christina get out of the car. Christina looks at her mother pleadingly, tears in her eyes. Joan gives her a reprimanding stare and moves to Mrs. Chadwick. She shakes Mrs. Chadwick's hand and pours on the honey.

JOAN

How kind of you to greet us, Mrs. Chadwick.

Christina stares at Mrs. Chadwick with a nervous, pained expression.

MRS. CHADWICK

I know you'll be happy here, Christina.

CHRISTINA

(earnestly)

I won't. Please don't make me stay.

(to Joan)

I don't want to leave home.

Mrs. Chadwick looks surprised and concerned. She puts her hand comfortably on Christina's shoulder, then glances questioningly at Joan. Joan shrugs it off with a firm smile.

JOAN

Just last minute jitters.

(back to Tina)

You'll see how lucky you are to be at this lovely school.

Joan kisses Christina on the forehead and shakes Mrs. Chadwick's hand.

CHRISTINA

Please, Mommie, don't leave me here.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED:

96

JOAN

That's enough nonsense, young lady... what will Mrs. Chadwick think?

MRS. CHADWICK

I'm sure everything will be fine once you settle in.

Joan gets into the car and waves gaily. Christina stares mournfully at the car as it goes down the long drive. Mrs. Chadwick puts her arm around Christina and walks her towards the main door.

MRS. CHADWICK

(continuing)

I know just how you feel.

Christina looks up at Mrs. Chadwick in surprise, unprepared for empathy from an adult.

CUT TO:

97 INT. CHADWICK SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

97

Four years have passed. We COME IN on a new Christina. She has matured and developed into an attractive young teenager. At the moment she is on the stage alone. She is reciting a monologue for her acting class. The other kids are sprawled on seats in the dark auditorium. As Tina recites, CAMERA PANS their faces. They are all fixed on Christina. She is quite good.

CHRISTINA

(in character)

'Understand! The first word I ever heard out of any of you was that word "understand." Why didn't I "understand" that I must not play with water -- cold, black, beautiful flowing water -- because I'd spill it on the palace tiles. Understand! I don't want to understand. There'll be time enough to understand when I'm old... If I ever am old. But now now -- '

Christina pauses when she finishes. The auditorium has been totally quiet. The other students now break into applause. Christina comes down from the stage, pleased but slightly embarrassed by their enthusiasm. TONY and VERA, two of the students, are holding hands.

TONY

Great, Christina.

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

97

CHRISTINA

Thanks, Tony.

VERA

What play is that?

CHRISTINA

'Antigone.' It's a Greek myth,  
written by a French playwright.

TONY

Can I have your autograph when  
you're a movie star?

He is teasing, and Christina gives him a playful, flirtatious punch on the arm.

CUT TO:

98 INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

98

Joan and Christina are in Joan's booth. Joan's eyes constantly rove the restaurant, even when she's speaking to Christina. Christina is uptight, afraid to do or say anything that will provoke her mother. Joan finishes several vodkas during the scene.

JOAN

Do sit up properly, Christina.  
Isn't this fun, us having a date  
when you come home for the weekend?

Christina straightens her shoulders and sits up taller. She breaks off a piece of bread, butters it carefully and puts it daintily into her mouth. Joan's attention is on some people who have just come into the restaurant.

JOAN

(continuing)

Look who's here: after all those  
face lifts I didn't know she  
could move her mouth enough to  
chew. And her bastard husband.

Joan motions for the CAPTAIN, who brings menus. Joan takes hers and continues looking at the doorway. The Captain smiles at Christina as he hands her the menu. She timidly returns his smile. Joan looks over and sees this.

JOAN

(continuing)

Don't flirt, Christina.

Christina blushes bright red and looks down at her menu mortified. Joan hands her menu back to the Captain with a gracious smile.

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED:

98

JOAN

(continuing)

We'll have the Hobo Steak for two; rare.

Christina looks up at the mention of rare meat. She looks at the Captain writing down the order. She considers whether to say anything, but stays silent.

JOAN

(continuing)

And two limestone salads.

The Captain leaves.

JOAN

(continuing)

Flirting can be taken the wrong way. Besides, we do not socialize with those who serve us.

Christina takes a report card out of her purse.

CHRISTINA

I want you to see this. I got all A's and one B.

Joan glances at the report card, puts it down.

JOAN

I'm very proud of you, dear -- What about your Christmas card list?

CHRISTINA

I've had exams, Mommie. I'll get my cards out on time. I'm not a baby anymore.

JOAN

Sometimes I wish you still were a baby: not a moment's trouble. So obedient. Being away at school has made you rebellious. Perhaps you'd be better off at home.

Christina looks panicked at the idea of being taken out of school.

CHRISTINA

I'm sorry. I've had a lot of schoolwork.

JOAN

I work like an ox to send you to a good school.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

98

JOAN (CONT'D)

Times are damn tough and I still  
treat you to a lovely evening  
like this and what do I get?  
Smart-aleck backtalk.

Christina swallows her inclination to defend herself.  
She musters a smile.

CHRISTINA

I'm sorry, Mommie dearest. I'll  
try to be better.

JOAN

We'll see, dear. Now let's enjoy  
dinner.

CUT TO:

99 INT. CRAWFORD BASEMENT LAUNDRY ROOM - DAY

99

Christina finishes putting the clothes into a front-loading washing machine. She closes the door and starts the machine. In the b.g. Joan is coming down the stairs. She stops at the bottom and watches Christina. Christina, unaware of Joan, carries the empty basket to a second machine and begins to take out the finished wet laundry.

JOAN

Tina?

CHRISTINA

You scared me!

JOAN

Sorry...

Joan walks over to a table near her daughter and begins, absentmindedly folding several towels from a large dry pile.

JOAN

There's a problem we have to talk  
about...

CHRISTINA

What did I do?

(CONTINUED)

JOAN

No. No. It's not you, dear...  
I'm having some financial  
difficulties. I let the extra  
help go... I just spoke with the  
Chadwicks about your tuition...  
They've agreed to let you go on  
a work/scholarship program.

Finding it tough to continue the conversation, Joan  
fingers the edge of a folded towel.

CHRISTINA

(moving to her mother)

That's alright... we'll make out...

JOAN

(almost to herself)

I had to work my way through  
school... scrubbing floors and...

(to Christina)

It'll do you good to learn the  
value of work early...

(sits on a nearby  
stool, leaning her  
elbows on the table)

But there's something else...

Joan takes a deep breath, runs her hands over her  
face, her forehead, through her now short hair. Sudden-  
ly, unexpectedly, she begins to cry.

CHRISTINA

What is it, Mommie?

JOAN

(fighting sobs)

You're going to have to be my  
brave girl when I tell you this...  
I lost my contract at Warners.  
For the first time in twenty-  
seven years I'm on my own... no  
studio... no contract... no  
money... nobody to... I've never  
been so alone.

Christina reaches out to Joan and cradles her in her  
arms, holding her, rocking her gently.

CHRISTINA

I'm here, Mommie... it's going to  
be alright. I'll help you.

(CONTINUED)

99 CONTINUED: (2)

99

JOAN

(very quietly)

I'm scared, Tina... I'm really scared... I didn't think this could happen... to me... What am I going to do?! After all these years... I can't...

CHRISTINA

(in tears)

Ssshhh... ssshhh. It'll be okay... We'll manage... there now... there now... I love you, Mommie... I love you...

CUT TO:

100 INT. BAR - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

100

Christina's finishing cleaning up after a party. She empties ashtrays, rinses glasses behind the bar. She sighs with exhaustion, and exits up the staircase.

CUT TO:

101 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM/DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

101

Christina enters the dressing room. She looks around, seeing the room disheveled, clothes scattered, dressing table spread with cosmetics. Standing at the open door, she knocks on the door. No answer. Every light in the room is on.

CHRISTINA

(calling out)

Mommie...

She waits, then enters the room slowly.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Mommie? I came up to say goodnight  
... Mommie?

Concerned, she walks further into the room, seeing no one. She moves slowly towards Joan's bedroom.

CHRISTINA

(continuing; scared)

Mommie...?

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED:

101

Not a sound, no reply. Christina walks into the bedroom. Joan is sprawled, face down, on the carpet. Christina rushes to Joan, turns her over, and shakes her. No response. Christina listens for heartbeat.

CHRISTINA

My God...!

(calling out)

Carol Ann!

She rushes out to the landing.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Carol Ann...! Help...

CAROL ANN

(coming up the stairs)

What is it?

CHRISTINA

Something's happened! Hurry!

CUT TO:

102 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

102

Christina comes through the open doorway to her mother's side, kneeling. Carol Ann follows through the door. She does not hurry, or seem ruffled.

CHRISTINA

(distressed)

... She's sick... I found her just like this...

Carol Ann looks down at the unconscious Joan without emotion.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Carol Ann... She needs help!  
Call the doctor!

CAROL ANN

She doesn't need a doctor. She's drunk.

CHRISTINA

Drunk...? No... Are you sure?

(CONTINUED)

CAROL ANN

I'm sure, Christina... believe me,  
it's not the first time.

CHRISTINA

Why didn't you tell me...? I  
could've helped...

Christina sits for a moment to let this sink in. Then she looks up and for the first time notices that Joan's bedroom is filled to overflowing with what are obviously an extensive series of department store purchases. There are dress boxes, some opened with new dresses spilling out, others still unopened, etc.

There is a new fur coat on the bed, still with the tags on in amidst the wrappings. There are perhaps a dozen shoe boxes on the bed with new shoes inside.

CHRISTINA

(continuing; shaking  
her head and moving  
to touch the new  
purchases)

When did she buy all these?

CAROL ANN

Two days ago. They came this  
afternoon.

CHRISTINA

I thought we were broke!

CAROL ANN

Let's put her to bed.

Christina nods sadly. Carol Ann gets a grip under Joan's arms. Christina takes Joan's feet and they carry Joan to her bed, placing her on it.

CAROL ANN

(continuing)

I'm sorry it has to be like this...  
for you and for her.

Christina nods sadly. Carol Ann leaves as Christina covers Joan with a light comforter. She arranges a pillow under Joan's head. She sits next to Joan on the bed and gently smooths back a strand of her mother's hair.

CUT TO:

103 EXT. CHADWICK RIDING STABLES - DAY

103

Christina, Janice and Vera gallop their horses out of a riding path to the stable. Christina dismounts and hands the reins to TONY. He is Vera's boyfriend, but just now he is interested in Christina. As he unsaddles the horse:

TONY

(so Vera won't hear)

Wanna meet me here tonight?

CHRISTINA

(glancing at Vera)

Why?

TONY

We could go for a walk.

CHRISTINA

What about Vera?

TONY

(he shrugs)

You want to or not?

CHRISTINA

But why?

TONY

I have to have a reason? Because you're pretty. That's why.

The words "because you're pretty" do it. Christina nods her head and again glances at Vera.

CUT TO:

104 EXT. STABLES - NIGHT

104

The moon is full as Tony and Christina walk slowly away from the stables.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRASSY SPOT NEAR HORSE CORRAL

Christina and Tony sit side by side in silence. He kisses her lightly on the mouth.

TONY

You're so pretty.

CHRISTINA

Am I?

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

104

He kisses her again, a bit more seriously. She is so starved for affection of any kind that her arms go around him and she kisses him back.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Am I really?

Tony makes an affirmative sound and gently pulls her down with him. His hands start to roam over her body. Christina doesn't seem really to notice. Her eyes fill and as he touches her, she repeats the question over and over:

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Am I really pretty? Me? Am I really...

Christina and Tony are entwined in a passionate embrace. He moves her skirt up as he gently moves to lie on top of her. Suddenly a shrill VOICE breaks their lovemaking.

VERA

Great!

(a beat)

This is real great!

TONY

Vera!

VERA

(vicious)

I'm going to tell. I am.

(starts away)

I'm going to tell.

CUT TO:

105 INT. MRS. CHADWICK'S OFFICE - DAY

105

Joan is pacing and smoking, in a rage. Mrs. Chadwick is behind her desk and Christina is on the couch, silent and forlorn.

JOAN

(to Christina)

How could you humiliate me like this? I'm ashamed to be the mother of... I can't even think of the word!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED:

105

JOAN (CONT'D)

(to Mrs. Chadwick) —

How could you let this happen!

MRS. CHADWICK

I understand your concern, Miss Crawford. Both students have been put on probation and will have no privileges for a month.

JOAN

Probation! This is appalling! I've devoted myself to making Christina a proper young lady. That boy should be expelled!

MRS. CHADWICK

Now, Miss Crawford. When this sort of thing has happened before we have found...

JOAN

(interrupting,  
shouting)

Before?! Is this an institution of learning or a teenage brothel? I've paid a fortune so my daughter can get a diploma for screwing?

MRS. CHADWICK

(stung, she comes  
back strong)

Chadwick has an impeccable reputation and -- when students break the rules we curtail their freedom.

JOAN

(toe to toe with  
Mrs. Chadwick)

We're leaving here right now. Obviously she can't be controlled in this environment.

Christina fights panic and tears. Mrs. Chadwick continues to struggle to control her temper and reason with Joan.

MRS. CHADWICK

Nothing really happened between your daughter and the young man. It was innocent. I think you're over-reacting, Miss Crawford.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: (2)

105

JOAN

And I think you're under-reacting,  
Madam!

Joan grabs Christina by the hand, jerks her to her feet, and propels her towards the door. Christina looks pleadingly at Mrs. Chadwick.

JOAN

(continuing)

My compliments to your school on  
its 'impeccable reputation.'

CUT TO:

106 INT. JOAN'S CAR - DAY (IMMEDIATELY AFTER)

106

Joan grips the wheel as she drives out of the school gates. She fumbles in her purse for her silver flask. She shakes it and throws it on the floor when she finds it empty. Christina sits like a statue on the front seat next to her.

JOAN

Where the hell can I get some  
vodka around this dump?

CHRISTINA

There's a liquor store to the  
right.

JOAN

I should have known you'd know  
where to find the boys and the  
booze.

Joan hits the accelerator pedal, and the car lurches forward with a SQUEAL OF TIRES.

CUT TO:

107 EXT. JOAN'S BRENTWOOD DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

107

Joan's car pulls to a quick stop.

JOAN

Barbara Bennett's here from New  
York doing a cover story on me for  
Redbook. I don't want any trouble  
from you. Don't give me any shit  
in front of the reporter.

CUT TO:

108 INT. THE BREAKFAST ROOM - NIGHT

108

As Joan enters, BARBARA BENNETT looks up from the typewriter. She is Joan's age, but looks ten years older. Her figure is plump and her hair, touched with gray, is fixed haphazardly.

BARBARA  
 (indicating typed pages)  
 You're going to love this.  
 (gestures a headline  
 in the air)  
 Movie Star Manages to Have it All  
 -- Career, Home and Family.

JOAN  
 (all smiles)  
 Wonderful. Let's see.

As Joan picks up the typed pages and starts to read, Christina enters.

BARBARA  
 My God! Christina? It can't be.  
 Last time I saw you, you were four.  
 (lays a hand on top of  
 her head; mock dismay)  
 Oh, my poor old gray head!

CHRISTINA  
 How are you, Miss Bennett?

BARBARA  
 God, call me Barbara.

A beat: what else do you say to a fourteen-year-old you haven't seen for ten years?

BARBARA  
 (continuing)  
 How do you like school?

CHRISTINA  
 Very much.

JOAN  
 She got expelled.

Dead silence. Barbara looks puzzled, and Christina is open-mouthed with indignation.

CHRISTINA  
 That's a lie!

JOAN  
 (icy)  
 I want to talk to you in the other  
 room, Christina.

CUT TO:

109 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

109

Joan strides through the door, closely followed by Christina. Joan leads the way into the den so they can't be heard.

CUT TO:

110 INT. BAR AREA - NIGHT

110

As soon as both of them are in the room, Joan whirls to face her daughter. Joan is furious, but this time Christina is equally furious, and she stands face to face with Joan.

JOAN

(full throttle)

Why do you deliberately defy me?

CHRISTINA

(just as strong)

Why did you tell her I got expelled?

JOAN

You did get expelled.

CHRISTINA

(even)

That's a lie.

Joan slaps her across the face. Christina doesn't move -- doesn't dodge, doesn't cower, doesn't even blink. She just stands looking at her mother, and the look says, "I see you, and I know what you are." This is a confrontation, and for the first time we realize that Christina is looking eye to eye with her mother -- in fact, Christina is a bit taller than Joan.

Enraged by this new attitude, Joan slaps Christina again, harder. Tina will not flinch.

JOAN

(a third slap,  
even harder;  
she begins to  
scream)You love it, don't you? You  
just LOVE to make me hit you!

Barbara Bennett appears in the doorway, shocked at what's going on. Joan whirls on her, rudely.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

110

JOAN

(continuing)

Barbara, you know how to get to your room. If you need anything, ask Carol Ann.

Barbara leaves. Joan begins to pace the room.

JOAN

(continuing)

This is wonderful, ab-so-lutely wonderful... you embarrass me in front of a reporter, and you...

CHRISTINA

(calm)

Why did you adopt me?

JOAN

(taken aback)

What?

CHRISTINA

Why did you adopt me?

JOAN

(movie star diction)

... because I wanted to open my home to unfortunate children. Because I wanted someone to love.

CHRISTINA

Don't act for me. I want to know: why did you adopt me?

JOAN

(trying to wound)

Perhaps I did it for a little extra publicity.

(quick; she means it)

Oh, that's not true. Really, it's not true.

CHRISTINA

Maybe just a little true?

JOAN

(looks up to the ceiling; a helpless gesture)

Well, I give up -- I don't know what to do with you.

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINA

Why not?

Joan's head snaps around in rage, and she moves nearer to Christina.

JOAN

I don't ask much from you, girl.  
Why can't you give me the simple  
respect I'm entitled to? Why  
can't you treat me the way I'd  
get treated by any stranger on  
the street?

CHRISTINA

(strongest so far)

Because I'm NOT ONE OF YOUR FANS!

Joan's entire body recoils for a moment, then she lunges forward, her face murderous. She grabs Christina by the throat, and they both go down, knocking over a lamp and a table as they fall. The shade rolls off the lamp as it hits the floor, and the scene is lit with a weird, bright light from the naked bulb.

Joan is completely out of control -- she sits on top of Christina, pressing her thumbs into her throat.

JOAN

BASTARD! Damn you! BASTARD!

Christina tries to fight back, to get away, but she is no match for Joan, and it is clear that Christina is in great danger. Finally, Christina twists out from under her mother, wedges her knee between Joan's body and her own, and pushes Joan away, loosening her grip.

Joan releases one hand and hits Christina backhand across the mouth, cutting her lip with a large ring.

JOAN

(continuing)

Ungrateful BASTARD!

Joan goes down again on top of Christina. This time we really think she will kill her daughter. When Christina is purple from lack of air, the door bursts open and Carol Ann rushes in followed by Barbara Bennett.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED: (3)

110

CAROL ANN/BARBARA  
 (AD LIB as they  
 pull at Joan)  
 My God! Joan! You'll kill her!  
Stop it!

But Joan won't let go. Finally both women give a tremendous pull, and drag her away. Joan's screaming turns to weeping that is touched with hysteria.

BARBARA  
 Stop it, Joan -- Christina's hurt.

Carol Ann checks Christina to see if she is all right, then helps the bruised and bleeding girl to a chair. Christina rubs her throat, then gingerly touches her cut lips. When Joan speaks, she is again in total command of herself.

JOAN  
 (to Christina)  
 Go to your room.

When Christina doesn't move.

JOAN  
 (continuing)  
 Now.

Christina stands up, looking at Joan with true hate. Joan turns her back. Christina leaves the room.

CUT TO:

111 INT. MOTHER SUPERIOR'S OFFICE - THE FLINTRIDGE  
 ACADEMY - MORNING

111

Christina sits on a stiff-backed chair in front of a stiff-backed nun, the MOTHER SUPERIOR, a formidable woman. Her office, like all the school buildings, is solid stone. It seems like a dungeon. Christina's school uniform is rather like a novitiate nun's costume. She is in a trance-like state, staring dully at this pious woman.

MOTHER SUPERIOR  
 Dear Christina, God has brought  
 you to our convent school so that  
 you can see the error of your ways.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

## MOTHER SUPERIOR (CONT'D)

You've sinned in the past,  
transgressed against the Holy  
Commandments, but you shall find  
forgiveness and be cleansed.  
Those who seek shall receive. Let  
us pray together for your repentance,  
that the good Lord will grace you  
with His comfort and guidance.

The Mother Superior gets up from behind her desk and kneels on the single pew underneath her window. Christina gets up, robot-like, and kneels beside her. The light streams in on them. The Mother Superior bows her head and concentrates on her prayer. Christina stares blankly out the window, all life gone from her eyes.

CUT TO:

112 INT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL SUITE - DAY

112

Forty to fifty people at party. Champagne cork pops. CLOSEUP champagne bottle bubbling over, glasses being filled.

## A HAPPY GUEST (V.O.)

To Joan and Alfred... a long and  
happy marriage!

## MANY MEN AND WOMEN

Cheers!... Congratulations... All  
happiness...

CLOSEUP two champagne glasses toast. Bright flash-bulb goes off. Joan is kissing a crew-cut, gray-haired man, ALFRED STEELE. She's in a pink suit with matching hat and gaudy costume jewelry. He's dressed in business suit and wears glasses. They're both very happy amid the festive atmosphere of this expensive party. The tables are laden with food, liquor and champagne, flowers everywhere, waiters attending to everyone's needs.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

(while Joan and  
Al kiss)

Hold it!...

(b.g. laughter)

That's great!

Flash goes off.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED:

112

JOAN

Alfred, darling, I'm so happy!

MALE GUEST

Speech... Speech!...

AL

Thank you all for being here on such short notice.

(scattered crowd  
laughter)

... If this marriage has come as a surprise to some of you... just think how I felt when Joan said 'yes.'

More laughter as Al lifts his glass in a toast to Joan.

JOAN

A few minutes ago, a reporter asked me how I would describe the marriage of the 'Soft Drink King' to the 'Queen of Hollywood.'

(smiling adoringly at Al)

I told him I thought it was a hell of a team!

Applause. Photographers flash pictures from every angle as reporters write furiously in their notebooks. A WOMAN hugs Joan.

WOMAN

Joan, dearest... I know you're going to be so happy!

A MAN slaps Al on the back.

MAN

You old scoundrel!

Carol Ann scurries through the crowd to Joan and whispers in her ear.

JOAN

(to Al)

Excuse me, darling.

Al smiles at her and nods as Joan goes to an adjoining room.

CUT TO:

113 INT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL SUITE BEDROOM - DAY

113

Joan closes the door, shutting off the party. Her smile and gracious manner are gone. She walks over and picks up the telephone receiver.

JOAN

Yes? Hello, dear. What took you so long to call? So what if you hear about it on the radio?...  
Christina, all you had to do was call Las Vegas. It's very simple, any operator would have been able to locate me. Obviously, you didn't try very hard. Hundreds of other people have found us!

(listens)

Thank you, Christina... we will be gloriously happy.

Joan hangs up on Christina, takes a deep breath, resumes her gracious, happy bride smile, turns to leave the room.

CUT TO:

114 EXT. CONVENT SCHOOL ENTRANCE - DAY

114

Mother Superior is smiling an affectionate farewell. Christina's suitcase is on the steps next to her. She wears a simple civilian dress.

CHRISTINA

Thank you, Mother. You've been so good to me... These years have been lonely... but I've learned a valuable lesson...

(smiles shyly)

... patience.

(she embraces

Mother Superior)

I'll write, I promise.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Goodbye, dear child. God be with you.

Christina picks up her suitcase, hurries down the long stairs without looking back.

CUT TO:

115 EXT. CRAWFORD MANSION DRIVEWAY - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY 115

Limousine pulls in, stops. Chauffeur gets out, starts to go to the right rear door. Before he gets there, Christina opens the door, gets out with her suitcase which he tries to take from her.

CHRISTINA

No, thanks, I can manage.

She starts up the walk towards the front door, enters the house.

116 INT. HOUSE 116

Stops, and walks slowly through the house, looking around at each familiar object.

117 EXT. CRAWFORD BACK YARD - DAY 117

The back yard pool and grounds look the same as in earlier scenes. Only the people have aged. Al Steele is swimming laps slowly in the pool. Joan is sitting on the patio talking on the phone. Christina moves onto the terrace and stands watching her mother.

JOAN

(into phone)

... I'll miss you too, darling,  
but you get to New York so often,  
we'll see each other then.

(listens)

Yes, I've put the house up for  
sale. Alfred travels so much and  
corporate headquarters are in New  
York... it only makes sense.

She laughs. Christina listens, looking out with curiosity at the man in swimming pool. Joan glances up, realizes Christina's arrived.

JOAN

(continuing;  
into phone)

My daughter's here. Talk to you  
before we leave.

(listens)

Love to you, too!

Hangs up.

(CONTINUED)

117 CONTINUED:

117

CHRISTINA

Hello, Mother.

JOAN

Darling!

Joan stands and moves to Christina and embraces her briefly.

JOAN

(continuing)

You've grown... taller. I want you to meet my husband.

CHRISTINA

What do I call him?

JOAN

(surprised)

What would you call anyone who is your father?

(Joan gazes at the man in the pool)

He's too fat, wears glasses, and he's slightly hard of hearing in one ear. But he's a wonderful man. Go introduce yourself.

Christina hesitates, then walks across the yard to the pool. In the b.g. Joan stands on the patio watching. Al Steele swims toward Christina, a smile on his face. Christina kneels and extends her hand which Al shakes.

CHRISTINA

(softly)

Hello... Daddy. I'm Christina.

CUT TO:

118 INT. UNFURNISHED APARTMENT - DAY

118

We're in New York, in what must be one of the biggest apartments in the world. The walls from eighteen normal-sized rooms have been torn out to make eight huge rooms. We see workmen in white overalls everywhere, a harried DECORATOR, etc.

Joan, Alfred Steele and Christina enter the apartment. The Decorator rushes to Joan.

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED:

118

DECORATOR

I don't know what to do -- that retaining wall is really blocking the view!

JOAN

Tear out the frigging wall and put the window where it belongs.

Christina laughs. The Decorator looks at Steele, who shrugs. CAMERA TRACKS the three as Joan points out various features of the room.

JOAN

(continuing; she laughs)

... so let's sit in the den a while.

The three perch on construction crates and boxes.

JOAN

(continuing)

Well, Tina. What are you up to?

CHRISTINA

I've been acting.

Joan pretends not to understand.

JOAN

Acting like what?

CHRISTINA

Like an actress. Mostly in stock. I think I may be pretty good.

JOAN

(condescending)

Good luck, darling.

CHRISTINA

I'm working at night, so I can go on interviews during the day. The thing is...

(it's hard for her)

... I don't like to ask, but I wondered if you could lend me --

JOAN

Not a cent.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

118 CONTINUED: (2)

118

JOAN (CONT'D)

You may be an actress for all I know, but you can do it like I did -- on your own; starve and cuss and kiss every ass you see, but do it on your own.

(a beat)

Besides, we can't afford it.

AL

Oh, Joan, come on. A little something.

Joan gives him a look that silences him.

JOAN

Doing things on your own is best. You agree, don't you, Christina?

CHRISTINA

(smiles; what else can she say)

Sure.

119 INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY (A BIT LATER)

119

Christina is waiting for the elevator. Steele moves quickly to her and presses two hundred dollars into her hand.

AL

Between us.

CUT TO:

120 INT. UNFURNISHED APARTMENT - DAY

120

Al re-enters and thoughtfully goes to Joan, who is studying blueprints.

AL

I hate to bring this up, but we've got to cut back on our spending.

JOAN

(angrily)

What are you talking about? I'm doing everything for you. I'm working my ass off to turn this into your showplace.

(CONTINUED)

AL

You're doing a marvelous job, but we've got to economize.

JOAN

(blows up)

Economize! I've lived a certain way all my life. I'm not going back down the ladder just because you want to pinch pennies! Most of our expenses are for your company. I have to look great for Pepsi-Cola.

AL

I want you to look great and I want us to live well, but there's a limit. We're going into debt.

JOAN

You're going into debt. You're the businessman, Alfred Steele, I'm the star! You wanted a movie star to trot around for your goddamned soda pop, well, you've got to pay the price.

AL

Be reasonable, Joan. I've given you everything you've wanted. Just look at this joint.

JOAN

You're the genius of the soft drink world. Get the goddamned company to pay the bills. Without me, Pepsi couldn't get the time of day.

AL

Joan, you've got to understand. It's a public company, for chrissake. This isn't Hollywood, where someone 'takes care of things' with a phone call. This is the real world.

JOAN

I have a public; they expect me to live a certain way.

AL

And that way is breaking my back.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED: (2)

120

JOAN

You should have thought of all this before. Why should I suffer because you didn't plan things well? You'll find a solution, Al. You love challenges.

CUT TO:

121 INT. PEPSI BOARD ROOM - DAY

121

Joan, dressed in black with a black-veiled hat, sits at one end of a long board room table. On both sides of the gleaming mahogany table is a line of TWELVE EXECUTIVES, the board of directors of Pepsi-Cola. Joan's manner is that of the suffering, saintly widow; they treat her accordingly.

EXECUTIVE #1

The condolences of every person at Pepsi-Cola are with you.

EXECUTIVE #2

Al Steele helped make this company.

EXECUTIVE #1

And you were right by his side, sharing the burdens and joy.

Joan bows her head, nodding and fighting tears. There is a beat as the men look at her with sympathetic concern.

EXECUTIVE #3

And we want to give you ample time to repay the debt. Plenty of time.

Joan's head snaps up out of its mourning pose. She fixes the man with a cold stare. His tone remains cool, aloof, oily.

EXECUTIVE #3

(continuing)

Of course we'll have to take the Fifth Avenue apartment, but you probably wouldn't want to stay there alone anyway.

Joan looks at each of the men slowly. A snarling smile begins to form as she swivels her head to include each of them.

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED:

121

She conducts herself like a reigning mobster being challenged by lesser mafiosi.

JOAN

(calm)

What debt? I've got a hundred thousand shares of stock.

EXECUTIVE #4

(referring to papers)

Your husband borrowed against the stock to pay for the construction on your apartment.

EXECUTIVE #2

And we loaned him a considerable sum in addition to meet expenses his salary didn't cover.

Joan laughs out loud, a harsh mocking laugh.

JOAN

You think you're so clever, trying to sweep the poor little widow under the carpet? Think again; I'm on the board of directors of this lousy company.

Joan smiles arrogantly at them. They look back at her unperturbed, no emotions visible. Her anger builds throughout.

EXECUTIVE #4

We assumed that with your husband gone you'd no longer want to be on the board.

JOAN

Bullshit. I've given years of my life for this company and I intend to stay with it.

EXECUTIVE #1

We appreciate your devotion and contribution, Miss Crawford, but we have retired you from the board of directors.

JOAN

You two-bit sons of bitches; you drove Al Steele to his grave and now you're going to stab me in the back? Forget it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

121 CONTINUED: (2)

121

JOAN (CONT'D)

I fought monsters worse than you  
years ago in Hollywood. I learned  
how to win the hard way.

EXECUTIVE #3

(placating)

Miss Crawford, we don't want any  
hard feelings, and of course...

JOAN

(interrupting)

You don't know what 'hard feelings'  
are until you see how few people in  
America will drink that shit of  
yours when I come out against it.

EXECUTIVE #3

(placating)

Please, Miss Crawford, it's hardly  
necessary to make threats you  
surely don't mean.

JOAN

Don't fuck with me, fellas. This  
ain't my first time at the rodeo.  
You forget that the press I  
delivered to Pepsi was my power.  
I can use it any way I want. It's  
a sword that cuts both ways, you  
could say.

The men all look nervously at each other.

THE CHAIRMAN

(speaks for the  
first time)

We didn't realize the extent to  
which you were interested in the  
company, apart from Al's position.  
We misjudged. We shall be  
pleased to have you stay on.

Joan smiles at him. She includes the others in her  
smirk.

JOAN

Thank you. I feel better already.

CLOSEUP on Joan smiling malevolently, feeling her power.

CUT TO:

122 EXT. NEW YORK CITY - WEST 84TH STREET - DAY 122

A 1968 vintage New York taxi is slowly moving down the street looking for a correct address. It stops in front of a fairly shabby brownstone walkup. Joan, looking considerably older, exits the taxi and goes inside the building. We see her checking mailboxes for Christina's apartment.

CUT TO:

123 INT. CHRISTINA'S APARTMENT - DAY 123

Spartan, neat, working girl's lifestyle. Christina is preparing a light salad in her kitchen. She hears the BUZZER.

CHRISTINA

Coming. I'm coming.

She crosses to the door which opens directly into her living room. She opens the door and finds Joan.

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Mommie!

Joan enters, looks around.

JOAN

I happened to be in the neighborhood.

CHRISTINA

Oh, Mommie. I wish I'd known you were coming. I would have straightened up.

JOAN

(graciously)

It looks quite neat to me.

She glances around the tiny apartment. She sits in a chair, enjoying a little nostalgia.

JOAN

(continuing)

Jesus Christ. I forgot what it was like. How are you, Tina?

CHRISTINA

I've been making rounds.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED:

123

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

And making rounds. I've had lots  
of turndowns and lots of rejections  
-- but I'm up for a part.

JOAN

Good!

CHRISTINA

It's a soap opera.

Joan opens her purse and removes a stunning silver  
flask with a jeweled Pepsi symbol on it and pours  
herself a shot of vodka. As she sips, she shows  
Christina the flask.

JOAN

I got it from Batista himself when  
I opened the plant outside Havana.  
Not bad, huh?

CHRISTINA

It's lovely, Mommie.

JOAN

Cheap bastards.

CHRISTINA

Do you miss all that?

JOAN

Yeah. Sometimes.

(a new beat)

So! What about the guys?

CHRISTINA

Guys are guys. It hasn't changed.

Joan again opens her purse, taking out an elegant  
black jeweler's box.

JOAN

I brought you a gift.

Christina is astonished. She takes the box from Joan  
and opens it. It's a beautiful strand of pearls.  
Christina is very moved.

CHRISTINA

They're lovely. Thank you, Mommie  
dearest...

(CONTINUED)

123 CONTINUED: (2)

123

JOAN

It was the first thing I got from  
Al. I want you to have them.

A long beat. Joan again looks around the apartment.

JOAN

(continuing;  
gestures to  
the pearls)

And, Tina -- if you don't get the  
part -- for Chrissakes, don't  
hock 'em!

Christina and Joan laugh at this line. Christina  
embraces her mother.

CUT TO:

124 INT. JOAN'S SMALLER APARTMENT - AFTERNOON

124

Joan has moved into a modest 4½ room conventional  
Manhattan high-rise apartment. As we come in, Joan  
is nicely dressed, fully made up, sitting at her  
dining room table with the now omnipresent glass of  
vodka at her side. The faithful Carol Ann is organ-  
izing piles of publicity head shots of Joan on the  
table, and has lists of names, stamps, sponges and  
envelopes laid out. Joan is signing her name (that  
same old "Yours always -- Joan Crawford") to each  
photograph, then passing it along to Carol Ann. Joan  
is fully concentrated, taking her task more seriously.  
She reaches the bottom of the pile, takes a sip from  
her drink and looks up.

JOAN

Is it four o'clock?

CAROL ANN

Five after.

JOAN

(nodding at small  
portable television  
set on sideboard)

Five after... turn it on!

Carol Ann does so. While she waits impatiently, Joan  
pours herself another drink and begins to pace, mut-  
tering to herself.

(CONTINUED)

124 CONTINUED:

124

JOAN  
 (continuing)  
 Five minutes late! I want that  
 set on every day at four sharp!

Joan strides over to the television set and adjusts  
 it herself, attempting to hurry the image into life.

125 ANGLE

125

Finally the image resolves and we COME IN on typical  
 scene from an afternoon soap opera, The Secret Storm.  
 Christina is prominently featured playing the young  
 leading woman.

126 JOAN

126

every critical faculty alert, retreats to her chair  
 at the dining room table and sits, forgetting her  
 drink as she scrutinizes and evaluates Christina's  
 performance. Actually, Christina's work on the soap  
 is quite acceptable. She appears attractive, com-  
 posed and her talents are certainly up to the demands  
 made. We have a sense of Joan examining Christina's  
 work as carefully and intensely as she would have  
 evaluated her own, years ago. Also, there's a mixture  
 of pride and envy as Joan watches her daughter in the  
 spotlight. After a suitably turgid climax on the  
 soap, there's a commercial break.

CAROL ANN  
 She's doing well, don't you think?

JOAN  
 Improving.

CAROL ANN  
 (holding some  
 letters)  
 A lot of fans have written about  
 how impressed they are with  
 Christina -- and how proud you  
 must be of her acting.

JOAN  
 Something had to rub off. Now  
 hand me some more of those 8 x 10's.

129 INT. CHRISTINA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

129

In the midst of eating dinner, she suddenly stops quickly, frowns, and touches her abdomen with the tips of her fingers. She is perspiring -- has a stab of pain -- she moves to the telephone and manages to dial.

CUT TO:

CHRISTINA

CHRISTINA  
(into the phone)  
Mother? I'm sick.

CUT TO:

128 INT. MANHATTAN HOSPITAL

128

Joan and Carol Ann walk quickly down the hallway. A strong-looking 50-year-old WOMAN, smartly dressed with a short haircut, steps out to introduce herself.

WOMAN  
Miss Crawford, I'm Belinda  
Rosenberg, Christina's producer.

The DOCTOR moves toward them from an examining room. He's in a hurry, but pauses briefly.

DOCTOR  
It's an ovarian tumor. We have  
to operate now.

CUT TO:

129 INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - DAY

129

Joan, Carol Ann and the producer stand as the Doctor from the previous scene approaches.

DOCTOR  
Good news. It's benign. She'll  
need a couple of weeks to recuperate.

CUT TO:

130 INT. CHRISTINA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - AFTERNOON (NEXT DAY)

130

Christina is lying in bed with intravenous tubes in her arm. There are lots of flowers. She's quite pale and is sitting up with pillows propping her. She is dozing slightly. A NURSE rushes in and switches on her television.

(CONTINUED)

130 CONTINUED:

130

NURSE

Your TV show's on; don't you want  
to watch?

CHRISTINA

(weakly)

To see how well they manage  
without me?

NURSE

To see your mother! They just  
announced your mother has agreed  
to stand in for you until you're  
well.

CHRISTINA

She can't! My character is  
twenty-eight years old!

131 ANGLE ON TV SCREEN

131

The commercial on the station finishes and Joan ap-  
pears on the screen. She is wearing one of Chris-  
tina's costumes, a mini-skirt, which serves to  
heighten the inappropriateness of the occasion.

Joan appears to be drunk. She looks disoriented,  
and slightly desperate, searching for the cue cards,  
slurring her words.

132 CHRISTINA

132

turns white as she stares in horrified fascination  
as her mother walks across the soap opera room shakily.

JOAN

(on TV)

Bill, I... uh... could you, uh...

ACTOR

(on TV, covering  
for her)

Could I call Cindy for you?

133 INT. SET OF SOAP OPERA

133

The CAMERA GOES INSIDE the television screen and we  
are on the set of the soap opera, which is being  
telecast live.

(CONTINUED)

133 CONTINUED:

133

The crew stands around the set, looking at each other with nervous embarrassment.

JOAN  
(in character)  
Yes, she wants... uh...

Joan squints at the cue card underneath the television camera. The Actor covers for her again.

ACTOR  
I know that she wants to marry David. But what about his wife?

Soap opera MUSIC comes up and the red light goes off on top of the television camera. Belinda Rosenberg, the producer, hurries over to Joan, trying to be diplomatic while under terrible strain.

BELINDA  
Miss Crawford, are you all right?

JOAN  
(shaky as hell)  
I'm fine. Just nerves. Get me a drink and I'll be fine.

BELINDA  
We've only got another seventy seconds. You're doing swell. Just keep finding those cue cards.

JOAN  
Tell them to hold them up a little higher. I couldn't see the damn things. That's why I went wrong, you see --

Joan's attitude is not one of anger, but of a liquor-induced self-assurance. The crew members and other embarrassed cast try not to look at her.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
In ten, please: nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one...

As he counts, the CAMERA PULLS BACK and RE-ENTERS:

134 INT. CHRISTINA'S HOSPITAL ROOM

134

where she is once again watching Joan on the television screen.

(CONTINUED)

134 CONTINUED: (2)

134

INT. CHRISTINA'S HOSPITAL ROOM - SAME TIME - DAY

Christina looks at the image of her mother on the screen. Christina winces in embarrassment and humiliation.

CHRISTINA

(to nurse)

Shut it off. Please.

CUT TO:

135 INT. CHRISTINA'S NEW, LARGER APARTMENT - NIGHT

135

Several more years have passed. DOORBELL RINGS and Christina opens door to admit Carol Ann who is carrying a see-through plastic bag which contains an evening dress and a small suitcase which contains coordinated shoes, bag, jewelry, etc.

CAROL ANN

Well, dear. Here's everything your mother picked.

CHRISTINA

My God. I hope it fits.

CAROL ANN

Joan's arranged for a seamstress to be here at five. She's so proud. She took sure care to pick the right colors for you.

PHONE RINGS.

Christina moves to answer it.

CHRISTINA

(into phone)

Yes, Mommie. Yes, she's here. It looks just fine. No. I'm delighted. I want to do it for you.

CUT TO:

136 INT. CRAWFORD APARTMENT - NIGHT

136

Joan is in her bedroom watching television.

(CONTINUED)

136 CONTINUED:

136

She is frail, ravaged by a combination of alcohol and failing health. Despite her weakened condition, she is done up in the old chin strap, creams, etc. as though she were planning to report to Metro tomorrow morning. As Christina watched Joan on television a beat ago, now Joan studies her daughter.

CUT TO:

137 JOAN'S TELEVISION - IMAGE OF AN AWARDS BANQUET

137

A MASTER OF CEREMONIES raises his hand to signal the end of the applause.

## MASTER OF CEREMONIES

As the final event of this prestigious evening we bestow our organization's highest award of merit upon a woman known throughout the world, not only as an Academy Award winning actress, but also as a business woman held in high regard for her charitable, civic and professional contributions... It is an honor for me to present this award of recognition to a truly great lady, Miss Joan Crawford.

(applause)

With us tonight to accept the award on behalf of her mother is Miss Crawford's daughter, Christina.

Christina rises from her table near the dais, walks up the stairs crossing to the podium. She looks stunning in her evening gown and attractive hairdo. She graciously accepts the award from the Master of Ceremonies.

138 DURING THE FOLLOWING WE INTERCUT

138

between the healthy, vibrant Christina in a blaze of light and jewels and Joan, in her darkened bedroom watching her daughter on television. As Joan watches, she raises the vodka to her lips with a now trembling hand to drink.

CHRISTINA

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

138 CONTINUED:

138

CHRISTINA (CONT'D)

It is a privilege to be here with you tonight and accept this honor ... this award on behalf of my mother, Joan Crawford. When I spoke with her, she asked me to convey to you her deepest gratitude. She wanted so much to be here in person tonight, but as you know, prior commitments made that impossible.

(pause)

I know she would want me to say 'Thank you'... to each and every one of you who made this honor possible. And on a more personal note, I'd like to say directly to her...

Christina takes a long pause and looks straight into the camera. Then with all her heart she says:

CHRISTINA

(continuing)

Congratulations and --

(a beat)

I love you, Mommie dearest.

CUT TO:

139 INT. JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

139

Joan, in her half lit bedroom as tears come into her eyes and slowly run down her cheeks.

CUT TO:

139A INT. JOAN'S APARTMENT - FULL SHOT - NIGHT

139A

Carol Ann swings the door wide open, and takes herself OUT OF THE SHOT. There stands Tina, elegant, beautiful, smiling, in her hands the Award, and enters, the CAMERA PANNING with her, as the door is closed behind. This room of plastic covered furniture, plastic flowers, white rug, with its display of trophies and awards, including the Oscar, lies with the weight of time on the figure of Joan, who sits up on the couch as her daughter hands her the trophy.

CAROL ANN

It's beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

139A CONTINUED:

139A

Joan looks at it without enthusiasm.

JOAN

Put it with the others.

Carol Ann takes it and does, then faces, while Tina comes to sit down beside her mother.

CLOSE TWO SHOT

There is silence, too long. Joan takes a sip from her glass.

CHRISTINA

Did you like the way it went?

JOAN

I liked the way you did it.

CHRISTINA

It was you they wanted to see.

Joan is up at that, ANGLE WIDENS, standing there facing an unseen world of awards and fans and time past.

JOAN

What would they see? I can't pretend to look like Joan Crawford any more.

Tina gets up. She wants to comfort her mother, but how. So she comes close but not too close.

CHRISTINA

They see you as they always see you. You never change in their minds just like you never change in mine.

Suddenly Joan is in tears and as when Tina was a child, so now Joan embraces her, but Tina is powerful and strong and it's Joan who is frail and weak.

VERY TIGHT SHOT, the two women, faces so close.

JOAN

Oh, Tina darling, I really wish we could live those days again and try again. I wish, I wish.

(CONTINUED)

139A CONTINUED: (2)

139A

CHRISTINA

I meant what I told the whole  
world tonight. I love you.

Joan peers into that face. Every face is always a mystery and Joan tries to read her daughter's. Then she steps away.

MOVING SHOT that takes her to her trophies where she retrieves the one from that night. And now this old woman, draws on her inner strength, her will, that fierce determination that made her life possible. She accepts the award. ANGLE WIDENS TO INCLUDE Tina watching.

JOAN

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.  
It is a privilege to be here  
tonight and accept this honor...  
and on a more personal note I'd  
like to say directly to my  
daughter... I love you, Christina,  
darling.

Joan turns away and returns the trophy to its place.

JOAN

(continuing; as  
she does)

I really do, Tina, darling, I  
really do.

CUT TO:

140 INT. FUNERAL HOME - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

140

We OPEN ON A FULL CLOSEUP of Christina in tears. This is a MATCH CUT from Joan's tear-stained face which we just left.

CAMERA SLOWLY PANS DOWN to reveal Joan in her coffin. She is frail in death, even thinner looking than she was in the preceding scenes.

Christina is alone in the room having the first viewing of her mother's body. CAMERA SLOWLY MOVES UP OFF Joan, BACK TO Christina's face as she looks down lovingly at her dead mother.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

140

CHRISTINA  
 (almost inaudible)  
 I did, you know. I always did  
 love you...

CUT TO:

141 DOORWAY - VIEWING ROOM

141

as her brother Christopher, now grown, and DAVID, Tina's husband, enter quietly. Solicitously, they move to Christina's side. Christina and Christopher embrace as David stands a few feet away.

CHRISTINA  
 (softly to her  
 brother)  
 You okay?

CHRISTOPHER  
 Yes. You?

CHRISTINA  
 I'm okay. You met my husband,  
 David?

CHRISTOPHER  
 Yes.

Christopher approaches the coffin and takes a look at his mother. Christina moves to David's side who puts his arm around her. After a moment, Christopher turns away from the coffin.

DAVID  
 (sympathetically  
 to Christina  
 and Christopher)  
 Let's go out and get some air.

With his arm around Christina, and a hand on Christopher's shoulder, he shepherds the grieving children from the room.

CUT TO:

142 FUNERAL RECEPTION ROOM - DAY

142

As the three emerge from the viewing room, they are descended on by an unctuous FUNERAL DIRECTOR.

(CONTINUED)

142 CONTINUED:

142

Reverentially to Christina -- but unable to restrain his enthusiasm.

FUNERAL DIRECTOR

Miss Crawford, I've always been such a fan of your mother's. I do hope you feel we've done her justice. Actually, I worked from my own personally autographed publicity still of your mother.

CHRISTINA

(mumbles)

Yes, of course. Thank you very much.

DAVID

Thank you.

David moves Christina and Christopher away from the mortician. They are almost to the exit when they are stopped by Carol Ann -- now in her mid-seventies. She is frail, worn and grieving. She goes straight to Christina and the two embrace and hold each other. They are racked with emotion. Christopher and David stand aside. After a long beat; Carol Ann speaks softly to Christina.

CAROL ANN

She always loved you so very much, Tina.

CHRISTINA

Did she, Carol Ann? Did she? I want to believe that. I need so to be able to believe that...

The two women embrace again, holding each other tightly, fiercely, almost afraid to let each other go.

CUT TO:

143 INT. LAWYER'S OFFICE - DAY

143

Christina, seated with David and Christopher. All three are quite formally dressed. On the other side of the desk is a distinguished-looking LAWYER. He turns the pages of a will. Christopher turns toward Christina. She glances at him and he gives her a comforting smile. She smiles in return, with tears brimming.

(CONTINUED)

143 CONTINUED:

143

The Lawyer stops turning pages and stares at the page in front of him.

LAWYER

(solemnly)

Here we are: this is the section  
pertaining to you and Christopher.

Christina and Christopher look at each other again while the Lawyer examines the page. There is tension, anticipation.

LAWYER

(continuing; after

a pause -- he reads)

'IT IS MY INTENTION TO MAKE NO  
PROVISION HEREIN FOR MY DAUGHTER  
CHRISTINA, AND MY SON, CHRISTOPHER  
... FOR REASONS WHICH ARE WELL  
KNOWN TO THEM.'

The Lawyer slides the page across the desk.

Christina and Christopher look at one another, shocked expressions on their faces. Christina stares down at the well.

CHRISTOPHER

As usual, she has the last word.

CAMERA SLOWLY ANGLES IN ON A CLOSE SHOT of Christina. She is staring at the brutal words before her. Finally, she looks up.

CHRISTINA

(softly)

Does she?

The SHOT SLOWLY BLURS.