

FADE IN:

INT. MAGGY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rain pelts the windows, and thunder rumbles.

MARGARET "MAGGY" MCANALLY, late 20s, takes a big drink of her wine and sets her glass on the table where there is an empty bottle and another half empty one. Soft music plays.

A woman, about Maggy's age, GAIL, sits on the other end of the couch. She wipes her eyes, and sets her glass down. She slouches almost as if she's disappearing into the cushions.

On the end table next to the empty bottle of wine is a pencil drawing of Maggy. Next to that one is a picture of Gail.

MAGGY

You're drinking a little heavy tonight. If you get drunk --

GAIL

I went to church today and saw Bell.

MAGGY

Oh.

She takes a big gulp of her wine.

GAIL

She wanted me to come over. I told her I was coming here.

MAGGY

I'm glad you did.

GAIL

I wish I could say the same.

MAGGY

We've been here, Gail.

GAIL

I'm tired of the lie, Maggy. I left Bell for you. She wouldn't admit who she -- who we are. You and I should move away from here, have children.

MAGGY

You know I can't do that.

GAIL
Can't or won't.

Maggy looks away from her.

Gail's cell phone pings. She answers it, watching. MUSIC.
Turns it off and pours a glass of wine and drains it.

GAIL (CONT'D)
I love you, Maggy.

MAGGY
I don't know --

GAIL
I thought I knew you.

She turns her phone on to show Maggy a video clip of Maggy
and a girl named STEPHANIE dancing.

GAIL (CONT'D)
This is from Bell.

MAGGY
Bell's a bitch. She can't possibly
know --

GAIL
You drove 100 miles to the city, to
the place where we met, so you
could screw around.

She picks up the drawing of Maggy and looks intently at it
and then looks back up at Maggy.

GAIL (CONT'D)
Really, Maggy?

MAGGY
Gail, you should pull your head out
of your ass.

The girl stands.

GAIL
You're right because I see a piece
of shit.

She rips up the picture, strides toward the door.

Maggy jumps up and grabs her arm.

MAGGY
Where are you going?

GAIL
Anywhere.

MAGGY
I want you to stay.

GAIL
Do you?

MAGGY
You've been drinking.

She breaks free of Maggy and opens the door.

GAIL
Is that the only reason?

Maggy says nothing.

GAIL (CONT'D)
I'll be leaving then. It smells bad
here.

Maggy watches her go, sits back on the couch and picks up her wine glass, drains it.

She starts to pour more, her hands shaking. She sets the bottle down, covers her face, sobs.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Maggy, dressed in a sloppy t-shirt, old jeans with paint stains, hair tied back in a pony tail, opens the door and steps warily into the office.

SHELLY SIMPSON, a secretary with salt and pepper hair, dressed professionally, smiles as she walks in.

Maggy looks at the closed door, with the plaque, principal, on it.

MAGGY
Do you know what this is about?

SHELLY
One of your students.

MAGGY
What's he like, Shelly?

SHELLY
Not sure yet.

The inner office door opens.

DR. OLIVER SHARP, a clean cut, muscular man, with green eyes, steps into the office, his suit immaculate, a cross pin attached to his lapel.

OLIVER
Come in, Miss McAnnally

MAGGY
Please, call me Maggy.

OLIVER
Come in, Miss McAnnally.

Maggy walks into the office, and Oliver closes the door behind her.

INT. INTERIOR OFFICE - DAY

BRIAN HYDE, a clean-cut man, also with a cross lapel pen, sits stiffly and formally.

OLIVER
This is Dr. Hyde.

BRIAN
As in Jeckyl and not cow.

He smiles a little, like he knows his joke is lame, but he hopes someone laughs, at least to make him feel better.

OLIVER
Dr. Hyde is a licensed counselor who works with the girls from the Residential Care Facility.

BRIAN
Licensed *Christian* counselor.

OLIVER
We go to the same church.

BRIAN
I counsel the girls on their health: physical, mental, and above all spiritual. I also make sure they have the best educational plan.

Maggy looks from Brian to Oliver.

MAGGY

Okay.

BRIAN

You're going to have one of my students.

He looks at a piece of paper.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

Art Seminar.

MAGGY

Art Seminar is an advanced class.

BRIAN

She has some problems, but Miss Drake believes she also has the talent to excel in art.

MAGGY

What is her art background?

BRIAN

Why should her background matter? Teachers teach.

As the two men stand and shake hands, Maggy opens the door.

OLIVER

Please wait outside for a minute Miss McAnally.

Maggy steps outside the door

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Maggy walks toward the office door, but stops at the desk.

MAGGY

Do you know anything about my new student?

SHELLY

Not really.

MAGGY

Mr. Sharp --

SHELLY

Dr. Sharp. That's what he wants to be called.

MAGGY

He's letting her into my class
because this Hyde guy says she has
talent.

SHELLY

You're the best Maggy. If she does,
you'll bring it out.

Maggy smiles.

The door to the office opens, and she turns to see Brian. He
frowns at her, walks through the office but stops in front of
her.

BRIAN

You were friends with Gail Ralston.

Maggy takes a quick, sharp breath.

BRIAN (CONT'D)

I hope she repented before she
died.

He brushes past her and leaves. Maggy freezes.

Oliver appears in his office doorway, motions for her to come
into his office.

INT. INNER OFFICE - DAY

Oliver sits in a leather chair behind a massive desk.

Behind him there is a plaque on the wall. "Let not sin
therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its
passions."

Oliver notices her looking at it.

OLIVER

A gift From Brian.

Maggy sinks into the chair.

Besides the plaque, the only thing on the wall are two
certificates.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I hear you are the best art teacher
around.

She smiles, relaxes a little.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
I don't understand art. I'm a core curriculum type administrator. Data drives my approach. Science and math are essential. I'm not sure the arts are. However, I know they bring out hidden talents in students.

He pauses, looks at her for a few seconds until Maggy seems uncomfortable.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
You don't know this, but the school is facing a financial crisis. Not to the point where we have to make substantial cuts, but close.

MAGGY
Is this why you called me in here?

OLIVER
Brian Hyde is an asshole.

Maggy nearly falls out of her chair.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
He thinks that severe mental illness can be beaten out with a Bible.

He reaches into his desk drawer and pulls out a bag of mini chocolate bars. He grabs one and offers one to Maggy.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
He would say that I'm a glutton for eating these.

He bites about half the candy bar at once.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Mostly, I don't give a shit about what Brian Hyde says. ...

MAGGY
But?

OLIVER
When he tells me one of the girls has problems, it's far worse than you or I can imagine. I want to warn you about that.

MAGGY

Could I ask you why --

OLIVER

I would put her in your class?
Brian insisted. I wish I knew why.
I gave in because I know he sues
schools when he believes one of his
girls has had their rights
violated.

He offers her a candy bar. She grabs two dark chocolate Milky
Way bars.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I want you to handle this girl. Our
school can't survive a law suit
even if we win. If something
happens, we will have to make
substantial cuts.

MAGGY

And art is not math and science.

OLIVER

No, it isn't.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Maggy taps the table nervously, holds a drink in her other
hand and sips it. Across from her, STEPHANIE "STEVIE"
MCGOWAN, about the same age, drinks a glass of wine.

MAGGY

I haven't had anything to drink
since ... the summer.

She begins tapping the table again.

STEPHANIE

Maggy, stop.

She reaches across the table, takes her hand, gently turns it
palm up, and squeezes.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

What are you so nervous about?

MAGGY

My job.

STEPHANIE

So quit.

MAGGY

I have to eat.

Maggy's eyes dart back and forth looking anywhere but into Stephanie's.

STEPHANIE

Plenty of food at my place.

She grins and squeezes Maggy's hand again.

MAGGY

Please, don't.

STEPHANIE

You have to learn to let go and keep living.

MAGGY

It's not that easy.

Stephanie leans back and takes a drink of her wine.

STEPHANIE

When I first met you, I thought you'd be a one night stand at best, but now. If there's any hope --

MAGGY

There's hope.

STEPHANIE

I can't tell you not to blame yourself. You'll have to decide that on your own. In the meantime, I'll be here.

Stephanie puts her drink back down and leans toward Maggy.

She takes Maggy's hand again, her finger lightly tracing her wrist and palm. She raises it up and kisses her knuckles.

Maggy gently pulls her hand back down.

Stevie strokes the palm of Maggy's hand with her finger.

Maggy stiffens briefly, gently pulls her hand away and takes another drink. Her fingers tap -- then stop suddenly when Stevie LAUGHS.

MAGGY

I have a new student. And my new principal doesn't like me.

STEPHANIE

And how are these two related?

MAGGY

I think my new student has really bad mental problems, and my principal says that I have to handle her or our school could be sued and art could be cut out completely.

Stephanie grabs her hand and smiles.

STEPHANIE

Worry when the time comes. Right now ...

She nods her head to the left.

Girls sit with each other. A few of them dance on the floor.

The song changes to a slow one. One girl kisses the other.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

They're playing our song.

MAGGY

We don't have a song.

STEPHANIE

This one will do.

Stephanie stands and takes Maggy's hand again.

Maggy drains her drink, and when she stands, sways a little.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

The only thing you should worry about is how I plan on taking advantage of you.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The classroom is cluttered. Art supplies, easels, six tables instead of desks, painting supplies -- acrylic paint and a variety of brushes on each table.

There is also a phone on Maggy's desk.

Maggy wanders through the tables and straightens paints. In front of each seat is a small canvas for painting.

A picture of Gail hangs on the wall. One of Stephanie next to it.

A BELL RINGS.

A student, JOHN BLACK, 17 comes in.

He walks toward the wall and looks at the drawings Maggy has posted.

He notices the painting of Gail.

JOHN
She's beautiful.

Maggy turns, and it's as if she notices the painting is there after forgetting about it for a long time.

She hurries to the wall, takes it down, drops it into the trash can.

JOHN (CONT'D)
I heard about the wreck.

MAGGY
I don't want to talk about it.

JOHN
Miss Mags, everybody has to die,
but when you don't live, you're
already dead.

She takes a deep breath and starts walking toward the door.

Two girls EMILY DAWSON and CHLOE ARMSTRONG, both 16 dressed in the latest styles, enter the room and sit at a table.

Oliver appears at the doorway and watches. She looks up and sees Oliver who motions for her.

John reaches into the trash can and retrieves the picture.

OLIVER
Ms. McAnally.

EMILY
In trouble already?

She GIGGLES.

Maggy slowly approaches him. From the door ...

OLIVER
Between classes, you need to
monitor the hallway.

He leaves before she reaches him.

JOHN
Such a tight ass.

MAGGY
John.

JOHN
He is.

Maggy suddenly smiles as students come in. TYLER WHITE, senior, athlete with a jersey. He sits next to John. They fist bump.

Two girls enter together. ALEXIS DAVIS and SARAH WRIGHT, both 16 or so, both well dressed, sit together at one table.

A bell rings; Maggy frowns and turns back into her classroom and walks to the desk.

MAGGY
I'm supposed to get a new student.

EMILY
We don't want a new student.

JOHN
We'll work with her.

TYLER
Especially if she's hot.

CHLOE
You're such a sleaze.

MELANIE RICHARDS appears in the doorway, stands puzzled, as if lost, 17, not the gorgeous type, average, crosses her arms and scratches them like she has a rash.

MELANIE
I'm looking for art design.

She sees everyone looking at her, stops scratching, wraps her arms around herself, and makes no eye contact.

MAGGY
This is the place. You can sit with these two guys over here, but watch out; they're dangerous.

Melanie says nothing but sits down.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
How do you like acrylics, Melanie?

MELANIE
I can use anything.

CHLOE
Oooh. An artistic savant.

She says it under her breath so Maggy doesn't hear it, but Melanie does.

Maggy picks up a poster from her desk. It is a print of Monet's The Water Lilly Pond.

MAGGY
Can you tell me what style Monet --

MELANIE
Impressionism.

CHLOE
Everyone knows that.

EMILY
Did you?

Emily LAUGHS.

MAGGY
How would you define impressionism?

Tyler quickly opens his book in the silence.

TYLER
A literary or artistic style that
seeks to capture a feeling or
experience --

MAGGY
Congratulations, Ty. You can read.

He LAUGHS.

MELANIE
Impressionism tries to capture the
light.

MAGGY
Explain yourself.

MELANIE

How do you explain light? It's like touching a soul.

CHLORE

What's that supposed to mean?

JOHN

It's hard to explain if you don't have one.

Tyler chuckles. Maggy smiles.

MAGGY

Impressionism is hard to explain, but you guys are good. I want you to start doing an original impressionistic painting.

Tyler GROANS.

Maggy stares him into silence.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The class members work diligently.

Melanie has her head on the table.

Maggy looks up from her own easel at Melanie. John nudges Melanie awake.

MAGGY

You need to work on your painting.

MELANIE

No I don't.

Melanie's demeanour has changed. She sits upright, like she's just waiting to fight. One clenched fists rest on the table. Her other hand rubs her chin.

MAGGY

I give you class time to work on things--

Melanie raises her arms up, her motion robotic. She stops, takes a deep breath, and then her arms fall to her side.

MELANIE

I'm finished.

Melanie loosens up, crosses her arms in front of her, scratches.

Maggy walks toward the table. Melanie takes the picture and hides it behind her back.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
It looks like shit.

She immediately tenses again, stands, knocking her stool over with a crash on the floor, her painting still behind her back.

Maggy freezes for a second.

JOHN
Mel, your work is great.

Melanie takes a step toward John, stops. She kind of collapses into herself, finger going to her mouth.

MELANIE
(in an uncertain, almost
as if ashamed of herself
voice)
It's no good.

All of the anger is gone. Her shoulders slump. Her canvas drops from her hands. She chews her finger, looks down at the floor.

Maggy glances at John who reaches down and picks up the painting.

He takes it to Maggy who glances at it. A river, muted greens and blues, several girls naked, some sitting on the banks, others in the river. Several people with blank, blurred faces, stand near them.

MAGGY
This is so ...moving. The innocence
of young children.

Melanie snorts in derision. Maggy glances at her.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
I don't quite get all of this. Who
are these ...

She points to the people with blurred faces.

MELANIE
The keepers.

MAGGY
Keepers?

MELANIE
Like in a zoo.

Melanie's eyes raise slightly; she takes her finger out of her mouth and smiles.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
See this.

She points to a girl off by herself, standing next to one of the people, her hands tied behind her back.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
She tried to run.

Maggy frowns.

MAGGY
I don't understand.

Melanie yells

MELANIE
No one does!

She bursts into tears and runs for the door and out into the hallway.

JOHN
What the hell?

CHLOE
What a crazy bitch!

Maggy picks up the phone on her desk.

MAGGY
Dr. Sharp needs to come down here now.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Maggy sits in her chair. Oliver studies her.

OLIVER
They found her in the bathroom.
What happened?

Maggy picks up Melanie's painting and shows it to him. He looks at it and hands it back.

MAGGY

She freaked out, ran from the room.
Dr. Sharp, she said some disturbing
things. Something is seriously
wrong with her.

OLIVER

If she's a danger, I can have her
removed.

MAGGY

I don't think she's a danger, but
we should talk to Dr. Hyde.

OLIVER

If this girl needs help, she won't
get it from him.

Maggy sits up straight.

MAGGY

I have a girl -- I know a girl who
is a licensed counselor. She's a
friend of mine.

OLIVER

Talk to her then.

He turns to go, but stops.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

You have to be careful how you
handle this.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The kids in the class sit in their chairs. John glances at
the clock. RUSTLE of supplies being put away.

JOHN

What are you going to do over Labor
day?

MAGGY

I'm going to hang out with my
friend Stevie. Some friends get
together to play video games. We
get together to paint.

She points to the wall.

On it hang several paintings. Melanie's has a prominent place
in the center of all the rest.

Next, to Melanie's painting is kind of an abstract impressionism painting of Maggie sitting on a cliff. The ocean behind her, dark storm clouds on the horizon.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
She did that.

She glances at the clock.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
We're going to start a new project
in class tomorrow that I want you
to finish up over Labor Day.

Almost all of the students GROAN in protest.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
The assignment is to do something
you want to do. It doesn't matter
what style or what medium.

She smiles.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Besides, if you get a good start on
it tomorrow, you won't have any
trouble finishing it up over the
weekend.

The bell rings. The students start to leave. John pauses. To
Melanie

JOHN
Are you coming?

MELANIE
I need to talk to Miss McAnnally.

When the other students are gone, Melanie walks up to Maggy
and looks at some of the paintings hanging on the wall.

MAGGY
What do you need, Melanie?

MELANIE
Mel. I go by Mel.

She moves a step toward Maggy.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Stevie's a girl.

MAGGY
Yes.

MELANIE
She's your lover.

MAGGY
Melanie --

MELANIE
Mel.

MAGGY
You need to go now.

MELANIE
Why her, this Stevie? I can show
you things --

OLIVER
Miss McAnnally, is everything okay?
Melanie frowns, curses under her breath.

MELANIE
I'll see you soon.
Melanie leaves, nodding to Oliver as she walks past him.

OLIVER
What's going on?

MELANIE
I think Melanie just propositioned
me.

OLIVER
Oh, fuck.
Melanie starts, can't believe her ears.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
I hope your friend can tell us what
we're dealing with.

MAGGY
I think Melanie has DID.

OLIVER
DID?

MAGGY
Multiple personality disorder.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Maggy looks up from her desk and sees Melanie who holds an 8 X 10 piece of cardboard stock.

MELANIE

I'm sorry about yesterday. She ...
I... have issues sometimes.

Maggy stiffens, looks at her phone, moves her hand close to it.

Timidly, Melanie walks up to Maggy's desk. Melanie wears a white sweater with a teal blue shirt and a pair of white pants. Her dress surprises Maggy so much that she moves her hand away from the phone.

MAGGY

You look cute in white.

Melanie smiles. Her hair, put up in a ponytail, bounces around

MELANIE

Would you look at this?

She hands it to Maggy.

Maggy does a double-take.

It's a picture in black and shades of gray, except for one place. The picture shows a girl sitting on the floor in almost a fetal position with several people surrounding her, their arms long, reaching for her. There are almost no facial features on any of the shapes, but two of them have beards and one has a mustache. The other two are totally blank.

It looks like more hands are pushing against the wall, trying to break through. The girl wears a white t-shirt pulled over her to her knees, nothing else.

Maggy looks at Melanie and frowns.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

(almost crying)
You don't like it?

MAGGY

It's, uh, arresting.

Maggy sees the name Nola on the back. It's written in a beautiful script, the letters an aqua color.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
What's Nola?

MELANIE
Her name. Almost alone.

MAGGY
What are these people doing to
Nola?

MELANIE
Hurting me ...

Her voice changes.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Because she's a weak whiny bitch.

Maggy reaches for the phone.

Melanie speaks, her voice sweet, seductive.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
Don't be afraid of me.

She steps close to Maggy.

MAGGY
Are you, Nola?

Melanie stops in her tracks, stiffens.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Is this a picture of Nola?

Melanie bursts into tears.

MELANIE
Leave me alone.

She runs for the door.

EXT./INT. AT THE RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - DAY

Maggy gets out of her car. Freeda, sitting on the porch, sees her and hurries toward her.

FREEDA
Do you have an appointment?

MAGGY
No, I wanted to drop by --

FREEDA
Ms. Belva won't talk to you.

MAGGY
Why not?

FREEDA
She's a bitch.

Freeda sees the shock on Maggy's face.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
She is. But I won't call her that
anymore.

Freeda laughs.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
The old ...witch... won't talk to
you unless you have an appointment.

MAGGY
I'm from the school.

Freeda's face widens with fear.

FREEDA
If you don't leave, she'll throw a
fit --

MAGGY
It won't be that bad.

FREEDA
She'll take it out on us because
it's always bad when the school
comes.

MAGGY
I just need to see her about--

FREEDA
Melanie didn't do it.

MAGGY
This is between Miss ... Belva and
me.

FREEDA
Melanie didn't do anything. She's
nice.

MAGGY
I'm sure she's nice to you --

FREEDA
It was one of the others.

MAGGY
The others. What do you mean?

The door to the residential house flies open and bangs into the exterior.

BELVA
Freeda, get in the house.

FREEDA
(rushing to get it out)
Mel --

BELVA
Now!

FREEDA
(whispers)
She'll hurt us.

MAGGY
(whispers also)
Who will hurt --

BELVA
Now, Freeda!

Freeda pauses, looks frightened, whispers

FREEDA
Help her.

Then, she runs back to the house.

BELVA
I don't see people without appointments.

MAGGY
It's about Melanie.

BELVA
I have an office in the back of the house. Come along.

Belva walks away.

Maggy hesitates. She looks up to see Freeda peeking out the window.

Maggy follows Belva into a spartan office.

There's a desk, a computer, a phone, a file cabinet, a small old-fashioned color t.v. and a bookshelf loaded with notebooks.

Belva sits behind her desk. Maggy sees one cane-bottom chair sitting against the wall and pulls it up to the desk. Belva scoots back.

MAGGY

Do I know you?

BELVA

We may have mutual ... acquaintances, but I don't know you personally.

MAGGY

I want to start by saying Melanie is a very talented artist.

BELVA

Her work is demented.

MAGGY

I think I know why.

BELVA

Because she's demented.

Maggy is stunned. She leans back as if she's been struck.

BELVA (CONT'D)

You don't know her. She plays people, hurts them.

MAGGY

I think she has ... multiple personality disorder.

BELVA

DID? Have you seen any of these personalities.

MAGGY

A couple.

BELVA

Melanie the tortured artist, Melanie -- sometime Mel -- the whore and, let me guess, Nola the tortured child?

MAGGY

You've seen them?

BELVA

Melanie tries to pull them on us
from time to time.

MAGGY

Then you know.

BELVA

She's acting. She has oppositional
defiant personality disorder. Brian
and I work on it.

MAGGY

I don't think --

BELVA

Here's the deal, Miss McAnally. If
you can't handle her, I wonder just
how good of a teacher you are.

Maggy silences for a second.

BELVA (CONT'D)

In four months, Melanie will be
emancipated and can do whatever she
wants ... provided she isn't in
juvenile detention.

Maggy can't hide her anger.

MAGGY

Detention.

BELVA

You are perhaps her last chance.

Belva glares at Maggy.

BELVA (CONT'D)

Has she done anything to you
personally besides offended your
sensibilities with her depraved
art?

MAGGY

I think she tried to seduce me.

BELVA

Not surprising. She can sniff out a
lesbian like a dog can sniff out a
biscuit.

Maggy freezes, her mouth drops open, she recovers and then
speaks

MAGGY
My personal life --

BELVA
Is not my concern. I 'll talk to
Melanie about personal boundaries,
but she can be obsessed. I hope you
can control yourself. Now. If you
don't mind, I have work to do.

Maggy walks to the door.

BELVA (CONT'D)
A piece of advice, Miss McAnnally.
If the school leaves me alone, I
leave the school alone.

Maggy walks out the door and starts for her car.

She looks up at the window again and sees Melanie, her face
scrunched up like she's been crying.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - DAY

Melanie sits on the couch and sniffles. Belva shakes her head
in disgust.

BELVA
I think this little piggie is
getting wild and needs to spend
time in the pen.

Even though Melanie does not attempt to fight them, two of
the girls, VERA and XENA grab her arms and jerk her off the
couch. They drag her away, Melanie doing all she can to get
her legs under her so that she can walk.

Belva follows them to the "pen". When they take her inside,
Belva ushers them away.

BELVA (CONT'D)
I'm disappointed in you.

MELANIE
What else is new?

BELVA
You tried to seduce your teacher.

Melanie backs away.

MELANIE
She's hot, but she's not my type.

BELVA
Just who is your type?

Belva takes a step toward her and smiles.

MELANIE
Not you.

Belva turns on her heels and walks back into the main room.
She approaches Freeda who is curled up on a bean bag chair.

BELVA
What did you tell her?

FREEDA
That you didn't see people without
appointments.

BELVA
You told her more than that.

FREEDA
No, I swear to God.

BELVA
Now, you've done it.

Freeda cowers even farther away from her, face wide with
fear.

FREEDA
I didn't tell her nothing.

BELVA
You took the Lord's name in vain.
Swear not at all; neither by
heaven; for it is God's
throne: Nor by the earth; for it
is his footstool.

Freeda cowers up against the wall, her arms in front of her,
trembling as if she has a chill.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You're just as sinful as she is.
Sad. Playing with pigs and
expecting to make them clean.

She motions. WILLOW, younger than the other girls but older
than Freeda, and Yasmine grab Freeda who struggles briefly
until Willow cuffs her on the head.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Just pray the demons don't have
her.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Stephanie, wearing a loose shirt and sweat pants, sits on a couch. She draws a few lines in a sketchbook, adding to a portrait that, though not finished, looks like Maggy.

The doorbell BUZZES, and she sets her pad down next to a half full glass of wine, a clean empty glass, and wine in a box.

When Maggy comes through the door, Stephanie wraps her arms around her. Maggy stiffens a little then relaxes.

Stephanie notices tears in Maggy's eyes and brushes them away, kisses her briefly, and draws her close.

MAGGY
Wine?

STEPHANIE
Your new principal?

MAGGY
Yes, no, I don't know for sure.
It's this girl --

Stephanie takes her hand and leads her to the couch.

Maggy sits down next to the table and looks at the pad.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
I'm not that pretty.

Stephanie squeezes her hand.

STEPHANIE
When are you going to realize what
you are?

She pours wine into the empty glass and refills her own.
Maggy takes a big drink, SIGHS.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
This girl. Not a rival I hope.

MAGGY
She has serious mental problems,
and no one cares.

STEPHANIE
Except you. You can't save
everyone, Maggy.

MAGGY
I can try to save her.

Maggy downs her drink.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
It's horrible.

STEPHANIE
How old is this girl?

MAGGY
almost 18.

Stephanie kisses Maggy exuberantly.

STEPHANIE
I know how we can fix your
problems. All of them.

Maggy sets her drink down.

MAGGY
It's not that easy.

STEPHANIE
Yes, it is. I've talked to the
university. They have agreed to
hire you as a full-time art
teacher.

She pours Maggy another glass of wine.

MAGGY
Someone needs to be there for
Melanie.

STEPHANIE
That's the great part. If she's 17,
she can attend class at the
university. Not only would you be
at the university, but I would be
too. I can be her therapist.

MAGGY
It won't work.

STEPHANIE
You could move in with me. Boom,
everything solved.

She hugs Maggy who backs away from her.

MAGGY

I have a contract.

STEPHANIE

Okay, the college can give you a night class until your contract is up. Melanie can still enroll in classes, you could still help her, and you could still live with me.

MAGGY

That's ridiculous. I can't do that.

STEPHANIE

Can't? Yes, you could ...if you wanted to.

MAGGY

I've explained to you --

STEPHANIE

Yeah, you have.

She stands up and looks away from Maggy. She picks up her glass and downs it.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I think you should go.

MAGGY

Why?

STEPHANIE

I can't handle you right now.

Stunned, Maggy stands up slowly.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Now.

Melanie walks to the front door, looks back and walks out.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - DAY

Melanie, her head down, her arms folded across her chest, scratching, follows Belva out toward the river.

Brian stands on the bank and watches. He has a notebook in his hand.

BELVA
Freeda fetch me the Bible.

FREEDA
What do you need --

BELVA
Does Freeda want to go back into
the pen?

FREEDA
No.

Freeda backs away from her as if she's going to bolt.

BELVA
Then do what I say.

Freeda turns slowly and trudges back toward the house.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Hurry up unless you want to get the
same treatment.

Freeda breaks into a run.

BRIAN
I'm not sure if this is the right
way.

BELVA
You call yourself a Christian,
right?

BRIAN
Of course.

BELVA
You believe in possession.

BRIAN
Yes.

BELVA
This child is possessed.

MELANIE
You're all fucking crazy.

Belva slaps her.

BRIAN
Belva --

BELVA
Spare the rod, spoil the child.

Freeda returns, starts to hand the Bible to Belva.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You're a part of this; you keep it.
Girls.

Three girls, JASMINE, VERA, and XENA grab Melanie and drag her out in the water.

Willow sits on the bank and smiles at the events surrounding her.

Freeda stands on the bank with a bible in her hand.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Come out of her in his holy name.

MELANIE
Go to hell, Dyke.

The girls shove Melanie in the water.

BELVA
Freeda, read Luke 8: 1-2

The girls hold Melanie under water. Freeda fumbles with the Bible and finally finds the correct scripture.

FREEDA
"And it came to pass afterward,
that he went throughout every city
and village, preaching and showing
the glad tidings of the kingdom of
God: and the twelve were with
him, And certain women, which had
been healed of evil spirits and
infirmities, Mary called Magdalene,
out of whom went seven devils"

Belva nods at the girls, and they drag Melanie coughing and sputtering out of the water.

Melanie stands stiff and rigid, struggling so that the girls have trouble holding her.

MELANIE
You filthy bitch. You sanctimonious
offspring of a whore --

BELVA
Mark 5:1-13.

FREEDA
She'll drown.

BELVA
Read it.

FREEDA
They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes. When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him.

BELVA
Stop. Do you repent of your sin?

MELANIE
Go to hell.

Brian hurries toward Melanie as if to save her.

BRIAN
You need to stop this right now.

BELVA
And you need to shut up.

Brian stops, starts to protest --

BELVA (CONT'D)
All of these girls will testify that this is the treatment you prescribed for her.

BRIAN
That's --

BELVA
Oh, be quiet, Brie. You know this is what you'd do if you didn't have that degree attached to your name. Girls. Of course if people knew how you got that degree. Girls.

The four girls force her into the water, and she struggles, squirming and kicking.

FREEDA

(trying to read fast,
stumbling over words)

Night and day among the tombs and
in the hills he would cry out and
cut himself with stones.
When he saw Jesus from a distance,
he ran and fell on his knees in
front of him. He shouted at the
top of his voice, "What do you want
with me, Jesus, Son of the Most
High God? In God's name don't
torture me!"

Belva motions to the girls who lift Melanie from the water.
Melanie is not struggling.

BELVA

Stop, Freeda.

Melanie GASPS and spits up water.

MELANIE

We won't forget this.

BELVA

We? You're filled with devils. Will
you confess?

MELANIE

We won't forget this.

The girls shove her back underwater.

BELVA

Go on, Freeda.

FREEDA

For Jesus had said to him, "Come
out of this man, you impure
spirit!" Then Jesus asked
him, "What is your name?"
"My name is Legion," he replied,
"for we are many." And he begged
Jesus again and again not to send
them out of the area.

BELVA

Stop.

The girls lift her back out.

BELVA (CONT'D)

What are you?

Melanie GASPS. In between gasps are great, hitching SOBS.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You're a pig.

Melanie's pushed down again.

FREEDA
I won't do it.

Belva backhands her again. The four girls hold Melanie under for a few seconds. Belva nods and they lift her back up.

BELVA
(to Freeda.)
A girl could drown here.

FREEDA
A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

Belva motions to the four girls. They shove Melanie under one more time for good measure and then lift her back out.

Melanie GASPS, draws in quick stabbing breaths, sobs,

MELANIE
(In a little girl's voice.)
Please, Miss Belva, please. Don't do it anymore.

BELVA
Why shouldn't I?

MELANIE
I didn't mean nothing. I won't do it again.

BELVA
What did you do?

MELANIE
Something bad. I'm sorry.

BELVA
What do you act like?

MELANIE
I don't know.

Belva motions for the girls. They grab Melanie's arms.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
A pig. Oink, oink. Oink, oink.

Belva walks up to Melanie and studies her up and down.

BELVA
You're still dirty.

She bends down and scoops up a bit of mud and rubs it on Melanie's cheeks.

BELVA (CONT'D)
So you won't forget. Take this
piggie to the pen.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Maggy sits at her desk, stares at her students without really seeing them. Students mostly sit quietly, but John studies Maggy. He slips the picture of Gail he took the first day of class out of his binder.

A bell rings, and the students come up to Maggy's desk and drop their sketches off. Maggy barely acknowledges them.

John waits until everyone leaves before he goes up to her desk.

JOHN
How did your Labor Day go?

MAGGY
Thank you for asking, but I'd
rather not talk about it.

He puts his sketch, one of Melanie on Maggy's desk. He holds the painting of Gail next to his body.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
This is very good.

JOHN
Do you know why she's not here?

MAGGY

I don't.

JOHN

Something's wrong with her.

MAGGY

She has some serious issues.

JOHN

I mean now. You have to save her,
Miss Mags.

MAGGY

I don't--

JOHN

You have to; you're the only one
she trusts.

MAGGY

How would you know that?

JOHN

She told me.

MAGGY

I'm going to try.

JOHN

You have to do better than try.

He sets the picture of Gail on her desk, and Maggy gasps.

MAGGY

Where did you get this?

JOHN

From the trash.

MAGGY

How dare you.

JOHN

If she's important enough for you
to paint her, she's important
enough to remember.

Maggy picks up the sketch. Tears fill her eyes.

JOHN (CONT'D)
It might be too late for her. You
can't change that, but it's not too
late for you ... For you and
Stevie.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Belva sits behind her desk while Brian sits uncomfortably in
the cane-bottom chair. He nervously taps his foot.

BRIAN
Why would you do that?

BELVA
Water cleanses and purifies. Now
that this girl has been baptized
maybe her soul can be preserved. I
can't help wondering why you of all
people are not as concerned for her
soul.

BRIAN
I can't help wondering if her soul
is really what you were worried
about.

BELVA
You don't need to wonder or worry.
All you have to do is write the
reports. I think it might be time
for you to go do that.

Brian stands to leave.

BELVA (CONT'D)
We have been in this business for a
long time, Brian. Together, we have
helped many children in our time.
With God the ends justify the
means.

He reaches the door.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Are we going to have our lunch
after church this Sunday?

His face lights up in a broad smile.

BRIAN
Of course.

BELVA

I'm in the mood for sushi. Oh, I forgot you're not a big fan of sushi.

BRIAN

I can eat anything.

Brian grabs the door handle and opens the door.

BELVA

You are so good to me.

He stops and turns back to her.

BRIAN

Do you think we --

BELVA

We'll talk later, but right now, we both have work to do. I'll see you Sunday.

She opens her desk drawer and shuffles papers. Brian gets the point, leaves quietly, closes the door behind him after one last pained look.

Belva stops, stares for a beat, and takes a picture from the drawer: She and Gail, drinks held delicately in one hand as they kiss each other.

The picture stuns her. Her face dissolving into anguish, her eyes watery. Then her face shifts instantly into anger. She rips the picture into four pieces and throws them into the trash.

Then she reconsiders, pulls the four pieces out, and stuffs them into the last folder in her file cabinet. Then, bows her head, her lips moving soundlessly.

INT. SMALL ROOM - DAY

Melanie sits on a small cot in an otherwise empty room and sketches.

A headless monster sits on a rock that juts out from a sea. In the sea, a large head with cracks all over the face floats. The water itself looks like a mirror with cracks all over its surface.

The monster has seven arms reaching up to the sky.

Each arm holds a different head, and under each head there's a one letter label.

In order from left to right on the picture M: the head for M is a man's face with a scruffy beard. O: another man's face, looks like a criminal with a scar running down its cheek. N: the face of a girl, typical teen with long hair and a shy smile, S: a tough looking girl with short hair, cigarette dangling from her mouth. T: another man, handsome with a smile; E this head a beautiful woman with long luxurious hair. R -- is half finished, a little girl's wide eyed face.

Melanie touches her pencil to this girl's face.

Someone KNOCKS on the door.

Panicked, Melanie jumps up and slides the picture under the mattress.

The door opens, and Freeda walks in with a tray. Melanie jumps up. She sneers and clenches her fists.

Freeda sets the tray on the end of the bed.

MELANIE

What the hell do you want?

FREEDA

I'm not afraid of you.

Melanie slaps her across the face.

MELANIE

You should --

The rage leaves her face in mid sentence.

Freeda rubs her cheek; her eyes water.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry.

Freeda doesn't answer, but instead reaches for the glass on the tray.

FREEDA

I'm supposed to say some things.

Freeda picks up a glass of water.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

I am the water of life. He who drinks from me will never thirst again.

She sets the glass back on the tray and holds up a piece of bread.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
I am the bread of life. Whoever
partakes of this bread will not see
death.

She sets the bread back down and holds up a few grapes.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
I am the vine ... The fruit... The
root of... I forgot. It's all
about God.

Melanie looks at the tray, picks it up, sneers at Freeda,
then throws the tray against the wall making Freeda flinch
and jump away.

MELANIE
God's never done anything good for
me.

FREEDA
God's not the mean one.

An instant change comes over Melanie. Sorrow pops into her
face. She sags and drops to the cot. Her fingers go to her
mouth.

MELANIE
I want my mommy.

When she begins sobbing, Freeda sits beside her and puts her
arm around her.

Melanie clings to her and cries even though her size dwarfs
Freeda.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
No one loves me.

She clings even tighter to Freeda.

FREEDA
I do.

As Freeda strokes her hair, Melanie's sobs slowly quiet.
Finally, she sits up, wipes her eyes, and then kisses Freeda
who recoils.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
Not like that.

MELANIE

I'm sorry.

Her face sags.

Freeda pulls a pre-wrapped brownie from her pocket.

FREEDA

I stole this for you.

A grateful Melanie smiles

MELANIE

I do love you, Freeda.

Freeda disentangles herself.

FREEDA

Let me see it. Please.

Melanie smiles. She stands up and gently pulls Freeda to her feet.

Then she reaches under the mattress and pulls out her drawing.

Freeda smiles.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

Do you want me to hide it or do you want to go ahead and finish Rachel?

She hands the drawing to Freeda.

MELANIE

I don't want to get caught with it.

Freeda gives her a hug.

FREEDA

I'm sorry about your supper.

She opens the door and goes back out. A padlock clicks shut on the outside of the door.

Melanie looks at the floor. She picks up the water glass and gulps down what hasn't spilled. Then she picks up the bread and breaks it apart.

MELANIE

Take eat. This is my head.

She bites a hunk off and then sets it on her cot. Then she picks up the grapes and plucks one, pops it into her mouth.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Maggie bites into a cookie. Shelly appears in the doorway.

Maggy looks up and smiles.

SHELLY

There's a girl here. She says she missed the bus and needs to see you. She's from the home.

Maggy stands up.

MAGGY

Melanie?

SHELLY

No. Not Melanie, younger.

Disappointed Maggy sits back down.

MAGGY

I'll talk to her.

Shelly pauses.

SHELLY

I usually try to mind my own business when it comes to that place ... but this girl has a black eye.

As she walks out, Freeda comes into the room; she's wearing a backpack.

MAGGY

Did Miss Belva hurt your eye?

FREEDA

No! No! She didn't do nothin.

Maggy touches her shoulder in an attempt to calm her but she jerks away.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

It happened in the pen.

MAGGY

The pen?

FREEDA

It's where the bad piggies go.

Maggy stares.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
Suzy hit me.

Maggy looks at her carefully, takes a breath.

MAGGY
Go ahead and sit down.

FREEDA
I'm here because she likes you.

MAGGY
I don't even know Suzy.

FREEDA
Not her. She's mean and an
abomination, but she can't help it.
Melanie.

Freeda hands Maggy an envelope.

FREEDA (CONT'D)
She said to give this to you.

MAGGY
Suzy?

FREEDA
Melanie.

MAGGY
Is Suzy at the home?

FREEDA
Sometimes.

MAGGY
Sometimes she goes away?

Freeda sits in a student desk that could hold two of her. She looks at the cookies.

Maggy grabs a small pack of cookies from her drawer.

She tosses it to Freeda who looks at it like it is some strange artifact.

Maggy nods.

Freeda tears into the packet and starts munching the cookies. She quickly devours one whole cookie before she stops and looks up.

FREEDA

Can I take one to Melanie?

Maggy reaches into her desk and pulls out another packet. She smiles and tosses it to Freeda.

MAGGY

Who's Suzy?

Freeda takes a picture of the seven headed monster from her backpack and sets it on Maggy's desk. Maggy stares at it and then looks at Freeda.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

What is this?

FREEDA

It's her.

Freeda points to the fourth head.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

She is. You can tell because she always has a hoodie. She doesn't like her hair and she never smiles unless she's being wicked.

Maggy begins to freak a little.

MAGGY

I don't understand.

Freeda points to each head one by one from left to right.

FREEDA

This is Mel. You can tell it's him because he's always scratching his beard. He's wicked too, and he's always after girls.

She pauses and points to the second face.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

I don't know him.

Then she points to the third one.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

This is Nola. I don't see her much, but when I do, she's always wearing white. I think she's getting lost and wears the shirts to remind her she's still there. Like some people tie a ribbon around their fingers.

Freeda then points to the next one.

MAGGY

The next one's Suzy. You said she was an abomination. What do you mean?

FREEDA

She doesn't like boys, and Miss Belva says that's an abomination. I don't know what an abomination is, but it must be something good because I think she's Miss Belva's favorite. Suzy thinks Miss Belva is an abomination too. I guess she likes her too.

Freeda points out the T and the E.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

I don't know them. The last one is Rachel. Melanie didn't finish her so she's still a kid. I think Rachel is the one that hurts the most. All she does is cry.

Maggy can't move; she stares at Freeda and at the picture.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

She doesn't know that I figured them out.

MAGGY

Their initials ... Spell monster.

Maggy examines the picture, counts in her head.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

7 letters in monster. 7 in Melanie. Melanie is the monster.

FREEDA

(angry)

No she ain't. They are. Well, not all of them. Mel can be nice when he's not being wicked. Rachel's sweet. Nola never does anything bad. She just kind of shows up every now and then.

She stops.

MAGGY

This might be hard to understand --

FREEDA

She's a broken mirror and these are
her pieces.

Maggy takes her hand.

MAGGY

I'm going to do everything in my
power to see that Melanie ...gets
put back together.

FREEDA

There will still be cracks.

MAGGY

We can probably do something with
them.

FREEDA

Don't scrub her soul.

MAGGY

What's that?

FREEDA

They push ...put her in the river
... to scrub the piggie off her ...
like in the Bible. Mark 5: 1-13

Shelly appears in the doorway.

SHELLY

The home is coming to pick her up.

MAGGY

Will you get ... in trouble?

FREEDA

Only if they know I've been talking
to you.

Maggy stands up and gives Freeda a hug.

MAGGY

It'll be okay, Freeda.

Freeda looks up, her eyes big ... like she really wants to
believe it, but then she looks down and shuffles toward the
door.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Freeda.

The girl turns around.

MAGG

How often does Dr. Hyde come to talk to you?

FREEDA

He ain't no doctor because he doesn't help anyone. Miss Belva says all we need is God.

Freeda and Shelly leave. Maggy sits down at her computer and types in Mark 5: 1-13

MAGGY

Holy shit.

She finishes, clicks out of her computer, reaches into her purse and gets her phone. She stares at it trying to decide what to do.

Her eyes narrow in thought.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Nola. Where have I heard that before?

She gets back on her computer.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Siri, what's the meaning of the name Nola?

SIRI

Nola, is Gaelic; It means white or fair shoulders. ... She always wears white.

She goes to her class rolls. Melanie N. Richards. Maggy presses the call button on her intercom.

MAGGY

Shelly? Do we know what Melanie's middle name is.

SHELLY

Nola.

Maggy takes a deep breath.

She leaps up from her desk and goes to a closet from which she pulls out a huge folder stuffed with sketches and photos.

She sits down and rifles through them.

Maggie finds a drawing -- upside down, the name NOLA -- on the back. She then pulls Melanie's first impressionistic painting from the wall and piles them up.

She takes her phone, hesitates, puts it back down.

She sits quietly for a beat and then glances back at the pictures.

MAGGY

You're not an abomination.

Maggie puts her phone away. She puts the art work in a folder and starts for the door, but she stops when she sees the envelope and reads, "Miss Maggy." She opens it and pulls out two pieces of paper folded together.

She shakes one loose and looks at it.

INSERT:

A scrawled note, the first half in big, childlike writing, the second half in an elegant script.

"I'm so sorry, they, I weren't themselves."

BACK TO SCENE:

She shakes the second one loose. This slip of paper is divided roughly into four squares. On the top, is a line in the same childish script.

"My Labor day project." Under it in the same elegant script, "I made them cooperate."

In the first square is a colored pencil drawing of a seascape with a dolphin jumping out of the water. A hand reaches out of the water.

In the second square is what looks like a kids drawing, Stick people standing by a river. Clouds dripping rain.

In the third square is a tall Godzilla-like monster with four tentacles, in three of the tentacles three people are held. The fourth one holds a headless body to his mouth -- feasting.

In the last square, a girl with a white nightgown sits on a bed in a dingy room. A door is partially open and six arms reach through it.

Under this picture written in the same elegant script is the word, "Me."

MAGGY (CONT'D)
You are not a monster.

VOICE OVER HER PHONE:

SHELLY
Ms. McAnally, Mr. ... Dr. Sharp
needs to talk to you.

INT. INNER OFFICE - DAY

Oliver looks at Maggy and takes a deep breath.

OLIVER
Despite what you might think, I am
not a monster. I want what's best
for the school. That means I also
want what's best for my student.

Oliver pulls out his bag of chocolate and offers her one.

Maggy hesitates.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Dark chocolate Milky Ways, right?

He grabs two of them and holds them out in the palm of his
hand.

She takes one.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
Melanie has missed two days. Have
you heard anything about her?

MAGGY
No ...

OLIVER
I would prefer you tell me what's
going on yourself ...rather than me
finding out on my own that you are
not fulfilling your
responsibilities.

MAGGY
I'm not positive, but I think there
may be some kind of abuse going on
at the home.

OLIVER

You don't have to be certain. You are a mandatory reporter, and even if you just suspect anything, it has to be called in.

Maggy can't look at him.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

I can make the call for you.

Maggy looks up at him.

MAGGY

You would do that?

OLIVER

Of course I would.

MAGGY

I need to handle this, but I appreciate the offer. It means a lot to me.

OLIVER

Didn't you say your friend was a counselor of some kind?

MAGGY

Yes, but --

OLIVER

Go talk to her. Explain what is going on. You ... And if it comes to it, we can use all of the experts we can find.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

KNOCK on the door. Sitting on the couch, Stephanie sets a bottle of wine down and her glass. She sketches: it's a pencil drawing of Maggy.

She smiles when she stands, glances at the picture of Maggy, and her face clouds in anger.

When she opens the door and Maggy steps inside, Stephanie glares at her.

STEPHANIE

What do you want?

MAGGY
I'm sorry. I can leave.

STEPHANIE
What do you want?

This freezes Maggy.

MAGGY
I need you ... your help.

STEPHANIE
All right then. Come in.

Maggy, uncertain, confused stands there as Stephanie turns her back on her and walks away.

MAGGY
I could use some wine.

Stephanie whirls back around.

STEPHANIE
You kick me to the curb and you
come back and want my wine.

MAGGY
Yeah.

Maggy walks past Stephanie and picks up the bottle of wine and fills the glass.

STEPHANIE
You have a lot of nerve.

MAGGY
That's not what I have.

She plops down on the couch with a SIGH.

Stephanie studies her and then goes toward the couch.

STEPHANIE
Alexis, play something mellow.

A smooth JAZZ vocalist fills the room, her voice warm and sensual.

Stephanie sits next to Maggy and refills her glass.

She glances at Maggy's glass. It's already half empty.

Stephanie sets her glass down, gently pries Maggy's glass from her hands, and sets it down.

Maggy looks at her, bursts into tears, and reaches for Stephanie who hugs her close.

Maggy sniffles quietly for a few seconds and then pulls away from Stephanie. She grabs her glass and takes another swig of wine.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
What do you want then?

Maggy takes another drink and looks at her.

MAGGY
I want ... need ... your expertise.

INT. LIVING ROOM OF STEPHANIE'S HOUSE - LATER

Two empty wine bottles sit on the table.

STEPHANIE
This is serious. You're not drunk yet.

Maggy CHUCKLES.

Stephanie stands up, wobbles a little, and starts toward the kitchen.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
I think I have one more bottle.

MAGGY
What Freeda said. I can't get it out of my mind.

STEPHANIE
Maybe she wasn't talking about Melanie hurting her.

Maggy jumps up.

MAGGY
Freeda called Miss Belva a bitch. She's not wrong.

Maggy sits back down.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
But she also said Melanie didn't hit on me.

STEPHANIE
I met a bitch named Belva.

Maggy looks at her. Stephanie pulls a bottle of wine and twists the top off.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Before I met you, I saw her sitting in our bar, and she tried to hit on me.

MAGGY

Did you --

Stephanie pours Maggy another glass and sits down beside her.

STEPHANIE

Hell no. She was a rebounder. Some bitch stole her girlfriend. When I told her no, she got downright irate, almost unhinged.

MAGGY

Two bitches named Belva.

She giggles.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

What are the odds?

STEPHANIE

She said that whatever she did, she was going to get back at the whore who stole the light of her life.

Maggy grows silent.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

She said her girl wanted her to commit, but she didn't want to ruin her reputation. I think Miss Belva was probably one of those religious women who can't decide whether they were born the way they were or if they are some kind of abomination. I don't blame her girl for ditching her.

She looks at Maggy.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

Some people just don't realize what they could be missing out on because they are afraid to live the life they were born in.

MAGGY

I'm sorry.

She drinks her wine, looks down. The lightbulb pops on, and she looks.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Did you just call her Miss Belva?

INT. ROOM WITH SIX BEDS SPREAD ACROSS THE FLOOR - DAY

Melanie stands in front of a mirror, admiring her black fingernails.

A folder sits on a desk. Freeda comes through the door and sees Melanie.

MELANIE

Hello, little frog. How's your eye?

She chuckles, blows on her fingernails to dry the polish -- a glossy black. She leans close to the mirror and kisses the reflection of her face, leaving black lipstick marks.

FREEDA

I don't like you.

Melanie's expression changes. She gasps and leans away from the mirror. Nervously, she crosses her arms.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

I took that picture to Miss Maggy.

MELANIE

Did she like it?

FREEDA

She was ... impressed.

Freeda sees Melanie's folder.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

Miss Belva wouldn't like it though.

Freeda starts to open the folder, but the door opens and Belva appears.

Freeda ducks past her before she can say anything.

Belva studies Melanie for a moment and then walks toward her...

BELVA
You could be so pretty.

She stops at Melanie's side.

Belva rubs Melanie's back making her stiffen, but Melanie says nothing.

Belva steps around Melanie and quickly opens the folder only to find a still life sketch. A vase with tiny little cracks. Black roses fill the vase. A few butterflies, also black, flutter around the roses.

MELANIE
Do you like it, Ms. Bev?

Belva smiles and starts to gush

BELVA
I think ...

She stops herself, sets her face straight, loses the smile.

BELVA (CONT'D)
It isn't the kind of thing I like.
Go before you miss the bus.

As she leaves the room, Melanie says under her breath.

MELANIE
Bitch.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Melanie approaches her locker cautiously, touches the lock, and pauses.

She wobbles a little, kind of fades out, and then straightens. When she sees her hand on the lock, she panicks, opens a small pocketbook, and reaches in for a slip of paper. Sighing with relief, she opens the combination lock.

She stands in front of her locker, looks at a small mirror hanging in it, and rubs her chin, like a man rubbing his beard. Satisfied, She reaches for a duffel bag in the bottom of the locker, opens it, chuckles, and strides with purpose to the girls' bathroom, but she stops outside the door and looks up and down the hallway.

She starts for the boy's bathroom but stops. Confusion clouds her face.

She sees a faculty bathroom right up the hall, tries the door, and goes in when she finds it unlocked.

INT. FACULTY BATHROOM - DAY

The school bell RINGS. A transformed Melanie goes to the mirror and looks at herself. She wears a black hoodie and a pair of ripped jeans instead of a dress, and military-style boots have replaced her other shoes.

She rubs her chin.

MELANIE
A little scruffy.

She pulls her hood up, looks briefly inside her duffel bag where her other clothes are crumpled up.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Standing up at her easel, Maggy looks up suddenly and frowns.

MAGGY
Have any of you seen Melanie?

Maggy kicks on her computer.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
She's not on the absentee list.

Melanie appears at the door. Maggy gapes at her. Melanie LAUGHS.

MELANIE
Take a picture.

Maggy frowns.

MAGGY
You're late.

MELANIE
I had to take a crap.

MAGGY
Melanie.

MELANIE
Mel.

MAGGY
Mel.

MELANIE
Do you want my latest, Mags?

MAGGY
Ms. McAnally.

MELANIE
I see how it is.

Melanie walks up to Maggy, sets her duffle bag on her desk, and rifles through it to find her drawing. It's crumpled and wrinkled.

As she's opening it...

MAGGY
You need to be more careful...

Pauses as she looks at the drawing of the black flowers and cracked vase.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
You did this?

MELANIE
You might say that.

Melanie winks at Maggy and then picks up her duffel bag and returns to her seat.

MAGGY
I'd like for you to sketch out a mosaic -- with different pictures capturing aspects of your personality. When you have your sketch approved by me, then you can start it as a regular project.

INT. CLASSROOM - LATER

Maggy walks around the classroom, looking at student work.

She pauses at Melanie's seat and leans over her shoulder. Melanie looks at her and smiles.

Her paper is divided into three sections. In one section is about half of a nice landscape. In the second one is stick figures and a house that is misshapen. In the last one is a drawing of a three headed monster, mouth open about to bite off the head of a girl.

MAGGY

Uh...quite a range here. Is there a reason for ... this?

MELANIE

Do you like it?

MAGGY

It is ... diverse ...

She frowns, sighs.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

So diverse.

MELANIE

Like my moods.

Maggy's eyes narrow.

MAGGY

It's almost like ... different people.

Melanie does not react, so Maggy straightens, looks at Melanie and then at her drawing again. Her brows furrow.

MELANIE

Do you like me?

A bell RINGS sparing her having to answer.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Can I talk to you for a minute?

Maggy hesitates briefly.

MAGGY

Anything important?

MELANIE

My art.

The class members leave, but not John who is looking intensely at them.

Maggy sees the concern in his face and nods to reassure him. He leaves slowly, glancing back as he reaches the door.

MAGGY

What do you want to talk about?

Melanie stands up and hugs Maggy -- and lingers long enough that Maggy disengages herself.

MELANIE

Melanie is going to be 18 at the end of the year.

MAGGY

Why are you talking about yourself in third person?

MELANIE

Habit.

Melanie kisses Maggy on the cheek.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I like you.

Maggy backs away from her. Melanie steps forward.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Does my art ... stir you?

Maggy backs up to her desk with Melanie right in front of her.

MAGGY

I ... have to get ready for class.

MELANIE

It's your plan period.

Maggy, with nowhere else to go, sits on her desk.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I am so much older than 18.

She leans forward, but Maggie shoves her back.

MAGGY

I know who you are.

Melanie backs away.

MELANIE

(almost pouty)

I thought you liked me.

She strokes her chin nervously.

MAGGY

You're my student, and I don't think you understand your sexuality. Love is more than just attraction.

MELANIE
I'm not worried about love.

MAGGY
I have a girlfriend.

Melanie takes two steps back.

MELANIE
You're gay?

MAGGY
Aren't you?

MELANIE
Hell no.

Panic crosses Melanie's face. She backs away, hits a table, knocks over a container of acrylic paint which spreads across the table.

Melanie's face changes. She crosses her arms.

Maggy studies her.

MAGGY
Melanie?

Melanie hurries from the classroom.

Maggy watches her go, looks at the table with the paint spreading over Melanie's painting making it look like it's bathed in blood.

Maggy grabs some paper towels and tries wiping the paint up but it soaks through and drips from her hands. She drops the towel, takes a deep breath and goes back to her desk.

She sits down, takes her phone out of her purse and dials.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Hello. My name is Maggy McAnally. I am a mandatory reporter. I have reason to believe that there are cases of neglect and abuse with the Enlightened Care Residential Care Facility.

She listens for a beat.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
I would prefer to remain anonymous.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - DAY

Belva sits at her desk and pops grapes into her mouth.

The phone rings in Miss Belva's office. She looks up from the picture of her and the other woman which has been taped together with invisible tape, and then puts it down.

BELVA

Hello.

A few seconds of silence follow. At first, she appears casual, unconcerned. Then she frowns.

BELVA (CONT'D)

That's insane. ... Who is this mandatory reporter?

Her fury melts into something else. Something like awareness.

BELVA (CONT'D)

Of course, she wants to remain anonymous; she's lying.

Silence.

BELVA (CONT'D)

There are disagreements between the girls at times, but they are certainly not life threatening.

She glances at the picture of her and Gail.

BELVA (CONT'D)

You will be here then tomorrow or the next day? You will find nothing here. What then?

She listens intently.

BELVA (CONT'D)

That's it? No recriminations for false reporting? I have spent my life working to help disadvantaged children. This is some twisted attempt to destroy me. I do an important work here. God will vindicate me.

She hangs up her phone. The picture catches her eyes. She looks at it, and her anger melts away.

She slips the picture back into the folder. Then she drops it into the trash can.

A sharp intake of breath; she puts her hands on her desk as if to steady herself. She pulls the folder and slips it back into the file cabinet.

BELVA (CONT'D)
She won't get away with this, Gail.
As God is my witness.

She taps her fingers on the desk, brow furrowed in thought, stops suddenly, gets her phone.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Brian, Melanie needs a three-day
emergency placement. She has gotten
violent, and I'm afraid she will
hurt someone. She's already given
Freedra a black eye.

She listens.

BELVA (CONT'D)
No. You need to get her tonight.
Right now.

Then, she stands.

Resolutely, she leaves her office.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - NIGHT

Xena, Willow, Yasmine, and Vera sit in the living room. Belva turns toward the bedroom.

BELVA
Get in here!

The four girls sit up straight, at attention.

Freedra comes slowly from the bedroom into the living room.

BELVA (CONT'D)
We have a problem.

Belva walks over to Freedra and glares at her.

BELVA (CONT'D)
And it's Freedra's fault.

Freedra cowers against the wall.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You went to the school and talked
to Ms. McAnnally.

FREEDA
No, I missed the bus.

BELVA
Don't lie to me.

Freeda slides down the wall, raises her arms slightly, as if preparing them for blocking the blows Belva might give her.

Belva turns away.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Don't be such a baby, Freeda. The
DFS will be here to ask you all
some questions. Don't lie to her.

She turns back to Freeda who flinches.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You tell her exactly how you got
that black eye. If any of you lie,
you will regret it.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - DAY

The six girls sit in the living room. When there's a KNOCK on the door, Beverly glares at all of them. Vera chuckles and elbows Xena.

A young man, DAVID LARSON in his late 20s early 30s steps through the door. He is dressed semi-formally and carries a briefcase.

DAVID
Mrs. Beverly Drake? I'm David
Larson.

BELVA
I expected a woman.

He laughs and offers her his hand to shake.

DAVID
There are men who do this job too.

Belva ignores his hand.

BELVA
It's Belva. Mizz Belva Drake.

He glances at her, unsure of how to take her.

He reaches into his shirt pocket and pulls out a card.

BELVA (CONT'D)
I've never heard of you.

DAVID
I'm new.

He looks around the room and at the girls sitting around. He offers her his card.

BELVA
I don't want your card. I'm offended that after all my years of operating here, that you would take any complaint seriously.

DAVID
It's our job to --

BELVA
Get on with it. Girls, go into the other room.

He sets his briefcase down on a desk. In it is a folder which he opens.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Before you start, you need to know a few things. You will find that the girls love it here. It is home to them. Freeda, on the other hand, is a different story. She has trouble with reality, lies constantly. Take anything she says with a grain of salt.

David jots down a note.

DAVID
I'll talk to Freeda first, and then Melanie.

BELVA
You won't be able to talk to Melanie tonight.

DAVID
And why is that?

He jots down another note.

BELVA
She is in the hospital for an emergency placement, 72 hours.
(MORE)

BELVA (CONT'D)

She had kind of a meltdown and tried to run away. Dr. Hyde thought it best to give her another evaluation.

As Belva walks away, she smiles. She opens the door to the girls' bedroom.

BELVA (CONT'D)

Freedra, Mr. Larson wants to talk to you first.

Freedra walks from the room, looks at Belva, and then walks toward David.

Belva stands there and watches.

DAVID

I really need to talk to her privately.

Freedra's eyes widen; a brief smile.

BELVA

You don't have to be afraid, Freedra.

She puts her arm around Freedra and hugs her. Freedra stiffens. She is afraid.

BELVA (CONT'D)

I'll leave her to you. The rest of the girls and I will wait in my office.

They walk out the door.

David looks carefully at Freedra; her black eye is still visible.

DAVID

What happened to your eye?

FREEDRA

Suzy hit me.

Freedra fidgets.

DAVID

Suzy? And what did Ms. Drake do?

FREEDRA

She put her in the pen.

DAVID

Pen?

FREEDA

The bad room.

DAVID

This is where Miss Belva puts kids
who misbehave?

FREEDA

Yes.

David frowns.

DAVID

What else does Miss Belva do to
girls who misbehave?

FREEDA

She scrubs our souls. Melanie
mostly.

Freeda shuffles nervously.

FREEDA (CONT'D)

I want to go now.

David studies her, jots some notes down.

Willow waltzes in the room. Freeda sees her and stiffens.
David notices her reaction and jots down a note.

WILLOW

Sorry. I have to pee.

DAVID

That's okay. I think I'm finished
talking to Freeda for now.

Willow goes down the hallway.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Is there anything else you want to
tell me before you go?

FREEDA

No.

He offers her his card. Freeda takes it and hurries away.

As Freeda leaves, David jots down a few notes.

Willow strolls down the hallway from the bathroom. David looks up and smiles at her.

DAVID
You've been in here for several years. Isn't that correct Willow?

WILLOW
I like it here, and Ms. Bev likes me.

DAVID
Can you tell me what happend to Freeda's eye?

WILLOW
I don't know for sure. She's kind of a klutz. Probably ran into a door or something.

He pauses and looks at his notes again.

DAVID
Do you have regular visits by a psychiatrist?

WILLOW
Dr. Hyde comes in regularly.

DAVID
What does Ms. Drake feel about these visits?

Willow LAUGHS.

WILLOW
She says she has more faith in God than she does doctors. But she likes him.

DAVID
Does Ms. Drake try to make you ... believe in God?

WILLOW
Nah. She wants us to go to church with her, but she don't beat us over the head with the Bible.

He looks at his notes again.

DAVID
Has Miss Beverly ever scrubbed your soul?

Willow smiles.

WILLOW
I don't know what you mean.

David frowns, tries a different tactic.

DAVID
So, tell me about ... the pen.

Willow laughs.

WILLOW
You mean "The crisis room?"

DAVID
Yes, tell me about that.

WILLOW
Belva doesn't use it that often.
Come here.

Willow gets up and David follows. She leads him to the "pen" and opens the door.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
It's kind of small, especially when
two girls get penned.

DAVID
Penned?

WILLOW
That's what we call it?

She laughs.

DAVID
Two of you get put in at once?

WILLOW
Uh, not usually. Only if she gets
tired of bickering and wants us to
work it out.

She closes the door.

WILLOW (CONT'D)
Like I said, it doesn't happen very
often.

DAVID
Does she lock the door?

Willow hesitates.

WILLOW
Is she supposed to?

DAVID
Does she?

WILLOW
You'll have to ask her.

He opens the pen door again and steps it off. He jots some notes in his little notebook.

DAVID
You've never been in the crisis room?

WILLOW
Are you done with me?

DAVID
Could you send in Miss Beverly again?

Willow hurries across the room and out the door. David walks the pen again, looks at the bed, and the bare walls. He writes some more notes.

Belva enters.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Have a seat.

Belva does so. She sits and fidgets while David looks at her.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Freeda says that Suzy hit her.

BELVA
We don't have a Suzy here. Freeda would blame an imaginary friend before she would admit that she's something of a Klutz. Poor girl.

He glances at his notes.

DAVID
What does it mean when one of your residents gets her soul scrubbed?

Belva laughs, cackles really.

DAVID (CONT'D)
I'm not sure this is a laughing
matter.

BELVA
Freeda told you this, right? About
Melanie?

She laughs again.

DAVID
I would appreciate it if you
explained what she's talking about.

BELVA
We are a Christian facility. We
happen to have a river running
behind us. A perfect place for a
baptism.

DAVID
Baptism?

BELVA
Yes. Melanie asked to be baptized.
She wanted her soul scrubbed.
Surely, you can't blame us for
helping to save a girl's soul? Poor
Freeda, she probably thought we
were drowning her.

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Melanie enters the office, looks at Shelly, who shrugs.

SHELLY
All I know is he has a DFS worker
in there.

MAGGY
Oh, good!

She pauses, frowns.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Why would the DFS officer be here?

SHELLY
They come here to ask about
students sometimes.

Maggy walks past, takes a deep breath, knocks on Oliver's
door.

He lets her in, she sees David, and takes a seat. He's eating a Milky Way candy bar.

He stands to shake her hand.

DAVID

David Larsen, DFS. Happy to meet you.

MAGGY

The dark chocolate ones are better.

She sits.

OLIVER

Mr. Larsen is doing an investigation. He wants to ask you about one of your students.

DAVID

I'm wondering what you can tell me about Melanie Richards.

MAGGY

Is this about the Enlightened Home for Girls?

DAVID

I don't think I should comment --

MAGGY

I made the call.

David takes another bite of the candy bar.

DAVID

I'm still investigating.

MAGGY

What's to investigate? Didn't you talk to Melanie?

DAVID

Though I can't discuss the details, she was unavailable.

OLIVER

That's convenient.

DAVID

How's that?

OLIVER

Did her doctor decide it was time
for an emergency placement?

DAVID

He is her doctor.

OLIVER

And he is an incompetent ass who
has his head so far up Miss Belva's
butt that he can't see shit. And
he'll do anything to protect her
butt so she doesn't get in trouble.

DAVID

Uh ... I don't quite ...

OLIVER

You're not stupid, Mr. Larsen.
Something didn't set right with you
and you're investigating further
instead of writing a report that
says there's no reason to suspect
anything wrong.

DAVID

I can't prove anything yet.

He leans back, lost in thought.

MAGGY

Didn't you talk to Freeda?

DAVID

That didn't do much good.

MAGGY

What about her black eye?

DAVID

She's clumsy.

MAGGY

She told you that?

DAVID

Well, no, but she said someone who
doesn't exist hit her.

MAGGY

Suzy.

He sits stunned.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Mr. Larsen, I need to show you something. I think it will help you to understand Melanie much, much better.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

A stack of Melanie's drawings sit on Oliver's desk.

David picks up the one with the girl in the room with the men with blank faces.

DAVID

This is Nola's work.

MAGGY

And this one is from all of the alts I've met. Except maybe for Suzy. I think I've seen her, but I can't be sure.

David sighs. He looks carefully at the different drawings.

DAVID

Do you know anything of her history?

MAGGY

She told me that she was this girl.

Points to one of the white shirted girls in the room.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

What do you think it means?

DAVID

I don't know.

MAGGY

My friend, Stephanie, a psychologist and counselor who's a part of the university thinks it obvious; severe sexual trauma -- probably worse than rape, possibly sex trafficking or ritual abuse.

Maggy puts Melanie's first picture down, the one with the girls at the river.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

This one really concerns Stephanie.

DAVID

It looks pretty peaceful

Maggy points to the girl with her hands behind her back.

MAGGY

Her keeper tied her up because she tried to run away. But that's not even the worst thing.

DAVID

What could be worse?

MAGGY

Stephanie says the worst thing is that there's more than one girl.

DAVID

I know enough about mental illness to know that this is more than enough to cause DID.

Maggy pilfers through Dr. Sharp's candy bar bag, can't find a dark chocolate Milky Way, settles on a regular one, but frowns as she tears the paper off.

MAGGY

It's not going to be the same.

OLIVER

If she's at the university, she could help us.

DAVID

A doctor already sees them.

OLIVER

Brian Hyde is an incompetent idiot who will do anything Belva says because he thinks she loves him.

Maggy bites into the bar.

DAVID

That isn't professional, but it's not illegal.

MAGGY

(her mouth somewhat full)
It is if she's calling the shots.

DAVID

She will want to hear that I see no evidence to expect abuse.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

That isn't true, but I can't fully say that there is. I can always say that I need to do some more investigation.

OLIVER

I can handle this.

He picks up the phone to dial and puts it on speaker phone.

The phone rings.

BRIAN (FILTERED)

Dr. Brian Hyde, how may I help you?

OLIVER

I thought I would give you a heads up since we are such great friends.

Maggy tries to smother a laugh, chokes on her candy bar and coughs loudly.

DAVID

Are you okay, Miss McAnally?

BRIAN (FILTERED)

What's up Oliver?

OLIVER

The DFS is here asking questions about Melanie. He will want to see her at the home.

BRIAN

I don't think that's a good idea.

OLIVER

It's not going to look good if you don't let him talk to her.

BRIAN

She's got serious issues.

OLIVER

As her doctor, I would think you would have her best interests at heart. Listen, he's trying to be thorough. I don't think it's anything to worry about.

BRIAN

I'll see what I can do.

OLIVER

All right then. Tell Belva I said hi.

Brian disconnects.

Oliver turns off his phone.

MAGGY

What if something goes wrong?

DAVID

What could go wrong? We'll either find out the kids are fine or if we find out they're not, then we can do something about it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

John walks toward the office, but stops when he sees Belva, Brian, and Melanie come through the front door.

He hurries up to Melanie.

JOHN

Hey, Melanie, I haven't seen you for a while.

Melanie blankly stares at him.

BELVA

Who are you?

JOHN

John. Melanie is in my art class.

BELVA

With Miss McAnally?

JOHN

Right.

BELVA

She hasn't been herself lately, and right now she can't talk.

Belva walks past them. Melanie stands still and looks at John.

BRIAN

Let's go, Melanie.

He takes her hand. Melanie looks at him and blinks.

BRIAN (CONT'D)
If you'll excuse us, we have
business with the school.

Melanie shuffles along with Brian and glances at John one more time before she turns away.

John watches them go into the office and then he hurries down the hallway.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Maggy sits at her desk. In front of her is a stack of sketches. Most are self-portraits of her students.

John hurries into the room, walks up to her desk. Maggy looks up, smiles.

MAGGY
Morning, Mr. White.

JOHN
(whispering)
Something's wrong, Ms. Maggs.

She loses her smile.

MAGGY
What?

JOHN
With Melanie.

Chloe and Emily walk into the room.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Be careful. Please.

He sits down as Tyler comes into the room.

A bell rings. Maggy picks up the papers.

MAGGY
I've been looking at your "pop
quizzes."

She starts handing them back.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Generally, they were pretty good.
Most incorporated my comments on
shading to indicate moods, but once
again, Melanie ...

She stops up and for the first time notices that Melanie is not here.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Melanie seemed to grasp the concept best.

EMILY
What a surprise.

She looks again at Melanie's empty spot, frowns, then glances at John.

MAGGY
I hope there's no trouble.

Maggy glances at John.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Do you know where she is?

JOHN
She and two other people went into the office.

Her phone buzzes, and Melanie picks it up.

OLIVER
(filtered)
You need to come to my office.

Maggy looks back at her class. Emily and Chloe smile. John just stares at first; then he looks away.

MAGGY
I'll be back.

EMILY
Sure thing, Miss Mags.

When Maggy leaves their sight.

CHLOE
Shit's about to get real.

INT. OUTER AND INNER OFFICE - DAY

Maggy enters the office door. Maggy does a double take when she sees Belva sitting in a chair.

Belva stands.

BELVA
(whispering)
You're going to be sorry that
you've messed with me.

Maggy stops.

BELVA (CONT'D)
And my girl.

The office door opens, and Melanie and Brian walk out.
Melanie looks at Maggy, her eyes wide for an instant, then
downcast. She shuffles toward her.

MAGGY
I've been worried about you.

BELVA
Don't talk to her.

BELVA (CONT'D)
Let's go.

Oliver watches them go.

OLIVER
Come into my office, Ms. McAnally.

BELVA
What you have done ... It's
terrible.

Maggy steps toward her, stops.

MAGGY
I'd say the same thing about you.

OLIVER
In my office, Ms. McAnally before
you make it worse.

Maggy stares at him and then at Belva, who smiles briefly,
then sets her face in a snarl when Oliver turns back to her.

Maggy steps into the inner office, but leaves the door open a
crack.

MAGGY
I'm worried. Melanie is fragile.

Oliver pulls his bag of candy bars out of his drawer. It has
one bar left. A plain milk chocoate. He gives it to Maggy.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
What's going on?

OLIVER
We've had a sexual harrassment
complaint.

MAGGY
Why are you talking to me?

OLIVER
Belva and her doctor claim that
you've harrassed Melanie to the
point where she required
hospitalization.

MAGGY
This is bull shit.

OLIVER
Yeah, I know.

MAGGY
I'm going back to my class.

She stands and starts for the door.

OLIVER
Please sit down.

The command in his voice freezes Maggy.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
School policy requires we put you
on administrative leave.

Maggy leans against the wall.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
We'll straighten this out, but
right now you have to leave.

Stunned and almost as if hypnotized, Maggy walks through the
door and shuts it behind her.

Oliver goes up to Shelly.

OLIVER (CONT'D)
We need to find someone to cover
Maggy's class.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Maggy walks toward her car, turns around, and looks back at the building. She opens the door to her car (A Prius or some other environmentally friendly vehicle, something small and elegant) and sits. Tears fill her eyes.

JOHN

Miss Mags!

She looks up and sees John poking his head out from behind the car next to her.

Maggy sees a couple of students on the sidewalk but no adults. She steps back out of her car.

MAGGY

Why aren't you in class?

JOHN

I'm in the bathroom.

MAGGY

The perfect place for when I knock the crap out of you for cutting class.

She smiles, but it is not all that joyful.

JOHN

I don't know for sure what happened, but I am sure that it wasn't Melanie who did it.

MAGGY

I know you like Melanie, but --

JOHN

I like Melanie, not that girl who walked into the office.

She reaches for the start button on her key fob.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Something else is wrong with her.

She stops and turns to him.

MAGGY

Something else?

JOHN

I know she has problems, but I never saw her like that.

MAGGY

Me either.

Once again Maggy reaches for the button, glances at the front door of the school and sees Belva and Brian in the foyer about to exit.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Shit.

Brian and Belva step through the front door. John sees them.

JOHN

Speaking of shit. It's time to flush.

He hurries off.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY -- DAY

David sits in Belva's office. All of the chairs are metal, fragile, uncomfortable. Spartan.

Two more metal chairs are folded up leaning on the wall.

In there are also Belva, Melanie, and Brian.

Melanie sits, eyes slowly opening and closing as if she is fighting sleep.

KNOCK on the door. Belva looks up surprised.

David stands and reaches for the door.

BELVA

Who could that be?

DAVID

I requested that Maggy and a counselor join us.

He opens the door. Belva fidgets.

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's only a preliminary hearing.

BELVA

I don't like this.

DAVID

Brian.

BRIAN

I don't see anything wrong with it.

Maggy and Stephanie take the chairs and open them.

Maggy hangs a white sweater on her chair. Melanie watches her.

The room is crowded. Belva looks nervously from one to the other.

She sees Stephanie.

BELVA

Who are you?

Stephanie hands her a business card.

STEPHANIE

You look familiar. Have we met?

Belva's eyes widen.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

In the city maybe?

BELVA

This isn't your concern.

STEPHANIE

I think Melanie's mental state --

Melanie slams her fist on the table.

MELANIE

Mel!

STEPHANIE

Mel?

MELANIE

Did I stutter?

MAGGY

Mel tried to seduce me.

MELANIE

You lying bitch.

BELVA

Calm down, Melanie.

MELANIE

Mel! She came on to me.

Melanie opens a folder and sets it on the table. When she opens it, on top is the drawing of the sea and the seven headed monster.

MAGGY

The sea is so lovely this time of year.

Confusion clouds Melanie's face. She crosses her arms and settles back in her chair.

She sets the picture away. On top of all the pictures is the primitive stick people drawing.

BELVA

What is this for?

STEPHANIE

We want to make a point about Melanie's mental state.

The tough Mel comes back.

MELANIE

Dammit, it's Mel.

She shows David the stick people drawing.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Let me see that shit.

She glances at it, smiles briefly, but then her face tightens into a grimace.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

I don't do junk like this.

MAGGY

But you did. In my classroom.

Melanie changes again.

MELANIE

Why is someone as fine as you such a ...

She changes back to Mel.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

Bitch. Show them one of my real pictures.

Maggy pulls out the impressionistic one with the ocean.

MELANIE (CONT'D)
I didn't do that one ... I like the
ocean ... I ...

MAGGY
Let me show you another one.

She pulls out the one of the girl in a white t-shirt.

MELANIE
It's sad.

MAGGY
Why do you say that, Nola?

Melanie looks at her, confused. She falls silent, gets the
faraway zombieish look again.

BRIAN
What are you trying to do?

MAGGY
Show everyone, things they need to
know about Mel.

MELANIE
Don't call me that.

Melanie trembles.

MAGGY
What do you want me to call you?

MELANIE
My name...our... monster.

Belva jumps up.

BELVA
This meeting is over.

Melanie picks up the stick people drawing. Her face breaks
like she's about to cry.

In a pout ...

MELANIE
You don't like my "pitcher."

Belva grabs Melanie's arm and drags her from the chair.

DAVID
If you leave, I'll have to report
that you refused to cooperate.

BELVA
Brian, do something.

BRIAN
He's not being unreasonable.

BELVA
You worthless piece of ...
She catches herself, sits back down.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You should be careful, Brian.

INT. RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITY - NIGHT

DAVID
This is a she said, he said
situation since we have no
witnesses.

MAGGY
There might be.

BELVA
This woman called in a complaint
because she knew that she is in
serious trouble.

MAGGY
That was supposed to be anonymous.

BELVA
Teachers are mandatory reporters.
It's easy to figure out.

MAGGY
So you knew.

BELVA
As I said, I figured it out.

MAGGY
Did you figure this out before or
after you reported me?

BELVA
What difference does it make?

Melanie pulls her hood down, brushes her hair back from her
face and smiles.

DAVID

It could make quite a bit of difference since Ms. McAnally has no history of sexual deviancy.

BELVA

She's a lesbian. She takes advantage of vulnerable girls. She needs to have her soul scrubbed.

MAGGY

Have you had your soul scrubbed?

BELVA

I'm not a lesbian.

Stephanie sits up suddenly.

STEPHANIE

I know where I've seen you. At Lilly's Bar in St. Louis.

BELVA

I don't go to places like that.

DAVID

Places like that?

BELVA

(Stumbles)

I don't go to bars.

STEPHANIE

It's a gay bar. I met Maggy there.

Melanie stares at Maggy.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)

I looked up and saw her beautiful face and that was it. Wouldn't you do the same, Suzy?

MELANIE

I'd hit that.

DAVID

You are almost 18, right?

Melanie looks confused.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Aren't you?

BELVA
In December.

MELANIE
Right. December.

DAVID
Almost an adult. Probably you'll be emancipated too. Were you flattered by Ms. McAnally's affection?

Melanie smiles.

MELANIE
It made me very hot.

DAVID
When you are 18 and when you are emancipated, it would be perfectly legal for you to have a relationship with Ms. McAnally.

MELANIE
What do you say, Mags?

DAVID
I wonder why Ms. McAnally would risk her job when she could just wait until you were 18.

BELVA
Who's on trial here?

BRIAN
It's not a trial, Belva. It's an investigation.

BELVA
Why don't you just shut the fuck up, Brian. I'm finished with you and you'll be finished.

BRIAN
Are you firing me?

BELVA
Yes, I am.

Brian stands slowly.

DAVID
You're part of the investigation. If you don't mind staying.

BRIAN
I don't mind at all.

BELVA
You can't do that!

BRIAN
You fired me.

BELVA
He can't say anything about my
girls. Client/patient privilege.

DAVID
Don't worry; we won't ask him
anything about patient records.

David ignores her and speaks directly to Melanie.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Did, Ms. McAnally try to force you
into having sex with her. If
there's any doubt --

MAGGY
I did nothing.

DAVID
Your witnesses would be very
helpful now.

Belva sits up suddenly.

BELVA
What witnesses?

MAGGY
I want to talk to her.

BELVA
Absolutely not.

BRIAN
She has a right to face her
accuser.

BELVA
She'll attack her.

BRIAN
If she tries, David will stop her.

He sits down. Maggy stares at him for a brief second, sighs,
stands.

MAGGY
Melanie has mental problems.

BELVA
How is this relevant?

Maggy sifts through the various pictures: the monster, which she sets aside, the first stick people drawing which she sets on top of the monster, and the two Nola drawings.

Finally, she pulls out the impressionistic painting and the four small quarter page sketches that Freeda had given her.

She takes the impressionistic acrylic painting.

MAGGY
This was the first thing Melanie handed into me.

This made me believe that I had a promising student.

Maggy goes back to the table, sorts through the different pieces, selects the seven headed sea monster and shows it.

She points to the first head.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
This is Mel according to Melanie's friend Freeda.

MELANIE
She's not my friend.

MAGGY
Can you confirm that you drew this picture, Melanie?

MELANIE
Mel. It's mine, and it's better than the shit those preps do.

MAGGY
Mel? Like this guy?

She again points to the first monster head and CHUCKLES.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
I hope it's not a self portrait.

Melanie starts to respond, but Belva puts her hands on top of Melanie's shoulder and squeezes. Maggie shows the first picture again.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
It's like two different people did
these. After Mel ...

As she names them, she points to each one.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Unknown, Nola, Suzy, unknown
unknown, and Rachel. Did I get them
right?

MELANIE
It's just a drawing.

Maggy points to Mel again.

MAGGY
How old is Mel?

MELANIE
How should I know?

MAGGY
Not 17 almost 18?

Melanie shivers, hugs herself.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Melanie did this one too.

Maggie shows them the kid-like drawing. Then she goes back to the table and drops the kid picture. Next, she picks up the three pictures drawn on one piece of paper.

Melanie draws her arms around herself in a tighter hug.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Are you cold, Melanie?

Melanie hugs herself even more tightly, but shivers a little. Maggy puts this drawing down, picks up the girl in the room picture and shows it to Melanie who is now gently rocking back and forth while shivers randomly hit her and staring straight ahead.

Melanie glances at her, keeps rocking. She hands the drawing to Melanie. She looks at it, tears in her eyes.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Or do you prefer Nola?

BRIAN
Nola?

MAGGY

Her middle name. It's Gaelic for
white shoulders.

MELANIE

Almost alone.

A strong hush settles over the room, almost as if they fear
breathing, all except for ...

BELVA

This is ridiculous.

MELANIE

Shut. The. Fuck. Up.

Belva stands.

DAVID

Sit down, Ms. Drake.

Belva does reluctantly.

MAGGY

These drawings.

She shows them the paper with more than one drawing on it.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

Melanie did them all.

DAVID

"I made them cooperate." What is
this?

MAGGY

You wrote that, right, Nola?

She shows them the Godzilla monster.

MAGGY (CONT'D)

It's also signed Mel. A 24 year old
immature sex-crazed male, who I
mistook for a lovestruck sexually
confused teenage girl. The monsters
all belong to Mel.

She points to the first face on the monster.

She hands them the impressionistic sketch.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
This one, and the other
impressionistic picture belong to
Melanie.

She shows them a stick figure drawing.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
This one and the other like it. Not
signed, but I think Rachel's.

She points to the half-finished little girl.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
A little girl's work.

She points to the Nola face.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Nola. She did these.

She hands them the two girls in rooms pictures.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Almost alone, the girl. I think the
pictures speak for themselves.

Maggy drapes the sweater over Melanie's shoulders.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
You look pretty in white. White is
a symbol for innocence. You were
innocent, Nola.

She squeezes her shoulder and turns back to the others.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
I wouldn't hurt any of them.

Maggy walks back toward her seat.

MELANIE
Ms. Mags didn't do anything, and
Mel knows it.

MAGGY
Nola? Is that you?

MELANIE
Mel's a liar. Tell them.

Her countenance changes. Mel is back. He takes the sweater
off and tosses it in the floor like a spoiled brat.'

MELANIE (CONT'D)
She didn't do anything.

DAVID
Brian, have you actually treated these kids?

BRIAN
Of course, I have. Melanie is on Clozapine.

STEPHANIE
Clozapine? Clozapine isn't used for DID. It's an antipsychotic, a drug with a huge tranquilizing affect.

Sensing an opening, suddenly ...

MAGGY
You wanted her tranquilized before we talked to her.

BELVA
She's suicidal.

MELANIE
(In a kids voice.) She makes me fib.

BELVA
Can't you stupid people see that's what she's doing now?

All eyes turn to her.

Maggy sets the pictures down, the stick figure one on top. Melanie tears up.

MELANE
Why don't you like my "pitcher?" I wanted you to like it so bad.

SOBS getting louder. She chews her finger.

Belva's still out of her seat, looks like she's about to bolt.

MAGGY
Your drawing is beautiful.

Melanie smiles.

MELANIE
Will you put it on your
refrigerator?

MAGGY
Both of them.

MELANIE
I can't spell my name. I get the
letters all confused.

David takes a deep breath.

DAVID
Ms. Hyde, in light of these
revelations, I can not recommend
charges be brought against Ms.
McAnally.

Belva grabs Melanie's arm and lifts her from her chair.

MELANIE
Please, Ms. Belva. I'm sorry I'm a
piggy.

BELVA
We're leaving. Melanie has to take
her medicine. Brian, get them out
of my office.

DAVID
There is, however, reason to
suspect --

BELVA
I don't fucking care what you
suspect. Until you drag me out of
this place, I'm still in charge.

DAVID
We'll need your records.

BELVA
There's the file cabinet. Help
yourself and then get the hell out
of here.

David reaches for the file cabinet.

MELANIE
I don't want to go.

MAGGY
We'll be back for you, Sweetie.

Belva starts to drag Melanie away, but Melanie twists away from her and slaps her so hard her head rocks.

MELANIE

Bitch, I told you not to touch me anymore.

BELVA

Look what you people have done.

MELANIE

She locks us up in the pen, calls us piggies.

Her face changes; she clinches her fists.

MELANIE (CONT'D)

The bitch wants you dead, Mags.

She sags into the chair.

BELVA

She's lying.

DAVID

We'll get a pscyhiatric evaluation done.

BRIAN

I've done one.

DAVID

Another one. You're fired.

BELVA

I'm getting her out of here.

MELANIE

(As Rachel)

I'm scared.

Belva lifts Melanie up again, like she's nothing, and starts for the door. Melanie cries.

Maggy jumps up.

MAGGY

You can't take her.

BELVA

Stop me, whore!

Maggy starts after her, but Stephanie grabs her.

STEPHANIE
You can't.

MAGGY
I love your work, Rachel.

Belva leaves with the sobbing Melanie.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
What are you going to do?

STEPHANIE
He'll make the call. She'll be forced out.

MAGGY
She should go to jail.

David pulls out some files.

DAVID
Most of these are empty. Brian, where are the records?

BRIAN
I don't know.

David grabs one last folder.

STEPHANIE
Why would she want to kill you, Maggy?

MAGGY
Besides the obvious call to the DFS-
-

DAVID
What is this?

He holds the picture of Gail and Belva.

Maggy drops into her chair, pain explodes in her face; she starts to cry. Stephanie sits beside Maggy, hugs her, kisses her cheek, strokes her hair.

Brian jumps up.

BRIAN
Melanie told Belva not to touch her anymore.

The door flies open, and it's Freeda.

FREEA
Ms. Maggy, they're scrubbing Rachel
and she can't swim!

Maggy jumps up and flies out the door. Stephanie follows.

FREEDA
I'm scared.

DAVID
Don't be, Freeda. We're going to
help you. Call the police, Brian.

EXT. BY THE RIVER - NIGHT

Maggy races from the building, Stephanie following closely.

Melanie's SCREAM, coming from the river.

MAGGY
Get Melanie!

She races toward the river. Melanie screams again.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
Downriver!

Maggy spies Belva looking down the river, watching Melanie being swept away.

She hears Maggy and turns toward her.

Maggy lowers her shoulder, like a football player and drives Belva backward, down a sandy beach to the edge of the water.

Stephanie dives into the water, but Melanie sweeps past her.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
You bitch!

Maggy tries to hold Belva down but she's too strong for her and she knocks her into the sand.

BELVA
Whore.

Stephanie swims for Melanie.

Belva kicks Maggy in the ribs and rolls her close to the water.

GRUNTING, Maggy struggles to her feet, tries to tackle Belva, who hits her with both fists in the back. Maggie hits the sand.

When Belva tries to kick her again, her feet are in deeper sand, and she can't get as much power behind it. Maggy grabs her foot, twists it, and Belva falls to the sand.

Maggy lunges for her and punches her in the face. Belva's nose gushes blood, but it doesn't stop her. Much stronger than Maggy, she shoves her off.

Maggy hits the beach, rolls a little in the water, tries to stand. Belva rushes her, knocks her backward into the water.

Melanie lifts her head and struggles to get up. Belva shoves her head under water.

STEPHANIE
(as if the bottom of a
bucket)
Maggy!

Stephanie is giving Melanie CPR.

David runs into view. He doesn't know whether to go to Stephanie or to Maggy.

Maggy struggles to get her head above the water. Belva slaps her hard, jerking Maggy's head back into the water. Belva shoves her under again.

STEPHANIE (CONT'D)
Save her! David runs toward the
river.

Belva hovers over Maggy.

DAVID
Belva, don't do it.

She looks up, temporarily distracted.

Maggy, using the heel of her hand, catches Belva's already damaged nose.

Belva YELPS in pain. Maggy tries to squirm free, but Belva is too heavy.

BELVA
You killed her!

Maggy struggles; Belva ducks her under again, lifts her back up. Blood from her nose gushing over Maggy's face then swirling away in the current.

BELVA (CONT'D)
You killed her.

She strikes Maggy in the face.

BELVA (CONT'D)
I loved her!

Just when Belva is about to shove her head under again, Maggy gasps.

MAGGY
I did too!

These words work like a hard slap. Belva looks into her face, and then her own face twists with sorrow, and she cries out, staggers away from Maggy, drops down in the water, sobs.

BELVA
I should have told her! I should
have ...

She can't go on, her voice choked with sobs.

Stephanie appears beside them. Freeda sits with Melanie, both clinging to each other as Brian stands and looks around, in a stupor.

MAGGY
I should have too.

Maggy looks down in the water. Stephanie reaches for her; Maggy takes her hand and Stephanie lifts her out of the water.

Maggy grabs her, holds on to her tightly, cries softly.

MAGGY (CONT'D)
I love you.

Stephanie strokes her hair, kisses her on the top of the head, much like a loving mother.

STEPHANIE
I know.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

SUPER: THREE MONTHS LATER.

Maggy and Stephanie sit at Maggy's desk and look at several pieces of Melanie's art work. Maggy holds the first ever painting that Melanie did.

STEPHANIE

It's incredible, isn't it?

There is a gentle KNOCK on the door.

JOHN

I found her.

He walks into the classroom with Melanie trailing behind, her hand in his.

STEPHANIE

How are you Melanie?

MELANIE

Okay.

STEPHANIE

The home?

Melanie breaks into a smile.

MELANIE

Much better with the new manager.

She looks down.

MAGGY

What's wrong?

MELANIE

I'm 18 Christmas Eve. My court date is January 3. I'm afraid.

STEPHANIE

They won't kick you out in the streets.

MAGGY

What's next?

MELANIE

I want to go to college.

STEPHANIE

Then go.

MELANIE

How? I'm broke and mentally ill.

STEPHANIE

I can help you with the mentally ill part. One of my therapist friends wants to use EMDR on you. For free.

She smiles.

MELANIE

Thank you for that.

Her eyes are still downcast.

MAGGY

Doesn't that make you happy?

MELANIE

Of course it does. It's just ...

MAGGY

Why don't you two have a seat?

Melanie and John sit in desks. He takes her hand.

Maggy studies the painting and looks up. Melanie notices it, flinches a little

John squeezes her hand. Melanie smiles.

Oliver appears in the doorway, unnoticed.

Melanie again looks at the painting in Maggy's hand. Her expression changes.

She pulls her hand away from John.

MELANIE

That sucks.

She points at the impressionistic one.

Oliver slips inside the room

MAGGY

You would say that.

MELANIE

What say you and I go out and make
an impression together?

Oliver steps forward.

OLIVER

What's going on here?

Maggy looks up.

MELANIE

Nothing you need to worry about.

OLIVER

I don't care how old you are, Mel.
Ms. McAnally is still your teacher.

MELANIE

I'll be twenty -- well, she'll be
18 -- and considered an adult -- so
she ... I ... Miss Mags --

OLIVER

Already has a partner. And don't
call her Miss Maggs.

Suddenly, as if someone flips a switch ...

MELANIE

I really like this one.

She points to the impressionism painting.

OLIVER

Mr. White, have you told her the
news?

Melanie looks at him.

JOHN

We're going to college together.

Melanie just looks at him, almost smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Ms. M ... MacAnally showed the
humanities dean your artwork.

MELANIE

All of it?

MAGGY

The college wants to use your work
to educate people about mental
illness.

MELANIE

Really?

MAGGY

Not only will you get a free
exhibit, but you also get your
education ... free.

Melanie burst into tears, jumps up, hugs John, then runs to
Maggy and hugs her.

MELANIE

Thank you so much!

MAGGY

It was Dr. Sharp's idea.

Melanie stares at him, scratches her chin.

MELANIE

Maybe you aren't a tight ass after
all.

She starts to leave but Maggy calls out.

MAGGY

What are you doing for your
birthday?

MELANIE

Just hanging with John.

MAGGY

You could come and celebrate with
Stevie and me.

Melanie looks at Dr. Sharp.

He laughs.

OLIVER

You'll be 18; you can do what you
want.

FADE OUT.

