

JOAN OF ARCADIA

"Pilot"

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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

JOAN DELANEY is a sixteen-year-old girl, typical in every imaginable way. Her room is littered with teenage business -- rock posters, discarded clothes, books, CD's, stuffed animals from years gone by. We can detect from her surroundings that she is growing up in a very middle class family -- nothing extravagant here. She sleeps splayed on her bed in typical teenage fashion. As we pan across the room, we HEAR A DISTANT, MUDDIED VOICE:

VOICE

Joan.

Joan stirs, turns over, throwing an arm across her face. And then, AGAIN:

VOICE (CONT'D)

Joan.

Joan stirs again. This time, the VOICE COMES LOUDER.

VOICE (CONT'D)

Joan.

Joan sits straight up in bed, her heart pounding, breathing heavily. She looks around her room, but nothing is there. Blink, blink, as she stares into the indigo light of the room. She lies back down. Turning her head, she is able to look outside her window and see a full moon peering down through the curtains. She reaches for an old worn out teddy bear.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

She is still asleep, though in a different position, and we HEAR A VOICE, this time YELLING.

VOICE

Joan! Joan!

She sleeps through this one.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

HELEN DELANEY is forty-five, youthful despite everything, funny, smart, tough. She's a good Irish Catholic working-class girl, though she's lapsed from the Catholic part in recent years.

HELEN  
Joan Agnes! Don't make me beat  
you!

REVEAL:

that Helen is cooking for several. Already in the kitchen is LUKE DELANEY, a nerdy fifteen-year-old, a year younger than his sister. He's wiry and a little neurotic, but mostly smart.

HELEN (CONT'D)  
Why have my children stopped  
listening to me?

LUKE  
We never listened to you, Ma.

HELEN  
William! Breakfast!

LUKE  
Dad definitely never listened to  
you.

HELEN  
You aren't helping.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/HELEN AND WILL'S BEDROOM - MORNING

WILL DELANEY is getting dressed. A handsome, rugged man in his forties. He straightens his tie, smooths back his hair, reaches for his wallet, then for his gun. Which worries us. Until he also reaches for his badge. He's a cop. He starts out of the room, remembers something, then goes over and kisses a rosary which is hanging from the bedpost. This is purely superstition and habit. Will Delaney hasn't been in a church since he was married.

CUT TO:

INT: DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joan is still sleeping. A KNOCK on her door. No answer. Will Delaney comes in. Stands over her. Sits down next to her. Starts to blow lightly on her face. She swats at it, as if there's an insect. He blows a little harder. She starts awake. He LAUGHS.

JOAN  
Dad, get away.

She kicks at him. He LAUGHS and goes out.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

Will comes into the kitchen. Luke is eating. Helen is still putting the morning together for her family. Will gives her a kiss and means it.

HELEN  
Where's Joan?

WILL  
She's up.

HELEN  
What about Kevin?

WILL  
Let him sleep.

He pours himself a cup of coffee.

HELEN  
Why?

LUKE  
Mom, you know all that stuff in my room? The candles and crystals and stuff? Don't touch that. I'm doing an experiment with light.

HELEN  
I want him to go job hunting today, Will.

LUKE  
Really important experiment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HELEN

If he's not going to college, he has to get a job.

WILL

He doesn't know anybody. Give him time to adjust.

LUKE

Life altering stuff.

HELEN

I'm not listening to you, Luke.

LUKE

Good to know.

HELEN

We've been here six months. Joan has adjusted. Luke has adjusted.

LUKE

Also good to know.

WILL

The world won't end if he sleeps another half hour, Helen.

HELEN

The doctor was very specific about this. No preferential treatment. We all agreed.

LUKE

Anyway, this experiment with light, it's called the double slit experiment.

HELEN

If you treat him special, then he'll expect the world to do that.

WILL

I heard all the same lectures as you...

But Will abruptly stops talking as KEVIN DELANEY, 19, wheels himself into the room. He's a paraplegic, due to a car accident over a year ago. Handsome, a former football star, his life has been derailed. He tries to keep up his humor, but he is tainted with anger.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KEVIN

Ever get the strange feeling that you're being discussed?

LUKE

I never get that.

KEVIN

Because you're too boring.

LUKE

That's what I'm thinking.

HELEN

Your pancakes are cold. I put the classifieds there. And I circled some things.

KEVIN

(picking up the paper)  
What, no CEO positions available? Just as well. I'd be the only one whose mother has to drive him to work.

HELEN

You're going to learn to drive.

KEVIN

I know how to drive. That's how this all started, I seem to recall.

HELEN

You know what I mean. You have to...

Will makes a gesture for her to stop talking.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Never mind. Apparently you don't have to do anything.

Tension in the air. Helen goes back to the stove. Will gives her a pleading look. She sighs, then puts some more pancakes on a plate, takes them over to Kevin.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Here. These are hot.

She kisses him on the top of the head. Will smiles at her appreciatively.

CUT TO:

INT: DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - MORNING

She is getting dressed, a large collection of choices already scattered around her feet. She looks at herself in a full length mirror, turning, can't decide. Suddenly something catches her eye, outside the window. She goes over, sees the form of a MAN standing under a tree, staring up at her window. She is frozen, looking at him.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - MORNING

The Delaneys are eating.

LUKE

So what you do is, you shoot photons at this piece of paper...

Under which Joan enters, in a hurry, heading for the back door.

JOAN

There's a pervert in the yard.

LUKE

...and a pervert appears in the yard.

HELEN

What?

JOAN

Come see.

She goes out the back door. Her parents exchange a look and follow. Luke goes, too. Kevin stays behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELANEY HOME/BACK YARD - CONTINUOUS

As Joan heads out to where she saw the man. But there is nothing there.

JOAN

He was standing right here.  
Looking up at my window.

Helen and Luke just stare at her. Will goes over and inspects the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILL  
No footprints.

JOAN  
The ground is frozen.  
(off his look)  
He was here.

HELEN  
What did he look like?

JOAN  
I couldn't see his face. He was  
wearing a dark coat.

LUKE  
A pervert coat?

HELEN  
That was Mr. Sellars. He's always  
out early. He's overly involved  
with his gutters.

JOAN  
I don't think so. And last night?  
I heard somebody calling me. In  
this weird voice. In my room.

Everyone just stares at her.

HELEN  
Joan. There definitely wasn't  
anyone in your room last night.

JOAN  
I'm not crazy. And I haven't  
dropped acid in just ages.

HELEN  
Come eat your breakfast. You're  
going to be late for school.

LUKE  
Please excuse Joan from first  
period. She was hallucinating.

JOAN  
Shut up, weirdo.

LUKE  
I'm the weirdo?

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

HELEN

Enough. Let's go inside and have a civilized family breakfast.

LUKE

It's always good to try something new.

Helen shoots him a look, and they head back inside. Will lingers, looking at Joan.

JOAN

I saw him, Daddy.

Will puts an arm around Joan. She stares up at her window, wondering. On this we...

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

FADE IN:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CLASSROOM - DAY

Joan sits in French class as the teacher, MRS. MARX, DRONES ON. She is sitting near her would-be friends, ELYSE and SOPHIE, who are pretty and popular. Not too far away is ADAM FLYNN, who is staring in their direction. Joan sees him, glances away, catches the eye of her friends.

MRS. MARX

Apres le film, les quatres amis...

CLASS

Apres le film, les quatres amis...

JOAN

(sotto voce)

God, could he be more obvious?

MRS. MARX

...recontre Michelle a le cafe...

CLASS

...recontre Michelle a le cafe...

ELYSE

What do you mean?

JOAN

The way he's staring at you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ELYSE  
He's not staring at me.

SOPHIE  
Me, either.

MRS. MARX  
...pour prendre les boissons.

CLASS  
...pour prendre les boissons.

Joan shoots another glance at him. He looks away.

JOAN  
What's the deal with him?

SOPHIE  
Monsieur Flynn is what we call  
'debris de blanc.'

ELYSE  
(off Joan's look)  
White trash.

JOAN  
Well. Obviously that won't work.  
Me being from royalty and all.

MRS. MARX  
Mademoiselle Delaney.

Joan looks up, caught.

MRS. MARX (CONT'D)  
Could you read the next paragraph  
to the class?

Joan looks down and is stumped.

JOAN  
I... don't think so.

MRS. MARX  
Porquoi pas?

JOAN  
Porquois...  
(conscious of her new  
friends)  
...je ne parle pas Francais.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

This gets a good LAUGH FROM EVERYONE. Except Mrs. Marx.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Joan is walking to the principal's office, slip in hand. She looks miserable. She suddenly hears FOOTSTEPS behind her. She turns to look. No one is there. She speeds up her pace.

CUT TO:

EXT. ALLEYWAY - ARCADIA - DAY

Will Delaney approaches a crime scene, complete with a handful of uniformed cops and some yellow crime tape. He approaches a body under a blanket. Leans down, lifts the blanket, and looks at the victim. It's a young girl, late teens, scantily clad. She's been beaten up and choked. Will stares at her for a long beat. A plainclothes detective approaches. This is BARRY NEWFIELD.

BARRY

Chief. What are you doing here?

Will covers her back up and stands.

WILL

Drug related?

BARRY

We don't know yet. It's an hour old.

WILL

How long has it been for her?

BARRY

Rigor has set in. Probably happened sometime last night. Patrol car found her.

WILL

You ID'd her?

BARRY

Not yet.

(then)

Chief, you show up on a call like this, the guys are gonna think you don't trust them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILL  
I wouldn't want them to think that.  
(pointing in the dirt)  
You get a picture of that?

BARRY  
What?

WILL  
Boot print.

Barry leans down, looks at it, sighs. He stands and motions to a nearby uniformed officer.

BARRY  
Osborne, get over here.

OFFICER OSBORNE runs over. He's barely into his twenties.

BARRY (CONT'D)  
Get a photo of that boot print.

OSBORNE  
Boot print?

BARRY  
Right there. And a plaster cast.

OSBORNE  
Okay, sir. And, sir, the M.E. just arrived.

BARRY  
Thanks.

Before he can go off:

WILL  
Wait a minute. The medical examiner is just getting here?

OSBORNE  
Yes, sir, Chief.

WILL  
So tell me she was found with the blanket already on her.

OSBORNE  
No, sir.  
(off his look)  
She was just lying there, out in the open.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILL

You've contaminated the scene,  
officer.

Osborne tucks his head.

WILL (CONT'D)

Dammit, it's procedure 101.

OSBORNE

I'm sorry, sir.

WILL

(sighs)

Just go get the M.E.

Osborne runs off. Will looks to Barry.

WILL (CONT'D)

You brought in the rookies because  
it was a prostitute?

BARRY

We don't know that it's a  
prostitute, yet. Osborne was the  
officer on patrol. Luck of the  
draw.

WILL

He should know better.

BARRY

This used to be a safe place to  
live, Chief. Less than twenty  
homicides a year, most of them  
domestic disputes. Violent crime  
has doubled in the last year, and  
it's hard for the boys to catch up.

(off Will's look)

But then, you know that.

WILL

I'll tell you what hasn't doubled  
in the last year, and that's the  
conviction rate. That's going to  
change, under my watch.

BARRY

I get that, Chief. But if I could  
just reiterate. You showing up on  
a routine murder investigation...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

WILL  
Lt. Newfield. When these  
investigations become routine, I  
won't have to show up anymore.

He walks off. On Barry--

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CLERICAL AREA - DAY

The clerical area outside the principal's office. Helen  
works there. She is talking to a fellow worker, MARLENE.  
Under this, Joan enters, slides into a chair, and attempts to  
hide her face with a pamphlet.

HELEN  
Marlene, did you see this excuse  
slip for Marty Wilkins?

MARLENE  
Yeah, I signed it.

HELEN  
Don't you think his mother, who's a  
lawyer, would know how to spell  
either 'sore' or 'throat'? I mean,  
she'd get one of them right.

MARLENE  
I'll call him in after lunch.  
(seeing Joan)  
Well, look who's here.

Helen looks over. She moves over to the counter, across from  
Joan.

HELEN  
Joan?

Joan looks up.

JOAN  
Hi, Mom.

HELEN  
Are you here to see Mr. Chadwick?

JOAN  
Apparently I'm getting some kind of  
award.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HELEN

Oh, really? Most likely to end up  
in big rig school?

JOAN

You know, a lot of people would  
consider your job a conflict of  
interest.

HELEN

That's fascinating.

MR. CHADWICK, a typical high school principal, comes out.

CHADWICK

Ah, Ms. Delaney. Let's have a  
chat.

He motions for her to come in. Helen watches Joan as she  
goes into the principal's office.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CHADWICK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Joan sits in a chair as he moves behind his desk.

JOAN

Look, Mr. Chadwick, I have to tell  
you that Mrs. Marx hates me. I'm  
not sure why.

CHADWICK

Could it be that you disrupt her  
class?

JOAN

I don't get in trouble anywhere  
else.

(off his look)

Okay, Mr. Backus hates me, too.  
But that's just because I'm morally  
opposed to dissecting frogs.  
Everywhere else, I'm good.

(still off his look)

P.E. does not count.

Chadwick takes a breath.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHADWICK

You are a special case, Joan. We like your mother very much, and your father is an influential figure in town. We do take into consideration that you're new here. And the fact that your family went through a very difficult time before relocating.

JOAN

I don't want special treatment.  
(beat)  
Although, a little special treatment wouldn't hurt.

CHADWICK

I saw your records from your former school. I saw your I.Q. tests. You should be blowing everyone else out of the water. I don't like to see anything go to waste.

JOAN

Well, that explains your tie.  
(realizing)  
I'm sorry. That was awful. Did I say that?

Chadwick takes a long breath, folds his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Joan is walking back to class, probation slip in hand. We hear the VOICES of teachers talking in nearby classrooms. Joan turns a corner and is walking down a deserted hallway. She runs her hand along the lockers, like a twig along a fence, making a rattling noise. Suddenly she looks up and sees A MAN standing there. He is middle-aged, nondescript. It is the same man Joan saw standing outside her window. He has longish hair and gentle eyes. She stands very still and looks at him.

MAN

Joan.

She is paralyzed. She doesn't know what to do.

MAN (CONT'D)

We need to talk.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

Joan turns and starts walking away from him.

MAN (CONT'D)  
You're not crazy.

She speeds up her pace. He takes a step toward her.

MAN (CONT'D)  
Don't be afraid.

Joan turns.

JOAN  
Leave me alone, you freak.

MAN  
I just need a moment.

Now Joan picks up the pace and starts running and yelling.

JOAN  
Help! Somebody help me!  
(as she continues to run)  
Mom! He's here! Somebody help!

On the man, as he watches Joan running down the hallway...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/CORRIDOR - DAY

Will Delaney hurries down the corridor. He finds a small knot of people. Joan is recovering, trying to talk to the people around her. Helen is there, as well as Mr. Chadwick and some security guards. Joan looks up and is happy to see her father. She runs to him. He hugs her.

WILL

Did he touch you?

JOAN

No, Daddy.

WILL

Is it the same guy?

JOAN

Yes. It was him.

Will walks with Joan back over to the group. Will and Helen exchange a look.

CHADWICK

Mr. Delaney, security has scoured the place. They couldn't find anything unusual. Still, I've suggested to Helen that she and Joan should go home for the day.

WILL

That's a good idea. I'll get a unit out here.

CHADWICK

I'm not sure that's necessary. It would be disruptive for the kids.

WILL

Not as disruptive as being abducted, I'm thinking.

CHADWICK

Chief Delaney, if we could speak.

He leads Will off to the side.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHADWICK (CONT'D)

As I said, we've combed the premises. We've talked to some teachers, some students. Nobody remembers seeing anyone fitting her description.

WILL

Try harder. Someone had to have seen something.

CHADWICK

Well, that's just it. Mr. Parker, the music teacher did see something. His classroom is in the area where Joan allegedly encountered this man. He recalls looking out the door, seeing Joan in the hall.

WILL

When?

CHADWICK

At the time she said the attack occurred. He paid special attention because your daughter was acting strangely.

WILL

How so?

CHADWICK

Talking to herself.

This registers with Will. He doesn't know what it means but he doesn't like it.

CHADWICK (CONT'D)

I just had Joan in my office this morning, for disrupting, then smarting off in her French class. Two days ago it was biology class. Last week, P.E.

WILL

What's your point?

CHADWICK

She's acting out. It's not unusual after some kind of tragedy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILL

You think my daughter has  
psychological problems?

CHADWICK

That isn't what I said.

WILL

My child doesn't have a problem.  
She doesn't need a shrink. And if  
she says someone approached her,  
then that's what happened. I'm  
going to get a unit out here. And  
what you need to do is your job.  
Keeping our kids safe, not  
psychoanalyzing them.

Will walks off, then turns on a heel; he's pissed.

WILL (CONT'D)

Nobody tells me about my family.  
Got that?

And before Chadwick can answer, Will is gone.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Kevin is LISTENING TO ELVIS COSTELLO and is painting model  
soldiers. The door opens O.S. He looks up. His mother and  
Joan enter.

KEVIN

Hey. What's going on?

Joan says nothing. She goes straight through the room and  
upstairs. Helen lingers.

KEVIN (CONT'D)

Why are you guys home?

HELEN

Some man approached Joan at school.

KEVIN

The pervert?

HELEN

We don't know. Honestly, I don't  
even know if it's happening, or if  
Joan is...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KEVIN

Cracking up?

HELEN

I was going to say looking for attention.

Helen hovers over him a beat, then:

HELEN (CONT'D)

What are you making for dinner?

KEVIN

The Napoleonic army.

HELEN

The great thing about cooking? It doesn't require legs.

KEVIN

Mom, I don't want to fight.

Helen draws up a chair. Kevin ignores her as he keeps working.

HELEN

Kevin, you can't just give up and withdraw. You have to do something. You have to have plans.

KEVIN

I had plans.

HELEN

You're nineteen years old. You're going to spend the rest of your life doing this?

KEVIN

This is an art, you know. There are people who do this for a living. Building miniatures for museums. I've looked into it.

HELEN

I don't understand why you can't go to college.

KEVIN

Because the only reason I was going to college was to play ball. I'm not the brains of the family. I don't like school.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HELEN

But there are so many other options, if you'd just explore them.

KEVIN

Don't you think I wish I was one of those guys who could get jazzed about the wheelchair Olympics?

(beat)

I'm not doing that bad, considering. But stop trying to make me the world's greatest invalid.

Helen doesn't know what to say. Finally, she stands.

HELEN

Do me a favor. Go talk to your sister.

KEVIN

What about?

HELEN

She's upset. And you are still her brother. She needs you.

Helen walks out. On Kevin, thinking about being needed --

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Joan is lying on her bed, staring at the ceiling. A KNOCK and she looks up. Kevin wheels himself in.

KEVIN

Hey.

JOAN

Hey.

KEVIN

Mom wants me to talk to you.

JOAN

To make sure I'm not crazy?

KEVIN

Yep. So are you crazy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

No.

KEVIN

Okay. I'm glad we had this talk.

He starts to wheel out.

JOAN

Like I want some weirdo to be following me. Like I want to create a story for people to pass around the lunch room. Because I was beginning to get a little too popular.

KEVIN

Joan, here's the thing. Mom likes normal. Dad really likes normal. Before my accident, Luke was all they could handle in the freak-for-a-kid department. Now they've got me. You're their only hope for normal.

JOAN

That is just wrong.

KEVIN

Sounded good, though. Didn't it?

She LAUGHS and kicks at his leg with her bare foot. A look comes over his face. Joan sits up, terrified.

JOAN

Oh, God. I'm sorry. What'd I do?  
(off his silence)  
Did you feel that?

He looks at her. He nods.

KEVIN

No.

JOAN

You're an ass.

She throws a glass of water on him as he LAUGHS.

KEVIN

I felt that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He pulls her into his lap, tickling her. As she fights back,  
LAUGHING, we...

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - DAY

As Helen is starting dinner, she looks up to the ceiling,  
HEARING THE LAUGHTER. A beat, then she crosses herself.

INT. POLICE STATION - THE NEXT DAY

A staff meeting. Barry, who is head of homicide, is  
addressing the homicide cops, most of whom are in uniform,  
some in plain clothes. Will is staring at the wall as Barry  
talks.

BARRY

Abigail Dorset is the victim's  
name. Eighteen years old, a  
runaway. She spent the last couple  
of nights at a teen shelter. We're  
still looking for the next of kin.

Barry starts passing out photos to the cops.

BARRY (CONT'D)

The victim was sexually assaulted,  
beaten and strangled. Forensics  
has determined that she did not die  
in the location where she was  
found. She was dumped.

WILL

Any similar murders on record in  
the last year?

BARRY

A couple of prostitutes. Nothing  
this major.

(off Will's look)

I'm sorry, Sir. I mean, no one  
this young.

Will looks away, staring out the window. He's disturbed. A  
knock on the door and Will's assistant, PATTY, sticks her  
head in.

PATTY

Chief, the Mayor.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

WILL  
(reaching for the phone)  
What line?

PATTY  
In your office.

On Will--

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA DRUGSTORE - DAY

Joan is there with her friends, Elyse and Sophie. They are reading magazines at the magazine rack.

ELYSE  
Oh, listen to this. Men  
overwhelmingly prefer real breasts  
to breast implants.

JOAN  
They must be talking about chicken.

The girls LAUGH.

SOPHIE  
And here. Austin, 29, says, "What  
I most value in a woman is a sense  
of humor."

JOAN  
Which means a girl who'll laugh at  
my jokes.

The girls GIGGLE.

SOPHIE  
You are so cynical.

JOAN  
I'm a realist.

The girls notice a knot of boys standing next to them. They smile and GIGGLE. One BOY in particular stands out. He is tall, gangly, and handsome. He smiles directly at Joan. The others follow his gaze, then look at her. She blushes, then looks back at the magazine.

CUT TO:

EXT: DRUGSTORE - DAY

as Joan and her friends walk out and the boy follows her.

JOAN

See you guys tomorrow. Another fun  
filled day of higher education.

The friends wave goodbye and walk on. Joan walks in the  
other direction. She suddenly realizes that the boy is  
there.

BOY

I'm in fifth period English. With  
you.

JOAN

You are?

BOY

I sit at the back. I'm Josh.

JOAN

I'm Joan.

They smile awkwardly.

BOY

You're new, right?

JOAN

Sorta new. I moved here last May.

BOY

You going home now?

JOAN

Yeah. I live on Carter Road.  
Which is just up there.

BOY

Okay. I live on Military Drive.  
I'll walk with you. I mean, if  
that's okay.

JOAN

(shrugs)  
It's okay with me.

She looks over her shoulder and sees her friends disappearing  
down the street, without looking back.

CUT TO:

INT: POLICE STATION - DAY

Will sits with the Mayor, EDGAR TIMMONDS, an imposing fellow.  
Will is being chastened.

TIMMONDS

I've known Pete Chadwick for thirty years. He's a good man and an outstanding principal.

WILL

He implied that my daughter was a liar. At best. At worst, he implied that she was mentally disturbed.

TIMMONDS

He says you jumped to those conclusions.

WILL

So he called you and tattled?

TIMMONDS

You're both prominent members of this society. There's a public relations aspect to the job, Will.

WILL

I'm not here to win a popularity contest. I'm here to create a police force where, all due respect, one barely exists. And your crime rate reflects it. It's in your best interest to let me do my job and not worry about getting invited to join the Rotary Club.

TIMMONDS

The city chose you from a list of highly qualified candidates. You're here because of their endorsement. I encourage you not to take that lightly.

Timmonds stands.

TIMMONDS (CONT'D)

That's all for now, Will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

And he goes out. On Will--

CUT TO:

EXT. ARCADIA STREET - EVENING

As Joan and the Boy walk along the street together.

JOAN

I mean, school is school. It's just terrible, no matter where you are. But here it's really bad. I don't know anybody, and I'm trying to act all normal. Just trying not to draw attention to myself. Because my father's the Chief of Police. But at the same time, you want to use any kind of leverage. I mean, anything to stop me from being a big zero. So do I mention my father or do I try to hide from it? Who knows.

The Boy says nothing as they walk along.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You're really in my English class.

BOY

Sure.

(off her look)

I mean, I am and I'm not.

JOAN

What's that supposed to mean? You skip a lot?

BOY

Yeah, I skip.

JOAN

Boy, I wish I had the courage to do that. But my parents are so all over me. If I do the littlest thing wrong, they know it.

BOY

That's what parents are for.

JOAN

(suspiciously)

You live around here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOY

Oh, yeah.

JOAN

Where?

The boy stops walking. Joan stops walking to.

BOY

I want to talk to you.

JOAN

Unless I'm missing something, you are talking to me.

The boy looks from side to side. They are on a deserted street. Joan notices this, too, and is nervous.

BOY

I mean, I want to be honest.

JOAN

Who are you?

BOY

I saw you today.

Joan stares at him a beat.

JOAN

You saw me where?

BOY

I was the person in the hallway.

Joan freezes. The boy realizes she's frightened.

JOAN

You were in the hallway? And outside my house?

(he nods)

No, that guy was an old guy.

BOY

Okay, this part is difficult. I don't always look the same.

JOAN

What are you talking about?

(backing up)

What do you want with me? Because I'm warning you, my dad's a cop. Not just a cop. The cop.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOY

I know who your father is. Will Delaney, born September 4th, 1957, in Brooklyn, New York. His mother was Eleanor Monroe, his father was Gerald Delaney. Your father had an uneventful childhood, attended Bronx Science, then City College, then joined the police force in 1980. He met your mother shortly after. One Helen Brodie. An art school dropout. You are the middle child of three. Your older brother Kevin was in a car accident a year and a half ago which fractured his back and left him a paraplegic. You have one other brother, Luke, fifteen. Your favorite color is green, you love salt on canteloupe, Jim Doss broke your heart in the eight grade and you're afraid of clowns.

JOAN

(frantic)

Who are you?

BOY

I've known you since before you were born.

JOAN

I'll ask you one more time...

BOY

I'm God.

JOAN

You're what?

BOY

God.

Joan stares at him, shocked.

BOY (CONT'D)

It's nice to meet you again.

As she continues to stare, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO



CONTINUED:

GOD

I'll explain something to you, Joan. It goes like this. I don't look like this. I don't look like anything you'd recognize. You can't see me. I don't sound like this. I don't sound like anything you'd recognize. I'm beyond your experience. I am taking on this form because it's comfortable for you. Makes sense to you. And if I'm snippy it's because you understand snippy. Do you get it?

JOAN

Sort of.

GOD

Because I'm not really snippy. I have a very good personality. You'd like me.

JOAN

I'm not religious, you know.

GOD

It's not about religion, Joan. It's about fulfilling your nature.

JOAN

I definitely haven't done that.

GOD

Exactly.

Joan regards him a beat.

JOAN

Okay, let's say you are God.

GOD

Joan. I am God.

JOAN

Let's see a miracle.

God pauses in front of a large tree. He gestures to it.

GOD

How about that?

JOAN

That's a tree.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

GOD

Let's see you make one.

God keeps walking. Joan moves along after him.

JOAN

So do you just go around appearing to people?

GOD

Not like this.

JOAN

But why me? I mean, I don't go to church. I was baptized as a Catholic, though. Mom read us stuff from the Bible when we were little. But my Dad hates the Catholic church, even though he is one, so we never go. My Mom likes the saints. When we were selling our house, she buried St. Joseph in the back yard. You know, a statue. Not the real one.

GOD

Yes, I'm acquainted with the whereabouts of the real one.

JOAN

Is it weird for me to have a crush on you?

GOD

I won't look like this next time.

Joan stops, stands still. He turns to her.

JOAN

Next time?

GOD

I'm going to be dropping in on you now and then, Joan.

JOAN

Why?

GOD

Let's just say I need you to do some errands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOAN

Why?

GOD

Do you notice how I'm not answering any of the why's?

JOAN

But this is dumb. I'm not religious. I don't even believe in you.

GOD

You will. Now, about these errands...

JOAN

What, like get an army and invade France?

GOD

That's been done. I want you to get a job. At the Village Book Store. It's a few blocks from your house. The manager's name is Sammy. Now he's snippy. It's important that you do this pretty soon.

(off her look)

Don't ask why.

JOAN

What if I say no? Will I burst into flames?

GOD

Where do you people come up with this stuff? Have I ever made anyone burst into flames?

JOAN

There was the pillar of salt thing.

GOD

You should have listened to that lecture on metaphor in your English class. Good-bye, Joan. Do as I ask.

He starts away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOAN

(beat)

Oh, I get it. You're crazy. Wow.  
That's a relief. I have to be  
going now. And you're probably due  
back at the Institute?

GOD

Soon, Joan.

God walks away. Joan stands there, feeling confused. She  
watches him walk down the sidewalk. People walking past  
don't seem to see him. He turns a corner, and Joan watches,  
wondering what just happened.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/KITCHEN - EVENING

Everyone is sitting around the table, not eating. They are  
waiting. Joan comes in the back door, and gets the stink eye  
from her father.

JOAN

Sorry I'm late.

Will looks at his watch.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I was talking to my friends. You  
want me to make friends.

WILL

I want you to make friends who have  
to be home for dinner.

JOAN

I lost track of time.

LUKE

See, when the sun starts going  
down? That's a reliable indication  
that the day is ending.

HELEN

Your father doesn't need any help.

KEVIN

Can we eat while we fight?

Kevin starts passing the food.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HELEN

Joan, after what happened at school, you can't just wander off and expect us not to worry.

JOAN

Okay. I'm sorry.

KEVIN

Hey, haven't I fulfilled our family tragedy quota? I think you can all relax.

HELEN

It doesn't work that way.

KEVIN

What 'It'?

LUKE

Actually it does work that way, in terms of percentages.

KEVIN

Mom's not talking about percentages, though.

WILL

Be respectful to your mother.

KEVIN

I'm just saying. When Mom says "It" she's talking about God. Which is interesting since we never go to church.

Joan shifts uncomfortably.

HELEN

Once a Catholic, always a Catholic.

KEVIN

So we just trot him out to explain the bad stuff?

Now Joan is really uncomfortable.

JOAN

Can we talk about something else? Anything else? Tell us some interesting facts about physics, Luke.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUKE

Can't.

JOAN

Why?

LUKE

You don't want to talk about God.  
Physics is God.

Joan looks at him, curious.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/LUKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Luke is surrounded by books, studying. His walls are adorned with pictures of Albert Einstein and other scientists. A KNOCK on the door.

LUKE

Enter.

Joan comes in.

JOAN

What are you doing?

LUKE

Rehearsing for my part in the big musical.

(off her look)

I'm studying. What else do I do?

She sits down on his bed.

LUKE (CONT'D)

(without looking up)

No, I won't do your math.

JOAN

I don't want you to do my math. I just want to, you know. Talk.

LUKE

Right.

Joan doesn't say anything. He looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LUKE (CONT'D)

Let me guess. You've fallen in love with a science geek and you want me to tell you how to converse with him.

JOAN

What did you mean when you said God is physics?

LUKE

You wouldn't understand.

JOAN

Why wouldn't I?

LUKE

You'd have to have a basic foundation in the subject. And knowing how a hair dryer works doesn't count.

JOAN

So you believe in God, then.

LUKE

Sure. It's logical.

JOAN

It is?

LUKE

If you accept the special theory of relativity, which I do, and the laws of thermodynamics, which I do, and when you throw in the fact that light is conscious, which it appears to be, well. How can you argue?

She looks at him, confused.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Besides, Einstein believed.

JOAN

Do you think He could be, you know, just walking around in the world?

LUKE

Like a person.

(off her nod)

It's not empirically inconsistent.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LUKE (CONT'D)

Everything is energy, and energy can manifest in any form, depending upon its rate of vibration.

JOAN

So God could vibrate himself into, say, the form of a hot guy about my age?

LUKE

See, I knew there was a guy in this.

JOAN

Yes or no. Could it happen?

LUKE

As the great physicist Faraday once said, nothing is too wonderful to be true.

On Joan, considering it.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - DAY

It's after school. Joan comes in and can't help noticing a HELP WANTED sign in the window. SAMMY, the manager, is a man in his late thirties, a would-be writer who is frustrated to be still working in a bookstore. He has an "I'm really an artist" demeanor and the bitter attitude to go with it. He's waiting on a middle-aged FEMALE CUSTOMER.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Where are your books on tape?

SAMMY

See, that's a paradox. Because books on tapes are, by definition, tapes, which means they are not books.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

I don't understand what you're saying.

Sammy picks up a book and flips through it.

SAMMY

This is a book. It doesn't make any sound. It won't fit into a stereo. You can't engage with it while you drive.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMMY (CONT'D)

It requires effort and imagination,  
not to mention the ability to read.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

Could I please see the manager?

SAMMY

Sadly, I'm the manager and the  
owner. Complain to me about me.

FEMALE CUSTOMER

You know what? I'm never coming  
back here.

SAMMY

Well, that will certainly eat right  
into my books on tape business.

The lady goes by, brushing past Joan, who is now almost too  
anxious to talk to Sammy. He looks at her.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I don't sell Harry Potter anything.

JOAN

I'm not here for a book.

SAMMY

Well, you're part of a growing  
trend. What do you want?

JOAN

The job.  
(off his look)  
The one you're advertising.

SAMMY

Oh, I'm sorry. That's for someone  
who can see over the counter.

JOAN

Look, I'm sixteen. I've had jobs  
before.

SAMMY

Really. Name all four books of The  
Alexandria Quartet.

(off her blinking stare)  
See, people might ask you things  
like that.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN

Then I'd say, let me look it up on the computer. I'm good with computers.

SAMMY

Yes, everyone is good with computers and cell phones and digital cameras and Tivo. But no one can form an objective thought to save their lives. Go home, all right? Hiring you would only complicate my life because I'd have to rant and rave about your shabby education, and I have enough to rant and rave about.

JOAN

I have to have this job.  
(off his silence)  
I was sent by God.

SAMMY

Oh, yeah? Do you have a note?

JOAN

If I come back with a note, can I have the job?

SAMMY

If you come back with a note from God, you can have the store.

JOAN

I don't think I want the whole store.

SAMMY

Go. Away.

Joan looks at him. A beat, then she walks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. PICNIC GROUNDS - DAY

A police picnic. The grounds are full of police officers, not in uniform, with their children. Will, Helen, Kevin, Luke and Joan are approaching the picnic.

HELEN

What's the Mayor's wife name?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WILL  
Mrs. Mayor.

HELEN  
Really, Will.

WILL  
I think it's Carol. Don't worry,  
she won't remember your name,  
either.

JOAN  
Do we have to stay long?

HELEN  
No, we don't. But we're going to,  
just to torture you.  
(off her look)  
This event was your father's idea.  
We can't leave.

WILL  
It's a morale booster.

LUKE  
See how boosted everyone is?

WILL  
Look, Kev. Horseshoes.

KEVIN  
Yeah?

WILL  
You could play horseshoes.

HELEN  
Yes, you can. Why don't you?

KEVIN  
Gee, this whole exchange seems very  
spontaneous. I don't feel any  
dramatic tension. Do you?

HELEN  
Just try it, Sweetheart.

KEVIN  
I can't. I came here to pick up  
women who are interested in  
paraplegics. So I'm going to be  
busy all day.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Kevin wheels himself off. Helen and Will exchange a look.  
The Mayor and his wife, ANGELA approach.

MAYOR

Good turnout, Will.

WILL

I'm sure they'd all prefer a raise.  
You remember my wife, Helen.

ANGELA

Yes, Helen. Good to see you again.

HELEN

And you. Carol.

ANGELA

Angela.

HELEN

Right.

She gives Will a look. Will turns.

WILL

My daughter Joan, my son Luke. And  
Kevin, over there.

ANGELA

Where?

(then)

The one in the wheelchair?

HELEN

Yes.

ANGELA

What a shame, on such a beautiful  
day. How long will he have to be  
in that?

Will and Helen are embarrassed.

MAYOR

It's permanent, Ange. He's a  
cripple.

WILL

He's physically impaired. Due to a  
car accident.

ANGELA

How awful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HELEN

Yes, we think about killing him in his sleep. If you'll excuse me.

Helen goes off.

MAYOR

I'm sorry.

WILL

It's all right. It's difficult.

Tense smiles. And everyone moves toward the picnic.

ANOTHER ANGLE

As Joan wanders over to inspect the food table. She reaches for a potato chip, bites into it, looks up to see ADAM FLYNN. He's staring at her. It's kind of odd.

ADAM

Hi.

JOAN

Hi.

ADAM

Plain?

JOAN

What?

ADAM

Are they plain? The chips. I don't like the flavored ones.

JOAN

They seem pretty plain.  
(then, as he reaches for one)  
Who doesn't like the flavored ones?

ADAM

They seem radioactive to me.

JOAN

You're in my French class.

ADAM

(in French)  
Yes, I sit behind you and stare at you because you're breathtakingly beautiful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JOAN  
I'm bad at French.

ADAM  
(smiles)  
I know.

They fall into line to get food. As they approach an African American WOMAN serving the food:

JOAN  
Your dad's a cop?

ADAM  
No. He's in maintenance. They let him come to the picnic, though. Everybody likes him.

JOAN  
Maintenance. Like...

ADAM  
Sweeping. Unclogging toilets. At headquarters.

JOAN  
Oh.

ADAM  
Your dad's the Chief of Police.

JOAN  
Yeah.

ADAM  
So how will they react to the engagement?

She looks at him, speechless.

ADAM (CONT'D)  
Now, that's humor.

She smiles.

WOMAN  
Hamburger or hotdog?

ADAM  
Vegetarian.  
(to Joan)  
It was nice of you to talk to me.  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

ADAM (CONT'D)  
(in French)  
See you in my dreams.

He goes off. She watches him.

WOMAN  
Hamburger or hotdog?

JOAN  
Hamburger.

WOMAN  
That's a fine young man right  
there.

JOAN  
You know him?

WOMAN  
I know everybody. You want that  
well done, right?

JOAN  
Yeah.

WOMAN  
How come you didn't get the job?

Joan stares at her. The woman stares back, unwavering.

JOAN  
Is that you?

WOMAN  
I ask the questions.

JOAN  
I... I tried. The guy wouldn't  
hire me. I mean, he said he would,  
but I have to bring a note.

WOMAN  
He was being facetious, Joan. You  
can't tell people I sent you.  
You'll sound like a nut.

JOAN  
Then how do I get the job?

WOMAN  
Figure it out. That's why I gave  
you a brain.  
(then, shifting her  
demeanor)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Sweetheart, I can't talk to you all  
day. I've got hungry people to  
feed.

(to the person behind her)  
Hamburger or hotdog?

Joan looks at her a beat, then wanders away, staring over her  
shoulder. The woman's eyes connect with her, then back to  
the crowd. On Joan, staring at God...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. DELANEY HOME/HELEN AND WILL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Helen is looking at vacation brochures as Will gets ready for bed.

HELEN

The Florida Keys? We always wanted to go there.

WILL

You always wanted to go there. I hate sand, water and bugs. And I really hate it when they all get together.

HELEN

Then how about Canada. We can do that rail thing.

WILL

Canada is where people go when they can't really afford to go on vacation.

HELEN

You are not helping.

WILL

I don't think I can get away. It's only been six months. I'm still on probation, as far as the city's concerned.

HELEN

We always go somewhere at Christmas.

WILL

Maybe not this year, Helen.

HELEN

Why not?

WILL

Think how it would be for Kevin. Putting him in the same old situation, so he has to look at the difference.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

HELEN

So he has to look at it?

(off his silence)

And we have two other children who  
deserve the rest of their lives.

WILL

And they'll have that. They're  
fine.

Will gets into bed, reaches for his book.

HELEN

I don't think Joan is fine.

WILL

Can we not talk about this now?

HELEN

When would you like to talk about  
it?

WILL

Anytime but now.

He opens his book.

HELEN

What if she's imagining this guy?  
Or worse, lying about it.

WILL

That's not what's happening.

Will is quiet for a moment. Helen watches him.

HELEN

The thing about going somewhere for  
Christmas, Will? It would be a  
start. We could get out there and  
see what the world looks like to us  
now.

Will sighs, looks at his wife.

WILL

I can't think more than a day  
ahead. Because I can't imagine my  
life... my son's life... being the  
way it is forever.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HELEN

Can't you just be happy that he  
lived?

WILL

Of course I am.

(beat)

I'm grateful for that every day.

She puts her hand on the side of his face. He kisses it, but  
keeps his eyes on his book. Helen slides down into bed and  
turns over.

CUT TO:

EXT. DELANEY HOME - MORNING

Joan is wandering around, looking for someone. Her father  
comes out, carrying a cup of coffee.

JOAN

Are you here? How does this work?  
Can I just call you up and you  
appear?

WILL

Who are you talking to?

Joan whirls, startled.

JOAN

Daddy. You scared me.

WILL

You scared me. Because it looked  
like you were talking to yourself.

JOAN

I'm... rehearsing for something. A  
play.

WILL

You're in a play?

JOAN

A speech. A poem. I have to  
memorize.

Will looks hard at her.

WILL

Are you all right, Kitten?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

I'm fine.

WILL

(beat)

I was thinking. Maybe you want to come down to the station and do a composite drawing.

JOAN

Oh. No, thanks.

WILL

Really? Because the sketch artists do amazing work. We've had a lot of success with that approach.

JOAN

I didn't get that close a look at him.

WILL

You said you looked right at him.

JOAN

Honestly, Dad. I just want to forget it.

She kisses him and goes toward the house. On Will, watching her, worrying...

CUT TO:

INT. ARCADIA HIGH SCHOOL/BATHROOM - DAY

Joan is brushing her hair. Some kids leave the room and she's alone. There's a KNOCK on the door, and a JANITOR sticks his head in.

JANITOR

You alone in here?

JOAN

Yes.

JANITOR

'Cause I have to clean.

JOAN

Fine.

He comes in.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANITOR

You're going to be late for class.

JOAN

(looking at her watch)

No, I'm not.

Then, she realizes.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Okay, this is getting old.

He looks at her.

JOAN (CONT'D)

You can't just keep popping up in your different party suits. I mean, of course you can. You can do anything. You're God. But it's driving me a little crazy. And don't nag me about the job. Don't you have a universe to run? Starving children, people in burning buildings and stuff? Can't you just go make a whale or something and leave me alone? Please?

The janitor stares at her. Blink blink.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Oh. Sorry. I thought you were somebody else.

Joan hurries out of the bathroom, embarrassed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERTED ROAD - DAY

Will pulls up in an unmarked police car, gets out. Walks over to where a crowd is gathering. There, in plain sight, is the dead body of a young girl, about the same age as the one before. No blanket this time. Barry walks over to him.

BARRY

Normally I wouldn't call you.

WILL

No kidding.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARRY

This one's younger. And not a runaway. Her name is Lindsey Mitchell. Junior at AHS. Mother reported her missing yesterday afternoon. She's been dead about twenty-four hours.

Will bends down and looks at the body. It's disturbing, as this could easily be his daughter.

WILL

Did you notify the FBI?

BARRY

I was waiting for you.

WILL

You're head of homicide. What do you think?

BARRY

I think it's the same guy.

(then)

I've never handled anything like this before.

WILL

Me, either.

He stands up, staring down at the body, resigned.

WILL (CONT'D)

Baptism by Napalm.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Joan comes into the book store. Sammy is on the phone with his wife. You wouldn't want to be her.

SAMMY

Is it moving?... Is it breathing?... Well, if it's moving and breathing, it's not dead... Dammit, Heidi, if it's hopping it's really not dead. It's goddamn cheerful.

Joan stands there waiting for him to get off the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SAMMY (CONT'D)

I told you we shouldn't get a  
rabbit for a pet. It's not a pet.  
It's food...Oh, don't do that.  
Heidi...

She hangs up on him. He sighs and puts the phone down.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Do not get married.

JOAN

Remember me? I came about the job.

SAMMY

Remember me? I said no.

JOAN

I didn't get a note from God, but I  
do have a strong verbal  
recommendation.

(off his look)

That's a joke. I'm revealing my  
good nature.

SAMMY

Why do you want to work here?

JOAN

(beat)

I like books.

SAMMY

Really.

JOAN

Oh, yeah. I'm crazy for them.

SAMMY

So you'll be shoplifting them.

JOAN

I'm not that crazy for them.  
Actually, I don't really like them.  
I need the job. Please say yes.

Sammy looks at his watch with a sigh.

SAMMY

You know how to work a cash  
register? In the off chance that  
someone comes in to buy something?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN

Yes.

SAMMY

Tell you what. I'll run home, take my wife's rabbit to the vet, get back here by six to close up. If you haven't burned down the store or wiped out my inventory, I'll hire you.

JOAN

What, now?

SAMMY

Yes, now.

JOAN

I wasn't thinking now.  
(off his look)  
Now is great.

SAMMY

I'll be back at six.

He goes off. On Joan, looking around. All these books.

CUT TO:

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Helen is coming out of the grocery store, carrying bags, heading to her car. Her eye catches something across the street.

HER POV

Of a church.

ANGLE HELEN

Looking at it. Considering.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Joan is wandering through the book store, flipping through books. She comes across a coffee table art book called The Lives of The Saints. She flips through. All these mysterious and beautiful icons appear. One in particular holds her attention. It's a picture of Joan D'Arc. She starts reading about her. She looks at the picture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They look eerily similar. Joan turns the page. And there she sees Joan at the stake. Burning, eyes turned toward heaven. Joan slams the book shut.

CUT TO:

INT. CHURCH - DAY

It's a Catholic church, full of statues and icons and candles. It's peaceful and beautiful. Helen sits in a pew, staring at the images in front of her. A PRIEST walks through, but Helen doesn't notice him. He stops beside her.

PRIEST

I'm opening up this booth.

She looks up at him.

HELEN

Oh, no. I'm not here for confession.

PRIEST

Is there anything I can do for you?

HELEN

I really don't think so.

He starts away. Helen's voice stops him.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Unless you can tell me how to live in the absence of Faith.

He walks slowly over to her.

HELEN (CONT'D)

See, I believe in God. I just don't trust him.

PRIEST

That's a terrible place to be.

HELEN

He seems to either be toying with us or indifferent to us. Which do you think it is?

The priest smiles, sits down next to her.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED:

PRIEST

St. Teresa of Avila, one of the holiest women who ever lived, once shouted at the heavens, "No wonder you have no friends if this is how you treat people." All because her carriage got stuck in the mud.

Helen can't help smiling.

PRIEST (CONT'D)

I believe God loves us all the time. And that He understands us, even when we don't understand Him. And that one day, it will all make sense.

HELEN

When we're dead?

PRIEST

I'm hoping to figure it out before then.

On Helen, feeling somewhat connected to his words.

CUT TO:

INT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Joan looks at her watch. It's past six o'clock. It's getting dark outside. She needs to leave. She starts opening drawers and looking around until she finds some keys.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

Joan tapes a note on the door for Sammy, then locks the front of the store. She starts walking home in a hurry.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

She turns a corner, and suddenly realizes someone is following her. She turns. It's a MAN in jeans and a zip-up jacket. He smiles kindly at her.

JOAN

Is that you?

MAN

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

Could we work out some sort of system? Some kind of code word? Because I really embarrassed myself with the janitor. Did you see that? By the way, do you see everything or just the interesting stuff?

(off his silence)

Oh, right. You ask the questions.

MAN

Do you need a ride?

JOAN

A ride? Yeah, that would help. My parents are going to kill me.

MAN

My car's over here.

JOAN

God has a car? Like a Lexus or what?

The man goes to the car and puts the key in the lock.

JOAN (CONT'D)

God locks his car?

MAN

So, you live near here?

She looks at him and suddenly realizes this is not God. She starts backing up.

JOAN

You know what? I think I'll walk.

MAN

You don't want to do that.

Joan backs up some more, then turns around and runs. She heads in the direction of the store.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

As she runs for the door, fumbling with the keys. We hear FOOTSTEPS. Joan is panicking, trying to get into the store. She drops the keys.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A HAND reaches into frame and picks them up. Joan SCREAMS, turns to run. The hand grabs her arm. She tries to fight back.

SAMMY

What the hell are you doing? Why are you leaving?

Joan realizes it's Sammy. She throws her arms around him. He's taken aback.

JOAN

Oh, my God. There's a man...

SAMMY

What man?

JOAN

This man... he tried to get me in his car...

SAMMY

What man?

She looks around. There's no one in sight. Joan is trembling and shaken. She looks at Sammy. She feels completely insane.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Joan is sitting on the couch, by herself. Staring straight ahead. Across the room, her mother sits in a chair, her father stands. They are both staring at her. They are waiting. A long beat.

LUKE

(O.S.)

Is Joan finished being yelled at? Because there's a global warming special on the Discovery Channel.

HELEN

(fierce mother voice)  
Luke Andrew.

LUKE

(O.S.)

I'll catch it in reruns.

Joan sighs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN

I thought I'd be home by six. Then the owner was late coming back. I'm sorry I scared you.

HELEN

You go and get a job, just like that, without telling anybody.

JOAN

You're always bugging Kevin to get one.

HELEN

That's Kevin. You're in school.

JOAN

Some parents would think that was industrious.

(beat)

And then there was this man, who was kind of following me.

HELEN

Oh, for God's sake.

(to Will)

I can't take any more of this.

WILL

Helen. Why don't you let me handle this?

HELEN

Fine. I kind of miss the fifties.

She gets up and goes out. Will is staring at Joan. She looks up at him with teary eyes.

JOAN

I swear there was a man, Daddy.

WILL

The same man.

JOAN

No, a different one.

WILL

(beat)

Why are you doing this?

(off her silence)

You cannot be making this up for attention.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

WILL (CONT'D)

Because there really is someone out there, Joan. And if a man is following you, I need to know.

JOAN

He really is. I mean, I think he is. The one earlier, that turned out to be... someone else. But the one tonight, he seemed real.

Will looks at her. He doesn't know what to say. Then:

JOAN (CONT'D)

Daddy, I don't want this to be happening to me.

She starts to CRY and he hugs her.

WILL

What's happening, Joan? What is it? You can tell me. Whatever it is, we'll deal with it. I'll get you a counselor, a doctor, a priest. I'll make it okay. That's my job.

She doesn't say anything. She knows she can't tell.

WILL (CONT'D)

Look at me.

(she does)

I am not going to lose you. For any reason. Do you understand?

She nods, holds on to him, wishing it were that simple.

CUT TO:

INT. DELANEY HOME/JOAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She's lying in the dark, clutching the stuffed dog, unable to sleep. She HEARS A VOICE:

VOICE

Joan.

She sits up, catching her breath. She looks over and sees the profile of Kevin in his wheelchair.

KEVIN

I appreciate what you did. It was kind of stupid and you got in trouble. But it was brave. And I get the point.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOAN  
I have a point?

KEVIN  
My little sister can get a job.  
I've got no excuse. So you're  
shaming me back into the world.

Joan just looks at him.

KEVIN (CONT'D)  
But you're right. It's time.  
(beat)  
Go back to sleep.

He turns and wheels himself out. Joan lies down, turns over,  
looks at the stars peering in through her window.

PULL BACK

From the perspective of the heavens, this small girl in a  
big, confusing place...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW