

"Damsels in Distress"

By

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REVISED PINK

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At the edge of the registration hall three well-dressed young women -- stylish, black ROSE; cute, insipid HEATHER and pretty VIOLET -- spot a lonely-looking new student.

ROSE
Look.

VIOLET
Where?

ROSE
There.

VIOLET
Yes. I think so.

Violet approaches the lithe, pretty but sad-looking LILY.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Hello. Are you a new student?

LILY
Yes.

VIOLET
Good -- we thought so. We'd like to help you.

LILY
Help me? What do you mean?

The four walk across the green, leafy quadrangle formed by the university's handsome old brick buildings.

INSERT TITLE: "The Quadrangle, Seven Oaks University"

VIOLET
As a freshman, it can be very tough. You finally get to college, it's supposed to be so great but, generally -- it's not. University life can be pretty bad.

HEATHER
There are a lot of suicides.

ROSE
Well, attempted ones.

LILY
I'm not actually a freshman. I'm a transfer student.

VIOLET
Oh... An "entering Sophomore?"

LILY
Yes.

VIOLET
So you were unhappy at your old school and are looking to recover here? Well, I think you will!

Violet encourages her with a huge smile.

HEATHER
Yes!

VIOLET
Would you welcome that? Would our help and guidance be something you'd appreciate, or would you rather sink or swim on your own? Either way's fine, we'd still be friends.

HEATHER
Yes, whichever you'd prefer.

A pause.

LILY
Yes. Sure.

VIOLET
Great! Well, let's start immediately.

She gives Lily a very quick looking over.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Clothes can be critical for confidence -- and an overall sense of well-being.

LILY
You don't like my clothes?

VIOLET
It's not about liking or not liking...

LILY
What's it about?

VIOLET
How you look when you put them on.

HEATHER

The right clothes don't have to be expensive.

ROSE

No, all you need are friends of about the same size.

A grungy pack of male students approaches, inconsiderately hogging the path, obliging the girls to step aside. Suddenly Rose looks like she's smelled something foul; Violet gags.

VIOLET

Phew!

Rose bends over, hyperventilating -- it's a bit scary.

LILY

What's wrong?

VIOLET

You didn't notice that?!

LILY

No, what?

VIOLET

Those guys! That smell! That awful acrid odor.

Rose's hyperventilating gets a little less. [Film full speech in both locations:]

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Rose has a very sensitive nose....

3

INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY

3

Rose lies in her bunk, a handkerchief to her nose.

VIOLET

...Have you heard of "nasal shock syndrome?" Any harsh, acrid, or just "disgusting" odor sends Rose into nasal shock--

ROSE

(very nasally)
This wasn't true nasal shock. Had it been, I'd've lost consciousness entirely.

LILY

(smiles)
Just from some b.o.?

VIOLET
 "Just some b.o.?! " Omigod, Lily,
 you must have a very high threshold
 for pain! That'll serve you well
 here at Seven Oaks!

LILY
 What do you mean?

VIOLET
 Seven Oaks is notorious for it's
 b.o. It was the last of the "Select
 Seven" to go co-ed.
 (looks around, combative)
 An atmosphere of male barbarism
 predominates -- but we're going to
 change all that!

HEATHER
 Yes!

Lily heads toward the door.

VIOLET
 Where're you going?

LILY
 I've got to get to the housing
 department -- it seems they lost my
 rooming assignment.

VIOLET
 That's terrible. You've no place
 to stay?

Lily shakes her head, her eyes watering a little.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 They lost your housing assignment?

ROSE
 How could they lose it?

HEATHER
 Was it just mislaid?

LILY
 No, there were more acceptances
 than they anticipated and not
 enough rooms to go around.

Violet exchanges quick looks with Rose and Heather.

VIOLET
 Why don't you stay with us?

LILY
 Really?

4

INT. DORM BATHROOM-- NIGHT

4

Considerable movement in front of the mirrors as the girls prepare for a night out.

VIOLET

You mustn't think of this in the old fashioned sense of going to a party to "find someone" or "not find someone." That's not the dynamic we're talking about.

LILY

What dynamic are you talking about?

VIOLET

I'm glad you asked that. Our going to a party of this kind is more a form of... "youth outreach"--

LILY

Of what?

VIOLET

"Youth outreach." It's not just some moronic frat house social function--

ROSE

Though it will be that.

VIOLET

Yes, of course, but what we've got to keep in mind is -- these guys are very young, they're "young people"--

Violet opens the door and goes halfway out, with one parting comment.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

They're essentially immature, crying out for help and guidance.

She leaves.

ROSE

Though they don't know that.

HEATHER

No. They don't, but we do.

LILY

But aren't they the same age as we are?

ROSE
Only numerically.

Violet returns, carrying a beautiful dress.

VIOLET
I'm a lot fatter than you are but I
think we could pin it.

LILY
Omigosh it's beautiful.

ROSE
Stunning.

Lily puts the dress up to see how it looks in the mirror.

TITLE CARD
Saturday Evening "Youth Outreach"

5 EXT. UNIVERSITY WALK -- NIGHT

5

Possible POV shot of a wooden frat clubhouse from which party music and crowd spills. Girls could walk into POV, or we just see them heading that way.

VIOLET
Take Frank, my friend -- he's not
some cool, handsome, "studly" macho-
type. No, not at all -- I can't
stand guys like that! He's more of
a sad-sack really, wouldn't you
say?

Rose and Heather nod.

ROSE
Definitely.

LILY
What's a "sad-sack?"

ROSE
(forcefully)
A loo-ser!

LILY
(to Violet)
You like losers?

VIOLET
Very much so. Do you know what's
the major problem in contemporary
social life?

LILY

What?

VIOLET

The tendency, very widespread, to always seek someone "cooler" than yourself -- it's always a stretch, often a big stretch. Why not find someone who's frankly inferior?

HEATHER

Someone like Frank.

VIOLET

Yes. It's more rewarding and in fact quite reassuring.

LILY

You mean, someone you can really help? Not just thinking of yourself?

VIOLET

Yes! That's it. Precisely! But without the goody-goody implications -- our aspirations are pretty basic: Take a guy who hasn't realized his full potential, or doesn't even have much and then help him realize it -- or find more. There's enough material here for a lifetime of social work.

Looking ahead, they see the front verandah of the D U where a drunken frat member walks toward its balustrade and dramatically falls, front-flipping, over it and disappears from view. He then stands and walks calmly back into the club.

ON the girls: Lily's shocked expression, the others' equanimity:

VIOLET (CONT'D)

What's really worrisome is that that--

(she makes a face)

-- was intentional.

The girls pass through the frame toward the clubhouse.

6

INT. D.U. CLUBHOUSE -- NIGHT

6

Entering it's instantly clear the girls greatly outclass the D.U. guys, a "meatloaf crowd" that includes Violet's FRANK.

VIOLET
 Frank, this is Lily, she's just
 come to Seven Oaks as a transfer
 student. Isn't she great?

FRANK
 Uh...

VIOLET
 Lily failed or was unhappy at her
 last school but we're sure is going
 to adapt beautifully here. In fact
 she already has!!

FRANK
 Oh. Good.

A good, quite recent (circa-2002/6) dance hit starts to play.

VIOLET
 Omigod -- a "golden oldie." I love
 these!

Violet starts the dancing; they all join in.

7 INT. D.U. CLUBHOUSE PARTY SPACE -- NIGHT 7

The four pair off and dance enthusiastically with klutzy DU partners -- Violet with Frank, etc. Later women arrivals look on jealously. Violet tries out new, cool dance steps -- the others follow suit. The dancing gets better. Even the DU guys -- most sad-sacks but one, THOR, dumb and handsome -- rise to the occasion.

8 INT. D.U. CLUBHOUSE REFRESHMENT AREA -- NIGHT 8

Breaking from the dancing Violet leads them into the refreshment area.

VIOLET
 Omigosh! Wasn't that great?

LILY
 That was really fun.

FRANK
 Yeah.

VIOLET
 I know that people can have useful
 careers in many areas: Government.
 Law. Finance. --

ROSE
 --Education--

VIOLET

Yes, even education! But I'd like to do something especially significant in my lifetime, the sort of thing that could change the course of human history -- such as starting a new dance craze.

LILY

Really?

VIOLET

Yes. Something that could improve the lives of every person -- and every couple.

Frank looks at Violet with pride, which Violet rewards with a quick kiss before sampling the punch.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

My gosh that's good! What's in it?

The young bartender gets flustered with an "uh..." "duh..." reaction -- he doesn't know.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

No, don't tell. It's better a mystery!

9

INT. DINING HALL -- DAY

9

At breakfast the four are in pretty good shape considering the night before.

VIOLET

I'm so proud of what you accomplished last night. You showed those guys a really good time without anything really bad happening. You could see their confidence and enjoyment increase by the minute, while not letting them turn into animals. That's good.

ROSE

Still, I hate it when they puke.

Violet thinks about this.

VIOLET

That's okay. It's part of growing up -- "they're learning their limits."

ROSE
But are they learning? It's like a puking festival.

VIOLET
Well, their aim's improving!
They're getting more directional!

HEATHER
Yuck. I hate when it gets on your clothes.

VIOLET
Dar-fur.

LILY
What?

VIOLET
Dar-fur. There are horrible injustices in the world and we shouldn't obsess over the adolescent misdemeanors of friends.

LILY
The guys you know, are they all Greeks?

VIOLET
What?

LILY
Are all the guys you know Greeks?

VIOLET
Excuse me? I don't understand.

LILY
(more slowly)
Are. All. The. Guys. You. Know. Greeks?

Violet looks to the others.

VIOLET
I don't think we know any Greeks.

ROSE
Professor Papadopoulos?

LILY
"Greeks" -- frat boys.

Blank looks all around.

VIOLET
Oh! Oh Yes! Fraternities! You mean members of Greek-letter

fraternities -- American college slang: "Greeks."

LILY
Like last night.

A pause.

VIOLET
Actually last night we were at the "D" "U" house: "D", "U," Roman letters, not Greek. Seven Oaks doesn't have a Greek letter fraternity system -- it's always been a Roman letter system here.

HEATHER
It's very different.

LILY
How?

VIOLET
Well, I think you'll see.

10 EXT. BRICK BUILDING -- DAY

10

They approach another Georgian brick building. Rose and Heather carry a large box of donuts and "jug o' joe."

LILY
What house is this?

VIOLET
Oh, this isn't a fraternity -- at least not one anyone should want to join!

The sign reads: "Suicide Center."

Violet picks up the "Prevention" from the Center's sign from the floor.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
(to Lily)
You probably think we're frivolous, empty-headed, perfume-obsessed college coeds. You're probably right. I often feel empty headed--

Violet puts the "Prevention" sign back up.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
But we're also trying to make a difference in people's lives. And one way to do that is to stop them from killing themselves.

Violet and Lily climb the Center steps.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 Have you ever heard the expression,
 "Prevention is nine-tenths the
 cure?" Well, in the case of
 suicide, it's actually ten-tenths
 the cure.

LILY
 Those are cliches, aren't they?

11 INT. SUICIDE CENTER -- DAY

11

While Heather and Rose set up the coffee and donuts for the center, including the sign explaining their restricted use.

VIOLET
 [Yes, they are.] It's interesting
 that you say that. I love cliches
 and hackneyed expressions of every
 kind. Do you know why?

Lily shakes her head "no."

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 Because they're largely true: The
 hundreds, perhaps thousands of such
 cliches and hackneyed expressions
 our language has bequeathed to us
 are, in fact, a treasure-trove of
 human insight and understanding.

LILY
 Really?

VIOLET
 Yes. Oh, come sit with us. During
 these formative college years we
 should try to learn as many
 hackneyed thoughts and expressions
 as possible -- furthermore, I think
 we will!

HEATHER
 (to Lily)
 Speaking of suicide prevention, do
 you have a boyfriend, Lily?

Lily is a bit amazed.

ROSE
 Are you dating anyone?

LILY
 I don't see the connection.

HEATHER

You don't?

VIOLET

Boyfriends are a primary suicide risk.

HEATHER

You don't have any particular friend? No one at all?

Lily is put on the spot.

LILY

No... Well, there's this grad student whom I met over the summer - - Xavier [pronounce Zav-ee-yay]. We became pretty good pals.

VIOLET

"Good pals?" What's that?

LILY

Well, he has a girlfriend whom I met -- she's very nice.

Violet looks around to the others.

VIOLET

What's the point of that?

LILY

Of what?

VIOLET

Xavier with the girlfriend.

LILY

What do you mean?

HEATHER

"Zavier" with a "Z?"

LILY

No, I think it's with an "X."

HEATHER

No, I'm certain it's a "Z."
 "Zavier" Like "Zorro." It's the same sound.
 (does a Zorro move)
 Zorro marked his name with a "Z."

LILY

It's an "X."

HEATHER

But Zorro's with a "Z." It's the same.

VIOLET

Okay, let's see if we can figure this out. Used at the beginning of a name, "Z" and "X" have the same pronunciation.

HEATHER

But it's Zorro- with a "Z."

VIOLET

Actually there were two "Zorros." One spelt his name with a "Z" and made a "Z" mark for Zorro, the other one spelled his name with an "X" and with his sword he'd make an "X" mark. What was really unfair was that, because he marked his name with an "X", everybody assumed he was illiterate, when actually he was spelling correctly.

A frantic seeming young male student bursts into the Center -- they all stop what they're doing.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Hello.

ROSE

Can we help you?

VIOLET

Of course we can! No case is too hard or challenging -- would you like a donut?

Heather springs into action.

ROSE

Please sit down.

HEATHER

Here, have some coffee.

Violet sits at the desk and takes out a form.

JIMBO

Thank you.

VIOLET

What's your name?

JIMBO
 Jim. Bose. But my friends call me
 Jimbo.

VIOLET
 Why?

JIMBO
 What?

VIOLET
 Why do your friends call you
 "Jimbo?"

JIMBO
 I suppose it's a contraction of
 "Jim" and the first part of my last
 name, "Bose."

VIOLET
 Yah. I got that. But, why bother.

JIMBO
 What do you mean?

VIOLET
 Why bother: "Jim" is already a
 lovely name -- short, simple,
 evocative -- shouldn't a nickname
 simplify the name that it's
 replacing? Jimbo' doesn't simplify
 anything.

JIMBO
 I don't know.

VIOLET
 Well, maybe you should ask your
 friends what they had in mind.
 (reading from form)
 Where do you live or reside?

JIMBO
 Doar Dorm.

ROSE
 Ouf.

HEATHER
 Omigod. Yuck.

JIMBO
 What?

VIOLET
 The smell. It's notorious.

JIMBO
What smell?

VIOLET
You're right, it's more like a
"stink." Unclean clothing, I'd say,
mostly.

ROSE
Vomit.

HEATHER
Stale beer.

ROSE
Pot, cheap deodorant -- there might
be a vermin infestation.

Heather and Lily place the coffee and donut next to him.

VIOLET
No wonder you're depressed, living
there. Did you know that a good
smelling environment is crucial to
our well-being? Have you thought of
moving and finding a place that
smells better?--

JIMBO
(getting frantic)
Wait, wait, wait-- It's not me --
I'm not depressed!

VIOLET
Are you sure? Because you kind of
seem on edge.

JIMBO
No -- I'm fine.

ROSE
That's a terrible expression --
"fine."
(a funny voice)
"I'm fine."
(normal voice)
Anyone who says they're fine
definitely isn't. It's kind of
conceited. Something smug about
it.

VIOLET
Why do you say you're "fine?"

JIMBO
I mean I'm not depressed! I'm not
suicidal!

Violet snatches the donut from his mouth.

ROSE

Why are you here then? Are you a con man, a confidence trickster?

JIMBO

No, there's a girl on my floor! Her boyfriend dumped her! She's been crying for days but now's silent--

VIOLET

Omigod! Why didn't you say so!

Violet jumps up.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

We have to go!

(to the others)

Call the cops -- a suicide might be in progress!

Violet heads off.

HEATHER

The campus cops?

ROSE

Yes of course the campus cops.

12 EXT. WALK TO DOAR DORM -- DAY

12

They head quickly along the walk. Violet still holds the partially eaten donut carefully and sanitarily with a thin tissue.

VIOLET

Take this. I'm sorry--

Violet gives Jimbo his donut back.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

It's just that we get a lot of students coming to the center pretending to be depressed to get the donuts.

ROSE

Confidence tricksters!

VIOLET

Yes, it's really bad, really cynical. And we made a pledge the donut company that we would only give the donuts to students who were depressed, suicidal or

otherwise nutty. We're a non-profit
-- so the rules are pretty strict.

Jimbo nods as he jogs, his mouth full.

ROSE
This man could still be a
trickster.

VIOLET
We'll soon find out... I'm
surprised we haven't had more cases
from Doar Dorm -- living in such
squalor must be terribly
destabilizing psychologically.

JIMBO
It's not so bad.

VIOLET
You poor guy!... Tell me about
this girl.

JIMBO
Her name's "Priss." She's very
pretty--

VIOLET
Oh, yeah--
(to the other girls)
--it's very hard for beautiful
women to experience rejection.

13 INT. DOAR DORM CORRIDOR -- DAY

13

They are outside the girl's room. Violet tests the door
handle. It's locked. She shakes it.

VIOLET
Priss? Priss? Are you okay?

They listen but can hear nothing.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Priss! Say something!

Meanwhile each reacts to the Doar Dorm odor: most gasping but
Rose spraying perfume on her pashmina and trying to breath
through that.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Priss! Open up -- please! Priss!

She listens but there's no sound from within. Rose
approaches Violet, looking unwell.

ROSE
(in terrible shape)
Could I wait outside?

VIOLET
Yes! It's best to get as far away
as possible!

Rose, who looks shaken, nods.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Take care of yourself, Rose.

HEATHER
Yes, take care of yourself.

Rose leaves, protecting her face with the pashmina.

VIOLET
Priss say something! Please!--

Campus cops arrive.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Oh thank God, we're going to have
to force this door.

14 INT. DORM ROOM -- DAY.

14

The campus cops burst into the room -- followed by Violet and the others. PRISS bolts up from her dorm cot, where she'd been lying teary-eyed, head under a pillow, headphones in her ears. She's delicate-looking and very pretty.

VIOLET
Priss?! Are you okay?!

Priss takes the headphones out of her ears.

PRISS
What?

VIOLET
Please don't-- Please, please--
Come with us.

15 INT. COFFEE COTTAGE -- DAY.

15

Violet & Jimbo sit with Priss who nurses a hot chocolate.

VIOLET
But you had contemplated suicide?

PRISS
What?

VIOLET
Had you resolved to kill yourself?

PRISS
No... Not really.

She stops, looks down and freezes. Silently, tears start streaming down her face. Violet turns to Jimbo:

VIOLET
Could you excuse us?

Jimbo nods and goes. Violet turns back to Priss.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Do you want to talk about it? What was his name?

PRISS
J-josh.

Priss's voice breaks; another wave of tears rolls down her cheeks.

VIOLET
If you'd rather not talk about it, we don't have to --

Priss nods, but the tears don't stop.

PRISS
No it's Okay, I just... I keep thinking how... he used to gaze at me with such love in his eyes -- you know what I mean?

VIOLET
No, I've never actually seen that.

PRISS
Yes, just days ago he'd gaze at me -
- with his eyes so blue.

She stops; the tears roll some more.

VIOLET
He had blue eyes?

Priss nods.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
So does Frank -- Frank's the guy that I go out with. Otherwise he's not conventionally good-looking -- which I actually prefer. Would you describe "Josh" as handsome?

Priss nods, too overwhelmed to talk further.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
That's a problem.

Lily comes by with a cup of tea.

LILY
Could I join you guys?

VIOLET
Yes, please. Priss and I were just talking -- in my view, handsome men are to be avoided. I don't even consider good looks to be flattering in a man. Do you know what I mean?

LILY
Uh, no.

VIOLET
Cookie-cutter "good-looking guys" with their "chiseled features," running around, full of themselves, getting everything they want, never suffering or experiencing any--

LILY
Have we suffered?

VIOLET
We're not under discussion-- That's irrelevant, beside the point.
(to Priss)
Is this making you feel any better?

Priss has stopped crying.

PRISS
Yes. I think so.

VIOLET
Good! I hoped it would.
(checks her phone)
Okay, it's nearly four and the Daily Complainer's orientation meeting is about to start. I think we should go. The editor, Rick DeWolfe, he's terrible, a real jerk.

The Fab Four plus Priss walk toward the "Daily Complainer" building.

LILY
Why do you think he's such a jerk?

VIOLET
Environment? Genetics?

LILY
I mean what's he done that's so jerky?

VIOLET
Oh. You'll see. He's one of those I was talking about -- tall, probably considering himself very smart and handsome -- and a "journalist" -- so you can just imagine the mind-boggling arrogance and conceit.

LILY
But, Violet, don't you think...

VIOLET
What?

LILY
Well, don't you think that the way you talk be considered arrogant too?

They walk in silence for a moment.

LILY (CONT'D)
I mean, a little...

VIOLET
Yes, of course, but what's your point?

LILY
Well...wouldn't that be hypocritical, criticizing Rick DeWolfe for something you could be criticized for yourself?

Violet considers this with complete equanimity.

VIOLET
No, I don't see why... We're all flawed. Must that render us mute to the flaws of others? Must we tether ourselves from comment because our natures are human too?
(very happy)
We've got a *rebel* amongst us!
That's good, I think. It's good to be challenged and criticized.

LILY

I'm sorry, I know your intentions
are good--

VIOLET

You've put your finger on something
important. That's it, precisely:
Our intentions are good. We're
seeking to help people rescue their
lives from terrible sadness and
failure -- which is a worthy goal,
don't you think?

LILY

Yes, but not exactly a humble one.

VIOLET

No, I agree with you there, you're
right absolutely. I'd like to
thank you for this chastisement.

LILY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to--

VIOLET

No, I think you did and I think
it's good. It's good to have a
friend to put one in one's place
when that's what one needs and now
I see that I have that kind of
friend in you. I think that's
great!

17 INT. DAILY COMPLAINER NEWSROOM -- DAY.

17

Tall, insufferable RICK DeWOLFE jumps up on a steel desk to
address the young freshman and sophomore crowd.

RICK DE WOLFE

Hello, people. Listen up...
People! Quiet... Quiet, people...
Shut up!... Okay, that's better!
Ha, ha. I'm Rick DeWolfe, editor
of the Complainer. Over the next
weeks and months I'm the person
you'll learn to hate most in the
world. At least, I hope so!

(laughs)

You're going hate me because I'm
going to work you relentlessly,
point out your stupidity and
incompetence, do everything in my
power to turn you into journalists -
- albeit barely literate ones.

Nervous laughter from the crowd.

VIOLET
Oh brother!

LILY
What?

Violet just shakes her head but Rick looks and sees Violet's contemptuous stare. A Ceausescu moment. Then he recovers.

RICK DE WOLFE
Any questions?... No?

Stupid titters. Violet rolls her eyes.

MALE STUDENT
Uh, yes -- how did the "Daily
Complainer" get its name?

RICK DE WOLFE
Isn't that pretty obvious?

The student, embarrassed, shakes his head; nervous titters from the crowd.

RICK DE WOLFE (CONT'D)
It comes out every day and it's the
university daily-- So, the Daily.
Complainer. Daily--

Stupid laughter, from Rick and others.

MALE STUDENT
No, I meant--

RICK DE WOLFE
You mean why the "Complainer?" The
name dates from Seven Oak's
earliest days as a divinity school.
The reference is to the Book of Job
-- Job's "complaint" with the
world. The Complainer started as a
theological journal but evolved
into the university weekly, finally
going daily after World War Two. I
like the name -- before justice can
be achieved, a complaint must be
made. That's what we do and people
don't like it a bit. Right now that
means extirpating Seven Oak's
elitist roman-letter clubs that are
like a cancer on the university
community--

VIOLET
Oh what nonsense!

RICK DE WOLFE
What?

VIOLET

They're not "elitist" in the least.

Dead silence in the room.

RICK

Of course they are.

VIOLET

Have you met any of their members?
The guys from the DU, for example?
They're morons, barely competent
for the tasks of everyday life.
They have to drink something like a
quart of beer just to talk to a
woman--

ROSE

Two quarts.

VIOLET

Yet you salivate at the idea of
taking the roof off these poor
guys' heads, and throwing them
brutally into the street where who
knows what harm might come to them.
And you consider yourself a
Christian?

RICK

No, I don't.

VIOLET

What unkindness and cruelty -- and
yet you're proud of that. This is
the darkness in human nature, in
the very Heart of Man -- which the
British novelist Joseph Conrad
wrote about most eloquently.

RICK

He was actually Polish.

VIOLET

Omigod! Pedantic too! Unkind,
self-righteous and pedantic -- in
short, a model journalist!

Rick looks around and appeals to the crowd.

RICK

You should know something about
these girls -- they run the
"Suicide Center" where their
preferred therapy for seriously
depressed and suicidal people is
...tap dancing. I kid you not.

VIOLET

Tap is a highly effective therapy as well as a dazzlingly expressive dance form that has been sadly neglected for too many years.

RICK

It's moronic and barbaric. You seriously expect tap dancing to solve these people's problems?

VIOLET

No, we don't -- we're using the whole range of musical dance numbers which over many years have proven themselves to be effective therapies for the suicidal and hopelessly depressed.

18 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- NIGHT

18

Violet lies on her bunk, looking discouraged, while the others relax or go about their business.

VIOLET

That really got me down.

LILY

I thought you handled it well.

VIOLET

You did? Thanks. No, it's all this aggression and hostility that gets me down -- not just his, but also my own. It leaves you feeling unclean.

HEATHER

Have you thought of taking a shower maybe you'd fee better.

VIOLET

You're probably right but there's something else... What Lily was saying about me being conceited and arrogant--

LILY

I'm sorry--

VIOLET

No, I think you're right. It's bad. I feel terrible.

ROSE

You're joking--

VIOLET

No, I'm serious. It's terrible how I've acted. I'm embarrassed.... We're all Christians -- Or, I should say "Judeo-Christians:" humility should be our watchword, the essence of being a good person. The question is, how do you become humble if you're essentially arrogant and... evil by nature?

The room falls into silence.

19

INT. SUICIDE CENTER -- DAY

19

A gangly, oddly-dressed male student awkwardly leads sad-seeming students, including Priss, in a tap dance number as if from a 30s musical. [Look for music.]

VIOLET

Very good, Freak!

GANGLY STUDENT

You really think so?

VIOLET

Yes! Certainly.

Lily takes Violet aside.

LILY

(whispering)

Is it really such a good idea to call him "freak"?

VIOLET

What?

LILY

He's already depressed; constantly calling him "freak"--

VIOLET

(whispers back)

That's his name, "Freak" -- "Freak Astaire," that's how he wants to be called.

"FREAK ASTAIRE" -- the gangly student -- notices them talking.

FREAK

(a bit paranoid)

What's all the whispering? What are you talking about?

VIOLET

Lily was just saying that she likes
your dancing.

Freak nods. Next to them DEBBIE, a chorus member, seems
catatonic.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Are you okay?

DEBBIE

(suspiciously)
What do you mean?

VIOLET

I just noticed that you looked a
little sad and I was wondering if
there's anything we could do.

DEBBIE

What could you do? Oh, I know: you
think I'm suicidal -- that I'm
going to kill myself and make you
look bad.

VIOLET

No, I'm worried you'll kill
yourself and make yourself look
bad.

DEBBIE

Do you have you any idea how
demoralizing it is to be constantly
questioned about whether you're
suicidal or not?

VIOLET

No.

DEBBIE

Well, the first few times, you
might brush it aside by saying "No"
or "Not now..."

(Increasingly angry)

...But, after a while, you begin to
wonder -- why is everyone asking me
this? Is it because they want me to
be suicidal? Or is it just the
unintended consequence of their
utter absurdity?

Debbie turns and walks away; Violet follows her.

VIOLET

Excuse me, what scent are you
wearing?

DEBBIE
What are you talking about?

VIOLET
The perfume that you're wearing.

DEBBIE
I'm not wearing any perfume!

VIOLET
You see, that could be the problem.

20 INT XAVIER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- EVENING

20

The kitchen in the ground floor apartment in a private house. Lily's grad student friend XAVIER and his girlfriend ALICE in the midst of preparing a healthy-looking meal.

LILY
I've become friends with this really nice group...

XAVIER
Reall?

Yeah -- though they're somewhat perfume-obsessed.

XAVIER
Oh them -- those girls? The ones who volunteer at the Suicide Center?

LILY
Yeah.

XAVIER
But they're terrible! The blonde one -- she's notorious.

LILY
What do you mean?

XAVIER
Such a bitch, terrible, isn't she?

ALICE
(preparing the salad)
Would balsamic be okay?

LILY
What?

ALICE
Balsamic vinegar, for the dressing?

LILY
Oh, yeah, sure.

Lily follows their movements as they prepare the meal.
Xavier lifts a lid revealing three artichokes in a cloud of steam.

LILY (CONT'D)
What's that?!

XAVIER
What?

LILY
Those.

XAVIER
Artichokes?

LILY
Is that what they look like?

ALICE
Oh come on, Lily. You've seen an artichoke before...

Lily is embarrassed for a moment.

ALICE (CONT'D)
You haven't?

LILY
They look so weird! Like little Martian space vehicles.

Xavier laughs.

21 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY

21

The girls leaving the Suicide Center with Priss.

VIOLET
You know, I'm not convinced that having a "Suicide Prevention Center" prevents any suicides.

ROSE
Well, the coffee's good.

LILY
If someone were really determined to destroy themselves, I don't think they'd stop for coffee.

HEATHER

I suppose it depends on what it tastes like.

LILY

Where are we going?

VIOLET

I thought I'd take Priss over to the D.U.

LILY

Why?

VIOLET

Well, it might be helpful for her to meet some of the guys.

LILY

How would that be helpful? They're morons.

VIOLET

Come on, Lily.

LILY

No, they are. They're morons.

VIOLET

No. Not medically... I like them. They're in that sympathetic range of being not good-looking, and yet not smart. There's something likeable about that. Spending time with them, you get the sense that you're really making a difference in their lives. For somebody suicidal, like Priss, that could be a real boost.

PRISS

I'm not suicidal.

VIOLET

Oh. That's good. It's better not to have the identity as a suicidal person, don't you think?

Lily heads down a divergent path.

LILY

Bye.

VIOLET

(worried)
Where're you going?

LILY
Over to Xavier's.

VIOLET
Is that a good idea?

LILY
Why wouldn't it be?

VIOLET
Is his girlfriend going to be there?

LILY
Of course -- gosh you're nosy.

VIOLET
No -- no nose. Just a general foreboding.

LILY
"Foreboding?"

Violet reconsiders.

VIOLET
You know, you're absolutely right! I was being nosy, terribly so. I've got to watch that. Please forgive me. I want to become a better person. Can one? Can one change one's nature? I don't know. But I feel we must try.

HEATHER
Yes, we must improve ourselves.

LILY
Bye.

DAMSELS
Bye.

22 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- DAY

22

In the golden light of the day's end Lily approaches Xavier's house. A guy on a bike passes her.

XAVIER
Lily!

Xavier stops.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
You were coming over?

Lily, surprised, nods. Xavier gets off his bike.

LILY
Yeah, is Alice home?

XAVIER
Alice is working.

LILY
Oh, she is?

XAVIER
But it's not a problem -- it's good
you came. Let's go to the Oak Bar;
I'll buy you a beer.

Lily hesitates.

LILY
I thought Alice would be back.

XAVIER
I'll call her. She'll join us
there.

Lily hesitates further.

23

INT. THE CORNER BAR - DAY

23

Xavier and Lily, installed at a booth, talk as the tavern starts to fill up with local and student crowds.

LILY
She's actually quite a good person.
I mean, her entire identity
revolves around helping people.

XAVIER
You really think that's true? For
instance, what's she have against
the Complainer? That's bizarre.

LILY
Well, she thinks the editor, Rick
DeWolfe, is completely egotistical.

XAVIER
And your friend isn't?

ALICE
Hi!

Xavier stands to let Alice by him into the booth.

LILY
Hey!

ALICE
Hi Lily!

XAVIER
Hi! Great! You got the message.

ALICE
Yeah, thanks. So, who's egotistical?

XAVIER
Lily's roommate. She sounds unbearable. She's on a rampage against the Complainer.

ALICE
Really? Why?

LILY
She thinks the editor, Rick DeWolfe, is conceited and, in fact, quite mean.

ALICE
Mean?

LILY
Yes, he wants to close Seven Oaks' Roman-letter clubs.

ALICE
That's good isn't it? I thought everyone was against them.

LILY
No.

XAVIER
Come on. There's no possible justification for those places. They're exclusive and elitist.

LILY
The point that Violet makes is that they can't be elitist, they're morons.

XAVIER
Yeah -- elitist morons.

Confounded for a second, Lily regroups.

LILY
But you'll grant that they're morons and that's a handicap -- such people should be helped, not hounded and persecuted.

XAVIER
(with a laugh)
Persecuted?

LILY
Yes. Losing the roof over your head, being thrown out into the street, that's about the worst thing that can happen to anyone.

Xavier shrugs, cruelly indifferent.

LILY (CONT'D)
Violet thinks that there could be some risk of... suicide.

XAVIER
Oh, because some moronic frat boy might kill himself, Seven Oaks can't do what's right?

LILY
It's a factor to be taken into consideration.

ALICE
Yeah.

XAVIER
No it isn't. You can't set policy that way.

The barman arrives with a new round of drinks.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Excuse me, we didn't order these--

BARMAN
Compliments of the guy at the bar.

They look to the bar, where a well-dressed fairly young guy nods to them. Lily looks at him intently -- while he's not handsome, there's something appealing about him.

24 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY

24

Lily paces as the girls lounge in the room.

ROSE
That's a playboy or oper-a-tor move. Oper-a-tors like that are to be avoided.

VIOLET
Why? It seems very generous to me -
- sending a round of drinks over to

people he didn't know? Drinks are expensive.

ROSE

Sending drinks to two gorgeous girls? His intention was to seduce -- and he assumed he could.

HEATHER

(shocked)
Both?

VIOLET

Isn't that a bit harsh? He was probably just yearning for some intelligent discourse.

ROSE

I doubt that was the course he was seeking.

VIOLET

Was he alone?

LILY

Yes.

VIOLET

You see -- he was alone and probably lonely. He could see that Alice and Lily are college students. College students are well known for their intelligent conversation. After all they can always talk about their courses. That was probably what attracted him--

ROSE

Nonsense.

VIOLET

Perhaps his view was even loftier -- to court Lily, with a view to matrimony. We're in the North but occasionally a Southern gentleman can wander into these parts.

ROSE

Rubbish.

VIOLET

Why not? Seeing Lily across a crowded bar, filled with the usual undergraduate slobs, why wouldn't a thoughtful young man seek her out? She's lovely. Isn't it incumbent on men and women to find ways to meet each other? Buying drinks for

a person you don't know seems to me to be a particularly generous one.

HEATHER

Yes, most guys won't even pay for the women they do know.

ROSE

What you've described is a playboy or oper-a-tor move.

VIOLET

I'll grant you it's a tactic, or perhaps even a ruse. But without some of that, would our species even survive? The Lord said, "Be fruitful and multiply--"

LILY

Omigosh--

VIOLET

No, this is how the world works -- "seeing someone across a room" -- this could be a great romantic story to tell your grandchildren.

Violet imagines this.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

And if you do marry and have children then he'll learn how to really squander cash. Isn't it good to know he's basically generous from the start.

HEATHER

Where's Priss?

25

INT. BAR LOUNGE, D.U. CLUBHOUSE - NIGHT

25

Priss sits with Frank as a D.U brother, THOR, makes drinks.

PRISS

Your eyes are so striking, so blue.

FRANK

Really? They're blue?

PRISS

Yes. The most piercing blue.

FRANK

Huhn.

PRISS

You must know that your eyes are blue?

FRANK
No.

PRISS
(laughs)
What do you mean?

FRANK
What?

PRISS
You must know what color your eyes
are.

Frank remains silent and impassive.

PRISS (CONT'D)
Come on, your eyes are very blue,
you know that.

FRANK
I'm not going to go around
"checking" what color my eyes
are!...

At the bar Thor cocks his head, listening.

PRISS
Yes, but-- When you look in a
mirror, you must see your eyes are
blue.

FRANK
Oh come on!

PRISS
What?

FRANK
I'm not homo-phobic, but I'm not
going to go looking in mirrors,
checking to see what color my eyes
are!... I don't think my eyes have
a color. If they were so blue,
looking out, wouldn't everything be
kind of blue? Like, have a blue
tinge or something?
(looks around)
Doesn't. Just looks normal.

Thor, handing them drinks, takes a look at Frank's eyes.

THOR
That's blue? That color?

PRISS
Yes. Of course.

THOR
Then, what color is that?

He points to a leather chair that's clearly green.

PRISS
Green.

THOR
You're saying that chair's green,
but Frank's eyes are blue?

PRISS
Yes.

THOR
And was color are the walls?

PRISS
Also, green.

THOR
Huhn.

PRISS
You don't know that?

THOR
No.

PRISS
How is that possible?

THOR
You really think knowing the colors
is so, so important?

PRISS
You're in college and you don't
know colors?... Doesn't that
embarrass you?

THOR
No. Why should it? That's why the
'rents are paying big bucks to send
me here -- you know, to learn
stuff.

Thor toasts them, taking a sip from his drink.

THOR (CONT'D)
Thanks. Well, gotta go hit the
books.

Thor heads off, then stops.

THOR (CONT'D)

I don't know about you but I don't think anyone should feel embarrassed about not knowing stuff. What's embarrassing is pretending to know what you don't -- or putting other people down just because you think they don't know as much as you. I'm happy to admit I'm completely ignorant. That's why I'm here and plan to really hit the books. So, the next time you see me, I'll know more than I do now. I'll be older, but also wiser -- or at least know more stuff. For me, that's education.

Thor salutes them with his drink.

THOR (CONT'D)

Cheers.

Thor takes a long draught before leaving. Priss and Frank watch Thor go.

FRANK

Thor's great. He's very clear about his objectives: he really wants to learn things -- that's why he's here. Like, you always see him with a book and yet he's not pretentious in the least...

26 INT. ELSEWHERE, D.U. HOUSE -- NIGHT

26

The lights are low. Some cool music is on. The camera swoops up the stairs, passes through a doorway and enters the club "nest" area -- finding Priss and Frank in passionate embrace. Their kiss goes on and on.

Reverse angle: Violet, Rose, Heather and Lily at the doorway, shocked. Violet turns and flees, the others follow.

27 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- NIGHT

27

The girls walk silently and somberly, Violet's face turned down, in a state of shock.

HEATHER

I can't believe it.

ROSE

What a jerk.

LILY

He's a monster.

HEATHER
 Omigosh, Violet. You did
 everything for them! They're
 nothing without you!

Tears have started rolling down Violet's face.

ROSE
 What a rat.

LILY
 Moron.

ROSE
 Don't waste a single tear on that
 creep.

HEATHER
 Don't waste a single breath.

LILY
 Jerk.

VIOLET
 Stop- Please...

ROSE
 What?

VIOLET
 (a quiet voice)
 I. Love. Frank.
 (a strange, intense voice)
 I love him.

28 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY

28

The next day they're still talking -- Violet prostrate abed.

LILY
 Come on, Violet, Frank's a moron.
 You're well rid of him.

VIOLET
 Don't say that.

LILY
 What, Frank's not a moron?

VIOLET
 You know, Lily, you're a bit harsh.
 This obsession with "intelligence" -
 - do you think it has some magical
 quality, transforming everything?
 The intelligence line is not an...
 immutable barrier; love can cross
 it. You can love someone whose

mental capacity is not large... I know; I have.

LILY

Well, there's a mutable barrier then.

ROSE

Frank's stupid, we knew. That he was a rat jerk playboy op-er-a-tor I hadn't realized.

VIOLET

I don't want to turn bitter. I worry for Frank -- I care about him.

LILY

Well, I'd stop.

VIOLET

No. I love Frank -- I always will.

HEATHER

If that's the case, why not fight for him?

VIOLET

What do you mean?

HEATHER

Get him back.

LILY

No! He's worthless!

VIOLET

Against Priss? I'd never win.

HEATHER

Sure you would.

VIOLET

Priss, who's so pretty and sweet?

ROSE

Priss is a rat. A bitch. A rat-bitch.

VIOLET

Don't blame Priss. She was crushed when her blue-eyed Josh left her.
(smiles a little crazily)
I should have known. Of course she'd fall for Frank. Josh and Frank are both blue-eyed heartbreakers.

Lily looks at Violet as if she were completely delusional.

HEATHER

I wonder if people with blue eyes are in fact less kind than other people. Blue eyes could represent an icy nature.

LILY

Your eyes are blue.

HEATHER

I know, and I'm often shocked at how cold I am. I'm like an icicle inside. I don't feel a thing.

TITLE CARD

The Algebra of Love

29

EXT. TOWN STREET -- TWILIGHT

29

Lily walks with the guy who sent the drinks over to them at the bar, CHARLIE WALKER.

LILY

Poor Violet.

CHARLIE

She's the roommate who's so self-confident and constructive?

LILY

Yeah -- but now she's a wreck... But there's no logic to the algebra of love.

CHARLIE

"The Algebra of Love?"

(smiles)

That sounds like the title to some lame book.

LILY

Well, it's a title, but the book's not lame at all.

CHARLIE

Love's "algebra?" I always thought it was more geometry.

LILY

Okay, the title's not good, but the book is.

CHARLIE

What's it say?

LILY
Well, that while we're all...
perverse in our romantic
preferences, there's actually this
logic, or algebra, to our
perversity. It has something to do
with how the species has evolved.

CHARLIE
The survival of the species?

LILY
Yes, and whether it will continue
to do so...

30 INT. THE CORNER BAR -- NIGHT

30

Lily drains a martini glass and puts it down next to an empty one.

LILY
Just to find the nearest package
store you had to drive forty miles.
(sips)
These aren't so strong--

CHARLIE
No, they're really strong.

Lily looks a little woozy.

LILY
I think I'd like another.

CHARLIE
That wouldn't be a good idea.

LILY
Why not?

CHARLIE
Well...

LILY
Are you trying to stifle me?

CHARLIE
Yes.

XAVIER (O.S.)
Lily?

LILY
Oh, hi!

XAVIER
Listen, we're going to get
something to eat, why don't you
come with us?

LILY
I'm with Charlie.

XAVIER
I can see that. But you really
should come.

LILY
Why?

XAVIER
I just think it would be a good
idea.

LILY
But why?

XAVIER
You really must come. I insist.

31 EXT. TOWN STREET -- NIGHT

31

Lily walks slightly ahead and separate from Xavier and Alice,
silent and angry. She might be a little tipsy.

XAVIER
Lily?

She just keeps walking.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Lily, are you angry?

Lily passes the front of a restaurant.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Lily! This is it. We're here.

She returns, as if reluctantly.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
What's the matter?

LILY
That was so rude. He's a nice guy
and you embarrassed him.

XAVIER
He's not nice at all. He was
trying to get you drunk.

LILY
No, he wasn't.

XAVIER
Plying you with martinis? What a sleaze-ball.

LILY
I was plying myself with martinis--

XAVIER
Come on, the guy's a total sleaze, a creep.

LILY
You don't know anything about him--

XAVIER
The way he sent drinks over to our table?

Alice, fed up, turns and walks quickly away. Xavier chases her.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Alice! Alice! What's wrong?!

32 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY

32

Tight on Violet's face, as she lies on her bed, her face lightly angled toward the wall.

LILY
I just had no idea Xavier could be so mean.

While the chat centers on Lily, the camera also observes Violet's post-jilt pain.

ROSE
Are you sure he was mean?

HEATHER
Sounds as if he was just trying to protect you.

ROSE
This Charlie Walker sounds like an oper-a-tor, a "playboy" type.

LILY
He's not like that at all, he's actually a really nice guy.

ROSE
I thought he was a slick
businessman.

LILY
No, he dresses well but he works in
strategic development.

ROSE
What?

LILY
"Strategic Development" -- he works
at "S.D.A." -- Strategic
Development Associates. He's an
associate there.

ROSE
What he is is a "strategic oper-a-
tor."

Lily notices Violet, turned to the wall.

LILY
Violet? Are you okay?

For a while Violet says nothing.

33 EXT. LOWER SPORTS FIELDS, SEVEN OAKS -- DAY 33

Violet strides between sports fields, heading toward the open
countryside as the sky darkens ominously. A maintenance man
riding a small grass-cutter calls to her:

GROUNDS KEEPER
Hey! Miss! Rain's comin' -- better
go back.

Violet nods but keeps on walking. Thunder sounds. Violet
continues; the sound of rain.

34 INT/EXT SEARCH FOR VIOLET MONTAGE -- NIGHT 34

Lily and Rose pass their neighbor POSITIVE POLLY in the
stairwell.

ROSE
Polly! Have you seen Violet?

POLLY
No, is something wrong?

ROSE
I'm not sure.

Outside, Lily and Rose look for Violet, calling, and enter a wood.

LILY & ROSE
(alternating)
Violet!

35 EXT. CLEARING -- NIGHT 35

Violet walks back from the wood; Lily and Rose find her.

LILY
Violet omigosh-- what happened?!

36 INT. DORM SHOWERS -- DAY 36

The girls wait as steam pours out of a shower stall.

ROSE
I don't understand, what were you
doing?

There is no response -- just the sound of water.

LILY
How long were you gone for?

Violet is still slow to reply.

VIOLET
I'm sorry, I don't know -- I lost
track of time.

The girls exchange concerned looks. Violet gets out of the shower, wrapped in a towel.

HEATHER
But you feel better now?

Violet, listless in her movements, is slow to reply.

VIOLET
Well... cleaner...

37 INT. SUICIDE CENTER -- DAY 37

Debbie and Freak practice dance; Jimbo quizzes Violet for the questionnaire.

DEBBIE
She'll say anything to get in the
show. I suppose now she'll want the
donuts, too--

JIMBO

You don't have to be suicidal to get the donuts, just "severely depressed."

DEBBIE

No, "clinically depressed" -- from a clinic.

JIMBO

(to Violet)

Would you say that you're depressed?

VIOLET

I don't like the term "depressed" -- I prefer to say that I'm in a tailspin.

DEBBIE

Omigod! A "tail spin!" She can't even say she's "depressed" like everyone else -- she's got to say something "special." Priss was honest, she was really depressed and she had a right to be in the show. Now every silly tail-spinner is trying to get in!

FREAK

The show's for everyone.

DEBBIE

No, it isn't, Freak! To be included in the Center's programs you have to be "clinically depressed." That means that you've been to a clinic -- and they've said that you're depressed. Have you been to a clinic?

Violet doesn't reply.

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Have you been to a clinic?

Violet shakes her head "no."

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

Then you're not "clinically depressed."

Heather arrives with a large tray of donuts and cardboard coffee jug as Violet leaves the building.

HEATHER
 Violet, Violet? What is it, where
 are you going?

Violet stops but doesn't respond.

VIOLET
 (in a leaden monotone)
 All I wanted was to make Frank
 happy... I'd all these plans,
 things we could've done together. I
 never even got to tell him...

Violet goes off, leaving Heather watching after her.

39 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY 39

Violet looks in the mirror then goes to her desk to write a note. She looks around for a good spot to place it, finally leaving it at the foot of her bed. But as she opens the door, a breeze ruffles the window curtain and lifts the note, which flutters under the bed.

40 EXT. TOWN BRIDGE -- DAY 40

Violet, walks across the low bridge, stops halfway across and gazes into the water below. The water swirls and eddies.

ROSE
 Polly, have you seen Violet?

POLLY
 No, she left the dorm at four and I
 haven't seen her since.

41 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- NIGHT 41

The boorish shouts of moronic male students on a walkway give the otherwise deserted Quadrangle a forlorn air.

42 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- NIGHT 42

Lily looks down onto the scene, then turns to the others.

LILY
 I can't imagine where she could
 have gone? Wherever she went, she
 should be back by now.

Rose turns to Heather.

ROSE
How did she seem when you last saw her?

HEATHER
Really sad about Frank.

LILY
Still?

Heather nods.

HEATHER
Yeah.

LILY
I'm beginning to wonder about Violet. How can someone so smart continue mooning over a dope like that.

ROSE
From what I've observed in my admittedly brief span on earth, people generally don't jump for joy after being dumped by the moronic jerk in whom they've invested all their hopes and dreams.

LILY
But Violet's so great, how could she go berserk over an idiot like that?

ROSE
People aren't exactly as you assume. The Violet you know bears little resemblance to the girl I met Seventh Grade year--

LILY
You met Violet in Seventh Grade?

ROSE
Well, her name wasn't "Violet" then.

A "wavy" memory dissolve begins as Rose thinks back...

43

INT. SEVENTH GRADE CLASSROOM -- DAY

43

Shyly entering, timid 11 year old EMILY TWEETER resembles the character we know as "Violet" physically but in no other way.

YOUNG ROSE
What's your name?

Emily doesn't immediately respond.

GIRL #1
You can tell us your name. We
won't bite.

GIRL #1 laughs.

GIRL #2
What's your name? Tell us.

GIRL #1
Are you retarded? Tell us your
name? Speak!

EMILY
Emily... Tweeter.

GIRL #1
"Tweeter?" Like a bird?

GIRL #2
That's ridiculous!

44 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- NIGHT

44

Present day.

LILY
"Tweeter?" Like a bird?

ROSE
Yes -- not an easy name to have at
that age.

LILY
Not at any age. What was she like?

ROSE
Timid, bookish... classic
scholarship student -- her parents
were writers. They didn't have a
dime. Finances were the least of
her worries.

LILY
What do you mean?

ROSE
Well, she was crazy -- I got stuck
rooming with her on the class trip
when no one else would. Ouf, it
was awful.

HEATHER
She smelled bad?

ROSE
No. Obsessive cleanliness was part
of her insanity.

HEATHER
But you were nice to her.

ROSE
No, not really -- the idea of being
nice to weird and unpopular kids
hadn't arrived then.

LILY
Why was she so unpopular?

ROSE
She was very strange -- constantly
setting herself odd, repetitive
tasks--

LILY
Tasks?

ROSE
For example on that trip she had
with her a little square suitcase.
The idea came into her head she had
to move it in a precise pattern,
over and over again...

Images of young "Emily" attempting this as a young "Rose"
watches, expression agape.

ROSE (CONT'D)
If she didn't execute this exact
movement, flawlessly, ten times --
she'd start over from scratch.

Looks from the others.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Another was to slide her hand
across her forehead, trying not to
touch her hair or her eyebrows on
either side --
(Rose demonstrates)
-- also repeating it ten times. Any
niggling thought she touched a hair
on either side, she'd start over.

LILY
My God that's insane!

HEATHER
Why would she do that?

ROSE
Well, it was a compulsion.

LILY
What compelled her?

ROSE
She had the superstitious conviction that if she didn't complete these tasks flawlessly -- her parents would die.

HEATHER
Was she Catholic?

ROSE
No. But what made the whole thing really sad was that her parents *did* die.

LILY
Omigod.

44A (48B) INT./EXT MONTAGE: 44A

Heather riding with the campus cops, looking all over; the lacrosse and girls hockey teams searching along the marsh near the playing fields, using their sticks to push aside the reeds.

45 INT. MOTEL SHOWER -- DAY 45

Violet showering [PG-acceptable], letting the water wash over her head. She notices the scent of the soap and, shutting off the water, inhales of it deeply.

46 INT. SMALL MOTEL ROOM -- DAY 46

Violet in a towel, her hair moist but combed, goes about the room getting dressed. Before leaving she retrieves the soap, inhales its scent again, and carefully packs it in plastic.

47 INT. DINER -- DAY 47

At the counter CAROLINA ANTONUCCI, a sympathetic but rather thin-skinned waitress, fills Violet's coffee.

CAROLINA
Something's wrong, isn't it, dear?

Violet, surprised, looks up.

CAROLINA (CONT'D)
Do you mind my asking?

VIOLET
Well... I do mind, a little.

CAROLINA
Oh well! Excuse me, your Highness!

Carolina stalks to the other end of the counter, refilling the coffees of two highway groundsmen there on their break.

VIOLET
I'm sorry -- it's just that it's kind of awkward to talk about.

CAROLINA
No matter... I just hope you haven't come down here to get run over on the highway.

Carolina rolls her eyes at the highway groundsmen.

VIOLET
What do you mean?

HIGHWAY WORKER 1
Suicides. They come down from the university. Jump out in the road to get hit by the blind curve--

HIGHWAY WORKER 2
Hope you're not one of them.

VIOLET
Do I look like one of them?

HIGHWAY WORKER 2
I don't know. Maybe.

HIGHWAY WORKER 1
Messy people, suicides. Think only of themselves and their own deaths - - not what comes after.

HIGHWAY WORKER 2
They make quite a mess, but don't stick around to clean it up.

CAROLINA
So you're not one of those depressed students down from the university?

VIOLET
Well, I don't really like the word "depressed;" I prefer to say that I'm in a tailspin.

CAROLINA
A Tail Spin?

SHARISE, a young black waitress, coming on duty, takes an interest.

SHARISE
Does this Tail Spin involve a Man?

VIOLET
Yes. It does. But I'm not as crazy as I was up to yesterday. Partly that's due to the salutary effect of scent on the human psyche. It's importance is, I believe, almost incalculable. At the motel this morning I happened to use this bar of soap--

Violet shows the soap in a see-through plastic zip-lock bag.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
It was provided me as a courtesy as one of its guests -- that an economical motel would provide such good soap is quite unusual. The scent is very precise.

SHARISE
Really?

Sharise leans forward. Violet cradles the soap in the palm of her hand.

VIOLET
Tell me if it provokes any particular reaction in your psyche -
- a state of mind.

Sharise and Carolina, then the highway workers, all inhale its scent -- then look thoughtful.

48 INT./EXT MONTAGE: 48

the Daily Complainer rolls off the press, the headline "Sophomore Missing!" -- with a picture of Violet

RICK
I always knew she was unstable. They're going to have her photo at the registrar.

49 EXT./INT. COMMUTER TRAIN STATION - DAY 49

Violet gets off a mid-morning commuter train.

50 EXT. MAIN GATE/QUADRANGLE -- DAY

50

Violet enters at the main gate -- a MALE STUDENT reading the Complainer looks up at her, surprised. Shrieks sound from across the quad.

HEATHER
Violet! Violet!

Heather runs toward her.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
You're back! You're okay!

VIOLET
Not really.

A campus police Mini pulls up and a cop jumps out.

HEATHER
Omigosh, Violet -- we were so worried, why didn't you tell us or at least leave a note?

VIOLET
I did leave a note.

CAMPUS COP
Would that be a suicide note?

51 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY

51

Violet looks under the desk and beds, finds the note and hands it to Heather.

VIOLET
I wouldn't have left without leaving a note.

HEATHER
But where did you go?

VIOLET
I took the commuter train to Villafranca and checked into a cheap motel there.

ROSE
The Motel 6?

VIOLET
No, the Motel 4, it's even less expensive.

ROSE
The Motel 4 in Villafranca - oh my
God, you really were suicidal!

HEATHER
But why'd you go?

VIOLET
I had to do something.

LILY
You really thought you were going
to find the answer to whatever you
were looking for in Villafranca?

VIOLET
I'm not sure what I expected but I
think I might have found it.

HEATHER
What?

Violet looks in her bag and pulls out something which she
holds cupped in her hands.

LILY
Soap?

Violet bends over her cupped hands and inhales deeply.

VIOLET
This scent -- and this soap -- is
what gives me hope.

LILY
How?

VIOLET
I'll tell you.

52 EXT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- DAY 52

Very late afternoon: Lily, with shopping bag, rings, then
knocks. No one answers. She knocks again. Then tests the
door. It's open and she hesitantly enters.

53 INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- DAY 53

LILY
Hello?... Hello?... Is anyone
here?...

Lily walks through the house -- it seems spare, as if
furnishings have been removed. A rhythmic sound comes from
somewhere in the apartment. Passing the washer-dryer she sees

it's the agitated spin cycle. She gets to the kitchen and puts the bag down on the counter.

XAVIER (O.S.)
Hello!

LILY
Omigosh, I couldn't understand where everyone was!

XAVIER
Sorry, I just went out to get some things.

He puts another bag of groceries on the counter.

LILY
Where's Alice?

XAVIER
Gone.

LILY
What do you mean?

XAVIER
Left. We broke up.

LILY
But when you called you said--

XAVIER
I know, I'm sorry. I thought it better to tell you in person.

54 INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE, KITCHEN -- EVENING

54

LATER, CUT TO CLOSE ON: Vegetables saute in a pan.

Xavier cooks, Lily helps.

XAVIER
Alice couldn't control her jealousy -- it completely overwhelmed her.

LILY
Really? What was she jealous of?

XAVIER
Oh come on.

LILY
No... what?

XAVIER
 You. After a while I just couldn't
 handle it -- things became
 impossible.

LILY
 She was jealous of me?

XAVIER
 Of course.

55 INT. LIVING ROOM, XAVIER'S HOUSE -- EVENING

55

The coffee table has been set with two places and low
 candles. Lily brings in their plates as Xavier looks through
 some dvds.

XAVIER
 Would it be okay if we watch a
 film?

LILY
 Yes, what would you like to see?

XAVIER
 I thought, maybe, Truffaut's
 "Baisers Voles", "Stolen Kisses."
 Do you know it?

LILY
 No, is it new?

Xavier shakes his head.

XAVIER
 It's a classic of French New Wave
 cinema -- I think you'll like it.

Xavier puts the dvd on and reaches for the wine.

LILY
 But, it's in color?

XAVIER
 Yeah.

Xavier pours them two glasses of wine -- Lily watches.

TIGHT ON: red wine pouring into a glass.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
 You don't know Truffaut?

LILY
 No.

XAVIER
Do you know Godard? "A Bout
Souffle?"

56 EXT./INT. LIVING ROOM, XAVIER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT 56

Travelling pan of room as closing music of Truffaut film
plays. Slouched back on the sofa, Xavier and Lily kiss.

57 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY 57

Heather paces, Lily and Rose study, Violet examining the
contents of a small case.

HEATHER
Why was Alice so jealous?

Lily just looks thoughtful, continuing studying.

ROSE
What do you think -- she was
jealous because Lily's absolutely
lovely.

LILY
I don't know -- apparently they had
a lot of problems.

ROSE
Of course! You wouldn't break up a
happy couple.

Violet is studying a piece of paper she's taken from the box.

HEATHER
What's that?

VIOLET
A note Frank left.

HEATHER
Really? Recently?

VIOLET
No -- when we were together. Now
that most correspondence is
electronic, it's very rare to be
left with anything written by hand.

ROSE
Frank can write by hand? What is
it?

VIOLET
It's not very important but -- it's
just all I have.

LILY
What's it say?

Heather, taking a look, reads it:

HEATHER
"Out for brewskis -- back in a...
gif."

LILY
What's a "gif"?

HEATHER
It's one of those little motor
scooters, isn't it?

VIOLET
I'm sure he meant to write "jiff,"
with a "j" -- "back in a jiff."

LILY
But he wrote "gif."

HEATHER
Could Frank be dyslexic?

ROSE
No. Dyslexics are intelligent.

Violet handles a little leather-covered ball from the box.

HEATHER
What's that?

VIOLET
Frank's bean-ball.

HEATHER
He gave you his bean-ball?

VIOLET
Not exactly. This is an extra --
he thought he'd leave it here just
in case he lost his other one.

LILY
How thoughtful.

ROSE
That's all Frank gave you, a bean-
ball?

VIOLET
Relationships aren't about
presents.

ROSE
They aren't?

LILY
Gosh, Violet, you've really got to
stop thinking about Frank.

VIOLET
Why? I don't want to stop thinking
about him. Recently I had a
thought that cheered me up a lot:
...Life is like a long flowing
river and, as a long flowing river,
some debris you never expect to see
again is almost certain to
reappear, floating to the
surface... Frank and I may very
well be together again one day.
Maybe it'll take many years but
somewhere, down the line, he is
very likely to pop up again -- and
I'll be there to catch him.

58

INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

58

Great music plays; lots of candles providing flickering
illumination. The camera snoops down the hallway to the
kitchen, where there are a few dishes left from a dinner a
deux, to the living room where Lily and Xavier smooch on the
couch, their clothes undone. Xavier slightly disentangles
himself, enough to talk.

XAVIER
There's something I wanna...

He stops.

LILY
I'm ready.

Xavier smiles.

XAVIER
I don't think we've spoken about
this--

LILY
What?

XAVIER
It's nothing bad. Have you ever
been to the South of France -- for

example, to the walled city of Carcassonne.

LILY
I've never been anywhere.

XAVIER
But you've seen pictures of it?

LILY
Uh... No, I don't think so.

He shows her a postcard of Carcassonne.

LILY (CONT'D)
It's fascinating, I'd like to visit it.

XAVIER
So you never studied the Cathars?

Lily shakes her head.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
They were a religious movement, very idealistic, located mostly in the south of France, that the Catholic Church and the royal authorities cruelly repressed. The "crusades" were not directed solely against the Moslems, there was also one against the Cathars.

LILY
Really? Why?

XAVIER
Cathar beliefs and way of life threatened the Catholic Church and the political authorities of that time. Catharism was branded a heresy and brutally repressed.

LILY
Omigod, the Catholic Church is, like, always bad.

Xavier nods.

XAVIER
Ideas can't be killed as easily as people -- especially such enlightened ones as the Cathars held. In recent years more and more people have returned to their beliefs.

LILY
So, you're a Cathar?

XAVIER

Yes. I aspire to be. I'm trying to follow the path the Cathars marked out.

LILY

That's so impressive. I can tell you -- we didn't have any Cathars back home.

XAVIER

I think you'd be surprised.

59 INT. BATHROOM -- NIGHT 59

Lily washing her hands, checking herself in the mirror.

60 INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT 60

Xavier goes between the bedroom and living room lighting candles and rearranging things, placing a lotion near the bed, adjusting the music. Lily, coming out, walks into Xavier's arms. Xavier leads her to the bed where they continue kissing, finally coming up for air.

XAVIER

Cathars dissent radically from Catholic teaching regarding procreative sex--

LILY

I should hope so!

XAVIER

In the Cathar view the highest form of love-making avoids procreation entirely.

Lily laughs, a little embarrassed:

LILY

Sure -- condoms, right?

XAVIER

Well, according to Cathar ideas, sex with condoms is just a parody of the procreative act.

A pause.

LILY

What do you mean?

XAVIER

The standard, cliché, form of sexual intercourse is for the man to... approach the woman... from "the front." In Cathar love-making -- which, I think you'll find very fulfilling -- it's from the other side.

LILY

From the other side?

XAVIER

Yes.

Xavier kisses her tenderly and continues in a near whisper.

XAVIER (CONT'D)

I'll be very careful, we'll go slowly. It'll be a new experience for you but one which I think you'll find brings an inexpressible closeness...

They continue kissing.

61 EXT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT TO DAY. 61

Time lapse of the turning from night to morning, when Xavier lets Lily out, giving a last kiss.

62 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET -- DAY 62

Lily walks down the street, pensive, looking somewhat uncomfortable, her gait odd.

63 INT. THE CORNER BAR -- NIGHT 63

TITLE CARD

Girls' Night Out

The girls having weekend-style cocktails -- drinks that are pink. Violet looks around the bar.

VIOLET

Might your drinks-buying friend be here? It would be great to get some complimentary cocktails.

LILY

Charlie? No.

Lily, looking around, shakes her head.

HEATHER
Do you still see him at all?

LILY
Yeah, he calls from time to time.

HEATHER
He does? Why don't you invite him
over and introduce us?

Lily smiles.

LILY
Why should I introduce you?

HEATHER
Well, because you know him -- and
we don't.

LILY
So?

VIOLET
"So?" "So" is probably the
unkindest word in the English
language. I can't bear it. It
should be outlawed: "So."

LILY
You're crazy.

HEATHER
Come on, Lily, you have Xavier.
You can't keep two guys for
yourself.

LILY
Guys do that all the time.

ROSE
We're not "guys," fortunately...

HEATHER
It's unconscionable for you not to
bring him around and introduce us.

LILY
Charlie's a friend. He's a nice
guy.

ROSE
What do you mean?

LILY
I just hate to think what would
happen if one of you got her claws
into him.

ROSE
That's outrageous!... We're perfectly nice people. We've met a lot of pathetic guys and nothing very bad's happened.

LILY
Charlie's not pathetic.

VIOLET
Well all the better then!

64 EXT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- EVENING 64

Lily approaches the house.

65 INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- EVENING 65

Xavier comes to the door and walks with her inside.

XAVIER
Where were you? Gosh -- it's late.

LILY
I was getting drinks at the Oak Bar.

XAVIER
With whom?

LILY
Just my roommates -- I've hardly seen them lately.

XAVIER
You could have called.

LILY
I'm sorry.

XAVIER
It's not like you. At all. I got takeout. I suppose I'd better heat it up.

He grabs her and they kiss.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I was just feeling so... Well, you know.

He smiles. He picks up a bag and slips out a small amber cannister.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I got this -- it's supposed to be great.

He hands Lily the elegant bottle.

LILY
What is it?

XAVIER
A great lotion -- everyone swears by it. Would you prefer dinner first?

Lily nods.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
I haven't been hurting you, have I?

Lily shakes her head.

66 EXT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- DAWN

66

Lily lets herself out and walks down the path and then the sidewalk, her gait careful and pretty awkward.

TITLE CARD
The Ides of March -- Beware

68 INT. COFFEE COTTAGE -- DAY

68

From watching Violet turns back to the others.

HEATHER
The "Roman Holidays" will be coming soon.

Rose groans.

LILY
What's that?

HEATHER
A festival Seven Oaks' Roman-letter clubs put on.

ROSE
A kind of moron jamboree.

VIOLET
I wish I could say the Roman Holidays were a celebration of the best in classical learning,

education, architecture, philosophy
 -- with poems in the style of
 Juvenal and recreations of
 historic events such as Cato's
 defense at the bridge. But, alas,
 it's --

ROSE
 A moron jamboree.

VIOLET
 The only Roman elements will be
 worship of Bacchus, Beerus and
 Blotto and it's such a shame
 because it could all have been so
 uplifting and improving.

Charlie Walker, not wearing a suit, enters the cafe. Lily spots him.

LILY
 Charlie! Charlie!

Charlie stops in his tracks and turns to her.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Hey! What are you doing here?

Charlie pauses for thought.

LILY (CONT'D)
 Have you the day off?

CHARLIE
 Uh, yes.

LILY
 This is my friend -- Charlie --
 whom I think I've mentioned.
 Charlie, these are my roommates --
 this is Rose, this is Heather and
 Violet. Charlie works at Strategic
 Development Associates -- he's an
 Associate there.

VIOLET
 You work in Strategic Development?

CHARLIE
 You've heard of it?

VIOLET
 Of course, yes. My cousin Jay in
 Philadelphia works in Strategic
 Development.

ROSE
 "Stra-tegic Devel-op-ment?" What
 is that?

CHARLIE

Well, in contradistinction to short-term or "tactical development" -- "strategic development" is planning for the long term.

HEATHER

Oh.

ROSE

Something bus-i-ness related?

CHARLIE

Mostly business, but any kind of organization.

LILY

But only businesses pay the big bucks.

CHARLIE

Actually, non-profits and government pay well too.

ROSE

I suppose that's how they keep from having profits -- by paying lots of money to companies like yours.

VIOLET

Excuse me -- aren't you in Professor Ryan's course at the Ed School?

CHARLIE

Uh, no.

VIOLET

You're not in Professor Ryan's "Flit Lit" course?

CHARLIE

No.

LILY

"Flit Lit?"

VIOLET

The Dandy Tradition in Literature--
(to Charlie)
I'm sure I've seen you there.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry -- I'm not in any courses at the Ed School.
(to the group)
Well, it was good to meet you.

(to Lily)
Great to see you.

Charlie heads off.

LILY
Bye!... God, Violet, what was that about?

VIOLET
That guy's definitely in Professor Ryan's class.

LILY
That's not possible -- he's got a full-time job at Strategic Development Associates.

ROSE
He never got his coffee.

The girls consider this significant detail.

LILY
Why would he lie about something like that?

VIOLET
He's lying. I find that... very attractive.

Violet keeps looking intently in Charlie's direction.

HEATHER
What are you going to do?

VIOLET
I'm going to stop cutting Professor Ryan's class.

CLOSE ON: A GIRL'S HAND WRITING COURSE NOTES--

69

INT. LECTURE HALL -- DAY

69

Violet listening intently to Prof. Ryan, taking notes:

PROF. RYAN
It can be argued that Firbank was too little disciplined, too unserious in his unseriousness to create works of enduring value. But as a liberating influence on later writers such as Waugh, his importance should not be discounted. It's not Firbank's work itself but the *idea* of his work that so helped later writers --

as Thomas Love Peacock did in the
previous century.

While Prof. Ryan speaks Violet, perched high in the
amphitheater, looks around. She catches a glimpse of someone
resembling Charlie, but in drab campus wear, slouched down
among friends, his face not visible.

70

EXT. LECTURE HALL -- DAY

70

The Charlie-type hurries off with his friends as if oblivious
to Violet's presence.

FRIEND #2
So did you finish it?

FRED
Firbank just isn't good..

FRIEND #2
I think he's funny.

VIOLET
Charlie! Charlie!

Charlie looks back; so do his friends.

FRIEND #1
"Charlie?"

Violet catches up to them.

VIOLET
Charlie! You are taking the
course.

Charlie looks awkward. FRIEND #2 laughs.

FRIEND #2
"Charlie?" Who's "Charlie?"

FRIEND #1
Uh, Fred, what's going on?

VIOLET
Fred?

FRIEND #2
Uh-oh Fred, sounds like you've got
some 'splainin' to do.

71

INT. COFFEE COTTAGE - DAY

71

Violet and Charlie sit at a table.

VIOLET
Well, you were lying.

CHARLIE/FRED
I wasn't lying. I was making it up.

VIOLET
Why were you making it up?

CHARLIE
(looks around, whispers)
If you were an eighth year Ed School student, would you advertise that?

VIOLET
Eighth year, impressive. But your whole life was a lie -- dressing up in suits, buying people drinks?

CHARLIE
No, the suits -- were real. The drinks -- real. And I wasn't just buying drinks for "people" -- they were for cute girls: there was a perfectly rational, logical, easily-explainable agenda.

VIOLET
So it was a playboy or oper-a-tor move?

CHARLIE
Of course. Transparently so.

VIOLET
I admire that -- drinks are expensive. But "Strategic Development" -- that was made up too?

CHARLIE
I thought you said your cousin Jay was working in it.

VIOLET
What cousin Jay?

CHARLIE
Cousin Jay in Philadelphia.

VIOLET
Oh. I don't have any cousin in Philadelphia.

CHARLIE
 You said your Cousin Jay in
 Philadelphia was working in
 Strategic Development.

VIOLET
 I was just saying that to be
 friendly -- to make a kind of
 link... So your name's Fred
 something?

CHARLIE
 Yes, Fred something.

VIOLET
 What's your name?

CHARLIE
 You really want to know?

Violet nods.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
 Why?

72 INT. GIRLS ROOM -- NIGHT

72

Violet with the others, studying but also talking.

ROSE
 Packenstacker?

LILY
 Omigod, how crazy. He's completely
 insane -- and I almost dated him.

HEATHER
 You can say that about a lot of
 guys.

VIOLET
 I don't think he's crazy.

LILY
 Making up an entirely fictitious
 identity? That's not crazy? It's
 insane, psycho, weird...

HEATHER
 Violet's identity is made up. I
 don't think she's crazy.

VIOLET
 No, I am.

LILY
 This is different. It's
 pathetic... All that about
 "strategic development" he just
 made up -- don't tell me that's not
 weird.

HEATHER
 I'm sure I've heard of "Strategic
 development" -- I think it's
 something pretty important.

LILY
 Omigod, Violet you're not going to
 start going out with him?
 (watching her face)
 You're not, are you?

VIOLET
 Well, we had planned to go to the
 library...

LILY
 Not to the stacks, I hope.

Violet nods.

VIOLET
 Yes.

LILY
 Omigosh, do you realize how
 dangerous that is?

VIOLET
 Dangerous?

LILY
 Yes. The stacks -- they're dark
 and deserted. Anything could
 happen.

ROSE
 It's true. With the study habits
 prevailing at Seven Oaks, your body
 might not be found until spring.

LILY
 Promise you won't go with him into
 the stacks. Please.

VIOLET
 Okay, I'll suggest the Randall
 Room.

ROSE
 Don't suggest. Insist.

LILY
And please not at night.

VIOLET
Okay.

73 INT. RANDALL READING ROOM, LIBRARY -- DAY

73

At a table in the elegant "Randall Reading Room."

VIOLET (O.S.)
What are you reading?

Fred shows her - a book of Walter Pater's.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Have you chosen a topic for your
final paper?

FRED
Uh, "The Decline of Decadence."

VIOLET
You think decadence has declined?

FRED
Definitely. Big time. Major,
major decline.

VIOLET
How?

FRED
"How" or "in what ways?"

Violet shrugs and shakes her head.

VIOLET
Either.

FRED
Okay, take the flit movement in
literature, or homosexuality: It's
gone completely downhill. Right
down the tubes.

He makes the sound: "Whchht."

VIOLET
What do you mean?

FRED
Before, homosexuality was something
refined, hidden, sublimated,
aspiring to the highest levels of
creativity and expression and often

achieving them. Now it just seems to be a lot of muscle-bound morons running around in T-shirts.

Violet looks a little shocked.

FRED (CONT'D)
It's pretty disillusioning.

Violet pauses in thought for a long moment

VIOLET
Are you gay?

FRED
Not especially but in another era, it might of had some appeal. Now, I just don't see the point.

VIOLET
I think you might be romanticizing the past.

FRED
We'll never know. The past is... gone -- so we might as well romanticize it.

VIOLET
Hunh. You could be right.

FRED
I wanted to ask, how's Lily?

VIOLET
Lily?

FRED
Yeah.

VIOLET
She's okay.

74 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY 74

Lily walking looking thoughtful.

75 EXT. TOWN STREET -- DAY 75

Just off campus a tall, thin fresh-faced California-type PAMPHLET GUY stands in the sidewalk as Lily approaches.

PAMPHLET GUY
Here, check it out A.L.A. No?..
Hello! Good afternoon!

LILY

Hi.

PAMPHLET GUY

Check it out. The A.L.A., have you heard of it? We have a meeting on Tuesday - you should come by.

Lily politely takes the brochure he hands her.

LILY

What's the "A.L.A."?

She examines the text more closely.

LILY (CONT'D)

Oh!

PAMPHLET GUY

Just join us -- come Tuesday. I think you'll really like it...
A.L.A!

76

INT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

76

Xavier, with Lily that evening, puts the brochure down, his tone exasperated.

LILY

So, a fellow was passing these out on the street and invited us to a meeting on Tuesday.

XAVIER

The "A.L.A." -- oh my God.

LILY

I thought it was something related.

XAVIER

You're kidding.

Lily, small voice, intimidated:

LILY

No.

XAVIER

"The A.L.A.?" "The Anal Love Association?" What do we have to do with that?

Lily looks down at the brochure again.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
 You haven't understood any of what
 we've talked about?

LILY
 Talked about?...

XAVIER
 The A.L.A. has nothing to do with
 us. Can't you see that?

Xavier sighs heavily and walks away, then returns.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
 The way we express love has
 meaning, it's in the context of
 something beautiful. We're
 following our Creator's teaching,
 aspiring to an ideal -- a beautiful
 one that brings an inexpressible
 closeness, not just to each other,
 but to--

He grabs the brochure.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
 For the A.L.A. and those like them,
 the love-act is just hedonistic
 pleasure-seeking, of a perverted
 nature -- there are words for
 people like that...! I can't
 believe you'd think we had anything
 in common with them. We don't,
 nothing, not an iota.

Lily stares back at him.

77 EXT. XAVIER'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

77

Lily is out the door and heading down the walkway, Xavier
 comes out after her.

XAVIER
 Lily! Lily! Come back! Please,
 don't be that way!

78 EXT. TOWN STREET -- NIGHT

78

Later, beyond Xavier's neighborhood, on Lily as she walks.

TITLE CARD
 The Lone Star -- Saloon & Dance
 Hall

79 INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT

79

Close on: feet during a line dance, lots of boots and heavy footwear -- just a couple pairs of light "Repetto" slippers amidst all the clomping. A wider view -- Violet, Rose, Heather, Jimbo, Fred amidst more "Western" dancers: Jimbo keen on a reserved Rose, Violet with Fred. Across the room, Lily enters looking sad. From the sidelines she watches the dancers. After a bit, the others notice her, Violet waving for her to join them. Lily shakes her head and dodges their looks. Finally, Violet breaks away from the line.

VIOLET
Omigosh, Lily, are you okay?

Lily shakes her head.

LILY
It's okay.

VIOLET
You don't want to talk about it?

Lily, still silent, nods.

80 INT. LONE STAR, BAR AREA - NIGHT

80

The group is clustered at the far end of the bar as a less dance-able, sad and poignant Western ballad plays.

JIMBO
But... I don't understand.

ROSE
You don't understand what?

JIMBO
What is 'non-procreative love-making?'

VIOLET
Well, it could be a lot of things.

JIMBO
Uh, yeah -- but in this case?

FRED
We don't have to talk about this--

LILY
No, I don't mind.

JIMBO
Could somebody just explain to me what this is all about?

VIOLET
Well, what it is is...uh--

LILY
Because Cathars don't believe in
procreative sex, they don't have
intercourse the usual way.

JIMBO
The usual way?

A brief, awkward pause.

FRED
You don't have to talk about this.

LILY
No, it's okay. Yes, the normal way,
from the front -- where you can
have procreation -- not from the
other side... where you can't.

A light goes on in Jimbo's head.

JIMBO
The other side... That's their
religion?

LILY
Not exactly but that's the
direction their beliefs head in --
when they want to express love,
that's what they do.

JIMBO
And you liked that?

FRED
Come on.

LILY
It got pretty uncomfortable.

JIMBO
So, it started out comfortable and
got uncomfortable later?

FRED
Man! Do we have to talk about
this.

LILY
I don't know.

JIMBO
How horrible. You poor girl.

HEATHER

What?

JIMBO

That's terrible. What he obliged
Lily to do.

ROSE

You know, some people like that.

81 INT. LONE STAR - NIGHT 81

Frank with Thor and others from the D.U. stand with brewskies watching the dancers and looking clueless. Frank catches sight of Violet and walks toward her.

82 INT. LONE STAR, BAR AREA - NIGHT 82

Frank comes up behind Violet.

FRANK

Violet. Can we talk?

Violet turns -- they all do.

83 INT. LONE STAR, BOOTH AREA - NIGHT 83

A group vacates a booth and Violet and Frank slip in. Rose, at the bar, looks critically in their direction. For a time Frank is tongue-tied, mostly looking down.

FRANK

You must be pretty mad at me.

VIOLET

No.

FRANK

You're not?

Violet shakes her head.

VIOLET

Not really.

FRANK

But it was so terrible, how
everything happened -- your walking
in on us.

Violet shrugs.

VIOLET

Maybe it's easier that way.

Frank looks down and goes silent.

FRANK
That bitch!

He looks down again. Violet waits for elaboration but there is none.

FRANK (CONT'D)
I can't believe it. What a bitch.
That bitch!

VIOLET
Priss?

FRANK
Of course Priss! What a bitch.
Oh, man... That whole thing --
(imitates Priss)
"I'm so stressed, sad, depressed.
I'm so tired. 'I'm fatigued.'"
That's what she said. She couldn't
sleep or something. She was so
depressed she had to get everything
her own way--
(mimicking her)
"I'm so stressed -- frantic!" Man!
What. A. Bitch!

VIOLET
Priss dumped you?

FRANK
No. It was mutual.

Frank goes silent again, then remembers something.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Listen, I have a question, do you
remember that bean ball I left in
your room?

Violet nods.

VIOLET
Yeah.

FRANK
Do you still have it?

VIOLET
Yeah.

FRANK
Do you think I could get it back?
I lost the other one and with
everything that's happened, I'd
really like to have it.

VIOLET
 (cheerfully)
 Nothing like some bean ball after a
 break up!

FRANK
 Yeah. God you're smart. You always
 get it. Whatever I say, you
 understand. Man!

84 INT. LONE STAR, DANCE FLOOR -- SHORTLY LATER 84

Violet walks back to the dance floor and rejoins the dancers.
 Fred and Lily already seem uncomfortably close.

85 INT. LONE STAR, BAR AREA - NIGHT 85

Thor, holding a brewski, approaches Heather.

THOR
 Hey, Heather.

HEATHER
 Hey.

THOR
 Hey.

HEATHER
 Hey.

THOR
 Hey.

HEATHER
 (with a flirting lilt)
 Hey.

THOR
 Hey.

Thor smiles and makes a fist, lightly touching it to
 Heather's shoulder.

86 INT. LONE STAR, DANCE FLOOR -- SHORTLY AFTER 86

The dancing group continues to dance, Violet somewhat
 isolated. The flirting and closeness between Fred and Lily
 becomes difficult for her to bear. Violet abruptly leaves the
 line and heads for the door. Fred, seeing her go, stops.

87 EXT. LONE STAR -- NIGHT

87

Violet stalks out and heads at a fast pace towards the university. Fred comes out and catches up to her.

FRED

Violet, what's wrong?

She won't say anything and just keeps walking.

FRED (CONT'D)

Violet, please, stop!

VIOLET

I'm sorry... Lily is lovely. I can understand why you would be attracted to her. Now she's free. Go. I understand.

Violet turns and runs off; Fred remains looking after her. Fade to black.

TITLE CARD

Roman Holidays

OMINOUS, SENTENTIOUS MUSIC SUCH AS 'THUS SPAKE ZARATHUSTRA.'

89 EXT. D.U. CLUBHOUSE GARDEN - DAY

89

Late afternoon Roman Holidays party scene at the D.U. -- toga, towel and sheet-clad "Romans" booze it up while bad rock blares. The courtyard has been set up as a coliseum -- an inebriated, semi-dressed gladiator with a rubber sword staggers forward and, spouting idiot Latin, charges a Golden Lab disguised as a lion:

GLADIATOR

Aunque utque! Latin! Et... cetera!

Charging, the Gladiator falls on his face before reaching the dog who licks his face.

ROSE (O.S.)

This is what comes from not teaching Latin in the schools!

90 EXT. ADJACENT LAWN -- DAY

90

The girls (minus Lily), elegantly dressed in plausibly Roman style, watch. Violet, though still sad, comments indulgently.

VIOLET

Yah, it's moronic and boorish, but also kind of fun, don't you think?

ROSE

No.

They look back as a roar rises from the D.U. crowd.

91 EXT. D.U. CLUBHOUSE - DAY 91

A chariot race has begun, predominantly razor scooters and skate boards. As the course extends outside the courtyard, the "lion" takes off.

ROSE (ON & OFF)

The art and thought of the classical age were the glory of civilization. These are nothing but moronic fraternity high jinx -- not improving or uplifting in the least.

There are some smash-ups as the race descends into a spectacle of drunkenness and hopeless chaos.

92 EXT. ADJACENT LAWN -- DAY 92

Suddenly Rose looks faint and gasps, placing her hand over her face.

ROSE

Oh no -- what's that... stench?!

Rose gags as if about to wretch. From the girls' right comes another roar; they turn to see:

93 EXT. DOAR DORM -- DAY 93

A horde of "barbarians" charges from Doar Dorm with animalistic shouts and calls, their dress and demeanor filthy and frightening, like something out of BRAVEHEART though in college wear. The barbarians rush the short distance to the DU grounds. Immediately a full melee breaks out.

94 EXT. ADJACENT LAWN -- DAY 94

VIOLET

I suppose this is what happens when decadence rots society from within--

HEATHER

And from with out.

VIOLET
 And not the interesting decadence
 of former times but the moronic
 kind you get today.

She nods toward the on-going melee.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
 Such a society is, I fear, destined
 to fail and be overrun.

Rose, hands over her nose, winces from the barbarian smell:

ROSE
 Maybe that's good.

They watch more melee as the scene fades, the fighting sounds
 and wails of wounded Romans continuing over BLACK.

FADE UP ON GRAPHIC:

"Complainer" Headline: FRATERNITIES BANNED!

94A EXT. ALLEY ADJACENT COMPLAINER OFFICE -- DAY 94A

Rick strides with his posse.

RICK
 Finally! It's about time those
 cesspools were drained!

95 EXT. D.U. CLUBHOUSE - DAY 95

A subdued Thor, Frank and their D.U. brothers bring out
 furniture including a strange hippie beanbag armchair which
 could be violet, lavender, mauve or purple in color.

THOR
 What color would you say that chair
 is?

FRANK
 That's a chair? I have no idea.

96 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- DAY 96

Rose and Heather study; Violet fretfully looks over Lily's
 well-made bed and ordered desk.

VIOLET
 Guys have their preferences.

HEATHER

You're just going to accept that?
You're not going to do anything?

VIOLET

There's nothing to be done. Fred
must know his own mind.

ROSE

Oh really? I seriously doubt that.

VIOLET

Come on, Lily's got that slender,
delicately swelling, blossoming
beauty no man can resist.

ROSE

Okay, you're probably right.

VIOLET

Poor Lily. Think of all Xavier put
her through.

A pause for thought.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

He just used her body -- and not
even the right side.

HEATHER

Have you ever noticed that good and
moral people tend to have large
posteriors. Not everyone, by any
means -- and I know it's not
logical -- but it does seem to me
true.

ROSE

The genetic link between morality
and large posteriors? Yes, I think
that's well known.

HEATHER

You and Violet have that build --
it's nice, you're still very
attractive -- but are also sensible
and moralistic. I don't. I have
narrow hips, but also no very
strong principles.

There's a knock on the door.

VIOLET

Yes?

Violet goes to the door, glancing through the peephole before
opening it.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Oh, hi.

Frank strolls in.

HEATHER

Hi, Frank.

FRANK

Hi, Heather -- wow.

(to Lily)

I guess you guys all heard -- the university is closing all the Roman-letter houses.

VIOLET

I'm sorry -- it's terrible. This year's Roman Holidays did seem like the end of civilization -- but even when civilization ends, people are going to need a place to stay.

FRANK

Man, it's bad. It's that bastard from the *Complainer*. Apparently someone from the administration has been reading it -- hard to believe. Bastard! Listen, we were wondering, if you thought it'd be okay if we stayed at the Suicide Center until we find somewhere else to go?

Violet looks to the others.

VIOLET

Okay, sure -- that sounds like a good stopgap measure.

FRANK

Thank you, thank you.... There was, uh, one more thing -- you remember that bean ball we talked about?

VIOLET

Yes.

FRANK

Do you think I could pick that up? After everything that's happened, I could really use it right now.

VIOLET

Yes.

Violet goes to find it, Frank following. As she opens the box, he notices the note in his handwriting.

FRANK
What's that?

VIOLET
What?

FRANK
That note.

VIOLET
Oh. One gets so few things written
by hand anymore, I guess I kept
it...

FRANK
Hunh.

Frank picks up the note and reads it aloud.

FRANK (CONT'D)
"Out for brewskies - back in a Gif"
[hard "g"]. What's a "Gif?" The
scooter, like a Vespa, right?

HEATHER
That's what I thought.

FRANK
I was thinking of getting one.

Frank looks to Heather with appreciation.

VIOLET
You must have meant "jiff." "Back
in a jiff" and then misspelled it,
or spelled it in a non-standard
way.

FRANK
Oh, yeah. Not a good speller.

Frank throws the bean ball up in the air and catches it
rather skillfully.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Thanks! You're great. Priss was
such a bitch... Damn! Damn!
(leaving)
Hey, Heather -- Bye.
(to Rose)
Bye.

HEATHER & ROSE
Bye.

Violet steps out in the hall with Frank who corners her.

FRANK

Wow, Heather is really cute. She's like, really attractive. Is she, uh, going out with anyone?

VIOLET

I think there might be something between her and Thor.

FRANK

Thor! Damn. Heather and Thor? Damn. Damn!

TITLE CARD

The Ed School -- "Robertson Hall"

96A 102 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY

96A

Rose walks with Violet who's obviously quite upset and overwrought.

VIOLET

I can't bear this tension with Lily. It's terrible to have the group divided this way.

Rose looks up and guides Violet away from the path alongside Robertson Hall.

ROSE

Better not next to Robertson.

VIOLET

What?

ROSE

Didn't you hear? Suicidal Ed School students have been going up to the roof and throwing themselves off.

VIOLET

But, it's only two stories--

ROSE

Yes, I know, it's terrible -- not high enough to kill but high enough to maim, and particularly dangerous for anyone below.

They head down the central path -- a safe distance away.

VIOLET

I've got to forget about Fred.

ROSE

But you really liked him.

VIOLET

This whole thing of a person meeting someone else first: it's so arbitrary, it's terrible and cruel -
-

She looks to Rose for support but only gets a blank look.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

-- especially when that selection by "priority" is the opposite of how things ought to be.

ROSE

I have to say, I was wrong about Fred. I thought he was a playboy or oper-a-tor type. In fact, he's just another guy rendered helpless by the attentions of a pretty girl.

They are interrupted by a commotion, shouts, from nearby Robertson Hall and a young woman following a young man across its roof.

ED SCHOOL GIRL

Cary! Cary! No! Don't! I love you!

The young man looks over the balustrade and as the girl approaches, jumps -- out of frame. Close on Rose and Violet watching: the sound of a slight "thud" in the distance, then a sharp squeal of pain.

ED SCHOOL GUY (O.S.)

Owwwww! Owwwww!

ED SCHOOL GIRL

Why did you do that? Carry, I love you!

Rose and Violet resume walking.

ROSE

Isn't the Ed School essentially a teachers' college?

VIOLET

Yeah.

ROSE

What concerns me is, if they can't even destroy themselves, how are they going to teach America's Youth?

TITLE CARD

Thor

97 INT. GIRLS' ROOM -- NIGHT

97

It's quiet, the lights off: Violet, Rose and Heather in their bunks.

HEATHER

I'm really worried about Thor...
It's hard for us to imagine how
upsetting it is not knowing what
the colors are.

ROSE

In fact it's impossible for me to
imagine.

HEATHER

When Thor sees a rainbow -- it's
only so much gibberish to him.
There was one this afternoon:
omigosh he took it hard. Recently
there was a parade in the city
where the marchers carried rainbow-
colored flags and banners --- Thor
was so upset: he said he'd no idea
what it meant --

ROSE

What kind of retard is he?

HEATHER

See, that's the conclusion people
immediately jump to.

VIOLET

Well, it's somewhat understandable.

HEATHER

Not if you knew the full story.

ROSE

What's the full story?

HEATHER

You know how parents love bragging
about how precocious their children
are? Thor's parents had become
precocity-addicts: constantly
needing an ever-greater precocity
"fix." When he should have entered
kindergarten, they instead pushed
him into First Grade. "Oh, Thor
skipped a grade," they could tell
their friends, most of whom were
terrible precocity-addicts too.

ROSE
 (suddenly alarmed)
 What's this all about?

HEATHER
 What Thor's parents failed to consider was the enormously important academic work done in nursery school -- key being the study of colors, which in Thor's case were -- a complete blank. Can you imagine?... I don't want to be too critical of Thor's parents. I suppose they just assumed that colors are the sort of knowledge people pick up along the way -- like, for example not stepping on sidewalk cracks.

There's an odd sound.

HEATHER (CONT'D)
 What's that?

VIOLET
 (whispers)
 I think Rose's sleeping.

A silence, except for the sound of Rose's breathing.

HEATHER
 Am I boring?

VIOLET
 No, not at all. When you've problems yourself, it's great to hear someone else's truly idiotic ones. Please go on.

A shocked pause.

HEATHER
 Wow.

VIOLET
 What?

HEATHER
 When you said that about depressed people being mean, you weren't joking.

VIOLET
 I'm sorry -- you're right. Please go on.

HEATHER
 No.

VIOLET

I'm sorry. You know how I am.
Please continue.

On Heather's face as she struggles with her resentment.

HEATHER

Thor decided he absolutely had to learn all the colors, both primary and mixed. He's been hitting the books really hard and thought he had finally mastered them. Then in town today he said "that traffic light's blue." I had to say, no, it's green. He was really upset. He'd been so sure it was blue.

VIOLET

The traffic lights in town are sort of blue.

HEATHER

This was a green light -- "cross at the green, not in-between."

VIOLET

Yah, we call them "green" but they're actually more bluish.

HEATHER

"Bluish" but still green.

VIOLET

No, they can be blue. I know it sounds strange but--

HEATHER

Huhn. I don't know about that. Frankly, it's hard to believe. Anyway, we continued walking and a naval officer passed us. Thor blurted out, a bit aggressively, "his uniform's black." I had to correct him. Navy uniforms are blue, "navy blue" -- that's why they're called that way. Omigosh, he was upset! It was as if he were going to cry.

Rose awakes, a little alarmed.

VIOLET

You know, actually, that's true: navy uniforms are black.

HEATHER

They're navy blue. That's the color's name.

VIOLET

No, by mistake the Navy received a huge shipment of fabric that was black, not blue. So as not to waste it they decided to sew gold braid on and use it -- and found that everyone assumed it was blue, navy blue, when it was in fact black.

HEATHER

Still? Navy uniforms are still black?

VIOLET

Yes -- I believe so.

In the dark Heather gets out of bed and starts looking around for her clothes and dressing.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

HEATHER

I've got to tell Thor! There's no telling what he might do!

The door opens and someone enters from outside.

HEATHER (CONT'D)

Who's that?

LILY

It's me.

VIOLET

Oh, hi, Lily.

LILY

Hi.

VIOLET

We were worried about you.

LILY

Why?

Violet, Rose, Heather and other volunteers pack bars of the "wonder" soap in oval cardboard packets. Behind them displaced DU members, sleeping bags lying around, lounge, play with bean balls, etc.

HEATHER

It's getting to look like a homeless shelter in here.

VIOLET

These guys are not really "homeless" -- they lost their fraternity house. It'd be better to call them "house-less."

HEATHER

Okay. It's getting to look like a house-less shelter then.

Violet turns to some of the D.U. refugees.

VIOLET

Hey, could you guys help?!

Frank and another approach. (Thor, in the background, climbs back in his sleeping bag, depressed and dejected.)

FRANK

Sure, what's up?

VIOLET

We need help packing this soap which we'll then distribute to Doar Dorm residents.

FRANK

Cool.

VIOLET

What would you say are the most effective means to fight depression?

Frank is completely stumped. His D.U. brothers listen in, making faces.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Maybe some of your D.U. brothers have an idea.

The D.U. guys think.

DU GUY

Uh, beer?

FRANK

No -- beer's a downer. Cocktails -- hard liquor, "spirits" -- is what really gives you a lift.

VIOLET

It's interesting what you say. My Cousin Jay's a medical officer in

Philadelphia: he says alcoholism -- by which I mean chronic, excessive consumption of alcohol -- is the primary self-administered treatment for depression.

DU GUY

Cool.

VIOLET

No. Ultimately it leaves you much worse off than before.

DU GUY

Oh no, not me. I just boot, and then feel fine.

VIOLET

By "boot," do you mean "vomit?"

DU GUY

Yes.

VIOLET

No, none of the effective anti-suicide treatments involve vomiting.

D.U. guy thinks.

DU GUY

Hunh.... a treatment for depression that doesn't involve vomiting...

FRANK

Uh -- hygiene?

VIOLET

Exactly. It's very important. That's why we have such hope in the wonder bar. Do you know its scent?

They shake their heads. Violet cups in the palms of her hands and offers it up to them. They inhale deeply -- and are (somewhat) transported.

FRANK

Wow.

DU GUY

It's guu--uud.

VIOLET

Transformative, we think.

HEATHER

This is so exciting. -- it's really great, isn't it.

On Rose's skeptical visage as she listens:

HEATHER (CONT'D)

I can just see those guys opening the packages, taking out the soap, smelling it and then excitedly going to wash themselves. For them finally to be clean, free from that horrible acrid smell, how different the world might look to them.

VIOLET

Yes.

Violet, looking around, notices Thor lying prostrate in his sleeping bag, his head buried in his arms.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

What's wrong with Thor?

FRANK

I don't know -- he asked me about the weather. When I told him it looked "very gray," he looked around -- and seemed really upset.

Thor lies with his head buried under his arm.

HEATHER

I better go to him.

Heather heads toward where Thor is.

FRANK

Thor's gotten so worked up over this color business. My God, it's weird! Didn't we all learn that stuff in kindergarten?!

100 INT. GIRLS' ROOM/HALL -- NIGHT

100

Violet studies at her desk, then gets up as if taking a break. As she walks there's a distinct clack sound. She's wearing tap shoes, walking delicately so as not to make too much noise. But the "clacks" are still pretty notable. She heads down the hall toward the bathroom -- suddenly a hall door swings open and MAD MADGE leans out.

MAD MADGE

What do you think you're doing?!

VIOLET

Going to the bathroom.

MAD MADGE

Making a racket like that?

VIOLET
I'm sorry, did I disturb you?

MAD MADGE
What do you think? Why are you wearing tap shoes -- are you out of your mind?

VIOLET
Yes, I think that's clear.

Quite a few others stick their heads out.

MAD MADGE
Oh, I'm so sick of that.

POSITIVE POLLY
Oh, really? I think it's cute.

Madge gives Polly a dirty look.

MAD MADGE
Since you won't be treating us to one of your hilariously incompetent tap routines, why don't you take those things off?

VIOLET
No, we'll do the routine... Rose!

Violet hurries back toward the room, no longer trying to soften her clacks:

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Madge wants to see the routine!

MAD MADGE
No --

Rose retreats within the room to put the music on.

MAD MADGE (CONT'D)
--I don't want to see your absurd routine -- I asked you to take those things off!

POSITIVE POLLY
Please Madge, please, we need a break--

VIOLET
Just briefly, please, it's helpful to have an audience-- Rose, the music.

MADGE
I'm going to report you!

"Things Are Looking Up" blasts from the stereo. Violet begins her dance down the hall -- it's joyous and amazing. Rose appears, with taps on, and joins in. Mad Madge slams her door. As Violet and Rose tap up and down the hall and stairs, their hall mates enjoy the spectacle.

101 INT. MR. BLACK'S SEMINAR - DAY

101

The seminar classroom of the wise and elegant CHARLES BLACK -- the students respond to one of his questions.

MR. BLACK

Susanne?

COED

For me it'd be, Madame Curie,
Simone de Beauvoir and, Margaret
Sanger.

MR. BLACK

Good. Violet?

VIOLET

I would say: Richard Straus,
Roderick Charleston and... Chubbert
Checker.

MR. BLACK

(pronouncing)

"Rickard" Straus, the composer?

VIOLET

Yes -- that was one of his posts.

MR. BLACK

I'm not familiar with the others --
could you tell us who they are and
what links them?

VIOLET

Yes.

Violet swivels slightly to include the other students, speaking slowly for their benefit.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

Each one of these men started an
international dance craze --
"Rickard" Straus, the Waltz;
Roderick Charleston, the
Charleston, and Chubbert Checker,
better known as "Chubby", the dance
we know as the Twist.

MR. BLACK
 (smiling)
 Why do you consider starting a
 dance craze so important?

VIOLET
 (surprised)
 Dance crazes enhance and elevate
 the human experience, bringing
 together millions of people in a
 joyous celebration of our God-given
 faculties and passing these
 delightful modes of physical
 expression down through the
 generations -- though not so much
 any more.

A pause.

MR. BLACK
 I thought -- well, I guess I
 assumed that "the Charleston" was
 named after the city of Charleston,
 South Carolina.

Violet maintains a studied and level expression.

VIOLET
 No... Though that misconception is
 quite widely held. It was Roderick
 Charleston. Usually behind some
 great creative phenomenon is a
 person, not a town.

103 INT. SUICIDE CENTER -- DAY

103

Freak and Violet practice a song and dance version of "Things
 are Looking Up," the chorus dancing behind:

VIOLET
 (singing)
*Oh things are looking up,
 Since love looked up at me!*

Priss pops into the room and stands by observing. Debbie, in
 the chorus, notices Priss and stops, as do others.

DEBBIE
 Priss!

PRISS
 Hi Debs.

FREAK
 Break!

Freak stalks off; Priss approaches Violet hesitantly.

PRISS

Violet, I am so sorry... You must hate me. I know what I did was wrong -- but, if things ended so easily between you and Frank, isn't it best that they did so? Isn't it better to break with someone so unreliable?

VIOLET

What?

PRISS

What I'm saying is, I know now I should never have gotten involved with anyone. I was still on the rebound from Josh. But, inadvertently, I did something that you must acknowledge as positive. Aren't you much better off being rid of a... numbskull like that?

DEBBIE

Priss, come on -- don't apologize to her! Of course what you did was right.

PRISS

I know it sounds crazy, but if I did help you disentangle from Frank, isn't that for the best? Frank was unworthy of you, Violet -- you must know that. Let's be honest, he's an idiot, a moron. How would it have been, your whole life attached to a dope like that?

FRANK (O.S.)

Priss?

Priss turns. Frank, with some DU guys behind him, stands with a crushed look on his face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How can you say something like that, Priss? I'm not a... moron. I... loved you.

PRISS

Well that wasn't very bright of you, was it? I was clearly on the rebound.

Tight on Lily eating, widen on the whole group having breakfast. Violet seems somewhat sad, Heather a bit high.

HEATHER

This is so exciting -- when should we go over there?

ROSE

I don't think there's any rush.

HEATHER

No, I'd like to go as soon as possible. Doar Dorm has the university's highest fatality rate, as well as the worst hygiene. This could really change things.

LILY

The highest suicide rate?

VIOLET

No, the highest fatality rate -- it's not certain what percentage were intentional and how many just due to a temporary unawareness of gravity's laws.

HEATHER

I can just see those guys getting the little gold packages, opening them and finding the terrifically good-smelling soap inside. Despite their habitual reticence toward hygiene, the wonderful scent and cute packaging should prove irresistible. And, once clean, they'll start to see the world with new eyes. The change could be dramatic. Doar Dorm could soon become -- "Dior Dorm."

ROSE

I doubt that, to be perfectly, absolutely honest.

VIOLET

No, I love the idea -- Dior Dorm. I adore optimism, even when completely absurd, perhaps especially then.

HEATHER

Great! Ready? Let's go.

105

EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY

105

The girls walk in the direction of Doar Dorm, Heather slightly ahead.

HEATHER

Let's hurry.

She starts to jog -- Violet catches up to her.

VIOLET

Let's not let our hopes up get too high, Heather.

HEATHER

No, you said yourself -- the Wonder Bar is transformative.

Fred, walking the other way, spots them.

FRED

Hey, Violet!

Fred falls in with them.

FRED (CONT'D)

Hi. Where are you going?

Violet is a little nervous and tongue-tied.

VIOLET

Doar Dorm.

LILY

Fred! Hi!

Lily runs up to fall in by Fred just as they turn the corner and see: Outside Doar Dorm and pouring out of its doors Doar Dorm guys and a few Doar Dorm "women" throw small oval discs back and forth in an enormous frisbee-like free for all. One of the discs falls at Violet's feet: it's the oval package they used for the Wonder Bar, never opened. The girls look to each other, appalled. Two guys jump for the same disc, bashing into each other, one dropping like a stone as if dead.

HEATHER

Oh, no.

VIOLET

Omigod.

106

EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY

106

The group walks back from Doar Dorm, Heather upset.

LILY

I guess it wasn't realistic to expect Doar Dorm to turn into "Dior Dorm" overnight.

HEATHER

They wouldn't even open them: they said without the soap, the discs wouldn't fly properly.

Rose turns to Fred.

ROSE

Are you coming Friday? Violet is launching her dance craze at the Lone Star.

Fred's impressed.

FRED

Really? That's great. What's the dance?

ROSE

The "Sambola" -- the Devil's Dance.

FRED

Cool.
(to Lily)
We'll go, right?

LILY

Yes, I'd like to but I have several papers to finish. But I'd like to...

108 INT. DORM BATHROOM -- NIGHT

108

Violet and Rose beginning their evening ablutions.

ROSE

I'm beginning to learn things about myself. I'm actually a really poor judge of character--

VIOLET

No--

ROSE

No, I am. A terrible excess of opinion distorts my judgement. I was completely wrong about him, he's not a playboy or oper-a-tor type at all. He's a loser.

VIOLET

I'm the biggest loser of anyone... First semester, "Forget Frank." Second semester, "Forget Fred."

ROSE

Have you forgotten him?

Violet, eyes watering, shakes her head "no."

ROSE (CONT'D)
I don't think you should give up on him.

Rose spits the toothpaste into the sink.

ROSE (CONT'D)
One thought reassures me: Our stupidity must be part of God's Divine Plan. He must have made us stupid for a reason.

VIOLET
Because He wants us to have kids?
"Be fruitful and multiply."

ROSE
Yes. Probably.

TITLE CARD
The Lone Star -- Debut of the
"Samboloa" Dance Craze

109 INT. LONE STAR -- NIGHT

109

Violet, sharply dressed, completes a music check with the manager GUS near the dance area, then goes to Rose at the bar where cocktails have just been served. Violet gives a worried look around the sparsely populated bar.

VIOLET
It's great! Thanks, Gus.
(to Rose)
I don't see how we're going to start a dance craze if no guys show up.

ROSE
Most guys aren't very good at the dance craze thing anyway.

VIOLET
Yeah, but still...

Heather enters, out of breath, dressed for the dance but otherwise preoccupied.

HEATHER
Very good news! I was just at my procrastination seminar and the two guys from Doar Dorm -- had showered. It was pretty clear they'd used soap -- Omigosh, what a

difference! It seems they'd been throwing the packages so energetically a soap bar fell out -- the unfamiliar, ivory-like object intrigued them. One thing led to another and -- well, it was just as you said. Isn't that great?

Violet and Rose nod. Violet takes a few steps, looking around.

VIOLET
Oh look, here's Jimbo.

JIMBO
Where is everybody?

VIOLET
This is pretty bad.

110 INT. THE OAK BAR -- NIGHT

110

Lily and Fred study and talk at one of the bar's corner booths. Fred checks his watch.

FRED
Aren't we going to be late for Violet's dance craze?

LILY
You want to go to that?

FRED
Yeah.

LILY
You're kidding.

FRED
No. I love dance crazes.

LILY
Gosh, you're strange...

FRED
Aren't we already late?

LILY
No, it's later on, like 10 I think... I have to confess I've started losing patience with Violet. Depression calls for serious treatment -- medication, psycho-pharmaceuticals, talk therapy--

FRED

But are those approaches really so effective? Despite all the medication and therapy, Ed School students are still throwing themselves off Robertson Hall. Violet's ideas might seem a little off-beat--

LILY

A little off-beat! Omigod. I don't know how much you know about Violet but there's some pretty weird stuff. "Violet," "Violet Wister" is not even her real name.

FRED

It isn't?

LILY

No. It's "Emily Tweeter." Apparently when she was eleven years old she went completely crazy and has had several relapses since, so it's a little worrisome to have her counsel nearly suicidal individuals--

FRED

I can't believe it.

LILY

What?

FRED

"Emily Tweeter" -- in First Grade I had an enormous crush on a girl with that name.

LILY

You remember that?

FRED

Yeah. It was pretty huge, Dr. Zhivago stuff. Any idea or even mention of her filled me with emotion. Admittedly I had a very strange perspective on the world then; I don't think my brain was fully formed or functioning properly -- everything was a bit of a dream. Then a bizarre thing happened. I was torn about whether to shout my passion from the roof tops or keep it secret. In a sort of compromise I wrote Emily's name, in crayon, on a scrap of paper, then carefully hid it in my

bookcase where no one else could possibly find it. So, my secret was expressed but, ostensibly, safe -- I'd no idea of the weird and inexplicable events that would follow.

Lily looks a little worried.

LILY

What?

FRED

Two years afterwards I was walking up the street a couple of blocks from my house when I spotted a slip of paper lying, face up, on the sidewalk near someone's trash -- the name "Emily Tweeter" written on it in crayon in my own child-like handwriting.

He stares into Lily's eyes with an expression of total bafflement and candor.

FRED (CONT'D)

It was completely, utterly weird. How could my secret, so well hidden, come to land on the sidewalk of Henderson Drive?

Lily tries to help him.

LILY

Could, uh--

FRED

No. I've thought long and hard about it -- there's no rational explanation. This was my first encounter with the bizarre and inexplicable. When I later learned about the Bermuda Triangle and other such mysterious phenomena, I knew it was probably all true as I'd had this early brush with the uncanny. From a very young age it became clear to me that rationalism cannot explain life's deepest mysteries.

LILY

And you think this girl was Violet?

FRED

I have to say I didn't recognize her. She was very young then. Do you have any idea if Violet might

have attended Willamette
Montessori?

LILY
In Portland?

Fred nods. The barman arrives with a tray of cocktails --
much to their surprise.

FRED
We didn't order these.

BARMAN
Compliments of the guy at the bar.

Lily and Fred look toward the bar -- Xavier, wearing a suit,
nods to them.

111 INT. THE CORNER BAR -- NIGHT 111

Shortly after, Xavier is with them in the booth.

XAVIER
...It was so brutal how it ended
between us. I know I was too angry
and a bit, crazy but I thought what
we had was stronger than that. That
you would not just walk away after
one disagreement. With all we had
been through, couldn't you have
just forgiven me...

Lily says nothing for a few moments.

LILY
It wasn't just that...

XAVIER
Oh, you mean, my Cathar beliefs?

Lily nods. Xavier is a little emotional.

XAVIER (CONT'D)
Well, I am no longer a Cathar.

LILY
How's that possible?

XAVIER
It's been very difficult.

FRED
You've entirely dropped your
adherence to the Cathar faith?

XAVIER
Yes. I have.

FRED

Good. Normally I'd be reluctant to comment on anyone's religion...

XAVIER

What?

FRED

I'm sorry, I guess I'm a bit of a bigot -- I could never take seriously a religion that worships on Tuesdays. All the major religions require worship on the weekend -- Friday, Saturday or Sunday. I find it really laudatory that people should sacrifice their weekend time to Worship God...

He checks his watch.

XAVIER

Having sabbath on Tuesday always seemed very bizarre to me. It is not right.

FRED

We'd better get to the Lone Star--

LILY

Why are you so concerned about that?

FRED

It's not as if international dance crazes start every day.

112 EXT. TOWN STREET -- NIGH

112

Fred, Lily and Xavier hurry down the sidewalk -- semi-jogging.

FRED

We better hurry.

They pick up the pace. Lily seems a little less keen on getting to their destination --

113 EXT. LONE STAR -- NIGHT

113

The three approach the Lone Star, just as Rose, Heather, Violet and Jimbo come out looking downcast.

FRED

What's wrong?

VIOLET
Another fiasco.

114 INT. GIRLS ROOM -- NIGHT

114

All four are in bed in the dark.

VIOLET
Sometimes our struggle reminds me
of the Myth of Sisyphus.

HEATHER
Who?

VIOLET
The myth about the guy who pushes
an enormous rock up a hill, only to
have it keep rolling back down
again.

HEATHER
Oh yeah. What a knucklehead. The
important thing to remember is that
he was mythical -- he never really
existed.

LILY
Violet, did you spend any part of
your education at a school called
Willamette Montessori?

VIOLET
In Oregon? Why?

115 INT. COFFEE COTTAGE -- DAY

115

Thor, Jimbo, and the girls huddled inside on a drab day; they
glance at Fred who speaks on his phone on the Coffee
Cottage's porch -- a drizzle falls outside.

THOR
Would you say that today is "very
gray?"

Jimbo looks around.

JIMBO
I'd say so. Maybe "blue-gray."

Thor looks around, trying to factor this in. Fred finishes
the call and comes in.

FRED
I'm sorry, her name wasn't "Emily
Tweeter" but "Lucy Wurlitzer." I

know they're not very similar: I'm beginning to realize that the human memory is not the foolproof instrument we sometimes imagine. What's worse it seems everyone knew all about my obsession, including my parents and siblings -- precisely those from whom I most wanted it kept.

ROSE

So from your earliest years you were already a playboy or oper-a-tor type.

FRED

Yes. I suppose that's why secrecy seemed so desirable.

LILY

Violet, can I talk to you?

Lily, having silently followed all this, stands and nods to Violet, who gets up too. As they walk to the coffee counter, Lily whispers to her confidentially.

LILY (CONT'D)

What's the plural of doufus?

VIOLET

Doufi.

LILY

Not doufuses?

VIOLET

You can say either: "doufi" respects the Latin root and so is preferred. "Doufuses" is also correct, although a bit inelegant.

LILY

You've thought a lot about this.

VIOLET

Yes. I've had to.

LILY

Hmmm.

VIOLET

What? What is it?

LILY

I like Fred -- he's a nice guy and I can see why you like him... Any mass of people, such as you might find in a large university or high school, divides into many different

groups. Normally there's a "cool crowd," and then variously less cool crowds. When I first met you and Rose, I thought you were the "cool crowd" -- and, in many ways, you are. I find your perfume and fashion sense excellent.

VIOLET

Thank you!

LILY

But...there's a reason, I think, why you are so strongly attracted to doufi. And it's not an accident. How different groups divide up...

While Lily speaks Violet notices something.

HEATHER (O.S.)

Thor! No!

116 EXT. COFFEE COTTAGE -- DAY

116

They turn in time to see Thor run into the street followed by Heather. The sun is out and its rays, bouncing off the dark clouds still hanging in the sky, create an exquisite lighting effect. Everyone follows them into the street. In the distance a rainbow has formed -- this is what panicked Heather. Thor runs hell for leather toward the beautiful arc, Heather after him.

HEATHER

Thor! No! Stop! Please, stop!

TIGHT ON: Thor's face as he runs, torn with emotion.

VIOLET

He's headed for Robertson Hall!

117 EXT. ROBERTSON HALL -- DAY

117

Thor disappears inside.

118 INT. ROBERTSON HALL -- DAY

118

Thor runs up the stairs, Heather behind.

119 EXT. ROBERTSON ROOF -- DAY

119

Thor runs toward the balustrade, Heather comes up from the stairs, almost too winded to call:

At the balustrade Thor stops for a moment and gazes at the rainbow in its terrifying splendor. He points first to the topmost band of color, then each succeeding one:

THOR
 Red!... Orange! Yellow!... Green!
 Blue! Indigo! Violet!...
 Hallelujah, Lord God, thank you!

Heather reaches him and they embrace, gazing at the rainbow together, Thor's face wet with tears of joy.

THOR (CONT'D)
 Education! We can learn the
 subjects we set out to master, no
 matter how hard or impossible they
 may seem. Thank you! Thank you --
 I wasn't sure I was going to make
 it!

Together they look to the rainbow horizon. Thor studies and nods his head again toward it, proud of his new competence.

THOR (CONT'D)
 Magenta... Pink... Mauve...

119A EXT. SEVEN OAKS -- DAY

119A

Rose and Violet, thoughtful, study together on benches.

VIOLET
 I miss my nice American friend.

ROSE
 No, you're mistaken.

VIOLET
 Oh come on, you go to London for
 four weeks--

ROSE
 Six.

VIOLET
 It's very dangerous, parents
 letting their children travel.
 They see them off at the airport
 and don't know what they'll be
 getting back.

Rose reflects on this.

ROSE
 I don't know what you're referring
 to.

VIOLET
You're not from London.

ROSE
I'm from London. I was there, and
now I'm here. I'm "from" London.

VIOLET
I just miss my nice American
friend.

ROSE
Nice.
(caricatures a nasal
American accent)
"Nice. Nice. Fine. 'Fine.'"
(reverts to type)
Those are not adjectives I like to
use. God gave us abilities -- he
requires that we use them: "Good.
Better. Best." "Excelsior!
Higher!" Only excellence can
glorify the Lord. Vulgarly is, in
essence, blasphemous.

TITLE CARD
In the Matter of the Doufi

120 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY

120

Lily and Violet come down a path, both in frilly "Damsels"
costumes.

LILY
I'm sorry what I was saying before -
- of course you're not
irretrievably linked to the doufi
or even that such distinctions are
valid--

VIOLET
No, don't apologize -- I probably
do have a "doufi" orientation. But
behind "coolness" isn't there a
certain repressing, squashing down
or at lack of cultivation of one's
humanity?

LILY
Oh, so you think cool people have
less humanity?

VIOLET
No, of course not, I don't think
cool people are entirely inhuman --
just enough to be cool.

LILY

In our society there's all this propaganda in favor of uniqueness, eccentricity, etc, but does the world really want or need more of such traits? Aren't such people usually terrible pains in the neck? What the world needs to work properly is a large mass of normal people -- I'd like to be one of those -- sorry.

VIOLET

But you will still do the part?

LILY

Yeah. Of course.

TITLE CARD

Dress Rehearsal

121 INT. SUICIDE CENTER -- DAY

121

In the long dance mirror first Lily then Violet appear, in their extravagant costumes for the musical.

LILY

Omigod we look ridiculous.

Violet looks at their reflection, serene.

VIOLET

Yes. I think that's good.

They disappear from frame. Cut to Freak cueing the music on the Suicide Center stereo system. The first notes of the "Damsels" overture begin.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

So do you know every number from every Fred Astaire movie?

FRED

No, there were two in our school musical. I know those.

VIOLET

But did performing those two numbers help you overcome adolescent feelings of discouragement and despair?

FRED

Absolutely.

VIOLET
 (calls)
 Freak!

Freak responds to her signal, pressing "play" on the stereo boombox. The song starts -- Fred begins the quiet lyric:

FRED
*If I should suddenly start to sing,
 Or stand on my head or anything,
 Don't think that I've lost my
 senses,
 It's just that my happiness finally
 commences.*

Fred takes Violet's hand and leads her out of the building.

FRED (CONT'D)
*The long, long ages of dull despair
 Are turning into thin air
 And it seems that suddenly I've
 Become the happiest guy alive--*

122 EXT. QUADRANGLE -- DAY

122

Fred and Violet emerge from the drab building into the more glorious world of a Seven Oaks version movie musical -- Violet joins him in song.

VIOLET & FRED
*Things are looking up
 I've been looking the landscape
 over
 And it's covered with 4 leaf clover
 Oh things are looking up
 Since love looked up at me!*

*Bitter was my cup
 But no more will I be the mourner
 For I've certainly turned the
 corner
 Oh things are looking up Since love
 looked up at me*

Others from the cast move in behind them, with some pairing off -- Lily with Xavier, Thor with Heather, Frank and Freak with Rose, Jimbo with Priss:

ENSEMBLE
*See the sunbeams
 Every one beams
 Just because of you
 Love's in session
 And my depression
 Is unmistakably through*

They pass Doar Dorm, now a paradise of decorous Dior-ness.

DOAR DORM CHORUS

*Things are looking up
It's a great little world we live
in
Oh we're happy as pups
Since love looked up at us.*

The song continues, then as the music fades an "iris" fade out of the image -- then partially re-opens:

CLOSE UP of a smiling Violet -- lighting, location and costume are dark and atmospheric. The music to a future hit dance song starts:

VIOLET

(a big smile)

Hey, everybody! Let's--

123

INT. THE LONE STAR/DANCE LOCALE -- NIGHT

123

The music goes full blast, the iris opens fully: Violet is in a dance locale, perhaps the Lone Star with better lighting:

VIOLET

do the -- "Sam-bo-la!"

To the dance hit's irresistible beat, Violet does the "Sambola" -- soon joined by the others, except Rose -- the camera moves among the dancers a la "American Bandstand." Rose sits, watching critically. Jimbo goes to her.

JIMBO

You're not dancing?

Rose shakes her head.

ROSE

Looks to me like just another...
Devil Dance. I'm waiting for a
dance of truth, and beauty, and
righteousness. A dance that
glorifies, not the body, but the
Lord.

JIMBO

Wow. You might have a long wait...

Credits roll: Subsequently Freak's partner tires -- he invites Rose to dance; she drops her resistance and joins in with great skill.