

COVERS

By Flora Greeson

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OVER BLACK -

A recording rewinds, and then -

Slow roar of an audience. A steady vamp kicks in. Guitar. Bass. Drums.

A voice - SUZANNE WILSON - powerful, drawling, seductive - starts singing a version of "Bad Girl" by Lee Moses -

SUZANNE (V.O.)

This is a song about a bad girl.

The crowd loses their shit. So loud that the track flattens out.

WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Whoah baby. Let's fix that.

MAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

Yeah, got it.

Rewinds. Vamp. Guitar. Bass. Drums. That voice again.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

This is a song about a bad girl.

Only a slight change, but for those who are listening, you can hear it. It's better. Clearer. Moving on.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

Something that happened to me a long time ago. A long time ago. I think some of you were there...

SLOW FADE UP -

INT. CAPITOL MASTERING STUDIO - DAY

As the song continues we pan past photo after photo of SUZANNE WILSON. Gorgeous. Black. Performing in stadiums, nightclubs, the White House. Singing at a piano. Recording in a studio, all hair and headphones. Gold & Platinum records on the wall. Electric, at every age.

And her voice... like if Tina and Aretha and Etta all threw their hands up and said, "fine, she can have some of this."

SUZANNE (V.O.)

Everybody was tellin' me, little girl, you're runnin' around too much.

Move past MAGGIE SHERWOOD (26, kinetic), spinning in a chair next to engineer SETH (40s), sitting at the board.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

But I had a head of my own! And I just wouldn't listen to nobody!

MAGGIE / SETH / AUDIENCE

Amen.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

My father, he told me, my mama, she told me. They said -

MAGGIE

Wait, play that back?

Determination and confidence exude out of Maggie. This is her element.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

My father, he told me, my mama, she told me. They said -

MAGGIE

Yeah yeah ok I think the show the next night - she says something like "my mama cried" can we pull that up?

Seth clicks around, buzzes through the next night's performance. Trusts her.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

My father, he told me, my mama, she sat down and crieeeeeeed.  
"Suzie Q... you gonna wear *that*?"

Suzanne laughs as the audience devours it. Seth and Maggie's eyes light up. Jackpot.

SUZANNE (V.O.)

They said girl, you're gonna break that man's heart. That's when I told mama these words -

SETH

That's great. Good job, Maggie.

And BAM the song kicks in! Suzanne WAILS the chorus -

Maggie bounces up and mouths along, knows the song inside out, has heard it 1000 times but *still loves it, how can anyone not love it* -

SERIES OF SHOTS AS "BAD GIRL" PLAYS OUT:

Maggie gears up for the day ahead of her - very different from what we just saw she's capable of. Autopilots off of a mental checklist that is borderline insane but down to a science. Effortless.

- IN HER CAR: Maggie peels through Los Angeles -

- AT THE DRY CLEANERS: Maggie picks up a very SPARKLY DRESS. Checks if hem was fixed. Nope. Argues -

- BACK IN CAR:

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE)  
(terse, fast)  
We're only going to be in Chicago  
for thirteen hours so if you want  
to see her that's the only time  
that works -

- JUICE STORE: Maggie picks up bottles of overpriced juice, waving thanks to the EMPLOYEE -

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
Ok, so you're dropping the cake  
off at 5, right?

- BACK IN CAR:

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
No no no - *Wednesday*, we need the  
liner notes *Wednesday* -

- DOUBLE PARKED AT PET STORE: Lugs giant bag of dog food into the trunk -

- TRULY ALWAYS IN HER CAR:

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
BITE SIZED. Not like the ones last  
time, I don't know who's mouth you  
are using for scale -

- PHARMACY: Slams GUMMY WORMS onto the counter -

PHARMACIST  
Please tell her I'm a huge fan.

MAGGIE  
(pleasant)  
I will. Is the Klonopin ready?

EXT. PIÑATA STORE - LATER

Maggie, PIÑATA WOMAN and her LITTLE GIRL cram PIÑATAS into the car. PINEAPPLE. WATERMELON. HEART. UNICORN. They tetris everything in. Maggie high fives the PIÑATA WOMAN.

LITTLE GIRL

(gasping)

We forgot the parrot!

Maggie wilts.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Traffic crawls. PARROT PIÑATA in her lap. Checks watch. A/C has been broken for at least three months, FYI.

MAGGIE

(sing songy)

Would someone please kill me.

Her phone rings for the hundredth time that day.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Yeah?

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)

Maggie? Hi!! It's Billy's assistant!

Maggie puts her head down on parrot. Here we go.

MAGGIE

(cheery right back)

Heyyy! What's up?

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)

Oh just wanted to make sure we were still good to rehearse tomorrow at Billy's?

MAGGIE

No. Nope. Not Billy's. We have to do it at Suzanne's *per my email* because she has a show -

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)

So there's no way she could just -

MAGGIE

Pop over to Long Island for the afternoon? Sure. I'll have my hearse drop her off.

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)  
 (commiserating)  
 Guess why he's changing his mind.

MAGGIE  
 Why.

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)  
 He says her apartment smells too  
 good.

MAGGIE  
 (laughing)  
 He's right. It's very threatening.

EXT. SUZANNE'S MANSION - DRIVEWAY - LATER

At the gate, Maggie pulls up and yells into the callbox:

MAGGIE  
 Hi it's me!

Gate opens, revealing huge, stunning Hollywood Hills home. If Nancy Meyers had an edge.

Maggie parks and realizes she can't get out of her car because she's crammed so much into it. Inhales. Not the first time it's happened.

She THROWS the PARROT out the open window. After a few valiant attempts Maggie pops out like a cork, grabs some bags and races into the house.

INT. SUZANNE'S KITCHEN

MARIA (40s), estate manager, perpetually bored and unfazed, watches as Maggie dumps everything on counter. A handful of LITTLE DOGS at her feet.

MARIA  
 Where are my worms?

Maggie chucks the bag of gummy worms from the pharmacy.

MAGGIE  
 Where are her keys?

MARIA  
 Where are the piñatas?

MAGGIE  
 In my car. Can you guys get them?

Maggie rummages through the juice bag and crams grapes from the always overflowing fruit bowl into her mouth.

MARIA

You're gonna be late.

MAGGIE

(mouth full)

Maria. Best case scenario.

MARIA

You get fired.

MAGGIE

Right. Keys.

EXT. SUZANNE'S GARAGE

Maggie hops into Suzanne's souped up black sportscar. Change and shit falls out the butterfly door as she opens it, pelting her.

MAGGIE

WHO STORES THINGS IN A DOOR THAT  
OPENS UPSIDE DOWN.

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - MOVING

Driving way too fast, weaving in and out of traffic, music blasting. You can fucking bet the A/C is on full blast.

EXT. BURBANK AIRPORT - PRIVATE TARMAC

Maggie drives onto the tarmac, PRIVATE GULF-STREAM G4 JET waiting. SECURITY stands outside the plane, speak into walkies alerting Maggie's arrival.

Jet door slowly opens revealing the SUZANNE TEAM:  
BODYGUARDS. LABEL SUITS. STYLISTS.

JACK ROBERTSON (60s), Suzanne's manager, locks eyes with Maggie and taps his watch. *Asshole.*

And then. Here she is -

SUZANNE WILSON (50s), out of this world cool and aggressive, a conglomeration of all the shit she's put up with and all the compromises she's made but at her core a ball-busting artist who's ready to drive her own goddamn car home and take a goddamn shower.

Maggie walks up to meet Suzanne, takes her bag, hands her the afternoon juice as they peel off from the group.

SUZANNE

Late.

MAGGIE

Two minutes.

SUZANNE

Ten.

MAGGIE

(checks watch)

Six. Not my best, not my worst.

The walk across the tarmac, immediately in sync.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

How was Maui?

SUZANNE

Stunning.

(re: juice)

This is disgusting.

MAGGIE

Too bad. It's counteracting all the mojitos you probably drank.

SUZANNE

(wincing, hungover)

Shut up.

MAGGIE

Did you bring me back a present?

SUZANNE

No. I don't want this, you drink it. I want a burger.

Maggie sighs, chugs the juice as they get to the car. Suzanne gets in the driver's seat, barely missing Maggie's face with the door.

EXT. IN N OUT - DRIVE THROUGH - LATER

The car pulls up to the window, BODYGUARDS in SUV behind them.

When the EMPLOYEES see who's in the car, they lose it. Selfies, applauding, singing, crying - Suzanne eats it up. Loves it.

Maggie hands over cash, checks the burger, *wrong*, hands it back -

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Suzanne drives with her knee, scarfs fries, adjusts the music. Maggie slurps a milkshake as they talk a mile a minute.

MAGGIE

You're meeting about the set changes at 2:30 and that facialist you saw last month can come at 3:15 if you still want her to and the band and their kids will be over for Alicia's birthday around 5 and tomorrow we leave at 9:30am for New York so we should be out of the house by 8:30 then we're in New York, Boston, Detroit, and Chicago for the last leg of the tour. Are you gonna eat those?

This is their cruising speed.

SUZANNE

(handing over fries)  
What's happening with the live album.

MAGGIE

Almost done -

Maggie pauses - about to say something but chickens out.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I can't wait for you to hear it, you sound amazing.

SUZANNE

(smiling)  
Of course I do.

MAGGIE

(bracing herself)  
Also. Billy was wondering if you would want to rehearse at his place tomorrow instead of yours -

SUZANNE

In *Long Island*?

MAGGIE

Yes. I told his assistant -

SUZANNE

Margaret.

MAGGIE

Yes.

SUZANNE

How many Grammys do I have?

MAGGIE

Eleven.

SUZANNE

Correct. And how many does Billy have?

MAGGIE

Um. Nine?

Suzanne smiles a ferocious, shit-eating grin.

SUZANNE

Feel free to relay that to his assistant.

EXT. SUZANNE'S BACKYARD - NIGHT

Suzanne's BAND/BACKUP SINGERS mingle as their KIDS smash piñatas. All familiar, eating, drinking - closeness that comes from years of sharing stages and tour buses. Maggie fits right in.

Drummer HANKY HARRISON (40s) watches as SUZANNE blindfolds his DAUGHTER, ALICIA (9), the birthday girl.

SUZANNE

Alright baby, you're up to bat.  
Knock 'em dead or I'll throw you  
in the pool.

HANKY

(genuine, to Suzanne)  
Thanks for doing this.

SUZANNE

I need you in Chicago for the real  
one. And I never got to do this.  
Alicia's my favorite goddaughter.

HANKY

Piñatas were a nice touch.

Suzanne flicks a look to Maggie, cleaning up and always listening. Maggie takes a little bow. *Her idea.*

SUZANNE

My pleasure.

Maggie rolls her eyes. Part of the job.

INT. SUZANNE KITCHEN - LATER

Music seeps into the kitchen as Maria and Maggie stack dishes into the dishwasher.

JACK - manager we saw back on the plane - stands across the island finishing his second slice of cake. He looks like Johnny Cash but acts like the guy who kept selling him amphetamines.

MAGGIE

(whisper yelling)

She'll have just finished ten shows and you want her to fly back and do a *meet and greet*? Jack. She's gonna kill me. I'm gonna kill me.

JACK

It's \$200K. She can handle it.

MAGGIE

I'm sure this is what the Board of Trustees had in mind when they gave her a KENNEDY CENTER HONOR.

JACK

(cool, used to her)

I'm doin' my job, Mags. And it's *your* job to get her there and get her coffee and her tampax or whatever the hell else it is we've been paying you for the last six months.

Maria gently takes a plate out of Maggie's hands before she can chuck it at Jack.

MAGGIE

(swallowing rage)

Three years.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I just think maybe it would be a good idea for her to take a break from these greatest hits tours -

JACK

Good idea. And by good idea I mean fuck you and your shitty ideas. She was just in Hawaii.

MAGGIE

For TWO DAYS. It was supposed to be her and some hot cabana boys and none of us and then you MET HER THERE with a bunch of A&R guys to do PROMOS!

JACK

She likes being with the fans more than sitting here on her ass. You know that.

He slides his plate towards Maria and dips out. Maggie FOLLOWS HIM DOWN HALLWAY, won't let it go -

MAGGIE

(determined)

She should be writing. REINVENTING. There hasn't been a NEW SUZANNE WILSON ALBUM in a decade and a half but if we *pushed* her in that direction - people would *flip* -

JACK

(annoyed)

I've been managing Suze a long time. Before you were born. You think new material is the answer? Cute. Guess what. No one gives a shit about new stuff. No one's going to a Yankee Doodle Springsteen concert for his new Wrecking Ball-folk bullshit-

MAGGIE

Actually, that was an *incredibly* poignant album and it did *extremely* well -

He stops, blocking her -

JACK

They want THUNDER ROAD. So what do we give them? THUNDER ROAD.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)  
 That's what pays my mortgage.  
 (in her face)  
 And when's my album gonna be  
 done?! What's taking so long?!  
 Stop braiding each other's hair  
 and FINISH IT -

And before she can respond - SLAM - Jack shuts himself  
 into the hallway bathroom.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Headed home. Digesting the night. Windows down, cooling  
 off.

Maggie fiddles with the radio, looking for something,  
 lands on one of those middle-aged Sirius Radio D.J.'s  
 introducing a song as it starts to play.

RADIO D.J. (O.S.)  
 "Share Your Love With Me," sung by  
 a 27 year old Aretha Franklin.  
 Originally by -

MAGGIE  
 (beating him to it)  
 Bobby Blue Bland.

RADIO D.J. (O.S.)  
 Bobby Blue Bland. Enjoy, kiddos.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

She waits for the tank to fill, elbows on the top of the  
 car, eyes closed, swaying in time to Aretha.

Music continues over:

EXT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Rifling though her bag for keys. So tired.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

Checks the mailbox. Letters from student loan collectors.  
 Looks at them for a beat. Puts them back.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Modest. Rough around the edges but homey.

Maggie checks if her roommate / best friend KATIE (26) is asleep. She is. Textbook open on her chest, light on - few months out from graduating med school.

Maggie gently closes the book, reaches to turn off lamp -

KATIE

(groggy)

Did you ask her.

Maggie shakes her head, embarrassed. Katie groans and turns over.

CUT: Maggie neatly finishes packing her suitcase, zips it closed.

CUT: Rubs her aching shoulder in front of open fridge.

CUT: Brushes teeth. Stops. Stares at herself in the mirror - has that permeating *what the fuck am I doing with my life / I have to get up in four hours* anxiety that's tough to shake.

CUT: In bed. Headphones on and computer open. Working on the mix of "Bad Girl" (song from opening).

CUT: Maggie sets alarms on her phone. Turns off light. Wide awake.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - 5AM

1st alarm goes off. Clicks light back on.

EXT. CAPITOL MASTERING STUDIO - 5:45AM

Maggie hands Seth a coffee as he unlocks the door - first ones there.

INT. CAPITOL MASTERING STUDIO - LATER

Maggie and Seth at the board, their mix of "Bad Girl" playing - working, intense, checking the clock -

MAGGIE

So you're gonna fill in the audience track at 2 min in, right? And at the end -

SETH

Needs to be louder, yeah. Then the album's done.

They high five, exhausted.

SETH (CONT'D)

You talk to her about the credit?

Maggie rubs her eyes. No, she didn't.

SETH (CONT'D)

Do you want me to ask -

MAGGIE

I'll do it.

Seth looks at her. Uh huh.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

After the tour. Once we play it for her.

SETH

You wanted me to tell you when it's 7:15 -

Maggie BOLTS UP and is out the door -

EXT. JUICE STORE - 7:25AM

EMPLOYEE hands Maggie a bag of juice -

INT. DRY CLEANERS - 7:35AM

Maggie inspects the hem of SPARKLY DRESS again. Annoyed DRY CLEANER watches. Still not right -

INT. LIMO - 8:30AM - MOVING

Suzanne and Maggie sit in the limo en route to the airport. Both scroll on their phones. Maggie drinks the juice, Suzanne a frappuccino.

INT. PRIVATE GULFSTREAM JET - LATER

Maggie hems Suzanne's SPARKLY DRESS herself. She glances up, taking in this self-contained world at 39,000 feet.

HER POV: Mimosas. Endless snacks. Throw pillows. Suzanne goes over SET LISTS with Jack. He sucks on the celery from his third bloody mary.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - CENTRAL PARK WEST - LATER

Establishing. Manhattan's very nice when you're a multi-millionaire.

INT. SUZANNE'S NY APARTMENT - LATER

And by "apartment" we mean extravagant duplex - Nora Ephron on crack.

BILLY JOEL sits at the piano in the middle of the room. Suzanne paces around him, rehearsing a duet, clearly steering the ship. For her he's just an accompanist.

SUZANNE

It doesn't sound right.

BILLY JOEL

I can try going up at the end -

They stop and start, fiddling around with the arrangement. Maggie sneaks in with bags of Chinese food.

SUZANNE

Oh, thank god. Let's take five.

Billy plays a few bars of Dave Brubeck's "Take Five." Maggie laughs, delighted.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Margaret, what'd I say about peanuts in the chicken.

MAGGIE

Did they not take them out? I told the guy -

SUZANNE

(sharp)

You should have checked. This isn't what I asked for.

MAGGIE

(this is humiliating)

I'll take it back, or I can take the peanuts out -

SUZANNE

I don't want your hands all over  
my food. Forget it.

Maggie brings Billy a plate, they roll their eyes at each other. Maggie's less afraid and more annoyed.

BILLY JOEL

(whispering)  
You know, I played a show in  
Soviet Russia and she's harder.

MAGGIE

(whispering)  
That's incredibly insensitive, but  
maybe true.

AUDIENCE (PRE LAP)

(chanting)  
SU-ZANNE. SU-ZANNE...

INT. DRESSING ROOM AT BEACON THEATER, NYC - LATER

HAIR STYLIST finishes up Suzanne. THREE BACKUP SINGERS next to her. Maggie sits at a KEYBOARD, playing scales as they warm up -

Maggie plays easily, comfortable - they harmonize until a SOUND GUY comes in to interrupt, checking Suzanne's mic.

Impatient, Maggie starts playing a MOTOWN SONG and the BACKUP SINGERS jump right in - drowning out Suzanne -

Suzanne's about to get mad but then they stop, point to her for the next line - they're irresistible, she sings it, nails it -

TOUR SEQUENCE: DAYS. NIGHTS. CITIES OVERLAPPING -

- START OF SHOW: Suzanne's LIFTED TO CENTERSTAGE on an elevating platform, crowd roars -

- ONSTAGE: Suzanne flirts, writhes, wails, struts -

- PRESHOW REHEARSAL, DIFFERENT VENUE: Suzanne waves to stop the BAND, hearing something else no one else does -

SUZANNE

(frustrated)  
No, no - I told you - guys, I'm  
not gonna tell you you're great if  
you're not great. Jimmy, just you.

JIMMY (horn player, 40s) plays a riff - *fuck he's good* -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Ok, well you weren't doing that a second ago.

They laugh - she's tough but she's right -

- BACKSTAGE, POSTSHOW: Jack schmoozes with PROMOTERS, Maggie brings them drinks -

JACK

You know, the first ten rows used to be supermodels and dealers. Now it's -

MAGGIE / JACK

Women in comfortable shoes.

Jack snatches his drink, tries to ignore her. *Asshole.*

- MIDSHOW: Suzanne pulls a YOUNG GIRL from the audience to sing with her onstage -

- DRESSING ROOM: Maggie packs ICE onto Suzanne's knees, dumps EPSOM SALT into a tub. Suzanne's bruised and blistered but vibrating with adrenaline, an athlete -

- BACKSTAGE, MIDSHOW: Maggie untangles Suzanne from her mic as she does a COSTUME CHANGE -

- PRESHOW REHEARSAL: Jack gestures to Suzanne, needs her for a second -

SUZANNE

Margaret, stand here for the lights check -

Maggie runs on, TAKES HER PLACE, squinting under the lights. Looks out into the EMPTY ARENA. *Holy shit.*

INT. CHICAGO THEATER - NIGHT

End of the last show: Suzanne takes in the audience, pouring sweat, beaming -

SUZANNE

Alright, alright... you know, I've been singing this song for twenty years.

(MORE)

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I wrote it taking the bus from my family's one bedroom apartment to the department store I worked at, right here in Chicago.

The theater explodes with excitement and cheers -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I'm *humbled* by my little heartsick, less-than-minimum-wage-making self. She was a real determined pain in the ass. I'd like to apologize to those of you out there who shopped at Weibolt's and were pointedly ignored by a skinny black girl always singing to herself in the cosmetic department, unless you were rude about it, in which case, how do you like me now?

And the crowd goes insane as she launches into her TRADEMARK HIT - her "Respect," her "At Last."

Staggering how great she is - honest, timeless. Whole body and soul. Like it's the last song she'll ever sing.

ON MAGGIE: Watching from the wings, caught up, emotional. Her *idol* 20 feet in front of her. All the bullshit washes away.

INT. PRIVATE GULFSTREAM JET - DAY

Plane's grounded, rain pouring down. Maggie sits with her headphones in, looking out the window.

Suzanne plops down next to Maggie.

MAGGIE

(startled)

Hey! Sorry. Are you okay? Can I get you something?

SUZANNE

No, no. Just antsy to get home.

MAGGIE

Yeah, sorry. I guess they're holding us til the storm blows over. I can try and talk to the pilot -

SUZANNE

Relax. I'm cool.

A little awkward. Nothing for either of them to do.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

What are you listening to?

She takes one of Maggie's earbuds.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Ohhh, baby Stevie Wonder! "Hey Love!" You know, he was sixteen when he recorded this. And it was his *sixth* album.

MAGGIE

What was I doing when I was sixteen. I think I was still trick or treating.

SUZANNE

I still hadn't even kissed a boy. Ooh, I love this part -

They both sing along, like teenage girls, swooning.

MAGGIE

(confessional)

I remember staying up to watch you sing with Stevie on Letterman.

Suzanne peers at her, amused.

SUZANNE

So this has been a long con.

MAGGIE

Yes, ever since I was a little girl I dreamed of giving you an enema in Toronto.

SUZANNE

Please don't talk about that. You know what clams do to me. Just be glad you weren't my assistant when I was experimenting with acid. Jack had to wash Steve Tyler's vomit out of my hair before I sang for President Carter.

MAGGIE

Oh my god.

SUZANNE

If you and Jack weren't always  
trying to out-victimize yourselves  
I really think you could get  
along.

Maggie's unconvinced. It shows. She figures the moment's  
over but Suzanne gestures to Maggie's music -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

What else you got on here?

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Katie sits on the closed toilet, in her scrubs, talking  
to the shower curtain.

KATIE

Did you talk to her about  
producing the album?

MAGGIE

Um. No. But only because she was  
doling out all these stories - did  
you know she had an affair with  
Prince? PRINCE!! I mean are you  
kidding -

KATIE

(not impressed)

Mag -

MAGGIE'S VOICE

She's so amazing, Katie. It was  
like we were friends -

KATIE

No. We're friends. This is a trap.  
Remember when she made you come to  
her house on Thanksgiving to test  
if her pie was poisoned?

MAGGIE'S VOICE

She just fired her four-star chef.  
It was possible.

Katie, annoyed, reaches over and turns on the sink,  
making the shower go cold. Maggie screams -

INT. CAPITOL MASTERING STUDIO - LATER

Maggie walks down the hallway holding bags of takeout, stops when she hears something coming from the studio -

MAGGIE

What the...

She walks in unnoticed - "Bad Girl" blasts, but it's different, garbled - a weird overdubbed beat added???

RICHIE WILLIAMS (early 30s), a slick, immediately annoying producer, jams to his reworked track.

Suzanne and Jack sit on the couch, listening. Suzanne's got a poker face. Seth's at the board, looking nauseous.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(horrified)

What - What's happening.

No one hears her. She drops the bags of food.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(yelling over)

HELLO?!

Seth pauses the track, relieved.

JACK

Maggie, this is Richie Williams. We hired him to finish up the album.

RICHIE

(condescending)

Hey, Maggie. Jack told me about you. You can stick around if you'd like. I love mentoring.

Maggie's jaw drops. *Is this a joke?!* Richie presses play -

JACK

Richie's been working on this cut for a couple weeks -

(to Suzanne)

I think it's got potential. You should hear the stuff he did for -

MAGGIE

The A\*Teens?! In 2001!?

She's gonna to lose it. Rolls her shoulders back.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Suzanne, can I say something?

JACK  
No.

SUZANNE  
Jack.

MAGGIE  
This sounds like garbage.

JACK  
HEY -

MAGGIE  
(locked on Suzanne)  
It's supposed to be a *live* album.  
What is all this shit?!  
(zeros in; to Seth)  
Play the guitar track -

Seth keys up the isolated guitar track.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
*This* is the spine of the song.  
Seth and I spent days cleaning it  
up.

Maggie gestures to Seth, who gets where she's going and  
adds the drums -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Hanky's been playing this rhythm  
for 15 years and it *still* sounds  
as tight as when you guys first  
recorded it. *Richie*, did you redo  
the drum line with a synth?

RICHIE  
(not getting it)  
Yes?

Maggie throws her hands up. Seth adds bass and backup  
singers -

MAGGIE  
I mean, are you kidding? He took  
them out!

Now Suzanne vocals -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(getting emotional)

Suzanne. Do you hear this? It needs some editing and mixing, but you could release your *demos* and they would be better than what he did. In fact, you *should* release your *demos* because I've heard them and they're fucking unbelievable.

Finally the horns, then audience. Everyone's silent. Not sure if that was the coolest thing she's ever done or the stupidest.

SUZANNE

(quiet, scary)

Margaret. Never talk to Jack or the people he hires like that again. Do you understand?

Maggie nods, rattled. *Oh, fuck.*

Suzanne gets up and heads to the door. Right before she leaves, looks to Richie and Jack -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Richie, you're fired. Jack, use Maggie's cut.

EXT. CAPITOL MASTERING STUDIO - LATER

Maggie walks to her car, jacked up by her victory.

JACK (O.S.)

MAGGIE.

Jack hauls himself towards her. She winces -

JACK (CONT'D)

I don't know what planet you're operating from but rattling off every opinion you have barreling around in your head isn't a skill, you dumbass, it's a handicap.

MAGGIE

But I was right -

JACK

It's not about that! You think it's all victories and losses? We're talking *marathon* here.

MAGGIE

I disagree. She puts something out like that and -

JACK

OBVIOUSLY WE WOULDN'T PUT THAT OUT, IT WAS HORRIBLE. But it took me MONTHS to get the two of them in the same room. Maybe five years from now she wakes up and says, "Hey, Jack, I'd love to do a remix album" and I say "Great, I know just the guy, OH WAIT, THAT OBNOXIOUS EX-ASSISTANT OF YOURS FROM ONCE UPON A TIME GOT HIM FIRED SO NOW HE HATES US AND IS CUTTING RECORDS FOR RIHANNA."

Maggie swallows. Didn't really put that together.

MAGGIE

Ok. I apologize. I mean, I don't, but now that she wants me to produce -

JACK

(spitting)

What are you, FIVE?! You're not - are you a producer? A manager? NO. YOU'RE A NOBODY. She liked your notes, congratulations. Anyone with ProTools and half a fuckin' eardrum can do what you did when the raw material is that good. You haven't *earned* this. Suzanne's MY CLIENT, NOT YOURS. Get your own. Or keep your mouth shut.

Jack whirls back into the studio. Maggie feels very small, and very young.

But fuck this guy. Fuck if he's right.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Maggie and Katie sit at the counter, Maggie dejectedly eats pancakes and Katie a sandwich. Music from jukebox.

KATIE

You have to quit.

MAGGIE

I can't quit. I dropped out of school to work for her. She pays me better than any other entry level job. I have \$30K in loans to pay back and my dad still hits me up for money.

Katie takes half of Maggie's pancakes and puts them on her plate, trading her for half a sandwich.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(spiraling)

You're going to be a doctor, and I'm going to be begging you to hire me as *your* personal assistant while I hit on your super hot son because I'll still be single.

KATIE

I would love to be your stepmom.

Maggie puts her head down on the counter. Katie rubs her back, supportive.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Just find a reason to leave.

CUT TO:

INT. KARAOKE BAR - NIGHT

ECCENTRIC MIDDLE AGED WOMAN sings a Carrie Underwood song to a stunned audience. It's... so bad. And so passionate? Maggie sits in the back, grimacing -

INT. COFFEE HOUSE - NIGHT

VERY EMOTIONAL GUY sings an acoustic version of "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun." He maybe starts crying.

KATIE sits next to Maggie, also crying, moved. Maggie looks at her, horrified. The whole thing is offensive. To women everywhere. She chugs her beer -

INT. BAR - NIGHT

"AMATEUR NIGHT" - snippets of MULTIPLE ACTS:

- NERVOUS TEEN GIRL mumble-sings -

- MAN/WOMAN DUET start FIGHTING in the middle of their song -

- Maggie sits at the bar, really trying to make something work:

MAGGIE

So how long have you played piano?

ASPIRING ADAM LEVINE

(insinuating)

Long enough to know that my fingers work magic.

Maggie nervously laughs, mouths/gestures "CHECK" to the bartender -

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Maggie pushes through the entry doors, sees a MAN TAP DANCING AND SINGING. Immediately turns around and LEAVES -

INT. MAGGIE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits on the couch, flipping through YouTube videos of various self-produced singers and bands -

MAGGIE

No. No. No. No.

She turns to Katie, getting ready to go out -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

No one's as good as she is.

KATIE

(laughing)

Yeah, well no shit!

INT. PHARMACY - MORNING

Antibiotics. Cough drops. Emergen-C. Vicks.

INT. SUZANNE'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Suzanne's snuggled into the couch, covered in blankets, surrounded by used tissues. Maria next to her, both sick.

In-N-Out bag between them. They share fries, occasionally throwing one to a dog.

Suzanne and Billy Joel on the flatscreen -

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
 Here's a look at Suzanne Wilson  
 and Billy Joel's performance last  
 week at the New York City Public  
 Schools Benefit -

MAGGIE (O.S.)  
 Hello!

SUZANNE  
 (hoarse)  
 In here.  
 (re: TV, to Maria)  
 Oh, oh, watch -

Billy stumbles with a lyric; Suzanne covers for him.

MARIA  
 Unbelievable.

SUZANNE  
 Amateur.

MARIA  
 Great dress.

SUZANNE  
*Great dress.*

Maggie comes into the living room, holding all the goods.

MAGGIE  
 What are you eating?!

SUZANNE  
 Nothing.

MAGGIE  
 It's llam!

Maggie snatches the bag from them, hands them each a  
 wellness shot.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 Drink. Now.

Suzanne and Maria stare her down. No way. Maggie sighs.  
 Downs them.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 (regrettably)  
 I'm gonna live forever.

SUZANNE  
 (little girl)  
 Will you go get me some popsicles?

MAGGIE  
 (gagging, impatient)  
 I just went to the store. Why  
 didn't you tell me when I asked if  
 you wanted anything special?

SUZANNE  
 The coconut ones.

MARIA  
 And Eskimo Pies.

Maggie exits, exasperated.

SUZANNE  
 (calling after)  
 And some oranges!

EXT. FANCY GROCERY STORE - LATER

A farmer's market going on in the parking lot - vendors  
 and tents, kids and parents surround a makeshift stage  
 where a CLOWN performs -

Maggie tries to find parking. It's a disaster.

INT. FANCY GROCERY STORE - PRODUCE AISLE

Maggie roams around the oranges. "Try and Love Again" by  
the Eagles plays over the store speakers.

Suddenly, she hears A VOICE start singing along, quietly -

VOICE / THE EAGLES (O.S.)  
*She was dancing all in time, and  
 the moves she made so fine...*

She turns, sees DAVID CLIFF (28), black, charismatic,  
 swaying along and watching the lettuce get hit with misty  
 sprinklers. He turns to Maggie and smiles. Playful.

DAVID  
 (re: song)  
 Eagles.

MAGGIE  
 (weirded out)  
 Yep.

DAVID

Great band.

He goes back to the lettuce, keeps singing. Maggie raises her eyebrows, puts oranges in a bag.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Don't you think?

MAGGIE

Huh?

DAVID

Don't you love the Eagles?

MAGGIE

Um. No.

DAVID

Really? Why.

Maggie sighs, unable to shake her bad mood. Tries to ignore that this guy is annoyingly handsome.

MAGGIE

They're hokey. Don Henley seems like an asshole.

DAVID

Well, first of all, this isn't Don Henley -

MAGGIE

Yeah, I know. Randy Meisner.

DAVID

(impressed)

Very good. The forgotten Eagle.

MAGGIE

(annoyed that he's  
impressed)

He almost died from a stomach ulcer because their music is so bad.

She puts the oranges in her basket, pointedly.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

As much as I'd like to get lectured by a stranger in the produce aisle on why I should love the Eagles, I already have a dad.

INT. FANCY GROCERY STORE - FROZEN AISLE - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie stocks up on popsicles.

VOICE (O.S.)

What about "Hotel California."

Reveal David. Again.

MAGGIE

Is this what you do? Lurk in high end grocery stores and annoy women with your mediocre taste?

DAVID

(ignoring her)

I think it's an underrated song.

MAGGIE

Have you ever turned on a radio? It's always on. It's the "Brown Eyed Girl" of Southern California soft rock.

DAVID

It's mythical. Darkness and light, good and evil, youth and age -

Maggie cannot believe she is having this conversation -

MAGGIE

Don't you have something else to do, somewhere to be?

DAVID

So the Eagles don't make your Fantasy Dinner Party. Who does?

MAGGIE

Nothing else to do, got it.

David opens one of her boxes of Eskimo pies, takes one, offers to her. She stares, astounded by his familiarity -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

That's illegal.

DAVID

Don't be a baby.

Beat. She takes one. Whatever.

MAGGIE

Living or dead.

DAVID  
Doesn't matter.

Maggie thinks. This is serious.

MAGGIE  
Umm... Brian Wilson. Nina Simone.

DAVID  
Her and I have the same birthday.

MAGGIE  
Me and Mariah Carey.

DAVID  
So we are both very demanding, and  
very deeply sad.

Maggie laughs. First time that day.

INT. FANCY GROCERY STORE - CHECKOUT

They stand in line, still eating their Eskimo Pies.

MAGGIE  
Joni Mitchell. Is that cliché? I  
don't care. Otis Redding.

DAVID  
You're not one of those girls who  
found out about Otis through the  
Dirty Dancing soundtrack are you?

MAGGIE  
I'm not even going to respond to  
that.

DAVID  
So yes.

MAGGIE  
How many more do I get.

DAVID  
One.

MAGGIE  
Sam Cooke.

DAVID  
Who's Sam Cooke?

Maggie scoffs at him, thinking he's kidding. David looks at her, blankly.

MAGGIE

You know Randy Meisner of the Eagles but you don't know Sam Cooke? Aren't you black?!

He shrugs. The store's PA interrupts them -

P.A. (O.S.)

Folks, please join us outside on the patio for live music and free Vitamin B shots!

David jots something onto a paper bag, hands it to her -

DAVID

I'm having a party tomorrow. You should come.

She takes it, surprised. Steps up to the register -

CASHIER

That will be \$35.17.

MAGGIE

(back to real world)  
For four boxes of popsicles?! Are they on sticks of gold?!

She pulls out cash, looks back to David. He's gone.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Maggie navigates through the crowd, heading to her car -

VOICE (O.S.)

Good afternoon everyone.

Maggie looks up, surprised. It's DAVID, onstage, plugging in an electric guitar, talking into a microphone.

DAVID (INTO MIC)

Welcome to the 2nd annual Wellness Fest. I'm David Cliff. I'm gonna start off with a song by the King of Soul, Sam Cooke.

Spots Maggie. Locks eyes.

DAVID (INTO MIC) (CONT'D)

Hope you all know who that is.

David goes right into Sam's "You Send Me."

He's not good, he's fucking great.

He's got a *voice* - holds the crowd, at ease and confident, charismatic, sexy and sweet - and at a fucking *grocery store*. Sings the song like he wrote it.

CLOSE on Maggie - wheels turning.

MAGGIE

Son of a bitch.

INT. SUZANNE'S KITCHEN - LATER

Suzanne looms over the sink, towel over her head, breathing in some eucalyptus from a boiling pot.

Maggie lets herself in through the side door. Stops when she sees Jack talking to Suzanne.

SUZANNE

(under towel,  
muffled)

Do you hear my voice? Have you seen the snot coming out of my nose?

JACK

It's only a couple days of press. You'll bounce back. Just keep breathing that witchy shit.

SUZANNE

(still muffled)

Margaret, don't just stand there like a moron.

Maggie reacts, how did she know she was here? Quickly walks to the fridge to unload groceries while avoiding Jack's glare.

JACK

We can talk about this later -

Suzanne turns to him, angry.

SUZANNE

I don't wanna act nice to a bunch of reporters who have to be reminded that I'm still alive and tell everyone to buy a live album I recorded TWO YEARS AGO.

(MORE)

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

It's PATHETIC. Just release it, I don't care. Let me figure out what I want to do next.

Frustrated with him as much as herself, Suzanne sits down, coughing.

Maggie tentatively hands her a box of popsicles.

JACK

(leveling, gentle)

Suzie. We gotta promo the album. You want to push it a few days, fine. But you don't get to go on sabbatical right now, okay? Let's get you better and get through this quarter. We're almost there.

SUZANNE

You're lucky I accidentally took NyQuill instead of DayQuill otherwise I would kick you in your last remaining testicle.

Suzanne leaves the room, popsicles in hand. Maggie and Jack exchange a momentary look of concern before remembering they hate each other.

INT. SUZANNE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Suzanne tucked in bed, asleep. Noise machine on, ocean sounds. Maggie quietly tidies up the room.

Silently pours more water into the humidifier. Adjusts blankets. Feels something underneath - a notebook? Checks that Suzanne's asleep for sure, flips it open, curious.

*Lyrics.*

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE / INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - NIGHT

Maggie and Katie pull up to the bottom of a long driveway, cars parked all over the street. A party going on at David's house. Like, *house*.

Maggie rechecks the directions on her phone, stunned by how nice the place is.

KATIE

You said he performed at a grocery store, you didn't say he OWNED it -

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

They stand in the doorway, overwhelmed. The crowd is young and rich, the house modern and open.

MAGGIE

(repulsed)

Everyone is so beautiful and young  
and full of life.

KATIE

Do any of them have jobs?

(yelling at them)

It's WEDNESDAY.

Maggie spots David, sitting on a couch with a throng of attractive, potentially Instagram famous people.

A VERY THIN GIRL (20s), stupid pretty, plops onto David's lap, drunk and flirty.

MAGGIE

(suddenly terrified)

What am I doing - I'm gonna be  
sick -

INT. DAVID'S BATHROOM

Maggie's leaned over the sink, hyperventilating. Katie holds a wet washcloth on Maggie's neck.

KATIE

Are you gonna throw up.

MAGGIE

No. Maybe. Hopefully.

Katie takes the washcloth off, feels Maggie's forehead. No fever. Just insane.

KATIE

You're fine.

Katie starts rummaging in a medicine cabinet, smelling bottles of aftershave, letting Maggie run her course.

MAGGIE

What am I supposed to say?! I  
can't do this. I can't pull this  
off.

KATIE

All I do is clean up various  
biohazardous material but I get to  
walk around and say I'm a doctor.

MAGGIE

That's not all you do -

Katie grabs Maggie hard, fed up.

KATIE

Don't sell yourself short.

MAGGIE

Okay. Ow -

KATIE

(not letting go)  
You just produced a LIVE SUZANNE  
WILSON ALBUM for NO MONEY and NO  
CREDIT. Now GET OUT THERE and  
CLOSE THE DEAL.

MAGGIE

Why are you yelling at me -

Katie slaps her across the face -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

WHAT THE FU-

INT. DAVID'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie opens the door of the bathroom, finds herself face  
to face with... David.

MAGGIE

Oh. Hi.

DAVID

Did you bring popsicles?

MAGGIE

(still mad at her)  
This is my roommate, Katie -

KATIE

Hi! Maggie told me all about you.

DAVID

Oh yeah? What'd she say?

KATIE

(going for it)

That you have a voice like Jeff Buckley crossed with D'Angelo. I have no idea what that means. Did she tell you she's a producer?

David looks at Maggie quizzically, surprised. Maggie looks like she could melt into the refurbished hardwood.

DAVID

No, she didn't.

MAGGIE

(warning)

Katie -

KATIE

Okay, okay. I'm gonna see how much food I can fit into my bag. You kids have fun

Katie slides past Maggie, they do a quick, choreographed handshake. David watches, spellbound.

DAVID

You guys have a handshake?

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - LATER

David throws back a shot, gives one to Maggie. Determined, she drinks it. He studies her, hands her a beer.

DAVID

Here I was thinking you had a crush on me and had to see me again.

MAGGIE

(cool girl)

Nope, just here for the pipes.

STUPID PRETTY from couch appears and sidles up to David.

STUPID PRETTY

You were supposed to bring me a vodka red bull!

Maggie pours herself another shot. Cripes.

DAVID

Theresa, Maggie. Maggie's a producer.

THERESA

Cool. I'm a model.

MAGGIE

(kill me)  
Got it.

THERESA

(to David)  
Hurry up, Casey's gonna light his pants on fire and jump in the pool.

Theresa kisses him exaggeratedly, scampers off.

MAGGIE

Girlfriend?

DAVID

Not really.

MAGGIE

(focus Maggie)  
So do you have an EP or anything?

DAVID

Just finished one.

MAGGIE

Can I hear it?

DAVID

Now?

MAGGIE

(challenging)  
Unless you have somewhere to be.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - LATER

Maggie walks around David's room, drinking her beer, listening to his overproduced, borderline bad song.

Checks out all his stuff - books, posters, LPs. She's a little tipsy.

David watches her for a reaction but can't read her. She makes him nervous - can tell he can't charm her into liking it and him. The song ends -

MAGGIE  
Did you write that?

DAVID  
(showboaty)  
Yeah, took me like twenty minutes.

MAGGIE  
Maybe you should have given it,  
like, an hour.

David tries to form a response but is too shocked -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
If you're trying to get your bass  
player a record contract, he's got  
one. I can't even hear you.

DAVID  
(defensive)  
It's still a rough cut.

MAGGIE  
(almost to herself)  
I don't get it. You were so good  
live. Why didn't it translate?

DAVID  
People like this song.

MAGGIE  
Like who. Vodka Red Bull?

DAVID  
Theresa. Yes.

Maggie throws up her arms, "hello!!"

MAGGIE  
Right. Because she's fucking you.  
It sounds like you recorded your  
vocals in like, your bathroom, and  
paid some high schooler to futz  
around with it.

DAVID  
Closet.

MAGGIE  
What?

DAVID  
I recorded it in my closet.

He points. Said closet.

MAGGIE  
(pitying)  
Babe.

She peers in -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
You've already got the voice, you  
just need to learn what to do with  
it. This closet is bigger than my  
apartment.  
(turns on him)  
What is it, exactly, that you do?  
Insider trading? Do you have some  
kind of app? Trust fund?

He doesn't elaborate. Something catches Maggie's eye -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Do you wear this?

She pulls out a ridiculous JACKET.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
It looks like Stevie Nicks ran  
Jason Derulo over with her car.

David grabs the jacket from her, puts it back.

INT. CONVENTION CENTER - MORNING

HUGE LINE weaves around a large holding area. "SUZANNE WILSON: IN PERSON" signs hung up. FANS OF ALL AGES from all over, holding memorabilia for her to sign, waiting to meet her. \$150 a ticket.

Suzanne stands in front of a curtain, greeting and posing with people for a PHOTOGRAPHER. She's effortlessly charming, talks and laughs with everyone.

FLASH CUTS: Suzanne hugs a TEARY MOM - kisses OLD MAN on the cheek - TWO MEN sing to her - GROUP bows down to her -

Maggie helps corral people in line. A TODDLER sneezes on her -

INT. THE SATELLITE BAR - NIGHT

Grimy Los Angeles music venue. Maggie gets her hand stamped at the door and slips in, catching the end of David's set.

She takes a QUICK INVENTORY OF HIS BAND - HER POV / SOUND AMPLIFIED SO WE HEAR WHAT SHE HEARS:

BASSIST - Still too loud.

DRUMMER - Jesus, he's bad.

KEYBOARDIST - Also singing backup. Really shouldn't.

David spots Maggie in the crowd. Straightens. Suddenly a little nervous.

Maggie holds her hand to her ear, mouths "can't hear."

David glares, steps back, whispers something to his BASSIST, who then ADJUSTS HIS AMP -

Maggie shrugs, "see?" David rolls his eyes. She's right.

INT. THE SATELLITE BAR - LATER

Maggie and David sit at the bar.

MAGGIE

Just let me record you in a studio. With a real human engineer. And real musicians. And better songs. No offense.

DAVID

All of this is offensive.

MAGGIE

You don't like me, I don't get anything, you don't lose anything. But that drummer -

DAVID

He's my friend.

MAGGIE

No he's not.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maggie sits in bed, headphones on, working on something -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - EARLY MORNING

David sits in the front seat, very hungover, listening to Maggie's reworked version of the song he recorded in his closet -

DAVID  
This actually is...

MAGGIE  
I mean, the song itself is still  
not good -

DAVID  
Jesus.

MAGGIE  
(mimicking Suzanne)  
I'm not going to tell you you're  
great if you're not great.

DAVID  
You've made that very clear. Wait,  
did you switch the chorus -

MAGGIE  
Yeah, if you move the second verse  
and rearrange the last lines for  
the bridge it -

DAVID  
(impressed)  
This is way better. Shit, Maggie.  
Where'd you - how -

MAGGIE  
My dad's been a radio DJ since the  
70s. My mom was a singer. I went  
to school for composing but  
dropped out and started, um,  
producing. I've been around  
musicians and people talking about  
music my whole life. I don't know  
anything else. But I do know that  
you're good and I can get you  
heard by the right people.

He takes her in. Believes her. Maggie checks her watch.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Ok get out, I have to go.

DAVID  
It's 7am on a Saturday -

MAGGIE

Sunday.

She starts her car, radio comes in -

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)

Chaka Khan's "I Feel for You,"  
originally by -

MAGGIE / DAVID

Prince.

RADIO D.J. (V.O.)

Prince.

She gives him a look. He sighs, relenting.

DAVID

When do we start.

Maggie grins. Got him.

MAGGIE

Once you write something less like  
(holds up her phone)  
This and more like  
(points to radio)  
This.

INT. REHEARSAL STUDIO - DAY

Maggie helps set up Suzanne and her BAND for rehearsal.

She moves past HANKY (drummer), stops, circles back -

MAGGIE

(quietly)  
Hey Hanky, would you do me a  
favor?

HANKY

Anything for you, babydoll.  
Suzanne or non-Suzanne?

MAGGIE

Non-Suzanne. Major non-Suzanne.

Suzanne walks to the center of the room, clapping her  
hands to start. Maggie gestures to Hanky, "later" -

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - SUNSET

Maggie knocks on the door. Rings doorbell. Nothing.

She walks down the front steps, confused, then hears the faint sound of a guitar coming from around back.

EXT. DAVID'S BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

David sits on the railing of his deck, playing an acoustic guitar and SINGING SOMETHING - an unfinished, original song. Soulful, with a lot of potential -

Maggie steps onto the deck, unnoticed, watching him -

He comes to a break, unsure where to go next -

MAGGIE

(enamored)

Well what the fuck is that?!

David STARTLES, barely putting his guitar down, when he loses his footing and FALLS OFF THE RAILING AND ROLLS DOWN THE HILL. They both SCREAM -

CUT TO:

INT. DAVID'S KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

David holds a dishtowel full of ice on his forehead. Pulls leaves out of his hair.

MAGGIE

I am really, really sorry.

(beat)

But you knew I was coming -

DAVID

An HOUR ago.

He's not wrong.

MAGGIE

Was that really the smartest place to sit -

He cuts a look at her. Not the time, got it. She looks around his big kitchen, notices a PHOTO above the sink. Walks over to get a closer look.

DAVID  
My dad. David Cliff Sr. Trumpet  
player.

MAGGIE  
Handsome.

DAVID  
You said your mom's a singer?

MAGGIE  
Was. She died when I was four.

It hangs there for a beat. Maggie shrugs.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Her and my dad met backstage at a  
Paul Simon concert. She was a  
backup singer for his opener, my  
dad was covering it for work, she  
moved in the next day, got married  
a month later. Nuts, right?

DAVID  
Not that nuts.

MAGGIE  
What about your parents?

DAVID  
Never married. My mom left me with  
my dad when I was little. It was  
complicated. Past few years her  
and I started talking. I dunno.

Maggie looks at him with unspoken understanding.

MAGGIE  
Your face okay?

She gently pulls the ice off. Not great. Maggie tries not  
to laugh. It's been a bad start.

DAVID  
Are you laughing at me?!  
(re: face)  
This is the moneymaker!

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

David's picks up his guitar, bandaid above his eye.  
Gestures at the piano.

DAVID  
You can play? Composing major?

MAGGIE  
Oh. Well, yeah, but I thought I  
would just listen -

DAVID  
Can you play along? It helps  
hearing it on the piano.

Maggie cautiously sits at the piano. Nervous. Her hands  
hover over the keys. This isn't warmups.

MAGGIE  
(avoiding)  
Do you need any water or anything -

DAVID  
(shut up)  
Maggie.

David starts the song he played on the deck. He walks her  
through it, calling out chords to help her get oriented.  
She picks it up, fast -

MAGGIE  
Okay, yeah, so you go into -

She plays the chorus. David watches her, impressed.

DAVID  
Right, but then I'm stuck -

Plays/sings the lead-up. Maggie thinks, humming, trying  
to work it out.

MAGGIE  
What if you, um...

She plays a little bridge on the piano, stops, self-  
conscious.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Never mind. That's dumb.

DAVID  
Stop interrupting yourself. Try  
again. Maybe like...

He plays some chords on the guitar. She matches him, then  
goes off onto a different riff. Their eyes brighten -

DAVID (CONT'D)

Fuck you!

MAGGIE

(excited)

Okay okay from the beginning -

EXT. DAVID'S DECK - DAY

Maggie and David lie on the ground, legs up against the house, bouncing a tennis ball between them, keeping rhythm as they work out lyrics - jotting down notes -

INT. GROCERY STORE - FROZEN AISLE - NIGHT

Maggie and David are taking a break, eating Eskimo Pies out of the box.

She follows far enough behind him so he doesn't hear her whispering on the phone -

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE)

Maria, hi, I'm stuck in a ton of traffic - can you just make sure she knows her dinner starts in an hour - ok thank you, thank you -

She hangs up, catches up to David -

DAVID

Who was that?

MAGGIE

My dad, whatever. So you have those three songs that are pretty good and that one that I hate - we really need to start recording. Get you in there and -

They round the corner, suddenly SEES MARIA IN CHECK OUT - Maggie WHIPS BACK OUT OF SIGHT - tries to think -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

David -

DAVID

(clueless)

Yeah -

MAGGIE

Wanna steal these?

He looks at her. Smiles conspiratorially -

CUT TO:

EXT. FANCY GROCERY STORE - PARKING LOT - MOVING

Maggie and David BOLT towards his car -

INT. SUZANNE'S FOYER - MORNING

Maggie lets herself in, drops mail and newspapers onto the entry table. Hears TV on in the kitchen -

TV NARRATOR (V.O.)

*Suzanne Wilson, American icon of popular music, is set to release a live album of hits recorded during her 10th world tour -*

INT. SUZANNE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Suzanne stands at the island in a bathrobe, drinking a smoothie, watching herself on E! -

Maggie walks in as IMAGES / CLIPS of Suzanne appear on screen -

TV NARRATOR (V.O.)

*One of the most recognizable voices of the 20th century - has remained a remarkably private person - alluded to a turbulent adolescence, never married or had children - has been criticized for demanding too much control over her records and performances - fans are wondering what is next for Suzanne -*

On TV: Cover art for new live album. Suzanne shielding herself from PAPARAZZI. Winning AWARDS. Exiting restaurants with FAMOUS ACTORS/MUSICIANS. JACK ushering her into A BLACK SUV. WALKING OUT of an INTERVIEW -

Suzanne (in kitchen) turns it off, has seen enough.

MAGGIE

You okay?

If the TV got to her she immediately hides it.

SUZANNE

Do I not look okay?

She's in a green face mask and fluffy slippers.

MAGGIE

You look great.

SUZANNE

Idris is coming over for dinner tonight -

MAGGIE

Elba!?

Suzanne gives a hair flip, or something that reads "yes, Idris Elba wants to fuck me, next question."

SUZANNE

I need you out of here by five.  
But before then I want everything  
off the Jon & Vinny's menu. And  
make sure there's enough body oil  
upstairs -

MAGGIE

(gross)  
Oh, sure. Yep.

INT. SUZANNE'S BATHROOM

Maggie pulls out bottles of body oil from under the sink -

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE)

(whispering)

David - you wanna use the studio  
tonight?

(beat)

What could you *possibly* be doing  
that is more important -

INT. REC ROOM AT SYNAGOGUE - NIGHT

DAVID and a HOUSE BAND OF OLD JEWISH MEN play to a bunch  
of thirteen year olds decked out in their Saturday best.

They do an energized rendition of a TOP 40 SONG. KIDS  
going ham - dancing, singing along.

Maggie stands in the back of the room, *loving* it. Loves  
watching him perform.

Maggie points to her face, "smile." Immediate reaction from TEEN GIRLS when David takes the note.

A BOY IN YARMULKE asks Maggie to dance - what the fuck, when at a Bat Mitzvah you weren't invited to -

David cuts in - spins her around - it's all very endearing and totally nuts. Like her and David are the only ones in the room.

EXT. SYNAGOGUE - LATER

Maggie carries David's amp and walks with him to his car. Kids file out, getting picked up by their parents.

MAGGIE

Then he asked me if I would go to prom with him in four years -

DAVID

And you said yes, totally free.

Maggie goes to kick him. The two of them are so attracted to each other that they're trying very hard to repel.

MAGGIE

So Thursday. We can start recording, wait til you hear this drummer -

DAVID

I'm playing a fundraiser in Pasadena.

She stops.

MAGGIE

David!!

DAVID

Did you just stomp your feet at me?

MAGGIE

I don't understand you! You're *obviously* not doing these gigs for money -

DAVID

I made a commitment -

MAGGIE

And I made a commitment to you  
but you're blowing me off for,  
what's next, a bris?! I'm not  
going to beg you to take this  
seriously.

She walks off, furious -

DAVID

(yelling after her)  
You have my amp -

MAGGIE

God, where did you even park?!

He catches up to her -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You have an *incredible* voice,  
moron. When you sing you're  
restrained and impassioned and  
modern and nostalgic - don't be an  
amateur!!

DAVID

(flares)  
But what if I'm terrible?! I'm  
good in front of a crowd, but I've  
never recorded *for real*. That's a  
whole different animal. I'm gonna  
blow it and then I'm just some  
douchebag who thought he could be  
a singer and I'll have to leave LA  
and what, do I go to a trade  
school? I have no skills -

A lightbulb goes off. Maggie gets it.

MAGGIE

I had no IDEA you had a complex  
about this! You're a self-doubter!

DAVID

(confused)  
I'm coming to you with a very deep  
seeded anxiety -

Maggie practically jumps around him with her realization.  
She shakes his shoulders, so relieved, beaming at him.

MAGGIE

I thought your inability to respond to a text within thirty minutes of receiving it was because you're an ASSHOLE, not because you're SELF SABOTAGING!

They stand like that for a moment too long. Very close to each other, this whole night, something changes and they MOVE IN TOWARDS EACH OTHER, CAUGHT UP -

Her phone rings. *COME ON.*

She immediately pulls away -

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yeah?

David shakes it off, tries not to feel a little hurt -

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Maggie drives. Suzanne sits in the passenger seat, more than a little drunk.

SUZANNE

So Idris wanted to go to -  
(repulsed)  
*Tower Bar -*

MAGGIE

Ugh, why -

SUZANNE

*I know.* And so we have a few drinks and then he proposed -

Maggie almost drives off the road. Suzanne gasps, reflexively slams her foot on an imaginary break and grabs the side of the door -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Margaret!!

MAGGIE

He PROPOSED?!

Suzanne eyes her hair in the mirror, composing herself -

SUZANNE

Many times. It's so irritating.

MAGGIE

We have very different problems.

SUZANNE

What were you doing. You're dressed nicer than normal.

Maggie gives her a look. Very nice.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

(dishy, tipsy,  
surprised)

Were you with a BOY?!

MAGGIE

(too fast)

No.

Suzanne laughs, caught her. Maggie's face reddens.

SUZANNE

You WERE!! Does he know who I am?

Maggie laughs, of course that's her first question.

MAGGIE

I'm sure.

SUZANNE

He better.

She cozies down in her seat, shuts her eyes.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Why are you drivin' so slow. This is a *McLaren*.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Maggie adjusts David's mic, fussing with levels on his amp. Seth works on his board on the other side of the glass in the booth.

SETH

Whenever you're ready, Maggie.

David looks around, feeling out of his element and over his head. Maggie puts her hands on his shoulders.

MAGGIE

(to David, gently)

Okay kiddo. It's just another Synagogue, or grocery store.

She steps back and sits on a speaker, gives him a nod.

He starts playing the DECK SONG, the one they worked on at his house. Messes up the chords.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry. We've got all night.

Seth puts his head down on the mixing board. Great.

David starts again, nails the opening. Maggie smiles, encouraging. He sings a few lines, but it's empty. Like he's trying to get it over with. She stops him.

DAVID

What.

MAGGIE

Loosen up. You're singing like you're being punished.

DAVID

Well.

MAGGIE

(ignoring)

Play that Sam Cooke song, from the store -

He starts "You Send Me." They talk in-between lines -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You love this song, right?

DAVID

Yeah. It's the best.

MAGGIE

Why?

DAVID

I dunno. Romantic Sam. It's like a throwaway seduction.

MAGGIE

But have you heard him do it at the Harlem Club?

DAVID

When he sneaks it into -

MAGGIE

"Bring it on Home to Me" -

DAVID  
 (laughing, knows it)  
 Yeah. He does it like -

David does what Sam does in the song. "You Send Me" becomes a ROARING PLEA, LOOSE and GRITTY. He ad libs and plays around, making Maggie laugh and clap along.

Seth sits up in his chair. Maggie gestures to him -  
*record this* -

David, still goofy from his Sam impression, goes RIGHT INTO HIS SONG, this time playful, freer - sings directly to Maggie -

CUT TO:

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER AND EVEN LATER

A series of FAST CUTS as Maggie, David, and Seth ASSEMBLE THE SONG - ALL THE SAME NIGHT - QUICK, EFFICIENT, IN A GROOVE NOW -

- Maggie plays a PIANO LINE, Seth layers the track -
- David records simple DRUM PATTERN, then BASS LINE -
- Maggie stands in the booth, trying to think of what's missing. David and Seth watch her, waiting -

MAGGIE  
 (to Seth)  
 Doesn't your brother play the sax?

- SETH'S BROTHER plays SAXOPHONE with David conducting, going back and forth with him, AMPED -
- Seth and Maggie do their thing at the mixing board, David watches them like a tennis match, impressed -
- LISTENING TO FINISHED TRACK: Maggie and Seth turn to David, who puts his hand over his heart and dramatically FALLS OUT OF HIS CHAIR. Maggie and Seth high five -

MUSIC UP AS MONTAGE STARTS:

INT. JIMMY KIMMEL - SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

JIMMY KIMMEL holds up a CD copy of SUZANNE LIVE, introing Suzanne and the band; Maggie stifles a yawn backstage -

EXT. SUZANNE'S MANSION - NIGHT

Maggie races to her car, late -

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Maggie and David argue over chord progressions, taking the guitar from each other -

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

Maggie races to her car, late again -

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maggie lies on the floor, legs up on the wall like she was with David, bouncing a ball, making notes - trying to WRITE LYRICS ON HER OWN -

Katie comes out of her room, annoyed, catches the ball, chucks it away from Maggie -

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Maggie introduces David to HANKY, who brought with him a HORN SECTION and BASSIST - they all work through a song, following David's lead -

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

David and Maggie play a song for Katie, who applauds -

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie leaves David's, crossing paths with THERESA (Vodka Red Bull). Watches her and David kiss hello, pretends like it doesn't make her want to die -

INT. PHOTO STUDIO - DAY

Suzanne in the midst of a PHOTO SHOOT. Maggie sits off to the side of the action as she SCRIBBLES LYRICS into a notebook, humming to herself - Suzanne eyes her -

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Just Maggie and David left in the studio -

MAGGIE PLAYS DAVID SOMETHING on the piano, shows him LYRICS SHE WROTE - he scoops her into a huge hug, proud of her -

MONTAGE ENDS AS WE DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUZANNE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Maggie waters some plants in the front yard. Suzanne comes out, dressed in a power suit.

MAGGIE  
Headed to the label?

SUZANNE  
Oh yeah. Big meeting to talk release party and "next moves."

She mimes a hand-job. Maggie laughs -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)  
You wanna come? Could be fun to watch.

Maggie points at the hose and the plants.

MAGGIE  
Oooh, can't, *super* busy.

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - MOVING

Suzanne and Maggie sing along to music, maybe do some mirroring hand movements.

INT. RECORD LABEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - LATER

BENNETT (60s), SPENCER (28), and RYAN (40s) sit around the table, chatting with Suzanne and Jack like you would with anyone who helped finance your beach house - heads firmly up her ass.

An ASSISTANT (22) checks in with Suzanne -

ASSISTANT  
(nervous)  
Can I get you anything to drink?

SUZANNE

I'm fine, thank you. Margaret?

Weird. Maggie's not used to the reverse position.

MAGGIE

Um. No, thanks.

RYAN

Suzanne, Jack, thanks for coming  
in -

SPENCER

Suzanne, big fan. Got added to  
your team and can I just say, my  
mom is more excited about this  
then when I graduated Stanford.

SUZANNE

Which was when, last week?

All the men laugh, very loudly, startling Maggie. *Jesus.*

RYAN

Told you she was hilarious.

BENNETT

Look baby, we're so excited about  
the release party next week -

RYAN

And we're thrilled that you okayed  
Lily Diamond to perform. She's  
*amazing* and *loves* you -

CUT TO:

INT. SUZANNE'S LIVING ROOM

Maggie, Suzanne, and Maria watch a LILY DIAMOND (20)  
music video on a laptop. Lots of CGI and sexy robots.

SUZANNE

I can't tell if I love her or hate  
her.

MAGGIE / MARIA

(simultaneous)

Hate. / Love.

BACK TO:

INT. RECORD LABEL - CONFERENCE ROOM - SAME

BENNETT

She's gonna be a *huge* talent -

SUZANNE

You didn't make me drive all the way to Century City just to tell me that, did you?

They laugh, again. So loud, wow -

BENNETT

No, no, of course not. Look baby, you've been doing so good on the promos and your pre-sale numbers are great -

RYAN

But once this album is out next week - we really want to make sure we think through your *next moves*.

BENNETT

What do *you* want to do next?

Suzanne waits til everyone's on the edge of their seat, and then -

SUZANNE

I've been thinking about recording a new album.

Maggie sits up straight. *Holy fucking shit.*

The men around the table stare at Suzanne blankly, for a moment too long. Jack interjects, trying to band-aid -

JACK

That's only one idea. I know me and Suzie were looking forward to what you guys had cooked up -

Suzanne can tell it didn't land. Quickly recovers.

SUZANNE

Yes, of course.

SPENCER

Awesome, let's check out this slideshow I threw together -  
(to Maggie)  
Can you hit the lights?

Maggie sits there, frozen. The moment she was waiting for passed over, dead on arrival.

JACK  
Maggie.

MAGGIE  
Sorry, yeah.

Maggie stands up, hits the switch, POWER POINT lights up -

SPENCER  
Okay, here's our big idea -

CUT TO:

INT. RECORD LABEL BATHROOM - LATER

Maggie SLAMS through the bathroom door after Suzanne -

MAGGIE  
A FIVE DISC CHRISTMAS BOX SET?

SUZANNE  
I thought that went pretty well.

Suzanne closes herself in a stall. Maggie's having a rage blackout.

MAGGIE  
Are you serious?!

SUZANNE (O.S.)  
(warning, peeing)  
Margaret.

MAGGIE  
You already *did* a Christmas album!! Look, I love your rendition of "Little Drummer Boy," it's weirdly very sexy -

SUZANNE (O.S.)  
Thank you.

MAGGIE  
But FIVE DISCS?!?! Are there even that many Christmas songs?!

Suzanne flushes, comes out, buttoning her slacks -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
Oh, oh, and a PERFUME LINE?!

Suzanne washes her hands, eyes Maggie through the mirror -

SUZANNE  
 (getting angry)  
 It was AN IDEA. I don't know what  
 your PROBLEM IS -

INT. RECORD LABEL - HALLWAY - SAME

All the guys stand outside the bathroom, awkwardly. Can hear Suzanne and Maggie yelling at each other inside -

MAGGIE (O.S.)  
 MY PROBLEM!?

INT. RECORD LABEL BATHROOM - SAME

Maggie's losing it. Overtired, overstressed, repulsed by that show in there, really overstepping -

MAGGIE  
 Suzanne, you have like, YEARS of  
 career moves ahead of you. How  
 could you let those pretentious  
 sparkling water blowhards walk all  
 over you! Like, no, please, don't  
 let me interrupt your *slideshow*,  
 tell me how we can re-do Captain  
 and Tennille with me and JUSTIN  
 TIMBERLAKE -

Suzanne slams her fist into the paper towel dispenser -

SUZANNE  
 God DAMMIT, Margaret.

MAGGIE  
 You said it - A NEW ALBUM -

SUZANNE  
 You know what those guys were  
 avoiding saying in there? That in  
 the *history* of music, five women  
 over forty have had a #1 hit.  
 FIVE! And only ONE of them was  
 black! Let's pretend that  
 statistic goes away, poof - the  
 problem then becomes I - not those  
 guys, not Jack, not you - I have  
 to COME UP with shit that's worth  
 giving a shit about!

Suzanne's shaky with anger and disappointment -

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I don't even know if I can do that anymore.

MAGGIE

But you can. *No one's* more talented than you.

(quietly)

I know you've been writing -

Suzanne stares at Maggie, totally betrayed. Angrier than we've ever seen her. Almost fearful of what Maggie found.

SUZANNE

You - you went through my things?  
My private things?

MAGGIE

(backpedalling)

I - I saw it - I wasn't -

Suzanne dries her hands, ice cold. Completely venomous.

SUZANNE

You don't get it. You're not an artist. You're an *encyclopedia*. You're *trivia*. You memorize travel itineraries and pick peanuts out of Kung Pao Chicken and think you're the ticket to everyone's inner breakthrough.

Maggie's frozen, decimated. Speechless.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

You're worse than the guys in there. At least they're setting me up for an easy win. You're setting me up to fail.

Suzanne shoves out of the bathroom. Maggie stands there, alone, tears welling in her eyes.

INT. SUZANNE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Suzanne and Maggie are silent as Suzanne drives. Very different car ride home than the one there.

EXT. SUZANNE'S DRIVEWAY - LATER

The two SLAM out of the car - Maggie stomps over to her car, gets in and SLAMS her door - Suzanne walks inside the house and SLAMS hers. Opens and SLAMS again.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Maggie sits in the booth with Seth, still shaken from earlier. Shellshocked.

David, Hanky and the band listen to playback of a track in the studio, all of them stoked -

DAVID

Mags, what do you think?

Catches her off guard. She hits the button so they can hear her. Monotone, her heart not in it -

MAGGIE

Uh, Hanky, that bit in the middle is spot on... David, on the 2nd chorus you come in a little...

Maggie's suddenly very sick of the sound of her own voice. *An encyclopedia. Trivia.*

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You know what? Don't listen to me. David, if you like it, I'm good.

The walls are starting to close in on her.

David and the band watch from the studio, unsure what's up. Watch Maggie walk out -

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Maggie tries to catch her breath outside. Hands won't stop shaking -

DAVID (O.S.)

Hey -

David walks out towards her, concerned.

MAGGIE

Sorry. You guys go ahead. I'm babysitting at this point, you don't need me yelling at you.

DAVID

You're right, I don't. But then I yell at you to stop yelling at me and that's when we get work done. So can you come back inside?

Maggie won't look at him - if she does she'll start crying. David sees that, puts his hands on her shoulders like she did for him in the studio.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Whoah, whoah - breathe.

Maggie takes a trembly breath with him. In, out.

David pushes some hair out of her face, checking in with her. She leans into him for a second, grateful.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(bait and switch)

We're doing your song next.

MAGGIE

Wait, what?

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

David plays MAGGIE'S SONG - the one we saw her writing - She can't believe how it sounds when he sings it. But he trails off after a few lines -

DAVID

How does the next part go?

Maggie names the chords, says the next line. David nods, starts over, gets past that part, then stops again.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Uh.

MAGGIE

What do you want, a line reading?

DAVID

Maybe you should record a scratch vocal? I'll sing along to that -

MAGGIE

I'm not doing a scratch. Just learn the song -

DAVID  
 (frustrated)  
 It'll take three minutes -

MAGGIE  
 (annoyed)  
 No!!

David puts his guitar down, pissed. Walks towards the booth -

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - MINUTES LATER

David pulls Maggie through the doorway into the studio. She fights him every step of the way, to no avail.

Band and Seth watch, used to them by now.

David puts headphones on Maggie, she takes them off.

MAGGIE  
 I'm not doing this.

They Fight. Comic. Aggressively pitiful. He wins. Shoves headphones back on her head. Dares her to take them off.

DAVID  
 No one's gonna hear it but us.

Maggie crosses her arms. Nervous. David nods to Seth who starts recording, and stands on the other side of the mic, facing Maggie. Plays the opening on the guitar -

And then Maggie STARTS TO SING HER SONG.

She's got a sweet, bluesy voice. Strong. Warm. A natural.

ON HANKY, SETH: No *idea* she was this good -

ON DAVID: Watching, encouraging, calm - as if he knew she could do this the whole time.

And then they gets to the chorus, and he can't help it - drawn in - he steps towards the mic, the two of them very close to each other, SING TOGETHER -

HANKY cues up the rest of the band to JAM ALONG - BASS, PIANO, DRUMS, HORNS come in one by one.

It's an electric room - their chemistry and ability to know where the other is going - plus, this is actually a GREAT FUCKING SONG -

And they let it end - Maggie takes off her headphones, self conscious.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Yeah, that'll do.

Maggie gives him a playful shove, Hanky and the band laugh and applaud.

MAGGIE

Alright, back to work -

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - PARKING LOT -LATER

Everyone into their cars, ears still ringing, yelling goodnights. Maggie and David wave them goodbye, last ones there.

MAGGIE

Ok, well -

Maggie goes to give him a high five. He attempts to do HER AND KATIE'S HANDSHAKE. Pathetic.

She laughs and pushes his hands away. Lingers for a moment and -

David GRABS HER and suddenly they're KISSING - and holy shit are they good at it -

Didn't you just see how they could sing together -

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - LATER

David and Maggie, feverishly making out, slam into the entryway against the wall -

MAGGIE

Oh my god, ow -

DAVID

My arm, god dammit -

MAGGIE

They're always doing this in the movies, how - why -

Maggie holds her head, David his arm. They catch their breath for a beat -

And they're back at it, stumbling into David's room, clothes coming off -

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Maggie jolts awake. David's arm across her stomach. She pats around to find her phone. Looks at the time. *Oh fuck.*

She quietly struggles to slip underneath him without waking him up. Gets up and out -

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - MINUTES LATER

Maggie slides out in her socks, pulling on pants and a sweater at the same time -

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS BOUTIQUE - 35 MINUTES LATER

BODYGUARDS stand outside, store closed to the public. A few TOURISTS try and snap photos from the outside.

Maggie rushes up to the BODYGUARDS, late -

MAGGIE  
Gentlemen, hello -

They give her a warm nod, open the doors -

INT. BEVERLY HILLS BOUTIQUE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie rushes to the back of the store where Suzanne stands on a platform, trying on a GOWN for the RELEASE PARTY.

A DESIGNER makes modifications. Jack paces on the phone, angry.

MAGGIE  
Sorry I'm late -

Suzanne ignores her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
I have the finalized guest list we can go over if you want -

Maggie pulls out her computer, ready to work. Suzanne turns the other way. Still pissed.

Jack hangs up and comes over -

SUZANNE

(to Jack)

Can you tell Margaret it's not acceptable to show up to work forty five minutes late.

Jack looks at Maggie, who closes her eyes in frustration, then Suzanne.

JACK

What?

The DESIGNER looks very uncomfortable.

JACK (CONT'D)

(refocus)

We no longer have a performer for the release party.

SUZANNE

Jewel Flower?

JACK

Lily Diamond. She caught a bug flying back from some music festival in Dubai and her doctor put her on vocal rest.

Maggie remembers Suzanne isn't speaking to her. Turns to Jack.

MAGGIE

Can you ask her if she wants me to check if Billy Joel can do the party? He's in LA these next two weeks, his assistant told me -

SUZANNE

(to Jack)

Tell her that's fine, if he's our last resort and if Margaret is capable handling something this important.

MAGGIE

(biting)

Tell her scheduling is in my very limited wheelhouse.

Jack watches them like a tennis match.

JACK

(to no one)

What's happening.

DESIGNER  
 (trying to process)  
 I think -

JACK  
 (so confused)  
 Not you.

EXT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

David stands at the callbox.

DAVID  
 Hey, it's me. Can I come up?

MAGGIE (OVER INTERCOM)  
 Is this a work thing.

Beat.

DAVID  
 No.

MAGGIE (OVER INTERCOM)  
 Then no.

DAVID  
 Maggie -

Katie pushes out the apartment door, in her scrubs, off to work.

KATIE  
 Hey David. You wanna come in?

DAVID  
 (to Katie)  
 Is she just gonna tell me that  
 this isn't a good idea?

MAGGIE (OVER INTERCOM)  
 This isn't a good idea -

Katie gestures to the open door. He goes in.

KATIE  
 (into callbox)  
 I let him up.

MAGGIE (OVER INTERCOM)  
 Goddammit Katie!

## INT. MAGGIE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

David sits on the counter, enjoying the awkward silence as Maggie tries to formulate what she wants to say.

MAGGIE

Look. Brian Epstein didn't sleep with the Beatles. Quincy Jones and Michael Jackson? No. Jerry Wexler didn't with Aretha, Jimmy Iovine didn't with Springsteen - well, then he dated Stevie Nicks - um, David Geffen and - no, him and Cher had a thing but now he's gay so I don't -

(realizes)

Actually a lot of people think Brian Epstein was in love with John Lennon. This is - not what -

(sags, so confused)

You have to go.

DAVID

(oblivious)

Cher's amazing. So sexy. You ever hear her version of "All I Really Want To Do"?

## INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Cher's "All I Really Want To Do" plays out of Maggie's speakers -

Maggie and David lie in her bed, clothes off, intertwined, listening to the insane bass and tambourine hook -

CHER

*I ain't lookin' to compete with you... beat or cheat or mistreat you...*

MAGGIE

(surprised)

This is... incredible!

DAVID

(proud)

I know.

Maggie's PHONE buzzes on the bedside table - she leans over and reads the TEXT, it's MARIA -

**SUZANNE WANTS TO KNOW IF BILLY JOEL IS CONFIRMED???**

Maggie sits up straight. Realizes something.

DAVID (CONT'D)  
Everything okay?

She looks at him. Looks at the text. A HUGE IDEA. *Holy fucking shit.*

**WHY DO I HAVE TO TEXT YOU NOW???**

MAGGIE  
Will you keep Friday night open?

DAVID  
Sure, why?

MAGGIE  
I, uh, got some extra studio time.

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - MORNING

Maggie weaves in and out of traffic, on a mission and on the phone -

MAGGIE  
(very cheery)  
Hey, it's Maggie!

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)  
Maggie!! What's up girl!!

MAGGIE  
You know, truckin' along -

She PULLS INTO A PARKING LOT - WE FOLLOW HER AS SHE PARKS AND HOPS OUT, RACES INSIDE A FANCY PRIVATE OFFICE BUILDING -

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)  
Billy's so excited for Suzanne's release party, the invite was so glam -

MAGGIE  
Yeah the glitter letters were a bit much - but I'm actually calling about that, do you have a quick sec?

INT. PRIVATE OFFICE BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

Maggie - still on phone - pushes through the double doors and into a lobby, down the hallway -

SUPER NICE BILLY ASST (ON PHONE)

Oh totally! I'm waiting for Billy to give me his lunch order - like dude, we all know you're gonna get Italian, you don't have to pretend to like sushi because we're in LA -

Maggie steps into a huge open office and stands face to face with BILLY ASST (JOSH, late 20s) still on phone -

MAGGIE

You're so much taller than you sound!

Josh looks up -

JOSH

Oh my god! It's you!

They hang up, jump around excitedly - Josh instinctually gets Maggie some water, takes her bag, puts her in a chair -

JOSH (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?!

MAGGIE

Remember that one time you got the dates wrong for Billy and Suzanne's dinner but I managed to convince Suzanne we never set it in the first place and she was dreaming the whole thing and I totally saved you?

Josh sits down, a wave of panic washes over him.

JOSH

She found out. I'm doomed. Billy is gonna kill me. We're so scared of her -

MAGGIE

No, no - easy, oh my god, are you crying?

Maggie hands him her water. He gulps.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 (determined, focused)  
 You've worked for Billy for what,  
 five years? How long have you  
 wanted to do something else *other*  
 than be his assistant.

Josh composes himself.

JOSH  
 Uh, five years? I actually have  
 been working on this screenplay -

MAGGIE  
 Ok, and what would you do if  
 someone offered to buy your  
 script? Like right now, here you  
 go, let's make a movie.

JOSH  
 Whoah, I mean, *anything* -

Maggie leans over his desk, very serious.

MAGGIE  
 Right. Okay. Listen. I want to  
 produce, and I've been working  
 with this singer. On the side. And  
 he's fucking amazing.

Josh is intrigued -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 I know Billy already agreed to do  
 the party Friday but I need you to  
 help me Oceans Eleven this thing  
 and get him to drop out at the  
 last second so I can swoop in, get  
 my guy seen by the label, wait for  
 them to lose their minds over him  
 like I clearly already lost mine  
 and change my fucking life.

A long beat. Josh goes pale.

VOICE (O.S.)  
 I love Oceans Eleven.

Maggie turns around - BILLY JOEL STANDS IN THE DOORWAY.

BILLY JOEL  
 Josh, I want the linguini.  
 (to Maggie)  
 Well, lemme hear him.

INT. BILLY'S OFFICE - MINUTES LATER

David's DECK SONG ends, playing off Maggie's phone through Billy's speakers.

Maggie waits for Billy's reaction. Heart in her throat.

BILLY JOEL

Yeah. I'm in.

MAGGIE

Shut up.

BILLY JOEL

I hate going to her parties anyways. She's just gonna get drunk and start yelling "Piano Man" at me.

MAGGIE

(trying to cover)

It's a great song. She's really a big fan of yours -

BILLY JOEL

No she's not. But I'm a fan of yours, Maggie.

Maggie balks at him, *me?*

BILLY JOEL (CONT'D)

Running around trying to get people to listen to music they don't know is good for them isn't easy. Our only fuel is passion and you got it coming outta your ears. This guy's lucky to have you in his corner. Suzanne too, whether she admits it or not.

MAGGIE

(genuine, wow)

Thanks, Billy. Mr. Joel. Billy Joel. Sir. Um.

BILLY JOEL

Send me the rest of his stuff. I wanna play it in my car -

BILLY JOEL / MAGGIE

Best way to hear it.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - PRIVATE PATIO - VARIOUS

Maggie preps for the release party:

- Dictates table setup to a PARTY PLANNER -
- Look at a HUGE CAKE with CHEF - Live album cover printed on the top -

MAGGIE

Do you see what I'm seeing?

CLOSE on cake. The icing bled and Suzanne has a unibrow -

- HUGE PRINTS of Suzanne from photo shoot set up in the entry way -

INT. SUZANNE'S HOUSE - VARIOUS - LATER

- Suzanne sits at her vanity, getting finishing touches done by MAKEUP ARTIST / HAIRSTYLIST -
- Maggie zips Suzanne into her GOWN from the fitting, still very tense between them -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Maggie applies eyeliner with a shaky hand at a stop light.

MAGGIE

Okay. Okay. Okay.

Looks at herself in her rearview mirror, nervous but excited. Might actually pull this off.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - PRIVATE PATIO - NIGHT

Establishing: PARTY IN FULL SWING - Lively. Dom Pérignon flowing. All about Suzanne -

FAMOUS MUSICIANS, LABEL GUYS from the meeting, other artistic and/or rich ATTENDEES -

JACK laughs and charms a group of MUSICIANS, trying to be in eight places at once, stressed -

SUZANNE CIRCULATES LIKE A PRO - looks amazing, plays the room, flirts and air kisses -

MAGGIE rushes around, keeping everything on track - cues waiters, shows a DRUNK SUPERMODEL where the bathroom is -

Checks her watch. Takes a deep breath. Showtime.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - CONTINUOUS

Maggie grabs Jack, in the middle of a conversation with an ASPIRING MUSIC VIDEO DIRECTOR -

MAGGIE

So sorry, Jack, real quick -

Jack moves with her, relieved -

JACK

That kid was talking to me about VR for twenty minutes. Why can't everyone just do shrooms like they used to -

MAGGIE

Billy had a last minute scheduling conflict. He's a no go.

Jack turns deep purple. They talk rapidly, crisis mode, whisper yelling -

JACK

ARE YOU FUCKING KIDDING - YOU WAITED TIL NOW TO TELL ME, WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU - I *HATE* THAT GUY -

Maggie hands him a drink off of a tray passing by -

MAGGIE

I HAVE A PLAN B -

JACK

(chugging drink)  
WHAT PLAN B -

MAGGIE

TRUST ME -

He eyes her, manic. Fuck this fucking party. He's desperate.

JACK

YOU FUCK THIS UP -

MAGGIE

I'M FIRED, I KNOW -

JACK  
DON'T FINISH MY SENTENCES -

CUT TO:

EXT. SUNSET BLVD

Maggie RACES down the Chateau driveway, down Sunset towards a MEXICAN RESTAURANT ON THE CORNER -

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - SAME

David stands outside, waiting for Maggie, wearing THE STEVIE NICKS JACKET FROM HIS CLOSET -

Maggie runs directly into him, having a hard time stopping in her heels -

MAGGIE  
WHERE'S YOUR GUITAR -

DAVID  
In my car. Jesus, you're not that late -

Maggie puts her hands on her knees, out of breath. Looks up at him, sees what he's wearing.

MAGGIE  
No. Why.

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie walk-runs up the hill towards the Chateau, David with his guitar close behind -

DAVID  
I thought we were gonna eat -

MAGGIE  
Change of plans. I'm gonna need you to fight the urge to get really mad at me right now, okay?

The party's search lights flash. David tries to keep up. She's freaking him out.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
So, here's the thing. I'm not a producer. Well, I am, but not like, a real one.  
(MORE)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I'm an assistant to a really big and famous singer and tonight she's having a release party and everyone from her label and like, hundreds of other important people are there, and you're gonna sing for them.

He stops.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(really trying)

You're welcome!!

DAVID

You're... not a producer?!

He doesn't move. She walks back, grabs him, drags him with her.

MAGGIE

I know this all seems insane but it would be great if we could skip the whole "you lied to me" thing and focus on the spectacular work you did and how this is an opportunity of a lifetime -

They GET TO THE PARTY - David sees PHOTOS OF SUZANNE hanging in the entryway, a LINE OF PEOPLE filing in -

DAVID

You work - for SUZANNE WILSON?

MAGGIE

Yes. And she's gonna love you, I know she will -

He looks at Maggie. Repulsed.

DAVID

Oh, fuck this.

Maggie's shocked - David turns back around to leave - she follows -

MAGGIE

DAVID -

DAVID

You're HER ASSISTANT? Does she know about me?!

MAGGIE

No - not yet -

DAVID

How could you - you told me -  
Seth?! Hanky?

MAGGIE

Technically they work for Suzanne  
but you were paying them so -

DAVID

Oh my god -

MAGGIE

I know. I'm sorry. I'll explain  
later, but we only have like four  
minutes to get you set up so -

DAVID

You're so - so ARROGANT - you gave  
me so much SHIT BUT YOU DON'T KNOW  
ANYTHING -

Now she's pissed. She gets in his face -

MAGGIE

It doesn't matter what I did!! Do  
you understand what's inside  
there? Your FUTURE. OUR future.  
Not a grocery store, not a shitty  
bar. Get OVER YOURSELF and BUCK UP  
and SHOW THEM HOW GOOD YOU ARE -

David's totally crushed. Can't grapple with this.

DAVID

I'm not your escape plan, Maggie.

He bolts - yells from down the hill -

DAVID (CONT'D)

AND I LOVE THIS JACKET.

"Jealous Guy (live)" by Donny Hathaway starts as:

EXT. CHATEAU MARMONT - PRIVATE PATIO - CONTINUOUS

Maggie pushes through the crowd, trying not to cry, Jack  
and Suzanne by the stage, frantic.

Jack sees Maggie across the crowd, gestures "*what's  
happening??"* Maggie shakes her head. She's got *nothing*.

Jack sharpens, whispers to Suzanne -

Suzanne looks over to Maggie. No familiarity. No warmth, no understanding. *It's over.*

Suzanne puts on a dangerous, passive smile as she walks onto the stage.

SUZANNE (INTO MIC)  
Hello everyone - looks like I'm  
singing at my own party tonight -

Everyone cheers, ecstatic with the surprise. Maggie slips out, defeated.

EXT. HOSPITAL - SIDE ENTRANCE - LATER

Song continues over -

Maggie sits on the curb outside, crying. Heart breaking.

Katie races out the door, in the middle of her shift - finds Maggie. Runs over, sits with her, holds her -

EXT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Maggie throws a few bags into her trunk, gets in the car. Katie leans in, concerned.

They do their handshake through the open window -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Maggie drives through Los Angeles, towards the coast, past the JUICE STORE, the DRY CLEANERS, the GROCERY STORE, the SYNAGOGUE -

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

Maggie leans on her car while her tank fills. Eyes closed. Music continues -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - CALIFORNIA COAST

Day turns into night as Maggie drives up the coast, through Ventura, Central California -

EXT. SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE SAN FRANCISCO - NIGHT

Maggie exits off the freeway, lost in thought, TURNS  
DONNY HATHAWAY UP -

EXT. RADIO STATION, BERKLEY - CONTINUOUS

Maggie pulls into a spot -

INT. RADIO STATION, BERKLEY - CONTINUOUS

DAISY (40s) sits at the front desk - music continues -

DAISY

Maggie! What are you doing here!

MAGGIE

Hey Daisy. He in there?

INT. RADIO RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

MAX SHERWOOD (50s), headphones on, listens to Donny  
Hathaway with the intensity of someone who saw him  
perform back in 1975 and took his death very personally.

It's clear - from the way he listens, like this is all  
that matters - that Max is Maggie's father.

Max sees Maggie - puts his finger over his lips, points  
to the "RECORDING: LIVE" sign illuminated in the doorway -

Max pantomimes along to the song passionately, silently,  
making Maggie smile, momentarily forgetting how shitty  
everything is.

Song fades and we hear a FAMILIAR VOICE - the D.J.  
Maggie's been playing in her car -

MAX (INTO MIC)

That was the late, great Donny  
Hathaway doing John Lennon's  
"Jealous Guy" -

MAGGIE

(quiet)

Live at the Bitter End.

MAX (INTO MIC)

Live at the Bitter End.

INT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

Max carries Maggie's bags inside as she stands in the entryway.

House JAM PACKED with albums, books - PIANO in the living room. Maggie takes it all in. OVERDUE BILLS on the counter.

Max can sense her unease. Sadness exuding out of her.

MAX

You wanna order a pizza?

MAGGIE

Nah. I'm gonna go to bed.

MAX

Alright, Magpie.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie turns on the lights. Same room from when she was seventeen. POSTERS OF MUSICIANS (Prince, Springsteen, Whitney, Joni) all over the wall.

Photos from high school, in frames and tacked up - her and KATIE at PROM, MOM holding BABY MAGGIE, MIDDLE SCHOOL MAGGIE and MAX at the radio station, MAGGIE SINGING at a TALENT SHOW and PLAYING GUITAR.

Maggie shuts her door - POSTER OF SUZANNE looks back at her. She falls onto her bed.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Max sits down on Maggie's bed. Still asleep.

MAX

Maggie.

He shakes her. She pulls the blankets over her head.

MAX (CONT'D)

Magdalene, you've been asleep for fifteen hours.

MAGGIE

(muffled)

Okay.

MAX

I gotta go into work. You wanna come with me?

MAGGIE

(muffled)

No.

MAX

What are you gonna do today.

She doesn't answer. He gets up, makes it to the door and turns back -

MAX (CONT'D)

I'm covering the singer-songwriter hour. Gonna start with some Joni Mitchell. Can you guess which album?

Their game. She peeks out, hooked.

MAGGIE

Is she dating David Crosby or Jackson Browne.

MAX

James Taylor.

Maggie almost smiles. Sits up. She looks pretty bad.

MAGGIE

For the Roses. My favorite.

MAX

(pontificating)

Atta girl. All about being a rock star and dating a rock star -

Maggie grimaces. Don't remind her.

MAX (CONT'D)

And heroin.

MAGGIE

Dad. You have to stop telling me all my favorite songs are about heroin.

MAX

I don't do that -

MAGGIE

You've ruined basically the entire Rolling Stone catalogue.

Her phone buzzes on her bedside table. DAVID on the caller ID. She stares. Max watches her debate. She flops back down.

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Still in bed. Looks over at her guitar in the corner.

INT. SHERWOOD KITCHEN - LATER

Maggie opens the fridge. Empty. *God dammit.*

INT. GROCERY STORE - LATER

Maggie checks out, eating an eskimo pie out of the box -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - LATER

Maggie drives around aimlessly. Phone rings on the passenger seat. David. She turns up the music.

INT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

Maggie and Max sit at the table, eating dinner. Maggie's quiet. Out of body.

MAX

Don's going out of town for a few weeks, I'm gonna take on his time slot and bring in some extra cash.

MAGGIE

Doesn't he do the 12-5am shift?

MAX

Yeah, but I can come home and sleep for two hours -

Maggie puts her fork down, thinking.

MAGGIE

I'll do it.

MAX

What? No. You're not gonna be here that long -

MAGGIE

Not like I have anything going for me anywhere else. We need money. You need sleep.

She notes the look he's giving her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Can you not be disappointed in me right now. I'm trying to help.

MAX

I'm not asking you to help. I could have paid for the groceries -

MAGGIE

It's not a big deal -

He gets up to clear his plate, upset.

MAX

You don't need to take care of me, Maggie.

A beat.

MAX (CONT'D)

Is the dishwasher clean?

INT. SHERWOOD BATHROOM - LATER

Maggie brushes her teeth, trying to ignore Max standing in the doorway.

MAX

Just because things didn't happen the way you wanted them to happen doesn't mean the work you did doesn't count. If that's how life went I would have jumped off a bridge by now. You liked the shit you made with him? Writing songs? Singing again?

Of course she did.

MAX (CONT'D)

Then keep doing it. You're young.  
This is the chapter of your  
biography where everything is bad  
but about to start happening.  
Percy Sledge was a hospital  
orderly before he sang "When a Man  
Loves a Woman." Sheryl Crow - you  
love Sheryl Crow - she was writing  
jingles -

MAGGIE

She was also singing backup for  
Michael Jackson -

MAX

(ignoring her)  
Leonard Cohen was an underpaid  
poet. Bill Withers was working on  
an assembly line. Stop worrying  
about everyone else and start  
worrying about yourself.

This lands. She looks at him. Mouth full of toothpaste.  
Her phone rings - David. Hits ignore. Spits. Max sighs.

INT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - MORNING

Max puts a plate of eggs in front of Maggie. Her phone  
rings, again.

Max looks at her. The phone. Can't take it. GRABS PHONE,  
EXITS ROOM -

MAGGIE

Dad -

EXT. SHERWOOD BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Maggie follows Max to the edge of the yard -

MAGGIE

DAD -

MAX

I can't keep watching you TORTURE  
YOURSELF -

He THROWS IT OVER THE FENCE. We hear a splash.

They stand there. Neither can believe what just happened.

MAX (CONT'D)

The Davidson's got a pool.

Maggie starts laughing, a weight lifted. Max laughs with her, glad he cheered her up -

But her laughter quickly turns to crying. He pulls her into a hug -

MAGGIE

(crying)

I just love them both so much.

MAX

(consoling)

I know.

INT. SHERWOOD KITCHEN - NIGHT

Max reads the paper, radio on -

MAGGIE (ON RADIO)

Um, hi, this is Maggie Sherwood, I'll be covering for Don McGrory these next few weeks - uh, I know he plays a lot of Elvis but I thought I'd start off with um, three different versions of "The First Cut Is The Deepest," originally by Cat / Yusuf Stevens -

MAX

(Jesus Christ)

Bold choice.

The Sheryl Crow version starts -

INT. MAGGIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Maggie sits on the bed across from her guitar. She gets up, moves toward it. Stops. Stares.

INT. RADIO RECORDING STUDIO - NIGHT

Maggie's relaxed in the studio, picking records and swaying along -

INT. SHERWOOD LIVING ROOM - DAY

Maggie asleep on the couch, Max puts a blanket over her -

INT. SHERWOOD BACKYARD - DAY

Maggie lies on the grass, legs up against the house, bouncing a ball off the wall - humming to herself -

INT. SHERWOOD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Max asleep on the couch, Maggie covers him with same blanket, headed out to the station -

INT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - MORNING

Maggie plays piano, making notes, starts and stops -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - DAWN

Maggie drives home from the station, yawning -

Suddenly a DEER JUMPS IN FRONT OF HER - she SCREAMS, SWERVES OFF THE ROAD AND INTO A TREE, AIRBAGS GO OFF -

Maggie sits there, nose bleeding, shaken -

Pats her jacket for her phone, then realizes - gets VERY ANGRY -

MAGGIE

YOU DON'T HAVE A PHONE. IT'S IN  
THE DAVIDSON'S POOL.

(slams fist into car)

YOUR. LIFE. IS. A. JOKE

She hits the steering wheel, the horn, inadvertently  
TURNS ON THE RADIO -

EAGLES (V.O.)

*She was dancing all in time, and  
the moves she made so fine...*

Same song David sang in the grocery store.

MAGGIE

Are you fucking kidding me.

She listens for a beat.

CUT TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Maggie loudly, emotionally, sings along - blood and tears streaming down her face onto her shirt -

MAGGIE / EAGLES  
*Gonna try, gonna try, gonna try,  
gonna try -*

Suddenly stops. REVEAL A POLICE OFFICER STANDING OUTSIDE HER WINDOW - she rolls it down -

MAGGIE  
This is a really great song.

INT. ER - LATER

Maggie sits on a hospital cot as a DOCTOR does a few stitches above her eyebrow. Maggie talks on a hospital phone -

MAGGIE (INTO PHONE)  
It's only a few stitches -

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - SAME

KATIE stands in the hallway, panicked -

KATIE  
Did he take an x-ray?! Do you have a concussion?! YOU'RE WORKING A NIGHT SHIFT?! LET ME TALK TO THE DOCTOR -

INT. ER - SAME

Maggie holds the phone out to the DOCTOR -

INT. MAX'S CAR - LATER

Max drives. Maggie holds an ice pack to her face. Lots of bandages.

INT. MAX'S CAR / EXT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - LATER

Max and Maggie walk up to the house -

Max tosses her a PLASTIC BAGGIE filled with RICE and her PHONE.

INT. DAVID'S BEDROOM / EXT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - INTERCUT

David asleep. His phone rings. He answers, groggy -

DAVID

Hello?

MAGGIE

David, hey, it's -

DAVID

Mags. I've been calling you -

MAGGIE

I wrote some songs I want you to hear.

A long beat. He smiles, good to hear her voice. Rubs his eyes.

DAVID

Where are you?

INT. DOORWAY - EVENING

Knock on the door - we hear Maggie race downstairs, excited to see David -

Maggie opens the door - her POV -

It's SUZANNE.

MAGGIE

Oh my god.

SUZANNE

(horrified)

Oh my god.

REVEAL MAGGIE has now developed A HUGE BLACK EYE in addition to the stitches.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

What the hell happened to you?!

MAGGIE

How did you find me?!

SUZANNE

Your roommate. She was very rude -

Suzanne pushes through, into the house.

MAGGIE  
God dammit, Katie.

INT. SHERWOOD KITCHEN - LATER

Maggie makes some tea, cautious. Suzanne looks around, politely - she's overdressed, to say the least.

SUZANNE  
Nice place.

Maggie puts the cups down, sits. Waits.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)  
So I'm doing a new album.

Maggie swells with joy and melancholy - *she's not there for it* -

MAGGIE  
Really.

SUZANNE  
(exhaling)  
I've got like, six songs written - recorded one a couple days ago and it, I mean, wow -

She sits, resigned. A lot to say here but they won't.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)  
(awkwardly)  
I may... or may not have... said some things... that could hurt... people's feelings. And for that I forgive myself.

Maggie stares, at a loss.

MAGGIE  
I'm sorry. Was that an... apology?

SUZANNE  
(yes)  
No.

INT. SHERWOOD LIVING ROOM - LATER

Suzanne and Maggie sit at the piano.

SUZANNE

Please tell me tell me if what I'm  
about to play you is complete  
garbage and if I should just do  
another Vegas residency.

Maggie laughs, winces with pain from her eye.

MAGGIE

Let me hear it.

Suzanne starts a NEW AND ORIGINAL SONG.

Maggie's overcome as Suzanne plays and sings, solidifying  
she truly comes from a different planet, here to bless us  
with her gift.

It's as good as anything she's ever done.

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR, interrupting - Maggie remembers -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Oh shit. One sec.

Maggie gets up and opens the door, DAVID BURSTS IN -

DAVID

I don't know how you did it but  
BILLY JOEL LOVES THE SONGS - oh my  
god, what happened to your face?

FROM ACROSS THE ROOM -

SUZANNE

David?!

David spins, sees Suzanne.

DAVID

Mom?!

PUSH IN ON MAGGIE -

THE BIGGEST, LONGEST PAUSE -

MAGGIE

MOM?!

SUZANNE

(fierce, to Maggie)  
Did Jack tell you about him?!

MAGGIE

WHAT?!

DAVID  
 (angry, to Maggie)  
 Did *she* get Billy to listen -

SUZANNE  
 Listen to what?! What are you  
 talking about?!

MAGGIE  
 SHE'S YOUR MOM?! HE'S YOUR SON?!

Maggie grasps for something to lean on -

SUZANNE  
 (to David)  
 You recorded something?! David,  
 that's wonderful -

DAVID  
 (to Suzanne)  
 Why are you here? I thought you  
 fired her -

MAGGIE  
 She didn't *fire* me, I quit -

SUZANNE  
 No, I fired you -

Maggie starts to piece it together -

MAGGIE  
 (to David)  
 "TRUST FUND"?!?

David tries to block out the mayhem for one second to  
 spit it out and tell her -

DAVID  
 Billy showed his label all of the  
 tracks you sent him and they want  
 to sign me. And you.

MAGGIE  
 ME?!

SUZANNE  
 HER?!

DAVID  
 You sent him the demo of us  
 singing your song together -

Oh shit.

SUZANNE  
 (to Maggie)  
 YOU SING?!

MAX walks through the front door -

MAX  
 Hey Maggie, who's car is that -

Everyone stops and stares at him. He sees Suzanne. Drops his coffee -

CUT TO:

EXT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATER

Maggie paces in front of the house, completely losing her mind. David watches, letting her decompress -

MAGGIE  
 So when you said. Your mom left when you were little. And that you started talking to her these last few years -

David starts to say something, she puts her hand up, *NOT FINISHED* -

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 YOU DIDN'T THINK. TO TELL ME. THAT IT WAS. SUZANNE. WILSON.

DAVID  
 (firing back)  
 You didn't tell me. That you were WORKING FOR HER.

MAGGIE  
 DON'T CHANGE THE SUBJECT -

INT. SHERWOOD LIVING ROOM - SAME

Hear/see David and Maggie's muffled arguing out front.

Suzanne and Max sit on the couch, in silence. Max sneaks stares at her, starstruck.

Suzanne feels Max's eyes, gets defensive -

SUZANNE

We wanted privacy. I was so young. My manager helped keep everything under wraps. Paid off a few people so we could get reacquainted on our own timeline. Booked tours that worked with his school schedule.

She shifts in her seat, not used to talking about it.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

I tried to - David said if my name was on it no one would take him seriously. So I gave him space. That's what he wanted.

She looks at Max, quizzically.

SUZANNE (CONT'D)

Have we met before?

MAX

1989. I interviewed you for my radio show - K-SADJ, in LA -

SUZANNE

That station downtown? With the Thai restaurant on top?

MAX

(oh my god)

Yes!

She looks at him, starting to remember.

SUZANNE

You had a beard. And a pregnant wife.

MAX

Yes.

SUZANNE

That was a good show.

MAX

It was. And that was Maggie, in the pregnant wife.

Suzanne sighs, annoyed and charmed.

SUZANNE

Fucking long con.

EXT. SHERWOOD HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Maggie, Suzanne, and David sit around a beat-up picnic table. All a little wide-eyed and spent.

SUZANNE  
(worst part)  
... Billy Joel?!

Max brings over burgers from the grill. Maggie starts putting together Suzanne's plate -

MAGGIE  
Suzanne, you want mustard -

SUZANNE  
(taking the plate)  
I got it, I got it.

Suzanne and Maggie look at each other. Almost like old friends.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - DAY

Four months later. Maggie speeds through LA, windows down even though her air conditioner's been fixed -

MAGGIE (ON PHONE)  
(fast)  
Yeah, it's two nights in San Fran  
but I have to be back by Thursday  
for Suzanne's session -

EXT. RECORDING STUDIO - LATER

Maggie pulls up, throws her car in park, races out -

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Maggie walks down the hallway - Assured. Tireless. Happy.

She ENTERS THE BOOTH - waving to HANKY, THE BAND - JACK sits at the board with SETH -

MAGGIE  
How far we get?

JACK  
 First verse. Stuck on the horn  
 arrangement -

Maggie presses the button to talk to the studio -

WE SEE SUZANNE, HEADPHONES ON, STANDING AT THE MIC,  
 discussing harmonies with her BACKUP SINGERS -

MAGGIE  
 Hi Suzanne -

SUZANNE  
 Late.

MAGGIE  
 Four minutes.

SUZANNE  
 Ten.

SUZANNE'S NEW ASSISTANT (early 20s, overwhelmed) offers  
 Maggie a JUICE -

MAGGIE  
 (to assistant, re:  
 Suzanne)  
 Good mood or a bad mood today.

ASSISTANT  
 (confused)  
 She has good moods?

JACK  
 (to Maggie)  
 Did you get me and Suzanne's  
 tickets for tonight?

MAGGIE  
 I got Suzanne's. You're not  
 invited.

Jack glares. She's still exhausting.

JACK  
 Look, I know we haven't always  
 gotten along but I think I deserve  
 ONE TICKET -

MAGGIE  
 (smiles)  
 Relax. It's at will call.  
 (to ASSISTANT)  
 Yours too.

SUZANNE

HELLO - you can't produce this by  
IGNORING ME -

Maggie hits the button again -

MAGGIE

Let's take it from the top -

INT. MAGGIE'S CAR - MOVING - LATER

Maggie drives, listening to the radio -

MAX (ON RADIO)

Next up we have a very special  
request from David Cliff going out  
to Maggie Sherwood - their West  
Coast tour starts tonight at The  
Troubadour in Los Angeles - I'll  
be there, and I hear Billy Joel  
will be too -

Maggie laughs, turns it up -

MAX (ON RADIO) (CONT'D)

Live, at the Harlem Square Club,  
1963 - Sam Cooke.

"Bring It On Home To Me (Live)" starts - SAM COOKE talks  
through the opening -

Maggie knows it inside and out. TALK/SINGS ALONG -

SAM COOKE / MAGGIE

*Sometimes me and my baby, we fuss  
and fight. And my baby leaves  
home, 'cause things ain't right...*

SONG CONTINUES AS SHE PULLS UP TO:

EXT. THE TROUBADOUR - SAME

MAGGIE AND DAVID'S NAME UP ON THE MARQUEE.

SAM COOKE / MAGGIE

*I get the feeling... so all  
alone... I call my baby on the  
telephone...*

She enters the theater -

David stands onstage with their BAND, setting up -

SAM COOKE CONTINUES PLAYING THROUGH THE THEATER SPEAKERS -

SAM COOKE / MAGGIE (CONT'D)

*I don't want you operator, I want  
my baaaaaaaaby...*

David turns around, sees Maggie running towards him -

The two of them sing along, sing to each other -

With the commitment and excitement of two artists who are about to open their very first fucking show and know ALL OF IT stems from the man singing right now -

LIKE MAGNETS they move towards each other, dancing - the open, empty theater waiting for them -

SAM COOKE / MAGGIE / DAVID

*I got a message for ya honey...*

David and Maggie kiss, AS ELECTRIC AS THE MUSIC -

SAM COOKE

*Darling, you send me...*

CUT TO BLACK. SONG CONTINUES...