

FLYING SOLO

by

Langille MacGregor

223 Craven Road
Toronto, ON M4L 2Z5

416-778-7748

langillemacgregor@yahoo.com

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

A secretary on her way to lunch exits a law office and drops two letters -- one addressed to Susan Marshall, the other to David Winston -- into a mailbox.

Moments later, a postal employee arrives to clear the box.

INT. MAIL SORTING PLANT - DAY - MONTAGE

The letters wend their way through the mail sorting process.

EXT/INT. TOWNHOUSE - DAY

Postal carrier #1 slips the letter addressed to David Winston, along with his other mail, through his mail slot.

INT. APARTMENT. LOBBY - DAY

Postal carrier #2 inserts the letter addressed to Susan Marshall into her mailbox, along with her other mail.

INT. COLLEGE. LECTURE HALL - DAY

SUSAN MARSHALL, 30's, attractive, lectures to an attentive group of predominately-female students.

SUSAN

...water imagery is very important here. Swimming becomes a metaphor for the self-contained, self-possessed life which the central character wants to develop. As the character herself says:

Susan starts to read from Ethel Wilson's Swamp Angel.

SUSAN (cont'd)

"...but now I am alone and, like a swimmer, I have to make my way on my own power. Swimming is like living, it is done alone."

MALE STUDENT #1

How about you, Miss Marshall? Do you swim alone?

SUSAN

I don't swim at all. I never learned as a child.

MALE STUDENT #2

I'll teach you.

Some of the males CHEER, disgusting several of the females.

FEMALE STUDENT #1
Grow up. What morons!

SUSAN
Why don't we get back to safer
ground? Does anyone have anything
to say about the novel?

A few students raise their hands as Cindy begins HICCUPPING.

SUSAN (cont'd)
Lindsay?

LINDSAY
Would you agree marriage is what men
do for sex and sex is what women do
for marriage?

SUSAN
I'd rather hear what you people
think.

FEMALE STUDENT #2
Everyone needs sex. Men just need
it more.

FEMALE STUDENT #3
I disagree. The enjoyment of sex
should not be gender-related.

MALE STUDENT #2
Shouldn't count. We're talking
reality here. Right, Miss Marshall?

SUSAN
Like I said, I'd rather hear what --
(to Cindy)
Excuse me? Would you like to get
some water? Unless someone has a
better idea.

STEPHEN
I do.

STEPHEN CURRAN, 20's, approaches Cindy and kisses her
passionately on the mouth. Her hiccups vanish instantly.

SUSAN
That's a hard act to follow so class
is dismissed. And don't forget your
final assignments are due this week.

Stephen watches Susan gather her books and briefcase
together, then exit as students cluster around Cindy.

FEMALE STUDENT #3

Do you believe that guy?

FEMALE STUDENT #4

Yeah! I mean no! Is he a good kisser?

FEMALE STUDENT #3

Excuse me? You don't know his sexual history --

FEMALE STUDENT #4

No, you excuse me. I just asked if he's a good kisser.

EXT. COLLEGE. CAMPUS - DAY

With her books and briefcase balanced precariously under her arm, Susan tries to walk and make notes at the same time. They come crashing to the ground as Stephen catches up to her.

STEPHEN

Mind if I walk with you?

SUSAN

Not if you don't mind carrying the books.

Susan continues making notes as Stephen collects her things, then follows her to the steps of the Administration Building.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Sorry. I find if I don't write things down I forget....

Susan takes her books and briefcase from Stephen finally.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Thank you. You made quite an impression on Cindy this morning.

STEPHEN

Maybe it wasn't Cindy I was trying to impress. Do you ever get the hiccups?

SUSAN

If you're saying that exhibition was for my benefit, I'm flattered, but you're wasting your time.

STEPHEN

I've asked around and you don't seem to be involved. It must be the age thing.

SUSAN

I'm wrong, you don't waste time. I am your professor, you know.

STEPHEN

Professors are people too. If you cut them, do they not bleed? If you contradict them in class, do they not mark you down?

SUSAN

It must be nice to have an answer for everything.

STEPHEN

I have a good professor.

SUSAN

And I have a meeting. Thanks for carrying the books.

STEPHEN

Anytime...Professor.

Susan watches Stephen exit, surprised to find herself smiling, then turns and enters the Administration Building.

INT. COLLEGE. DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

The DEAN is perched on the edge of his desk, facing Susan.

DEAN

Our subsidies aren't keeping up with inflation so every department has to cut one teaching position. Your classes are popular and you're turning these kids on, but you're not publishing and that, to the powers that be, means everything.

SUSAN

I understand, Dean. Thank you.

DEAN

No decision will be made till after the summer, but I wanted you to be aware of the situation.

EXT. GARDEN PARTY - DAY

DAVID WINSTON, 30's, boyishly handsome, reads from his novel, Sleeping Arrangements, to an audience of women who appear as taken by the man as by the writing, especially one WOMAN who sits comparing David's dust jacket picture to the real thing.

DAVID

"...as fierce as it seemed that night, I knew the worst was over. And as the rains came, I longed to hold her again, to see her smile illuminated by the night sky one last time."

David closes the book to thunderous APPLAUSE as his friend and editor, JERRY BRACKETT, steps up to the podium.

WOMAN #1

You really think he's slept with as many women as the tabloids say?

WOMAN #2

Look at his hands. It wouldn't surprise me if it was more.

WOMAN #1

Hands? I thought it was feet.

JERRY

Well, ladies, have you had enough?

Several women SHOUT 'no.'

JERRY (cont'd)

In that case, step up to the book-signing table where David will be happy to autograph your books. Unless, of course, there's something else you'd like him to sign?

Several women rush to the table as David takes Jerry aside.

DAVID

I'm holding you personally responsible to make sure this is short and sweet.

JERRY

You can't have it both ways, David. Either you play the game and sell the books or you get a real job. Now smile, your public awaits.

David feigns a smile, then approaches the book-signing table where the woman who sat comparing his dust jacket picture to the real thing stands first in line.

EXCITED WOMAN

I have to say, Mr. Winston, you're much better looking in person.

DAVID
 You know what they say? The dust
 jacket adds ten pounds.

EXT. STREET - DAY

David and Jerry approach Jerry's car, parked at the curb.

JERRY
 If all the personal appearances go
 like this one, we might just break
 even on this book.

DAVID
 The first one sold in the book
 stores? What do I have to do to get
 this one to?

JERRY
 Short of dying? People don't mention
 you in the same breath as George
 Clooney because you're a good
 writer, David.

INT. CAR - CONTINUING

David gets in the car on the passenger side while Jerry gets
 in behind the wheel.

DAVID
 You mean I'm not a good writer?

JERRY
 Of course, you are. But that's not
 why People Magazine named you one of
 their fifty sexiest people. Or why
 millions of men would love to be in
 your shoes, including me.

As Jerry starts the car and drives away, David takes off his
 shoes and hands them to him.

DAVID
 Here. You might want to replace the
 odor-eaters.

INT. TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

David enters to find the contents of the room strewn about.
 He picks up a note and reads it as Jerry enters and reacts to
 the mess.

JERRY
 The afternoon wasn't that bad.

DAVID
I didn't do this.

JERRY
Robbers?

David holds up the note.

DAVID
Sharon.

JERRY
I thought you two were getting along.

DAVID
You know what I'm like when I'm not
working on a book.

JERRY
I know. A man with too much time on
his hands gets restless. How is it
different when you are working on a
book?

DAVID
I don't remember. I don't suppose
she thought to buy groceries before
she left.

David checks the fridge and cupboards, only to find them
empty, as Jerry picks the mail up off the floor.

DAVID (cont'd)
Chinese take-out okay?

JERRY
Whatever. Do you ever even look at
your mail?

Jerry holds up the letter from the lawyer.

JERRY (cont'd)
This one looks serious.

DAVID
You better open it then.

He opens the envelope and reads its contents.

JERRY
Guess what? Your divorce is final.

DAVID
I guess another drink's in order.

INT. APARTMENT. LOBBY - EVENING

Susan retrieves her mail from her mailbox.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Susan enters her apartment to the SOUND of her phone RINGING.

SUSAN
 (into phone)
 Hello?...Hi, Patty. Yeah, I just
 got in....Uh-huh....Uh-huh.

Susan sorts the mail while on the phone. When she sees the lawyer's letter, she rips it open and reads it.

SUSAN (cont'd)
 No, I'm still here. Guess what?

INT. FANTASY NIGHTCLUB - EVENING

Susan shrinks into her seat as her friend, PATTY, along with various other women, CHEER on a male burlesque show.

SUSAN
 I can't believe I let you talk me
 into this.

PATTY
 You have to mark the occasion,
 Susan. Otherwise, it just festers
 like a boil and you never get over
 it. Is that what you want?

The dancers finish their routine and exit the stage.

SUSAN
 Trust me, I'm over it. And this is
 over so can we please go now?

PATTY
 Relax. They haven't even brought us
 our drinks yet.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 And now, ladies, it's time to set
 sail on that tropical Paradise
 you've always dreamed about.

As three dancers bound onstage in naval uniforms and begin gyrating wildly, Susan double-takes on one of them: Stephen.

She slumps down into her seat, trying to be inconspicuous, but he sees her and calls out to her from the stage.

STEPHEN

Hey, Professor! Enjoying the show?

With a wink and a smile, Stephen and the other dancers strip down to their G-strings as Patty looks at Susan with surprise.

PATTY

You've been holding out on me.

EXT. FANTASY NIGHTCLUB/STREET - EVENING

Susan holds the door of a cab for Patty.

PATTY

Are you sure? Because I could just as easily get the next one.

SUSAN

You have further to go than I do.

PATTY

Thank you. For tonight too. I think I had enough fun for both of us. Are you sure you're okay?

SUSAN

I told you, I'm fine.

Susan watches the cab drive away as Stephen exits the club.

STEPHEN

Enjoy the show, Professor?

SUSAN

Stephen! You startled me.

STEPHEN

And not for the first time tonight.

SUSAN

Is the show finished already?

STEPHEN

I'm leaving early. I have a final paper due tomorrow and my professor doesn't give extensions.

Stephen signals for a cab, then motions for her to take it.

SUSAN

Don't you have a paper to get to?

STEPHEN

We could always share.

EXT. APARTMENT - EVENING

The cab stops outside Susan's building and Susan gets out. Stephen looks at her expectantly.

STEPHEN

I guess this is good night then.

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Stephen checks out one of Susan's many book-filled bookcases as she hands him a glass of wine.

SUSAN

So how long have you been....

STEPHEN

Dancing? Since I decided to postpone real life by staying in school a little longer. Working one or two nights, I can make as much as other people make in a week, sometimes two.
(indicating books)

I suppose you've even read these.

SUSAN

Most of them. What about you? Do you read much?

STEPHEN

I'm taking your course, aren't I? You're not one of those professors who think women's studies are only for women, are you?

SUSAN

No. I've always been a fraternizer.

STEPHEN

That's good. And if you're wondering if I mind being surrounded by all that estrogen, I grew up with a mother and four sisters.

SUSAN

No father?

STEPHEN

Just a sperm donor. So do you write as well as read?

SUSAN

A little. Not really.

STEPHEN

So you do write, you just haven't been published yet. Is that it?

SUSAN

Don't you have a paper to write?

STEPHEN

Time to drink up and go, huh?

SUSAN

Not necessarily.

STEPHEN

Good. So why haven't you been published?

SUSAN

Why? I guess because I never send anything out.

STEPHEN

Why not?

SUSAN

You ask a lot of questions! Okay, why not? I guess because I thought one writer in the family was enough.

STEPHEN

I thought you and your husband were separated?

SUSAN

Divorced, actually. As of today.

STEPHEN

That's why you were at the club?

SUSAN

It was my friend, Patty's, idea.

STEPHEN

In that case, I should go since you're probably feeling a little vulnerable right now.

Stephen sets his glass down and goes to the door. Bristling slightly at his insinuation, Susan follows.

STEPHEN (cont'd)

But I'd like to read your book someday.

SUSAN

What makes you so sure I have one?

STEPHEN

You don't? And you shouldn't be intimidated by sexist, misogynistic crap, no matter how successful it is. Night, Professor.

After Stephen exits, Susan takes the glasses to the kitchen, starts to rinse them, stops suddenly, goes to her desk, removes a manuscript from a drawer, and sits down to read.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

With her manuscript hidden beneath a newspaper, Susan nurses a drink when her friend, ELAINE MATTHEWS, a no-nonsense, shoot-from-the-hip, editor arrives and kisses Susan's cheek.

ELAINE

Sorry I'm late.

Elaine notices her drink.

ELAINE (cont'd)

Good! You started without me.

Elaine takes a seat, then promptly looks around for a waiter.

SUSAN

Not having a good day?

ELAINE

It's just what I jokingly refer to as my life these days. You know, for what they charge here, they should hand you a drink as soon as you walk through the door....So how are you?

Elaine catches a waiter's attention before Susan can answer.

ELAINE (cont'd)

I'll have a Gin and Tonic. Better make it a double.

Elaine focusses her attention on Susan finally.

ELAINE (cont'd)

So, this is a lovely surprise!

SUSAN

I haven't seen you in awhile. I thought it'd be nice to have lunch.

ELAINE

So this has nothing to do with the manuscript under the newspaper?

SUSAN

God, you're cynical.

ELAINE

You have to be in this business. Have you read his latest? Actually, you come off pretty well in this version.

(off her look)

You don't really think he has more than one book in him, do you? He's destined to spend his life writing the first one over and over again, not that there's anything wrong with that if you do it well. So are you going to show it to me?

Susan pulls the manuscript tentatively from beneath the paper.

SUSAN

I thought you might take a look at it, not as an editor but as a friend.

ELAINE

I'm cynical and you're naive. Otherwise you'd know there are no friends in publishing. You're sure you want me to look at it?

SUSAN

I know you'll be honest.

ELAINE

That's why I'm asking. Now let's order, I'm starved.

Elaine looks for their waiter and sees David and Jerry enter.

ELAINE (cont'd)

Speak of the devil. And his shadow.

Susan covers the manuscript with the newspaper again as David and Jerry approach their table.

DAVID

Susan! Elaine! This is a surprise.

ELAINE

What? That some of us actually have food with our drinks? Hello, Jerry!

JERRY
Elaine. Susan.

DAVID
It looks busy. Maybe we should join
you guys?

ELAINE
Sorry, but I'd like to enjoy my
lunch.

A Maitre'd motions to David from across the room.

DAVID
Looks like our table's ready anyway.
You look good, Susan. Did you....

SUSAN
Yesterday.

DAVID
Me, too. Well, what can I say,
Elaine? As always, words fail me.

ELAINE
I know. I read your book.

DAVID
You always have to have the last
word, don't you?

ELAINE
Yes, and if you don't let me, you'll
lose your table.

When David opens his mouth to speak, Jerry pushes him in the
direction of their table.

JERRY
We'll just be going now.

SUSAN
You don't have to run interference
for me, Elaine.

ELAINE
The pleasures of life are getting
fewer and fewer, Susan. Don't deny
me this bit of fun at Regis and
Gelman's expense. Now where's that
damn waiter?

David and Jerry take seats at their table across the room.

JERRY

Did you mean it when you said Susan looks good? Because she does, she looks good.

DAVID

Of course, she looks good. She looks great. What's your point?

JERRY

No point....Do I have to have a point every time I say something?

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Frustrated by their lack of order, Susan begins rearranging the books as she searches for one in particular.

SUSAN

How do they expect people to find anything if they don't keep the -- ?

STEPHEN (O.S.)

Looking for this, Professor?

Susan looks up to see Stephen holding a book.

SUSAN

Frye's Anatomy of Criticism? Are you finished with it?

STEPHEN

That depends. I've been cramming for hours and I could really use a beer and pizza break....Well?

SUSAN

I'm not sure. Beer gives me hiccups.

STEPHEN

I have the perfect cure.

SUSAN

That's what I'm not sure about.

INT. PIZZERIA - EVENING

Stephen hangs on Susan's every word as she relates a story.

SUSAN

So then he said in that gravelly voice of his: Screw Attorney-Generals and Five Star Generals.

(more)

SUSAN (cont'd)
 What this country needs is an Editor
 General. The level of literacy in
 this country is going to hell in a
 hand basket.

Stephen LAUGHS.

STEPHEN
 What did you say?

SUSAN
 I said if it's okay with Reader's
 Digest to end a sentence with a
 preposition, then it's okay with me.

Susan LAUGHS now.

STEPHEN
 I like the way you laugh.

Susan immediately feels self-conscious and stops.

STEPHEN (cont'd)
 Come to think of it, you're the only
 professor I've ever heard laugh.
 What do they do? Beat it out of you
 in graduate school?

INT. APARTMENT - EVENING

Susan goes from the bedroom to the kitchen as the phone RINGS.

SUSAN
 (into phone)
 Hello?...Elaine! How are you?

ELAINE (O.S.)
 Don't tell me you haven't been
 waiting for this call, Susan!

SUSAN
 You mean the manuscript? Actually,
 I'd forgotten all about it.

ELAINE (O.S.)
 And I really prefer a vibrator.

SUSAN
 Then don't keep me waiting.

ELAINE (O.S.)
 Are you sure you wouldn't like to do
 this face-to-face?

SUSAN

Elaine!

ELAINE (O.S.)

Okay, I loved it. Not since Fear of Flying has there been a book like this and the world might actually be ready this time. Can you stop by tomorrow to discuss some changes?

SUSAN

Changes?

ELAINE (O.S.)

There are always changes, Susan. How's three-o'clock?

SUSAN

Three's great, Elaine. Thank you.

Susan hangs up and raises her arm in a victory salute.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Susan runs into the bedroom and jumps on top of Stephen.

STEPHEN

It was bad news, wasn't it? I can tell. You're just the kind of person who wears her heart on her sleeve.

SUSAN

Very bad news. The worst.

STEPHEN

I could make you feel better.

SUSAN

Would you?

STEPHEN

Right after you admit there's at least one thing a younger man is good for.

SUSAN

I'm already going to hell so, yes, I admit it.

STEPHEN

You're not my professor anymore so you're not going to hell. Now what's the bad news?

LATER

Susan nervously watches Stephen read the last page of her manuscript.

SUSAN

Well?

STEPHEN

Well what?...Oh, the book! It's heavy.

Stephen rubs his shoulder.

STEPHEN (cont'd)

I think I hurt myself....I loved it, silly. It's funny and sexy and honest...just like you.

INT. ELAINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Susan nervously sits across from Elaine in her office.

ELAINE

The editorial board's agreed to fast-track this, Susan, so I've made a list of suggestions. Does the male antagonist really have to be emasculated in such an awful way? It seems painful even to me.

SUSAN

It's allegorical, Elaine.

ELAINE

Of course. And the bikers?

SUSAN

External manifestations of internal realities.

ELAINE

That's what I thought.

INT. CAB - EVENING

With his cab stopped in traffic, a CABBIE nervously looks at David seated in the back seat, drunk.

CABBIE

You better not puke in my cab.

The cabbie suddenly pulls into an opening in the next lane and is immediately rear-ended by another cab.

DAVID

Whoa! That was some turn.

The two cabbies get out of their cars to survey the damage as David and LAURA, the passenger from the other cab, get out too. Laura is also drunk.

DAVID (cont'd)

Are you alright?

LAURA

I think so.

DAVID

You know, in this city, you statistically have the best chance of hitting a cab.

LAURA

Really?

DAVID

Sometimes it's the only way to get one to stop. C'mon, I'll take you home.

LAURA

Thanks. I could use a drink.

DAVID

Me, too.

David leads Laura to the other side of the street and hails another cab as the cabbies continue SHOUTING invectives at one another.

INT. LAURA'S APARTMENT. VARIOUS ROOMS - EVENING

David and Laura stumble drunkenly into her dark apartment.

DAVID (O.S.)

Do you have lights?

LAURA (O.S.)

Somewhere.

Fumbling in the dark, David finds a lamp and turns it on. Laura immediately points to it.

LAURA

There it is. And the bar's over there. If you don't mind making the drinks, I'll get the aspirin.

David goes to the bar as Laura exits the room.

DAVID

Do you know how many cabs there are
in this city?...Lots. That's how
many....Are you okay in there?

When Laura doesn't respond, David goes looking for her and
finds her fast asleep on her bed, still in her clothes.

INT. COLLEGE. OFFICE(S) - DAY

Susan enters the outer office where JANICE, her secretary,
sits reading David's novel.

SUSAN

Good morning.
(off her look)
Okay, maybe not.

JANICE

Check your office.

Susan does, and returns with a large bouquet of flowers.

SUSAN

They're beautiful.
(off her look again)
Okay, what's wrong?

JANICE

Besides someone having the nerve to
put stuff like that onto an innocent
piece of paper, what makes you think
anything's wrong?

SUSAN

I'd say Phil either forgot your
anniversary, or he remembered and
bought you an iron.

Janice follows Susan as she returns to her office.

JANICE

You know what flowers represent,
don't you?

SUSAN

Life? Beauty? Regeneration?

JANICE

It's things like this that have
enslaved women for generations. No
good will come from these.

SUSAN
I'm sure they're friendly flowers.
They certainly look friendly.

JANICE
Read the card.

Susan reads the card to find they're from Stephen.

JANICE (cont'd)
Horniest little douche-bag on campus.

SUSAN
Have you ever talked to him?

JANICE
Don't have to. The world is full of
douche-bags.

Janice holds up David's book.

JANICE (cont'd)
You want it when I'm through?

SUSAN
What do you think?

Janice shrugs perfunctorily, then exits.

INT. TOWNHOUSE. OFFICE - DAY

Hungover, David is struggling to write at his computer when he turns it off finally, then reacts to not saving the file.

INT. BAR - EVENING

David and Jerry are seated in a bar, drinking.

DAVID
I keep rewriting the first two
chapters. I must have twenty
different versions by now.
(BEAT) Make that nineteen.

JERRY
Who was it who said if your writing
doesn't keep you up nights it won't
keep anyone up?

DAVID
That's the other thing I can't seem
to do anymore.

A BEAUTIFUL BLONDE walks by and sees the look on David's face.

BLONDE
Things can't be that bad!

JERRY
I'm sure he'd cheer up if you joined
us....

BLONDE
Lucky.

JERRY
Really?

BLONDE
It's how I make men feel.

JERRY
All my life I've wanted to feel that
way.

David stands suddenly.

DAVID
I've got to go.

BLONDE
The bathrooms are downstairs.

DAVID
Home. I've got to go home.

Lucky watches David and Jerry exit, clearly disappointed.

INT. TOWNHOUSE. VARIOUS ROOMS - DAY

David enters the living room and goes straight to the bar where he fixes himself a drink as Jerry enters, always a step behind him.

JERRY
Don't you think you've had enough?

DAVID
We're rationing drinks now? You want
one?

Jerry shakes his head 'no,' then follows David to the

BEDROOM

where David grabs a suitcase and begins packing some clothes.

JERRY
Going somewhere?

DAVID
I thought I would. Wanna come?

JERRY
I have a job, David.

DAVID
Well, then, don't let me keep you
from your work. God knows you're
not keeping me from mine.

JERRY
Writing's a process. It takes time.

DAVID
Time, huh? You know how I spend my
time? Trying to decide if I drink
because I write or if I write so
I'll have an excuse to drink.

JERRY
One of life's eternal questions. So
what are you going to do? Look for
another career?

DAVID
I'm not qualified to do anything
else.

JERRY
So where do you think you'll go?

DAVID
I don't know. The country, maybe?

JERRY
Do you even know where the country
is?

David randomly points.

DAVID
Out there...somewhere.

JERRY
There's fresh air in the country,
David. Your lungs aren't used to
fresh air.

Jerry follows David back to the

LIVING ROOM

and the bar where David fills a suitcase with liquor bottles.

DAVID

Then I'll find out if Darwin was right. Maybe I'm really a dinosaur and totally unsuited for life as we know it.

JERRY

What about Manhattan-style bagels, David? The New York Times?

DAVID

You want another book, don't you?

INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT. HALLWAY - DAY

Susan and Stephen quietly wait for the elevator to arrive.

INT. ELEVATOR - CONTINUING

Susan and Stephen enter and, as soon as the doors close, begin making out. After a moment, Susan pulls back from him.

SUSAN

We need to talk, Stephen.

EXT. PARK BENCH - DAY

Susan and Stephen are in mid-conversation.

SUSAN

This isn't me. A part of me wishes it were, but it's not. And you --

STEPHEN

Have my whole life ahead of me? Okay.

SUSAN

Really? That's it?

STEPHEN

I never expected more than one night and I wasn't even sure of that. Wanna come see my show tonight? They're auditioning for a movie and I could use a cheering section.

SUSAN

I don't think you'll have any trouble finding one.

Stephen nods, then starts to leave.

STEPHEN

Good luck with the book.

INT. CITY STREET - EVENING

Susan stops to admire a window display, a scenic tableau of small-town life that seems to hold nostalgic meaning for her.

INT. APARTMENT. HALLWAY - DAY

Susan hands her apartment key to MRS. SHANAHAN, a neighbor.

SUSAN

Thank you for watering my plants,
Mrs. Shanahan. I know it's last
minute.

MRS. SHANAHAN

Don't you worry, dear. I'll take
good care of them.

SUSAN

I know you will.

EXT. DAVID'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

David climbs behind the wheel of a rental car and tentatively drives away.

EXT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Susan gets into a rental car and drives away with confidence.

INT. SUSAN'S MOVING CAR - DAY

Susan grabs her cell phone and dials a number as she passes the city limits sign.

SUSAN

(into phone)

Elaine, hi. I'm just calling to --

Elaine's voice replaces that of her answering machine.

ELAINE (O.S.)

You sound funny, Susan. Is
everything alright?

SUSAN

I'm calling from the car. I've
decided to go home for a few days.
I'll make the changes to the book
there and fax them to you.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Home! You mean Swift Falls?

SUSAN

Yes.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Isn't that in Canada, Susan?

SUSAN

Nova Scotia, actually. It's...I don't know...comfort food.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Comfort food?

SUSAN

It's how you feel about gin, Elaine.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Well, why didn't you say so? Just promise you'll keep in touch.

SUSAN

I will. Thank you.

MONTAGE - SUSAN AND DAVID DRIVING FROM NEW YORK TO NOVA SCOTIA

-- David crosses the U.S. border into Canada, followed closely by Susan;

-- David gets stuck behind a slow-moving tractor while trying to flirt with a woman in another car as Susan deftly weaves in and out of traffic;

-- David gets stuck at a cow crossing, then stops to check a map as Susan continues passing car after car;

-- David drives through the intersection of two country roads, then backs up and turns right;

-- David drives into Swift Falls, a picturesque town whose wooden houses and white picket fences personify the essence of quaintness while Susan approaches the same intersection David had earlier and, without hesitation, turns right.

EXT. REALTY AGENCY - DAY

As David pulls into a realty agency and parks, a BUZZ about his presence immediately spreads among the towns people.

INT. REALTY AGENCY - DAY

As David enters the realty office, BARBARA WINCOTT, 30's, looks at him first with suspicion, then interest.

BARBARA
May I help you?

DAVID
I hope so. I'd like to rent a house, preferably something furnished.

BARBARA
How big were you thinking? I mean, is it for a couple? A family?

DAVID
No. Just me.

BARBARA
In that case, I may have just the house for you.

INT/EXT. CAR/STREET - DAY

Barbara pulls her car to a stop in front of a house with a 'For Rent' sign on the lawn.

DAVID
I'll take it.

BARBARA
Just like that? Wouldn't you like to see inside --

DAVID
I like to be surprised.

BARBARA
I wish all men were like you. But I'm afraid you won't find many surprises in Swift Falls.

INT. REALTY AGENCY - DAY

David signs the rental agreement and hands it to Barbara who, in turn, hands him a set of keys.

BARBARA
How long will you be staying with us?

DAVID
I'm not sure. Maybe forever.

BARBARA
Well, I'd be happy to answer any questions you have, not that there's much to know about Swift Falls.

DAVID
Thanks. I'll keep that in mind.

BARBARA
Do you mind if I ask you a question?
Why Swift Falls?

DAVID
I was looking for a place to get
away from the rat race for awhile.
When I saw Swift Falls, I knew I'd
found it.

BARBARA
Well, if there's anything I can do,
anything at all --

Barbara shakes his hand, holding it longer than necessary.

DAVID
I have your card.

As David withdraws his hand from Barbara's and exits, she
goes to the window and watches him drive away.

EXT. SWIFT FALLS - DAY

Susan drives into Swift Falls, past the realty office, and
along it's main drag. It's nothing much more than a grocery
store, drug store, post office, library, and movie theatre.

She turns onto a country road finally and continues driving
until she reaches a farm with the name "Marshall Farms"
emblazoned on the barn.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Susan gets out of her car as JASON SAWYER, 30's, the farm's
manager, exits the barn.

JASON
Susan? This is a surprise.

SUSAN
For me too. You're taking good care
of things, I see.

JASON
I wouldn't want to get myself fired,
seeing as I practically grew up here
too.

SUSAN
It looks exactly the same.

JASON
 Not much changes around here.
 Except we have a movie theatre now.
 Oh, and we have one other thing.

INT. BARN - DAY

Susan watches in amazement as Jason hits a key on a keyboard and an electronic milking machine immediately moves under a cow, locates its' teats with sensors, and begins milking.

JASON
 If your granddaddy saw this, he'd
 roll over in his grave.

SUSAN
 He would.

JASON
 Have you been home yet? To your
 parents, I mean.

SUSAN
 I thought I'd get settled in first.

JASON
 Just so you know, Susan. When I
 said not much has changed, I meant
 it.

INT. FARM HOUSE. DINING ROOM - DAY

Susan sets up her writing space in the dining room, moving things until everything is in exactly the right place.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DAY

David sets up his writing space too, albeit more haphazardly.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY - MONTAGE

Susan and David both garner attention from the towns people as they just keep missing one another while running errands:

-- Susan enters the post office as David exits the hardware store;

-- Susan exits the book store as David enters the drug store;

-- Susan enters the hardware store as David exits the post office.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

David enters the grocery store finally and begins to shop. Susan follows and, as they move up and down the aisles, they continue just missing one another.

LATER

David reaches the check-out counter in time to see Susan exit. He sets his groceries down and turns to LISA, the twentysomething cashier.

DAVID
I'll be right back.

EXT. GROCERY STORE. PARKING LOT - DAY

David catches up to Susan, surprised to find her putting her groceries into the back of a truck.

DAVID
Susan!
(BEAT) You can drive a truck?

SUSAN
David! What are you doing here?

DAVID
Just picking up a few things.

SUSAN
In Swift Falls, David. What are you doing in Swift Falls?

DAVID
I just started driving, Susan, and here I am.

SUSAN
Really, David? This is the place you refused to visit when we were married because you said you couldn't understand why anyone would choose to go to a place that wasn't big enough to have a movie theatre.

David points to a movie theatre across the street.

DAVID
It has one now.

SUSAN
I still don't understand why you're here.

DAVID
I needed a change, Susan.

SUSAN
Then drink Bourbon instead of Scotch.

DAVID
I also needed a quiet place to write.

SUSAN
Let's try this one more time, David.
Why here? Why Swift Falls?

DAVID
Why not Swift Falls, Susan? You're
upset, aren't you? It's not like I
knew you'd be here.

SUSAN
Well, now you do.

DAVID
What are you saying?

SUSAN
I think you know.

Susan walks away as people stop to look.

DAVID
Can't we talk about this, Susan?
Please?...It's either that or...or
I take off one article of clothing
for every step you take!

As Susan keeps walking, David removes his shoes and socks.
She glances back as he removes his shirt and undoes his pants.

SUSAN
I don't know what you've heard about
small town life, David, but you
might want to double-check your
sources.

DAVID
I just want to talk, Susan.

INT. DINER - DAY

Dressed again, David is drinking coffee in a booth with Susan.

SUSAN
It's a big country, David. With
lots of small towns.

DAVID

It doesn't have to be like this,
Susan.

SUSAN

That's one opinion.

DAVID

Can't we at least give it a try?

SUSAN

Swift Falls isn't that big, David.
Sometimes it felt like New York
wasn't big enough and Swift Falls
isn't New York.

DAVID

Exactly. Maybe New York was our
problem? If I see you on the street,
Susan, I'll cross to the other side,
not that I'll have much time for
walking anyway since I'll be busy
writing.

SUSAN

You promise to stay out of my way?

DAVID

May I never write another book if
I'm lying. So why are you here?

SUSAN

I'm staying at the farm while I
rewrite a book Elaine thinks has a
chance of being published.

DAVID

That's great, Susan. We'll both be
writing so we won't have time to get
in each other's way.

EXT. GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

Susan and David drive off in opposite directions.

INT. FARM HOUSE. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Susan is writing on her laptop when she stops suddenly, saves
the file, turns the computer off, and grabs her jacket.

EXT. SUSAN'S PARENTS' HOUSE - DAY

Susan pulls her truck into her parents' driveway and parks.

INT. SUSAN'S PARENTS' HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Susan enters the kitchen to find David seated at the table with her parents, GEORGE and MARION MARSHALL.

GEORGE

We were wondering when you were going to grace us with your presence. We had to hear you were at the farm from David here.

MARION

Sit in and have some pie, dear. It's Pumpkin, your favorite.

SUSAN

I don't want pie. I want to know what he's doing here?

GEORGE

He's about to have some pie. You know, he's full of stories, just like radio used to be. But of course, you'd know that already since you were married to him.

SUSAN

How could you, David? My own parents.

DAVID

This isn't what it looks like, Susan.

SUSAN

You're not having dinner with my parents?

DAVID

Okay, it is what it looks like, but it's not what you think.

MARION

We heard he was in town, dear, so we invited him to dinner.

GEORGE

It's only natural we'd be curious since you weren't married to him long enough for us to ever meet.

MARION

Would you like tea with your pie, dear?

SUSAN

I told you, I don't want pie. I don't want tea and I don't want pie. What I want is for him to leave.

(to David)

I want you to leave, please.

GEORGE

Maybe this is how you talk in the city, but you're not in the city now and I won't have you talking like that to a guest in our home. Sure, maybe he is a little citified. Maybe he doesn't hunt or fish. And maybe he has a sissy job for a man, but he has a way with a story and he can hold his liquor so if you can't be civil, you don't have to stay.

SUSAN

Fine.

Susan turns and exits in a huff.

MARION

She takes after her grandfather, that one.

GEORGE

That's why he left her the farm.

MARION

Headstrong from the get go. But we don't have to tell you that.

INT. FARM HOUSE. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Susan tries to write, but is unable to concentrate.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

David feverishly writes at his computer, clearly pleased.

INT. FARM HOUSE. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Susan gives up trying to write, grabs her jacket, and exits.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Susan approaches a cow and strokes her head.

SUSAN

Hi there, Bessie. My, what big, brown eyes you have?

Susan grabs a pail and stool and proceeds to milk the cow.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Don't worry, you're in good hands.
Good hands, get it. When I was a
little girl, I used to do this all
the time. Mind you, it's been
awhile since I've been a little girl
and the world was a different place
then.

Susan looks at the milking machine.

SUSAN (cont'd)

I guess I don't have to tell you.

Jason appears in the doorway and watches Susan milk Bessie.

INT. FARM HOUSE. DINING ROOM - EVENING

Susan tries to write, but is still unable to concentrate.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

David pours himself a drink, then gets an idea and quickly
returns to his computer, leaving it behind.

EXT/INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Holding a casserole dish, Barbara KNOCKS at the door, then
when there's no answer, leaves it on the step and exits.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

David crosses the street when he sees Susan walking towards
him; she keeps walking without acknowledging the gesture.

INT. DAVID'S LIVING ROOM/SUSAN'S DINING ROOM - DAY

INTERCUT David continuing to write with fervor while Susan
continues to struggle.

INT. BARN - EVENING

Susan enters to find Jason feeding the pigs.

SUSAN

Need any help?

JASON

I thought you came here to write.

When Susan shrugs, Jason hands her the bag of pig feed and
she starts feeding them like a pro.

JASON (cont'd)
I see you haven't lost your touch.

SUSAN
Who, me?

JASON
It's funny to think there are people
in the world who have never been
this close to a pig.

SUSAN
Just yesterday, Bessie and I had
pretty much the same conversation.

EXT/INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Engrossed in his writing again, David doesn't hear a teenage boy KNOCKING at the door with his grocery order. The boy leaves the groceries on the step finally and exits.

LATER

As he puts his groceries away, David reacts to finding extra items he didn't order.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

David approaches Lisa at the check-out with his groceries.

LISA
Hi, Mr. Winston.

DAVID
Please, call me David.

She scrutinizes his order.

LISA
Well, David, you might want to pick
up some butter. It's on sale and
you must be running low by now.

DAVID
Actually, I meant to add it to the
list....Wait! How did you know I'd
be running low?

LISA
I'm the one who fills your phone
orders.

DAVID
So you're the one who's been
slipping in the extras?

LISA
I hope you don't mind.
(off his look)
I don't suppose you're going to the
dance on Saturday?

DAVID
I think I could be talked into it.
That is, if you'll go with me.

LISA
I think I could be talked into it.

DAVID
What time do dances start in these
here parts?

LISA
Usually about nine.

DAVID
Nine it is. Why don't I give you my
number and you can call me with your
address...which you already have
because you do my phone orders.

EXT. DRUG STORE - DAY

David waits for Susan to exit the drug store, then enters.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Barbara browses the shelves, surprised to find David's novels.

EXT. LIBRARY PARKING LOT/CAR - DAY

Barbara reads David's first novel on the way to her car, then
gets in the car and keeps reading instead of driving away.

EXT/INT. DINER - DAY

David enters, sees Susan eating at the counter, then turns
and exits.

INT. MOVIE THEATRE - EVENING

David takes a seat as the movie is about to begin, sees Susan
seated a couple of rows ahead of him, and moves to the other
side of the theatre.

INT. REALTY AGENCY - DAY

Barbara finishes David's first book, then starts his second.

INT. CHURCH. BASEMENT - EVENING

An old-tyme fiddle BAND tunes up their instruments as David enters with Lisa on his arm.

EXT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE - EVENING

Susan exits the house and walks toward the truck as Jason exits his living quarters off the barn.

JASON

Well, don't you look purty!

SUSAN

Right back at ya, cowboy. Are you going to the dance?

JASON

I thought I would.

SUSAN

Care to ride shotgun?
(BEAT) I'm sorry, you probably have a date.

JASON

Who, me?...I don't actually so sure.
It'll be like old times.

An uncomfortable look crosses Susan's face.

JASON (cont'd)

I'm sorry, I guess I shouldn't keep bringing up the past like that.

SUSAN

The past is the past.

INT. CHURCH. BASEMENT - EVENING

David does his best to follow along as he and Lisa square dance in a set with three other couples. As the formation progresses, Barbara becomes David's partner.

BARBARA

Not bad for a city fella.

DAVID

I obviously didn't inherit the square dance gene.

BARBARA

It just takes practice. By the way,
I read your books today. Your
research must keep you pretty busy --

Before David can answer, he and Barbara move on to new partners, then back to their original partners. As the dance ends, David and Lisa move off to the side of the room and sets form for the next dance.

LISA

Are you having fun?

DAVID

You bet.

A BUZZ permeates the room as Susan and Jason enter together.

LISA

That's Susan Marshall. She lives in
New York too.

DAVID

Really?
(jokingly)
Who's her boyfriend?

LISA

Ex-boyfriend. He takes care of her
farm for her when she's not here.
They practically grew up together.

Lisa waves to Susan who, when she sees David with her, acknowledges her in a perfunctory manner.

LISA (cont'd)

She doesn't seem so friendly now
that she's been to the big city.

DAVID

Cities can do that to a person.

LISA

It hasn't done that to you!

DAVID

No, but I was born in the city.
It's all I know. Maybe when I go
back I'll be different too.

David watches Susan pull Jason onto the dance floor with an air of familiarity.

LISA
Would you like to dance some more?

DAVID
I thought you'd never ask.

As they dance, David tries to match Susan and Jason's exuberance, but he just looks clumsy.

INT. FARM. SUSAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Susan and Jason are making love.

JASON
Maybe not much has changed after all.

As they pull apart, it's clear that's not true for Susan.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Barbara gyrates wildly on top of David as they make love.

BARBARA
It's funny how I just happened to
drive by as you were coming home.
(as she orgasms)
I guess this means I'll be in your
next book.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - MORNING

As David pours himself a cup of coffee, he picks up a bottle of Scotch, considers adding it, thinks better of it, then takes the coffee to the living room and starts to write.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. KITCHEN - MORNING

An awkward silence hangs between Susan and Jason as they drink their morning coffee.

JASON
I should get started on the chores.

Jason goes to the door.

SUSAN
Jason, wait! I want you to know that
what happened last night --

JASON
The past is the past, Susan. I got
it.

Jason exits.

INT. FARM HOUSE. DINING ROOM - DAY

Susan tries to write, but still can't concentrate.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

David unpacks his grocery order to find several items damaged.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

As Barbara approaches Lisa's check-out with her groceries, Lisa puts up a 'CASHIER CLOSED' sign.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

A lone car pulls to a stop at an intersection.

INT. CAR - DAY

Jerry looks straight ahead, then to the left and right, as he tries to decide which direction to go in. Suddenly, Elaine SHRIEKS from the back seat.

ELAINE

We're lost, aren't we?

JERRY

We're not lost. We're just somewhere between New York and Swift Falls. But we're not lost!

ELAINE

We're lost. I don't know why I agreed to this cockamie idea.

JERRY

Maybe because it's all your company could afford.

ELAINE

I should have paid my own way. At least, I'd still have my sanity.

JERRY

And I'd still have my hearing. And why do you have to sit back there? Why can't you sit up front like a normal person?

ELAINE

I've taken cabs all my life, I don't know how to sit in front.

(more)

ELAINE (cont'd)

Now would you please find a gas station so we can get directions so we can get to Swift Falls so I can have a drink and forget I ever met you!

JERRY

I can't tell you how pleased I am you're such an easy person to travel with. You've obviously never heard the phrase: When in Rome.

ELAINE

Have you ever heard the phrase: Up Yours?...I'm sorry, but my blood pressure goes up whenever I leave the tri-state area.

Jerry decides to turn right finally.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Jerry pulls into a gas station and rolls down his window as an ELDERLY MAN approaches.

ELAINE

Don't forget to get directions.

JERRY

I'll get directions. Don't worry.
(to elderly man)
Hello, there?

ELDERLY MAN

Howdy, young fella!

ELAINE

I thought people only talked like that in movies.

JERRY

Howdy yourself.

ELAINE

Now I'm going to be sick.

JERRY

How are you today?

ELDERLY MAN

Oh, you know, just walkin' around trying to save on funeral expenses.

ELAINE

This just keeps getting better.

JERRY

You wouldn't happen to know how to get to Swift Falls, would you?

ELDERLY MAN

Sure do. It's ten miles thataway.

The man points in the opposite direction to which they were travelling.

EXT/INT. ROAD/CAR - DAY

As Jerry stops at the "Welcome to Swift Falls" sign, Elaine gets out of the car, kisses the ground, then gets back in.

JERRY

You're a real work of art.

ELAINE

Thank you. Now drive, if there ever was a time for happy hour, this is it!

EXT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE - DAY

Jerry pulls to a stop in Susan's driveway. As soon as Elaine gets out with her suitcase, he drives off, leaving her sputtering in a wake of dust as Susan appears in the doorway.

SUSAN

Elaine! This is a surprise! I was just about to make some tea.

ELAINE

I don't think tea will do it, Susan.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Susan pours herself a cup of tea as Elaine nurses a Gin & Tonic.

ELAINE

You haven't done any work at all?

SUSAN

I've tried, Elaine. But I can't seem to write if he's anywhere within a fifty mile radius.

ELAINE

You wrote it in the first place.

SUSAN

Yes. After we'd separated. Anyway, what's the rush?

ELAINE

I told you, Susan, we're fast-tracking it.

Elaine holds up her now-empty glass.

ELAINE (cont'd)

I'd kill for another.

SUSAN

Not until you tell me why you're here. And with Jerry, no less.

ELAINE

I'd appreciate it if you wouldn't mention his name in my presence.

SUSAN

Then tell me what's going on.

ELAINE

It seems our publishing companies are merging....Well, not merging exactly. The little putz's company is taking over mine which means without this book I may be out of a job. Which, of course, may be preferable to working with....You can see why this is so important, Susan.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Jerry reads David's new manuscript with keen interest.

JERRY

I have to give it to you, David. You were right about coming here. This is the best work you've ever done.

DAVID

It was like picking words out of the air, Jer. I've heard authors say that, but I never understood it before. I've even cut back on the drinking.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Susan pours Elaine another Gin & Tonic.

ELAINE

I still don't get why David's here.

SUSAN

I'm not really sure. All I know is he agreed to stay out of my way and, for the most part, he has.

ELAINE

He couldn't manage that in the city.

SUSAN

I guess he found ways to keep busy.

ELAINE

According to...you know...he's even found time to write.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

Jerry holds the manuscript in his hands as if weighing it.

JERRY

Too bad we can't charge for books by the pound. How much do you think it weighs?

DAVID

Why are you here, Jerry?

JERRY

To see how you are, of course. And to see how the work's going. I'm happy to see it's going well.

DAVID

Why's Elaine here?

(off his look)

It's a small town. Not much goes unnoticed.

JERRY

Elaine's here to see how Susan is. And to see how her work's going.

DAVID

Why are the two of you here together?

EXT. STREET - DAY

David AD-LIBS a greeting to one of his neighbors as he and Jerry walk along the sidewalk.

JERRY
Can you believe this? We're actually walking.

DAVID
What are you talking about? We walk in New York!

JERRY
Yeah! From the cab to the restaurant and back again. It's not the same.

DAVID
I'm glad you're enjoying it, but you still haven't answered my question.

Jerry points to a house with a white picket fence, an obvious stall tactic.

JERRY
Look, David, A white picket fence. They really do exist.

INT. BAR - EVENING

David and Jerry are doing shots at a table already cluttered with empty shot glasses.

JERRY
Please, David, no more. I've grown accustomed to having a liver.

DAVID
Then stop stalling!

JERRY
Okay, okay. Our company's taking over Elaine's company!

Jerry waits for an explosion that never comes.

DAVID
So? Mergers happen all the time in publishing.

JERRY
There'll be cuts, David. And not all the writers will survive them. But with the new book, I'm sure you have nothing to worry about.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. VARIOUS ROOMS - EVENING

Elaine follows Susan throughout various rooms of the house.

ELAINE

This is charming, Susan. I can see why you wanted to come for a visit.

SUSAN

Now if only I could write. Wait! You've never thought rustic was charming. You're starting to lie now?

ELAINE

I thought I should practice. You know, to survive the merger.

Elaine enters Susan's bedroom and notices the door opens to the outside rather than the inside.

ELAINE (cont'd)

If you can't write, Susan, I guess you'll have to come back to the city.

SUSAN

I don't think I'm ready yet. Or maybe I'm not meant to write a book. But I know one thing, I have a new appreciation for Joyce Carol Oates.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. BEDROOM - EVENING

Wearing one towel while drying her hair with another, Susan exits her ensuite bathroom, surprised to see her laptop and all the notes for the book on the bed.

SUSAN

Elaine, do you know why -- ?

Susan sees the door is closed and tries to open it. When it won't budge, she BANGS on it.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Elaine!

ELAINE (O.S.)

Yes, Susan?

Elaine's voice comes from the other side of the door.

SUSAN

Where are you?

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. HALLWAY/BEDROOM - EVENING

Elaine, seated in a chair propped against Susan's door, calmly drinks a Gin & Tonic and flips through a magazine.

INTERCUT Susan in the bedroom with Elaine in the hallway.

ELAINE
I'm right here, Susan. In the hall.

SUSAN
You're outside my room?

ELAINE
That's right.

SUSAN
Why?

ELAINE
I want you to write.

SUSAN
This is crazy. Let me out!

ELAINE
No.

SUSAN
Elaine! Let me out!

ELAINE
Not until you write.

SUSAN
Then I'll climb out the window.

ELAINE
You might find it a bit chilly.

Susan checks her closet to find her clothes gone, then looks for her suitcase and finds it gone too. Finally, she goes to the bathroom to find something to wear, but all she finds are the towels she's already using. She even considers the see-through shower curtain for a moment, but dismisses that idea.

LATER

Still outside Susan's bedroom, Elaine pours another drink as Susan sits on the bed in the bedroom and tries to write.

SUSAN
Okay, Elaine, you win.

ELAINE
What do I win, Susan?

SUSAN
I'll go back to New York.

ELAINE

That's good, Susan. Especially
since I really have to pee.

EXT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

Jason loads Susan's suitcase into the trunk of the car as Elaine waits quietly in the passenger seat. Susan hugs Jason, then gets into the car and drives away.

INT. SUSAN'S MOVING CAR - NIGHT

Susan drives through Swift Falls on her way out of town.

ELAINE

You're doing the right thing, Susan.
This book could change your life.
You want your life to change, don't
you?

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE. KITCHEN/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jerry looks wired as he continues holding David's manuscript.

DAVID

You're not tired yet?

JERRY

Are you kidding? I want to talk
about the book some more. I have a
few changes...suggestions...changes.

DAVID

I thought you said it was the best
work I've ever done?

JERRY

It is, David, but no book's perfect.

DAVID

The bible?

JERRY

Too many characters. And it's too
open to interpretation.

DAVID

Fine. Tell me what you want changed.

LATER

David struggles to make the changes on his laptop in the living room while Jerry waits quietly in the kitchen. Frustrated, David gives up trying to write and goes to the

KITCHEN

and pours himself a drink, gulps it down, then returns to the

LIVING ROOM

and tries to write again.

KITCHEN

David reappears moments later, picks up the bottle of Scotch, then puts it down again.

DAVID (cont'd)

It isn't working. Something's wrong.

JERRY

Are you doing anything differently?
Changed your aftershave? Started
taking baths instead of showers?

DAVID

No, everything's the same.
(BEAT) Everything except Susan.

JERRY

Susan?

David dials Susan's number, but the phone just RINGS.

DAVID

Think about it. I wrote my first
book when I was with Susan and it
was a big success. The second one
I wrote when we were breaking up and
it wasn't a success. Okay, it
bombed. And this one, the one you
say is my best ever, I wrote faster
than anything I've ever written in
my life. I don't know why I didn't
realize it before. Susan's my muse!

JERRY

Your muse.

DAVID

Yes. If I so much as see her in
town, I come home and write my ass
off.

JERRY

And the fact she hates you....?

David grabs his jacket and car keys and starts for the door.

DAVID
I guess muses are like books.
They're not perfect. C'mon.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jerry follows David to the car.

JERRY
Where are we going?

DAVID
To see Susan. We have to figure
this out.

JERRY
Aren't you forgetting something?
(off his look)
Aren't you going to lock the door?

DAVID
We don't lock doors here.

JERRY
You're kidding? I spend half my life
looking for misplaced keys. Maybe
I should move here? What d'ya think,
David? You think I should move
here --

DAVID
Just get in the car, Jerry.

EXT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE - NIGHT

David tries the door of the house to find it's locked, then
peers through the window to look for signs of life.

JERRY
I thought you said people don't lock
their doors here?

DAVID
They do if they're going away for
any length of time.

JERRY
Like maybe back to New York?

Jason rounds the corner of the house.

JASON
If you're looking for Susan, she's
not here.

JERRY

Do you know where she is?

JASON

She went back to New York with the woman who never stops drinking.

DAVID

What'd I'd tell you? I'm right again.

JERRY

I know. This is getting scary.

INT. MOVING CAR - NIGHT

Elaine is driving now, albeit at five miles an hour, as Susan sits in the passenger seat and furiously writes on her laptop.

ELAINE

Are you sure this is a good idea, Susan? I've never driven a car before.

SUSAN

You're doing fine. Besides, it's not like there's any traffic.

ELAINE

I could really use a drink.

SUSAN

When I finish the changes.

INT. DAVID'S MOVING CAR - NIGHT

David drives while Jerry rereads David's manuscript in the passenger seat.

JERRY

Now that I look at it again, maybe it doesn't need that much work. Just some tweaking here and there. You can still tweak, can't you?

DAVID

I told you I'd make the changes, Jerry, and I will.

INT/EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY - MONTAGE

Susan and David settle back into their New York routines:

-- Susan pops her morning vitamins, then goes jogging through Central Park while David struggles to write;

-- David stands in front of the Scotch section in the liquor store and tries to decide which brand to buy while Susan browses in a bookstore;

-- Susan sees David coming out of a store, but doesn't say anything;

-- David thinks he sees Susan and rushes to greet her, but it turns out to be someone who just looks like her.

INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Susan finds an invitation to a cocktail party celebrating the merging of the two publishing houses in her mail.

INT. DAVID'S HOUSE - DAY

David finds the same invitation in his mail and throws it into the garbage as Jerry enters.

JERRY
Anything interesting?

DAVID
Not really, no.

JERRY
Bills, huh.

DAVID
Pretty much.

Jerry pulls the invitation out of the garbage.

JERRY
What's this?

DAVID
A Go-to-jail-do-not-collect-two-hundred-dollars card? Or maybe it's an invitation to spend two hours with people who think they 'are' because they read. Two hours, I might add, you'll never get back.

JERRY
Maybe. Or maybe it's the solution to your problem.

DAVID
An open bar?

JERRY
Susan will be there. Your muse?

INT. BALLROOM - EVENING

With the cocktail party in full swing, David and Jerry linger by the bar.

DAVID
I don't see her.

JERRY
She'll be here. Have another drink!

DAVID
You're telling me to drink now? You must be desperate.

David orders a drink as Susan and Elaine enter finally.

JERRY
What'd I tell you?

ELAINE
Be strong, Susan. You can do this.

Elaine and Jerry discreetly nudge Susan and David toward the middle of the room and one another.

DAVID
Susan.

SUSAN
David.

JERRY
Elaine.

ELAINE
Jerry.

JERRY
I think I'll get a drink.
(to Elaine)
Would you like to get a drink?

ELAINE
You have to ask?

DAVID
You're back, I see.

SUSAN
For a few days now.

DAVID
Me, too.

Elaine and Jerry watch Susan and David from the bar.

ELAINE

You think it's working? I don't think it's working.

JERRY

It might if you give it a chance.

ELAINE

You obviously don't know anything about women.

JERRY

I know if they're getting any, they don't drink like there's no tomorrow.

ELAINE

If this doesn't work, there may not be.

INT. BATHROOM - EVENING

David is furiously writing on his laptop in one of the cubicles as Jerry enters and goes to a urinal to pee.

JERRY

I see it's working.

DAVID

Like a charm. I just have a few more changes to make.

JERRY

You better hurry. She's getting ready to leave.

INT. BALLROOM - EVENING

Susan looks less than happy as David approaches her across the room.

SUSAN

We're obviously not in Swift Falls anymore.

DAVID

Obviously. How's your book coming?

SUSAN

It's finished. Yours?

DAVID

Any moment now.

SUSAN

I owe you an apology, David. You said you'd stay out of my way in Swift Falls and you did so thank you.

DAVID

And your parents?

SUSAN

You crossed a line there. Good-night.

As Susan exits, David turns and scribbles some more notes.

EXT. HOTEL - EVENING

David and Jerry exit the party.

DAVID

Wanna share a cab?

JERRY

Why don't we walk instead?

DAVID

Because it's twenty miles!

JERRY

Cab it is.

INT. MOVING CAB - EVENING

David and Jerry's cab stops in front of David's townhouse.

JERRY

Did you get everything you need?

DAVID

Yup! It's just typing now. Wanna come in while I print it up?

JERRY

Why not? It's not like I have a life of my own.

EXT/INT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY - MONTAGE

Photographers take pictures of Susan and David for their dust jackets as their books are printed, bound, boxed and shipped.

INT. FANTASY NIGHTCLUB - EVENING

Stephen bounds onstage with two other dancers and begins to dance. He looks into the audience, sees Susan, and smiles.

INT. STRIP CLUB - EVENING

David and Jerry watch a stripper go through her motions.

INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT - DAY

As the DOORBELL RINGS, Susan goes to the door in her pajamas to find a COURIER waiting with a package.

COURIER

I have a package for Susan Marshall.

SUSAN

I'm Susan Marshall.

COURIER

Sign here, please.

Susan signs for the package, closes the door, then stares at it in disbelief as Stephen appears from the bedroom.

STEPHEN

Good morning.

SUSAN

Sorry. Did the doorbell wake you?

STEPHEN

I was awake. I was watching you sleep. That is, when you weren't watching me. What ya got there?

SUSAN

Why don't you go back to bed and I'll put some coffee on. I make great coffee!

STEPHEN

If it's anything like the way you make love.

Stephen grabs the package from Susan.

STEPHEN (cont'd)

It's from a publisher. Must be a book. A pretty special one to be delivered this early in the morning.

Susan starts kissing Stephen to distract him.

SUSAN

Why worry about some dumb old book when there are other things we could be doing?

STEPHEN

How do you know it's a dumb old book unless you open it? Did I mention I like to be read to?

SUSAN

Fine, you win.

Susan rips open the package to find an advance copy of her novel, Flying Solo.

STEPHEN

It's your book.

SUSAN

Yes, it is.

She jumps on Stephen and, kissing him, propels him backwards toward the bedroom.

STEPHEN

Didn't you say something about coffee?

INT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY/EVENING - MONTAGE

-- David and Jerry play handball while Susan gets a massage as various people buy and read their respective books;

-- Susan and David rifle through various newspapers, looking for reviews. Susan is surprised to find one for her book on page one of The New York Review of Books while David looks disappointed to find a review of his book on page twenty-three.

INT. DAVID'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

David works at his computer with the TV tuned to the news.

NEWS READER

There's a new literary sensation on the horizon and her name is Susan Marshall.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - CONTINUING

Susan walks past a bookstore, surprised to see a display of her book in the window.

NEWS READER (V.O.)

This self-proclaimed 'good' girl is mining 'bad' girl territory and her first novel, Flying Solo, has everyone talking.

INT. DAVID'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

David stares intently at the TV.

NEWS READER
In other news --

DAVID
Hey! I wrote a book too.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - EVENING

David passes a bookstore with a display of his book in the window. After a moment, he doubles-back and enters.

INT. BOOKSTORE - EVENING

David lingers by the counter while a WOMAN buys a copy of his book, then approaches her as she heads for the exit.

DAVID
I couldn't help noticing that you
bought a copy of my book?

WOMAN
Your book?

DAVID
Yes. If you like, I'd be happy to
sign it for you.

A beat.

WOMAN
Thanks, but I don't think so.

The woman exits, leaving David looking humbled.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Susan hands a sweater and her credit card to a SALES CLERK who processes the card, then hands the slip to Susan to sign. The clerk then looks at the card to verify her signature.

SALES CLERK
Hey, you have the same name as the
woman who wrote that book, Flying
Solo? What are the odds?

INT. SUBWAY - DAY

Taken aback by the sight of someone reading her book, Susan moves closer, mirroring the reactions of the reader.

EXT. STREET - DAY

David and Jerry walk along a New York City street.

JERRY

Isn't this great? I never knew walking could be so fun.

DAVID

Is there a point to this walk?

JERRY

A point?

DAVID

You know, a reason.

JERRY

I guess there is a reason. You didn't happen to see the review of Susan's book in the Times, did you?

DAVID

The point, Jerry?

JERRY

The first page, no less. Of course, your review --

DAVID

On page twenty-three....

JERRY

Was good too.

DAVID

Jerry!

JERRY

Okay, okay. As you know, we're in a very precarious position right now, especially with the merger. People just aren't buying books the way they used to --

DAVID

So far you're not telling me anything I don't already know.

David indicates a bar.

DAVID (cont'd)

Oh, look, Jer, a bar.

JERRY

Okay, the point. I might as well just say it, David. We want to piggyback your tour with Susan's.

DAVID

Okay.

JERRY

Really?

DAVID

Yes, really. I have to make money on this book because the way things are going it may be my last.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Susan and Elaine also walk along a New York City street.

ELAINE

So how are things, Susan?

SUSAN

I feel like everywhere I go people are looking at me.

ELAINE

Get used to it. Once you start the book tour, they will be.

SUSAN

Tour? I don't know, Elaine --

ELAINE

Susan! What's the point of writing a brilliant book if nobody knows about it?

SUSAN

I'd like to think it's good. I don't know about brilliant --

ELAINE

There's more, Susan. We want you to go on tour with David.

SUSAN

You what? From what I've heard, book tours are bad enough when everything goes right. To do it with David, I'd be out of mind. No, Elaine, I can't. I'm sorry.

INT. BAR - DAY

Jerry and Elaine commiserate with one another over drinks.

ELAINE

I've never known two more stubborn people.

JERRY

And if anyone understands stubborn, it would be you.

ELAINE

What's that supposed to mean?

JERRY

All I'm saying is you understand. Could we please just work together on this?

ELAINE

I could take you, you know. With one arm tied behind my back.

JERRY

I'm hoping it won't come to that. So what do we do now?

ELAINE

You're going to have to get David to talk to her.

JERRY

You're kidding!

ELAINE

Do I look like I'm kidding?

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Susan, dressed to the nines and looking radiant, enters to find David already waiting. He stands and holds her chair.

DAVID

You look amazing! Is it true women dress for other women, or do they secretly dress for men and just don't want them to know?

SUSAN

Please, David, let's just have a pleasant....

Susan notices there are only two place settings on the table.

SUSAN (cont'd)
Aren't Elaine and Jerry coming?

DAVID
Wouldn't you know it? Something came up at the last minute. But they said to go ahead without them. So, what are you in the mood for?

David grabs his menu, almost hiding behind it, as Susan peruses her menu.

SUSAN
I don't know. Elaine says everything's good here. But if this dinner is to get me to agree to the tour, David, you're wasting your time.

INT. COLLEGE. LECTURE HALL - DAY

On the first class of the semester, Susan enters a lecture hall filled with mostly female students who give her a standing ovation and a big round of APPLAUSE. As she motions for them to sit down, she notices several of the women are holding copies of her book.

SUSAN
Thank you. Hopefully, you all received the reading list with your registration and have already read our first book, Swamp Angel.

As Susan holds up the book, a STUDENT holds up her hand.

SUSAN (cont'd)
Yes.

STUDENT #1
Some of us were hoping we could study your book.

SUSAN
You want to study my book? But Swamp Angel's a modern classic.

STUDENT #2
Flying Solo is the reason most of us signed up for the course.

Several students nod in agreement.

ELDERLY FEMALE STUDENT
Please!

EXT. COLLEGE. CAMPUS - DAY

Susan punches Elaine's phone number into her cell phone as she walks across campus after class.

SUSAN

You win, Elaine. I'll do the tour.

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO. GREEN ROOM - DAY

Susan paces as she and David wait to tape a talk show.

SUSAN

I don't know why the green room isn't green, David. Neither are green cards.

DAVID

Really?

SUSAN

Yes. Why are you talking?

DAVID

I thought it might relax you. You seem a little nervous.

SUSAN

A little! I'm beginning to wish I'd never written a book. Is it always like this your first time?

A beat.

DAVID

Oh, you mean your first book tour! Usually, the first one's pretty good because you don't know what to expect. It's when you know what to expect that it really sucks. Then, of course, there's the added pressure of it being a follow-up book, especially if the first one's a hit. Well, like yours is.

SUSAN

You're not helping, David.

INT. TV STUDIO #1 - DAY

Susan enters the studio and takes a seat next to the TV HOSTESS to a big round of APPLAUSE.

TV HOSTESS

Now I understand this is your first television interview and you're a little nervous. But you don't have to be. They love you, they really love you. And I have to say....

She holds up a copy of Flying Solo to the camera.

TV HOSTESS (cont'd)

...I loved this book. I bet a lot of mothers will be giving it to their daughters, hopefully before they get married.

The audience APPLAUDS again.

LATER

TV HOSTESS (cont'd)

Now this book reads just like real life. Is it? Is Flying Solo your story?

SUSAN

Is it my story? No, it's fiction.

TV HOSTESS

So it's not a -- what do they call it -- roman a clef? C'mon, you can tell us.

SUSAN

No. I mean everything that happens is grist for the writer's mill. That's just the process, the way it works.

(as an afterthought)

Essentially, fiction writers are professional liars who, if they're any good, tell essential truths.

TV HOSTESS

That's so nicely put.

Thinking she's dodged a bullet, Susan relaxes a little as the TV Hostess holds Susan's book up to the camera again.

TV HOSTESS (cont'd)

This is definitely what they call a good read. And stay where you are, after the break we'll be joined by Susan's ex-husband who also happens to have a new book.

LATER

David is seated between Susan and the TV Hostess now as she holds up David's book, A House Full of Women, to the camera.

TV HOSTESS (cont'd)
 (with fake praise)
 My goodness, two good reads in one day. I don't know what to say.
 (BEAT) Yes, I do.

She locks her eyes on David.

TV HOSTESS (cont'd)
 Your male characters are typically male and your female characters typically female. How do you defend these choices in this day and age?

David bristles at her accusatory tone and returns her gaze.

DAVID
 Testosterone. About a glass a day.

She waits for him to elaborate, but he just smiles benignly.

TV HOSTESS
 Is that your answer?
 (BEAT) Unfortunately, we're out of time so be sure to join us next time. And don't forget to pick up Susan's book, Flying Solo.
 (as an afterthought)
 Oh, and David's book too, A House Full of Women.

INT. TV STUDIO #2 - DAY

David and Susan appear on a talk show with a MALE TV HOST.

MALE HOST
 Your books have struck a nerve with people. Why do you think that is?

DAVID
 Why do you think that is?

MALE HOST
 I don't know.

SUSAN
 Maybe I can answer the question.

DAVID
No, Susan, let him.

MALE HOST
I'm sorry, I haven't read your books.

DAVID
That's what I thought. Come on,
Susan.
(to host)
We'll come back after you have read
them. Maybe.

Susan shrugs and follows David off the stage as a look of desperation comes across the host's face.

MALE HOST
But we still have thirty-five
minutes to fill?

INT. RADIO STATION. STUDIO - DAY

David and Susan field questions from a MALE RADIO HOST.

RADIO HOST
Your central character is a thirty-
something male who always gets what
he wants. Is that how you see the
world?

DAVID
No one gets what he wants all the
time. But it's kind of stupid not
to try, don't you think?

The host looks at David with disdain, then turns to Susan.

RADIO HOST
Susan, the characters in your
novel -- the female ones anyway --
achieve success in a variety of
ways, not the least of which is
through cooperation. Now I
understand the two of you were
married. To each other. Were these
conflicting viewpoints the reason
the marriage failed?

Again, Susan shifts uncomfortably.

SUSAN
It's not that simple --

DAVID

Sure it is, Susan. He wants to know if you divorced me because I'm an asshole.

(to host)

Isn't that right?

RADIO HOST

In a nutshell, yes.

EXT. STREET - DAY

David rushes to catch up to Susan as she exits the studio.

DAVID

C'mon, Susan, the only reason we're here is to put on a show. Anything to sell a few books, hopefully before they're remaindered.

Susan's cell phone RINGS.

SUSAN

(into phone; abruptly)

What!

ELAINE (O.S.)

We just shipped 40,000 more units, Susan. There's even talk of Julia Roberts doing the movie. Isn't that great?

SUSAN

I was hoping for Meryl Streep.

ELAINE (O.S.)

She's good too.

SUSAN

I'm kidding, Elaine. It never even occurred to me anyone would want to make a movie out of --

Susan notices David flirt with a woman as she walks by.

ELAINE (O.S.)

Oh, one more thing. We've booked you on the Sally Fucking Simpson Show. Not even Letterman can get on that show! Actually, maybe we'll book you on Letterman. I bet Dave would love to have you --

SUSAN

Can I call you later, Elaine? Thanks.

Susan hangs up the phone and gives David a withering look.

DAVID

What?

David turns to see the woman enter a building, then turns back to Susan.

DAVID (cont'd)

Oh! That's nothing, Susan. I've changed.

SUSAN

I'm supposed to believe a man who slept with the caterer on the day of our wedding.

DAVID

I said I was sorry.

SUSAN

Not sorry enough not to sleep with the chambermaid on our honeymoon.

DAVID

I was drinking more then, Susan. Are we going to go through every indiscretion?

SUSAN

No, David, we're not. I'm having a root canal on Thursday. Look, if this tour has any chance, we need a plan. Obviously we have to talk during the interviews, but the rest of the time you stay out of my way, just like you did in Swift Falls. Deal?

David doesn't answer her.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Did you hear me, David? Because that's the only way this is ever going to work. David?

Susan realizes he's ignoring her on purpose.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Fine. By the way, we're booked on The Sally Simpson Show.

Susan turns and walks away.

DAVID
 (muttering to himself)
 Sally Simpson! She's a fox.

INT. TV STUDIO #3 - DAY

The BUZZ is palpable as a taping of The Sally Simpson Show -- the other queen of daytime talk -- is about to begin.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 And now, morning's answer to orange juice and the Wall Street Journal, please welcome Sally Simpson.

SALLY SIMPSON enters the studio to even more APPLAUSE.

SALLY SIMPSON
 Unless you've been living on another planet, you will no doubt have heard of my first guest. And what you've heard will depend on who you've been listening to. Rarely has a novel, and a first one at that, generated such controversy as Flying Solo. Welcome Susan Marshall to the show.

Susan enters and takes a seat on the stage next to Sally.

SALLY SIMPSON (cont'd)
 Let's get right to it. How do you account for the phenomenal reception this book has received?

SUSAN
 I'd like to think it's a good book. But more than that, there seems to be a high level of dissatisfaction with the relationships people are having. Especially the women.

SALLY SIMPSON
 Tell me about it! Did you ever dream you'd become the spokesperson for a whole generation of women?

SUSAN
 Hopefully I'm speaking for the men too. I mean, if what one gender experiences doesn't effect the other, well, then we've really got problems.

SALLY SIMPSON

So you're saying this isn't just chick lit, Bridget Jones's Diary, post-feminist girls in search of power...popularity...personal redemption.

SUSAN

No, I don't think it's chick lit. Nor do I think it helps to ghettoize writing by categorizing it.

SALLY SIMPSON

Sorry, I didn't know that's what I was doing. Now the characters in your novel are very sexual, they're not afraid to ask for what they want. What advice do you have for the women out there stuck in bad relationships?

SUSAN

We've heard it before, but it's true, the answer is talking. It's as simple and as complicated as that. For me, a good conversation is the biggest turn-on there is.

SALLY SIMPSON

I see. Okay, we have to take a break, but when we return we'll meet David Winston, a writer with a very different take on the sexes.

Susan relaxes a little as they go to break.

SALLY SIMPSON (cont'd)

We're really going to give Oprah a run for her money on this one.

LATER

DIRECTOR

We're on in ten.

The director AD-LIBS the countdown as Sally feigns a smile into the camera.

SALLY SIMPSON

Welcome back. We're about to bring out a writer whose novels have garnered mixed reviews for their portrayal of women as whores and gold diggers, David Winston.

David enters and takes his seat to a mixed reception.

SALLY SIMPSON (cont'd)
 David, you're as well known for your womanizing as you are for your novels. Do you think this is an impediment to your writing, or simply research?

DAVID
 Well, Sally, I guess it depends on the woman. Maybe we could get together after the show and talk about it?

SALLY SIMPSON
 Try me during sweeps week.
 (to Susan and David)
 Your book paints a rather bleak picture of marriage. Any chance you'll give the institution another try?

DAVID
 It's not called an institution for nothing. But for sweeps week, who knows?

SALLY SIMPSON
 Susan?

SUSAN
 I have nothing against marriage per se, assuming the relationship's solid. But for a marriage to really work, it needs a lot of different layers --

SALLY SIMPSON
 I suppose your idea of a good relationship, David, is a good lay?

DAVID
 You've read my book.

INT. SWIFT FALLS. JASON'S LIVING QUARTERS - DAY

Jason watches Susan being interviewed on television.

SUSAN
 I think men find dating easier than women. It's more linear. They know what they want from a date.

INT. SWIFT FALLS. BARBARA'S HOUSE - DAY

Barbara watches David being interviewed on television.

DAVID

Dating isn't difficult. Dating the same woman, that's difficult.

INT. SWIFT FALLS. LISA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Lisa also watches David being interviewed on television, eating chips like a woman scorned.

TV HOST

Is it true you continued to hone your dating technique even while you were married to Susan?

DAVID

What can I say?

INT. SUSAN'S PARENTS' HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Susan's parents watch Susan being interviewed on television.

TV HOSTESS

Did you ever actually catch him in the act? You know, doing it with someone in your own bed?

Susan looks at her in disbelief, clearly lost for words.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Susan is seated at a table on one side of the restaurant as various diners approach her for autographs. David is seated at a table on the other side, unable to even get a waiter's attention to ask for more bread. Susan's WAITER arrives finally with her food as she signs her last autograph.

SUSAN

(to waiter)

You want one too?

WAITER

What I want is for you to give us men a break in your next book. Since my wife read Flying Solo she hasn't done much in the bedroom, if you know what I mean.

SUSAN

Sorry.

David continues trying to get his waiter's attention without success. Finally, he turns to a COUPLE at the next table.

DAVID
Excuse me, but you guys don't seem
to be eating your bread. Do you
think I could have a piece?

The man hands the bread basket to David.

MAN
Help yourself.

The woman looks at David with a hint of recognition.

WOMAN
You look familiar. I know, I saw
you on TV, on that talk show! You
were with that other writer...Susan
Marshall!

DAVID
That would be me.

WOMAN
You were disgusting. And the things
you write about....
(to husband)
We have to change tables. I don't
want to sit near that man.

The woman's husband shrugs in resignation as she pulls him from his seat.

WOMAN (cont'd)
(to David)
You should be ashamed of yourself.

DAVID
I am. And thanks for the bread.

INT. HOTEL. BAR - EVENING

David is having a drink with a beautiful WOMAN at the bar when Susan enters and takes a seat at a table. When he notices a waiter take her order, then return to the bar, he indicates Susan with a nod of his head.

DAVID
Would you put the lady's drink on my
tab?

The waiter nods as the woman looks at David quizzically.

DAVID (cont'd)
Ex-wife.

Shaking her head, the woman sets her drink down on the bar.

WOMAN
This always happens to me.

David opens his mouth to speak.

WOMAN (cont'd)
Don't. Whatever you have to say, I
don't want to hear it. It'll just
be lies anyway.

As the woman grabs her purse and exits the bar, David downs
his drink, then motions to the bartender for another.

LATER

Susan approaches David at the bar.

SUSAN
Sorry if I interrupted things
with....

DAVID
I don't bother with names anymore.
It's so much easier if you just call
everyone 'next.'

SUSAN
Thanks for the drink.

DAVID
Don't mention it...seeing as we're
on the same expense account and all.
Isn't this a break in protocol?

SUSAN
It is, yes.

DAVID
As long as we're breaking protocol,
how about another drink then?

SUSAN
Thanks, but I have an early flight
tomorrow.

DAVID
Where are we going this time?

SUSAN
Back home to New York.

DAVID
Right, New York. Are you sure you
wouldn't like another? One for the
road?
(off her look)
Your demons never were very thirsty.
I think we probably sold some books
today. Jerry and Elaine will be
happy.

Susan nods.

SUSAN
Don't drink too much.

DAVID
I'll do my best.

David watches Susan exit, then turns to the bartender.

DAVID (cont'd)
Hit me again, barkeep.

LATER

The bartender pours David yet another drink.

BARTENDER
I've heard about the way you writers
drink. And this really makes you
write better? Me, one drink and I'm
comatose.

DAVID
You're lucky.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Susan and David take their seats without acknowledging one another. When Susan sees some of the passengers reading their books, she slumps down in her seat and tries to be as inconspicuous as possible.

INT. AIRPORT. BAGGAGE CAROUSEL - DAY

Susan and David wait for their bags on opposite sides of the baggage carousel.

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Susan and David exit the airport and hail cabs.

EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

Susan and David's cabs jockey for position on the freeway.

EXT. PUBLISHING HOUSE - DAY

Susan's cab pulls to a stop in front of the publishing house, followed, moments later, by David's cab.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE. ELAINE'S OFFICE - EVENING

Jerry pours champagne for Susan, David, Elaine, and himself.

ELAINE

Sales are going through the roof.
Marketing is working its collective
tuckus off to keep up with the
demand.

JERRY

There's even talk of you two getting
your own sitcom. What do you think
of that?

SUSAN

Honestly? It's ridiculous. David is
being vilified out there. And for
what? To sell a few books?

ELAINE

C'mon, Susan. David doesn't mind.
Do you, David?

DAVID

Why would I mind? I'm happy to let
you serve up my balls for all of
America to take a whack at.

ELAINE

See, Susan? David doesn't mind.

Elaine takes Susan aside.

ELAINE (cont'd)

Frankly, after David, I just assumed
you'd become a lesbian.

INT. SUSAN'S APARTMENT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Susan and Stephen are making love when she pulls away from
him suddenly.

STEPHEN (O.S.)

We're breaking up again, aren't we?

INT. STUDIO(S) - DAY - MONTAGE

INTERCUT David going to town on various talk shows while Susan tries to redress the balance.

DAVID

I was a miserable husband, a complete failure.

CUT TO:

DAVID

It's true. I fantasized about other women every time I made love to my wife.

CUT TO:

SUSAN

No, I didn't actually mind being married to David. Most of the time.

DAVID

I had my mistresses buy Susan's birthday, Christmas, and anniversary presents because, after all, their tastes were similar and you know what women are like if you don't get the right thing! They never get over it. Ever!

CUT TO:

DAVID

You know, I think I would fake an orgasm if I could. Definitely. Relationships are messy enough. Why add to it?

CUT TO:

SUSAN

No, I don't think he's misogynistic. If anything, he likes women too much. And yes, I would trust him around animals and children. What does any of this have to do with the books?

INT. BOOKSTORE(S) - DAY - MONTAGE

People rush to buy copies of Flying Solo and A House Full of Women in stores that list their respective sales on a tote board. Susan's book is beating out David's book two-to-one.

EXT. DINER - DAY

A waitress writes the day's specials on a blackboard: The Susan Marshallburger and The David Winstonstew.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

A minister puts the title for Sunday's sermon up on the Announcement board: "Without God, you're Flying Solo."

EXT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

A banner on the outside of a strip club reads: "WE'VE GOT A HOUSE FULL OF WOMEN AND WE DON'T MEAN THE BOOK."

EXT. HOTEL - EVENING

The PAPARAZZI, out in full force, snap pictures of Susan and David as they exit their hotel and go to separate cabs.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Right here. Right in the camera.
That's it.

Susan holds up her arms to shield herself from the photographers while David gives them the finger.

EXT. STREET. NEWSPAPER BOXES - DAY

Photographs of Susan and David on the front page of various newspapers peer out from their boxes, including the one of David giving the photographers the finger.

INT. RADIO STATION. STUDIO - DAY

Susan and David appear on a radio call-in show.

FEMALE CALLER #1

Hi, Susan. I want to thank you for telling it like it is. It's about time people realized it's not like it is in the movies.

RADIO HOST #2

Okay, thanks for your call. I think we have another caller on the line. Hello?

FEMALE CALLER #2

Hi! My boyfriend won't read anything but the Sports section in the paper, but I made him read your book, Susan, and now he's joined the Book-of-the-Month club.

RADIO HOST #2

A convert. It doesn't get any better than that. I think our next caller has a question for David. Are you there, caller?

FEMALE CALLER #3

Yes. I saw you on TV, David, and I was wondering if you'd go out with me? I think we'd really hit it off.

Susan, the radio host, and the engineer in the control booth look at David expectantly for his answer.

DAVID

Do you have big tits?

EXT. STREET - DAY

Susan exits the studio and SCREAMS as David calmly follows her outside.

SUSAN

What the hell are we doing, David?

DAVID

Proving literature's not dead? Oh, and we're getting rich in the process!

SUSAN

We've become laughing stocks. It's certainly not about the books anymore...if it ever was. And why are you taking all this shit?

DAVID

We're competing in the global marketplace, Susan. We're playing the game. Did I mention we're getting rich? God, I love this country!

SUSAN

Well, I'm sorry, I refuse to play "the game" anymore. I'm going home and, if you're smart, you will too.

INT. RESTAURANT - EVENING

Susan and Elaine eat dinner in a restaurant.

SUSAN
I wanted to tell you in person,
Elaine. I'm sorry, but I can't
continue with the tour --

A WAITER brings a bottle of wine to their table.

ELAINE
We didn't order this.

WAITER
It's compliments of the women at
Table 9.

Susan and Elaine look to Table 9 to see the women holding
their hands reverently in front of them as if giving thanks.

ELAINE
And you want to give this up, Susan?

EXT. SUSAN'S MOVING CAR - DAY

Susan drives past the city limits sign again, the weight of
the world seemingly falling from her shoulders.

INT. TV STUDIO - DAY

David, who's obviously been drinking, is in the middle of an
interview.

DAVID
Writing is just masturbation really.
Fiction, especially. It's nothing
more than jerking off onto a page.
Unless, of course, you're Richard
Ford. Did you know that seventy-
five per cent of all men jerk off in
the shower and the other twenty-five
percent sing?

Shocked, the tv host shakes his head 'no.'

DAVID (cont'd)
And do you know what they sing?

Again, he shakes his head 'no.'

DAVID (cont'd)
I guess we know what group you're in.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE. JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

David sits opposite Jerry.

JERRY
Masturbation, David?

DAVID
You know it's true.

JERRY
Yes, but I was hoping we could keep it our little secret. I certainly didn't expect you to go on national television and announce it to the world. I have to tell you, David, I'm disappointed.

David shrugs.

JERRY (cont'd)
And do you know why I'm disappointed? I'm disappointed because we only moved up five places on The New York Times best-seller list. Your book is neck and neck with Susan's. Isn't that great?

David appears less than enthusiastic.

JERRY (cont'd)
I thought you'd be happy, David. Don't you know what this means?

DAVID
Woody Allen isn't masturbation's only fan?

JERRY
It means you can write your own ticket.

INT. BARN - DAY

Susan and Jason watch a new calf being born, absolutely mesmerized.

SUSAN
What's a book, compared to this?

JASON
That doesn't sound like the Susan I know.

SUSAN
It's the new me. I never thought they'd actually think the book was autobiographical.

JASON

I don't know anything about books, Susan, but don't people usually write about themselves? Otherwise, what's the point of writing a book in the first place?

SUSAN

Did you read it?

Jason nods.

SUSAN (cont'd)

Did you think it was about me?

Once again, he nods.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE/DAVID'S TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

INTERCUT Susan and David wandering around their houses. They happen to pick up one another's books and start to read.

EXT. DAVID'S TOWNHOUSE - MORNING

Carrying Susan's book, David exits his townhouse and gets into a waiting stretch limousine.

INT. LIMOUSINE - MORNING

David reads Susan's book as the CHAUFFEUR pulls into traffic. After a few moments, he closes the book to stare out the window, deep in thought.

DAVID

So where are we going?

The chauffeur checks a sheet of paper.

CHAUFFEUR

Let's see. Brooklyn.

David returns to looking out the window.

DAVID

How would you feel about not going to Brooklyn?

CHAUFFEUR

Excuse me? Aren't you supposed to do a TV interview there?

DAVID

Yes. Would you get fired if we didn't go to Brooklyn?

CHAUFFEUR
I'm independently contracted. I
just wouldn't get any repeat
business from them.

DAVID
Do they give you a lot of business?

CHAUFFEUR
Not really, no.

DAVID
If I promised you all my future
business, how would you feel about
going to Swift Falls instead of
Brooklyn?

CHAUFFEUR
Swift Falls?

DAVID
It's in Nova Scotia.

CHAUFFEUR
Well, it looks like a nice day for
a drive and I can't say I've ever
been to Nova Scotia.

DAVID
That settles it. To Nova Scotia, my
good man.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

As the chauffeur drives, David pops open the bar and surveys
its contents. After a moment, he pops it shut again.

EXT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

The limousine crosses the U.S. border into Canada.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE. JERRY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jerry is working at his desk when his phone RINGS.

JERRY
(into phone)
Hello?...What d'ya mean he isn't
there yet?

Jerry checks his watch.

JERRY (cont'd)

Yes, I know your show is live. Yes, of course, I know it's #1 in the 18-49 year old demographic. Give me a couple of minutes and I'll get back to you.

Starting to sweat bullets, Jerry disconnects the call, then dials David's cell phone.

EXT. COW CROSSING - CONTINUING

The limousine is stopped at a cow crossing, waiting for a herd of Holsteins to cross the street.

INT. LIMOUSINE - CONTINUING

David looks at the display window on his cell phone when it RINGS. He sees the call is from Jerry and turns the ringer off as the chauffeur turns to look at David.

CHAUFFEUR

Are these Jersey cows?

DAVID

I think the black and white ones are Holsteins.

CHAUFFEUR

Holsteins, huh! They're cute.

INT. PUBLISHING HOUSE. ELAINE'S OFFICE - DAY

Elaine is working at her desk when Jerry appears in the doorway of her office. He's struggling to breathe.

JERRY

We have another problem.

EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

The limousine turns right at the intersection David had problems with when he first drove to Swift Falls.

EXT. SWIFT FALLS - DAY

The limousine drives into Swift Falls and along its main drag. People immediately spill out into the streets to get a look at the first limousine that's ever come to town.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM. BARN - DAY

Susan feeds slop to the pigs.

EXT. SWIFT FALLS - DAY

The limousine drives along the country road that leads to Susan's farm.

EXT. SUSAN'S FARM - DAY

Susan exits the barn as the limousine pulls into the driveway. Jason, who's fixing a fence in one of the fields, stops to look too as the limousine stops and David gets out.

SUSAN

David? What the -- ?

DAVID

Hi, Susan. We just started driving and, guess what? Here we are.

EXT. SUSAN'S FARM - DAY

In the distance, the chauffeur gives Jason a hand with the fence he's fixing as Susan gives David a tour of the farm.

DAVID

There just didn't seem to be any point to finishing the tour without you.

David climbs onto a tractor.

DAVID (cont'd)

So this is what it's like to get back to nature.

David jumps back to the ground.

DAVID (cont'd)

Seen anything interesting on television lately?

SUSAN

I may have watched a tape Elaine sent me.

DAVID

So you know! I'm the Pee Wee Herman of the literary world.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM. HEN HOUSE - DAY

Susan gathers fresh eggs and hands them to David to hold.

DAVID

They're warm.

SUSAN
They're very sexy hens.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Susan and David exit the hen house as Jason and the chauffeur approach.

CHAUFFEUR
(to David)
Is it okay if I go into town with Jason?

JASON
We need more materials.

DAVID
Sure.

Jason looks at Susan with genuine concern.

JASON
You okay?

Susan nods.

SUSAN
Actually, I need some things. Do you mind?

Jason shakes his head 'no.'

SUSAN (cont'd)
I'll make a list.
(to David)
I'll be right back.

LATER

Jason and the chauffeur are seated in Jason's truck as Susan hands Jason a list.

As they drive away, Susan looks around for David who appears suddenly in the hay mow.

DAVID
Hey, Susan, look at me.

SUSAN
I'd be careful if I were you. You don't want to --

David loses his balance and falls backward.

Susan rounds the corner of the barn to find David spread-eagled in a pile of manure.

SUSAN (cont'd)
Well, that.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. KITCHEN - DAY

David enters the kitchen, freshly-showered now and wearing a fluffy white bathrobe.

SUSAN
Feel better?

DAVID
Much.

SUSAN
You smell better too. I've laid out some fresh clothes in the guest room and I've made some coffee. Unless you'd like something stronger --

DAVID
Susan --

SUSAN
Please, David, I didn't quit the tour for you. I quit it for me and I don't want to talk about it.

DAVID
You're the one who believes talking's the answer to everything.

Susan nervously paces around the kitchen.

DAVID (cont'd)
I'm beginning to think we never really gave ourselves a chance, Susan.

SUSAN
No, David. You never gave us a chance.

When Susan turns her back to David, he immediately drops his robe and moves behind her.

SUSAN (cont'd)
You really need to deal with your issues with clothes.

David nuzzles Susan's neck.

SUSAN (cont'd)
No, David! Not the neck.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. BEDROOM - DAY

Susan turns to David after having had sex with him.

SUSAN
I wish I'd never heard of sex.

DAVID
No, you don't. Tell me, when did you get so good at it?

SUSAN
When I started having it with someone who wasn't just having it with himself.

David grimaces.

SUSAN (cont'd)
You asked.

Susan and David HEAR a car door SLAM in the yard. She puts on a robe, goes to the window, and sees Elaine.

SUSAN (cont'd)
Shit!

EXT. FARM - DAY

Jerry gets out of the car too.

ELAINE
I don't understand how you could get lost. It's not like you haven't been here before.

JERRY
I didn't see you helping.

ELAINE
I didn't kill you, did I?

Susan exits.

ELAINE (cont'd)
(to Susan)
Good. You're here.

David exits, also in a robe.

ELAINE (cont'd)
 Dear, God! It's worse than I thought.
 (to Susan)
 Please tell me he drugged you!

DAVID
 (to Elaine)
 Do you know what your problem is?

ELAINE
 Put someone on a talk show and all
 of a sudden he's an expert. I need
 a drink, Susan.

INT. SUSAN'S FARM HOUSE. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Susan, David, Jerry and Elaine are grouped around the living
 room.

ELAINE
 This is bigger than us, Susan.
 Forget what it means to you and
 David or even Jerry and me. Think
 about what it means to the women out
 there who don't have the strength or
 the resources to speak for
 themselves.

JERRY
 Let's not forget the men. They read
 too, you know. Well, some of them.

SUSAN
 You don't care about the women out
 there, Elaine.

She looks at David and Jerry.

SUSAN (cont'd)
 Or the men. This is exactly about
 me and David and you and Jerry.

ELAINE
 What are you saying, Susan?

SUSAN
 All you're interested in is saving
 your precious jobs. That's what
 this is about, what it's always been
 about....But I guess I owe you that
 much since you did publish the book
 in the first place.

ELAINE

What are you saying, Susan?

SUSAN

I'll finish the...we'll finish the tour.

DAVID

We will?

JERRY

You will?

ELAINE

Damn, I'm good.

SUSAN

But on our terms. We're not going to jump through hoops anymore.

ELAINE

That's all I'm asking, Susan.

INT. TV STUDIO #4 - DAY

Susan and David tape an episode of The Jerry Springer Show. As the opening theme MUSIC ends, Jerry looks into the camera.

JERRY SPRINGER

Thank you for joining us. Our guests today could easily give the WWF some competition....

INT. TELEVISION STUDIO. GREEN ROOM - DAY

Elaine and Jerry watch the taping from the green room.

JERRY

We have the same name, you know.

Elaine looks at Jerry in disbelief.

INT. TV STUDIO #4 - DAY

JERRY SPRINGER

This has hardly been a walk in the park for the two of you?

SUSAN

To tell the truth, it hasn't been easy. But I'm happy to say we're doing fine now.

Smiling, Susan clasps David's hand.

DAVID

That's right. The experience has brought us closer together. I --

Smiling, David looks at Susan.

DAVID (cont'd)

We can only hope others find the depth of understanding in their relationships that Susan and I have found.

JERRY SPRINGER

What's been the hardest part? Certainly, it can't be easy to have your dirty laundry aired on television. Especially, you, David. Your last interview didn't exactly endear you to the writing establishment who has since described your work as Hemingwayesque, just without the charm and talent.

SUSAN

We don't like to dwell on the past, Jerry. All we can say is we're moving forward and we've never been happier.

DAVID

Oh, and we can't wait to start a family.

Susan looks at David in surprise.

JERRY SPRINGER

Let's go to a commercial. When we come back, we'll try to get to the bottom of this sudden change of heart.

The audience APPLAUDS as the show goes to commercial.

FLOOR DIRECTOR

And we're out.

Jerry Springer immediately becomes incensed.

JERRY SPRINGER

I want to know who the fuck booked these guests? Don't they know what kind of show we are?

INT. HOUSE - DAY

A bored housewife switches from The Jerry Springer Show to a talk show featuring a couple fighting.

INT. STUDIO. GREEN ROOM - DAY

Elaine and Jerry look both shocked and surprised.

ELAINE

Are they crazy? This won't sell books.

JERRY

You don't think it's for real, do you?

ELAINE

Don't be a twerp. They have as much chance of making it work as...we would.

JERRY

Don't even joke about it.

ELAINE

What's that supposed to mean?

JERRY

Which word didn't you understand?

ELAINE

A man like you'd be lucky to get a woman like me.

JERRY

You'd be lucky to get a man like me. What exactly do you mean by a man like me?

Elaine and Jerry look at one another as if for the very first time.

EXT. DINER - DAY

A waitress erases the board advertising the SUSANMARSHALL-BURGER and the DAVIDWINSTONSTEW, then starts to write the new specials.

EXT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

A clerk removes Susan and David's book displays from the window and replaces them with other books.

EXT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

A man removes the banner -- "WE'VE GOT A HOUSE FULL OF WOMEN AND WE DON'T MEAN THE BOOK" -- from outside the strip club.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Susan and David exit the studio after the taping and start walking along the street.

DAVID

Did you really mean what you said in there?

SUSAN

What?

DAVID

That you've never been happier.

SUSAN

What do you think?

DAVID

I don't know. That's why I'm asking.

SUSAN

You really think that after everything that's happened we should get back together?

DAVID

Not after everything, Susan. Because of everything.

Susan stops in her tracks and just stares at David.

SUSAN

I read your book, David.

DAVID

And I read yours. It was good, Susan. Really good. I should have told you before. It even got me thinking.

SUSAN

Your book got me thinking too, David. That's really what you think of us?

DAVID

What are you saying? This nicey-nicey stuff has just been an act?

SUSAN

(echoing his words)

C'mon, David, the only reason we're here is to put on a show. Anything to sell a few books, hopefully before they're remaindered.

Susan resumes walking.

DAVID

Wait! What did you mean when you asked if that's what I thought of us?

SUSAN

Don't, David. I read your book.

DAVID

Which is a work of fiction, Susan.

Susan stops walking and stares David down again.

SUSAN

Please, don't insult my intelligence. My book's a work of fiction too so I know very well that both my book and your book are about us. Even Elaine said your book was about us, although she thought I came across pretty well in this version.

DAVID

Elaine's working with a pickled brain, Susan. I should know. And for your information, my book is about my parents who you never met either because we weren't married long enough. But if you did meet them, you'd know. I should say when you meet them. I've heard it said that a good relationship has a lot of different layers and maybe one of those layers should be family. You know, parents --

SUSAN

Those hot studio lights really got to you. Maybe you should see a doctor.

DAVID

Maybe we both should. Because I also think one of those layers should be children. Don't you?

SUSAN
You were serious about that? About
having a baby?

DAVID
I don't want to be an only child,
Susan.

Susan looks at David, somewhat overwhelmed.

SUSAN
Let's just go home, David.

DAVID
Which home?

SUSAN
Which home do you think?

DAVID
I don't know.

SUSAN
Fine.

DAVID
What's fine?

SUSAN
Everything, David. Everything's
fine.

Susan and David continue to walk down the street as we

FADE OUT:

SUPER TITLE CARD: "ONE YEAR LATER"

FADE IN:

INT/EXT. BEVERLY HILLS. MANSION. VARIOUS ROOMS - MORNING

Two envelopes -- one addressed to Susan Marshall, the other
to David Winston -- drop through a gold mail slot and land
with a THUD next to one another on a marble floor.

A butler immediately places the letters on a silver tray,
then walks through a large, beautifully-appointed house to
the patio area where Susan and David, in fluffy white robes,
are eating breakfast at a table by a swimming pool.

Susan and David remove their letters in turn from the tray
and open them to find what are obviously contracts.

SUSAN
Julia's signed to do the movie.

DAVID
Who's playing me?

SUSAN
Richard.

DAVID
Not Russell? I was hoping for
Russell.

SUSAN
No, Richard. And Garry's directing.
You'd think he'd have learned his
lesson with the last one. I wonder
who they got to write....?

Susan scans the papers, then peers at David.

SUSAN (cont'd)
Oh, no.

DAVID
I already said yes, Susan.

David holds up his contract.

SUSAN
Then tell them you changed your
mind. The woman's a marital mine-
field. It was one thing when she
stuck to co-stars, but now she's
going after anyone and everyone.
Even writers --

DAVID
The woman deserves a chance at
happiness, Susan. Don't you want
her to be happy?

SUSAN
Of course, I do. Just not with my
husband. I know, tell them you've
decided to take a break from writing
scripts to write another novel.

DAVID
I can't do that, Susan. I gave up
writing fiction when I gave up
drinking and women. Other women.
(more)

DAVID (cont'd)

And you don't want me to start
drinking again, do you? Besides,
what happened to trust?

SUSAN

It's not you I'm worried about.
Okay, if you're going to do this,
David, know that I'm going to be
there. Every second of every minute
of every day. Even if you go on
location. No, especially if you go
on location, I'll be there.

Elaine enters, also wearing a fluffy white robe.

ELAINE

You were right about this California
air, Susan. It does make you fuck
like rabbits.

Jerry enters, also wearing a fluffy white robe.

JERRY

Morning, all. Do I feel lucky
today, or what?

We FREEZE on his expression as we

FADE OUT:

SUPER: FLYING SOLO 2: ON LOCATION

COMING SOON TO A THEATRE NEAR YOU

FADE OUT:

THE END