

PEARS AND SINGLES

by

Catherine M. Hall

metashoe@aol.com
beadedgown.net

FADE IN:

INT. ZILLS BAKERY - BACK ROOM

At the foot of a metal, winding staircase, a door marked "VAT ROOM QUIET PLEASE LIVE CULTURES" opens...

RENA MOORE, dressed in grey coveralls and cap, exits the Vat Room, pulls a rack of risen, unbaked buns behind her. She exhales and inhales deeply, pushes the rack toward the Bakery Kitchen.

EXT. STREET - DAY

March, morning, small town NJ, commercial district.

The street is empty except for a taxi, idling.

AZALEA ZILLS exits the taxi, pulls a small suitcase behind her. She gasps.

The taxi driver holds a tissue over his nose, drives away.

Azalea struggles to breathe as she drags her suitcase uncertainly towards the curb.

She lifts the suitcase into her arms, draws in a deep breath and walks on tip-toes to the sidewalk

Fog gathers, spreads. Hedges in front of some of the buildings sway as the sunlight shifts.

Several DWARF HORSES, huddled together, peer through a hedge, then back away, into the fog.

Azalea inhales violently, as if to sneeze and says to the departing horses --

AZALEA

I beg your pardon.

A sign above a near by building's front door reads

"Martin Harm, PHD, Harm Mental Health Services".

Azalea enters this building.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - CONTINUOUS

A big white room, brightly lit.

At the unoccupied Front Desk there are vases of flowers and several boxes of tissues. Azalea helps herself to tissues.

DR. HARM (O.S.)

Rose!

DR HARM leans out from his office, points to Azalea.

ROSE PIN enters from another door, sits behind the Front Desk, sets her take-out breakfast aside.

She hands a packet of papers to Azalea.

ROSE

You are Miss Azalea? Fill out these papers, please, Doctor will see you soon.

DR. HARM

Doctor... will see you... now!

ROSE

Okay, now. She still has to fill all the papers out, last I heard.

DR. HARM

Later, outside later, inside now.
Azalea!

Azalea looks to Rose for clarification.

ROSE

He's Dr. Harm. This is his place.

DR. HARM

Welcome, Miss Azalea, to my place.

INT. DR. HARM'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Harm escorts Azalea to a swivel chair. He takes his seat behind a large desk.

There's no other furniture in the office; a mural of a forest surrounds the room and pictures of Stonehenge hang over the painted trees.

Azalea puts down her suitcase, sinks into the chair and then sits up straight and tall, almost levitating.

Dr. Harm takes a letter from an envelope and smooths it out on his desk.

He holds the letter and the envelope up, for Azalea to see.

DR. HARM
 "Hill And Valley, Inc." They say
 they'll pay for ten *reacclimating*
sessions for you!

AZALEA
 When they asked me to leave I got
 that. Severance.

DR. HARM
 (smiling)
 Gotta ask. Asked you to? Leave?
 Religious organization, right?

AZALEA
 (nodding)
 We did fund raising. Telemarket
 surveys. We had a script to follow.

Dr. Harm unfolds a cloth napkin over his desk.

AZALEA (CONT'D)
 But... I just took that as a
 guideline, people always wanted to
 talk about other things...

Rose enters, places a tray (with a pear, two slices of white
 bread and a knife) on Dr. Harm's desk.

Rose exits.

DR. HARM
 Pear quarter? Keep talking.

Azalea shakes then nods her head, inhales rapidly as if to
 sneeze but doesn't sneeze.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
 Bless you? No? Then what.

AZALEA
 I'd say, did you sleep alright? Did
 you trim the hedge around your house?

Dr. Harm cuts the pear into four sections, bites into one
 section, pushes the pear aside and cuts the stacked bread.

DR. HARM
 Did I?

Dr. Harm takes a bite of the bread and pushes it away, too.

AZALEA
 I took a vow of silence, except for
 work. Don't you like your bread?

DR. HARM
Food has no taste. It's the smell,
outside. Destroys the senses.

AZALEA
Is it that fruit, with the thorns?

DR. HARM
Nobody knows. It's unknown.

Dr. Harm gestures that he's done with thinking about that.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
Any other vows? Vows with exceptions?
Exceptional vows?

AZALEA
Before Hill And Valley, I had trained
to be a Catholic nun and they had
vows of poverty. Just... renewable.

DR. HARM
They ask you to leave, too?

AZALEA
They did. But on matters of dogma.

DR. HARM
Dogma! What *dogma*?

AZALEA
Transubstantiation.

Dr. Harm puts the pear pieces together in different shapes.

AZALEA (CONT'D)
The Host becomes the Body and Blood
of Christ, at the Consecration.

DR. HARM
And you say... no? The host is the
wafer, right?

AZALEA
Yes. Not no, just *and also*. If the
Host is the Body and Blood of Christ,
and I believe that It Is, then It
always Was.

DR. HARM
Timing is everything!

AZALEA
God's in all things at all times.

Dr. Harm wipes his fingers on the dry bread segments.

DR. HARM
Well, what's the point of that? You
just meet God? Coming and going?

AZALEA
(nodding)
It is confusing. Disorienting.

Dr. Harm pushes the food around on the tray, frowning, he lifts up a stapler, from his desk.

DR. HARM
God's in the stapler?

AZALEA
Sure.

DR. HARM
You see God... in the stapler?

AZALEA
I don't know that I do.

Dr. Harm opens the stapler, shows the staples, snaps it shut again.

AZALEA (CONT'D)
I mean I don't think that God *looks*
like a stapler...

DR. HARM
Looks like the knife, or this napkin,
or the pear?

AZALEA
(thoughtfully)
Maybe the pear...

He stands, suddenly, points to Azalea with both hands.

DR. HARM
Challenge! That's what we do here...
let's take a look around!

Azalea stands, instantly. She leaves her suitcase, follows Dr. Harm.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
So much new stuff going on here,
it'll floor you. Bowl you over.

INT. DR. HARM'S WORKROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Harm leads Azalea to the next room; white walls, tables, craft projects, cluttered shelves and an "Is It Art" sign.

DR. HARM
See? Workshops? And here's something
I call "Is It Art". You carefully
consider each item...

He ceremoniously puts a vase in her hands, nods knowingly, then replaces the vase with a small bowl.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
And really try to see it *as a work
of art*, and then ask yourself --

In Azalea's open hand, the bowl breaks apart, apparently spontaneously.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
Is it, was it art. Is it still...
what... in the hell happened?

Dr. Harm tries to pick up the pieces while Azalea, sorry, embarrassed and frantic, tries to slide them to his hand.

As the pieces separate, an ancient, dried flower shows in the break, startling Dr. Harm.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
You see this! You're a witness!

He holds the pieces in his hands, the flower remains attached to a partially exposed leaf, still embedded in the clay.

Azalea looks ashamedly at the pieces: she steps back and bumps into one of the shelves.

Azalea and Dr. Harm reluctantly look up at the slightly trembling shelves.

AZALEA
Those move?

All of the items on the shelf slide, crash to the floor.

Shelves, pictures, hanging plants, the "Is It Art" sign and a metal grate that was over a heat duct fall and break.

Dr. Harm moves only his eyes, then bellows --

DR. HARM
Ooh-wooh-wooh!

Azalea, about to take a step, freezes.

Rose enters, looks around at the wreckage.

ROSE

You should have let me!

From the floor in Dr. Harm's office, Azalea's suitcase bursts open -- a sweater pops out, sleeves flailing.

INT. RECEPTION AREA - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea fills out papers as Rose eats a bun at the Front Desk. Azalea hands Rose the papers and points to the small take-out bag, imprinted with "Zills Bakery", on the desk. Rose holds the bag open for Azalea to help herself.

ROSE

I got this from their cart, on the street.

Rose looks at the papers Azalea has filled out.

ROSE (CONT'D)

You're a Zills?

AZALEA

No. Just my family. There's a building, somewhere?

Rose draws a little street map for Azalea.

ROSE

Rena Moore works there, she's very musical.

EXT. ZILLS BAKERY - DAY

Nineteenth century, three story brick building, on a hill.

INT. ZILLS OFFICE - DAY

Small, dark room, overfilled with oversized desks, office machines, shelves and on the floor, cardboard cartons.

Rena Moore, energetic, perhaps a former cheerleader, wears jeans and a sweater, works at a desk.

She hums as she counts a pile of money, tabulates with an adding machine -- a paper tape winds down to the floor.

O.S a SHRIEKING VOICE rises.

Rena looks up. She shoves the money into a zippered bag, locks the bag in a drawer, exits quickly.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rena runs down the metal stairs, through a small room (with several doors on each wall) to the Bakery Show Room's Front Counter.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

There's a five foot high Front Counter and two Side Counters with glass fronted display cases below the Counter Tops.

On the Front Counter this is cash register.

There are a few small tables with chairs at a distance from the Counters.

On one wall, two color photos of handsome men, captioned "Ted" and "Dave" and two smaller b/w photos labeled "Frank" and "Arnie".

Across one wall, coffee mugs hang on a line of hooks.

MRS. CARL kicks the customer side of the Counter.

RENA

How can I help you, Mrs. Carl?

Mrs. Carl shakes a fist at Rena.

MRS. CARL

You no-good cheat!

Customers enter the store.

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

At a work table, ARNIE ZILLS, nervously slices marshmallows. He looks up, forlornly as Mrs. Carl shrieks O.S.

He listens a moment, then glumly resumes his work.

On the counter, in front of Arnie, stands a small house, made out of buns with pressed on marshmallows made to look like rows of bricks.

Arnie wears an apron and cap imprinted with "Not By Bread Alone" on the front and "Zills Buns" on the back.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Customers quietly approach the counter, Dave smiles, greets and serves them, ignores Rena and Mrs. Carl.

RENA
(softly)
I see, we charged you tax --

MRS. CARL
Trash! Horse's ass trash!

RENA
I'll correct this, immediately.

Mrs. Carl throws papers at Rena and storms out -- Rena looks around, embarrassed. Customers looks away.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rena, head down, returns upstairs. She sings, softly, sadly.

RENA
"Hangman, Hangman slack your rope,
oh, slack it for a while..."

Arnie peers out, his hands filled with marshmallows.

In the Back Room, the metal stairs are set in a cement floor, dim lights reveal a work counter, with a sign "Dispatch Table" nailed to it.

Opposite the stairs, a door leads to the Bakery Kitchen, where Arnie works -- and another door, closed, with a sign: "Family Kitchen Do Not Enter".

To the East is the door that opens behind the Front Counter of the Bakery Show Room.

In the shadow of the stairs is the sign on the door that reads "VAT ROOM QUIET PLEASE LIVE CULTURES".

Near the stairs are two more unmarked doors.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - DAY

A few promotional posters decorate the walls featuring close ups of Zills Classic Sour Dough Buns (hot-cross buns with a "Z" instead of an "X") and buns stacked into shapes; houses, trees, animals, etc..

On a wall near the Front Counter is a framed obituary of a startled woman (resembles Arnie) captioned "Bunny Pat-Zills".

Everywhere else, there are photos of a glamorous woman, in elaborate costumes captioned "THE ONE AND ONLY EFON ZILLS!"

EFON ZILLS, petite, still recognizable as the exotic beauty in the photos, now stands in the narrow opening between a Side Counter and the Front Counter. She wears a suit with high heels.

Three tense men with Zills caps on, and aprons over their jeans and t-shirts, work near the Front Counter.

TED ZILLS has a nervous, jerky walk. He shoves aside trays of buns in the Main Display Case.

FRANK ZILLS, his face distorted by pain, walks with a deep limp, checks the Display Case near the side wall.

Dave Zills now sits working at a laptop computer on a shelf behind the Front Counter.

There are no customers in the Bakery, at the moment.

Efon noisily spreads open a NEWSPAPER on the Front Counter and slides it toward her to scan the pages.

EFON

Hey. Who's that guy from McGeehee Beach that worked here?

TED

Blaine Lansky. Blansky.

EFON

No, the other one.

TED

Blaine something.

EFON

I thought it was Douglas.

FRANK

That's his brother. You didn't hire him.

EFON

Crap, he's dead.

Frank stands up, slowly, straightens his back, gingerly.

TED
(harshly)
No more fresh buns 'til the nine
thirty crowd!

FRANK
I got empty cases, here!

TED
You should have thought!

FRANK
Not going to leave these empty!

TED
Think one time, just one time!

EFON
Don't argue boys, don't.

Efon motions with both arms, as if pushing back a crowd.

EFON (CONT'D)
Teddy, be patient with your cousin
Frank. His Loo-Pus might be hurting
him, today.

FRANK
(wearily)
I don't have Lupus, I have arthritis.

Efon grabs some envelopes from the shelf where Dave works.

Efon slices open a large envelope, takes out a letter and a
photo, shakes them toward Dave's head -- he looks up.

DAVE
That's the one and only Aggi-Erin
Meeth, don't wreck it.

Dave pumps his fist in the air.

DAVE (CONT'D)
Aggi-Erin Meeth eats Zills buns!

EFON
Everyone does, dear. Who is Aggi
Aggi Teeth.

DAVE
Aggi-Erin Meeth, the singer.

Frank leans on the Counter, moves toward Efon, refolds the newspaper with stabbing motions and points to an article.

FRANK

From the eighties, making a comeback.

EFON

Singers. Who cares about singers?

Frank grinds his fist into the side of his head, laughing, joylessly.

FRANK

I'm starting a rumor that today is Monday. You hear me? Monday. My day off! I'm not here!

Frank limps speedily around the Show Room, leans heavily on shelves and counters.

Dave types rapidly on the computer keyboard.

DAVE

Auction's almost over, count down...

Efon strikes a dramatic pose.

EFON

How *infamous* do I have to be for my possessions to be collectible?

Efon shakes the photo of Aggi-Erin Meeth at Dave as he types frantically.

EFON (CONT'D)

I mean big time money. Would this picture be worth more if I signed it to her or if she signed it to me?

TED

It's not how famous you are, it's whatever it's worth to the collection. I've told you.

Efon stands taller, more imposing, but still tiny, compared to Ted.

EFON

Do I have to be *violently murdered* or just *violently kill* someone else, dear --

FRANK
Murder / suicide, Aunt Efon! You've
got it covered!

Efon SLAMS a tray onto the Counter, the tray slides to the
floor.

EFON
That's *very helpful*.

DAVE
Last chance to bid... on the Alpha N
Mask Collection...

EFON
Who *is* this Alpha N person?

DAVE
Collection. Masks from sci-fi movies
and stuff, *damaged in the actual
fight scenes...*

TED
Gonna bid or just talk.

DAVE
Bid. Done.

TED
Get it? Did you get it? Is it held
up for review?

DAVE
Transaction held up for review!
Those jerks!

TED
Jerkoffs! They've got it in for us.
We're a *threat* to them.

DAVE
Stupid auction. Wait, okay, done,
got it.

TED
All?

DAVE
What'd I say?

Rena enters, unnoticed, brings rolls of coin to the cash
register. She sings, quietly.

RENA
 "Tell me, what'd I say? Tell me
 what I say. Tell me, what'd I say-"

Rena exits, singing.

Frank looks over Dave's shoulder at the computer screen.

FRANK
 Dat's Kulcha, baby!

EFON
 Those masks look awfully shabby!

TED
 Battle scars! They better be, anyway.

DAVE
 Could be worth a fortune!
 Dave closes up the computer, takes his place at the Counter.

EFON
 My nephews, the entrepreneurs!
 Customers enter, the Zills men smile, greet them.

LATER

Dave, Ted and Frank work at the Front Counter, a line of
 customers moves along, quickly.
 Efon chats with select customers as they approach the Front.
 Conversations rise and fall above the sound of the cash
 register, telephones and street noises when the door opens.

Azalea enters, gets in line behind other customers. When
 she's face to face with Dave, he smiles, eager for her to
 place an order and move along.

DAVE
 What can I get -- Azalea?
 Dave leans over the Counter, one-arm hugs her.

Efon grabs Ted, pulls him toward Dave.

AZALEA
 Dave! Yes, I'm Azalea! Thank you.
 For inviting me.

Azalea takes a deep breath, tears fill her eyes.

EFON

What the cat dragged in.

AZALEA

I'm Azalea. Hello, Efon? And Ted?

Ted reaches his hand toward her.

TED

You going someplace with that bag?

Azalea lifts her suitcase as if to hand it over the Front Counter, then just shakes Ted's extended hand.

AZALEA

Here?

DAVE

(smiling)

Like how long? So we can train you
for something, Efon can train you...

Ted resumes waiting on customers. Frank continues waiting on customers -- now there are two intersecting lines of customers.

Efon holds her arm around Dave and addresses Azalea.

EFON

If you can, dear, of course! What
can you do, could you do a little
office work, dear?

Ted yells over his shoulder, as he waits on a customer.

TED

Arnie! Empty trays! Who's working
here?

Arnie zaps out of the Kitchen in a half crouched stance, grabs trays from the Display Case, runs back to the Kitchen, reappears with trays of buns.

Frank makes his way to where Dave and Efon stand.

FRANK

Azalea! I'm your old cousin Frank,
the brains *and* the brawn around here!

Frank and Azalea do a four handed handshake and laugh.

TED

Am I the only one working, here?

EFON

Give me the empty tray!

Efon makes a grand gesture to retrieve a phantom tray.

Frank punches a shelf and a wall, suddenly, grimaces and limps toward the Back Room.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

In the dim light, Frank grips the Dispatch Table as a spasm of pain overtakes him.

Rena, going up the stairs, hurries back to help him.

Frank angrily knocks a few things from the table, shoves his elbow toward Rena, then furiously shuffles back to the Front Counter.

Rena, not really surprised, shakes her head, withdraws into the half light, goes back upstairs.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TED

Am I the only one working?

With a queenly head tilt and arm lift, Efon walks out to the customer side of the Front Counter.

People stand aside.

TED (CONT'D)

Like talking to a bowl of hammers...

Efon dramatically reaches for Azalea and pats her arm.

EFON

Not you, dear.

TED

When you see the way things go around here you'll be running back to the nut house.

EFON

The *nun house!* Not the nut house!

Efon laughs. She has a loud laugh, like a barking dog. People who have never heard her laugh before stop what they're doing and stare.

Ted and Dave take no notice, Frank grits his teeth.

Arnie reappears, carries trays from the Kitchen.

ARNIE

Nuts! Raisins! We got it all!

FRANK

Azalea! This is your cousin Arnie!
He lives in the basement and plays
with bricks. I was gonna say stones
but there's ladies present.

Arnie grins, blushes, bows toward Azalea. Azalea returns the bow and smiles.

Ted snaps his fingers toward Azalea and points his thumb toward the door behind the Counter.

TED

Azalea, this way! Somebody, watch
the Counter, please!

Efon points and walks back to the sale's side of the Front Counter. Azalea, with suitcase, follows.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ted hurries past the Dispatch Table and up the steps. Behind him, Azalea takes three quick steps up the stairs, then halts.

She walks back down one step, with one foot pointing to the step below.

She takes one step up, then slowly, another step up, then two steps up, then two steps down.

As he runs up the metal stairs, Ted points through the stairs toward a door.

TED

That's the Vat Room. That's where
you'll be working, probably.

Ted turns at the landing, sees Azalea below and yells.

TED (CONT'D)

Move it!

Azalea takes a few more steps then pauses to observe, near the Vat Room sign, a row of gear coveralls, on hooks.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

High ceilings, faded floral wallpaper, warped wooden floors.

Down a narrow hallway, the first door leads to the Office. Other doors, on both sides of the hall, are closed.

RENA (O.S.)

So, if you could get a check to us...
yes, I'll send you copies... all of
last year? Sure, that's no problem...

Ted hurries past the Office, to another flight of stairs.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

One open door leads to a large storage room, filled with bags and boxes.

A door opposite the storage room, is closed.

Ted hurls himself toward that door, turns the knob, it doesn't open. He tries again.

Ted punches the wall, then hurries back downstairs. When he passes Azalea, she turns and follows him down, again.

RENA (O.S.)

Yes, hi... you said you'd send a
check? Sure, I can go over your
account with you, again...

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

A pegboard between two large refrigerators holds three lines of keys, on hooks. Ted pulls on each key, doesn't find what he's looking for, stomps back up the stairs.

Arnie looks up from his work, stares.

Azalea, confused, slowly follows Ted -- after a few steps, Azalea stops short, looks back, apparently disoriented.

Arnie frantically points in the direction that Ted went. Azalea trudges onward.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Efon stands, smiling, outside the now open door (Azalea's Room).

Efon and Ted look into the small, pleasant, modestly furnished bedroom. Ted pushes past Azalea, on the stairs.

TED
Miss "Bells On Her Toes" can take it
from here. Bowl of claw headed
hammers...

Ted stomps back down the steps.

Efon leads Azalea into the bedroom.

INT. AZALEA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

EFON
(grandly)
Bedroom... bathroom.

Efon indicates the door to a small, private bathroom, and then pulls that door shut.

AZALEA
Thank you! It's wonderful.

Efon shields her eyes against pictures of herself on the walls as if surprised to see them.

EFON
That's from "Belles of Paris", but
years ago... I'll take them away!

Efon waves at the pictures as if to make them disappear.

EFON (CONT'D)
Take your time, dear, just hurry
downstairs, soon as you can. Oh!

Efon suddenly rubs her knee and limps to a seat at the foot of the bed. Efon looks very small as she rubs her knee.

AZALEA
Can I help you, Aunt Efon?

Efon smiles, bravely.

EFON
Family! Free room. And board.

AZALEA
Yes. Thank you. All.

Efon rubs her ankle, now, shoulders hunched, she looks old.

EFON
We won't pay you a salary, of
course...

Azalea nods, uncertainly.

EFON (CONT'D)

But there's a wonderful *benefits* package, with life insurance!

AZALEA

You sent me that, when you invited me to move, here...

EFON

And... Zills pays the premiums!

Efon leaps to her feet, then prances out of the room.

Azalea puts down her suitcase, then looks back at it, suspiciously. The suitcase opens, then falls over -- it looks tired.

Azalea nods to it, sympathetically, then walks around the room, tries to open the bathroom door -- it doesn't open.

Azalea gazes, uneasily, out to the empty hallway and stairway.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Azalea stands at the top of the stairs, looks down to the second floor, crosses herself, tries to take a step.

Her foot returns to its starting point, momentum almost pushes the rest of her body down the stairs.

She stands up straight, tries again -- this time her foot makes the step but the rest of her body stays still.

Azalea reexamines the stairs and the railing, nods, sits on the top step, slides down a few steps, stops, stands, tries to take a step, sits down again, slides down a few more steps.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea sits at the bottom step of the metal stairs, quickly gets to her feet.

Rena enters, from the Bakery Show Room. Azalea turns to her.

AZALEA

Is there a way to get in the bathroom?

Rena opens a door behind Azalea; it's a bathroom.

AZALEA (CONT'D)

There's another one... upstairs.

RENA

And there's one here.

Azalea stumbles slightly, closes the door behind her.

LATER

Azalea exits the bathroom, looks carefully at the threshold. O.S Rena's muffled voice, Efon's laugh.

Azalea follows the voices to the doorway of the small Family Kitchen, next to the much larger Bakery Kitchen.

Efon taps Azalea's shoulder as she walks past her.

Azalea regards Efon with...loving amusement.

Efon was prepared for anything except that -- she adroitly mimics Azalea's expression, mocking it.

EFON

I haven't decided where to put you.

Efon heads back to the Bakery Show Room. Azalea starts to follow Efon, but looks back, toward Rena.

Rena smiles as she expertly organizes scattered invoices on the Dispatch Table.

RENA

So, hi there, Azalea? You're the cousins' cousin, right? I'm Rena, I work here, too.

Behind Rena, the appliances and cabinets in the Family Kitchen all have heavy chains and locks across them.

Efon returns and points, accusingly, at the cabinets.

EFON

I don't want to hear about food!

RENA

You don't need to diet, you look just like when you were a dancer. Model.

AZALEA and RENA

Model dancer. Dancer's model.

EFON

Oh, beat me with a bloody skunk...

Rena nervously hums "Rescue Me". Efon looks at Rena with loathing. Triumphant loathing.

Rena nods, encouragingly, toward Azalea.

AZALEA

Dancer's model.

EFON

This is my place. Not yours.

Azalea nods graciously. Efon sputters angrily.

Rena unfolds a piece of paper from her pocket.

RENA

Azalea, do you know about the terrible
problem we have around here --

Efon exits, back to the Bakery Show Room.

Ted and Dave push by with racks of trays, ignore the women.

AZALEA

I'll be glad to work. I'm very
good on the telephones...

Frank enters, angrily.

He pounds a phone receiver against the wall, smashes it.

Frank exits.

Rena regards the new dent in the wall.

RENA

I'll show you the Office, okay?

Azalea follows Rena back up the stairs, without too much
difficulty.

INT. OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rena clears cardboard cartons from a chair near her desk,
motions for Azalea to sit down.

Rena places one of the cartons on her desk, cuts through the
packing tape with scissors.

RENA

What I wanted to tell you about was --

AZALEA

The smell? The smell in the fog?

RENA

Oh, the smell... do you think it's
in the fog? Nobody seems to know...

AZALEA

Although I did think I smelled
something downstairs, too, now that
you mention it...

RENA
That might just be the sourdough,
rising, in the Vat Room.

Rena pulls the carton open, brings out several stacks of printed brochures.

Rena moves the carton to the floor, brings another carton to her desk and starts to cut it open, then stops, takes a breath, rolls up her sleeves.

RENA (CONT'D)
I'm concerned about the dwarf horses.

Azalea sits up, looks around.

RENA (CONT'D)
There are so many abandoned ones,
around here. And they need help!

Rena stabs open the next carton.

RENA (CONT'D)
They have all kinds of health
problems. But the people at Cranberry
Farm, down the road, take them in.

AZALEA
Oh, good.

RENA
But they're so shy. The little
horses, I mean. So if you see any --

Azalea's eyes grow big.

RENA (CONT'D)
Just tell me. Okay, now we've got
to make some corrections.

Azalea picks up one of the brochures.

AZALEA
(reads)
"Zills Theater Of The Arts presents
The Pirate." Which Pirate?

RENA
It's supposed to say "The Pirates of
Penzance".

As Azalea looks through the brochure, she stands, suddenly -- starts a big sneeze, stops, mid-sneeze.

AZALEA

Um. With a sneeze, is it... mouth open? Do you know?

Azalea, not breathing, tries to look casual.

Rena fits some sticker forms into the printer, looks up and sees the urgency.

RENA

Open then closed.

Azalea sneezes, successfully, then shudders with relief.

RENA (CONT'D)

Ah-choo, that's... maybe a good way to remember...

Azalea relaxes, back in the chair, breathes deeply, smiles.

EFON (O.S.)

Azalea!

The brochure flies out of Azalea's hand -- she looks around, gets to her feet.

AZALEA

I guess that means --

EFON (O.S.)

(louder)

Azalea!

Rena nod toward the door. Azalea exits.

Rena prints out tiny stickers, carefully places a sticker in each brochure and sings.

RENA

"I want to ride to the ridge where the West commences..."

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - LATER

Early evening, the building is quiet.

Rena wearily puts her coat on as she descends the stairs -- she sings softly.

RENA

"Snakes in the bricks, twisted with no three squares, fall head over --"

The Vat Room door bursts open, Azalea, wearing gray coveralls, staggers from the room.

RENA (CONT'D)
Sh! Be quiet with the door.

Azalea stumbles toward the side door, steps outdoors -- stops and hurries back inside, gasping.

RENA (CONT'D)
Oh, no fresh air, outside...

Rena grabs her hand, opens another door, reveals stairs to the basement.

Azalea sways, slightly.

Rena places Azalea's gloved hand on a railing bolted to a brick wall. Azalea descends the stairs, Rena closes the door, behind them.

INT. BAKERY BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

A hanging light emits a pale glow, enough to see, dimly.

On the stairs, Azalea takes a deep gulp of air.

RENA
Better? Should have told you... how long were you in the Vat Room?

Azalea mumbles, inhales, exhales.

Rena shakes her head.

AZALEA
Efon said --

RENA
Only Dave and Ted have worked up that kind of resistance.

AZALEA
And Frank? And, what's his name --

RENA
Arnie? They try... between you and me, it's taking a toll on them. You'll be okay.

AZALEA
Between's a preposition. That's good to hear somebody say --

Azalea takes a few deep breathes of good basement air.

AZALEA (CONT'D)

-- "between you and me", not "between you and I"... I write poetry. Do I have to stay down here?

RENA

No, once you get the Vat Room air out of your lungs, you're fine, see? You're better, now, right?

Azalea laughs, nods. They return upstairs.

AZALEA (O.S.)

Nothing wrong with being the object of a preposition...

The basement: on the other side of the brick wall, Arnie stands, with a miner's light strapped to his head.

He listens, intently, and holds a trowel and a brick.

All of the brick walls in the basement are beautiful.

O.S. The door closes.

Arnie carefully resumes patching the wall, but quietly.

INT. BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rena helps Azalea step out of her gray coveralls, Azalea smooths the clothes she's wearing under them.

AZALEA

I'm supposed to meet Dave and Ted, hope they didn't leave...

RENA

Leave for where? Nobody goes anywhere around here.

Rena and Azalea exit from the side door.

EXT. ZILLS PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rena and Azalea each cover their noses with tissues.

AZALEA

I don't know.

A big black TRUCK zooms into the parking lot, stops in front of Azalea and Rena.

Rena waves and walks toward a battered hatchback.

Dave, driving the truck, yells out.

DAVE
Azalea! Move it!

Ted leaps from the passenger seat, hangs onto the open door, impatiently waves Azalea to get inside.

Azalea looks around, orients herself, climbs into the truck, sits next to Dave. Ted jumps in beside her.

The engine fires up, the truck roars out of the parking lot.

EXT. ZILLS THEATER PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Zills Theater Of The Arts -- a sprawling brick building, with a grand front entrance is a few blocks from the Bakery.

The black truck arrives. Ted leaps out, starts to slide crates from the truck bed.

TED
Dave! Take the Nichner Collection.
Azalea! Get that crate, follow me.

They unload the truck, carry crates to the front door of Zills Theater.

TED (CONT'D)
Azalea, you know about Re-Collect?

DAVE
It's huge.

TED
Collections, put together by real collectors -- broken apart and put together into other collections.

AZALEA
Broken apart how?

DAVE
That's the thing!

INT. THEATER LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Pictures of Efon adorn the walls.

A few people hold boxes, wait to be admitted to the Theater (visible through the main door; red carpet down an aisle between rows of theater seats, a wide, wooden stage).

JON, serious looking, has a lap-desk on a chain, around his neck. He rigorously scans boxes with an electronic device, then allows the people to enter the Theater.

TED
Don't be such a jerk, Jon.

Jon looks up, alarmed. With forced swagger, he swings the lap-desk over one shoulder.

JON
Rules are rules.

Jon nervously scans the crates Ted and Dave hold.

DAVE
FYI there's no bomb.

Jon tries to laugh.

TED
Jerkoff.

Jon's shoulders fall -- then, he looks up, regains ferocity.

JON
She with you? Needs a badge!

He jerks his thumb toward Azalea then balances the lap-desk on one knee, authoritatively.

TED
Just put Zills. Jerkoff.

Jon grimaces, hesitates, writes Zills, hands a badge to Azalea, without looking at her.

Ted and Dave push past Jon, walk up the center aisle to the stage.

INT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea looks around, disoriented.

TED
(yells)
Azalea! You-who!

Ted and Dave stand on the stage and arrange items on card tables, next to other vendors.

Azalea walks up the center aisle.

On either side people work fast, unbolt rows of seats from the floor, carry them to the side of the large room.

By the time Azalea reaches the stage, all of the seats are gone and card tables are set up in their place.

STAGE

Azalea stands between Dave and Ted on the stage. Dave opens one of the crates, filled with broken telephones.

Ted lifts a box of cracked vases to the table and carefully brings one vase to the top of the pile.

TED (CONT'D)

The collector was a millionaire.
All this got broken... *when somebody
tried to choke him to death!*

Azalea gazes at the items.

AZALEA

Wow. How hard could it be?

DAVE

And then the guy who bought the vase
collection *added these postcards to
it. Made a whole new collection!*

TED

And we've got it!

AZALEA

And you want to sell it?

DAVE

Sure! As is, or... maybe we *break
it apart and remake it, different!*

TED

(secretively)

That's for us to know, not the
customers.

A VENDOR nearby arranges some books on a table and throws other books into a large garbage bag.

Azalea watches him, then points to the bag.

AZALEA

Are you making a new collection?

The Vendor regards Azalea coolly.

VENDOR

These are leftovers from collections
that were recollected. Ten dollars.

Azalea peeks into the bag, hands him a ten dollar bill.

The Vendor pushes the bag into Azalea's arms.

DAVE

Why don't you go look around, you're bothering people, up here.

Azalea moves among the crowd and the vendors' tables.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - NIGHT

Jon holds his lap desk in his arms, like a baby. He and Azalea look puzzled as they peer out the front window.

JON

I don't know what to tell you. Dave and Ted left a while ago. Can't you just go back to the Bakery?

Azalea nods, uncertainly.

JON (CONT'D)

It's right there, you know?

Jon points down the street.

JON (CONT'D)

It's right there, just like two blocks away.

Azalea straightens her back and settles the bag of her purchases safely under one arm.

AZALEA

Two blocks. Okay. Two blocks, that way. That way, right?

EXT. ZILLS THEATER PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Azalea walks into the darkness, her head back, slightly, as if she could see through her nose.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - NIGHT

Azalea looks up at the Bakery building.

In the back of the Bakery, an outside STAIRCASE leads from the parking lot to a third floor fire escape.

Azalea runs in place, then steadily ascends to the top.

EXT. FIRE ESCAPE - CONTINUOUS

The stairs lead to a door and a wooden trellis. Azalea opens the door -- it opens to her bathroom.

INT. AZALEA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea steps inside -- she opens and closes the door a few times, looks in, looks out, then locks the door from the inside.

She looks in the mirror.

AZALEA
Nyuk nyuk nyuk!

INT. AZALEA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She approaches the bed, pats it, climbs up.

She still holds her bag of purchases, and carefully slides the contents onto the bed: a small staircase from a dollhouse, and three books.

Azalea reaches across the bed, hangs the staircase from some nails in the wall.

She arranges the books on her bed; Collected Poems Of Hart Crane, Collected Poems of Marianne Moore, Collected Poems Of Wallace Stevens.

Azalea reaches into her suitcase, retrieves a cylinder of papers, held by an elastic band. She snaps the band.

AZALEA
Poems of Azalea Zills. Collected.

LATER

Azalea sleeps in her bed, the books and the cylinder of papers are on the foot of the bed.

She opens her eyes and looks at the ceiling.

O.S Heavy Footsteps.

Azalea, in pajamas, slips out of the bed without disturbing the books and papers, puts on slippers and a trench coat.

EXT. TRELLIS - NIGHT

Azalea exits from her bathroom door, climbs up the trellis to the roof.

EXT. ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea walks up the roof. Out of the darkness, Ted steps heavily, toward her.

TED

So, you made it back, you're harder
to get rid of than we thought.

Ted laughs, flatly.

TED (CONT'D)

We get ten thousand dollars on
everybody's insurance policy when
they die. You know that?

Azalea looks out, into the distance.

Ted walks down the slope of the roof, stands at the edge.

TED (CONT'D)

Arnie comes up here to look for the
Jersey Devil. Lunatic. Over there --

Ted points into the darkness.

TED (CONT'D)

Is where the new Bakery's going.
And some stores we'll rent out.

AZALEA

What happens to this Bakery.

TED

Gone. And the Theater, too.

Ted jumps from the roof -- to a porch, hidden in the darkness.

Azalea sits down on the roof.

INT. BACK ROOM - DAY

Outside the Vat Room, Rena slips into gray coveralls.

Dave, smiling broadly, breezes through, followed by two chic
women; BRANDIE WIMMLE and FRIENDIE WIMMLE, both dressed in
business suits and high heels.

DAVE

You think the *Bakery's* old-fashioned,
wait 'til you see the upstairs!

BRANDIE

It's like a *fossil*, Dave!

FRIENDIE

A big, ugly... gray...

Dave, Brandie and Friendie pause, startled by the sight of
Rena, then keep going upstairs.

RENA
Dave, remember --

Dave takes a few steps up the stairs, half turns, impatiently.

RENA (CONT'D)
-- you said to say "pear trees" to
you, the first Monday in April.

DAVE
I said? Why would I --

BRANDIE
(giggling)
Supreme Court meets first Monday in
October! Supreme Court, Dave?

Dave looks pleadingly at Rena, motions for her to go away.

RENA
They have to be pollinated this week --

Dave stares down at Rena.

RENA (CONT'D)
-- if we're going to make Zills
special Pear-And-Almond Buns.

Dave nods, backs away, salutes, indicates "got it, go away".

The Wimmle's jangling giggles draw Dave up the stairs.

Rena opens the Vat Room door and sings, softly.

RENA (CONT'D)
"One of these days I'm gonna get
myself wise..."

She closes the Vat Room door, softly, behind her.

INT. VAT ROOM - LATER

Azalea and Rena wear Vat Room coveralls.

Azalea stands near the door. Rena cuts dough into buns.

The Vat Room: long narrow room, no windows, counter in the
middle of the room.

Near the door, a wheeled rack with trays of unbaked buns.

Rena slides a tray of buns onto the rack.

RENA
(softly)
Okay, this whole shubang goes to the
Bakery Kitchen, can you manage it?

Azalea makes an "okay" sign, with her gloved hand. Azalea exits, with the tray rack.

Rena trudges back to the cabinets, takes a large, cloth covered bowl from one of the cabinet shelves, brings it to the center counter. She sings, softly.

RENA (CONT'D)
"Widows face the future, factories
face the poor. The fact remains --"

Azalea reenters, Rena looks up.

AZALEA
That other time, in here, all I did
was clean.

RENA
You want to see starter dough?

Azalea nods, eagerly.

Rena takes the cloth away from the bowl, reveals a great puffy mound of risen dough. The women's eyes tear.

RENA (CONT'D)
Just try not to breathe through your
nose, too much, at first.

Rena punches down the dough, and reworks it into a ball.

RENA (CONT'D)
Bring those three bowls, there, and
we'll add some of this starter dough
to those.

Azalea brings bowls, partially filled with dry ingredients, to the work counter.

Rena adds a large dollop of starter dough to each bowl.

RENA (CONT'D)
This batch is where the leavening
starts. The Batch "Aunt Bunny", Ted
used to call it. You want to stir?

Azalea stirs.

RENA (CONT'D)
I guess Bunny was your...
grandmother, right?

AZALEA
My great grand. Arnie's grand and
everybody else's cousin.

RENA
That's good stirring. And Efon is...

AZALEA
By marriage, sort of an aunt...

Efon opens the door, abruptly.

EFON
There's my Azalea, dear!

Efon struggles dramatically to cross the threshold, Rena and
Azalea go to help her.

Efon shoos Rena away, speaks to Azalea.

EFON (CONT'D)
Dear, you come with me, we can help
poor Ted with his collections...

Efon and Azalea exit.

EFON (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Pull it shut, come on, I can't do it
dear... like this, give it a good --

The door SLAMS shut.

Rena winces as batches of dough in the cabinets collapse.

Rena pantomimes stabbing herself in the solar plexus, twists
the imaginary knife, sighs.

Rena looks around the room, sighs, straightens her shoulders.

She opens the cabinets and empties all of the fallen batches
of dough into one bowl and sings softly but energetically.

RENA
"Invisible tears in my eyes,
incredible pain in my heart --

Rena's vigor returns as she sings.

INT. EFON'S BEDROOM - LATER

Efon sits on the edge of a canopy bed, she covers her face with her hands and whimpers.

She wears a fur trimmed dressing gown over Capri pants and a Zills Buns t-shirt. Azalea stands in the doorway.

AZALEA

Efon, are you alright? Do you want me to get Dave?

EFON

Oh, please don't, dear, we're a couple of strong girls.

Azalea takes a step toward Efon, but continues to lean away from her.

EFON (CONT'D)

They'll all laugh, call me a stupid old woman, I guess that's what I am.

AZALEA

You're not old.

Efon stifles a reply, then continues, amicably.

EFON

It's poor Ted, dear... what is it he wants with all of that... junk?

Azalea looks thoughtful, sits down on the floor to think.

EFON (CONT'D)

I break something and it's a disaster, he buys a box of smashed dishes and it's a gold mine!

AZALEA

It has something to do with documentation.

Efon sits up straight, satisfied.

EFON

Alright, you don't know, either.

Efon stands, suddenly, leans toward the open door, listens.

BRANDIE (O.S.)

What a waste this place is, no wonder you're losing money...

FRIENDIE (O.S.)
And *creepy*, like, *ancient*...

DAVE (O.S.)
That's why we're looking for *new*!
We put a fresh face on everything
and we'll take over the market!

O.S. Footsteps descend the stairs.

Efon drops a thick folder of papers into Azalea's lap.

Efon walks around her room, twirls a baton in one hand and holds a newspaper in the other.

EFON
I'll call out names, you match them
in the folder.

She clears her throat and reads aloud from the newspaper.

EFON (CONT'D)
Skipper Longstreet, wait, that's
Louise Skip of Longstreet, no wait --

AZALEA
In this folder? Names on these pages?

Azalea fumbles with the papers.

EFON
Former employees! We've got to know
who's died, don't we? Keep going.
I've got the obits, that's the hard
part!

Azalea sorts through the papers.

EFON (CONT'D)
Smith, Smithers, who was that woman
who worked the concession stand at
the Theater, years ago...

Azalea looks through the papers.

EFON (CONT'D)
Their families get a hundred
dollars from the insurance. For
nothing! We only get ten thousand!

Azalea nods, struggles with papers.

EFON (CONT'D)

The sad part is that we don't have the money for their premiums to invest! Once they die.

AZALEA

You invest it for them?

Efon restrains herself from jabbing Azalea with the baton.

EFON

We pay the premiums! We've got to get *something* for our trouble! Keep going. Smith, no. Smith, no...

AZALEA

Smith. Smith. Smith.

Efon shakes her hands in desperation toward an unseen audience.

EFON

Louise Skipstreet. Longstreet. Next!

TED (O.S.)

Rena! Show time!

O.S. Footsteps on the stairs.

Ted leans into Efon's room.

TED (CONT'D)

Efon, get dressed. Azalea, with me.

Ted exits.

Efon stands, kicks the papers aside.

EFON

Go!

EXT. STREET - DAY

Ted drives a golf cart, with "Zills Buns" signs on the front, back and sides.

Rena follows him, on foot, carries two full shopping bags.

Azalea walks behind Rena, carries a large coffee urn.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Rena wipes off the concessions counter, Ted unfolds a paper table cloth, spreads it out, tapes it to the counter.

Rena and Ted arrange buns on a shelf behind the counter and in a glass display case below the counter.

TED
Coffee? Where'd she get to...

Azalea enters, with coffee urn.

RENA
Over here. Let me take that.

Rena sets the coffee urn at the end of the counter, plugs it in, puts up two signs:

"Coffee brought to you by ZILLS BAKERY"

"ZILLS Famous Sour Dough Buns \$1 tax inc."

Azalea stands to the side, Rena and Ted move rapidly.

RENA (CONT'D)
Ted, here's the little notice that you said you would read.

Rena slips a piece of paper into Ted's breast pocket.

TED
Yeah, yeah, if there's time.

RENA
It just says that the Cranberry Horse Farm is a non profit organization --

TED
If there's time!

RENA
And the web site and the phone --

Ted exits.

RENA (CONT'D)
Azalea, ready?

Azalea salutes and nods.

RENA (CONT'D)
Buns, with tax, are a dollar each, coffee's free and self service. There's no creams. Or sugars.

Azalea nods to the coffee urn.

RENA (CONT'D)

Once the show starts we can go watch,
then, before intermission, we come
back. It's The Pirates Of Penzance.

Azalea signals thumbs-up.

The Theater front doors open, people fill the Lobby, buy
buns and pour themselves coffee.

Rena, friendly and gracious, works quickly and efficiently.

Azalea, happily stunned by the ease of the enterprise,
gleefully receives dollars and gives out buns.

The rush ends.

RENA (CONT'D)

See? Lobby's empty. We close up
shop.

Rena locks the counter, Azalea peeks out to the Theater.

AZALEA

Is that Ted on the stage?

Efon, wearing an evening gown, walks through the Lobby.

Azalea jumps out of the way as Efon walks briskly up the
center aisle, to great applause.

Rena unlocks a door, off to the side,

INT. THEATER STAIRS / BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Rena and Azalea descend a flight of stairs, Rena locks the
door behind her.

The basement, lit by a few hanging light bulbs, is empty.

The floor is formed by wooden planks, like a boardwalk.

A roar rises and falls.

AZALEA

(whispers)
Is that the audience?

RENA

(whispers)
No. It has to do with the water
table and all the quartz in the ground
around here...

Rena motions for Azalea to keep walking.

INT. THEATER - MOMENTS LATER

Rena and Azalea emerge from a concealed door near the orchestra pit. Rena crouches, Azalea follows.

They sit on a bench near the orchestra.

ON STAGE: The Pirates Of Penzance has begun -- all eyes are on the performers.

LATER

Rena pulls on Azalea's sleeve, stands, crouch-walks back to the hidden door, Azalea follows.

INT. THEATER STAIRS / BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Rena and Azalea walk quickly, in the vast emptiness of the basement.

RENA
 (quietly)
 I wish Ted had remembered to mention
 Cranberry Farm and the little horses.

Rena, still half crouched, struggles to make no noise, softly marching.

AZALEA
 To keep them alive...

RENA
 And *happy*.

Rena walks faster, speaks earnestly, almost desperately.

RENA (CONT'D)
 Any old thing can be alive. Even
 when you're dead your body stays
 alive. Cells. Body cells feed
 other... life forms...

Azalea glances toward Rena, who looks anxiously into the darkness ahead.

RENA (CONT'D)
 You've got to be *happy*.

Azalea matches Rena's quick-step, quiet march.

They disappear into the darkness -- sound of their footsteps hurrying back up to the Lobby.

INT. THEATER LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Rena reopens the concession stand.

Members of the audience quietly gather in the Lobby, then converge upon the concessions stand.

Rena and Azalea begin to wait on customers, again.

The customers smile as they receive buns.

INT. THEATER STAIRS / BASEMENT - LATER

Rena and Azalea walk quickly, speak quietly.

AZALEA

(thoughtfully)

In the show, the fellow's a pirate.
Because they heard wrong -- pirate
instead of pilot.

RENA

Yup. For want of a con-so-nant...

AZALEA

Imagine if my great grandmother wanted
us to be like, you know...

RENA

Like "rakers" not "bakers"?

AZALEA

Or "undertakers" not "bun - der -
bakers"...

RENA

You never know.

INT. THEATER - LATER

The crowd applauds as the cast bows and exits the stage.

People stand and stretch, wearily, happily.

Rena and Azalea follow the crowd to the front door.

RENA

Ted will come back later, for the
trays. I don't see your Aunt Efon.

AZALEA

Antiphons are Liturgical Chant. In
the real world, I mean.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Rain falls.

Rena and Azalea follow the crowd down the front stairs.

Azalea sniffs the air.

AZALEA
Nice fresh mold.

The two, wearily, laugh, walk.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

AZALEA
I'm sorry Ted didn't say your
announcement about the dwarf horses.

Rena shakes her head and shrugs.

AZALEA (CONT'D)
It's good that you have a cause,
something you work for.

RENA
They have all kinds of health
problems; lungs, digestion... their
little hooves...

AZALEA
Once I start getting paid I'll make
a donation to the Cranberry Farm.

RENA
I've even made them the beneficiaries
on my life insurance!

AZALEA
Oh, that... I don't *necessarily*
think we're worth more dead than
alive...

RENA
Well, technically, maybe. But Ted
is real big about investing the, you
know, equity.

AZALEA
Too good of a word.

A clap of thunder, the rain pours.

They run.

EXT. ZILLS PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea runs toward the Bakery, Rena runs to her car.

RENA

Can you get in? Should I wait?

Azalea waves her away, bumps into the Bakery door.

Arnie unlocks the door, he and Azalea wave to Rena.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arnie watches Rena drive away, winces as her car scrapes the cement barriers.

Arnie and Azalea walk to the Dispatch Table.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

ARNIE

She'll be okay, she doesn't live far.

AZALEA

We left trays at the Theater.

ARNIE

Ted takes care of that.

AZALEA

I'll help you clean up?

ARNIE

Nope, I got it. Efon put some stuff in your room, so be careful. She said it was "overflow".

Azalea starts up the steps and stops, intrigued.

AZALEA

Overflow...

ARNIE

Probably just papers and boxes.

AZALEA

Or maybe it's... capers and oxes.

Azalea walks up another step but leans backwards.

AZALEA (CONT'D)

Arnie, Ted said you look for the Jersey Devil, sometimes.

Arnie blushes violently, starts to sweep, briskly.

AZALEA (CONT'D)

You notice how many so-called mythical creatures have heads like horses?

Arnie turns slowly.

ARNIE

Many of your lake monsters... and some flying ones, too.

AZALEA

I wonder if anybody ever thought seahorses were imaginary...

Azalea exits up the stairs -- stretches her arms and turns her head from side to side, as if swimming.

Arnie, uncertainly, returns to sweeping.

Suddenly he stops, as if he had heard something outside. He peeks out the window in the side door, then leans his ear on the glass, then looks out again, then listens.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Azalea's bedroom door is open, cartons filled with costumes and feathered hats cover the floor in Azalea's room.

Still swim / walking, Azalea gently dives onto the cartons, and softly kicks the door shut behind her.

EXT. THE CREVICE - DAY

Trees cover the land west of the Bakery, almost concealing a long split, in the ground.

Efon, Ted and Dave regard the crevice, each with arms folded.

TED

Fill it in.

EFON

Knock the trees down first?

DAVE

Fill it in first.

Arnie runs from the Bakery to join them.

TED

Arnie, I don't wanna hear --

DAVE

We're going to fill it in, it's no big deal.

ARNIE

(breathless)

You think so? That crevice goes down *hundreds, maybe thousands of feet!*

TED

Here we go...

ARNIE

And then what... concrete? You think you can plug up a... *chasm* like this!

Arnie runs along side the big gash in the ground, it varies in width and depth.

ARNIE (CONT'D)

You could spend your whole life exploring, around here.

Arnie walks toward the trees, looks at the ground.

ARNIE (CONT'D)

All kinds of things growing... like... *morels...*

TED

Meanwhile, Sasquatch Jr., no bank loan for a new Bakery until we've got *much* more room for parking.

EFON

Tell him not to tramp around back there, he's just making it worse!

DAVE

Arnie!

TED

Forget it, let him wander off.

DAVE

Wait, I'll get him...

Dave steps toward the crevice, makes a megaphone with his hands and yells.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Arnie! I'm knocking down the brick walls in the basement!

Arnie runs back toward the Bakery.

EFON

But you won't knock down the Bakery
until the new one's built, right?

Ted, Dave and Efon walk slowly back toward the Bakery.

DAVE

You know, instead of just knocking
it down, we could have a fire!

TED

We could do that. I know some people
who know a guy --

DAVE

I mean, make an event of it --

Dave looks excitedly at the Bakery.

DAVE (CONT'D)

We could get a permit or whatever
you need, you know... people *love*
fires!

TED

Can't really charge admission...
maybe have concessions stands...

EFON

We'll have Azalea do that!

Arnie runs back toward the others.

ARNIE

I saw a couple of those little horses
over there, near the garbage...

EFON

Hideous creatures! Poor things.

The little horses stand in the distance, look frail.

EFON (CONT'D)

Get rid of them! Just *get rid* of
them. And speaking of dead weight,
that Rena --

ARNIE

Everybody says it looks good on her...

EFON

I was *going* to say... what does she
do around here, anyway?

The others exchange glances.

TED

Who knows, once we get the new Bakery set up maybe we'll cut her loose --

DAVE

Yeah, it's all automated. Going to practically run itself.

Efon strikes a pose in the direction of the little horses as they run away.

EFON

olé!

She leads the men back to the Bakery.

In the distance, Rena carries cartons to the garbage area, looks around, blankly.

INT. DR. HARM'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Harm writes, at his desk, Azalea sits opposite.

DR. HARM

Migraines? Pain, flashing lights?

AZALEA

And a heightened sense of smell.

DR. HARM

Well, that's not good.

He looks down at his notes.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)

You say you keep a journal?

AZALEA

No, I write poems.

DR. HARM

So, you "write poems". When you write you're being creative, you create...

He kneads the air.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)

You build up something...

Azalea shakes her head.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)

Yes, you do, you *build up*...

AZALEA

It's more like taking apart. Digging down. Into.

DR. HARM

Why? Where?

AZALEA

Toward reality. Toward God.

DR. HARM

Ah! God is... *below*?

AZALEA

God is reality. The pyramid base of all points.

DR. HARM

You're not going to break into goddamned poetry, are you?

Azalea sinks into the chair.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - EVENING

As the sun sets, a dusting of snow falls.

Rena stands near a small horse, on the side of the road.

Dave's truck approaches, slowly. Dave makes exaggerated gestures of exasperation.

DAVE

No. You can't put that horse in this truck.

RENA

Well... you must know somebody... could you please just call somebody.

DAVE

Come on! Just walk him to that farm over there that takes them in... it's, what, two blocks away!

The small horse shudders.

RENA

His little feet hurt him. His little hooves. Please, Dave?

Dave, snorting, makes a call on his cell phone
 Rena and the horse stand in the falling snow.
 A battered pick-up truck approaches, Frank drives.

Rena and Frank help the little horse onto the truck bed, Rena
 climbs up, sits beside the horse.

Frank drives the short distance to the farm, pulls into a
 wide, dirt driveway, near the stables.

EXT. CRANBERRY HORSE FARM - CONTINUOUS

Frank, limping, helps Rena get the horse down.

Rena tries to hand Frank money, he refuses it, impatiently.

People come from the stable to greet Rena and the horse.

INT. FRANK'S TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

In the rear-view mirror the stable door opens wide, people
 groom and feed dwarf horses, welcome Rena and the new horse.
 Frank watches as he drives away.

INT. DR. HARM'S OFFICE - DAY

Azalea sits in the patient's chair, Dr. Harm stands gazing at
 one of the Stonehenge pictures, then sits in his chair.

DR. HARM

So, how's it feel to be back in the
 secular world? You fitting in?

Azalea shakes her head.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)

You want to fit in? Would that be
 better? Why would that be better?

AZALEA

Maybe I'd be less destructive.

Dr. Harm presses his fingertips together.

DR. HARM

You told me... God is in all things?
 At all times? In you? In you, now?

Azalea nods at each question, shows little reaction.

Dr. Harm takes the pose of one greatly confused.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
 How can this be? Why should... how
 can you be destructive? How can
 God... destroy... God?

He sits back in his chair, proudly.

AZALEA
 Oh, you know. Free will.

DR. HARM
 So, you destroy my workroom... that
 was an act of free will?

Azalea nods, thoughtfully, then reconsiders.

AZALEA
 Not *my* free will. But free will.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - DAY

Frank and Arnie stand near the Dispatch Table.

Rena enters, smiles, they smile back.

Rena catches sight of the coveralls outside the Vat Room.

Several very bright white suits now hang on the hooks, in
 place of the saggy gray ones.

Rena, surprised, examines a suit; one has "Ted" embroidered
 in black on the back, the next has "Dave" and a third one
 has "Arnie" on it.

RENA
 Who's who in the Vat Room...

Rena flips through the remaining three suits, all small,
 with the names Efon, Azalea and Rena, in small letters on
 the breast pockets.

Rena examines the one labeled "Rena", it looks like it's a
 child's size.

RENA (CONT'D)
 Me?

Frank clears his throat. Arnie steps forward.

RENA (CONT'D)

I think I'm supposed to be getting smaller. Much, much smaller...

Arnie holds up one of the old gray coveralls.

ARNIE

(secretively)

We got this from the trash for you.

FRANK

You know... to wear.

Arnie passes the gray coveralls to Rena and then waits, as if to see if it still fits alright.

Frank leads him away.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Tomorrow is my day off, my day, my reward, and I shall drink my favorite *lambic ale*.

ARNIE

You like that *lambic* so much, why don't you have it every day?

FRANK

Why don't we jump off the roof and see who's faster.

Frank and Arnie exit.

Rena sings quietly as she smooths out the grey coveralls.

RENA

"Take back your mink, take back your pearls..."

Dave approaches, bouncing happily, smiles at Rena.

DAVE

How 'bout new suits! Pretty cool, huh? You like 'em? You like 'em?

Frank returns.

FRANK

Hey, I didn't see one for me, Dave.

Dave shrugs and smiles.

RENA

Dave, remember the pear trees, should we start to get ready?

Dave shrugs and exits, scuffs his feet, loudly.

Rena turns to Frank, sternly.

RENA (CONT'D)

Frank? The pear trees will have to be pollinated.

FRANK

Oh, let 'em take cold showers. Come on, they're not going anyplace. Same as all the rest of us...

Frank exits, noisily.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - DAY

A few customers sit at tables -- Frank waits on a customer at the Side Counter, Ted wipes off the Front Counter.

Dave pushes a few buttons on a desk phone, behind the Front Counter and his voice sounds throughout the building.

DAVE

Ladies and Gentlemen, attention, please! We have a new flavor...

Other noises in the Bakery quiet down.

DAVE (CONT'D)

We have a new flavor! You are invited to the sample table in Zills Bakery Show Room, first come, *first serve!*

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea starts to step into white coveralls, outside the Vat Room door.

Efon rushes down the steps, grabs Azalea and hurries onto the Bakery Show Room.

Rena walks, quickly, down the stairs.

EFON (O.S.)

New flavor party!

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Efon bursts into the Show Room followed, dutifully, by Rena and Azalea.

EFON

New flavor party! Do you know --

Efon stops short, Rena and Azalea bump into her.

At a table, near the Front Counter, Brandie and Friendie (glamorous and sophisticated), sit smiling.

Dave is very attentive to them.

Efon walks briskly to their table, moves some chairs around, sits down. Rena and Azalea sit, too.

Brandie and Friendie smile, Dave fusses with paper napkins and plates, Efon looks on, in silence.

RENA

Well... new flavor! What could it be...

BRANDIE

We know!

Brandie and Friendie giggle, triumphantly.

Ted enters, from the Kitchen, carries a tray of buns.

FRIENDIE

Sh! Brandeis Wimmle, it's a secret!

BRANDIE

I didn't say what! Friendly Wimmle!

Rena blinks and stares at the sisters.

Dave takes a seat at the table, Ted serves everyone a bun.

TED

Six at the party, full house, plus one! Everybody ready?

Everyone bites into the warm buns.

EFON

Delicious! Mmmm!

Customers approach the table, curiously.

CUSTOMER

What's the new flavor?

EFON

It's... it's yummy good!

TED

You like it?

BRANDIE
Can you guess?

RENA
Um... blueberry?

TED
No... you like it?

AZALEA
Boysenberry.

TED
And?

FRIENDIE
Vuh vuh vuh... that's a hint!

Brandie whispers to Efon.

EFON
Vidalia onions! Yay, me!

FRIENDIE
Winner! Winner!

Brandie winks at Ted.

DAVE
Good, right? Everybody?

Customers sample the new buns, too -- approval all around.

RENA
Excuse me, Brandie, Brandeis... your
name is Brandeis? After Justice
Brandeis?

DAVE
They're lawyers! You didn't know
that by looking at them, did you!

Rena continues, purposefully --

RENA
And your name is Friendly, after --

FRIENDIE
After Justice Friendly!

RENA
You mean Judge Henry Friendly?

FRIENDIE
That's what I said.

RENA

Son of a gun.

The excitement at the table dies down, a moment.

FRIENDIE

Should we tell them, Teddy!

BRANDIE

Hang onto your socks, everybody.

TED

Drum roll! There's *another new flavor!*

Ted runs back to the Kitchen.

Efon cries out, struggles to catch her breath, Rena stands, Dave runs to the Kitchen.

Dr. Harm and Rose Pin enter, walk up to the Front Counter, Frank waits on them.

DR. HARM

What's all the excitement?

FRANK

Just another day in the house of Zills. What can I get you.

ROSE

The order for Dr. Harm.

FRANK

Got it, right here.

Frank shows them a house shaped bun cake before he ties the box up with string.

DR. HARM

My workshop group is going to love this!

As he takes his order, Dr. Harm catches sight of Azalea -- he holds the box protectively.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)

God in the box! God in the buns!

Azalea nods, smiles, continues to eat.

Rena turns suddenly, as Rose pats her on the shoulder.

ROSE

You're not singing!

Rose smiles, waves and exits.

RENA

Oh! Hi, Rose! Bye, Rose!

Dave returns from the Kitchen with a glass of water, which he hands to Efon.

Efon suddenly resumes a show of gasping for breath, struggles to sip the water.

EFON

Another new flavor!

Ted returns with the second tray of buns.

The remaining customers in the Bakery gather around the table.

Frank leaves the Front Counter, walks to the table.

FRANK

Let me guess, New Flavor Party!

EFON

Two! Two... new... flavors!

FRANK

Moose and squirrel?

Ted excitedly considers this guess, then scowls.

TED

This is serious! Now, think... surf n' turf, but very classy.

BRANDIE

Very high-end!

EFON

Somebody guess!

AZALEA

Brie... and lobster. Very good!

DAVE

Smarter than she looks!

EFON

Baby boy, you apologize, right now!

Efon tickles Dave, mercilessly.

DAVE

(giggling)

I'm sorry, I said sorry!

FRANK
Surf n' turf? Oh so clever, the
lobster's amphibian.

EFON
Please, we're eating!

TED
What do you know about taste.

EFON
Yeah, Frank.

DAVE
Frank Weird Beer...

Frank snaps to attention, braces himself for a good argument.

BRANDIE
Right. So, anyway...

Friendie signals to Ted and Efon to listen.

BRANDIE (CONT'D)
Rena! Your old boy friend's a
judge, too, right?

Frank, startled by the interruption, drops a bun on the table.

RENA
(startled)
My... ex-fiancé. Oh, years ago.
William Hardy.

Rena blushes, very red.

EFON
You girls weren't even born then!

FRIENDIE
Billy Hardy! We know him. He married
that gorgeous girl --

BRANDIE
And rich! And all those cute kids!

FRIENDIE
And he's still so handsome!

EFON
The one that got away! The one that
got away!

Silence at the table, all eyes on red-faced Rena. Frank
picks up the bun that he dropped on the table.

FRANK
So... Ted. New flavors!

Silence in the room.

AZALEA
Yay, Ted and Dave!

Azalea and Frank applaud, everyone else in the store joins in, with applause and cheers.

Rena exits, awkwardly.

INT. ZILLS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Rena runs to her desk, tears stream down her face. She rubs her eyes, tries to get back to work.

Friendie and Brandie enter.

Rena, embarrassed, fumbles for tissues, wipes her face with her sleeve.

The Wimmle sisters look around at the office furniture and decor as they speak to her.

FRIENDIE
Poor Rena. Must be tough for you,
being the only non family member,
around here.

BRANDIE
Of course, you've been here so long,
you must feel like you're part of the
family...

FRIENDIE
But you're not...

BRANDIE
That's funny about Judge Billy --

FRIENDIE
Funny that we know Billy Hardy --

BRANDIE
When I get married I think I'll do
that hyphen thing, like, say, Wimmle
hyphen Zills!

FRIENDIE
Oh, right, like Ted's grandma --

BRANDIE

Bunny Pat hyphen Zills! What a riot!

Friendie and Brandie stand over Rena, smiling.

RENA

Bunny Pat Buckwald hyphen Zills.
Buckwald was her first husband.

Friendie and Brandie roll their eyes and turn to exit.
Brandie calls over her shoulder, to Rena.

BRANDIE

There's a picture, downstairs!

Rena seethes. Her eyes and nose water. She dumps out
her purse, finds tissue, trumpet blows her nose.

Arnie enters.

RENA

You! Your grandmother's first
husband's last name!

Arnie, baffled, searches the air around him.

RENA (CONT'D)

Buckwald, right? Bunny Pat Buckwald
hyphen Zills.

ARNIE

Right. Okay if I sand the walls?

Arnie holds sand paper in his gloved hands.

Rena nods, begins to relax as Arnie works nearby.

INT. FAMILY KITCHEN - DAY

Early Morning.

The cabinets and appliances are still chained and locked.

Azalea sits at the table, eats watery cereal, from a bowl.

O.S. Clatter of footsteps.

Dave bounds in, glances around, bounces on his toes, like a
runner on base.

DAVE

Where'd you get cereal?

Azalia looks up, slides her bowl slightly toward him.

O.S. Heavier footsteps.

Ted pushes past Dave, frowns at Azalea.

TED
Where'd you get --

Dave turns suddenly.

DAVE
Hey, you look at those Alpha N. masks
yet? Torn up in battle scenes, right?

TED
(furiously)
Wrong. Cut up with scissors.

Ted punches a cabinet, glances out the window.

TED (CONT'D)

What's that Arnie doing out there --

Dave bangs on the window, then bounces out of the room. Ted
strides, angrily, behind him.

Azalea finishes her cereal, rinses, dries her bowl and spoon.
She slides a panel from a corner cabinet, puts the bowl on a
shelf, slides the panel back, pockets the spoon, exits.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea focuses on the stairs, swim-runs up them.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

At the top of the steps, Azalea pushes her hair back, wipes her
nose in her fingers, walks steadily into her room.

EXT. TRELLIS - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea watches the scene below unfold, around the crevice.

EXT. THE CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Arnie sits at the edge, peers down.

Dave approaches, startles Arnie who jolts forward, nearly

falls in but oddly, hardly seems to notice the danger.

Ted walks, quickly, past Dave, yells at Arnie.

TED

Nothing's coming out of the crevice!
Give it up Freakazoid...

Arnie stands. Ted towers over him -- Arnie moves away from Ted but still near the crevice.

DAVE

That's right, crawl right back in
that hole in the ground...

Arnie tries to ignore Ted, moves further along the length of the crevice, into the woods.

TED

Shoot, it's Frank's day off, *again*.
Nobody's working!

EXT. GARBAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Ted trudges back to the Bakery, past the garbage cans, where Rena struggles to fit a big bag into a metal can.

TED

(gruffly)
Don't *mess that up*.

Ted stalks away.

RENA

(mumbles)
Yeah, Rena... *don't go making a mess
of my garbage...*

Rena struggles to shove the bag into the garbage can, finally slams the metal lid on the can, knocks it over, regathers her strength, stands the can up, again.

RENA (CONT'D)

(sings)
"Gimme a pig foot, and a *bottle* of
beer -- "

Rena looks up.

Frank sits in a lawn chair at a secluded spot on the other side of the garbage cans.

He holds a bottle of lambic ale, and glares at Rena.

FRANK

Do not. Spoil. This day. For me.
Rena holds up her empty hands, walks away.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Rena hurries upstairs, snaps her fingers, hurries back down.
Dave enters, from the back door.

RENA

Dave!

Dave hurries out to the Bakery Show Room.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ted, unsmiling, waits on CUSTOMERS.
Dave steps out to the middle of the Show Room, he breaks into
a tap dance ala Ruby Keeler. Delighted customers applaud.
Rena waits until Dave stops to take a breath and a few bows.
Finally, Dave looks at Rena.

DAVE

What?

RENA

Let's decide about the pear trees.
It's time.

DAVE

Damn! You should have reminded me!

Rena sighs as a sudden facial tic confuses her expression.

DAVE (CONT'D)

Not Frank! He got no production at
all from those pears, last year!

Rena moves out of the way as customers enter and exit.

DAVE (CONT'D)

And the year before, with Arnie!
Zilch! It's like a curse! Hello,
Mrs. Carl!

Among the other customers, Mrs. Carl grabs her order from the Front Counter and hurries toward Dave.

MRS. CARL

Oh, Dave, can I put in my order now for Pear-And-Almond Buns? I don't want to miss out!

DAVE

Of course! Rena, take care of that...

Mrs. Carl folds her arms and smiles smugly, at Rena. Customers clamor around Rena, yell out orders. Dave exits. Rena's smile looks painful.

LATER

Rena wearily nods as the last customer relays an order.

CUSTOMER

Two dozen Pear-And-Almond, in a round shape, and another three dozen in the shape of an Easter Bunny!

RENA

Two round and a bunny. Got it.

The customer exits, happily.

Ted stands at the front door, forces a smile to the customer, slams and locks the door behind her.

EXT. ROOF - NIGHT

Azalea leans against the slope of the roof, reading a book with a tiny light attached to a page.

She looks up, as if she heard something, pauses, reaches in her pocket, pulls out a sourdough bun, takes a bite, gets comfortable again, goes back to reading.

INT. BAKERY BASEMENT - NIGHT

Arnie, asleep in his bed (next to the brick wall) -- mumbles, flails his arms, falls out of bed.

He stands up, looks around with alarm and then pulls on jeans and a sweatshirt, over his pajamas.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - NIGHT

Arnie walks stealthily, in the dark.

Fog swirls, ominously, then lifts to show a very large, shadowy figure move toward the trees.

Arnie moves, cautiously, toward the figure.

It's too big to be a person -- hair covered, broad shouldered -- it might be some kind of bear.

The figure moves steadily, just ahead of Arnie, it turns its head, seems to peer in Arnie's direction, then turns back, strides, quickly, into the woods.

Arnie's mouth drops open, then he takes a deep breath.

ARNIE

Sasquatch.

INT. FAMILY KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ted, Dave and Efon sit at the Family Kitchen table. Ted unlocks the refrigerator, takes out plates of fried chicken and two six packs of beer, then locks the fridge up again.

DAVE

Key!

Ted tosses him the key ring. Dave unlocks the chain on a cabinet, gets a box of cookies.

EFON

Low-fat.

Dave hunts around, grabs another box of cookies, resets the chain, puts the key ring on the table.

Ted takes the key ring and pockets it. Efon taps the table.

EFON (CONT'D)

Nobody's died, lately.

TED

Which is not all bad.

DAVE

A couple of ten thousand dollar pay outs would come in handy right now...

EFON

But until they all die we keep investing the premiums, right?

Dave groans.

TED

Okay, so investments have been down, lately --

DAVE

Down? Gone! What's left! You did
so bad in the market last month --

TED

The market is down!

EFON

All that means is... what does it
mean?

DAVE

Means the money we pay on everybody's
insurance premiums --

TED

Isn't there, at the moment. But,
come on, the market's bound to go
back up.

EFON

Bound to.

DAVE

Can't do anything about it, anyway...

Arnie enters, from outside.

DAVE (CONT'D)

What hole did you crawl out of?

TED

What species you taking up with?

Ted, Dave and Efon laugh.

Arnie brushes some small leaves from his face, glances at
them and then eats them, calmly.

ARNIE

You guys set on putting up a new
Bakery, across the street?

TED

Part of a high class strip mall.

DAVE

It's going to make a *mint*.

TED

With cash from me and Dave, Aunt
Efon's jewelry and your property
over there --

Ted thumbs toward the woods.

DAVE

We'll just about make it.

ARNIE

Uh huh. You sure about getting rid of your jewelry, Aunt Efon?

EFON

I... I think it's for the best...

ARNIE

Nobody's forcing you, you know.

TED

Don't get her started --

DAVE

We finally got her on board!

EFON

Nobody had to *get me on board!*

Efon crumples a handful of cookies and scatters them across the table.

EFON (CONT'D)

I'm the queen of this beehive!

Ted and Dave glare at Arnie.

Ted bites into a chicken leg, chews and speaks.

TED

We're just getting rid of some dead weight.

EFON

Speaking of which --

TED

I'm starting a diet, tomorrow!

EFON

Silly boy, I meant Rena, dear...

ARNIE

(surprisingly loud)

I tell you *she's still pretty!*

Everyone, including Arnie, looks surprised.

EFON

I mean, what do we *need* her for, now... we've got *Azalea!*

Arnie stirs, as if about to speak.

Ted groans, then turns his chair, pulls on Arnie's sleeve.

TED
Hey, Arnie... morels!

Arnie's eyebrows go up.

TED (CONT'D)
How 'bout you go find some. Yeah!
Arnie boy. Morels!

Arnie opens the door to the outside, looks longingly into the darkness. Exits.

EFON
What's that, wine?

DAVE
Mushrooms.

EFON
Oh. Why didn't you say so? Oh,
those ones the pigs dig out of the
ground?

Efon laughs at this idea. Ted and Dave laugh at the laughter.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - MORNING

Ted impatiently knocks on Azalea's bedroom door.

Azalea, in black jeans and a black sweatshirt, opens the door. She holds a black pen.

Ted smiles as pleasantly as he is able.

TED
So, you writing your poetry? I need
you to go outside. You're not really
doing anything, right?

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - MOMENTS LATER

Early morning, blue sky, swirls of pastel colored fog.

TED
Here's the problem.

Ted shakes a fist toward a line of pear trees.

TED (CONT'D)
You know they have to be pollinated
by hand, right? Leave it to Dave
and he makes a mess of it...

Ted paces around the pear trees, Azalea follows.

TED (CONT'D)
They just won't give me the production
I want...

Azalea steps back from the trees.

AZALEA
Maybe they... just need more time...

TED
Brandie and Friendie offered to take
care of it for me... but they're
really busy...

Ted slaps Azalea on the back.

TED (CONT'D)
So that leaves you. And don't say I
can just buy pears, they're not the
same. They do not work.

Arnie drives a golf cart from the street to the back of the
Bakery. He regards Ted suspiciously.

TED (CONT'D)
Arnie! Any luck with the cart sales?

Arnie nods and shrugs, starts to unload empty trays.

TED (CONT'D)
Hey, Arnie, I'll do that for you,
here, you show Azalea the ropes with
the pear trees. Great!

Ted exits, returns to the Bakery.

ARNIE
Yeah, sure, he'll unload my empty
trays...

Arnie grimaces in Ted's direction, then sighs, hopelessly,
and addresses Azalea.

ARNIE (CONT'D)
Okay. You get chicken feathers, you
pick these flowers, dry them, then
dust the other trees with the pollen.

AZALEA

These trees. And then those trees.
So I go get the flowers.

ARNIE

Only if they're open. And you should
get a paper bag, to put them in.

LATER

Azalea carries a ladder from a shed in the backyard to the
pear trees, sets up the ladder, climbs up, no problem.

EXT. IN THE PEAR TREE - CONTINUOUS

Azalea takes a deep breath.

AZALEA

*Kindly permit me to impose upon your
privacy... how beautiful you are!*

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Frank drives up in a golf cart, parks it near the Bakery
back door.

Arnie carries trays from his cart to the Kitchen.

FRANK

Who's up in the tree?

ARNIE

Azalea. Ted said.

Frank walks over to the ladder.

FRANK

Azalea? Too early to take the
flowers.

AZALEA

I know. I'm just visiting.

Azalea climbs down.

FRANK

Maybe tomorrow.

Frank exits, to the Bakery.

Azalea carries the ladder back toward the shed. She sneezes,
turns back to the pear tree and smiles, beatifically.

Azalea walks back from the shed to the Bakery, stops to look at glass bottles, shining in a recycle bin.

She squints, misreads the bottles' labeled Lambic Ale.

AZALEA

Iambic ale? *Iambic ale!*

Rena walks by, wrestles some trash bags into the cans.

RENA

(sings)

"I yam what I yam and that's all
that I yam, I'm Popeye -- "

Rena exits.

RENA (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Lots of orders already for Pear-and-
Almond buns...

TED (O.S.)

(proudly)

Going to be the best year ever!

Ted marches out to the pear trees.

TED (CONT'D)

Azalea! You give up already?

AZALEA

It's too early, tomorrow, probably.

Ted throws his arms up in frustration.

TED

That Rena! Nag, nag, nag but what...
it's too early! It's too early!

Ted exits.

Fog swirls around the pear trees, Azalea gazes up at them.

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - DAY

Ted leans down to frost a tray of buns, Efon stands beside him, watching.

Rena approaches, they don't acknowledge her, she clears her throat.

RENA

Guys? I just took an order. For an
extra large raisin bun spiral.

Ted glances up, Rena shows him a page from an order book.

RENA (CONT'D)

A spiral, like a big caterpillar,
with a smiling face.

TED

Raisins?

RENA

Raisins to make the smiling face,
yes, that's what they want.

EFON

(dryly)

Rena and the *raisins*. I really wish
you had run this by us.

RENA

What's wrong? We do lots of cakes
like this.

EFON

That's just *it*. *You're* stuck in the
past.

Rena stands, dumbfounded.

TED

We're thinking different direction.

Rena shakes her head, still confused.

EFON

Fondant... for example!

Efon gestures grandly toward Ted.

Ted stands straight, momentarily, shifts his weight then
hunches down again to resume work on the buns.

Ted grimaces at the buns as he assembles them into a cube.
He glares at Rena, as if daring her to comment.

RENA

Fondant? Gets kind of like concrete
doesn't it? Gets kind of hard?

Ted does not respond.

RENA (CONT'D)

Anyway, this order is okay, right?

TED

Well, you backed me into a corner!

EFON
Just *ask us*, before you finalize.

TED
I don't want to be backed into a corner!

Efon puts her arm around him, they exit.

Rena quietly addresses the empty Kitchen.

RENA
(sarcastically)
Rena and the raisins...
(sings)
"Spit, make clay, make even the outer walls..."

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - DAY

In a corner of the Bakery Kitchen, Rena pours herself a cup of coffee from the coffee urn.

Brandie and Friendie chat just outside the Kitchen doorway.

Arnie stacks trays of buns in a metal rack.

Efon enters, executes a few classic poses, adjusts her outfit (turtleneck and designer jeans), glances at her reflection in the glass door of a cabinet.

Efon turns and regards Rena, thoughtfully.

EFON
Rena, dear, if you were twenty years younger, I'd think you had a bun in the oven.

Efon pats Rena's tummy and laughs, loudly.

Rena swallows the first few remarks that come to her mind.

RENA
Nope, just a fibroid.

EFON
Everybody's got the fibroid. Look at poor Frank. And, my hands, can't even get my rings on, some days!

Efon shows off her slender fingers, with sparkling rings.

Dave enters, takes the cup of coffee from Rena's hand.

DAVE
Thanks, doll.

Dave exits.

Rena begins the process of fixing another cup of coffee, for herself.

EFON
What did you say you had? Fungus?

RENA
Fibroids. Makes you look puffy.

Efon, alarmed, checks her reflection again.

RENA (CONT'D)
Not you, me. It'll shrink down, probably.

EFON
You think I'm shrinking?

RENA
Me! The fibroids in my uterus!

Efon rolls her eyes and pats Rena's tummy, again.

EFON
Might want to cut down on snacks.

Efon takes a bun from a tray and exits, eating.

Arnie follows, but sidesteps toward Brandie and Friendie.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brandie and Friendie struggle to keep straight faces as Arnie cautiously approaches them.

ARNIE
Did Efon say something about --

BRANDIE
Rena being pregnant?

Brandie and Friendie smile, rapturously.

Arnie walks back to the Kitchen, as if hypnotized.

INT. BAKERY KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Rena holds a spoon of sugar in her hand, looks uncertainly at the coffee cup in her other hand, dumps out the coffee, begins again.

Rena fills her cup, turns away from the coffee urn, adds sugar and milk to her cup.

Arnie enters, walks up behind her, taps on her shoulder.

Rena, startled, spills a little coffee, wipes it up.

RENA

Hi, there, Arnie, I didn't see you.

ARNIE

(solemnly)

I hear congratulations are in order.

RENA

Something good happened?

Rena looks surprised.

ARNIE

You're going to have a baby.

Rena opens her mouth.

ARNIE (CONT'D)

Congrat-

RENA

No. No.

O.S. Wild laughter.

Arnie looks down at Rena's puffy midsection.

RENA (CONT'D)

It's just... it's just...

Rena despairs of coming up with a clever remark.

RENA (CONT'D)

I have this fibroid mass, in my uterus. But it's nothing...

Rena's face turns red, she pretends to be calm.

RENA (CONT'D)

It's like... a little going away present from my child-bearing years.

Rena tries to laugh, lightly.

Arnie looks confused, then relieved, then embarrassed.

Rena laughs again, nervously, and exits.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Brandie, Friendie and Efon whisper and laugh.

Rena, blushing, walks by, conversation stops short.

EFON

Don't say "hello", Rena!

RENA

Hi, again...

Rena continues up the stairs, the laughter resumes, at a higher pitch.

INT. ZILLS OFFICE - LATER

Rena stands on a chair, holds a cord with one hand, catches paper (shot up in the air from the fax machine) with her other hand.

Frank enters, shoulders hunched.

FRANK

What in tarnation? If you want to kill yourself, I wish you'd do it at home!

RENA

You have to keep the cord up and catch the pages! Out of paper!

Rena climbs down, unsmiling, gets paper from a pack. The fax machine beeps -- Rena refills the tray, climbs back up.

FRANK

(sputtering)

We can't just have a fax, we've got to have a bleeping Death Machine?

RENA

When Ted's here it works just fine. He scares it.

FRANK

You want scary, I'll show you *scary*!

RENA

Quiet rage is nice, too, Frank.

FRANK

And the copier, what's wrong with *it*?

Piles of papers surround the copy machine.

RENA

It thinks it's out of toner but it isn't. Efon gave it some extra work to do.

FRANK

You've got to be shitting me.

RENA

I shit you not.

Frank turns to leave, head down, hands rolled in tight fists, and lurches out the door.

Frank returns.

FRANK

So what is it coming through the fax? Freaking Fractlopedia Britannica?

RENA

Efficiency report, from Brandie and Friendie!

FRANK

Can't it be done on-line or something?

RENA

Can't get on-line. Phone company told Dave *problems on the line*.

Frank struggles to hold himself in check.

FRANK

Striking workers destroy the lines!
They tell him that every time and *he buys it!* Jerky jerky jerk jerk.

RENA

Attack of the office machines!

FRANK

Dang, blast and ptuuuii.

RENA

(thoughtfully)
Maybe we're all channeling Deputy Dog...

FRANK

(morosely)
Make my copies? Ten of each.

He hands her several pages of Zills buns advertisements.

Rena nods.

The fax is suddenly quiet. Rena reaches for where the paper would fly to, but nothing is there.

RENA
Good fax machine. You'll behave now, too, won't you, copier.

FRANK
I'd better get out, I think I hear them answering you.

Frank exits. Rena climbs down, pats the copy machine.

RENA
(sings)
"Call any vegetable, and the chances are good, that that vegetable will respond to youooooo!"

Rena suddenly looks very tired.

Her face shows fatigue, ripples of increasing sadness, a few twinges of horror, then emptiness.

INT. DR. HARM'S OFFICE - DAY

Dr. Harm leans over his desk and points at Azalea.

DR. HARM
Three things that make you want to go on living. One?

AZALEA
Poetry. God's love. My family.

Dr. Harm points a second finger at Azalea.

DR. HARM
How much do you care what other people think about you.

AZALEA
Very much. Yes, very much.

DR. HARM
So why write poetry? Nobody likes it, right?

Dr. Harm and Azalea both consider this.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
Anyway, what difference does it make what people think of you?

Dr. Harm smiles, cheerfully.

DR. HARM (CONT'D)
What are the odds of somebody just...
punching you out?

AZALEA
Same as everything, I guess, fifty
fifty...

DR. HARM
(reluctantly)
Gimme a poem.

AZALEA
"Dots." Day's end delay like a trail
of thimble jellies / above myriad
coyotes' incendiary eyes.

DR. HARM
Thimble jellies. That's meaningless.
It's a nonsense poem.

AZAEA
They're jelly fish. That's what
they call them. They look like Dots.
The candy.

DR. HARM
Jelly fish? Look like Dots?

AZAEA
These do. That's the thing. One
more? Poem?

Dr. Harm leans forward, makes a show of keeping his eyes
wide open.

AZALEA
"Like The Real Stars." Confetti is
three / dimensional graffiti /

DR. HARM
Isn't "is" a weak word?

Azalea doesn't respond, Dr. Harm flexes his fingers toward
her, signals "keep going".

AZALEA
Galaxies sprinkled in terrazzo grow
quantum / dots ten times already
there.

DR. HARM
Dots again. Why... why poetry?

Azalea shakes her head.

AZALEA

In the second poem, the "dots ten times" reads as "dots ten X"... like the powdered sugar.

Dr. Harm grimaces, finally he speaks.

DR. HARM

Do you think you're any good? Your poems, I mean.

AZALEA

Oh, my poems...

Dr. Harm crumples a piece of blank paper and tosses it back and forth in his hands.

DR. HARM

What's your favorite Tarot Card?

AZALEA

Ten of swords. That's the man with ten bloody swords in his back.

Dr. Harm suddenly opens a book, flips through it, reads.

DR. HARM

Ten swords not a card of violent death.

Dr. Harm looks at the picture -- looks up at Azalea, closes the book.

INT. ATTIC HALLWAY - DAWN

Dave knocks rapidly on Azalea's door and calls in a loud, frantic whisper.

DAVE

Azalea! Hurry up! Help me!

The door opens, Azalea pulls her trench coat on over her pajamas. Half asleep, she leans to one side and with her fingers, she holds one eye open.

INT. STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

Dave pulls Azalea down the stairs, Azalea marches on an incline, hitting enough stairs to keep from falling.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Dave drags Azalea outside, points to the pear trees.

The little white buds on the front six pear trees are gone.

DAVE

All the flowers are gone! What did you do, did you touch them?

AZALEA

I touched one flower, there.

Dave speaks frantically to Ted over the phone.

DAVE

She says she only touched one flower.

TED (O.S.)

She loosen them, somehow? Azalea, we're not accusing you, we just need to know!

AZALEA

I'm sure they were still attached.

Dave walks away, talks to Ted on the phone.

Arnie approaches, from the Bakery.

AZALEA (CONT'D)

Flowers I was going to pick are gone.

ARNIE

And there aren't any petals on the ground... does this tree look *chewed* to you?

AZALEA

The leaves... like teeth marks... the wind wouldn't do that.

ARNIE

No. No, it wouldn't.

Ted drives up in a golf cart, parks, gets out noisily, stomps over to the trees shaking his fist.

TED

Who did this! I can't go another year without pears!

Dave returns.

DAVE

You think it was Frank?

TED

Azalea, did you hear anything, about anybody going to take the flowers?

AZALEA

No.

DAVE

Just tell us, we need to get those flowers back.

TED

Forget it, they'll be ruined.

DAVE

Why? You have to dry them, anyway!

TED

Where am I going to get pollen!

AZALEA

Doesn't have to be these exact trees, right? There's pear trees all over...

TED

None of the other ones bloom this early! Forget it.

Ted exits, angrily.

Dave and Arnie look up at the trees, gloomily.

Azalea exits.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea runs back through the building, makes a too-wide turn toward the stairs, regains her balance. She turns sideways and walks steadily up the stairs.

EXT. ZILLS PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea (in jeans and sweatshirt) walks sideways down the stairs that lead from her bathroom to the parking lot.

Arnie backs up a golf cart loaded with trays of buns, as he is about to return to the street.

Azalea climbs in, sits beside him, to Arnie's surprise.

ARNIE

I can't run you all over town.

AZALEA

I know where I need to go, I mean
I'll know it when we get there.

Arnie shakes his head, then drives the golf cart out to join the traffic in the street.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Azalea points to the right, looks determinedly in that direction.

ARNIE

Not supposed to do this...

Arnie makes a turn, drives a little further, Azalea makes a "halt" sign.

Arnie pulls the golf cart to the side, Azalea scampers out, disappears into the trees. Arnie drives quickly away.

EXT. ROADSIDE WOODS - MOMENTS LATER

Clumps of azalea bushes mark a trail through the trees.

Azalea follows the colors, hurries up a hill, into a straggly wooded area, reaches a quiet, residential zone.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL AREA - CONTINUOUS

Azalea walks toward a high hedge around a house.

The hedge sways and ripples slightly.

Azalea follows the hedge around a corner where a disheveled MAN runs his arms up and down the sides of the hedge.

It's Dr. Harm, almost unrecognizable, his face bruised.

Dr. Harm jumps backwards.

DR. HARM

Did you see? Something ran into me,
last night. I think it was an animal.

AZALEA

An animal?

DR. HARM

Big, big dog. Or a bear...

Dr. Harm laughs, nervously, pats the hedge.

AZALEA

Big animal!

Rose walks toward them, from Dr. Harm's house, with a flashlight in her hand.

ROSE

I went all through the house,
everything seems okay.

Dr. Harm looks perplexed.

DR. HARM

I heard a thunk and a "huh?"... like
that... "huh?"

Rose and Azalea nod.

ROSE

We could walk around the yard.

Dr. Harm nods, he and Rose walk with the flashlight aimed at the hedges.

Azalea continues down the street, walks faster, to the end of the block, turns a corner.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - CONTINUOUS

Two large houses sit back from the sidewalk, on a hill. Near the street are holly trees, behind them a cluster of pear trees, with low hanging branches, in flower.

Azalea takes a sheet of newspaper from a neat pile of recycle material, near the curb.

She forms a cone with the newspaper, fills it with white pear blossoms.

Azalea looks up from the flower cone -- two small horses approach, cautiously -- one horse nuzzles the paper cone.

Azalea stands, transfixed. A cell phone rings.

Azalea, surprised, reaches in her pocket, flips open a phone.

RENA (O.S.)

Dave? Do you have Aggi-Erin Meeth's
phone number?

AZALEA

Rena? What do the little horses
eat, can they eat Zills buns?

Azalea holds the phone under her chin, shifts the flower cone to one arm, hunts in her pockets for food.

RENA (O.S.)

Azalea? No, no buns. You've got horses with you?

AZALEA

Pear flowers?

Azalea finds something in her jeans pocket.

AZALEA (CONT'D)

Dog biscuit? Where'd that come from...

RENA (O.S.)

Break it up for them.

Azalea breaks up the biscuits, feeds the horses, giggles and speaks to them.

AZALEA

How 'bout *them* apples...

RENA (O.S.)

Look for apples. If there's morels there'll be apples.

The horses watch Azalea.

Azalea sniffs north, south, east, west. She and the horses walk, locate some apple trees.

Azalea shakes a low branch, crab apples fall to the ground. Azalea holds a few for the horses to eat.

AZALEA

Morels and crab apples.

RENA (O.S.)

Sounds like a new flavor party. Azalea? Is anybody around?

A pick-up truck approaches, it's Frank.

AZALEA

Frank's here. Hi, Frank!

Azalea and the horses look up, curiously. Azalea holds the cone of flowers like a lamp.

Frank drives the truck near to where Azalea stands. Frank sighs, loads the horses in his truck, with Azalea.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - DAY

Late afternoon.

Rabbits, squirrels and small horses graze in a cluster of orange wild flowers.

Nearby --

EXT. IN A SECOND PEAR TREE - DAY

In a pear tree, Azalea sits on the top of the ladder, feather dusts the flowers with pollen.

Efon stands below the pear tree.

EFON

There's lots of flowers on that tree.
What was all the uproar about?

AZALEA

It was those other trees that lost
their flowers, the donor trees...
these are the receiver trees...

Azalea glances down.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Efon has already walked away.

EXT. IN A SECOND PEAR TREE - CONTINUOUS

Azalea dusts the flowers with pollen, the fine particles sparkle all around her.

Through the branches, the town looks like milkweed fluff.

TED (O.S.)

You're done, right? You get rid of
the rest of the pollen, like I told
you to?

AZALEA

This is all there is, I used it all.

Azalea climbs down. She shimmers with pollen dust.

EXT. GARBAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Arnie and Frank struggle to chop wooden pallets into kindling.

FRANK

I keep thinking it's skunks someplace.

ARNIE

Fossil fuels in the air. Bad energy.

FRANK

You switch electricity from sixty cycles to four hundred cycles, you've got all the energy you need!

Arnie stops mid-chop, thinks a moment, nods and resumes chopping the pallets.

ARNIE

Like on planes! That's good. And I got this idea for electric cars.

Frank holds a hatchet in the air, looks at the sky.

FRANK

Was that thunder?

ARNIE

Small motor over each wheel, reduce the weight, you don't need as much fuel.

A truck, with "Burly Men Orchards" painted on it, parks near Frank and Arnie.

Two BURLY MEN approach.

FIRST BURLY MAN

You guys got the problems of the world all solved, again?

Frank and Arnie stop working, smile a greeting.

FRANK

Tomorrow we're going to cure cancer.

ARNIE

Or even LOO-pus, maybe.

Frank and Arnie put down their tools, catch their breaths.

FIRST BURLY MAN

You guys could do us a big favor. I could make it worth your while...

Frank and Arnie shake their heads.

FIRST BURLY MAN (CONT'D)

I gotta have pollen, guys!

FRANK

You know how Ted is.

ARNIE

If it were up to us, but... you can try...

The Burly Men nod, they understand.

CRACK of thunder.

The men search the sky, cautiously.

The Burly Men keep walking toward the pear trees.

Frank and Arnie put away their tools.

Dave approaches the Burly Men, speaks to them. Dave looks around, nervously.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

Dave and the two Burly Men approach the pear trees, Ted motions for them to stop.

TED

The pollen's all gone. Sorry guys.

FIRST BURLY MAN

You gotta help us out, Big Ted...

TED

All gone!

FIRST BURLY MAN

Something ate all the flowers off our trees! I find out you had something to do with it --

Ted walks away.

FIRST BURLY MAN (CONT'D)

Dave, you talk to him! I'll make it worth your while!

From the shadow of the tree, Azalea folds up the ladder.

DAVE

(quietly)

Azalea, no more pollen?

FIRST BURLY MAN

Look at her, she's coated in the stuff. Just let her come... roll around a little bit in my trees.

Dave looks around, nervously.

Rena approaches, from the garbage area.

RENA
Azalea, let's go across the street.

Rena takes Azalea by the arm, they walk to the curb.

RENA (CONT'D)
We can look at where the new Bakery
will go, you know, I can't even
believe I'm saying that...

Dave and the Burly Men watch the women walk away.

Dave exits.

The Burly Men look at the trees, dejectedly.

EXT. VACANT LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Rena and Azalea have crossed the street, they stand on the
curb in front of the vacant lot.

Azalea laughs and shakes her head.

AZALEA
They can't build anything *here*.

RENA
Well, your cousin Ted's pretty
determined.

Azalea suddenly looks terrified.

AZALEA
But... the ground, here, the ground
falls away!

Rena studies Azalea.

RENA
Let's us go back to the Bakery.

AZALEA
I don't think we can! I don't think
we can leave this place unguarded!

Azalea is chalk white and trembling.

RENA
Oh, it's okay... it's okay... let's
go back and talk about it...

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Rena gently leads Azalea back across the street as the flow of traffic steadily increases.

RENA
That... that singer Dave invited
will be here, soon. Aggi-Erin Meeth.
You know her songs, Azalea?

As they step onto the curb, Azalea turns and DARTS BACK through the oncoming cars, races back to the other side of the street.

RENA (CONT'D)
Azalea!

AZALEA
Call for help! Call for help!

Rena stares, searches her pockets, runs back to the Bakery.

The Two Burly Men pass Rena as they follow Azalea back across the street.

EXT. VACANT LOT - MOMENTS LATER

A SURVEYOR walks across the lot.

Azalea stares, in a panic, she walks toward him.

AZALEA
Help!

SURVEYOR
What? What's wrong?

AZALEA
There's a big... animal! Like a
dog, but not a dog...

SURVEYOR
(alarmed)
Coyote? Where'd you see him? You
got to be real careful around coyotes!

The Surveyor hurries toward Azalea.

Azalea stretches out her hand toward him, frantically pulls him toward the street.

SURVEYOR (CONT'D)
Wait a minute! I've got work to do,
here!

The Burly Men stand on the lot-side curb, watching Azalea.

AZALEA
Can you bring this man back across
the street?

The Surveyor double takes.

FIRST BURLY MAN
We're happy to help.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Burly Men lead the Surveyor across the street, the traffic parts for the Burly Men. Azalea walks with them.

RUMBLE

The ground shakes. A wave of dirt moves across the ground.

Rena (on the Bakery side of the street) walks slowly toward the curb, she faces the vacant lot. Her mouth drops open.

The Burly Men herd Azalea, Rena and the Surveyor into a pile on the ground.

A large SINKHOLE opens in the vacant lot.

The First Burly Man stands up and stretches out his arms, now covered in pollen.

FIRST BURLY MAN
Works for me!

The Burly Men head back across the Bakery parking lot.

Arnie runs from the Bakery back door, walks with them back toward the "Burly Men Orchards" paneled truck.

The Second Burly Man points toward the sinkhole, the First Burly Man keeps his arms extended.

Arnie suddenly runs into the woods.

EXT. BAKERY FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Dave stands outside the Bakery, he smooths his hair and straightens his shirt collar.

He smiles and waves to a black limousine as it pulls up to the Front Door.

Ted exits the Bakery and now stands behind Dave.

TED

So, Aggi-Erin Meeth finally decides to show up.

DAVE

Come on, it's like pre-publicity for the ground breaking on our new Bakery.

They elbow each other to be the first to open the limo door.

Ted catches sight of the excited crowd on the other side of the street and then sees the SINKHOLE.

Dave sees Ted's face freeze and slowly turns to find the cause.

They turn back toward the opening car door.

TED AND DAVE

Aggi-Erin Meeth!

The Limo Driver, DALE, classy looking, opens the back seat door on his side.

A large man, VAN, in jeans and an "Aggi-Erin Meeth 2010 Re-Death Tour!" T-shirt, emerges from the back seat door, near Dave and Ted.

Van looks around, sizes up Ted and Dave, then reaches back to assist AGGI-ERIN MEETH, black jeans, black leather jacket, dark glasses, long straight hair.

An energetic woman, HEDDA, a larger, younger version of Aggi-Erin hurries from the car.

Behind Hedda, a distracted looking man, BERT, dressed like Van, joins the group at the Bakery Front Door.

Dave leads everyone into the Bakery.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

No customers are in the Bakery.

DAVE

Ms. Meeth --

AGGI-ERIN

Oh, please, it's Aggi...

DAVE

We're so happy to have you!

AGGI-ERIN

Buns, we want your buns!

Laughter, all around.

BERT
What was that rumbling?

TED
Some commotion...

DAVE
Across the street, way across...

HEDDA
I had to drag Aggi-Erin away from a
huge bunch of fans in McGeehee Beach!

BERT
Fans everywhere...

Ted escorts the entourage to a specially set up table in the center of the room.

VAN
Where's all your customers?

HEDDA
They closed the place down, for us!

TED
Actually, we're keeping it open for
you. We closed about an hour ago.

HEDDA
Thanks, Aggi really appreciates that.

DAVE
Here's buns! A variety to try, and
would you like coffee? Tea?

Aggi-Erin and Bert sit, Van walks around, Hedda takes a few pictures, with her cell phone.

AGGI-ERIN
Don't go to any bother, guys...

VAN
Ms. Meeth doesn't want to bother.

HEDDA
They got things ready, you want to
stay, Aggi? Is coffee okay, Aggi?

AGGI-ERIN
Real good, thanks, everybody.

TED

Have a seat, ladies, gents, big guy...

Mugs on the wall suddenly fall to the floor and break.

BERT

That is so cool.

Dave freezes.

TED

That's... kind of our signature.

Ted gathers up a few large ceramic fragments.

AGGI-ERIN

Breaking?

Aggi-Erin leans forward, she wants to know about this.

Hedda and Bert take out recorders, point them toward Ted.

TED

This is how we document! You've heard of Re-Collect, I'm sure...

Ted leans against a wall, thinks twice, stands up straight.

BERT

Collectors. Remaking collections.

AGGI-ERIN

I've heard of that...

HEDDA

It's got a lot of... *fragments*, right?
Like *fragments*, right?

Dave fills plastic mugs with coffee from the urn, begins to pass them around to the guests.

Aggi-Erin regards her mug with sudden interest.

Hedda, about to take a sip, does the same.

TED

It's like, you know, slice of life?
It's slice of life, right back at
life.

Ted makes a single chop at the air with the flat of his hand, Dave does the same, almost simultaneously.

TED (CONT'D)

It's proof!

Bert eats voraciously.

DAVE

Proof that... you know, *proof!*

Dave busily refills the trays of buns on the table.

TED

That... we're doing what we want!
How do you prove anything, anymore?

Ted grabs a bun from the table, bites into it.

Dave nods, waits, looks around.

DAVE

Hold up a newspaper? Could be forged!

Aggi-Erin takes a big bite of a bun.

HEDDA

Oh, you mean for pictures? You want
to take pictures? Okay, Aggi?

TED

That'd be great, but to make it
unique...

Dave nods with sudden excitement as he brings a digital camera out from the shelf near the cash register.

Ted lays the ceramic mug fragments carefully on the table, away from the food.

TED (CONT'D)

Here's my old broken mug, and if we
take a picture -- it's totally fresh.

AGGI-ERIN

Like a scar...

BERT

(sings)
Like a scar...

Dave takes pictures of Ted with Aggi-Erin and the broken mug, then of everybody with pieces of broken pottery.

HEDDA

Wouldn't the photos have the date on
them, for documenting, I mean?

VAN

Date can be forged, you can do anything to a photo -- this is a way of proving, physical evidence, right?

TED

That's it! You got it exactly, friend!

Ted pretends to lean against the wall, crosses his arms, tilts his head, without touching the wall.

EXT. VACANT LOT - CONTINUOUS

Rena and Azalea watch, with a crowd of SPECTATORS, as a ring of FIREMEN and POLICE OFFICERS surround the sinkhole and cordon off the area with yellow tape.

A few local REPORTERS stand further back, pointing cameras and microphones toward the deep hole.

Many spectators hold up cell phones and cameras, many small lights twinkle.

INT. STAIRS / BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Efon hesitantly descends the stairs.

Dave brings another tray of buns from the Kitchen.

EFON

Earthquake? What's... who's that?

DAVE

That singer. Aggi-Erin--

EFON

Where's your Press? You want coverage, right?

DAVE

I'll... I'll ask Ted.

EFON

Stand back. Stand back.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Efon enters.

TED

Oh-oh, here's our own personal Diva!

AGGI-ERIN

You're the babe in these pictures!
I'm in awe, I'm totally *in* awe...

Hedda stands to shake hands with Efon. Everyone chats, pleasantly, as the group snacks.

Ted, Dave and Van take more pictures.

EXT. VACANT LOT - CONTINUOUS

The Police set a ring of flares, ten feet back from the circle of yellow tape.

The crowd of spectators breaks into small groups, disperse: Rena and Azalea head back toward the Bakery.

EXT. ZILLS PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Azalea moves in the general direction of the garbage cans, turns back, waves to Rena, exits.

Rena shrugs, looks at her own sleeves, dusted with pollen -- she heads back toward the Bakery.

EXT. BAKERY FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Dave and Ted pack boxes of Zills buns in the limo.

Dale (the driver) takes pictures of Efon, in the back seat, posing like a starlet.

Rena enters the Bakery.

INT. BAKERY SHOW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hedda and Bert wander around behind the Front Counter.

Rose and Dr. Harm follow Rena into the Bakery and go to the Front Counter.

ROSE

Hi, Rena. I like that sparkling effect you've got going, there!

Rena smiles back at her, and strikes a pseudo-glamorous pose.

Hedda pretends to be working at the Front Counter.

HEDDA

What can I get you folks, fresh buns, right from the oven!

Aggi-Erin sits at the table, finishes a conversation on her cell phone. She looks tired.

Rena approaches the table.

RENA
Ms. Meeth? Can I... get you coffee?

AGGI-ERIN
You probably don't work here, either!

Rena opens her mouth to answer but starts giggling, uncontrollably.

Aggi-Erin laughs, too.

Dr. Harm stares at Rena, glowing under the florescent lights.

DR. HARM
What a beautiful woman!

ROSE
Rena! You going to sing one of your songs?

Rena smiles, dreamlike.

Azalea enters the Show Room from the door behind the Front Counter and accepts a cup of coffee from Hedda, still enjoying the role of Counterman.

AGGI-ERIN
You have songs?

Rena blinks her eyes open.

Everyone is looking at her.

HEDDA
Oh, did you write a song that you want Aggi to hear? Or --

AGGI-ERIN
Rena? Let's hear your song.

Silence in the room. Everyone looks at Rena.

Rena begins to sing.

RENA
"Unhand those words! Before / that
apple core fell or was pushed, / we
spoke our hearts by hand. / Found
out, kept / out. Spit, make clay.
Make even the / outer walls..."

Rena freezes. Silence.

Azalea's thin voice sings.

AZALEA
"Snakes in the bricks.."

Rena's voice grows robust and continues.

RENA
 "Listen / for rain. Snakes in the
 bricks, twist- / ed, with no three
 squares, fall / head over heels for
 wellsprings, out of the / blue,
 untoward, unto- / ward. No holds
 barred."

Rose, Azalea and Dr. Harm whistle and applaud. Everyone
 gathers on the customer side of the Front Counter.

DR. HARM
 (shuddering)
 Snakes in the bricks?

ROSE
 Twisted! Totally twisted.

BERT
 (excitedly)
 Really gave me the creeps!

Bert and Aggi-Erin exchange looks.

AGGI-ERIN
 I'd like to do that song. Hedda?
 This is Rena.

Hedda holds up a small computer.

HEDDA
 I've got it, Bert, did you get it?

Bert indicates that he has the song recorded and has taken
 it down on paper, too. He clicks his pen.

BERT
 "Adam and Eve" for "Listen for rain"?

Rena smiles, blankly.

RENA
 Rain?

BERT
 What's the name of the song? Could
 the name be "Adam and Eve"?

Azalea nods, encouragingly. Rena snaps back to attention.

RENA
The Name could be "Listen For Rain"
and fit "Adam and Eve" in that spot --

BERT AND RENA
(sing))
Adam and Eve, snakes in the bricks,
twist- / ed with no three squares...

BERT
Yup. Aggi could make that sound--

RENA
Oh, Aggi's rough-voice sound! With
brush on cymbals!

BERT
Hedda, you get a last name and a
signature?

Hedda brings papers over for Rena to sign.

BERT (CONT'D)
We should get going!

Aggi-Erin gets to her feet and shrugs.

AGGI-ERIN
I'm here, and I'm gone. I like your
snake song, Rena.

Aggi-Erin shakes hands with Rena, and then with Azalea.

Rena smiles, broadly. The entourage departs. Rena turns to
Azalea.

RENA
Thanks, pally.

Azalea does a "t'weren't nothin'" motion. Azalea and Rena
exit the Bakery via the back door.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - MOMENTS LATER

Frank struggles with bags of garbage and rolling garbage
cans.

Arnie runs from the woods, shakes Frank by the shoulders,
knocks down two more garbage cans, keeps running, toward the
Bakery.

Frank walks away from the garbage, sits in his chair, opens
a bottle of lambic ale.

Azalea and Rena keep walking, in the general direction of the crevice.

AZALEA

I gave Dr. Harm a letter so if anything happens to either of us, they'll know to blame Ted and Dave.

Rena stops walking.

RENA

No. As in "for our life insurance"? You think they'd kill us?

AZALEA

(casually)

I just want you to know I got it covered.

Rena and Azalea continue walking.

RENA

Well, hey! You got it covered! And you didn't mention Efon, at all?

Azalea shakes her head, smiling.

RENA (CONT'D)

That'd really get her!

EXT. BAKERY FRONT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Ted, Dave and Efon yell good-byes as the limo pulls out to the street.

Arnie runs up to Dave, Ted and Efon, waving his arms, dramatically.

ARNIE

Mammoth! Or Mastodon! Big! Animal Bones! Down in the crevice!

Efon smiles and gazes toward the street, she walks back inside the Bakery, smiling.

Arnie keeps looking back, in amazement, toward the crevice.

TED

I don't have time for this.

DAVE

Who cares if there's bones in the ground...

Arnie takes an angry step toward Dave and waves his arms in a vaguely threatening way. Arnie twitches as if receiving electric shocks.

ARNIE

This is... a hugely important thing!

Rose and Dr. Harm join Dave, Ted and Arnie.

Dr. Harm begins to run in the direction that Arnie points.

Arnie races ahead of him.

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

DR. HARM

(yells)

Animal bones in the crevice!

Rena and Azalea hurry to follow.

RENA

Oh, please, God, let it not be little horses.

AZALEA

Do you write all of those songs that you sing?

RENA

No, just that one.

AZALEA

You know, it's funny, but I always thought Connie Stevens sang that song.

RENA

No. Maybe... she will!

EXT. AT THE CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Through the woods, at the edge of the now much wider CREVICE, part of an enormous animal skeleton juts out.

Arnie recklessly climbs and slides down the steep, rock wall.

As Arnie brushes dirt from the bones, the crevice fills with water, rising from underground.

A sudden breeze stirs the trees, the sky darkens, everyone looks cold and frightened.

Heavy rain begins to fall.

Rena stands at one end of the crevice, scans the surroundings, ascertains that no small horses are in the danger area, sighs with relief.

Azalea heads into the woods, toward the far end of the crevice.

Arnie frantically pulls on the skeleton.

ARNIE

No! You can't disappear!

Azalea walks along the edge, looking down.

About thirty feet from Arnie, the steep sides of the crevice change to jutting boulders, like stairs.

Azalea climbs down, holding onto the rocks as she does.

She reaches into the mud and brings up a bone, about a yard long, six inches wide.

As Azalea pulls out the bone, oily water clings to the joint end, like a shining membrane.

Arnie labors frantically as mud and rocks slide into the crevice and water rises rapidly.

Arnie slips further and further down, along with the massive, sinking skeleton.

DR. HARM

Take my hand!

Dr. Harm springs toward the edge of the crevice, almost slides down himself -- Rose, Rena and Dave pull him back.

Ted yells to Arnie.

TED

Get out of there, you stupid idiot!

DR. HARM

He could grab a stick!

Dr. Harm picks up twigs and throws them back on the ground.

ROSE

I'll get cops.

Rose walks a few steps away, flips out a cell phone.

Dave runs to the shed and returns with rope. He and Dr. Harm tie the rope to a tree, untie the rope, pull the rope in different directions toward other trees.

Arnie looks out, into the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The large upright primate stands, in dappled light, facing Arnie, and breaks a branch off of a tree.

EXT. GARBAGE AREA - CONTINUOUS

Frank reluctantly leaves his lounge chair and tries to retrieve the rolling garbage cans.

He groans as he bends and reaches for one of the lids on the ground.

On the ground -- several enormous footprints are sunk into the dirt.

As Frank crouches to inspect them, rain water fills and softens them.

Frank shakes his head.

He pokes around the garbage bins, scrubby bushes, stacks of wood, old tires.

He finds something -- on the ground, unaffected by the rain, one of the fondant covered bun cakes holds the permanent outline of a twenty four inch long footprint.

EXT. AT THE CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

Ted throws himself down on the ground, reaches toward Arnie who is rapidly disappearing into the void.

Rena points to where Azalea stands, halfway down the crevice, on the rock stairs, with her arm outstretched.

The rain lessens to a fine mist.

RENA

Arnie! That-a-way!

Arnie stares toward the woods.

EXT. WOODS - CONTINUOUS

The ape-like creature walks away, looks back, keeps walking into the woods, with arm motions like a swimmer.

EXT. AT THE CREVICE - CONTINUOUS

As water splashes his face, Arnie regains his senses, follows Rena's suggestion and slowly sloshes toward Azalea.

Azalea leads Arnie back to the surface, Dr. Harm receives him at the edge.

Arnie climbs out and collapses on the ground, watches, despairingly, as the solid evidence disappears into the mud and darkness.

Ted, his clothes covered in mud -- and Dave, tripping over the rope, run to Arnie.

Azalea pokes Arnie with the salvaged piece of the skeleton.

Arnie grabs the shining bone and leaps to his feet. Dr. Harm and Rena catch Arnie before he slips back into the mud.

Arnie, oblivious to danger, turns to Rena.

ARNIE

I knew it!

Rena strokes the side of Arnie's muddy head.

Rose holds up her cell phone, it plays... "snakes in the bricks, twisted with no..."

EXT. BEHIND THE BAKERY - CONTINUOUS

View from overhead:

Frank dances on his way over to join the others.

He raises a bottle of ale and shakes an open bag of flour.

FRANK

(sings)

Oh! Mares eat oats and does eat
oats and...

FRANK (CONT'D)

(yells)

Rise up, creatures!

FRANK (CONT'D)

(sings)

Little dammsydivey!

As the breeze picks up the sifted flour, shapes emerge in the swirling mist.

Azalea looks up at the sky and twirls, arms in the air.

Pear, dogwood and cherry blossoms swirl through the air and fall in drifts on the ground.

Frank sneezes, keeps on dancing.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

