

Facade
Jess: The Prodigy
Episode 2
by
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FACADEACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. SEASHELL DRIVE - MORNING

The full shot of Seashell Drive sees the Women of Seashell Drive standing next to their front doors. Within moments, the CHILDREN OF SEASHELL DRIVE exit their house (insert credits in a fast crawl) to superficial pecks on the cheeks from their respective mothers. That is quickly followed by MEN OF SEASHELL DRIVE (insert credits in a fast crawl) exiting their house to a cursory peck on their cheeks and a wave as they pull their expensive vehicles into Seashell Drive and, as orderly as a military parade, drive out of Seashell Drive.

The WOMEN OF SEASHELL DRIVE leave their respective houses to meet in the middle of Seashell Drive (insert credits). After pleasantries are exchanged, they turn to look up Seashell Drive.

We see a t-shirt and shorts wearing DAN standing at the front of his driveway drinking his morning cup of coffee. He waves to the women as JESS storms out of the house, past Dan with barely a nod.

PATTY enters the scene with a quick closing of the door and hurried steps to the car. She stops for a moment when Dan shows them their neighbors at the top of Seashell Drive. They both wave with big smiles before engaging in a morning kiss. Nothing too sloppy but more than the pecks of earlier.

Patty continues on to the car where she finds a slumping Jess (insert credit) still complaining. Patty shrugs at the neighbors as she gets in the car and drives out of the driveway. Patty waves (insert credit) as she drives past the Women of Seashell Drive.

The Women of Seashell drive watch her pull away before turning their attention back to Dan who is still standing there waving. They share a look between each other while turning their back on Dan.

He stops waving, still with a big smile on his face (insert credit), as he turns and enters five Seashell Drive through the garage. The door automatically shuts behind him while we close in on the Women of Seashell Drive to see what they're up to today as we (insert show title).

MICHELLE

Did you see that Jess, girl?

Michelle asks with an unreasonable amount of glee.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Do you know why she was even more
miserable than usual?

The Women of Seashell Drive, ever at the ready for a new twist of the screw, lean in to see if Michelle can deliver a bon mot.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Well, I got her an invitation to
try out for the tennis team at
Meadowrivers.

The Women of Seashell Drive find this uproarious.

CATHERINE
You got *that* girl a tryout at
Meadowrivers?

Michelle nods happy to be a productive member of the Women of Seashell Drive.

REBECCA
Does she even know what tennis
is?

MICHELLE
I have no idea, but once Janice
gets her on the court. . .

The Women of Seashell Drive howl in full.

JUDITH
. . . *Your* Janice is going to play
that girl?

Judith looks at all of the smiling Women of Seashell Drive.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Well, that may be an event to
make even our social calendar.

The Women of Seashell Drive continue to revel in their good fortune until

DAN
What's so funny, gals?

The Women of Seashell Drive are startled for a moment before regaining their sense of decorum and disgust.

JUDITH

Gals?

DAN

Yeah, it's a term of endearment
from where I come from, Judy.

JUDITH

JUDITH!

DAN

Oh yeah, I forgot.

CATHERINE

Instead of forgetting something
as important as our proper names,
you should think about forgetting
your archaic branding of women.

The Women of Seashell Drive nod in their solidarity. Dan shrugs and begins to hand out some flyers. The Women of Seashell Drive take them with feigned disinterest.

DAN

Yeah, sorry. No harm, no foul.
Check this out. You're all
invited, of course.

The Women of Seashell Drive look at Dan's flyer. It's a well drawn invitation for a house warming at Five Seashell Drive. The Women of Seashell Drive give it a cursory reading (without missing a vowel) and quickly pass judgement. Judith holds the flyer out at Dan as if it's moist.

JUDITH

And what is this? Exactly?

DAN

It's an invitation to our house
warming.

Dan leans in close to Judith and speaks slower.

DAN (CONT'D)

That's another one of them things
we do from where I'm from. Invite
all your friends over to see your
new digs.

Dan looks back towards Five Seashell Drive. The Women of Seashell Drive follow his glance.

DAN (CONT'D)
And those sure are some digs,
wouldn't ya say, ladies?

The Women of Seashell Drive blanch at ladies but Judith decides to let it go. They have bigger issues at hand.

JUDITH
I'm sorry, Dan. But I don't
remember you mentioning any
party, house warming or not, to
us before?

Dan smiles a little confused but moves on happily.

DAN
That's because you're guests! You
don't have to do anything except
wander on up to the house when
you hear the festivities begin.

Dan's trying to put his best spin on this but he senses something is wrong on Seashell Drive. The Women of Seashell Drive lean towards each other with whispers. Dan looks at this as if it's something he's never seen before.

DAN (CONT'D)
If you need to talk about what to
wear, I'll head on back to the
house.

Dan turns slightly.

DAN (CONT'D)
But, let me tell you, it's pretty
informal. Hope to see you there.

Dan begins to step away.

REBECCA
It's not about our clothing, Dan.

Judith looks at Dan as the Women of Seashell Drive adopt a group solemn expression.

JUDITH
This is more serious than our
wardrobe, Dan.

Dan looks at the gathered funereal feel.

DAN
More serious than clothing? My
goodness! This must be serious.

Dan's attempt at levity thuds.

CATHERINE

It is.

MICHELLE

It's an enormous breech of the
Seashell Drive protocol.

Dan looks at his crotch.

DAN

I don't know about enormous. . .

The Women of Seashell Drive ignore his immaturity.

JUDITH

. . .Dan, we know there is much
to understand about the ways of
Seashell Drive. But one of the
thing even you should understand
is respect for each other.

The Women of Seashell Drive nod in agreement. Dan's still a
little out in left field about this line of conversation.

DAN

I understand that. Hey, I respect
the hell out of you women. Look
at this place? I'm sure if it
weren't for your concerted
efforts this place would be over
run with wolverines.

MICHELLE

Joke all you want. . .

Dan feigns innocence.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

. . .but this is a very important
dictum of our lives.

DAN

I don't know what you've heard,
but Patty takes care of all the
dictum's in the house. So. . .

Dan turns completely to leave.

DAN (CONT'D)

. . .you'll have to talk to her
about that. In the mean time, if
(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)
you want to come, répondez s'il
vous plaît by the date listed.

The Women of Seashell Drive huddle closer as Dan disappears
up Seashell Drive.

REBECCA
What are we going to do with that
man?

MICHELLE
He's barbaric.

JUDITH
He's a man. Nothing more, a lot
less.

Judith looks at her cohorts on Seashell Drive and smiles.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Nothing but an ATM with mommy
issues.

The Women of Seashell Drive twitter at Judith's words. Judith
smiles at the appreciation while quieting the troops down.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
We'll go after the real power. In
the meantime. . .

Judith looks at Catherine.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
. . .Catherine, you side with
him.

Catherine is aghast.

CATHERINE
But, Judith, I've never. . .

Slowly, Judith's plan hatches itself in Catherine's head.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
. . .heard of such a marvelous
idea.

Although Melissa and Rebecca don't quite understand, they
play along. The real dictum of the Women of Seashell Drive is
to play along. Unless you can get something on your own.

Catherine hugs Judith and heads towards Five Seashell Drive.

JUDITH
Melissa. . .

Judith calls startling Melissa.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
. . .the next thing to do is make
sure Janice is well rested and
athletically nourished for
today's match.

Melissa smiles under this burden as she hurries towards her house.

Judith and Rebecca watch her go for a moment before Judith puts the next operation into effect.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
And our job, Rebecca, will be to
draw up that oh so binding
Seashell Drive dictum.

Judith and Rebecca smile widely as we:

FADE TO:

EXT. MEADOWRIVERS COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Patty, carrying a large tennis bag, and Jess are walking through the lovely and very exclusive looking MEADOWRIVERS COUNTRY CLUB. Patty has an expression of 'I could get used to this.' While Jess has an expression of 'If my teenage super power was fire, that would make this place cool.'

Due to Jess' obvious dismay at being there and her attire of the week (Mope Rock), they are drawing much undue attention to themselves.

PATTY
Excuse me.

Patty stops a crisply attired MALE TENNIS PLAYER. He is looking Jess over as if she's an animal escaped from the zoo.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Can you point us in the direction
of the tennis courts? My
daughter. . .

The Male Tennis Player is stricken at having these people in his club, but now, having to speak with them is just too much. The power of speech unavailable, he points towards the tennis courts.

PATTY (CONT'D)
. . .Thank you.

Patty follows his finger and nods politely.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Thank you, very much.

Patty and Jess continue walking towards the tennis courts getting plenty of passage room from the club members.

PATTY (CONT'D)
He seemed like a very nice young man. And did you see how neatly he was. . .

JESS
. . .pretending to be straight.

PATTY
Jess! Do you have to always be so negative?

JESS
Seems to fit with the general milieu of teenhood, don't you think?

PATTY
I'm just asking you to expand your outlook.

Patty gestures around the club. She barely misses hitting a MEMBER or two.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Look at this place! Couldn't you just imagine lounging around here during those lazy days of summer?

JESS
No.

PATTY
Making new friends.

JESS
No.

PATTY
Having new adventures.

Jess stops. Patty stumbles but quickly recovers.

JESS

Like what? Getting chlamydia from
Thad over there?

Jess points to THAD who smiles.

THAD

Hi! Do I know you?

Jess snarls at Thad and pulls Patty away.

JESS

These people aren't like us, Mom.
They take this so seriously. It's
just a game. It's not going to
change my life.

Patty and Jess arrive at the TENNIS COURTS. Michelle quickly
sees them and ushers JANICE onto the court. Janice dutifully
does as requested while Michelle waves as she walks towards
Patty and Jess.

Michelle walks up to Patty and Jess. She has big, fake hugs
for both of them. Jess cringes at the touch.

MICHELLE

Are you ready for your big match,
Jess?

JESS

No.

Patty emits a nervous little laugh.

PATTY

Of course you are, honey! She's
just a little nervous. She's
never done anything like this
before.

JESS

I've never played this stupid
game before.

MICHELLE

Oh, don't worry, Jess. Although
Janice is a top player in her age
group I told her to take it easy
on you.

JESS

Great, now I'm being appeased by
someone who doesn't even know the
meaning of the word.

MICHELLE
I'm sure Janice knows what
appeased means.

Michelle says a little harder than she expected.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Oh, sorry. I get a little nervous
before Janice's matches too! I
guess I just love my children so
much!

Jess rolls her eyes as Patty hip checks her.

PATTY
I know what you mean. I remember
when Jess was in the second grade
talent show. . .

JESS
. . .shut up!

PATTY
She stood right up there in front
of everyone. . .

JESS
. . .I said shut up!

PATTY
And blasted out 'Losing My
Religion.'

Jess slumps against the fence with a 'clang.'

PATTY (CONT'D)
I thought my jaw was going to
break I was mouthing the words so
hard.

Michelle's plastered on smile does not belie the fact that
this story is far from her reality.

MICHELLE
Yes, I can see why you'd be
nervous.

Michelle regains her composure.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
There's nothing a mother wouldn't
do for her child.

Michelle looks Jess, still cringing against the fence, up and down.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Are you going to get into your
tennis togs?

Michelle asks nicely. Jess looks herself up and down.

JESS
I don't know what a tog is, but,
as you can see, I'm dressed.

Michelle is frozen at this response. In her life a situation like this has nor could ever happen. Patty comes to the rescue by reaching into her bag. She pulls out a white, frilly tennis dress. Jess recoils as if it's on fire. Melissa smiles in wonder.

MICHELLE
What a beautiful, and very
traditional, tennis dress.

Michelle addresses Jess.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
And you'll look beautiful in it.

JESS
On Halloween. There's no way I'm
wearing that.

A Mother/Daughter stand still. Patty regains what little composure she has. Jess entrenches as an immovable force.

PATTY
Jess, I went out of my way to
pick this up today.

Patty moves to stand directly in front of Jess.

PATTY (CONT'D)
And you're going to wear it.

Patty leans in and moves closer to Jess.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Or you're going to eat it. And,
let me tell you, passing the
zipper will not be pleasant.

Patty and Jess are at a standstill. For a beat. Jess snatches the dress from Patty's hands and storms off to the locker room.

Patty straightens up from her minor victory and attempts to regain herself. Patty smiles at the ever smiling Michelle.

PATTY (CONT'D)
She's nervous.

Michelle smiles while working hard to put every nuance into her memory bank. That is, until she can put it into her PDA to send to the Women of Seashell Drive.

MICHELLE
We're all liable to get nervous
at a time like this.

Michelle pulls closer to Patty.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)
Jess has to do real well. Your
future at Meadowrivers depends on
how she does.

Patty is a little taken aback.

PATTY
How's that? I thought you'd
sponsor us, we'd meet some
members and if Dan didn't make
too much of an ass of himself
we'd be in.

Michelle laughs. She was hoping to get Patty in this position.

MICHELLE
Oh Patty, I'm sorry if you
misunderstood. Meadowrivers is
what's known as a competitive
advantage club.

PATTY
Competitive advantage club?

MICHELLE
Yes, you see, because our Janice
has been ranked number one in her
age group for three years, our
entire family gets a prestige
membership.

PATTY
What about the other people on
Seashell? They're all members,
aren't they? They can't all have
great jocks in their family.

Michelle laughs.

MICHELLE

Why, yes, they do. Judith's Chad is a top swimmer and Catherine's Teresa has been the number one golfer since she could lift a club. So we're all prestige members.

PATTY

How convenient.

MICHELLE

Oh, it is.

Michelle looks around conspiratorially.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Rebecca only has a junior membership because, frankly, she's not much of a player. And that husband of hers, well, the less said there the better.

Michelle leans back with a big smile on her face.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

But mark my words, that Rege is going to be there ticket to a prestige membership. And you never know. Jess seems like she has a fire in her. Maybe you can ride her coattails to prestige.

Michelle turns away quickly as Jess arrives. She stands with mouth agape.

PATTY

Excuse me? What'd you. . .

Patty sees Jess for the first time and is speechless.

PATTY (CONT'D)

. . . Jess?

Jess has a big smile on her face.

JESS

Do you like it?

Patty is speechless. Jess is not dressed in the traditional tennis dress. She's wearing the most up-to-date in women's

tennis wear. Jess looks great but that doesn't lessen the shock.

JESS (CONT'D)

The guy at the pro shop says he just got it in. It's the newest thing.

Jess spins around to show the entire suit.

JESS (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. . .

Jess points towards the MAN standing in the Pro Shop door. He waves.

JESS (CONT'D)

. . .he says you owe him five hundred dollars.

PATTY

Five hundred dollars?

JESS

Well, the clothes were three hundred and my new racket was another two.

PATTY

Three? Two? Five? Do you know who's going to be mowing the lawn for the next six months?

Jess leans into Patty and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

JESS

The lawn service?

Jess runs off towards the court.

PATTY

No! You! You're going to be the lawn service once your father finds out how much this costs.

Patty turns to Michelle and interrupts her typing into her PDA. Michelle smiles. Michelle walks up to Patty and puts her arm around her.

MICHELLE

Kids! Don't worry, Patty. If she does well and you becomes members that's just a drop in the bucket.

Patty's still in shock while Michelle has a big smile on her face.

PATTY
Drop in the bucket.

Michelle pulls out her PDA and begins typing. We begin to hear tennis balls being hit as we:

FADE TO:

EXT. MEADOWRIVERS COUNTRY CLUB - LATER

Patty is still in the same position with the same expression but Michelle has join her in that state. Jess comes running up to the fence with a big smile on her face.

JESS
Mom! Did you see that? I beat her. I beat that kid.

Jess remembers that 'the kid' belongs to Michelle so tones it down a notch.

JESS (CONT'D)
It was a tough match and all. But the guy there. . .

MICHELLE
. . .the tennis pro, Eric.

JESS
Yeah, him. He said he never saw anything like it. He said I was a natural. He said kids spend thousands. . .

MICHELLE
. . .many thousands.

JESS
Yeah, many thousands. How'd you know?

Jess waits a beat but sees that Michelle isn't going to answer. So she continues forward.

JESS (CONT'D)
To get this good.

Jess stops moving for a moment. Which is good because she was beginning to tire Patty.

JESS (CONT'D)

Can I come back tomorrow? If I
beat some other kid I can be the
number one player in the fourteen
year old age group.

Jess has a big smile on her face.

JESS (CONT'D)

And do you know what happens when
I'm the number one player in my
age group?

Patty nods her head solemnly.

PATTY

The drops fill the bucket.

Jess has no idea what her mother is mumbling about, but it
doesn't matter. She's number one!

We pan out while the scene becomes colored like a cartoon in
bright colors and bold strokes that begins to darken
ominously until we:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. SEASHELL DRIVE - EVENING

A long shot of Seashell Drive fades from dark ominous strokes as the scene becomes colored like a cartoon in bright colors and bold strokes until we see the Men of Seashell Drive working on their perfect lawns.

We pan up Seashell Drive until we see Dan sitting on a lawn chair at the end of the driveway sipping a beer as if he doesn't have a care in the world.

To his left we see a sweat drenched Jess happily mowing the lawn.

JESS

If I get to be number one I'm
going to have to get more togs,
you know.

DAN

We'll see, honey. It's a big lawn
to mow.

JESS

And you know I'll have to have
lessons. Eric said to improve I
should take at least three
private lessons a week.

DAN

We'll see, honey. It's a big
house to clean.

JESS

And then there's the membership
fees, and court fees, and
traveling team fees, and. . .

DAN

. . .We'll see, honey. It's a big
sweat shop you're going to be
making togs at.

Jess continues to talk and mow as we:

FADE TO:

INT. 4 KITCHEN SEASHELL DRIVE - MOMENTS LATER

The Women of Seashell Drive are looking over sheets of paper
is the throes of glee.

CATHERINE
Judith, this is amazing.

REBECCA
You have outdone yourself.

MICHELLE
How do you come up with such
perfect plans?

Judith sits there allowing the praise to wash over her.

JUDITH
It's a gift.

The Women of Seashell Drive giggle as Judith stands. The
others quickly follow her lead straight towards the door.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
They'll never know what hit him.

CATHERINE
You mean them.

Judith looks confused for a moment.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
You said know what hit him.

Judith cackles at her slip.

JUDITH
As long as the point gets across.

The Women of Seashell Drive exit the house.

CUT TO:

EXT. 5 SEASHELL DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

Jess is wrapping up the lawn mower cord while Dan continues
to lounge on a chair with a beer in his hand and his eyes
closed. The Women of Seashell Drive begin walking up the
driveway.

PATTY (O.S.)
JESS! Can you come in here? I
need help with the dishes.

Jess finishes wrapping the cord and begins pushing the lawn
mower into the garage.

JESS
Be right there, Mother.

Jess enters the garage and heads towards the kitchen.

The Women of Seashell Drive arrive in front of Dan. A shadow is cast upon him. He acts confused for a moment before lifting his head and squinting his eyes open. He focuses while taking a sip of beer and notices it's the Women of Seashell Drive. He drops his head back onto the chair.

DAN

Patty's in the kitchen. I'm sure
you won't mind if I don't show
you in.

The Women of Seashell Drive stand there for a moment waiting for their cue from Judith. Judith appraises Dan as one would road kill.

JUDITH

I'm sure we won't, but I'm sure
what we have will also be of
interest to you.

Judith holds out a piece of paper. Dan doesn't move. Judith shakes the paper in a fit of exasperation. Still with eyes closed, Dan reaches up towards the paper. He's just a sliver away. Judith doesn't move. Dan doesn't move. And here they will stay. Until Rebecca takes one from her sheath and places it on top of his stomach.

One by one, the Women of Seashell Drive follow Rebecca up the driveway. Judith, still with paper extended, is the last to leave. She pulls the paper abruptly away. Dan yanks his hand back yowling.

DAN

Owww. Paper cut! For a man in my
field that could put me on
disability for weeks!

Judith shows no outward signs of hearing Dan.

DAN (CONT'D)

Maybe even months! How'd you like
to be known as the lady who
murdered Hilary: Queen of the Taj
Ma Mall!

Judith enters the garage. Dan takes another sip of beer.

DAN (CONT'D)

That's a name that'll stick to
ya, let me tell you that! Little
girls worldwide will revile you,
that, my lady, you can count on!

Judith disappears. Dan smiles and begins to lift the paper sitting on his stomach. As he looks over the paper his smile begins to fade. He looks up disgusted and begins to shake his head.

DAN (CONT'D)
And I've got a few other names
that'll stick to you, bitch.

Dan crumples up the paper and throws it on the lawn. He leans his head back and shuts his eyes.

DAN (CONT'D)
JESS! Some paper flew on your
lawn. You'd better get it.

JESS (O.S.)
I'll be right there, daddy.

DAN
That's my little girl.

Dan takes his last sip of beer to empty the can. He tosses it on the lawn.

FADE TO:

INT. 5 SEASHELL DRIVE KITCHEN

Patty is standing at the sink surrounded by the Women of Seashell Drive. Patty is looking at the paper disbelieving.

PATTY
I'm not sure I understand all of
this. Some of it seems pretty
specific to our housewarming.

JUDITH
Don't be silly, Patricia.

PATTY
Patty.

Judith blanches but ignores.

JUDITH
These have been the rules of
Seashell Drive since I was a
child.

The Women of Seashell Drive nod in agreement.

CATHERINE

We just typed up a new copy so it
would be presentable.

JUDITH

Yes, the old one was quite
battered and not at all
presentable.

Patty's not buying this but she knows as long as the Women of
Seashell Drive are in allegiance she knows there's nothing
she can do about it. It doesn't stop her from trying.

PATTY

Since you were a kid, huh,
Judith? I didn't know they had,
to quote the vaunted document,
boom boxes and other stereophonic
sound amplifiers, when you were a
mere child.

Judith is barely flustered.

JUDITH

Well, dear, as you'd expect, the
document has been upgraded over
the years.

The Women of Seashell Drive begin to chuckle.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

How silly would it be if we still
called them victrolas?

The Women of Seashell Drive laugh. Patty looks them over.

PATTY

I guess you're right.

Judith accepts that as an acquiescence and begins to gather
the Women of Seashell Drive to leave. They begin to stir.

JUDITH

Good dear.

Judith reaches out and touches Patty's shoulder.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

I think when you have time to
really look over the rules you'll
find they can benefit everyone on
Seashell Drive.

Judith turns to leave and Catherine approaches Patty with a pat to her shoulder.

CATHERINE

It's for our inner peace, dear.

Catherine exits and Michelle taps Patty's shoulder.

MICHELLE

You have to admit Seashell Drive
is a quiet place.

Michelle exits as Rebecca moves in for a full on hug.

REBECCA

The rules are there to protect
us, Patty.

Michelle breaks the hug but remains extra close.

REBECCA (CONT'D)

To make sure what's ours stays
ours.

Rebecca leans back and the Women of Seashell Drive laugh heartily as they exit the kitchen. Patty watches them go before turning her attention to the paper.

PATTY

Yeah right, since she was a kid.
The damn inks still wet.

Patty exits the kitchen as we:

FADE TO:

EXT. 5 SEASHELL DRIVE - MOMENTS LATER

Dan is still sitting on his chair with a beer in his hand. Patty storms up and bangs into his chair to get his attention.

DAN

Hey! Watch it! I've got a
beverage here!

Dan stands up and sees that the Women of Seashell Drive are huddled in front of Judith's walkway. He smiles and gives them a big wave. They wave back shortly and begin to move towards their houses.

PATTY

I don't like that they can make
up rules and expect us to follow
them.

Patty waves the paper in Dan's face.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Did you read this?

Jess walks up with a few small pieces of paper in her hand
along with the can and the crumpled list of rules.

JESS

I picked up the yard. Is there
anything else I need to do before
I finish my homework?

DAN

You could get me a bee. . .

Patty reaches out and takes the list of rules from her.

PATTY

. . .No, go do your homework.

Jess smiles and begins to walk away.

JESS

Okay.

Jess heads towards the garage while Patty tosses the crumpled
list of rules at Dan. Dan lets it bounce off his chest before
catching it.

PATTY

You didn't even look at it.

DAN

I looked at it. It's a draconian
list of arbitrary rules cooked up
to prevent our housewarming.

Patty glares at him for a moment.

PATTY

But you didn't read it.

Dan holds up his hands.

DAN

Okay, you got me there. But I
wasn't far off, was I?

PATTY

That's beside the point. They're ganging up on us. They're trying to make us like them.

DAN

What's wrong with that?

PATTY

What's wrong with it?

DAN

Yeah. You said yourself Jess hasn't been this helpful since she flopped out of the womb.

PATTY

Yeah, but. . .

DAN

. . .and look at her. This is the first time in I don't know how long she hasn't been dressed like the Nine Inch Nails road crew.

Patty is slightly giving in slightly before catching herself.

PATTY

You mean to tell me these rules don't bother you?

Dan puts his arm on Patty's shoulder and turns her towards the house.

DAN

Of course they do. But I'm not going to bitch about it.

PATTY

Then what are you going to do?

Dan tosses the crumpled list of rules into the air and catches it.

DAN

I'm going to fax this to my agent to see if he can find a hole.

Patty laughs and puts her arm around Dan's waist as they enter the garage. Dan reaches out to the right and pushes a button. The garage door begins to slide down slowly.

PATTY

But we'd better use my copy.
Remember the last time you faxed
a crumpled piece of paper?

DAN

Oh yeah. That's why we had to get
a new fax machine, right?

The garage door closes fully and we:

FADE TO:

INT. 4 SEASHELL DRIVE - CONTINUOUS

Judith is standing at her front window. We see the closed
garage door of 5 Seashell Drive. Judith is talking on the
phone.

JUDITH

I think they understand.

CATHERINE (V.O.)

I'm sure of it. I'm still
concerned he'll ignore it. We
don't have any real authority to
set down any rules.

The camera PANS over Judith's shoulder out the window and we
see Catherine at the front window of 3 Seashell Drive.

JUDITH

As true as that may be, I'm sure
Patty would see her folly in
going against us. After all, she
has the initial meeting with the
belletristic society tomorrow. We
wouldn't want that to go poorly
now, would we?

CATHERINE

No, Judith, I'm sure she
wouldn't.

Judith begins to draw her shades.

JUDITH

Good night, Catherine. We've done
well.

CATHERINE

More than well, Judith.

The shades now block out the view of Catherine and Judith turns while hanging up the phone.

JUDITH
We've done very well, Catherine,
very well indeed.

Judith stands there reveling in her deeds as we

FADE TO:

INT. 5 SEASHELL DRIVE DRAWING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Dan is on the phone looking out his window. We see the last vestiges of movement from Judith's curtain.

DAN
Are you sure?
(pause)
That's excellent.

Dan walks towards his desk and sits down.

DAN (CONT'D)
I love playing by the rules and
still winning. Thanks, Doug. Have
I ever said you earn almost
whatever you steal from me?
(pause)
Well, I'm saying it now. You earn
half of what you steal from me.
(pause)
Yeah, half. I don't want it to go
to your head and think you're
smart enough to steal more.
(pause)
Oh. You are smart enough. Well,
just make sure you leave enough
so I can still drink Heineken.
(pause)
Thanks, Doug.

Dan hangs up the phone with a big smile on his face. He picks up a drawing pen just as Patty enters the room.

PATTY
Why are you so happy?

DAN
Doug found a way around the
rules.

Patty looks at Dan askew. Dan protests.

DAN (CONT'D)
A legal way. A legal way. He
wouldn't listen to me this time.

PATTY
Well? What is it?

DAN
First the guys have to agree. . .

PATTY
. . .URAGH!!!!

Dan protests somewhat.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Do you think those spineless
dolts will do anything their
wives don't tell them?

Patty shakes her head sadly.

PATTY (CONT'D)
What was your idea?

DAN
No, this could work out.

Dan stands up and walks across the room towards a full sized
cut out of David Ortiz.

DAN (CONT'D)
All it'll take is my gift of gab
and my very close, personal
relationship with Big Papi.

Patty buries her head in her hands as Dan puts his arms
around the cut out of David Ortiz.

PATTY
We're sunk.

Dan smiles as the scene becomes colored like a cartoon in
bright colors and bold strokes that begin to darken until we:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. BELLETRISTIC SOCIETY OFFICE - DAY

Patty is enveloped in a dramatically comfortable chair which offsets her dramatically uncomfortable expression. Surrounding her in this ornate room, with leather bound volumes filling every crevice, are the Women of Seashell Drive. Judith seated to her right, Catherine to the left with Rebecca behind her and Michelle behind Judith. Patty looks as if she'd like to make a break for it but knows, with this group of sentries on watch, escape is futile.

Speaking in the haughty and well burnished tones we hear is DELORES HAUGHTMAN, the president and chief benefactor of the Belletristic Society.

DELORES (O.S.)

After my grandfather revoked the loan of his extensive collection of first editions, which are now confined to this office, the university realized the error of their ways and admitted Father to class that fall.

Delores chuckles.

DELORES (CONT'D)

Of course, it cost the family a building and enough scholarships to seat the woodwind section to keep him there, but to further the Haughtman legacy, it was worth it.

The Women of Seashell Drive join Delores in her laughter. Patty joins a beat late, a beat long, and a decibel to loud. The Women of Seashell Drive draw away from Patty while Delores clears her throat.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLETRISTIC SOCIETY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Delores is sitting behind a dark, imposing desk. Her skin is as shiny and smooth as the wall of a racquetball court. It's hard to figure if the ripples and folds in her clothes were created by her wardrobe or something more ominous hidden beneath. The truth lies somewhere in the middle. Delores begins collecting papers which she slips into a leather valise with the Belletristic Society logo etched into it.

DELORES

As you can see, Patricia, we do have our jocular moments. But I must stress upon you the seriousness of our mission.

Delores picks up the valise and holds it out to Patty. Patty hesitates. She wants to fit in not be part of any mission.

DELORES (CONT'D)

I understand your hesitation. We are not for everyone. It takes a certain woman to blossom within our ranks.

Delores places the valise on her desk and leans back.

DELORES (CONT'D)

As these fine women can attest.

The Women of Seashell Drive all nod in agreement. Judith leans towards Patty.

JUDITH

Oh yes, when I first came to the society thought I knew it all. I was educated at all the finest institutions. I was a world traveler. I thought I had it all.

Judith pauses as she gestures towards Delores.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

But this woman and her society opened up so much more of life.

Judith turns her attention back towards Patty.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

No only with her books and scintillating conversation.

Judith smiles and chuckles quickly joined by Delores.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

That's truly just the cover.

Judith's smile quickly vanishes as she moves towards Patty for the kill.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

But with the very soul and life of this exquisite establishment.

Judith sits back slowly and exhales exhausted. Michelle places a hand on her shoulder. Judith reaches up to cover it as she closes her eyes. After a beat, Judith slowly opens her eyes.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
But Delores is right. Maybe we've
overreached.

Judith begins to rise. The Women of Seashell Drive begin to stir. Judith reaches towards a confused Patty and places her hand atop Patty's.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
Maybe the Belletristic Society
isn't for you. It isn't for many.

Judith is now on her feet and begins to make gentle movements that signify leaving. Patty has been cornered and she knows it. But she also knows the decision she makes here will reverberate during their life on Seashell Drive.

PATTY
Let's not be so quick, Judith.

A quick and knowing look is exchanged between Judith and Delores. Without missing a movement Judith turns towards Patty and leans over her. The Women of Seashell Drive follow suit and Patty is now enveloped by more than the supple, overstuffed chair.

PATTY (CONT'D)
I like the idea but I'm a little
overwhelmed by it all. There's so
much to read and learn.

JUDITH
And embrace.

MICHELLE
Enjoy.

REBECCA
Encounter.

Catherine leans in taking Patty's hand. Patty is stunned and disorientated by this, the softest hard sell in history.

CATHERINE
And it's all for you and you
alone.

Patty looks at the smiling faces of The Women of Seashell Drive. It seems so inviting, so exhilarating, so. . .

PATTY

So how much is this all this
exhilaration going to cost me?

The Women of Seashell Drive back off from the full, yet polite, press slightly. Patty relaxes and begins to feel somewhat back in control.

DELORES

If money is an issue, my dear...

JUDITH

. . .Oh, no, Delores. That can't
be it. Patty and her family have
the loveliest home on Seashell
Drive. Don't you, Patricia?

And in a moment, Patty's control slides off an embankment.

CATHERINE

As lovely as it is, dear, you
deserve more.

REBECCA

Something to challenge you.

MICHELLE

Something you can never put a
price on.

The Women of Seashell Drive nod in sisterly agreement. Patty knows she's having the touch put on her. But it's never been so velvety. And she was a Brownie Leader!

DELORES

Ladies, please.

The Women of Seashell Drive turn their full attention towards Delores. She is holding the valise in both her hands with the fullness of the etched Belletristic Society logo shimmering.

DELORES (CONT'D)

If Patricia chooses to pass on
joining our society, for whatever
personal reason, we shouldn't
tease her with what could have
been.

The Women of Seashell Drive fade off so it seems Patty, Delores and that valise are the only items in the room.

Patty is mesmerized by the rich leather and glistening logo on the valise. Her resolve fades like leather in the sun.

PATTY

I do deserve something for me.

The Women of Seashell Drive clamor in agreement and praise as Patty reaches into her bag to pull out her checkbook. Delores leans forward and offers the gilded gold pen from her desk.

DELORES

Make it payable to The
Belletristic Society in the
amount of thirty two hundred
dollars.

Patty stops and remains still. Before she looks up Judith's hand reaches for her shoulder.

JUDITH

I know that seems like a large
sum of money, but, as you said
yourself, you deserve something
for you.

Patty still seems unsure of spending that much. Even on her.

DELORES

That's also to cover your
initiation fee, processing fees,
a small donation to preserve
these invaluable books and
manuscripts, and your very own
valise.

The valise! That damnable valise!

PATTY

That was thirty two hundred,
right?

Delores smiles her widest smile while reaching the valise towards Patty.

DELORES

Exactly.

Patty tears the check out of her checkbook and exchanges it for a valise of her very own. Delores quickly places the check into her desk and lifts her heft from her chair.

DELORES (CONT'D)

I'd like everyone to welcome the
newest member to our little
family, Patricia Blake.

The Women of Seashell Drive politely applaud while Patty admires her valise as Delores arrives in front of her.

DELORES (CONT'D)
Welcome.

Delores extends a hand towards Patty who absentmindedly accepts it and is easily and gently guided from her seat. Patty is guided towards the door efficiently.

DELORES (CONT'D)
It's lovely to have you as our newest member, Patricia. I know your experiences will be like nothing you've ever imagined.

The Women of Seashell Drive, with Patty mindlessly in tow, arrive at the office door where they file out quickly.

DELORES (CONT'D)
I can't wait to hear your opinion of our first offerings, dear.

SND FX: PATTY'S CELLPHONE

Delores scowls while Patty rummages through her bag.

DELORES (CONT'D)
And, dear, next time, please, place that device on silence when you arrive here.

Patty waves an apology while fumbling with her phone.

PATTY
Hi. I'm on my way out now.
(pause)
I said I'm on my way out!

Patty is pulled out of the office in a wave of Women of Seashell Drive while Delores places a hand on Judith's shoulder. They let the Women of Seashell Drive exit before Delores reaches into her pants pocket.

DELORES
You are still the best recruiter I've ever had!

Judith smiles as she takes the cash from Delores' hand.

JUDITH
It's a gift.

Judith holds the bills up towards a smiling Delores before placing them in her purse.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
And those at the top of the
pyramid are rewarded with the
biggest gifts.

Judith and Delores hug quickly and uncomfortably before Judith exits the office. Delores steps into the open door.

DELORES
Do you have any other potential
members?

JUDITH (O.S.)
You know me, Del, I've always got
a hook in the water.

SND FX EXTERIOR DOOR CLOSING

Delores smiles and nods as she gently closes her office door and begins to walk back behind her desk as we:

CUT TO:

EXT. PATTY'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Patty and Jess are in the car. Jess is dressed in her tennis finest checking out her mother's new valise. Jess is not as impressed with the valise as Patty was. She pushes the paper she was looking at back in and tosses the valise into the back with nary a thought.

Patty spins around to watch her valise fly towards a collection of tennis equipment, shopping bags and random fast food wrappers.

SND FX CAR HORN BEEPING

Patty jerks the wheel to straighten out her car as the horn sound dissipates and fades. After regaining her composure, Patty glares at an disinterested Jess.

PATTY
Watch it with my valise, Jess.
It's very expensive.

Jess crumples her face and shrugs.

JESS
That thing? It's not even high
quality leather. Chad says you
(MORE)

JESS (CONT'D)
can always tell a piece of high
quality leather by its. . .

PATTY
. . .Since when do you care what
Chad has to say about anything?

Jess slumps herself deep into the passenger seat and glares
at Patty.

JESS
What's your problem? First you're
on me to be friends with these
kids then you give me crap when I
mention them.

Jess snaps her head forward.

JESS (CONT'D)
What is with you?

Patty thinks for a moment before looking into the rearview
mirror at the valise. It sure doesn't look at brilliant
sitting on hamburger wrappers as it did on the desk.

PATTY
I'm not sure.

Jess looks at Patty and rolls her eyes.

JESS
And you give me shit.

Patty snaps her head towards Jess.

PATTY
Watch your mouth!

JESS
Don't yell at me because you
bought a piece of shit.

PATTY
Watch your mouth!

JESS
Don't blame me for your lack of
taste.

Jess and Patty begin snapping at each other as Patty pulls to
a stop at a red light in the middle lane. To the left,
drivers side, Judith pulls up and looks into the car. To the
right, passengers side Catherine pulls up and does the same.

Judith and Catherine exchanges smiles before Judith beeps her horn every so gently.

SND FX CAR HORN BEEP

Jess and Patty disengage as they see the person they're looking at smiling back at them. Jess and Patty exchange looks as they exchange who they were looking at. They all wave as the light changes to green. Judith pulls off to the left, Catherine to the right and, after a beat, Patty pulls away silently as we:

FADE TO:

INT. PATTY'S CAR PARKED AT MEADOWRIVERS - LATER

Patty is looking forward and sees Jess smiling and shaking hands with a GIRL at the net. Jess turns and waves towards Patty who nods. Jess jogs over to the bench to pack up her goods as Patty lifts the valise up and takes another real close look at it.

JESS (O.S.)
Can I go to Seaview Country Club
with Lardin and Katy?

Patty jumps slightly while tossing the valise into the back of the car. It takes a second but she regains her composure.

PATTY
Ah, sure. That sounds like fun.

Patty looks at Jess. Jess looks at Patty for a beat before shuffling from foot to foot while looking at her friends, LARDIN and KATY. They both have expressions of bemused boredom.

JESS
Ah, can you drive us?

Patty catches herself asleep at the wheel.

PATTY
Oh, sure, get in. I didn't
know...

Jess opens the passenger door while Hilary opens the back. Jess takes one look into the back and has a moment of trepidation.

JESS
MOTHER!

Jess jumps into the car and before Hilary and Katy can get into the back, she's reaching over the seat and throwing all the crap living there into the way back of the car.

JESS (CONT'D)
It's so tacky to carry around
such a mess.

Jess completes her task and slides her body into the seat.

JESS (CONT'D)
You really should have someone
clean out this car.

Hilary and Katy finish wiping off the seats dramatically before sitting down. Jess tries to ignore it but has difficulty.

JESS (CONT'D)
There are people for that, you
know.

PATTY
I know and, because you care so
much, after you plow the north
forty, slop the hogs, and tend to
grampa. . .

Patty looks back to begin pulling the vehicle out of the parking space and engages Hilary and Katy.

PATTY (CONT'D)
. . .he can be quite a handful
now that he's up there in age,
can't he, Jess?

Patty turns back and smiles at Jess who summons the teenage beam of parental hate.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Well, dear, after that I'm sure
you'll still have time to clean
out this pigsty.

The forced smile on Jess' face is about to rip apart.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Seeing it matters so much to you.

Hilary and Katy stifle giggles while Jess sulks and Patty pulls out of Meadowrivers into traffic.

CUT TO:

INT. 5 SEASHELL DRIVE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dan is sitting on the couch with a bemused expression while Catherine regales him with tales of the idyllic life as she knows it on Seashell Drive.

CATHERINE

Oh! The times we've had! The time
Judith's Bob's curling team won
the clubs bonspiel, well...

DAN

. . .Bob curls! I love curling!

Catherine, glad to have Dan react to anything, even this,
sighs. Dan stands up and walks towards the wood floor.

CATHERINE

He was the skip of the team!

DAN

I think they should have a
curling channel.

Dan looks towards Catherine.

DAN (CONT'D)

Curling on TV. That's one of the
reasons we almost moved to
Canada. Those lucky bastards!

Dan kneels down and pantomimes releasing a stone with a
theatrical slide on the shiny wood floor.

DAN (CONT'D)

Sweep! Sweep! Ahhhhh!

Dan looks down the imaginary sheet wistfully before slowly
standing. He steps next to Catherine.

CATHERINE

Do you curl?

DAN

No, but when I was in college...

Dan steps back and plops onto the couch.

DAN (CONT'D)

. . .not then either. But I
always liked the idea of the
sport.

Dan looks at a quickly deflating Catherine.

DAN (CONT'D)

It's a clean sport, isn't it?

Catherine tries to regroup herself. No matter what she's tried during this fact finding mission, Dan has found a way to distract her.

CATHERINE

I'm sure Judith's Bob can take you on a visit to club.

DAN

How come you always refer to him as Judith's Bob? Like he's one of her belongings. Judith's shoe. Judith's shotgun. Judith's urinary tract infection?

Catherine is at the end of her rope. She maintains her composure but she's now wishing she'd accepted another task.

CATHERINE

It's only for your benefit, Dan. I mean no insult to Bob. You meet so many people in your line of work it must be difficult to keep track of them all.

DAN

Oh yeah, my contact list is burning up. Catherine, think about it, when was the last time you saw me leave the street? Come on, give it some thought. My best friend is an imaginary ten year old girl which, if I'd hazard a guess, is against reams of rules not only on Seashell Shell Drive but within nature.

Catherine, trooper that she is, let's him babble until she seizes and opening.

CATHERINE

I'm glad you brought up the rules, Dan.

Dan rolls his eyes.

DAN

Catherine, no offense, but if you came here to defend the sanctity of the Seashell Drive way, save
(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)
your spiel. I'm not drinking the
kool-aid.

CATHERINE
No, Dan, I think the rules are
being unfairly interpreted in
regards to your house warming.

Dan looks at the very sincere looking Catherine. His best friend might be invisible, but he's savvy enough to have a healthy suspicion and patient enough to let this play out.

DAN
Really? I don't remember you
protesting on my behalf.

Catherine waves off Dan's protest.

CATHERINE
Oh, Dan, you know how things are
with people.

Catherine leans towards Dan conspiratorially.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
It's best to not show your hand
too soon.

Dan nods as Catherine gets closer. Dan backs off slightly.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
At least until you have all your
information.

Catherine sits next to Dan pinning him to the couch.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
You see, it recently came to my
attention that Rebecca is having
an engagement party for her
sister.

Dan is a little less than moved by this information which distresses Catherine slightly. She's going to have to put the full press on.

DAN
Good for her. Sounds like fun.

Catherine jumps off the couch.

CATHERINE
Aren't you outraged at the double
standard?

DAN

I'm not much of an outrage guy.
I'm much more a passed out in the
corner guy.

CATHERINE

You can't let them get away with
this. WE can't let them get away
with this.

DAN

Catherine, in case you've
forgotten, you were right there
with the rules fluttering
gleefully in your hand.

CATHERINE

But, Dan, I explained that, as
badly as I felt, and I do, I
wanted to. . .

DAN

. . .play it close to your vest.
Yeah, I'm down with the poker
analogies.

Catherine is contemplating her next move while seriously
considering Dan to be the most ineffectual man on Seashell
Drive. And that's saying quite a bit.

CATHERINE

You're just going to let this
travesty occur? You're going to
let them run roughshod over you?

Catherine nods her head solemnly.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

That will set a very bad
precedent during your residence.

DAN

Listen. . .

Dan stands.

DAN (CONT'D)

. . .I appreciate you filling me
in but there's something you have
to know about me, Cathy.

Catherine blanches at 'Cathy' and even more dramatically when
Dan puts his arm around her shoulder.

DAN (CONT'D)
I'm a play by the rules kind of
guy. I didn't make the rules, you
people did.

Catherine begins to protest but Dan stops her by placing two
fingers over her lips. Catherine's eyes bug out and her neck
stiffens. Dan smiles as he pulls his fingers from her lips,
looks at them, reacts and wipes them on his shirt.

DAN (CONT'D)
And if the rules aren't fair, who
am I to point that out?

Dan begins to walk Catherine towards the front door. His arm
around her nice and friendly.

DAN (CONT'D)
As you've explained to me, Cat,
the rules are there for a reason.
And those reasons, Cath, are
inviolable.

Dan and Catherine reach the front door just as it opens. Jess
races in.

JESS
Hi.

Jess passes Dan and Catherine with the slightest of glances.

JESS (CONT'D)
Mom! When's dinner going to be
ready? I have to meet Elizabeth
in a twenty minutes at the club.

Patty is dragging bags from the front stairs into the house
so doesn't see Dan and Catherine standing in the doorway.

PATTY
Why can't her mother drive you?
They live right next door. DAN!
Come here and help me.

Patty backs into the house and dragging in some bags. She
tosses the belletristic valise over her shoulder.

PATTY (CONT'D)
This running around is going to
kill me. First it's that
belletristic meeting then to the
club. Oh and let me tell you
about that horse barn. DAN!

Patty turns around and jumps back when she sees Dan with his arm around Catherine.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Whoa!

DAN
Hi, honey! Catherine came over to
invite us to an engagement party.

Dan takes his arm off Catherine and begins to collect bags.

PATTY
Is that so?

Dan stands up with his arms full of bags.

DAN
Yeah! It's going to be the
kickoff bash for the Seashell
Drive social season.

Patty is still watching Catherine and wondering what's really going on.

PATTY
It sounds it. Who's getting
engaged, Catherine?

Catherine pauses for just a moment.

CATHERINE
Ah, Rebecca's sister.

PATTY
Rebecca, huh?

Patty begins to move past Catherine.

PATTY (CONT'D)
That's funny. We were with her
for a good part of the afternoon
and she didn't say anything.

Patty stops in front of Catherine.

PATTY (CONT'D)
Don't you feel it's funny she
didn't say anything, Catherine?

Catherine pauses nervously but regains her composure quickly.

CATHERINE
Not at all, dear. After all, we
were there for your big day.

Catherine begins to step past Patty.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
We wouldn't want to distract from
the matter at hand now, would we?

Catherine reaches the door stepping around the minefield of
bags.

PATTY
I guess not.

CATHERINE
I'll see myself out, dear.

Catherine exits and Patty reaches out and kicks the door
closed.

PATTY
DAN!

DAN (O.S.)
Don't worry, I didn't do anything
stupid.

Patty cocks her head as if she doesn't believe him.

DAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Really!

Patty adjusts the bags in her arms and begins to walk towards
the kitchen.

DAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Honey?

PATTY
Yes.

DAN (O.S.)
Do you think little girls would
like curling?

PATTY
The sport or their hair, Dan?

DAN (O.S.)
The sport! I figure if I can work
it into the show I can write off
a curling rink for the backyard.

Patty shakes her head as she exits the room.

PATTY (O.S.)
We'll talk to Doug, Dan.

DAN
Awesome!

FADE TO:

EXT. SEASHELL DRIVE - MOMENTS LATER

The Women of Seashell Drive are congregated in front of 5 Seashell Drive. Rebecca's shocked expression and agitated motions give a blazing insight into what's happening.

REBECCA
I don't want to give my sister an engagement party!

Judith is working hard to make everyone understand.

JUDITH
That may be, dear, but we have no choice. It's now expected.

Judith stares at Rebecca and the finality is stamped.

REBECCA
I have to go home now.

Rebecca turns, looks at Catherine crossly as she exits.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I have invitations to prepare.

The Women of Seashell Drive bid Rebecca adieu as the scene becomes colored like a cartoon in bright colors and bold strokes that begin to darken until we:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. SEASHELL DRIVE - NIGHT

The Men of Seashell Drive are at the top of the cul de sac around Steve's newly polished car like a pack of craven hoofed troglodytes.

The Women of Seashell Drive are in the middle of the cul de sac pretending to be engaged in adroit conversation but, truly, they're keeping a watchful eye on the Men of Seashell Drive searching for a moment of stupidity to flourish.

It doesn't take long. ROD runs towards Bob's backyard while BOB takes center stage. The Women of Seashell Drive begin to move towards the Men of Seashell Drive.

Rod races back into the scene handing STEVE and TOD each a curling broom. Rod steps back as Bob pantomimes delivering a curling stone while Steve and Tod sweep in front of the imaginary stone.

BOB
You have to make sure you give it
the perfect amount of weight
depending on the situation.

Bob stands and begins to holler curling instructions.

BOB (CONT'D)
SWEEP! SWEEP! SWEEP! WHOA! WHOA!
HURRY! YEAH!

Bob pumps his fist in the air.

BOB (CONT'D)
Right on the button.

Bob waves Steve and Tod back and turns to Dan.

BOB (CONT'D)
No matter the situation, Dan,
always make sure you give the
stone enough weight to cross the
hog line.

Dan nods.

DAN
Yeah, it takes a real man to
cross the hog line.

Dan turns and addresses the arriving Women of Seashell Drive.

DAN (CONT'D)
Ladies! Join us! Bob is giving us
a curling tutorial.

The Men of Seashell Drive slowly begin to sidle over towards their respective spouses.

JUDITH
Yes, Bob is always ready to throw
a bonspeil.

Judith looks at Bob and his enthusiasm wanes.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
No matter how inappropriate the
locale.

The Men of Seashell Drive begin to fade in behind their women. Dan takes this as an opportunity to step into the middle to pull everyone's attention to him.

DAN
Inappropriate? Jude. . .

Dan extends his arms and bellows.

DAN (CONT'D)
. . .this is our domain! We are
the kings and queens of Seashell
Drive! Nothing we do on our
demesne inappropriate.

Dan looks around at the disapproving glares of the Women of Seashell Drive and down turned faces from the Men of Seashell Drive. Dan adopts a sheepish manner and goofy grin.

DAN (CONT'D)
All right, maybe some things are
inappropriate. But just a few.
And mainly by me.

After a moment of shame, Dan jumps back into his role as the barking carney.

DAN (CONT'D)
But that doesn't mean we can't
party like its four score and
seven years ago!

Dan jumps into Rebecca's face. Rebecca is startled and gingerly, as if he may be moist, places her hands on Dan's shoulders. Dan grabs them and does a child-like dance with her.

DAN (CONT'D)

And from what I've been told
you're pushing the party envelope
into a new realm of festive.

Rebecca grabs Dan's hands and pushes them away.

REBECCA

If you mean our garden party to
celebrate my sisters engagement,
then yes.

Dan looks around at the denizens of Seashell Drive
surrounding him with arms akimbo and grin wide. There are
various stages of disgust from the women and utter confusion
from the men. Patty is the only one semi-comfortable with
Dan's action. But she knows that could change any second.

DAN

See? That's what I've been saying
about you all! You're ready to
throw down at a moments notice.
Owwwwwww! Good gawd, ya'll!

Dan spins and howls to the continued dismay of those
gathered. At the end of his spin, which concludes directly in
front of Judith, Dan reaches into his pocket.

DAN (CONT'D)

Which is why it distresses me to
be so petty.

Dan pulls tattered and folded papers from his pocket which
the Women of Seashell Drive immediately recognize as the
rules they made up. Dan makes a theatrical play at unfolding
the papers and finding the exact passage he needs.

DAN (CONT'D)

And ask why, if it says so right
here in the centuries old bylaws,
we weren't informed about this
little shindig?

Judith begins to speak but Dan plows ahead.

DAN (CONT'D)

I know I wasn't in on this, were
you, honey?

Dan looks at Patty who shrugs her shoulders.

PATTY

News to me, Dan.

Dan shakes his head solemnly before leaning closer into Judith's face.

DAN
If I didn't know better, I'd
think someone was trying to pull
something over on us.

After a beat, Dan leans back quickly. Judith jumps. Dan speaks with a slow, methodical phrasing.

DAN (CONT'D)
But I know something like that
could NEVER happen on bucolic
Seashell Drive.

Dan pauses as he looks over the residents of Seashell Drive. The Women of Seashell Drive are looking towards Judith for guidance. The Men are, well, the Men of Seashell Drive. Their thought process is blank as a fart and half as useful.

DAN (CONT'D)
Could it?

Dan surveys the crowd for a beat before Judith speaks.

JUDITH
You are correct, Dan, there was
nothing nefarious as hand. You
see. . .

Judith steps towards Dan attempting to regain the upper hand.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
. . .these plans were in place
long before you arrived.

Dan feigns shock and embarrassment.

DAN
Oh, geez, I should have known
that!

Dan turns to Patty and smacks his forehead with the palm of his hand. Patty rolls her eyes and shakes her head.

DAN (CONT'D)
How silly are we?

Dan turns to Judith and takes her hands in his. Judith tries to extricate her hands for a moment but it's useless.

DAN (CONT'D)
We should have known the rules
are the rules and they stand true
and strong for everyone. Right
down to the last period.

Dan leans towards Judith.

DAN (CONT'D)
Isn't that right, Judith?

Dan releases her hands and smiles. Judith pulls her hands
back and rubs them together. Out, damn'd neighbor!

JUDITH
There would be anarchy if that
weren't true.

Dan claps his hands together.

DAN
Hot damn! I was hoping you'd see
it that way!

Dan opens up his rules sheets again and looks them over.

DAN (CONT'D)
Because. . .

Dan looks up at Judith before continuing to read.

DAN (CONT'D)
. . .and correct me if I'm wrong,
but it says the only people who
can vote are the, and I quote,
'landowners as named in deeds
legally registered within the
laws and decrees of the
commonwealth.'

Dan looks up from the sheet and smiles at Judith.

DAN (CONT'D)
Nice touch. Very genteel, very
gentry.

Judith is done with Dan's stalling.

JUDITH
Very well. What is it you are
trying to say, Dan?

DAN
I'm not trying to say anything.
What I am saying is, I'd like to
see the vote.

Judith stammers.

JUDITH
The vote?

DAN
Yeah, you see. . .

Dan walks over to Catherine and puts his arm around her.

DAN (CONT'D)
. . .recently it's been brought
to my attention that I have some
allies who believe maybe the
rules weren't followed totally
within the spirit of the thing.

Dan winks at the red-faced Catherine as he steps away.

DAN (CONT'D)
And are more than happy to vote
my way. Not that I'm naming
anyone. I'm just saying I'd like
to see the vote.

Dan is again face to face with Judith. Judith's beside
herself with this assault on her authority. But she's battle
tested and ready for the fight.

JUDITH
Why, of course, Dan! There are no
underhanded maneuvers or back
room deals here! We are nothing
if not the epitome of democracy!

Dan salutes and sings. Off key.

DAN
And the home of the brave!

Dan snaps off the salute.

DAN (CONT'D)
Play ball!

Judith can barely hide her contempt for Dan.

JUDITH
Really, Dan! Is that necessary?

DAN
No. But it sure is fun!

Dan claps his hands again.

DAN (CONT'D)
So, how are we going to do this?
Call in Jimmy Carter? Use my hall
closet as a voting booth? Oh, I
know, we'll blindfold everyone
and. . .

Dan thinks for a moment before shaking his head.

DAN (CONT'D)
. . .nah! That won't work unless
we get Jimmy Carter. And he's
tough these days what with his...

JUDITH
. . .DAN!

DAN
Present!

Judith takes a deep breath.

JUDITH
Let's do this civilly.

CATHERINE
And quickly!

Catherine is not enjoying her role as an ally of Dan's.
Catherine and Judith exchange a glance which comforts
Catherine. They know their jobs so much do them.

JUDITH
Exactly.

Judith turns to engage Dan and is dismayed to find him
talking with the Men of Seashell Drive. Dan's in the middle
of a batting stance when Judith interrupts him.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
DAN!

Dan shanks his swing and protests.

DAN
That's a do over!

Dan implores the Men of Seashell Drive.

DAN (CONT'D)

You saw that! She waited until I
was going to take that pitch
downtown to yell like that.

JUDITH

Dan, please, the matter at hand.

Dan scoffs and swings his shoulders unhappily.

DAN

Yeah, well, I still should get a
do over.

Dan walks over to Patty and puts his head on her shoulder.
Patty pats his head and rolls her eyes.

JUDITH

Now that everyone is ready we
will expediently dispatch of this
matter.

Judith smiles and nods at the Women of Seashell Drive. They
smile back. They're well trained for situations like this and
will put this unfortunate incident behind them posthaste.

Judith's air of command flourishes into full bloom. She made
the rules and knows nothing can go wrong.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

We are here to discuss the
possibility of our new neighbors,
The Blake's, hosting a house
warming party.

The assembled residents of Seashell Drive nod in agreement.
Except for Dan who's still pouting.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

If there is anyone opposed to
such an event, please raise your
hand now.

In a flash, Judith, Rebecca, and Michelle's hands go up. Dan
looks stricken. Judith grins. Even with Dan having
Catherine's vote, the majority continues to rule.

JUDITH (CONT'D)

Although it is a forgone
conclusion, for protocol, all
those in favor of such an event
please raise your hand.

Dan's hand shoots up. Both hands shoot up. Dan jumps up and down looking at Catherine who, with considerable effort, raises her hand. Judith looks at Dan with a big smirk.

JUDITH (CONT'D)
As we can see, the majority. . .

PATTY
. . .Judith.

Judith turns towards Patty who has her hand raised.

PATTY (CONT'D)
I count it three to three.

Judith has a momentary flutter with this turn of events.

PATTY (CONT'D)
The rules state every landowner
named on the deed.

Patty smiles.

PATTY (CONT'D)
My names on the deed.

Dan fumbles with the papers until he gets to the one he's looking for. He holds it out to Judith who pushes it away.

DAN
So she gets to vote. And, from
what the deeds to every house on
the street say, so does everyone
standing here.

Judith, although not totally happy about this bit of information, is not unduly concerned. There is a status quo on Seashell Drive and no mere man dares undo it. Judith regains her regal pose and continues with the vote.

JUDITH
I see there's been a slight
oversight in the voting. But I'm
sure we can finally reach a
conclusion to this laborious
matter.

Judith turns and faces Bob. Bob has played the game too long and knows the consequences of an improper answer. Bob looks at Dan who's pantomiming the delivery of a curling stone followed by frenzied sweeping.

BOB

As welcome as a bonspeil would be
on Seashell Drive, I must concur
with my wife by stating that such
an event would be distracting.

Bob nods towards Dan. Dan grins and shrugs his shoulders.

DAN

Bad curling!

Dan quickly disengages from Bob, the lost cause, and directs
his attention to Tod. Tod is standing ramrod straight with a
lost grin on his face.

DAN (CONT'D)

It's up to you, Tod. Big Papi.
Right here. Hitting Dingers.
Getting jiggy with the bonspeil.

Dan looks quickly at Bob.

DAN (CONT'D)

Oh yeah, you didn't know that,
did you? Ortiz loves curling.

Dan quickly goes back to Tod.

TOD

I will also agree with my wife
with a vote of yes.

Catherine pushes Tod slightly which doesn't make him any more
unbalanced but does confuse him which his expression shows.

TOD (CONT'D)

But I thought you wanted me to
vote the line?

Catherine glares at Tod and pulls him closer. Dan begins to
turn his attention to Steve. The swing vote with the wife who
so wants to fit in.

MICHELLE

I would like to remind *EVERYONE*
that I voted in opposition to
this event.

Michelle plasters a smile on her face and wiggles in nice and
close to Steve. Steve smiles at Michelle. Michelle smiles at
Steve. Steve leans over and gives Michelle a polite peck on
the cheek. Michelle feigns schoolgirl innocence as she turns
her full attention to her beloved husband.

Dan watches this with hope plastered on his face. Patty is behind him with a more pessimistic outlook. Judith moves to the side of Judith and pats her with an icy paternal hand.

STEVE
I've had a long time to think
about this so I have. Thought
about this, I mean.

Public speaking isn't Steve's strong suit and it's very illfitting right now.

STEVE (CONT'D)
And I have to say that I can't
see any reason why we shouldn't
have this party.

The Women of Seashell Drive reacts as if slapped. Gasps abound. Dan grabs Patty as they dance and hug.

DAN
A tie! It's a tie and, per the
sacred scroll, the ruling goes to
the request! Bonspiel ho!

Dan looks at a scowling Judith. This is not the outcome she expected nor is it of the manner she accepts with grace.

JUDITH
I know what the rules state!

Judith turns to Michelle who turns and slaps Steve on the shoulder.

STEVE
What? It's just a party!

Michelle pulls Steve's sleeve while Judith turns on her heels with Bob quickly behind.

MICHELLE
I can't believe you.

Steve begins to stumble away.

STEVE
What? When am I going to have
another opportunity to see David
Ortiz hit dingers in my own
neighborhood?

Steve turns and nods a winning nod to a celebrating Dan.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Who wouldn't want to see that?

DAN
No right thinking person, Steve!

Dan turns his attention to the pale Catherine and the still flummoxed Tod. Dan grabs Tod's hand and shakes it with gusto. With his other arm Dan tosses a hug around Catherine.

DAN (CONT'D)
I just want you to know there's
no way this party could ever be
happening if it weren't for you
two.

Dan breaks the hug. Catherine attempts to regroup. Tod, well, I think you grasp Tod and his range of emotions by now. Dan leans ever so close to Catherine. She is nervous.

DAN (CONT'D)
Especially you. I know it took
guts to go against the girls but
you did it.

Dan backs up and bows. He stands back up and points at Catherine.

DAN (CONT'D)
And I'm not going to forget that.
As a matter of fact, the first
dinger Big Papi hits is going to
have your name on it!

CATHERINE
No, seriously, Dan, I truly don't
deserve any special attention.

Dan waves her off.

DAN
Nonsense. You had the conviction
to stand up for injustice! To
battle a wrong until you made it
right.

Dan stands there with a very sincere smile that makes Catherine uncomfortable. She shifts as she places her hand on Tod's arm. He collects her and they begin to walk towards their house. Dan calls towards them as they walk away.

DAN (CONT'D)
And I won't forget that. Trust me
when I say, it'll be raining
dingers in your future.

Catherine and Tod look back towards Dan as Patty walks up next to him. Catherine looks shell shocked while Tod has a grin on his face.

TOD
Big Papi's going to hit dingers
for you, honey!

Catherine and Tod turn back and continue their seemingly endless trek back to their house. Dan and Patty watch them walk away.

PATTY
Quite an evening.

DAN
Yes, it was.

PATTY
You don't believe anything you
said to her about having guts, do
you?

DAN
Not a friggin' word of it.

Dan and Patty wave towards Catherine and Tod.

PATTY
Now what are you going to do?

Dan and Patty turn and begin to walk toward their house.

DAN
Well, I'm going to set up a
bonspielung, dinger raining
party. Let's see. What am I going
to need? Booze. Food. Decoration.
People. Okay, I'm covered there
because that's your department.

PATTY
Oh, I see. What are you going to
do?

DAN
I have a lot to do.

PATTY
Like what?

DAN
I'm going to have to call my
people. . .

PATTY
. . .you have people?

DAN
I, my dear, am peopled like you
wouldn't believe.

PATTY
And what are you going to have
your people do?

DAN
They're going to figure out how
to put in a curling sheet.

PATTY
You're going through with that?

Dan stops. Patty stutters to a halt.

DAN
Of course. What's a bonspeil
without curling?

Patty surrenders and slaps her forehead.

PATTY
What was I thinking?

DAN
What indeed. And then I'm going
to have to call Doug.

Dan and Patty reach the bottom of their driveway.

PATTY
What's he going to do?

DAN
Get in touch with Ortiz' people.
I don't know how much he's going
to cost, but I'm sure it'll be a
pretty penny.

PATTY
Especially when he finds out
he'll be curling.

DAN
Are you kidding? I bet he pays me
to be in on this bonspeil.

Dan and Patty laugh as they continue up the driveway towards
the house.

PATTY
That'd be something.

DAN
It sure would, Pat, it sure
would.

They reach their house as the camera pulls back to reveal a
full shot of Seashell Drive. All the other denizens of
Seashell Drive are standing at their opened front doors
watching Dan and Patty open their front door. Everyone begins
to enter their respective houses as the scene becomes colored
like a cartoon in bright colors and bold strokes that begins
to darken ominously until we:

BLACK OUT.

THE END