

# Perfect Shiny Black

by

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EXT. LOS LUNAS GROCERY STORE - MORNING

It's a bright, sunny morning in this little New Mexico town.

LYNNETTE, 39, pushes a cart full of groceries through the parking lot toward her faded 1955 grayish-black Ford pickup. She is frumpy and wearing blue medical scrubs. Her face is clean of any makeup and her shoulder length hair is in need of re-perming. She could stand to lose about 30 pounds.

She whistles as she plops the bags of groceries in the back of her weather-worn truck. She is almost all the way into the driver's seat when she hops back out. She peers into a few of the bags, grabs something and takes it into the cab of the truck with her.

INT. TRUCK - MORNING

Lynnette speeds along a dusty rural road singing along to a cheesy 80s song on the radio. She glances down at her fuel gauge which is almost on empty. She sighs.

LYNNETTE

Shoot. Now or never.

EXT. LOS LUNAS COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Her truck slows down and she makes a wide u-turn.

EXT. LOS LUNAS GAS STATION - MORNING

She pulls into the gas station, hops out, and starts pumping her gas. As she waits for her tank to fill up she leans against the truck and starts to sing the '80s song again.

EXT. LOS LUNAS COUNTRY ROAD - MORNING

Lynnette's truck is on the road again. Keeping one eye on the road she reaches over and grabs a round pint carton of butter pecan ice cream. She pulls the lid off and tosses it on the seat.

Still whistling and singing she leans over and opens the glove compartment, leaving one hand to steer and keep a hold of the ice cream.

Her rummaging produces a plastic knife still in it's fast food plastic wrapping, salt and pepper packets and a straw.

LYNNETTE

Oh great.

She puts the fast food remnants back in the glove compartment.

She eyes the perfect, flat top of the exposed ice cream. She eyes the road. The ice cream. The road. The ice cream.

LYNNETTE

What the hell.

She takes a bite of ice cream. Sinks her teeth into it as far as she can with this awkward process. Then another.

She works her way all around the carton until no more ice cream is accessible in this fashion. Can feel some on her nose, checks it out in the rear-view mirror.

LYNNETTE

Real classy, Lynnette.

EXT. NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY - MORNING

As the credits roll we see her truck cruising along this desolate highway. Not a building in sight. Just a long straight road leading to who knows where.

Miles of flat desert land on either side of the road, mountains in the distance. She has a long drive ahead of her.

EXT. NEW MEXICO HIGHWAY - MORNING

Her truck nears a small community stuck out in the middle of nowhere. A small rock wall with a metal-lettered sign on it reads "Welcome to Meadowlake!" Actually now it reads "W elc me to Me dowl ke ".

EXT. MEADOWLAKE ROAD - MORNING

The small community of Meadowlake is mostly full of mobile homes and small dilapidated houses with a few barns and sheds thrown in for good measure.

But there is one new building at the side of the road, newly finished with some wooden construction barriers still in place in the front of the building. It is a plain, rectangle building that usually would attract no attention.

But today as Lynnette passes this new building there are workman installing a large sign out by the road. It reads "Arturo's Mini-Mart" and it is professionally painted.

Lynnette nearly drives off the road when she sees this. She gasps in disbelief.

LYNNETTE

Holy crap!

She cranes her neck as she passes to get a good look.

INT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - MORNING

Still in her scrubs, Lynnette enters the old, small store. She carries a piece of paper with her.

KATHERINE, 35, notices Lynnette as she enters. Katherine is trim and pretty, immaculately groomed. She is quite a contrast to the sloppy and dowdy Lynnette.

Katherine stops shopping for a moment, watches Lynnette talk to the store owner about putting a flyer up near the counter.

The woman behind the counter is MRS. VUDALI, 52, an East Indian woman. Her English is perfect, but very heavily accented.

MRS. VUDALI

And what is this flyer for?

LYNNETTE

A first aid class at the community center on Thursday. I got one of the fireman from down in Los Lunas to come out and teach us all basic first aid.

Mrs. Vudali seems uninterested in the class.

MRS. VUDALI

Oh, I see. Sure, you may put it up.

After putting the flyer up Lynnette spots Katherine.

KATHERINE

Ah, the first aid class. My heart's all aflutter.

LYNNETTE

Oh hey Katherine. I was gonna call you later. You haven't forgotten about the class have you?

KATHERINE

How could I forget? You bring it up every time I see you. Guess I'll be there.

Lynnette pouts a little bit.

LYNNETTE

You guess? You promised you would! I need your help.

KATHERINE

You really think anyone's gonna show up?

Lynnette seems hurt.

LYNNETTE

Of course. Why wouldn't they?

She turns her attention back to Mrs. Vudali who is busy talking on the phone. She is speaking in Hindi. She seems pleased about whatever it is she is talking about.

Lynnette puts some more tape on her flyer and Katherine puts her purchases on the counter. Mrs. Vudali gets off the phone and is all smiles.

LYNNETTE

Good news?

MRS. VUDALI

Well, not news really. Vishal is home from college. Came home last week.

LYNNETTE

Oh yeah? How's he doing? I haven't seen him in years.

MRS. VUDALI

He did very well at college. Very well.

LYNNETTE

Good for him.

MRS. VUDALI

This past week has been a bit of a strain having him home again. You miss them when they go, but you get used to them being gone.

LYNNETTE

Last time I saw him he was, what, 17?

MRS. VUDALI

About that, yes.

Mrs. Vudali shows them a photo that is taped back behind the register of the family, her husband, her son VISHAL as a gawky teenager, and his younger sister.

LYNNETTE

I remember he was always running through here on his way to somewhere.

KATHERINE

If only I had half the energy teens do.

LYNNETTE

Jeez, I nearly forgot! Guess what I just saw down the street.

She doesn't wait for them to guess.

LYNNETTE

Another store is moving in.

Now Mrs. Vudali seems more interested in the conversation.

MRS. VUDALI

What? Where is this?

LYNNETTE

That new building down the road. I just saw them putting up the sign. "Arturo's Mini-Mart" it said.

Katherine says nothing. Mrs. Vudali presses for more information.

MRS. VUDALI

It's a store? Like ours you mean? Or something else?

LYNNETTE

I think it's like yours. "Mini-Mart"...it's not likely they'll sell shoes or something. There goes your monopoly.

Mrs. Vudali frowns and fidgets nervously.

MRS. VUDALI

I must tell my husband about this.

Mrs. Vudali gets on the phone immediately while ringing up Katherine's purchase.

KATHERINE

(to Lynnette)

They've been building it for three months, what did you think it was going to be?

LYNNETTE

Thought it was just a little house or something.

Katherine pays as Lynnette heads out.

LYNNETTE

Well I'm off to bed.

KATHERINE

I don't know how you get used to sleeping in the day.

LYNNETTE

Habit. Believe me, if you work a ten hour shift all night, it's very easy to sleep during the day.

KATHERINE

That seems like a lot. Ten hours of sitting packaging medical supplies?

LYNNETTE

I don't mind. Four ten-hour days gives me a three day weekend every weekend.

Lynnette leaves the store shouting her goodbyes from the door.

As soon as Lynnette is out of the store, and and soon as Mrs. Vudali has her back turned, Katherine surreptitiously pulls the flyer off the wall while making sure not to ruin her perfectly manicured long nails.

She nearly throws the flyer in the trash, but Mrs. Vudali hears the paper rustle, turns to look, and sees the flyer in Katherine's hand. Katherine laughs nervously at being caught.

KATHERINE

It fell. She didn't use enough tape.

Katherine grudgingly reattaches the flyer to the wall.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - MORNING

Lynnette puts away the last of her groceries in her tiny little kitchen. The whole trailer is quite small and old. Lynnette's slack housekeeping doesn't help matters. Practically the whole trailer is contained in this one room. The living room couch has been permanently pulled out into a bed.

She sighs and turns the tv on to some talk show and plops down on the bed. She doesn't even bother to take off her scrubs. There is a stuffed Sesame street character "Grover" on her bed. She turns him to look at her.

LYNNETTE

So Grover, how was your day? Do anything special?

Lynnette tries to imitate Grover's voice.

LYNNETTE AS GROVER

Yes Lynnette, I had a full and exciting day. I sat on the bed watching tv waiting for you to return. Now that you're here I feel so much better.

LYNNETTE

Good. I feel better too. There's no place like home, is there?

LYNNETTE AS GROVER

Nope, no place like home. Can we have some ice cream?

LYNNETTE

No, we already had some.

LYNNETTE AS GROVER

YOU had some, I didn't. Please?

LYNNETTE

Well...okay.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - LATER

There is now music coming from the tv set and Lynnette and Grover are dancing. His overly-long muppet arms and legs make it easy for her to hold onto him in the traditional dancing embraces.

Lynnette knows how to dance, it's obvious from her moves with Grover. But Grover isn't much of a partner for her. Nevertheless she crosses back and forth through the trailer doing the tango and some made up steps of her own. She is soon quite worn out and she and Grover collapse onto the bed.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

It is now dark in her trailer, except for the tv which is still on but the sound is turned down. She is fast asleep on the sofa-bed. Grover is watching tv silently, sitting upright in his place on the back of the couch.

An alarm clock goes off and Lynnette groggily turns it off. She turns on a nearby lamp and sits up. The clock reads 7 pm. She is still half asleep as she gets up and heads for the bathroom. We see that she still wears the top to her scrubs, but no bottoms.

LYNNETTE

Three day weekend, woo hoo.

She doesn't sound very enthusiastic.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - LATER

Lynnette sits at her kitchen table reading a magazine. The tv is still on, but she pays it no attention. She is scraping out the last traces of ice cream from the pint container.

She frowns when she sees there's no more left. She considers the empty carton for a few seconds. Then gets up, pulls her scrub bottoms back on and heads out the door with her keys.

INT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - NIGHT

Lynnette pulls a pint of butter pecan ice cream from the freezer in the back of the store. In her handheld basket she also tosses in pack of mini-donuts and a candy bar. She saunters back up to the counter and starts to put her items on the counter even though no one is behind the register yet.

She hears someone coming up from the back room. When she looks up her face could not possibly register a more surprised look. It is Vishal. Not a teenaged Vishal, but a 22 year old who is a million miles away from the gangly, awkward teenager we saw in the photo. Handsome, tall, intense. He now sports a beard, making him look all the more manly.

VISHAL

Hi. That all for ya?

She tries to gain her composure.

LYNNETTE

Wow. Vishal? You're all grown up!

Hearing this he looks up to take more notice of her since she obviously knows him.

LYNNETTE

I'm Lynnette Cooper, you probably don't remember me. You were a kid last time I saw you.

He laughs. He has a killer smile.

VISHAL

Yeah, I think I remember you. You drive that '55 Ford pickup, right?

Though he looks thoroughly East Indian, he sounds completely American.

LYNNETTE

Yeah, that's right! Good memory.

VISHAL

I always noticed that truck, it's nice.

He looks through the glass door, sees her truck.

VISHAL

Yup, that's the one I remember. Nice shape.

LYNNETTE

It's so old though.

Lynnette is suddenly aware of the junk food she has put on the counter. While Vishal is looking out the door at her truck she slowly scoops her candy bar and mini-donuts off the counter back into the hand basket. Then she drops the basket to the floor and scoots it aside with her foot.

VISHAL

Yes, but the body is good, no dents or damage. Does it run okay?

LYNNETTE

It has its good days and bad days.

Vishal turns his attention back to his job.

VISHAL

Is this all for you?

LYNNETTE

Uh huh.

VISHAL

Butter pecan, that's my favorite! Good stuff. You should try the Blue Bunny brand, it's even better.

Lynnette is still quite stunned by how Vishal has changed, but manages to follow his conversation.

LYNNETTE

Is it? I should try it sometime.

VISHAL

You have to go all the way into Los Lunas though, we don't carry it here.

LYNNETTE

Oh, that reminds me! You do realize there is another store about to open soon down the road?

VISHAL

Yeah, my parents were talking about that. There goes our monopoly.

Lynnette is over-excited to hear this.

LYNNETTE

That's exactly what I said! Really, I mean I used those exact same words!

Vishal seems less impressed at their like-minded thinking and takes her money and gives her her change.

VISHAL

You need a bag?

LYNNETTE

Sure.

She watches as he gets a bag and puts her ice cream in it.

VISHAL

There you go. Here's your receipt. Thank you.

He is done with her. The transaction is over. He gives her a 'thank you and goodbye' smile, turns around to attend to his other duties. She takes her ice cream and leaves.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - NIGHT

She pauses for a second outside the door of the store. She lets out the breath she realizes she had been holding.

LYNNETTE

Yowza.

INT. KATHERINE'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Katherine's home is immaculate and very homey. Everything is in it's place. Her double-wide mobile home is newer than most of the others in Meadowlake and it shows.

Katherine is busy using her portable sewing machine to make a little fairy costume on the dining room table. It is ridiculously frilly. Lynnette sits nearby in a tee shirt and sweat pants drinking a soda. Lynnette distractedly chews on her hair.

LYNNETTE

What's this for?

KATHERINE

Lily's class is doing the Wizard of Oz.

LYNNETTE

My God, that's ambitious. What grade is she in?

KATHERINE

(proudly)

Second. It's the private school we send them to in Albuquerque, they tend to tackle more rewarding projects. Lily is Glenda the Good Witch.

LYNNETTE

Good for her. Jeez, that's like an hour drive each morning into Albuquerque? And I thought Los Lunas was far.

KATHERINE

It's worth it. Keith picks them up in the afternoon so it's not so bad. Being the boss he can leave whenever he wants.

Lynnette isn't as impressed with this as Katherine seems to be.

LYNNETTE

Good for him.

KATHERINE

And once we move into town it won't be so bad. Frankly I can't wait to move back into Albuquerque.

LYNNETTE

Can't they take a bus?

KATHERINE

No, we're too far out of the district.

LYNNETTE

I was never in a play the whole time I went to school. I auditioned once, but didn't get a part. You?

KATHERINE

I had several parts in our high school production of Spoon River Anthology.

LYNNETTE

Several? How so?

KATHERINE

Oh you know, Lynnette, that's the play where there are lots of parts where they only have one monologue at a time and then they go on the next dead person.

LYNNETTE

Dead person? What the hell are you talking about?

KATHERINE

They are all in a cemetery, dead. And they come out and tell the audience about their lives. There are so many and since they all just have monologues and no interaction between characters all the actors can do lots of parts.

Lynnette seems baffled.

LYNNETTE

Hm. Never heard of it.

KATHERINE

Oh, you must have. It's very famous.

LYNNETTE

Nope. Never.

Katherine is almost getting angry at Lynnette by now.

KATHERINE

Oh honestly Lynnette! Haven't you heard of anything?

Katherine seems unaware that she has hurt Lynnette's feelings. After a moment Lynnette gets up to go.

LYNNETTE

I gotta go.

KATHERINE

Oh, you're not mad are you? I didn't mean anything by it.

LYNNETTE

I know. I gotta water the plants.

KATHERINE

You have to rush home to water your plants? Good excuse.

LYNNETTE

No, no. The plants in the Community Center. I'm the only one that takes care of them. If I don't do it now I'll forget.

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

The place is empty except for Lynnette. She waters each plant, speaking to them as if they were children.

LYNNETTE

How are you doing? Did you miss me? I bet you thought I forgot about you. I'd never do that. Ut oh, I see a dead leaf here. Let me just get rid of that.

She gently removes the offending leaf.

LYNNETTE

There now, isn't that better?

She moves on to another plant that is barely alive at all. It's in pretty bad shape. She bites her lip in horror when she sees the state of the plant.

LYNNETTE

Oh my, what happened to you? Did someone leave you in the sun? You're a shade lover. Why do they move you, why can't they leave it to me? Don't worry, I'll nurse you back to health.

She continues to fuss over the plants.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING LOT - DAY

Lynnette locks the Community center door behind her, and heads for her truck. Once in the truck she tries to start it, but to no avail. She tries several times.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Vishal is loading newly-delivered ice into the ice machine on the porch of the store. The Meadowlake Community Center is across the field from the store. Vishal hears the truck failing to turn over. He watches her for a few seconds as she keeps trying.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Lynnette sits in the truck with her forehead on the steering wheel. She jumps when Vishal knocks on her window. She quickly rolls down the window.

LYNNETTE

Vishal! You scared me!

VISHAL

Sorry. You having trouble?

LYNNETTE

I'll say. Stupid old thing. Maybe I flooded it.

VISHAL

Pop the hood.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Vishal is working under the hood of the truck, and Lynnette stands watching him. Watching him very carefully. When he suddenly turns to talk to her she tries to pretend that she wasn't giving him the once over.

VISHAL

It might be your alternator. Does it do this often?

LYNNETTE

Once in a while, yeah.

VISHAL

You got a screwdriver?

She scrambles to the cab and finally finds one under the seat and hands it to him.

LYNNETTE

Loose screw?

VISHAL

No. I think if I can touch this metal here, and over here it'll start. The charge will jump over. But only this once. Try it.

LYNNETTE

I didn't understand anything you said, but okay.

She hops in the cab and the truck starts.

LYNNETTE

Hey, great! You're a mechanical genius.  
Thanks!

Vishal closes the hood and comes to her still-open door.

VISHAL

I can't be sure that was the problem  
though. Mind if I drive it? I might be  
able to tell if I could drive it and  
listen to--

LYNNETTE

Sure! Hop in.

INT. LYNNETTE'S YARD - MOMENTS LATER

The truck stops in front of Lynnette's trailer and they get  
out. Her yard is full of mismatched patio furniture and old  
metal barrels used to burn trash. The nearby tool shed is  
falling apart.

Vishal takes another admiring look at the truck.

VISHAL

I think it's probably the alternator. I  
could put another one in for you. It's  
not that hard. It'll save you paying  
the labor.

LYNNETTE

That'd be awesome. Where do I get one?

VISHAL

I can pick one up for you in town. This  
is a '55 right? I'll let you know how  
much it is and you can pay me back later.  
I'm almost sure a new alternator would  
solve your problem.

LYNNETTE

For a while anyway, then I'm sure another  
problem will pop up. It's one thing  
after another with this old thing. I  
should just get a new car.

Vishal steps back to admire the whole length of the truck.

VISHAL

Oh no, don't do that. This is a great  
truck. Look, I can probably fix most of  
the smaller problems. It's worth it to  
keep it running.

Lynnette steps over to his vantage point and looks at her truck with new eyes.

LYNNETTE

You really think so?

VISHAL

Oh yeah. I can't believe you don't appreciate this thing.

LYNNETTE

Well it was my ex-husband's. I just kind of ended up with it. It's kind of a man's car, don't you think?

VISHAL

Are you kidding? Look at these curves.

Vishal steps over to the truck, gently caresses it's rounded fender.

VISHAL

The shape of this chassis, the gentle curve of the fender. Look at the way the front rounds down.

He again runs his hands along the smooth rounded hood.

VISHAL

No sharp angles on this thing. This is a very womanly truck. You look great behind the wheel.

LYNNETTE

Thanks. I never thought of it like that. I guess it could be a pretty cool looking truck if I had it repainted. Got one of Roy's old paint guns from the shop in the shed somewhere.

Vishal looks truly distressed.

VISHAL

No, no, leave it. Don't paint it.

LYNNETTE

Really? But it's so faded, it's not even black anymore. Roy never made a garage for it.

VISHAL

It looks great faded, it looks real.

(MORE)

VISHAL (CONT'D)

Not like those restored 50s cars that look like toys. They look so fake with brand new paint jobs.

Lynnette raises her eyebrow and gives nod of the head that says "hm I never considered that." Vishal can see that she isn't totally convinced.

VISHAL

Look, if you went out and bought an old antique oak dresser, you wouldn't paint over the old finish would you? You buy it for its oldness, its distressed finish. This is an antique, you should just leave it like it is. It wouldn't look right if it was a perfect, shiny black.

She stands stunned for a moment at his insight. He suddenly notices her watching him and gives a shy, self-conscious smile. She finally manages to speak.

LYNNETTE

Wow. There's more to you than sacking groceries, isn't there?

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - MORNING

Lynnette is making little signs using bright pink paper. "Welcome" or "This way" with an arrow. Katherine is standing in the tiny kitchen pouring coffee for herself. There is no one else in the Community Center which still looks rather new and unused.

LYNNETTE

I'm telling you, Kath, he is a MAN now. You should have seen him, I can't believe that's the same awkward teenager that used to hang around up there.

KATHERINE

That Indian boy?

LYNNETTE

Yeah. But I wouldn't call him 'boy' anymore.

KATHERINE

Uh huh. You want some?

Lynnette is caught off-guard at Katherine's question. Her eyes widen.

LYNNETTE

Uh...do I want some?

KATHERINE

Coffee...you want some?

LYNNETTE

Oh!

She laughs.

LYNNETTE

No thanks. Just come help me make some more signs.

Katherine sits at the table with all of the supplies.

KATHERINE

What's with all the pink paper? Kinda bright, isn't it?

LYNNETTE

It's leftover from the Valentine's dance flyers. I ordered way too much.

KATHERINE

Don't you think you have enough signs? It's not like they're bound to get lost.

LYNNETTE

I just want everything to be clear. There's nothing worse than bad directions.

KATHERINE

Lynnette, don't be silly. Everyone knows where the community center is, and there's only one room for God's sake. Why are you so...

LYNNETTE

Why am I so what?

Katherine takes a deep breath and bites her tongue.

KATHERINE

Thorough. You're very thorough.

Lynnette is pleased with this. Katherine doesn't bother helping with the signs, she just sips her coffee. There is a slightly uncomfortable silence for Katherine.

KATHERINE

So. He's a hottie, is he?

Lynnette is absorbed in her signs, she is now using glue and glitter to enhance them.

LYNNETTE

Who?

KATHERINE

That Indian boy. Excuse me, Indian MAN.

LYNNETTE

Do you have to call him that?

KATHERINE

Well I don't know his name, do I?

LYNNETTE

Vishal. Jeez, don't you pay attention? You've been going to Meadowlake Market for like ten years.

KATHERINE

This coffee is awful.

LYNNETTE

Remember when he was just a kid? I never thought anything about him other than him just being a kid. But now...

KATHERINE

I might just have to take a look at him. Mind you, I don't usually like that type.

LYNNETTE

What type?

KATHERINE

You know. Like him.

LYNNETTE

You mean because he works in a grocery store? We all can't be the high-powered executive type. You should have heard how he was talking about my truck.

KATHERINE

Men and their cars. Please. Keith spends all weekend tinkering with his. What's so great about that?

LYNNETTE

They WAY he was talking about, almost poetic, romantic.

Katherine laughs.

KATHERINE

Please. He was romancing your truck?

LYNNETTE

You don't understand. He had this...I don't know...sensitive way of talking about it, how it was a woman's truck and everything.

KATHERINE

Yeah, it's your truck, you are a woman, so what?

LYNNETTE

You don't get it.

KATHERINE

No I get it. Men can be romantic with their cars. Hell, Keith would marry his car if it was legal I think. Spends more time with it than with me.

Katherine gets up to dump out the rest of her coffee.

LYNNETTE

(under her breath)

I can't imagine why.

KATHERINE

Looks like you're pretty much done here, mind if I head out? I've got some errands in town to do.

Lynnette now seems glad to be rid of her.

LYNNETTE

Sure.

KATHERINE

I'll leave you to your glittering, darling.

INT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - NIGHT

Vishal and his sister SHASHTI sit behind the counter. Shashti is 16, very pretty, very bubbly. Like her brother she has no trace of an accent.

VISHAL

Let me see it!

SHASHTI

Okay, but you have to swear not to tell Mom and Dad.

Vishal over-dramatically crosses his heart.

VISHAL

I swear. Come on! Lemme see!

Shashti turns around and pulls the bottom of up her shirt a bit to reveal a large tattoo on her lower back. It is elaborate and has a Hindu theme. The number six is a prominent feature of the tattoo.

VISHAL

Wow! It's huge! I thought it was gonna be a tiny little "six" or something. Mom and Dad will freak if they see this.

SHASHTI

Shut up! Like I need to hear that!

Vishal gently touches the tattoo.

VISHAL

Did it hurt?

SHASHTI

Was a little sore. That's 'cause it's so big. My little "six" didn't hurt.

She pulls down her jeans a few inches to show a little decorative tattoo of the number six on her hip.

VISHAL

You are a wild woman, Shashti.

SHASHTI

Oh yeah, right. I have two tattoos so I'm really out of control. I have the highest average in calculus. Did you?

Their ribbing is very good-natured.

VISHAL

I didn't need to take calculus.

SHASHTI

No, I mean in high school.

VISHAL

I was the third highest.

SHASHTI

See. Tattoos are not, I'm still a better student than you.

Upon hearing her bold statement Vishal lunges off his stool toward her. She yelps and runs, knowing what is coming. Vishal is on her in a second and tickles her without stopping. Soon she cannot breath from laughing so hard.

VISHAL

Take it back! Take it back!

She can barely speak, but she manages to blurt out the words.

SHASHTI

I take it back! I take it back!

Vishal stops his tickle-punishment and she heaves trying to catch her breath.

VISHAL

That'll teach you. Wait 'til you get to college, it's a whole other world. You won't be a big fish in a little pond anymore.

A customer enters the store and Vishal immediately stops his playfulness. Shashti on the other hand is still quite outgoing and playful, despite having an audience now.

SHASHTI

Who says I want to go to college?

She is taunting, but obviously not serious about it.

VISHAL

Yeah, right. Then Mom and Dad would kill you for sure.

Shashti is on the other side of the counter now after running from the tickle attack. Vishal has a box of cans on the counter between them.

VISHAL

Here, I'll mark 'em if you put 'em away.

Vishal gets out a price tag gun and marks the cans.

VISHAL

What does Mark think of the tats?

Shashti starts piling the cans in her arms as they are ready.

SHASHTI

Who?

VISHAL

Duh! Mark, your boyfriend!

Shashti wrinkles up her nose in disapproval and laughs.

SHASHTI

Jeez Vishal, call home once in a while!  
Mark was like last year! I'm going out  
with Chris now.

VISHAL

Chris? The jock?

SHASHTI

He's on the track team, that hardly makes  
him a jock.

VISHAL

Wasn't he your class president last year?

SHASHTI

Yup, that's the one.

Vishal stops his can marking. He seems genuinely impressed.

VISHAL

Wow. Way to go, Shashti.

There is a faint trace of envy in his eyes.

Shashti notices Lynnette's flyer on the wall.

SHASHTI

Hey, what's this? "A basic first aid  
class, learn the basics of first aid."  
Kinda redundant isn't it? Is this another  
one of Lynnette's things?

VISHAL

Yeah, I guess. Tomorrow night I think.

SHASHTI

Poor thing. No one ever goes to any of  
her get-togethers. Can you imagine?  
How humiliating.

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Lynnette ushers people into the main room of the Community  
Center. Just a few people really, mostly senior citizens.

Lynnette has put a bit of effort into her appearance tonight. She wears a dress and she has pulled her hair back.

LYNNETTE

Did my signs help you?

SENIOR CITIZEN

Hm? What signs?

LYNNETTE

I made signs for the doors. There's several doors, I wanted to make sure everyone knew what door to use.

SENIOR CITIZEN

Oh, yes, I think I noticed a sign.

LYNNETTE

It's so frustrating to go around trying all the doors.

SENIOR CITIZEN

Yes dear. It was a nice sign.

Lynnette calls to her as the old woman heads towards the seats.

LYNNETTE

There'll be refreshments afterwards!

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - MOMENTS LATER

Lynnette has set up about forty chairs but there are only about seven or eight people not including Lynnette and the FIREMAN present who lead the first aid class.

At the back of the room Lynnette pours punch from a large plastic punch bowl. She pulls out cookies and chips and arranges them as artistically as she can. Way too much food compared to the amount of attendees that showed up.

Lynnette notices Vishal slip into the room. She breaks into a huge smile. Vishal sees her and flashes a smile as he takes a seat near the back. She gives him a big goofy grin, waves.

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

The first aid crowd is breaking up and a few people come back for cookies and punch. Lynnette proudly serves them. Vishal hangs back from the crowd, still in his seat. He watches Lynnette as she tries to engage everyone in conversation.

LYNNETTE

Mrs. Ortega, you look nice tonight.  
Here, have some cookies. Did you enjoy  
the class?

MRS. ORTEGA

I guess. My husband is a diabetic so I  
was wanting to learn how to give shots.  
He didn't cover that though.

LYNNETTE

Perhaps if you asked him he might help  
you with that. Would you like me to  
call him over?

MRS. ORTEGA

Oh no. I'll find him himself.

The older people talk amongst themselves, a few of them asking  
questions to the Fireman who graciously answers them all.

Vishal approaches the refreshment table. He looks at the  
bags the cookies and chips came in.

VISHAL

Hey, these are from our store. This is  
our price tag.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, I'm glad you came! Want some  
punch?

VISHAL

Sure.

Lynnette pours him some and takes it, standing awkwardly, not  
knowing what to say.

VISHAL

Good class. Good stuff. Always handy  
to know.

LYNNETTE

I wish more people would have shown up  
though.

VISHAL

People like to stay home. What can you  
do?

Several of the older couples are looking at Vishal, trying to  
remember who he is. They whisper, but snippets of conversation  
can be heard...

SENIOR CITIZEN

...that's the Indian boy....

MRS. ORTEGA

...the general store...

MR. ORTEGA

...oh, the Indian couple's son...

Vishal appears annoyed. Lynnette takes charge. She clears her throat and speaks loudly to the small crowd.

LYNNETTE

Everyone! Look, Vishal Vudali is home from college! We haven't seen him in quite a while, have we?

Vishal seems a bit embarrassed, but kind of grateful to Lynnette.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, tell us all what you studied.

VISHAL

I had a double major, business and computer science.

The crowd is already uninterested and they go back to their own conversations.

LYNNETTE

Wow, that sounds...well...

She laughs.

LYNNETTE

Kinda boring!

Vishal and Lynnette both laugh.

LYNNETTE

No, I'm kidding. It doesn't sound like something I'd like, but I'm sure you enjoyed it.

VISHAL

No, it was kinda boring actually.

Vishal laughs at himself.

VISHAL

But it's what I needed to do to eventually have my own business.

LYNNETTE

What kind of business?

Vishal notices that no one else is still interested in their conversation.

VISHAL

You're actually interested in this?

Lynnette is somewhat taken aback by his question.

LYNNETTE

Of course I am, or I wouldn't be asking.

VISHAL

I'd like to have my own computer consulting business. Nothing huge to start with.

LYNNETTE

Is that what you're gonna be doing now?

VISHAL

Oh, not my own business, no. Not yet. That'll take me years. I gotta get some experience first. Before I left Seattle I had several interviews with big firms.

Lynnette nibbles on a cookie as she listens to Vishal.

VISHAL

And now with that new store moving in down the road...

He shakes his head sadly.

VISHAL

...that's bad news. My parents are really worried about that. They've had the only store up in Meadowlake forever. Now this new store could really hurt business.

LYNNETTE

Yeah, that's gotta be tough.

VISHAL

So that's more reason for me to want to get a really good job in Seattle. I might have to help my parents out if business gets bad.

LYNNETTE

That's nice that you want to take care of them. Seattle. You like it up there?

VISHAL

Yeah, it's nice. Rains a lot though.

LYNNETTE

I love the rain. A lifetime of living in the desert, I'm ready for some rain. You don't like the rain?

Vishal shrugs.

VISHAL

It's okay I guess.

LYNNETTE

I wish it was rainy here. The rain makes everything seem so clean. And green. The trees and plants looks so gorgeous in the rain. So shiny and slick looking.

He considers this comment, nods.

VISHAL

I guess.

Lynnette smiles at him.

LYNNETTE

If you go to Seattle, who's gonna fix my truck?

Vishal grabs a handful of chips. He smiles shyly.

VISHAL

I'm sure you'll be fine.

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - LATER

The place is now empty except for Vishal and Lynnette. Most of the lights are off. Vishal washes some dishes in the sink while Lynnette packs up big boxes of supplies. Vishal seems more relaxed now.

VISHAL

So after your divorce how come you stayed out here?

LYNNETTE

I dunno. Just easier I guess.

VISHAL

You work in Los Lunas, wouldn't it be easier to move down there?

LYNNETTE

Yeah, but I couldn't afford it. Roy pays me a little alimony, but not much. I don't mind it up here.

VISHAL

No kids?

LYNNETTE

No, we never did have kids. Kinda wish we had though.

VISHAL

You still can.

LYNNETTE

Oh please, I'll be forty in three months. I think that ship has sailed.

VISHAL

Boy, I'd be out of here in a flash if I didn't have any family or a job to tie me down.

Lynnette finishes packing the box and just watches Vishal.

LYNNETTE

So how come you don't have a girlfriend?

Vishal looks at her, surprised at her directness.

VISHAL

Ah, we're changing subjects I see.

LYNNETTE

So?

VISHAL

Who said I didn't?

Lynnette presses for more, trying to sound casual.

LYNNETTE

So do you? What's her name?

VISHAL

Actually no, I don't.

Vishal squirms a bit as he dries a few plates.

VISHAL  
Women...that's a touchy subject.

LYNNETTE  
Touchy?

VISHAL  
Yeah. Women...they don't really...they  
tend to not be...attracted to me. To  
Indian men. American women anyway.

This seems like a news flash to Lynnette.

LYNNETTE  
Really? No, that can't be. Nooo.

Vishal flashes her a weary glance.

VISHAL  
Trust me.

Lynnette stands next to him and helps him dry the dishes.

VISHAL  
Now, if I was a female, it'd be a  
different story. American men tend to  
love Indian women. Look at Shashti, she  
always has boys all over her. They think  
she is so petite, so exotic. They just  
want to cherish her and take care of  
her. But American women...they just  
think of me as 'that Indian guy' or the  
'Hindu boy.'

Lynnette takes all of this in. She repeats his last sentence  
thoughtfully.

LYNNETTE  
"Hindu boy."

Vishal suddenly puts his fists on his hips and thrusts his  
chest out, the stance of a superhero.

VISHAL  
Yes, it's Hindu Boy! The superhero with  
many gods! Able to repel women with one  
a single glance.

LYNNETTE  
That's horrible.

Vishal laughs at her seriousness.

VISHAL

Horrible? I don't know if it's horrible,  
but it's just the way it is.

LYNNETTE

Meadowlake isn't exactly a melting pot.  
You're either Hispanic or White up here.

Vishal shakes his head.

VISHAL

Nah, it's like this everywhere. Even  
Seattle.

LYNNETTE

So exactly how many gods *do* Hindus  
worship?

VISHAL

Well, they say there are millions, but  
they are all also the same one.

LYNNETTE

Huh?

VISHAL

Many, many gods...yet only one.

This does nothing to help Lynnette understand.

LYNNETTE

Okay, so let's say American woman aren't  
attracted to you--and I don't think that's  
entirely true by the way--but even if it  
was, what about East Indian women?

Again Vishal laughs.

VISHAL

Yeah, you try finding me one way out  
here! Besides, I don't want to **HAVE** to  
have an Indian girlfriend. Just because  
I'm Indian doesn't mean I'm only attracted  
to Indian women.

An awkward moment of silence passes between them. Suddenly  
the distance between them is too close. He clears his throat,  
tosses the dishcloth aside and she claps her hands together.

LYNNETTE

Okay! Great! Dishes are done! You  
need a ride home?

Vishal furrows his forehead in confusion.

VISHAL

I live right across the field.

LYNNETTE

Oh, right. Right you are. Right.

He smiles at her nervousness.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Vishal carries the last of several large, heavy boxes to Lynnette's truck.

VISHAL

Jesus, what's in these?

LYNNETTE

Books. Manuals and things. They've been here for ages, thought I'd sort them out. Throw them away. I could use the binders. You need any?

VISHAL

Nope, I'm done with school, no more three ring binders for me.

Lynnette has her keys in hand, but lingers, not opening her truck door.

LYNNETTE

So.

VISHAL

So.

LYNNETTE

Thanks for the help, Vishal, really. It was sweet of you. They were so heavy, I don't know how I would have gotten them in my truck.

VISHAL

You're welcome. Oh hey! How are you going to get them out?

LYNNETTE

I hadn't thought of that. I can just leave the boxes in the truck and take the books out of them several at a time.

VISHAL

Or....

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Vishal carries in the last box and drops it in the corner on top of the other boxes.

VISHAL

Whew. That's the last one.

LYNNETTE

Thanks. Wow, you're almost breaking a sweat. You want a soda?

She moves toward the kitchen but he stops her.

VISHAL

No, that's okay. I should go.

LYNNETTE

Right. Okay, now you need a ride home.

VISHAL

No, that's fine, it's not that far. I could use the walk.

LYNNETTE

Sure?

VISHAL

Yeah, that's fine.

Another awkward silence.

LYNNETTE

Well, thanks again, Vishal.

She hesitantly moves in and then in a burst of courage she quickly kisses him on the cheek.

He looks at her with surprise. Or is it now lust?

They suddenly lunge at each other with a passionate intensity. Grabbing each other...hot, desperate kisses...pulling at each other's clothes. In a flash they collapse on the sofa-bed, smothering each other with kisses and ripping off clothes. They are an explosion of the pent-up passion and loneliness of years.

In all of the frenzied excitement and movement, Grover is knocked from his perch on the back of the couch.

INT. ETHICON FACTORY - NIGHT

The huge cavernous factory is abuzz with hundreds of workers, all in medical scrubs and hair coverings. There are assembly lines of people putting medical supplies into packaging. It is a cheerless place.

Lynnette is in her place on one of the lines. She is the only one smiling.

COWORKER

So come on Lynnette, spill it. You've been beaming all night.

LYNNETTE

What? Can't I just be in a good mood?

COWORKER

Sure, as long as you tell us what caused this good mood.

They notice a small slightly red patch on Lynnette's chin. Another worker chimes in.

COWORKER TWO

That looks suspiciously like "beard burn" to me!

Lynnette blushes and smiles, but doesn't really do anything else to discourage them. They all hoot and holler.

COWORKER TWO

Ooo, I knew it! You've got a man!

COWORKER

Look at that "beard burn"! I'd recognize that anywhere. My Larry has a beard.

Lynnette is beaming even more now that her secret is out.

LYNNETTE

Maybe!

COWORKER

So who is he? Anyone we know?

Lynnette says nothing, prolonging the teasing and guessing games. She revels in the attention.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - MORNING

Lynnette bursts into her trailer, makes a beeline for the phone and quickly dials.

LYNNETTE  
(on phone)

I'm home.

EXT. THE VUDALI HOUSE - MORNING

The Vudali's house is located right next to the Meadowlake Market. It is one of the few real houses in Meadowlake, not a trailer. Vishal darts out of the house. He quickly glances at the store to make sure no one is watching him, then takes off toward Lynnette's trailer.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Lynnette dashes around tidying things up, throwing clutter into a closet, quickly making the bed.

INT. LYNNETTE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lynnette zooms in, now wearing something halfway pretty. She hurriedly puts deodorant on, then a splash of perfume. She stops dead in her tracks and looks down toward her legs.

LYNNETTE  
Oh crap!

INT. LYNNETTE'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Lynnette is frantically shaving her legs, propped up on the edge of the tub.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Lynnette opens her door to see Vishal perched on her doorstep. She is nearly out of breath, but tries to cover it up.

LYNNETTE  
Wow, seven minutes. You must walk fast.

VISHAL  
I ran.

Vishal enters and before the door even closes behind him he is upon her, kissing and embracing her passionately.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - LATER

Vishal is asleep in her bed, naked. She quietly slides out of bed and starts to get dressed. She looks at him fondly. She writes a note for him, "Be back soon."

EXT. MEADOWLAKE ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Lynnette is walking down the road toward the new store, not too far from her house.

INT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - DAY

Lynnette enters the store cautiously, as a spy in enemy territory. ARTURO, a friendly 42 year old stocky Hispanic man stands near the door. He wears a straw cowboy hat, even though he is indoors. She nods hello.

ANGELA, his 40 year old wife sits behind the counter looking grim and quiet. She nods her hello to Lynnette.

The store is spectacularly clean and bright, well-stocked and cheerful. It is slightly larger than the Vudali's store. Lynnette seems dismayed to see the wonderful condition of the new store. She spots something at the back of the store. Her jaw drops open.

LYNNETTE

Oh my God.

There stands a well-stocked, clean-looking meat counter and white-aproned man behind it, probably a relative of Arturo's. There is all kinds of meat, even some fish. It all looks fresh and healthy.

Lynnette turns her attention to the rest of the store.

Large refrigerated section, bigger than the Vudali's. Full of sodas, milk, cheeses, packaged lunch meats, and produce.

Another aisle shows all types of fast foods, ready to be eaten. Hot dogs, nachos, burritos, and a soda machine serving a large selection of fountain drinks.

Arturo approaches her in a friendly manner. He is beaming with pride.

ARTURO

Can I help you find something? We just opened a few days ago. Let us know if we can help you in any way.

Lynnette is caught off guard.

LYNNETTE

Ah, no. No thanks. I was just looking.

Arturo is not pushy, and he leaves her to shop with a smile. Lynnette suddenly scans the walls and nearby aisles. Not

finding what she is looking for she smiles devilishly. She gets Arturo's attention.

LYNNETTE

Actually...

Arturo immediately appears to assist her.

LYNNETTE

I was wondering, do you have any ice cream?

Arturo's face falls.

ARTURO

I'm sorry, but no. We don't have a frozen section.

She can barely suppress her grin.

LYNNETTE

Ah, too bad. Thanks anyway.

And with her spying mission accomplished, she dashes out.

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART PARKING LOT - DAY

LYNNETTE

No ice cream? How can a mini-mart not have a frozen section?!

EXT. LYNNETTE'S YARD - LATER

Lynnette approaches her yard only to find Vishal working on her truck wearing just his jeans, no shirt. It's hot. He stops working when he sees her.

VISHAL

Hey there. Where'd you go?

She grins at him.

LYNNETTE

Arturo's Mini-Mart.

Vishal is truly perplexed.

VISHAL

That new store?

She nods.

VISHAL

Our competition?

She nods again, smiling. He treats it as a game now.

VISHAL

And why, may I ask, are you shopping at our enemy's store?

LYNNETTE

Oh, no, I wasn't shopping, I didn't buy anything. I wanted to look around.

Vishal simply nods, focuses his attention back under the hood.

VISHAL

Okay. We all need a hobby I guess.

LYNNETTE

No, silly! It was a fact-finding mission. It's not like you or your family can really go in there.

He starts to realize what she is saying. He comes back out from under that hood again.

VISHAL

Aha! Right. "Oh there's that Indian boy." You were spying!

Vishal now stops tinkering with the truck and seriously listens to what she says.

LYNNETTE

It's really nice, Vishal. *Really* nice. And get this, they have a meat counter.

VISHAL

A meat counter?! You're kidding! My parents aren't gonna want to hear this.

LYNNETTE

But they should. That's why I went in there. They have fast food items, and lots of produce.

VISHAL

Wow. This is bad.

She smiles.

LYNNETTE

But listen to this...

She waits for him to really look at her, to make her announcement more dramatic.

LYNNETTE

They don't have a frozen section! No ice cream, no TV dinners. No popsicles.

This news doesn't have the impact she thought it would. Vishal starts to put his tools away. She follows him.

VISHAL

It's really nice, huh?

She frowns, nods. He washes his hands with goopy hand cleaner.

LYNNETTE

Maybe we could start a rumor, something to make people stay away.

He rinses his hands with the hose.

LYNNETTE

Or maybe people will just keep coming to you out of loyalty. I will. I'm loyal. I'll tell everyone I know not to shop at Arturo's.

He finishes drying his hands and steps over to her. He cups her face in his hands.

VISHAL

You know what? You are just the sweetest woman. Thank you.

He rewards her with a very long and deep kiss.

INT. KATHERINE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Katherine stands impatiently in her bedroom waiting for her husband KEITH, aged 35, to get out of the shower. When she hears the water turn off she starts talking through the open bathroom door.

KATHERINE

It's all out in the open now.

KEITH (O.S.)

What is?

KATHERINE

The new store. Everyone knows.

KEITH (O.S.)

Well yes, the sign is up, we're open for business. It's no secret.

KATHERINE

Don't say "we." You know I wanted nothing to do with this.

Keith comes out of the bathroom wearing a towel and drying his hair with a towel. He is an easy-going, gentle man.

KEITH

Oh honey, get over it. It was a good investment. This place needed another store. Competition is good for business.

KATHERINE

No one knows we're investors, right?

He thinks for a second.

KEITH

Not really, not up here. Just Arturo and his family.

KATHERINE

Well let's keep it that way, huh? I'd be the laughing stock of Meadowlake.

KEITH

What's the big deal? I thought you'd be proud. We're moving up in the world.

She sneers at this.

KATHERINE

We're supposed to be moving OUT, not up. We're supposed to be moving back to Albuquerque and here you are investing in Meadowlake!

KEITH

Yeah, I know. But I think we should stay here a few more years. Keep our eye on our investments, you know?

Not sensing the degree of his wife's irritation he simply kisses her on the way out of the room.

KEITH

What's for dinner?

This leaves her fuming.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - DAY

Vishal is sprawled on Lynnette's bed. She is down below, head bobbing up and down underneath the sheets. Vishal moans in ecstasy.

VISHAL  
Oh my God. Oh my God!

His moans continue until he climaxes violently. She comes out from under that sheets, letting him float in his bliss, watching him silently. Finally he can speak again.

VISHAL  
Jesus, that was...unbelievable!  
Incredible. Jesus.

LYNNETTE  
You know, for a Hindu, you sure mention  
God and Jesus a lot.

He barely registers her joke.

VISHAL  
That...

He suddenly seems more shy than before.

LYNNETTE  
That? That what? That was good?

VISHAL  
Oh my God. Oh my *Gods*. Yes. But that...

Lynnette leans into him, waiting for the end of his sentence.

VISHAL  
That was the first time someone's done  
that to me.

Her eyes widen.

LYNNETTE  
What? The first time?

VISHAL  
I mean, I've had sex before, but this  
was the first time for THAT, yes.

She lets it sink in.

LYNNETTE

Oh my God, how can someone as sexy as you get to be 22 years old and never had a girl go down on him?

VISHAL

Hey, I wasn't kidding when I said that I haven't had much experience with women.

LYNNETTE

Oh, sweetie, I'm so sorry!

She sounds truly sincerely apologetic.

VISHAL

Sorry? What do you mean?

LYNNETTE

If I'd have known it was your first one, I would have made it more special.

He smiles.

VISHAL

More special than that?! No way. Not possible.

She warms to hear him say this and snuggles up close to him.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - LATER

Vishal lies on Lynnette's bed, watching the bathroom door.

VISHAL

So how come you don't use your bedroom?

LYNNETTE (O.S.)

I don't know. 'Cause the TV's in the living room. I like to fall asleep watching the TV.

VISHAL

Why don't you just move the TV into the bedroom?

He waits for her reply through the bathroom door. Finally she answers.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)

I dunno.

He laughs. He looks at Grover who sits nearby.

VISHAL  
 (to Grover)  
 She's a complex woman.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
 Okay, ready?

VISHAL  
 Yes! I've BEEN ready!

She comes out of the bathroom wearing a ridiculously gawdy costume. It is red, white and blue, full of sequins and frills and sparkle. He can't help but laugh.

VISHAL  
 What the hell is that?

LYNNETTE  
 My costume for the Fourth of July parade!

VISHAL  
 Oh, thank God!

She laughs.

LYNNETTE  
 What, you thought this was what I was going to wear to dinner or something?

VISHAL  
 I was holding my breath.

She spins around for him to admire it.

VISHAL  
 Fantastic! Truly belongs in a parade.

Vishal grabs Grover off the back of the couch and uses him to prop his head up.

LYNNETTE  
 It's gonna be -

She glares at Vishal.

LYNNETTE  
 Grover is not a pillow.

Vishal puts Grover back into his position being careful to arrange him respectfully.

VISHAL  
 My apologies, Grover.

LYNNETTE

What are you going to wear for the parade?

VISHAL

Me?! I'm not -

He is saved from answering when part of the dress falls down around her ankles.

LYNNETTE

Crap. I still need to fix this, but I need a whole bunch of elastic. You have any elastic at the store?

VISHAL

I don't think so.

LYNNETTE

Will you come into town with me? We could get lunch.

VISHAL

Sure. Maybe Arturo's has some elastic, we should try there first.

She gasps in mock outrage.

INT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT - DAY

Lynnette and Vishal sit in a fast food restaurant eating burgers and fries. Lynnette has chosen to sit on the same side of the booth as Vishal, instead of across from him.

LYNNETTE

Did you see "The English Patient"?

Vishal's mouth is full, so he just nods.

LYNNETTE

Yeah, me too. I loved it.

VISHAL

I remember it was very, very long.

LYNNETTE

Remember "Kip"?

Vishal has to really concentrate for a second.

VISHAL

Oh yeah, the Indian guy, he was a bomb expert or something?

LYNNETTE

Yeah, the "Indian guy." Women loved him.

Vishal laughs, trying to keep the food in his mouth.

LYNNETTE

No, really. Lots of women loved Ralph Fiennes, but I remember a lot of women lusting after Kip too.

VISHAL

Oh, we're talking about this again?

LYNNETTE

Well Vishal, you said that American women don't like Indian men, and that's just not true. I like you.

He smiles at her innocence.

VISHAL

Yes, you've demonstrated that to me.

LYNNETTE

Besides, you're not even all that Indian. I mean, you're totally Americanized. Or are you still devoutly Hindu?

VISHAL

Lynnette, I'm eating a *hamburger*!

It takes her a second to realize the gist of what he is saying.

LYNNETTE

Oh. Right. Right! Do your parents still not eat beef?

She dips her fries in his ketchup and nibbles on them.

VISHAL

No, they don't. They're still pretty devout...kinda. They've gotten a bit more slack about it. Shashti still considers herself Hindu, but I don't. I think she's just doing it 'cause it's trendy right now.

As Vishal speaks he notices an older Hispanic couple watching them. He ignores them, but doesn't lean too close to Lynnette.

LYNNETTE

I want to dance. With you.

VISHAL

Right here in "Tastee-Burger"?

LYNNETTE

No, I mean later. I love to dance. Most men don't. Roy hated to dance, he never took me dancing. Do you dance?

VISHAL

Not really. Not a dancer.

LYNNETTE

I'll teach you. Please?

Vishal keeps his eye on the whispering Hispanic couple who are still watching them.

VISHAL

Okay, you can try and teach me. I'm not guaranteeing any miracles though.

Lynnette notices that Vishal is watching someone and she finally looks to notice them too.

LYNNETTE

Racists.

She makes a deliberate move to kiss Vishal in front of them. He doesn't pull back, but he doesn't let it linger either.

VISHAL

(whispering)

I think it's more about the age difference.

INT. THE VUDALI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vishal sits absorbed in a book on the living room couch. Shashti comes in the front door and goes straight to Vishal, who hasn't looked up. She waits. He still doesn't look up from his book.

She clears her throat loudly and bangs into his knees "accidentally." Finally he looks up to see her dangling an envelope in front of him.

VISHAL

What's that?

SHASHTI

Jeez, it took you long enough. Looks like a very important envelope from a very important company in Seattle.

Vishal grimaces and frowns.

VISHAL

Oh boy. That was too quick. It's a form letter thanking me for the interview but they've-

SHASHTI

Open it, you dork!

Vishal takes the letter and opens it. She sits next to him, waiting anxiously as he reads.

SHASHTI

What, what, what?!

VISHAL

They want me. They want me to start in two weeks.

She shrieks with delight. She hugs him. He seems elated and is all smiles. Mrs. Vudali charges into the room.

MRS. VUDALI

What? What's all the noise about?

SHASHTI

Mom, Vishal got the Seattle job!

She is overjoyed, he stands up so she can hug him.

MRS. VUDALI

Vishal, Vishal! I am so proud of you! I knew you'd get a good job! Which one is it?

VISHAL

The Craig Corporation, the one I wanted.

Mrs. Vudali holds her hands over her mouth to prevent her from crying with joy.

MRS. VUDALI

I must tell your father! I'll be right back!

She bolts out of the door to running across the parking lot towards the store. They smile at their mother's over-exuberance.

SHASHTI

Soooo. What are you going to tell your girlfriend?

Vishal plays it cool.

VISHAL  
What girlfriend?

SHASHTI  
You're little girlfriend down the street.  
You know the one.

VISHAL  
What are you talking about?

SHASHTI  
Okay, okay, I'm bluffing. I don't know  
who you're seeing, but I know you're  
seeing someone! You can't fool your  
little sister!

Vishal sits back down next to her. He looks at her with  
amazement.

VISHAL  
How do you know these things?

SHASHTI  
Oh come on. You're gone all the time,  
you never tell us where you're going,  
you're in a really good mood. You're  
gettin' some! You're seeing someone!

He laughs and relents.

VISHAL  
Okay, you're right. I am.

SHASHTI  
Am? Am seeing someone?

VISHAL  
Am getting some.

She looks upward and speaks to the higher forces.

SHASHTI  
Finally! Finally, he's getting some!  
My brother is finally getting laid!

VISHAL  
God, Shashti, you're so crude!

She goads him good-naturedly at every turn.

SHASHTI

So who is she? Oh, I assume it's a she?

Vishal snorts in humorous disgust and offense.

VISHAL

Of course it is.

SHASHTI

Face it Vishal, you're not getting off this couch until little Shashti knows who she is. Your LOVER. Your WOMAN. Your MISTRESS.

Now he is truly embarrassed. He checks the front door.

VISHAL

Shh! Mom could hear!

SHASHTI

Oo! So she's someone Mom wouldn't approve of? I like her already! Vish, you're getting all mysterious on me. Who is she?

He shifts in his seat.

VISHAL

Look, she's not who you think. I got to know her, and she's really quite sweet. We just sorta...happened...

SHASHTI

Oh my God, you're explaining her way too much...that can't be good.

Vishal hedges again.

VISHAL

She's a bit older than me...probably not who you'd expect me to be with--

SHASHTI

For Christ's sake, just tell me!

VISHAL

Lynnette Cooper.

Vishal waits for her response. It takes a second. Her eyebrows shoot up in shock. She doesn't know whether to laugh or shout in amazement.

SHASHTI

You are kidding.

Vishal shakes his head.

SHASHTI

You're not kidding. Wow. You're right, that's not who I was expecting. This'll take a minute to sink in.

Vishal looks at the letter in his hands and rereads it. Shashti looks deep in thought.

SHASHTI

You know what? Good for you. You're obviously pleased with the arrangement. So what if she's like...way older than you. You like her?

VISHAL

Yeah. She's sweet, kinda childlike. So sincere, so passionate.

SHASHTI

Passionate huh? Lynnette? In bed you mean?

He looks away in embarrassment. She gives up and once again talks to the empty room.

SHASHTI

Okay, he's gonna be stingy with the juicy details.

VISHAL

Hey, don't tell Mom and Dad. They'd probably freak out.

SHASHTI

Okay, now we're even. No mention of my tattoo, no mention of your Mrs. Robinson. Seriously though, what are you gonna tell her about the job? I mean, are you two serious, or is this just a fling?

Vishal looks unsure of how to answer.

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Lynnette drives, Vishal sits by the window as usual, but this time Shashti is crammed in between them. Shashti is all smiles. Vishal looks embarrassed, Lynnette looks a little confused.

SHASHTI

I haven't been to the lake in ages!  
When was the last time we were out here,  
Vish? Like four years ago?

VISHAL

Uh huh.

LYNNETTE

I remember when they put this lake in.  
Couldn't call it Meadowlake without a  
lake. There used to be a diving board  
over where it's really deep. I wonder  
if that's still there.

SHASHTI

Oh, I can't wait! I haven't gone swimming  
in so long! Aren't you excited Vishal?

VISHAL

Uh huh.

LYNNETTE

It's gonna be so nice to have a picnic  
lunch next to the lake.

EXT. LAKE - DAY

The three of them stand looking shocked. In front of them is  
the man-made lake, or what used to be the lake. It is now a  
huge, dry, dirt hole filled with trash surrounded by many  
dead trees.

VISHAL

Well what are you waiting for? Jump in.

EXT. LAKE - MOMENTS LATER

Vishal and Lynnette set up a blanket under one of the dead  
trees, one of the few spots not used as a dumping ground.  
Shashti is off in the distance rumaging through some piles of  
junk. As Lynnette smooths out the blanket, Vishal takes out  
food from a cooler.

VISHAL

I'm sorry. She wanted to come. She heard  
me mention the lake, and-

Lynnette seems a bit disappointed and quiet.

LYNNETTE

It's okay. Really. I like Shashti.  
(MORE)

LYNNETTE (CONT'D)

It's nice that you get along with your sister.

VISHAL

I know, but you probably imagined this as a romantic thing for you and me. Sitting by the lake, just us.

LYNNETTE

Yeah, well even if your sister wasn't here, it wouldn't have exactly been the most romantic scene.

The whole lake area is nothing but a big desert area of weeds and dirt covered in trash. It's literally a dump now.

LYNNETTE

Good idea Lynnette, let's go to the lake, how romantic!

Vishal takes her hand and draws her to him.

VISHAL

It WAS a romantic idea.

He kisses her hand.

VISHAL

Very sweet. And it's going to be a lovely afternoon with my sister and my... Lynnette.

This makes her smile and her mood lightens. They start to set the food out and relax.

LYNNETTE

I wonder how long it's been dry.

VISHAL

Quite a while from the looks of it.

LYNNETTE

This lake was so nice when they put it in, do you remember?

He nods vaguely.

LYNNETTE

You must have been really young. These trees used to be so gorgeous and full and the water was really deep and clean.

(MORE)

LYNNETTE (CONT'D)

Look, the diving board's still there. I think there were even ducks up here. They must have brought them in.

VISHAL

Did you come up here a lot?

LYNNETTE

Once in a while. Roy liked to cook out, so we'd come up here and barbecue. He'd never swim though. I would. I love the water. Seems like a million years ago.

Vishal nibbles at the chicken as he takes it out of the Tupperware.

VISHAL

How long have you been divorced?

LYNNETTE

About five years. Roy fell in love with the secretary at the garage he owned.

VISHAL

Where was this?

LYNNETTE

Los Lunas. He's still there. "Roy's Body Shop" down on highway 47.

VISHAL

Oh right! I've seen that. I'll make sure to never give him my business.

She chuckles at his comment.

LYNNETTE

Yup, that's Roy's. She still works there I think. They had a baby a few years ago, got married. In that order.

She looks away to cover her sadness, then recovers.

LYNNETTE

She thinks she got a real deal with Roy 'cause he owned his own shop. Big deal. You're the first man I've been with since he left.

VISHAL

That's a long time to be alone.

She just shrugs.

LYNNETTE

I was used to it. But I'm so glad I have you now.

She looks to make sure Shashti isn't looking, and steals a quick kiss from him.

LYNNETTE

Things sure have changed. It's nice to have you here. This is kind of a horrible thing say but...

VISHAL

What? Tell me.

LYNNETTE

It's so selfish. I'm embarrassed. But I was kind of hoping that you didn't get the job in Seattle. I was kinda glad that you haven't mentioned it.

Vishal's face goes to stone. There is a moment of silence, a golden opportunity for him to mention it. He swallows hard.

LYNNETTE

Look at Shashti, she's having fun just poking around in the garbage.

The moment passes. He says nothing.

VISHAL

I'm starving. Let's get this picnic started.

EXT. LAKE - LATER

All three of them sit on the blanket devouring fried chicken. Shashti is showing the big tattoo on her back to Lynnette. Lynnette wipes her greasy hands on a paper towel before lifting Shashti's shirt further, so she can get a really good look.

LYNNETTE

Wow. It's beautiful. What's with all of the sixes though?

SHASHTI

I was named after the Goddess of Six. Shashti is the Goddess of Six, the one you pray to if you're pregnant or have a baby.

LYNNETTE

Six? Why?

SHASHTI

Hindus believe that the first six days of a baby's life are the most crucial, if you can get through those you'll be fine. My mom miscarried several times before she had me, so they were real worried about me. They prayed and prayed to the Goddess Shashti that I would live, and when I did, they decided to name me after her in gratitude.

LYNNETTE

Hm. That's interesting. I wasn't named after anyone. My middle name is Elizabeth. My mom liked Elizabeth Taylor, so I guess I'm sort of named after her.

SHASHTI

I have another one here.

She shows Lynnette the "six" tattoo on her hip.

LYNNETTE

Cool. I used to think about getting a tattoo. Maybe a little butterfly or something on my butt.

SHASHTI

Yeah, why not?

LYNNETTE

Probably the the tattoo guy would look at my butt and say "lady, you got room for a whole flock of butterflies!"

Shashti laughs.

SHASHTI

Oh, not true! A little butterfly would be cute.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, does your name mean anything?

He stops eating his chicken long enough to answer. He rolls his eyes as he answers.

VISHAL

"Large." I guess they knew I was going to be tall.

SHASHTI

Vishal doesn't have any tattoos though.  
But I guess you know that.

Lynnette stops mid-bite when she hears that. Rather than deal with Shashti's subtle confession of knowledge about the affair, Vishal hops up.

VISHAL

If you'll excuse me ladies, I need to go  
help refill the lake.

He trots down to the edge of where the lake used to be. Lynnette looks at Shashti, confused. Shashti explains.

SHASHTI

He has to pee.

LYNNETTE

Ah.

After Vishal disappears behind an old refrigerator to do his business, Shashti turns to Lynnette with her typical straightforwardness.

SHASHTI

So. You're doing my brother. Good for  
you.

Lynnette nearly chokes on her food.

SHASHTI

Don't worry, it's okay. I think it's  
great. It's about time Vishal had a  
girlfriend. He's always so standoffish  
with women. I'm glad you snagged him.

Lynnette's eyes light up.

LYNNETTE

Girlfriend? Did he call me his  
girlfriend?

With a mouth full of chicken Shashti shrugs off the question.

SHASHTI

He really likes you. Said some nice  
things about you. Oh hey, if it happens  
to come up with my parents, you know  
nothing of my tattoos, okay?

Lynnette nods happily.

INT. KATHERINE'S DINING ROOM - DAY

Katherine and Lynnette sit at Katherine's dining room table working on their Fourth of July costumes.

LYNNETTE

Mine's almost done. See all these sequins? I think they're really gonna sparkle out in the sunshine.

KATHERINE

Yeah.

Katherine holds her costume up, an equally outlandish creation. Katherine's disapproval is easily seen on her face.

KATHERINE

Lynn, do I really have to do this? I'm going to feel like an ass.

LYNNETTE

Oh come on, everyone's going to wear a costume. It's the fun of a parade.

KATHERINE

Everyone? Like who exactly? Are we going to be the only two idiots doing this?

LYNNETTE

No. I think some people from the water company are going to dress up.

KATHERINE

So let me get this straight. You and I and maybe a few other people are going to be standing on top of a flatbed truck waving sparklers around as it goes down Meadowlake road at three miles an hour. That is the extent of the parade?

LYNNETTE

I dunno, some other cars might follow us. We'll get a real sense of community spirit going! I know! We'll pass out sparklers along the way and encourage everyone to hop in their car and follow us.

KATHERINE

I don't know, Lynnette, this all sounds pretty lame.

LYNNETTE

You promised me. You have to do this.  
Come on, your dress is looking so pretty.

Katherine hesitantly continues to work on her costume.

KATHERINE

God, sometimes I hate this place. I  
don't know why you like it out here so  
much.

LYNNETTE

It's peaceful.

KATHERINE

Desolate is the word. A grocery store,  
a laundromat, and a Community Center  
that no one uses. The nearest gas station  
is 12 miles away in Los Lunas. There's  
nothing to do out here. Nothing ever  
happens.

LYNNETTE

Oh, I wouldn't say *nothing* happens.  
There's something I wanna tell you. A  
secret sort of.

Katherine is interested now in the gossip.

KATHERINE

Yeah? A *dirty* secret?

Lynnette is beaming, about to burst with her news.

LYNNETTE

Well, kinda. I'm involved with someone.  
And maybe I kinda shouldn't be...but...

You could knock Katherine over with a feather. She's all  
smiles.

KATHERINE

You? You're having a fling with someone?  
Let's hear it!

LYNNETTE

Well...remember I said that Vishal had  
really changed, and that he's all grown  
up now?

Katherine looks more disgusted than thrilled.

KATHERINE

No. No way. Not that Indian kid? Oh  
Lynnette, you're kidding!

Lynnette is crestfallen seeing Katherine's disapproving scowl.

LYNNETTE

What? He is so sexy now, Katherine you  
have no idea...he's so...

She shudders with a delicious memory.

KATHERINE

He's just a kid!

LYNNETTE

He's 22! He's a very mature 22.

Katherine snorts at this and laughs.

KATHERINE

Oh come on! I don't care how mature he  
is, he's still only 22! And he's...so  
East Indian looking!

LYNNETTE

Duh, Katherine! He IS Indian.

Katherine stops her sewing, deep in thought. Lynnette gets  
up and gets a soda from the nearby refrigerator.

LYNNETTE

Oh Katherine, he's so delicious, the way  
he talks to me, he's so serious, so  
intense. It's sexy. And...

She smiles wickedly.

KATHERINE

What?

LYNNETTE

Well, he's 22...if you know what I mean.

KATHERINE

Meaning?

LYNNETTE

Well, you know...he's got a lot of  
stamina.

KATHERINE

Eww. That's a kid you're talking about.  
You're creeping me out.

LYNNETTE

Creeping you out? Jeez, it's not like  
I'm talking about a fourteen year old.  
What's the big deal? I thought you'd  
love the idea.

KATHERINE

I just can't believe it.

Lynnette sips her soda while Katherine sits stunned.

LYNNETTE

No one knows though, so don't say  
anything, okay? His sister knows, but  
no one else.

KATHERINE

And what does that tell you?

Lynnette smiles wickedly again.

LYNNETTE

That's it's fun to sneak around and have  
my way with him in secret!

KATHERINE

Yeah, because you're robbing the cradle.  
He's too young for you, Lynnette. You  
should know better. And him of all  
people.

Lynnette slams her soda down on the dining room table, some  
of it spilling out in the process.

LYNNETTE

What does that mean exactly? Huh? "Him  
of all people"? Why? Because he's  
Indian?

KATHERINE

Well you have admit he's not exactly  
your type.

LYNNETTE

And who would my type be, huh? Someone  
old? Someone boring? Is that what you  
are saying? I don't deserve to be with  
someone so handsome and sexy? I should

(MORE)

LYNNETTE (CONT'D)

go for some old fart who's just desperate to have someone and wouldn't mind settling for me? Or maybe you're saying that Vishal is too...ethnic for me? Too...what? Too Indian? Too dark? That he should only settle for some little exotic Indian woman that his parents arranged for him to marry?

KATHERINE

Calm down, Lynnette. I'm just surprised, that's all.

Katherine starts to clean the spilled soda off the table. Lynnette watches her intently, still waiting for an answer, an apology, anything.

KATHERINE

No need to throw soda all over.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Lynnette is on the phone, pacing the floor.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, I have to go to work in a few hours, can't you just come over? I really want to see you.

INT. THE VUDALI'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Vishal starts to walk down the hall with the cordless phone, he speaks softly to her.

VISHAL

Look, my parents just made a big dinner for me, they went all out. I sort of feel like I should stay here for a while.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)

But I have to go to work soon. Can't you come over for just a while?

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vishal shuts his bedroom door.

VISHAL

I can't. This is sort of a 'congratulations' dinner, my mom made a big dessert and -

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
 Congratulations? For what?

Vishal cringes at his mistake. He freezes for a second.

VISHAL  
 For...for me finishing college. For  
 coming home and all that.

Lynnette buys his answer. She sighs.

LYNNETTE  
 Okay. But how long will it take for  
 dessert? Maybe after that you could  
 come over real quick.

Vishal subdues his sigh.

INT. THE VUDALI'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Shashti clears the table while Mr. Vudali pulls dessert bowls  
 from a cabinet.

SHASHTI  
 Dad, not those bowls. The big ones, up  
 there on top.

Mrs. Vudali wipes her hands on a dishtowel.

MRS. VUDALI  
 Oh, I should call Rita back...

INT. THE VUDALI'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Vudali goes to the quiet living room, picks up the phone  
 and hears the continuing conversation.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
 I'll make it worth your while. Remember  
 that thing I did that you like so much?

VISHAL (O.S.)  
 Yeah...man, that's tempting...

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
 I'll do it again...as soon as you get  
 here, I'll do it for you.

Mrs. Vudali gets the gist of the conversation and is shocked,  
 but still listens.

VISHAL (O.S.)  
 You're making this really hard on me.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)

But I want you...

VISHAL (O.S.)

Lynnette...

Upon hearing Lynnette's name, Mrs. Vudali is even more startled and bangs the phone down quickly. She stares at the phone.

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

VISHAL

Oh shit! I think someone was listening.  
I gotta go.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Lynnette paces the floor back and forth.

LYNNETTE

Vishal! Don't go! Please! Don't hang  
up! Please come over!

VISHAL (O.S.)

Lynnette, don't you get it? I think my  
mom or my dad was on the phone just now.  
They are gonna freak out.

She tries to remain calm but her voice sounds a little  
desperate.

LYNNETTE

Why? What's the big deal? So what if  
they know? Is that so bad?

VISHAL (O.S.)

Yes! It is! They aren't going to  
understand this!

LYNNETTE

Why? Because I'm white? Is that it?

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vishal cracks open his door to look down the hall. Sees  
nothing.

VISHAL

No, they don't care about that. It's...

LYNNETTE (O.S.)

What? Why won't they understand?

His words are terse now, impatient.

VISHAL  
Because of the age thing. You're too  
old for me!

Silence from Lynnette's end.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Lynnette is frozen, nearly in tears. She sits down on her  
unmade bed, still listening on the phone.

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Seeing no one in the hall, Vishal shuts his door.

VISHAL  
Lynnette? You still there?

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
Yes. I heard. I'm too old.

VISHAL  
Wait, I didn't say that, I said 'too old  
for ME.' There's a difference.

Silence from her end.

VISHAL  
You can see where my parents wouldn't  
approve. Can't you?

Quiet sniffing from the other end.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
I guess so. But Vishal...

He waits. She sniffs again.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

LYNNETTE  
I love you.

She waits for a reply. She dabs her nose with a tissue.

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vishal cringes. He quietly sighs. He sits down and runs his  
fingers through his hair.

VISHAL  
Lynnette, don't say that.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

LYNNETTE  
But I mean it! I love you Vishal!

She stands up, smiles and breathes deeply.

LYNNETTE  
I do! I love you! That changes  
everything, doesn't it?

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

A stunned Vishal simply sits on his bed.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
Doesn't it?

There is a knock on his door.

MRS. VUDALI (O.S.)  
Vishal, dessert.

VISHAL  
Okay, Mom.  
(to Lynnette on phone)  
I gotta go.

LYNNETTE (O.S.)  
No! Vishal! I love you! Don't go!

VISHAL  
I'm sorry Lynnette. I'll talk to you  
later, I have to go.

He hangs up.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Her mouth hangs open as she stares at the dead receiver.  
Nothing but a dial tone.

LYNNETTE  
Vishal!

She pounds the receiver down and flings herself onto her bed  
in tears.

INT. THE VUDALI'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Vishal sits in silence at the table eating his dessert surrounded by his parents and Shashti. Nothing is said. The clinking of spoons hitting their bowls. Quiet eating.

Vishal doesn't look up at anyone. His parents look at Vishal, then exchange a leery look with each other.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE ROAD - DAY

The Fourth of July parade, if you can call it that, is coming down the main road in town. It consists of a flatbed truck carrying Lynnette in her gawdy costume and a few other people who barely bothered to dress up. There is a tinny version of the "Star Spangled Banner" playing from the trucks stereo.

There is only one other car following the truck, decorated with some crete paper and a small flag. The truck is honking its horn continuously with short beeps to get people's attention.

Lynnette is waving sparklers, barely seen in the daytime. She is waving at passing cars, and the few people on the street. It's a pretty pathetic sight.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - CONTINUOUS

Vishal is on the porch of the market refilling the free classified ad holders when he hears the honking horn. He wanders over toward the road to see the oncoming spectacle.

VISHAL

Oh God.

A car pulls into the parking lot. Out pours Shashti and several of her high school friends. They are awestruck by the sight of the lame parade coming down the road. The kids laugh and point. They lean against the car, waiting for the parade to pass. Shashti isn't amused, she is stunned.

SHASHTI

Oh Lynnette, no.

The noise of the honking horns, the music and the laughing kids draw Mr. and Mrs. Vudali out of the store. They stand next to Vishal and watch the parade approaching. Vishal squirms as it gets closer.

Lynnette spies Vishal in the tiny crowd. She swallows hard, puts on a smile and waves to him. He looks away, pretending not to have seen her. He sneaks a glance at his parents, they are watching Lynnette with suspicion. Vishal steals

away quietly from the crowd, backing away.

Lynnette has seen his avoidance. Her smile is gone.

A young, SCROUNGY BOY, one of the Shashti friends, lights up a cigarette and snidely laughs.

SCROUNGY BOY

Man, I can't wait to get the hell out of this dumpy town.

INT. KATHERINE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Katherine is in her well-appointed kitchen, putting away the last of the night's dinner dishes away. The doorbell rings, and we hear Keith in the background answering the door. A few seconds later Lynnette enters the kitchen.

KATHERINE

Oh hi, Lynnette. Come on in, you want some coffee?

Lynnette simply tosses a bag onto the kitchen table.

LYNNETTE

There's the things I borrowed for the parade. Thanks for not showing up.

She turns to leave, leaving in a huff.

KATHERINE

Oh Lynnette, don't overreact.

Lynnette stops in her tracks and turns to face Katherine.

LYNNETTE

You said you were going to be in the parade, and you left me up there all by myself. I wanted to have a big parade, get as many people as I could, and my own best friend wouldn't even show up. Thanks a lot.

KATHERINE

I had to take the kids to a party in town. I told you I might not make it.

LYNNETTE

No you didn't. You said you thought it was lame and didn't WANT to do it. But I thought you might at least back me up.

KATHERINE

Honestly Lynnette, did you think I'd want to be part of that? You up there with a dress made of pipe cleaners and glitter? You looked like a second grader!

This takes Lynnette's breath away. Her eyes brim with tears. She leaves before Katherine can stop her.

Keith comes into the kitchen after Lynnette's hasty retreat.

KEITH

What's wrong with Lynnette?

KATHERINE

Nothing, she'll get over it.

INT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - NIGHT

Vishal is stocking the sodas in the large refrigerated section. Mrs. Vudali is at the counter talking to Mr. Vudali. Shashti waits until her parents are not watching her and takes something from near the counter, then goes straight to Vishal.

SHASHTI

Here.

She hands him a box of decorative toothpicks. They have American flags on them. He takes them and surreptitiously tosses them into a nearby small styrofoam cooler. He nods to her then nods over toward the frozen section. She nods, and as casually as she can she saunters over the freezer.

INT. ETHICON FACTORY - NIGHT

Lynnette sits unhappily at her station doing her repetitive work. Dozens of sealed medical instruments sit next to her waiting to be packaged.

She works consistently, but for every one she completes, two or three more appear next to her. The happy, upbeat music overheard does nothing to lighten her mood.

EXT. LYNNETTE'S YARD - MORNING

Lynnette gets out of her truck, wearing her scrubs from work. She looks tired. She gets to her front door and sees a small, white styrofoam cooler on her doorstep.

Stuck into the cooler lid are many American flag toothpicks spelling out the word "SORRY". She breaks into a grin. Opens the cooler and there is a gallon of butter pecan ice cream.

INT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - DAY

Lynnette is still dressed in her work scrubs when she cautiously enters the store. Not seeing anyone but Vishal behind the counter, she approaches him with a smile.

LYNNETTE

Hi. Got your present. I liked it. It was sweet.

VISHAL

No pun intended?

He laughs gently.

LYNNETTE

Huh? I meant your flags and everything, that was sweet.

VISHAL

Yeah, I knew what you meant. I was saying that the ice cream was...nevermind. So what's up?

She smiles coyly at him, moves slowly to him.

LYNNETTE

I've missed you. It's been days.

VISHAL

Yeah, I know. I'm sorry.

LYNNETTE

Maybe you could come over tonight? Let me sleep for a while and then come over?

VISHAL

Ah, well, I can't tonight. Some of Shashti's friends are going to a concert in Albuquerque, and I thought I'd go too. Haven't been to a concert in ages.

LYNNETTE

Oh. I see. Who's playing?

VISHAL

The Angry Worms.

LYNNETTE

Oh yeah! They've been around a long time. You already got your ticket?

VISHAL

Yeah, Shashti got it for me. I was lucky she could still get me one. They almost sold out.

LYNNETTE

You mean she just got your ticket now?

VISHAL

Yeah. She got theirs weeks ago, but it's open seating, so we can still all sit together.

She fidgets and frowns a bit.

VISHAL

What? What's wrong?

LYNNETTE

Well...I could've gone. It's my night off. Why didn't you ask me if I wanted a ticket?

VISHAL

I didn't think you'd want to go. I mean, I'm kinda getting a ride with Shashti and her friends, and I didn't...

LYNNETTE

Didn't what?

He distracts himself by straightening out the stacks of cigarette cartons behind the counter.

VISHAL

I didn't think you'd want to go.

LYNNETTE

Didn't think I'd want to go? Why wouldn't I?

VISHAL

Well, Lynnette, you're almost 40. I didn't think you'd want to go see a concert.

Her expression is one of disappointment and disbelief.

VISHAL

Besides, it's Shashti's group, I can't be inviting anyone with me.

LYNNETTE

"Anyone"? I'm just an "anyone"?

VISHAL

Come on, that's not what I meant.

LYNNETTE

No, that's fine. Go ahead without me.  
You left me some ice cream after all. I  
mean, that should be enough to satisfy  
me, right?

He sighs in exasperation.

VISHAL

You know that's not what -

LYNNETTE

I'm not just an "anyone".

She turns on her heels.

VISHAL

Lynnette!

But it is too late, she is out the door in a flash.

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT

Lynnette sits at the computer in the small office in the community center. She keeps all of the lights off, the computer screen is all the lighting she needs.

The screen shows what she is working on, a flyer that reads "Arturo's Mini-Mart--Disgrace of Meadowlake--Cockroaches in the Burritos--Maggot Meat Market--STAY AWAY!" She smiles at the screen, please with her handiwork.

The printer next to the computer is printing out hundreds of copies on the leftover bright pink paper.

EXT. MEADOWLAKE NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Lynnette walks down a deserted sleeping street. The houses are all dark, quiet. She keeps a lookout constantly as she passes each house and cautiously and quickly sticks a flyer in their mailbox. She can't contain her smile as she moves on to the next house.

EXT. KATHERINE'S YARD - DAY

Katherine takes her mail out of her mailbox. She sees the bright pink flyer, reads it. She carefully turns the paper

over, taking a good look at it. She shakes her head in disbelief.

KATHERINE  
Lynnette. Unbelievable.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - DAY

Lynnette dials her phone and waits for an answer.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)  
(on phone)  
New Mexico Department of Health, how may  
I direct your call?

INT. TRUCK - DAY

Lynnette drives past Arturo's on her morning drive home from work. The gate is closed with a homemade sign reading "closed temporarily" on it.

LYNNETTE  
Yes!

INT. BACK ROOM OF MEADOWLAKE MARKET - DAY

Vishal stands with his hand over his mouth in horror. His other hand holds the flyer that Lynnette made to ruin Arturo's Mini-Mart. Lynnette stands next to him, beaming.

LYNNETTE  
"Maggot Meat Market", isn't that  
hilarious?

VISHAL  
Oh my God, Lynnette. I can't believe  
you did this! Where did you put this  
flyer?

LYNNETTE  
In about fifty mailboxes. I was gonna  
do everyone's but I got tired.

He can't help but burst out laughing at her antics.

VISHAL  
Are you serious?! How? When did you do  
that?

LYNNETTE  
The other night when you went to the  
concert. Isn't it great though? Now  
(MORE)

LYNNETTE (CONT'D)

everyone thinks it's full of roaches and no one will go there. I wish I could have done everyone's mailbox. Still, maybe word will get around.

VISHAL

Man, you could get in so much trouble! What if someone knows you did this?

LYNNETTE

Don't worry. I deleted it from the computer. And no one saw me putting them in the mailboxes.

VISHAL

How do you know? Someone could have seen you!

LYNNETTE

At 2 am? Nah. Besides, no one ever notices me.

INT. MEADOWLAKE MARKET - LATER

Lynnette leaves the store, leaving Vishal alone with Shashti. A few customers mill around the store, so Shashti speaks quietly to Vishal.

SHASHTI

What was that all about? A quickie in the back room?

VISHAL

Get a load of this.

He shows the flyer to Shashti.

SHASHTI

Yeah, I saw it. Subtle. Lynnette's work?

He nods, while re-reading the flyer.

VISHAL

I can't believe she did that. I mean, it's kinda sweet when you think about it. She's trying to put Arturo's out of business.

SHASHTI

Wow. She must really be in love with you.

This pains Vishal. He cringes.

SHASHTI

You don't love her, do you?

VISHAL

Oh man, I don't know. It was just fun, I mean, I had no idea it was gonna get serious.

SHASHTI

Does she know you're leaving?

He slowly shakes his head no.

SHASHTI

Vish, you gotta tell her. That's not fair. She's gonna fall in love with you, and you're gonna say "Thanks babe, by the way, I'm off to Seattle tomorrow. How about one last roll in the hay?"

VISHAL

Shut up. That doesn't help.

SHASHTI

What are you waiting for? You gotta stop this before it's gets out of control. I like her and all, but if you aren't in love with her, you gotta break it off.

He sighs heavily.

VISHAL

I know, I know. I'll do it tomorrow.

SHASHTI

Remember, do it fast and get out.

VISHAL

Oh, very nice.

SHASHTI

No, really. It's better that way. Don't linger and 'talk it out', that's a killer. In and out.

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - DAY

Vishal enters her trailer, and she is at her stereo rewinding a tape.

LYNNETTE

Hey, I found the perfect song for us.

VISHAL

What do you mean?

LYNNETTE

I was going to teach you how to dance, remember?

VISHAL

Oh, yeah. Listen, we should talk.

LYNNETTE

No, we should dance!

She finds the song she was searching for on the tape. She starts the tape. It is a ballad.

LYNNETTE

Come over here, I'll show you how to start.

VISHAL

Wait. Maybe we should talk first.

LYNNETTE

Talk to me while we're dancing. I've been dying to dance lately.

She's already in dance mode, gliding around her living room. He has no choice but to join her once she reaches for him.

LYNNETTE

Okay, just follow my feet...just kinda sway back and forth...there's no real set way to do it.

Vishal starts to dance with her.

LYNNETTE

Good. See, you can dance. Nothin' to it.

VISHAL

Lynnette, you know that job I wanted in Seattle?

Lynnette flinches.

LYNNETTE

Sshhh. Just dance with me.

VISHAL

I heard from them. They want me. I start next week.

She swallows hard to keep from crying.

LYNNETTE

This is nice, dancing with you.

VISHAL

And...

LYNNETTE

Just dance, hold me close.

She clutches onto him as they dance.

VISHAL

I don't think we should keep seeing each other.

She buries her face in his chest, still swaying to the music. He has stopped dancing.

LYNNETTE

Nooo.

He stands awkwardly while she still tries to dance.

VISHAL

Yes. I think we should stop. I'm sorry, Lynnette.

LYNNETTE

Why? Why can't we still be with each other? You don't have to go!

VISHAL

Yes, I do! What are you talking about? You know I want this job, and I took it.

She begins to cry softly.

LYNNETTE

You already said yes?

VISHAL

Yes.

LYNNETTE

But...but maybe I could go too.

Vishal pushes her away gently.

VISHAL

No, no. Let's be serious.

She clings to him, not letting him push her away.

LYNNETTE

Why couldn't we both go? I could get a job up there too. I love the rain. It'd be great.

VISHAL

Lynnette, no, you can't go. Be real. I came here today to tell you it's over. It was a nice time, really, but it's over.

He tries again to push her away, but she won't let go of him.

LYNNETTE

Is it because of your parents? They don't have to know.

VISHAL

No, that's not it. I just don't think I want to...do this anymore.

LYNNETTE

But I love you, we should be together!

VISHAL

No, it's over Lynnette. I gotta go.

LYNNETTE

No! Please, don't go! Stay with me!

VISHAL

No, we gotta just end it.

LYNNETTE

Please...just one more time.

He is having a hard time keeping the tears from his eyes from falling. He struggles to maintain control.

VISHAL

Please Lynnette...don't make this hard.

LYNNETTE

I'll do whatever you want. Just be with me one more time...

She begins to kiss him, his neck, his ears.

VISHAL

I can't...

He is not trying too hard to get away from her. She knows all too well what turns him on.

LYNNETTE

Please...stay...

More kisses, fondling, soon he is helpless to resist. Soon they hit the floor hard, not bothering to make it to the bed.

His passion is aggressive and fierce, with no trace of his usual tenderness. She doesn't object to his roughness, she lets him have his way. Making love has given way to pure sex this time.

She claws at him with desperate grabbing hands. He takes no time at all in unzipping his jeans and finding his way under her skirt, not even bothering to undress either of them. In a few moments it is all over, his passion is spent after a few moments angry, passionate sex.

In a flash he is up and off of her, zipping up his jeans, a look of shame upon his face. She reaches for him, but he steps back.

VISHAL

I'm sorry, Lynnette.

And he darts out of the room.

EXT. LYNNETTE'S YARD - DAY

Vishal slams the door behind him and stands there still adjusting his clothing, stooped with guilt. He shuts his eyes and shakes his head.

VISHAL

Oh my Gods.

INT. KATHERINE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Keith is doing sit ups. Katherine is in bed slathering lotion on herself.

KEITH

This is disgraceful. How could someone have a problem with Arturo's store already? It's just not possible.

KATHERINE

Seems like a bad omen to me.

KEITH

You're just pissed because I made this investment without your blessing.

KATHERINE

Perhaps someone is jealous. The Vudali's have had the monopoly for years. Perhaps the shock of a new store has driven them to do something questionable.

KEITH

Shock? The building's been under construction for three months. What did they think it was going to be?

KATHERINE

Maybe they thought it was going to be a little house.

KEITH

Oh, who's dumb enough to think that?

She shrugs.

INT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - DAY

A matronly-looking Hispanic woman, MS. ZAMORA carries a clipboard and finishes looking at the nacho cheese machine. Arturo hovers nearby fidgeting with his straw hat nervously.

MS. ZAMORA

Mr. Chavez, your store seems to be in fine shape. I can't imagine anyone filing a complaint against you.

Arturo breathes a sigh of relief.

ARTURO

I'm so glad to hear you say that. I can't believe you were even called.

MS. ZAMORA

Don't worry, it happens all the time. Someone holding a grudge, some kids on a lark. Who knows. But we had to check it out.

ARTURO

Sure, we understand.

MS. ZAMORA

You've just opened haven't you?

ARTURO

Yeah, we've been open a while, but we're having our official grand opening tomorrow.

MS. ZAMORA

I'm just sorry you lost a few days business while we got this sorted out. I hope it hasn't cost you too much.

Ms. Zamora efficiently finishes her paperwork as she speaks.

ARTURO

Well, it did hurt us a bit. But we'll be back on our feet in no time. We've got an ace in the hole.

MS. ZAMORA

Good to know. You're all set here. Just need your signature and you're back in business.

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - DAY

The parking lot is a blast of color, music, and excitement. There are 'Grand Opening' signs all over, balloons and banners.

Arturo and his family are grilling hot dogs and giving away free drinks. Big signs by the road announce "Free hot dogs and drinks!"

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Lynnette drives by in her truck. She sees the excitement in the parking lot of Arturo's. But something specific catches her eye. She gasps dramatically. She slams on the brakes and stops in the middle of the road, staring.

LYNNETTE

Holy shit!

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - CONTINUOUS

POV pulls back to show the entire parking lot. The wooden construction barriers are now gone -- there now stands glorious, brand-new GAS STATION PUMPS!

INT. TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

The large, bright gas sign over the island of pumps is visible from a long way away.

LYNNETTE

Oh no. This is bad. Very bad.

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - CONTINUOUS

Customers mill around, enjoying the free food, marveling at the new gas station. Keith is there, observing it all with a very satisfied smile.

INT. THE VUDALI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Vudali sit on their couch. Lynnette sits opposite them, mid-speech.

LYNNETTE

...so I want you to know that you won't have anything to worry about. I've been stirring up the community's sense of loyalty and I'm sure no one will shop at Arturo's.

MR. VUDALI

But they have gas! We can't compete with that.

MRS. VUDALI

And Vishal said they had a meat counter.

LYNNETTE

Well that's true, they do have the gas pumps. But I think people will still shop at your market and then go buy their gas at Arturo's.

MRS. VUDALI

But why would they make two stops when they can do it all at Arturo's?

LYNNETTE

Oh they won't. Believe me.

Mr. and Mrs. Vudali exchange worried glances.

MR. VUDALI

Ms. Cooper, I have to ask. Why are you getting so personally involved in this?

Lynnette can't hide her growing smile.

LYNNETTE

Vishal and I have gotten very close recently. If I can help you save your  
(MORE)

LYNNETTE (CONT'D)

business, maybe Vishal won't feel the need to take the job in Seattle in order to help out financially.

MRS. VUDALI

Lynnette. Vishal wanted that job long before Arturo's opened. He's moving to Seattle because -

LYNNETTE

He feels responsible to help out. It's sweet, really. I just want to help because if it's important to Vishal, it's important to me.

Mr. and Mrs. Vudali don't know what to say.

LYNNETTE

I know I'm not Indian, and I'm probably not who you were expecting to see your son with. But we love each other.

INT. THE VUDALI'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Shashti hides around the corner, listening.

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - NIGHT

Lynnette smashes a back window in.

INT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - NIGHT

Lynnette yields an old paint gun hooked up to a mini-compressor, drenching everything in sight with bright blue paint. She's having a ball. She doesn't miss a single item on the shelves. Arturo's is a bright blue mess.

INT. MEADOWLAKE COMMUNITY CENTER - DAY

Lynnette trails through the empty Community Center in her scrubs carrying a watering can. She lavishes attention on the plants.

The door swings open with violent intensity. She perks up. It's Vishal. His intensity is lost on her.

LYNNETTE

Vishal! I knew you'd come back to me.

VISHAL

Are you crazy? You vandalize Arturo's?!  
You come to my house?!

LYNNETTE

I just wanted to explain to your parents...

VISHAL

Explain what?

LYNNETTE

That they shouldn't worry. That you wouldn't have to leave. That Arturo's won't put them out of business.

He paces frantically back and forth. She calmly waters a plant and cleans its leaves with a damp rag.

VISHAL

Why?! Because you painted everything blue?!

LYNNETTE

Think about it, Vishal. If he has no stock, then people won't shop there. Duh.

VISHAL

You ruined his stock! Big deal! Lynnette, he's just going to get more! He'll have to close for a few days, he'll get more stock and be back open again! Are you willing to sabotage his store every week?! I think they're finally going to get wise to you!

She stops and faces him.

LYNNETTE

Oh my gosh. You're right. I should do something more permanently damaging.

VISHAL

NO! That's not what I meant! Don't do anything. I'm just saying that sometimes you...

She picks the dead leaves off a plant that is all but dead.

VISHAL

...sometimes you...don't think things through all the way. He's got gas pumps. That's what's going to put my parents out of business. What were you thinking?

She turns her attention from the dead plant to Vishal.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, I did it for you. To help.

VISHAL

No. Don't say that. Do NOT do it for me! I want nothing to do with this.

She continues to lavish attention upon the dead plant.

LYNNETTE

I did it for us. Maybe your parents will approve of me more after I save their business.

Vishal yanks the dead plant out of her hands.

VISHAL

Lynnette. It's dead. Throw it away.

He hurls it into a trash can.

LYNNETTE

Vishal!

She fishes the dead plant out. Carefully tends to it.

VISHAL

Leave Arturo alone.

He storms out.

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - NIGHT

All is quiet around the premises of Arturo's Mini-Mart on this night. The new gas pumps are idle, but their digital readouts glow in the darkness. The hum of the neon sign can be heard in the stillness. A few balloons still hang up on the grand opening banner.

There is a quick movement in the shadows. CLOSE UP of a rag in someone's hand. The hand twists the rag until it becomes thin and tight, then stuffs the rag into one of the pump nozzles.

A lighter flicks on. The flame touches the rag. It lights.

Footsteps haul ass out of there. As he runs away, we see it is the Scroungy Boy from the car load of Shashti's friends.

Seconds later the still night is shattered with a deafening explosion. A huge fireball lights up the sky. Arturo's Mini-Mart is gone in a flash.

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Vishal hops off his bed and runs to the window.

VISHAL  
Jesus! What the hell?

INT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Lynnette is sound asleep on her sofa bed.

EXT. ARTURO'S MINI-MART - MOMENTS LATER

Vishal runs toward Arturo's. Or the flaming remains of it. There is already a crowd gathered. Vishal stops in his tracks. Out of breath.

VISHAL  
Oh my God, Lynnette, what have you done?

Fire engine sirens approach.

INT. THE VUDALI'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vishal sits with his head buried in his hands on the couch. His parents stand nearby talking to police.

POLICEMAN  
Did she actually say that she was going to destroy the mini-mart?

MRS. VUDALI  
Well, no. Not in those words. But she definitely said that she would make sure that Arturo's wouldn't last. I just can't believe this.

MR. VUDALI  
She threatened, but I didn't think she would actually do something like this.

POLICEMAN  
Did she have a grudge with Arturo? Some reason to sabotage his business?

MRS. VUDALI  
She...was very close to our son. I supposed you should talk to him.

Mrs. Vudali motions for Vishal to come over. He listlessly drags himself off the couch.

POLICEMAN

What can you tell me about Ms. Cooper?  
Did she have reason to harm Mr. Chavez's  
business?

Vishal sighs deeply. His mother looks at him and nods.

VISHAL

She...she wanted his store to fail  
because...she was loyal to our store.  
She didn't want our business to fail.

The Policeman seems confused.

POLICEMAN

Did she have a vested interest in your  
store? Had she invested money in your  
business?

VISHAL

No. She was just really...loyal. She  
and I were friends. She was always trying  
to help my family out.

MRS. VUDALI

Tell him about the flyers. Tell him  
about how she called the Department of  
Health. Tell him what you told me this  
morning. Tell him!

VISHAL

I can't believe she would go this far.

POLICEMAN

Son, you need to tell us everything.

EXT. LYNNETTE'S TRAILER - LATER

Lynnette answers her front door dressed in her bathrobe to  
find four very grim looking COPS on her doorstep.

POLICEMAN

Ms. Cooper?

EXT. PARKING LOT OF LAUNDROMAT - DAY

Katherine lugs a laundry basket from her trunk and goes into  
the laundromat.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - CONTINUOUS

It's empty except for Katherine and the Scroungy Boy playing  
pinball and a few other WOMEN folding clothes.

She puts her clothes into a washing machine, adds detergent, and inserts some coins. The Scroungy Boy approaches Katherine.

KATHERINE

(whispers)

Not now. Keep playing pinball.

SCROUNGY BOY

I'm out of quarters.

Katherine surreptitiously slides him a few quarters.

INT. LAUNDROMAT - LATER

Katherine sits reading a magazine. Her clothes are tumbling in the dryer. The Scroungy Boy still plays pinball.

The last of the other women folds the last of her clothes, grabs her laundry basket and leaves.

SCROUNGY BOY

Finally.

Scroungy Boy plops next to Katherine. Without looking at him she pulls an envelope from her purse and hands it to him.

KATHERINE

Disappear. If I ever see you in Meadowlake again your parole officer will find out what you've been up to.

SCROUNGY BOY

No problem, lady. I'm not staying another minute in this dumpy place.

KATHERINE

And if you think you'll be able to prove I was involved I'll claim you raped me. They'll never believe you over me.

SCROUNGY BOY

I said no problem, lady. I'm gonna go to L.A., start a band.

She doesn't suppress a disdainful laugh.

KATHERINE

Well, good luck to you.

INT. POLICE STATION, LOS LUNAS - DAY

Vishal comes out of an interrogation room, upset and tired.

POLICEMAN

Thanks for your statement. It'll help a lot charging her.

VISHAL

Look, I don't know for sure that she did it. You understand that, right? I'm just telling you what she told me.

POLICEMAN

Sure, sure. But it'll still be helpful.

VISHAL

Can I see her before I go?

Policeman shrugs.

POLICEMAN

I guess.

INT. POLICE STATION, LOS LUNAS - LATER

Lynnette sits in handcuffs. Several cops stand guard here and there as the paperwork is typed up. Vishal approaches.

LYNNETTE

Vishal! Oh my God! I didn't do anything!

The Policeman nods his approval to the cops that Vishal may talk to Lynnette.

INT. POLICE STATION, PRIVATE ROOM - LATER

Vishal keeps his eyes down.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, I didn't do it. You believe me, don't you?

No response from Vishal.

LYNNETTE

Vishal?

Finally he meets her eye.

VISHAL

Lynnette, you sabotaged his place twice before. What if someone was hurt? Or killed? You could have killed someone!

LYNNETTE

I didn't do it! I was home! I swear!  
Vishal you have to believe me. If you  
don't, no one will.

She reaches out to hold his hand. He doesn't extend it.

LYNNETTE

You know me better than anyone else!  
Please. Tell them!

Vishal is nearly in tears. He can't look at her.

VISHAL

I already have.

He bolts out of his chair and leaves.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

Shashti and Vishal sit on the bank of the lake/dump.

SHASHTI

I feel sorry for her. Poor thing. She  
blew up Arturo's thinking it was this  
grand gesture of love for you, for us,  
and ends up in jail for it.

VISHAL

Not exactly your typical grand gesture  
of love though, was it?

SHASHTI

No, but still. Didn't she understand  
that you were moving to Seattle one way  
or the other?

VISHAL

Lynnette sees things very simply. Funny  
thing is, I actually liked that about  
her. She didn't complicate things.

They sit and contemplate the empty lake silently for a minute.

SHASHTI

You still going to Seattle?

He nods.

SHASHTI

Won't you have to testify or something?

He nods.

VISHAL

I'll come back for that. Might be a while.

SHASHTI

I just can't believe she did that. Man, people do crazy things for love.

He cringes. Almost in tears.

SHASHTI

Vish, she fell in love with you, but you didn't fall in love with her. That's not your fault.

VISHAL

She'll probably go to prison because of what I said.

SHASHTI

What?

VISHAL

What I told the cops.

SHASHTI

Oh. Well, you just told the truth, right?

He nods.

SHASHTI

That's all you can do. Maybe she needs to be...

Vishal looks to his sister, waiting for the end of the sentence.

SHASHTI

...maybe they'll put her in a place where she can get help.

VISHAL

You think she was off in the head?

She shrugs.

SHASHTI

I don't know. Blowing up a gas station to show your boyfriend - I mean, to show a guy that you love him isn't exactly a sign of mental stability.

VISHAL

Figures. The only women I can get are mentally unstable ones.

She laughs.

SHASHTI

Yeah, right, Vish, THAT'S the point I was trying to make.

INT. POLICE STATION, LOS LUNAS - NIGHT

Lynnette is in her cell. She cries herself to sleep.

LYNNETTE

Vishal, please come for me. Come help me. Vishal.

INT. VISHAL'S BEDROOM - DAY

Vishal packs up his belongings. Shashti helps by folding his clothes.

He cleans out his desk. Looks at a piece of pale yellow paper.

VISHAL

Oh.

Shashti glances over at him.

SHASHTI

What?

He flips the paper so that Shashti can see it.

SHASHTI

"Visitation and Correspondence Procedures." What is it?

VISHAL

Lynnette's lawyer gave it to me. Information on how to visit Lynnette or write to her in prison.

SHASHTI

Oh no, no, no. Clean break, Vishal. I told you, don't drag it out, that hurts more.

VISHAL

Hurts her or me?

SHASHTI

Her. Who cares about you? You're a guy, you'll get over it easier.

VISHAL

Ha ha.

She continues to fold clothes. Vishal rereads the pale yellow paper, then folds it up and tucks it into his Daytimer.

INT. PRISON - DAY

Katherine sits with Lynnette in the visiting room of the prison. Lynnette wears a prison jumpsuit. Katherine is properly attired of course. Lynnette looks at a photo of Katherine and her kids at a waterslide park.

LYNNETTE

Aww. They're sure having fun.

She hands the photo back.

LYNNETTE

And how is Keith?

KATHERINE

Oh, he's okay I guess. He's been busy at work. He's regional manager now.

Lynnette glances at a FELLOW INMATE and her visitor, a HANDSOME LOVER.

LYNNETTE

I'm so happy you still come see me. You've been my only visitor so far.

KATHERINE

I wish it could be more than once a week, but you know, with the kids and all...

LYNNETTE

No, it's been great. It's been great having a visitor.

KATHERINE

Of course. I wouldn't abandon my best friend.

LYNNETTE

But...I was hoping that Vishal would come see me. He hasn't yet.

KATHERINE

Sweetheart, you do know that he moved to Seattle already?

End of the world news.

LYNNETTE

Oh.

Katherine pats Lynnette's hand in an attempt to console her.

LYNNETTE

But he can write. Maybe he'll write.

INT. SEATTLE OFFICE - DAY

Vishal wears an expensive suit. His office is very classy. He stands at the window of his office. He watches the rain.

His office overlooks a nice Seattle suburb. Full of trees.

Vishal watches the gentle rain. The tree leaves are slick and shiny.

An attractive FEMALE COLLEAGUE raps on his door as she enters.

FEMALE COLLEAGUE

Vishal?

Before he turns to her, he morphs his serious scowl into his killer smile. He turns to her.

VISHAL

Hiya, babe.

She smiles back.

FEMALE COLLEAGUE

Hey, can I look at your printout of the schedule for the grids? I think I left mine in your car.

INT. PRISON - DAY

AS BEFORE

KATHERINE

Yeah, he might write. And actually, I might have to start writing too.

LYNNETTE

Writing? Why?

KATHERINE

Keith and I decided to move back to Albuquerque. We recently came into some money. An insurance settlement for a bad investment Keith made. Long story. Anyway, we found a house already up in Sandia Heights. We move in three weeks.

Katherine's all smiles at her good news. Bad news for Lynnette.

LYNNETTE

Oh.

KATHERINE

You should see the house, Lynn, it's gorgeous. I'll send you pictures once I decorate.

LYNNETTE

Okay.

KATHERINE

But listen honey, I'll do my best to come visit you as much as I can. But you know, with the kids and all...

INT. SEATTLE OFFICE - DAY

Vishal sits at his desk, but he isn't working. He still watches the rain outside his window.

He spins his chair around, opens a drawer and finds the pale yellow piece of paper his his Daytimer. He pulls it out, unfolds it. Reads it again.

Then he tears it up. Tosses the pieces into the trash.

He swivels back to face the rain. Takes in the scene. The warm gentle rain that makes everything so clean and green.

EXT. AUTO JUNKYARD - DAY

Blistering New Mexico sun. An overcrowded junkyard for unwanted cars. Dozens of discarded cars sit rotting and rusting away.

In the back of the junkyard sits Lynnette's faded gray 1955 Ford pickup truck.