BEFORE AND AFTER

A Movie For Television

by

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Registered WGAw
BEFORE AND AFTER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1 INT. PATTY'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A small, mod apartment (high-rise, city lights, etc.). We're at a party: with-it people in cocktail clothes, most of them slender, the women playing up bodies. Liquor, dishes of nuts, pretzels, candy on every table. UNDER THE TITLES and STAR CAST CREDITS: The hostess, PATTY, very thin and sexy, refills drinks, serves rich hors d'oeuvres to the guests who are involved in a game of charades. Most guests take something, a few refuse. PHIL, very macho, acts out the book title: "LOOKING OUT FOR #1." AD LIBS of... "seeking," "searching," "looking"... "Looking, looking"... etc. During that we BECOME AWARE of certain of the guests: MARGE, rather roly-poly, tires of the game, takes hors d'oeuvres tray to help Patty.

MARGE
Let me help, Patty.

PATTY
Oh, thanks, Marge.

Marge eats a few as she passes them around. JACK, mid-thirties, slim, nice-looking, just beginning to bald, is more interested in the very young redhead beside him than in the game -- and she in him. On Jack's other side, VICKY, Jack's wife, quite overweight, wearing a too-tight pantsuit, but very attractive and vivacious, steals a disapproving look at Jack, and then turns back to the game. Phil is now pointing to himself and gesturing "1." TITLES END.

VICKY
'Looking Out For Number 1!'

AD LIB applause and agreement. Patty hands an hors d'oeuvre tray to Phil, as she kisses him.

PATTY
Brilliant, Phil, darling. Now you can be host again.

During that, Vicky polishes off a handful of nuts, and gets up to be next. She takes the folded paper that's handed to her, reads it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
Oh, no! Oh, come on! This sounds like something my husband would dream up.
(to Jack)
Jack, did you?

Jack glances at her, shakes his head, no, and goes back to the redhead. Vicky watches until:

MARGE
Come on, Vicky, start.

AD LIB urging, and Vicky gestures that she's starting. She makes the proper gestures for AD LIBBED reactions: "Book title"... "Five words"... "Non-fiction"... "complete title"... Vicky begins to run in place. AD LIBS: "Hurry"... "Chase"... "race"... Vicky gestures "keep trying"... as she runs toward Jack, runs in place in front of him, until --

JACK
(turning toward her)
Run?

She gestures "yes," and to keep trying... and runs harder -- as Jack turns back to the redhead. Vicky notes that, disapproving, and then is drawn back to the game. AD LIBS: "Run, Spot, Run?"... "Maybe it's not run," etc., as Patty and Marge pass food trays and Phil refills wine glasses. He pours for a PAUNCHY MAN.

PAUNCHY MAN
I hope it's dry wine. Dry has less calories.

PHIL
Drink up. You can fast tomorrow.

Patty, turning to the game:

PATTY
'Run For Your Life'?

Vicky gestures no, try again... and runs harder, really lifting her legs, and racing hard in place. She gestures a full circle with her arms.

ANOTHER ANGLE
We're BEHIND her as:

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MARGE
I've got it, I've got it! 'The Complete Book of Running'!

Applause. Vicky takes a deep, thankful bow and -- her pants split -- in full view of those behind her. There's an awkward silence as those who don't see it react to those who do. Vicky stands, frozen for a moment. Jack is embarrassed, turns away from the redhead. And then Vicky grins widely (a facade), turns so everyone can see the ripped pants, and throws her hands up in a champion's gesture.

VICKY
The winner and new champion,
Vicky Matthews!

The room erupts into applause and laughter. Jack relaxes, and turns his attention back to the redhead.

3

INT. PATTY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A glamorous bedroom, with one corner used as a sewing room -- materials and supplies neatly stashed in cubbyholes over a sewing machine, with a slender form wearing a half-finished disco dress standing next to it. Vicky is easing out of the torn pants, as Patty goes through her clothes in the closet. She takes out various items, a dress, a pair of pants, a robe, all sexy, all too small for Vicky, as --

VICKY
Why did you invite the redhead?

PATTY
I didn't. Phil did.

VICKY
So why doesn't she hit on Phil?

PATTY
She likes husbands better than boyfriends. How about this?

Showing Vicky a filmy robe.

VICKY
Oh, sure! Patty, none of that is going to fit me.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Vicky wraps the torn pants around herself, and goes to the sewing machine.

VICKY
(continuing)
Why don't you make yourself a caftan?

PATTY
I don't like them. They camouflage everything.

VICKY
(patting her hip)
Yeah... everything.

She goes through the pile of neatly folded materials.

PATTY
Phil likes me in tight, revealing clothes.

VICKY
Everything I have is tight, and revealing. Of course, none of it started out that way...
(picks up a piece of material with a loud, splashy print)
Hey, how about...?

PATTY
Vicky! That's for my new couch cover.

VICKY
Perfect for me.

THE LIVING ROOM

MUSIC is PLAYING now, and people standing around talking, eating, as Vicky appears in a "sari" made of the bright, splashy print.

VICKY
Ta-da!

Vicky holds a model's pose -- gets applause and laughter from those around her... and a glare from Jack. Then he turns back to the redhead.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Vicky sees that, the smile drops and she moves to the hors d'oeuvres table. Marge is there, relishing the pastries.

MARGE

The cream puffs are great.

Vicky nods and takes one -- and a drink in her other hand -- all with an "I'll show you" determination.

INT. JACK'S OLDSMOBILE - NIGHT

Jack drives a large Oldsmobile sedan, and Vicky, still in the sari, sits beside him. Both are angry. The car RADIO counterpoints with romantic MUSIC.

VICKY

I think I look very... exotic.

JACK

You look like you couldn't find anything big enough in Patty's closet.

VICKY

(comically)

Poor girl is just skin and bones.

They ride a moment, silently. The MUSIC ENDS, and a commercial comes on: A JINGLE advertising a well-known candy. Vicky flicks OFF the RADIO.

VICKY

(continuing; diggin)

And you don't like your women bony. You like them popping out of their clothes.

She makes a simpery, sexy gesture.

JACK

All right, Vicky --

VICKY

(imitating him)

All I did was talk to the girl.

JACK

(exactly the same way)

All I did was talk --

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
JACK (CONT'D)
(a take, realizes)
She's a nice girl.

VICKY
If you happen to like sexy looking broads.

JACK
I married a sexy looking broad.

He looks at her accusingly. Vicky flinches under it, looks for a retort, then --

VICKY
Well... well... I married a guy with hair on his head.

Jack's hand goes automatically to his head to cover a thin spot.

EXT. THE MATTHEWS HOUSE - NIGHT

A suburban, upper-middle class house. A vintage Ford coupe is parked to one side of the driveway, almost blocking the other side. The Oldsmobile pulls in off the street, has to angle around the Ford, going onto the grass, before it can get to the garage.

JACK (O.S.)
Your mother didn't move her car. Didn't you tell her?

VICKY (O.S.)
I told her.

The garage door opens automatically, revealing a late model Chevy wagon, parked behind the Ford. The Olds pulls into the garage next to it.

INT. THE MATTHEWS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Vicky and Jack have just come in. Vicky is still holding the ripped pants. HELEN, Vicky's mother, is maternal and very slender. She reaches for her coat, purse and knitting and looks Vicky over at the same time.

HELEN
You didn't go to a costume party.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

HELEN (CONT'D)
How come you came home from one?

Vicky holds the pants up for Helen to see. And then
she mouths with Helen --

HELEN
(continuing)
I told you the pants were too
tight.

VICKY
I know you did, Mom. Thanks for
sitting.
(heading for the
bedroom)
Kids give you any trouble?

HELEN
They never give me trouble.

Helen looks at Jack.

HELEN
(continuing;
gesturing a fat
body
Do something with her.

JACK
I'm trying, Helen.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

In addition to the usual bedroom furnishings, an exer-
cycle stands in one corner. Vicky comes into the room,
goes to her dressing table, opens a bottom drawer and
pushes things around until she finds a hidden candy
bar. She starts to unwrap it, but the SOUND of the
DOOR OPENING stops her. She drops the candy bar back
into the drawer, and pushes it closed, as Jack comes
in. He stands just inside the doorway, looking at her,
and Vicky sees his reflection in the mirror. They're
both uncomfortable, turn away. Then --

VICKY
... I'm sorry...

JACK
So am I...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She holds up a thumb toward him -- a private symbol they have. Jack holds his up -- as if to press the thumbs together -- but they're still across the room from each other.

**VICKY**

Friends?

A beat... and they move toward each other... just close enough to press thumbs together.

**JACK**

Friends.

But the aura of the quarrel is still there -- they drop their hands, and don't know what to do next. Jack looks over the sari... tries for a grin.

**JACK**

(continuing)

You know... you do look pretty sexy in that thing.

Vicky grins, then in a comical, but sexy way, she hands him an end of the sari, and they dance around each other as he unwraps it, while they hum some torchy song. Then they go into each other's arms. They kiss, begin to touch each other, run their hands over each other. Jack's hand reaches Vicky's buttocks. He squeezes.

**JACK**

(continuing; murmuring)

There's the beautiful bun that split the pants.

Vicky freezes, and then, furious, she pushes him away.

**VICKY**

You bought that pantsuit. I didn't.

**JACK**

You said you liked it.

**VICKY**

I would have liked it a size larger.

**JACK**

You were going to lose weight by the party.

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
I never said that. You said that.

JACK
You wanted that electronic calorie counter, and that exercycle thing. I got them for you.

VICKY
I didn't want them. You wanted them.

JACK
What do you want? Ten cream puffs?

VICKY
They're mostly air.

JACK
Vicky, it's not a joke. You're eating yourself right back to where you were when Danny was born. Why?

VICKY
(comical question)
I'm hungry?

JACK
(cynically paraphrasing)
That's funny, you don't look hungry.

VICKY
That's not funny!

JACK
No, it's not, Vicky! And it gets less funny by the pound.

Vicky glares at him, and suddenly grabs a blanket off the bed. Jack, knowing what's coming, has his hand up ready -- Vicky throws the blanket, and he catches it.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack is asleep on the couch, his head completely covered by the blanket. LISA, 11, and DANNY, 9, in their pajamas, sneak up to the couch. Danny lifts the cover carefully, so they can see who it is.
CONTINUED:

DANNY  
(disappointed)  
It's Daddy.

LISA  
That'll be a nickel.

As they go back to the bedrooms --

DANNY  
Bet a dime the fight was about  
Mom eating too much.

And they're gone. Jack wakes up, gets his bearings,  
realizing where he is and why. He gets up, stretches,  
and drops to the floor to do pushups.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Vicky wakes up, realizes she's alone in the bed --  
remembers the fight, and pulls the covers up again.  
A beat, she throws off the covers, gets up, turns on  
the exercycle but doesn't get on it, and marches past  
it to the adjoining bathroom. We SEE her through the  
open door as she steps on the scale -- and groans.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A cake and cookies are in covered containers on the  
counters, sugared cereals are SEEN in open cupboards.  
The table is set for a fancy breakfast for four. Lisa  
puts the flower centerpiece in the middle, where three  
containers of syrup already stand along with jam and  
powdered sugar. Jack sets down a tray of hot pancakes.  
And Danny leads Vicky in. They're all dressed for the  
day, but Vicky is half asleep and in her robe.

JACK  
(warily)  
Good morning.

LISA  
We made breakfast.

VICKY  
I'm not hungry.

LISA  
Aw, Mom... Daddy said we were  
all going to eat together.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DANNY
Like we do every time you have a fight.

VICKY
... I'll just have coffee.

She sits down, and Jack pours coffee for her. She avoids Jack's eager look and sips at the coffee.

ANOTHER ANGLE - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Danny and Jack are just finishing their breakfast. Lisa is poking at hers, half of it is still on the plate.

DANNY
Should we go out and let you talk now, like after all the fights?

JACK
Yes.

Danny and Lisa get up as --

LISA
Are you driving, Daddy, like after all the --

JACK
Lisa, knock it off.

Lisa shrugs, and starts out after Danny.

VICKY
You didn't finish your breakfast.

LISA
I'm not hungry.

And she goes. Vicky and Jack are alone. She's staring into her coffee... Jack looking at her... then --

JACK
Friends?

He holds up his thumb... a beat... and Vicky presses hers against it.

VICKY
Friends.

(CONTINUED)
She pulls her hand away, uses both hands to hold the coffee cup, and looks away from him again.

JACK
... You want to meet me downtown and we'll go out to dinner?

VICKY
Why is the peace offering food? I thought you wanted me to diet.

JACK
Well... you won't let me buy you clothes... Flowers! I'll buy you flowers.

VICKY
I've got a garden full of flowers.

JACK
What do you want?

VICKY
To wake up tomorrow a size 9.

JACK
Then go to Dr. Haymer... He did it for you before.

VICKY
Yeah, when I was a kid, and a teenager, and after each baby. He's a lousy doctor. The disease keeps coming back... worse every time.

JACK
(takes her hand)
But in between, Vick, when you get thin... you were gorgeous when we got married.
(moves in closer)
You can look like that again.

He leans over to kiss her -- just as Lisa comes in.

LISA
We're ready, Daddy.

JACK
Lisa, you've got lousy timing.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

LISA

Sorry.

And she goes. But she's broken the mood. Jack gets up.

JACK

Go to him, Vicky... You can be the sexiest, most beautiful woman in the world.

He blows her a kiss, and goes. Vicky reaches up and grabs it, and mutters to herself.

VICKY

Would it be okay if I was only the second most beautiful?

She sits a moment, thinking. We HEAR the FRONT DOOR CLOSE. Without thinking, Vicky picks up the remaining cold pancake from Lisa's plate and begins to eat it.

INT. DR. HAYMER'S OFFICE - CLOSEUP - A MEDICAL POSTER

of a normal heart and a heart covered with fat. STAY on that as:

DR. HAYMER (O.S.)

A candy bar is 250 calories, a piece of pie is 300, a serving of peanuts, 400.

WIDEN THE SHOT TO INCLUDE Vicky in DR. HAYMER's office, sitting across the desk from the doctor, an old family friend.

DR. HAYMER

(continuing)

Calories are energy. If you don't use up the energy, it stores itself in your body as fat.

VICKY

And 3500 calories of stored fat is one pound of body weight. I know all that, Dr. Haymer.

DR. HAYMER

I know you know it. So why do you buy that stuff?

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
I don't. I get it for the kids.

DR. HAYMER
Who eats their leftovers?

VICKY
(a beat, grins)
Oh... leftovers...

DR. HAYMER
(hands her a printed sheet)
Vicky, go on a diet.

VICKY
(looks at the form and puts it down)
I went on this diet.

DR. HAYMER
Went where? Off of it?

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

Busy -- women and men of all sizes, filling carts with food -- junk, health, lots of both. Above their heads, advertising banners offering a cornucopia of goodies -- desserts, starches, dietetic products, etc., etc. OVER all this:

VICKY (V.O.)
Maybe it's my glands.

We PUSH DOWN an aisle, diet foods on one side, gourmet bakery on the other, and FIND Vicky and Marge shopping. Vicky looks at the display of diet supplements with a before and after picture of a woman in profile, then joins Marge picking out baked goods as:

DR. HAYMER (V.O.)
It's not glands. It's food. Too much food. The wrong kinds of food. Vicky, it's poison, it'll kill you.

VICKY (V.O.)
So let me go back on those appetite depressants -- those amphetamines.

(Continued)
DR. HAYMER (V.O.)
No, you got crazy on amphetamines.

Vicky and Marge are near a slim demonstrator, offering tidbits of a rich cake. They stop to taste as:

VICKY
So I asked him if I should take some tests or see an endocrinologist or something.

MARGE
What'd he say?

Marge takes two more samples, gives one to Vicky and they move on, past a huge man shoving cans of diet foods into his cart, as:

VICKY
(imitating Haymer)
If you want to spend your money, spend your money. But go on a diet.

looks at cake in her hand
I can't start a diet in the middle of a day.

They round the corner to the candy aisle as:

VICKY
(continuing)
There ought to be a magic wand.
A touch and the fat just melts off.

MARGE
Or a touch and no one cares.

EXT. THE SUPERMARKET - DAY

Vicky and Marge roll their overfilled carts out of the store, past the drugstore where a window display advertises diet pills, and to Vicky's station wagon as:

MARGE (V.O.)
Did you know they used to sell capsules of worms that would eat your fat from inside? Yuch.

VICKY (V.O.)
Marge, we have to do something about ourselves!

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MARGE (V.O.)
Why? What's wrong with us?

EXT. A NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

On a street of small stores, we briefly NOTICE a billboard advertising ice cream -- a bikiniied girl eating a cone... and then FOCUS ON Vicky's station wagon, loaded with groceries, and Marge as passenger.

VICKY (V.O.)
Wouldn't you like to look like Patty?

MARGE (V.O.)
Did you ever see how Patty eats?

The station wagon turns a corner and pulls up into the line of cars double-parked in front of an elementary school. Mostly mothers, a few fathers, sit at their wheels waiting.

VICKY (V.O.)
Yeah. She doesn't.

INT./EXT. THE STATION WAGON

Vicky and Marge are sharing a bag of doughnuts as:

MARGE
What a lousy way to live.

VICKY
Why? Patty's got it made... A great job, a macho live-in boyfriend, the same figure she had when she was eighteen. You know what I have? A 24 hour job -- being a maid to two kids, a house, and a husband who's looking for girls with figures like I had at eighteen.

MARGE
You know what I have? I like myself. Which is more than either of you have.

The school BELL RINGS and the children burst out of the school. Immediately, a CACAPHONY OF HORNS is HEARD -- parents summoning their kids.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The kids look about, confused. Danny seeks out Vicky's car from the school door, then seeing it, makes a beeline for the car. He dives into the back seat and lies down. We're vaguely AWARE of another boy, his age, Jeff, watching.

DANNY

Let's go.

VICKY

Mind if we wait for Lisa and Peggy?

Jeff saunters to the car, and Danny cringes away from him. Jeff grins at Danny, looks at Vicky, then back at Danny. He puffs his cheeks out, comically grotesque, and as Danny leans out the window, Jeff waddles away.

DANNY

(calling after Jeff)

Creep!

MARGE

What's all that about?

Danny doesn't answer. Lisa and Marge's daughter, Peggy, appear at the school door, stop to talk to others. Danny leans over the front seat, and hits the HORN.

INT. DR. ROLLINS' OFFICE DOOR - DAY

We're CLOSE ON the door on which is printed: DR. EUGENIA ROLLINS/ENDOCRINOLOGIST. An overweight man opens the door to go in, and we FOLLOW to:

INT. DR. ROLLINS' WAITING ROOM - DAY

The walls display charts and medical textbook pictures of weight related subjects: body types, good and bad foods, slogans, etc. Men, women and children, most of them overweight, studiously avoid speaking to each other. Vicky is as quiet as the rest, flipping through a medical journal, but actually studying those around her. A NURSE opens the inside door.

NURSE

Mrs. Matthews.

And Vicky goes inside.
DR. ROLLINS is a small compact woman. She's business-like, and yet gentle, as:

DR. ROLLINS
Over half the people in this country weigh more than they should. And they spend 10 billion dollars every year on fad diets, gadgets, pills, books, clinics. All they really need is to eat fewer calories.

VICKY
But, sometimes isn't it something the body is doing wrong?

DR. ROLLINS
Very, very few cases are due to body irregularity.

VICKY
But my tests... didn't they show anything?

DR. ROLLINS
Your blood pressure is 130 over 95, it could be lower, but it's normal. Your sugar level is 120. 100 is better, but it's normal. But if you gain more weight, those figures could change -- drastically.

VICKY
What about my glands?

DR. ROLLINS
Sorry. The only thing you can blame is your fatty cells.

VICKY
(a reprieve, she thinks)

Yeah?

DR. ROLLINS
We're all born with a certain amount of fatty cells. There are two times in our lives when they multiply. If we're fat as toddlers, or in our late teens.

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
(sinks)
Guilty.

DR. ROLLINS
Once they're there, they stay there.

She shows Vicky the chart -- two sketches of fatty
cells -- the sketch of the empty cells is small, the
one with the filled cells is large, but both contain
the same number of cells.

DR. ROLLINS
(continuing)
You see, if you keep them empty,
they stay small, and you stay
slim. But if you fill them up...

She shrugs.

VICKY
(really shaken now)
What can I do?

DR. ROLLINS
Take care of yourself.

VICKY
I'm too busy taking care of
everyone else.

DR. ROLLINS
(takes a diet sheet
from drawer, the same
one Dr. Haymer gave
Vicky)
You have time to go on a thousand
calorie diet. And do aerobic
exercises -- jog, swim, bike,
jump rope. That will change
your metabolism and burn the
calories off faster... But most
important, Vicky. Get at the
source. Why?

VICKY
(this is the nitty
gritty, she's upset)
I don't know why.

(CONTINUED)
DR. ROLLINS
Find out. I'm no psychologist, but I know people usually overeat for emotional reasons. Because they're unhappy, or to make up for something else they're lacking.

VICKY
Or maybe it's just a vice, like drinking or drugs... only it shows more.

DR. ROLLINS
Then get rid of it. Try a group... Weight Watchers or Overeaters Anonymous or Calorie Counters.

Vicky looks more and more overwhelmed.

INT. THE MATTHEWS DINING ROOM - DAY

It's early evening. Jack and Lisa are working on the dining room table. Lisa, on homework; Jack, paying bills. The room is adjacent to the kitchen, so that at some ANGLES we can SEE Vicky in there, making dinner. The counter is filled with riches for tonight -- mashed potatoes, sauces, a cake. Vicky is preparing garlic toast, wets a finger to pick up a crumb, and eats it as:

JACK
So join one of them.

VICKY
You know what they cost?

JACK
Whatever. I'll pay.

VICKY
You're still grumbling about paying for the gym.

JACK
$300 a year for four years! And you never use it!

VICKY
(comes to the door)
I never wanted it!
(MORE)
CONTINUED:

VICKY (CONT'D)
It was one of your 'helpful'
hints! Like that damned
exercycle in the bedroom.

JACK
And you never use that either!

LISA
... Are you going to fight?

JACK
Lisa --

LISA
Bye...

She gathers her books quickly and goes, as --

VICKY
I don't want to fight with you,
Jack.

JACK
I know. You want a magic wand.

VICKY
(trying to be funny)
You think if they could go to the
moon --

JACK
Vicky. Go to a diet club.

A beat. Vicky shrugs and goes back into the kitchen.

VICKY
I'm not a joiner.

Jack follows her, and we FOLLOW.

VICKY
(continuing)
You want roquefort on the salad?

JACK
Vicky, go somewhere... before
you turn into a Mack truck!

Vicky freezes. And Jack could bite his tongue --

JACK
(continuing)
I'm sorry.

But Vicky is taking off her apron.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JACK  
(continuing)
Where are you going?

VICKY
Somewhere! As ordered!

She throws the apron at him and marches into the dining room. Jack follows, and we FOLLOW.

JACK
What about dinner?

NEW ANGLE

as Lisa appears, playing the "sweet child."

LISA
I'll make it, Daddy.

Vicky hears that, grows even more angry, as she marches into her bedroom and slams the door.

CUT SHARPLY TO:

INT. THE GYM - LATE AFTERNOON

The gym is filled with men and women in sweatsuits, a few with weight belts, some of the really svelte women are in leotards, and all the heavy people are sweating profusely. They follow the male instructor through a rigorous exercise, bouncing in place in a jogging-like movement, to recorded MUSIC, and keeping up with varying degrees of success, as we PAN:

VICKY (O.S.)  
(imitating Lisa)
I'll make it, Daddy... the fink.

PATTY (O.S.)
Let her. Let them all take turns cooking, and let Jack do the chauffeuring, baby sit a couple of nights so you can get out.

And now we're on Vicky and Patty, next to each other. Patty is gorgeous in her leotard, and doing her exercise with ease. Vicky, in a sweatsuit, is barely moving through it, breathing heavily.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PATTY
(continuing; cynically)
You don't have to be the sweet, self-sacrificing housewife every minute of the day.

VICKY
Yes, I do... Jack's entitled to a good housewife or a good-looking wife. I have to be at least one of them.

She stops for a breath, as the rest of the class keeps going.

PATTY
What about what you're entitled to?

VICKY
(trying the exercise again)
I've got it.

What?

PATTY

VICKY
Kids, husband, home...

PATTY
Is it what you want?

New exercise -- harder -- sit-ups -- and Vicky can only get her head and shoulders off the floor. She hesitates, then nods, yes.

PATTY
(continuing)
Are you ever going back to work? You were a damned good advertising artist.

VICKY
That was 12 years ago.

The thought depresses her.

The class is getting into shoulder stands for bicycling. Patty gets into it easily.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

PATTY
You going to just sit there?

Vicky tries it -- once, twice... a third time. She rolls over, too far, and does a clumsy backward somersault. And then lies there, defeated.

VICKY
Oh, the hell with it.

EXT. THE GYM - NIGHT

The SOUND of EXERCISE MUSIC is still HEARD, as Vicky, worn out, almost limps out of the gym. As she turns toward the parking lot to one side, we WIDEN THE SHOT TO INCLUDE the store between the gym and the parking lot -- an ice cream shop. Vicky gets just past it, hesitates, looks at the store, hungrily.

INT. THE ICE CREAM STORE - NIGHT

Pictures of luscious ice cream combinations line the walls. Vicky, wedged into a half-armed student chair, about to attack a large sundae complete with trimmings, scoops up the cherry, and when it's halfway to her mouth --

ANGLE - INCLUDING JOYCE

a jolly, very overweight women in her mid-30's, sits at right angles to Vicky. Vicky sees her when she lifts her head to eat the cherry. Vicky hesitates -- it's as if she's seen a mirror image of herself -- and she doesn't like it. Joyce looks up -- their eyes catch, and they're embarrassed. They've been caught in the act. Finally --

JOYCE
Don't eat the cherry. Red dye number two. It's bad for you.

A beat -- and they both laugh. Vicky shrugs a "what the hell" and digs in. They go on eating as:

VICKY
You live around here?

JOYCE
Of course not. I wouldn't eat ice cream where people know me. They might think I'm fat.

(Continued)
They go on eating. Joyce finishes, struggles to get out of the chair, starts to leave, then stops for:

**JOYCE**
(continuing)
My name is Joyce and I'm a compulsive overeater. That's how we say it at O.A.

**VICKY**
You belong to Overeaters Anonymous?

**JOYCE**
Did. Also Weight Watchers, Calorie Counters and TOPS. And as you can see, I gained a great deal from all of them.

Vicky grins, laughs, and in a moment, they're both giggling uncontrollably.

**EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE ICE CREAM STORE - NIGHT**

Vicky and Joyce leave the store together, as if they're great, old friends, and walk toward the parking lot.

**VICKY**
Then there were only three left, and I couldn't serve that to six women, so --

**JOYCE**
You polished them off, and went to the store for more.

**VICKY**
Yeah. I was so sick the next day --

**JOYCE**
Did it stop you from eating?

Vicky doesn't need to answer... they walk a minute, then --

**VICKY**
The doctor said I should figure out why... and I thought of a million reasons... all phony.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

    JOYCE
    I know why I eat... it's the only pleasure I have.

They've reached Joyce's car.

    JOYCE
    (continuing)
    Well... bon appetit.

She starts getting into the car, and Vicky reaches out impulsively to stop her.

    VICKY
    Joyce, can I call you?

    JOYCE
    For the next ice cream sundae?

    VICKY
    Or the next confessional, which ever comes first.

Joyce digs into her purse for pencil or paper, as --

    JOYCE
    You'll never use this.

    VICKY
    Probably not.

She takes the slip of paper with Joyce's phone number on it, and Joyce gets into the car. Vicky watches as she drives off, then looks at the phone number, puts it into her purse, and starts toward her own car.

INT. MATTHEWS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa sits in front of the TV eating popcorn, and watching an old "Lucy" or ? rerun -- a funny dinner scene. But she's turned to what Jack and Vicky are saying. Vicky has just come in, and Jack is leading her toward Danny's room, as --

    JACK
    He wouldn't tell me. He just ran into his room and slammed the door. But you should have seen him.

    (CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LISA
He looks terrible.

JACK
Of all the nights for you not to be here.

Vicky goes to Danny's door and knocks.

VICKY
Danny?

DANNY (O.S.)
Go away!

INT. DANNY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Danny is in his pajamas, and huddled into the bed, with his back to Vicky. She picks up his shirt from the floor, notices the rips, dirt and blood on it, and goes with it to the bed. She sits down and turns him toward her. Danny has made a childish, unsuccessful attempt to clean his face, but the dirt, and remnants of a bloody nose are still SEEN.

VICKY
... How's the other guy?

DANNY
I barely touched him... He's got the longest arms!

Who?

VICKY

DANNY
Jeff Hauser!

He didn't mean to tell her. He turns away, and pushes down into the covers.

VICKY
The creep?

DANNY
I'll get him back...

VICKY
For what?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DANNY
For... for giving me a bloody
nose, and tearing my shirt and --

VICKY
For what, Danny?

A beat... and Danny has to let it out -- on a sob.

DANNY
He said you had to go through
doors sideways... he said... boy
was I lucky, I didn't have a
mother, I had an elephant... he
said...

And he can't talk any more, he's sobbing too hard.
Vicky holds back her own tears... but the pain is
obvious. Vicky holds her arms out to him, and Danny
goes into them. She holds him, rocking him... as he
sobs and she bites at her lips.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
ACT TWO

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

A busy place; waiters carry trays heaped with rich food, pastry carts stand waiting, menus are huge. Baskets piled high with homemade rolls are on every table. A fashion MODEL in a flowing, long gown poses for the women at one table, and a slender luncheon, watching, rejects a basket of hot biscuits/rolls offered by a waiter. We FOLLOW the Model toward another table, where someone lathers a roll with butter... and then MOVE PAST that toward another table where Vicky and Marge are finishing their lunches. Vicky's eating a tuna salad, and Marge, a club sandwich with French fries. A WAITRESS refills their coffee cups.

WAITRESS
Oh, didn't you get rolls?

VICKY
Yes, but I didn't want --

But the Waitress is gone. Marge starts to ladle sugar into her coffee, as Vicky squeezes some lemon onto her salad and picks up what she's been saying:

VICKY
(continuing)
I didn't know what to say to Danny. 'I'm not fat?' 'It's okay that I'm fat?' 'Jeff's a stinking brat and you should beat him up'?... which is what I wanted to say. Marge, why don't you use artificial sweetener in your coffee?

MARGE
That stuff kills rats.

Two men take the table behind Vicky; the one back to back with her, pushing his chair quite close in order to sit down. The Waitress appears with two baskets of rolls, putting one on the men's table, and one on Vicky's.

WAITRESS
There you are.

She leaves. Vicky puts the basket on an adjacent, empty table -- where the first basket of uneaten rolls sits, as Marge grabs one.

(CONTINUED)
MARGE
What you should have said is,
'Poor Jeff, he tries to cuddle
with his mother and he hits rib
bones. You've got it made, kid.'

The Model approaches their table, opening her gown to
reveal a matching bikini.

MODEL
(reciting)
Going from beach to beach party
and made out of imported silk, the
ensemble comes in blue, gold and
green, sizes six to twelve, and
sells for $57.95.

MARGE
What do you have in a size 20?

MODEL
I'm sorry.

Both shrug. The Model leaves and Marge reaches for
another roll. As she butters it:

VICKY
That's 120 calories each and you're
on your third.

MARGE
Vicky, I didn't go on pills with
you, and I didn't go on shots with
you, and I'm not going on 1000
calories with you either. So, let
me enjoy this.

They eat silently, then:

VICKY
Do you know what I weigh?

MARGE
No, and I don't want to.

VICKY
Don't worry, I wouldn't tell you.

The Waitress returns and picks up their plates.

WAITRESS
There's dessert with the salad.
Peach cobbler.

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
Do you have any fresh fruit?

WAITRESS
Sorry, no substitutions.

VICKY
I'll skip it.

MARGE
She'll take it and I'll have one, too -- with chocolate ice cream.

VICKY
I don't want...

But the Waitress has gone.

MARGE
You can start your diet tomorrow.
The cobbler here is really great.

VICKY
I've already started and I'm not going to let you ruin it for me.

MARGE
Then I'll eat both cobblers.
They're pretty small anyway.

VICKY
No! No, I'll eat it, I know I will.

Vicky gets up.

VICKY
(continuing)
If I'm here when the cobbler arrives,
I'll eat it.

MARGE
Where are you going?

VICKY
To make a phone call. I'll meet you up front.

Vicky tries to move from the table but is stuck because
the man behind her is so close. He's involved in con-
versation and is oblivious to her struggle until:

VICKY
(continuing)
Could you move... just an inch?

(CONTINUED)
The man shifts his chair closer to his table, while giving Vicky an amused once-over. Vicky catches it, is embarrassed, and covers with:

VICKY
(continuing; to the man)
Better not eat the rolls. You're getting paunchy.

And she goes, hearing the men LAUGH behind her. We TRACK Vicky through the restaurant... and the eating, and the piles of food, and the waiters serving -- and Vicky trying not to look at passing goodies. She goes to the coin telephone on the wall near the cashier. She gets Joyce's number from her purse, dials, and gets a busy signal.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

She hangs up, turns to watch Marge, now eating the cobbler a la mode, turns away; notices after-dinner mints on the cashier's counter, takes one, almost eats it, puts it back, and dials again. Busy. And she's getting very upset.

INT. JOYCE'S DEN - DAY

It's an office, with a large desk, covered with papers -- notes, invoices, mail, etc. Joyce (wearing a ratty old muu-muu) leans back in the tilting swivel chair, in a sexy, come-on way, as she talks into the phone... and nibbles on nuts from a bowl on the desk.

JOYCE
Well, I'm wearing a sheer black negligee... Because I knew I was calling you... Now?... In the middle of the day?... No, come on, Max, don't be silly... I didn't call you for that, I called you to tell you that we're having a special on number 20 bonded paper... Just for you, $3.95 a ream... Well, why don't you place your order, and I'll ask my boss if I can make the delivery in person.

She begins to write the order.

INT. RESTAURANT - VICKY ON PHONE

She dials again, this time the phone is free. A waiter carries two huge banana splits past her, and she watches, as:

VICKY
(into the phone)
Hello, is this Joyce?... From the ice cream store, and no maraschino cherries?... Yeah, Vicky... Oh, I'm fine -- no, I'm not... I just had lunch --
(shrugs)
No, I didn't have dessert.
It's like a page out of *House Beautiful*. Everything Joyce can't put on her body, she puts into her home. She sets out dishes of ice cream for herself and Vicky, who looks at it, worriedly.

JOYCE
It's dietetic. No sugar, no salt, and they don't say how many calories.

As they eat:

VICKY
Marge says she's the only one who's really happy, because she accepts who she is, and enjoys it. And she's right. Patty's got it all, but she isn't enjoying it. I've got everything Patty doesn't have ... and I'm miserable.

JOYCE
I have nothing. No husband, no kids, and a lousy job. And I'm fatter than all of you.

VICKY
What do you want, Joyce?

JOYCE
Husband, kids, and no job. What about you?

VICKY
I don't know... I used to do advertising art. Patty says I should go back to it.

JOYCE
Is that what you want?

VICKY
I'd have to take some classes first.

JOYCE
So take some classes.

VICKY
I'd have to lose weight first.

JOYCE
(understanding)
Big lady wrapped around a little paint brush?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
I'd look ridiculous.

JOYCE
So go to Jack La Lanne.

VICKY
I was thinking... Calorie Counters? Will you go with me?

They both think about it, as they scrape all the ice cream off their plates and eat it.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - EVENING

Vicky has on a bulky dress and some junk jewelry -- necklace and bracelets. She is edgy as she checks herself in the mirror and doesn't realize Jack is taking a picture until the flash of his Polaroid goes off.

VICKY
What're you doing?

JACK
That's the 'before' picture. When you get down, I'll take the 'after.'

And Vicky is more edgy.

VICKY
Did I tell you it's $10 for the first time for registration? After that, $5 a week?

JACK
You told me, and I'll pay it.

Vicky goes into the bathroom. We SEE her through the open doorway. She gets on the scale and takes off the jewelry, as:

VICKY
You have to pay the $5 even the weeks I don't go.

JACK
You already planning which weeks you won't go?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
I'm trying to be realistic.

The dress feels too heavy, she takes it off, and steps on the scale again -- then in her slip, she comes back into the bedroom to test the weight of other dresses in the closet, as:

JACK
Forget realistic. Lose weight.

A beat. Vicky looks at herself in the mirror.

VICKY
Jack... what do you see when you look at me?

JACK
You trying to get out of going?

VICKY
I'm not asking you to go to bed with me... I want to know how you feel about me.

JACK
I feel... Honest?

VICKY
Honest.

JACK
I feel... betrayed...

A beat. He walks out, and Vicky looks at herself, wondering.

INT. A CHURCH SOCIAL HALL - EVENING

Under a beautifully-lettered slogan, "God will provide" is a crudely homemade one on paper, "But not too well, please!" And under that "Calorie Counters." The room is filled with people -- coming in, chatting, standing in line to check in, and in another line to get weighed. Joyce and Vicky, wearing a lightweight sleeveless dress, reach the front of the check-in line, and are greeted by SANDRA, tightly girdled into a fairly nice figure. The check-in counter top is covered with pamphlets and diet recipes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SANDRA
( effusively )
Oh, Joyce, I'm so glad you came back!

JOYCE
I didn't come back. I was dragged back. This is my friend, Vicky, she wants to join.

SANDRA
(same tone as before)
Oh, Vicky, I'm so glad you want to join!

BEN approaches. He's 40ish, 25 pounds overweight, a smiling, likeable man.

BEN
(to Joyce)
Couldn't stay away from me, could you?

JOYCE
Ben! I thought you'd be skinny by now.

BEN
I was... for about ten minutes.

ANGLE - THE WEIGH-IN LINE

Joyce, Vicky and Ben are now together in line, in that order. A woman, BETTY, 60 pounds overweight, is in front of Joyce. They move up slowly as:

BEN
I'm giving it one more chance. After that, I'll start saving up for a by-pass.

JOYCE
(to Vicky)
Ben's doctor thinks the weight caused his heart attack.

Vicky looks at him, shocked.

BEN
Actually, I'm not overweight. My chest just slipped a little.

( CONTINUED )
CONTINUED:

It's Joyce's turn. She steps around the free-standing blackboard used as a divider, and gets onto the scale, which is hidden from those in line -- but not from us. As she hands her card to the clerk:

JOYCE
Close your eyes, this is supposed to be private.

ANGLE - THE GROUP

is now almost seated. As the last people take seats, the lecturer, BRAD, 30ish, very slender, and dressed ultra-mod (with shirt open to the belt line, chains around his neck, etc.), leads the group, singing, as we PICK OUT Vicky, Joyce and Ben sitting toward the back. Vicky is reading the song off a leaflet, but Ben and Joyce know it, and sing along with less gusto than most around them. Several people wear half-masks of pigs' faces. Joyce and Ben hold their masks on their laps.

ALL
(to the tune of "Home on the Range")
Oh, give us a shape,
And don't let us escape
To the land where the fat used to be.
Oh, let us get thin
Because thin's always in.
And to happiness it is the key.

Everyone applauds, then:

BRAD
Good evening. I'm Brad.

ALL
(in chorus)
Good evening, Brad.

BRAD
My name used to be Irving. When I weighed 235 pounds. But I look more like a Brad now, wouldn't you say?

The audience APPLAUDS and AD-LIBS approval.

BRAD
(continuing)
Let's see how we did this week.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

AD-LIBBED mixture of GROANS and HURRAHS, as Brad picks up a pile of cards.

BRAD
(continuing)
Betty?

Betty stands at her seat for:

BETTY
Four and a quarter pounds!

APPLAUSE. She sits down.

BRAD
Betty's lost 14 pounds in all. It won't be long now!

AD-LIBBED approval. Brad looks at the next card.

BRAD
(continuing)
Oh-oh.

AD-LIBBED GROANS of compassion.

BRAD
(continuing)
Now, you know we don't announce the amount of gain, but we do want to help... Joyce, what happened, darling?

JOYCE
(doesn't stand, comically)
I don't know, I ate like a bird.

BRAD
A vulture?

Everyone laughs, including Joyce... but we CATCH Vicky's face... she's mortified.

BRAD
(continuing)
Where's your pig mask?

Joyce shows it to him and drops it back into her lap. AD LIBS: "Put it on." "You have to wear it," etc.

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
(continuing)
No, let's stop picking on her.
Joyce, we're glad you came back,
and we are going to help you...
if it kills you.

APPLAUSE and LAUGHTER. Brad looks at the next card.

BRAD
(continuing)
Oh, a new member. Vicky... Vicky,
where are you? Stand up,
sweetheart.

Vicky half raises a hand. And everyone cranes to see
where she is.

JOYCE
(aside to Vicky)
He won't give up.

Vicky stands up.

BRAD
Oh, isn't she pretty?... Vicky,
we're going to turn you into a
beauty queen. Aren't we?

APPLAUSE and approval, AD LIB. And Vicky sits down.
Brad looks at the next card.

BEN
(aside to Vicky)
Here goes.

BRAD
Ben, aw, Ben, why?... You're a
baaad boy.

Ben half stands and sits, looking sheepish. AD LIBS
are more intent: "Put on the mask." "You have to
wear it." "Pigs have to wear pig masks," etc... and
we MOVE IN CLOSE to our trio. Vicky is looking at
Ben, compassionately, and Joyce looks at the grinning
faces around them.

JOYCE
(aside)
Let's get out of here.
INT. THE MATTHEWS KITCHEN - EVENING

There are cardboard grocery cartons on the table, and Jack and the kids are putting food from the cupboards and refrigerator into them. Lisa takes a box of cookies from the cupboard.

LISA
What about these cookies?

JACK
Out.

DANNY
But we like them.

JACK
So does your mother.

LISA
(dumping them)
Out.

DANNY
Does that mean I never get to eat junk food again?

JACK
We'll go out once in a while for a treat... Danny, we want Mom to get slim and beautiful, don't we?

DANNY
(remembering the fight)
Yeah... we sure do...

INT. A COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

Posters on the walls depict various goodies. Vicky, Joyce and Ben are in a booth, drinking coffee. Joyce and Ben eat pie.

JOYCE
My whole family was fat. They liked to eat, and that's the way they raised me. And I'm tired of trying to change.

BEN
I was gorgeous until I got married, and my wife started to feed me...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BEN (CONT'D)
Boy, did she feed me... It killed her, and it'll probably kill me, too.

VICKY
My husband's slim... and my kids... and my mother, especially my mother.

Joyce and Ben make understanding sounds.

JOYCE
(handing Vicky a forkful of her pie)
Here.

VICKY
No... I don't think so... This may not last, but right now, I'm feeling... strong. Do you know this is the first time in years I've ordered coffee and nothing else?

JOYCE
Not because of Calorie Counters?

VICKY
Because I don't want to go back to Calorie Counters.

HOLD on Vicky.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT
Jack, still dressed, stands in the doorway, watching Vicky get ready for bed.

VICKY
It was awful... the way they embarrassed people... and that... that poor man's Burt Reynolds who ran the thing...

JACK
But, as long as they help you.

VICKY
They helped me leave, that's how they helped me.

(CONTINUED)
JACK
... You mean... you walked out on it?

VICKY
We had to. We couldn't stand it.

JACK
Who, we?

VICKY
Joyce, and Ben and I.

JACK
Who's Ben?

VICKY
Joyce's friend... He really likes her.

JACK
How fat is she?

VICKY
You know, there are some men who see past fat.

She's in her pajamas now and sits at the dressing table, to brush her hair.

JACK
If you left the meeting early, how come you're home so late?

VICKY
We went out for coffee.

JACK
(bitingly sarcastic)
And what?

Vicky stops brushing, her hand halfway to her head. Suddenly, she throws her brush at him. He ducks, it misses. Then Vicky starts gathering blankets and pillow off the bed. Used to that, he puts a hand up to catch them.

JACK
(continuing)
Ever notice how you always pick these fights at night, so you can throw me out of my bed!

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
You picked the fight!... Is it so you can get out of my bed?

JACK
Well, why not? Nothing much happens there!

He starts for the door.

VICKY
Sure! Because you're saving yourself for your chicks!

Jack, at the door, turns sharply.

JACK
That's what you think? That I'm sleeping around?

VICKY
Aren't you?

JACK
I'm sure as hell thinking about it.

He drops the bedding on the floor and steps over it to get to the closet. He takes out a sweater and goes out of the room. A beat, and Vicky chases after him.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack strides toward the front door, as Vicky appears from the bedroom.

VICKY
Where are you going?

JACK
Do you care?

He goes out and slams the door. A beat.

VICKY
(yells to the door)
Not one damn bit!

And she stands, trying to breathe normally... looking about as if what to do next... The kids peek from behind a door.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
(continuing; sharply)
Go to bed.

The kids disappear.

VICKY
(continuing; to their door)
No, I didn't mean...

She sobs, holds it back... the panic grows... what to do... suddenly she bolts toward the kitchen.

INT. THE KITCHEN - NIGHT

Vicky stands at the refrigerator, staring, infuriated, at two pictures that have been taped to it -- the Polaroid shot Jack just took, and one of herself and Jack on their honeymoon -- at a pool, in bathing suits. Both young -- he, with a head full of hair, she very slim. She tears the pictures down, rips them up, pulls open the refrigerator door -- and it's almost empty. Only some vegetables are inside. Vicky stares at it... open mouthed, in horror. HOLD on her.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

FADE IN:

43 EXT. THE MATTHEWS HOUSE - DAY

It's early the next morning. Helen's Ford pulls into the driveway (blocking both sides), Helen gets out, and then takes two grocery bags out of the trunk.

44 INT. THE MATTHEWS KITCHEN - DAY

Vicky, in a bathrobe, and Helen unpack the bags... opened boxes of cereal, half a loaf of bread, a cube of butter, a half jar of jam, an open container of milk, danish and doughnuts, etc., as --

Danny and Lisa, still in their pajamas, race in.

LISA Grandma's here. DANNY What did you bring us?

HELEN (extending her arms to them) My poor starving little orphans!

The kids tumble into her arms, for just a moment, and then Danny goes to attack the food, as Helen guides Lisa to the table.

HELEN (continuing) Come and sit down. Grandma won't let you go to school without a good breakfast.

VICKY Mom, I didn't throw the food out. Jack threw it out.

DANNY We helped him.

VICKY You what?

LISA We were helping you diet.

HELEN Oh, listen to that angel!

Vicky is furious. She goes to Lisa and glares at her.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
My dieting is none of your business.

LISA
Daddy said --

VICKY
(really furious, grabbing Lisa's shoulders)
If Daddy said, 'Jump over a cliff,' would you jump over a cliff?

HELEN
Jack would never tell her to --

VICKY
What did your precious Daddy expect you to eat... while he's having a... a... champagne brunch at the... the Hilton?

Now she's shaking Lisa, and Helen is trying to pull them apart, as --

LISA
I want a champagne brunch, too!

DANNY
How about an Egg McMuffin?

EXT. THE MATTHEWS HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Lisa are still finishing their breakfast, as Helen shepherds them out the door. Vicky, still in her robe, watches. The kids climb into Helen's car (still blocking both sides of the driveway) as --

HELEN
Get dressed, and go apologize to your husband.

VICKY
For driving me crazy?

HELEN
So sit on your pride... alone... You're just as stubborn as your father was.
(kisses her)
Eat some breakfast. You look terrible.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jack's Olds drives down the street, hesitates at the blocked driveway, and pulls up to the curb. Helen pokes at Vicky.

HELEN
(continuing; aside to Vicky)
Apologize.

And she hurry's to the car. Jack gets out of his car. He's had a terrible night, and it shows. He starts toward Helen's car, and she starts the motor.

HELEN
(continuing)
Hi, Jack... Goodbye, Jack...

LISA
I want to talk to Daddy.

As Helen drives, off, Jack stands near the curb and Vicky at the door, both waving goodbye. Then they look at each other. Jack starts for the house. Vicky goes inside and slams the door. Jack hesitates, takes a breath for courage, and goes to the house.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Vicky cleans up the kids' dishes, as Jack dogs after her.

JACK
Forget the dishes. I want to take you out to breakfast.

VICKY
Where? To the alley where you threw the food?

JACK
I said I was sorry!
(trying to control himself)
I really am, Vicky. I was wrong to do that.

Vicky hesitates, goes on working.

JACK
(continuing)
Because I know you're trying.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
(turning on him)
No! Because it's none of your business!

The words just pop out, but now Vicky thinks about them... It's a new idea... and she has to think it through... as she continues cleaning the kitchen. Jack plods on --

JACK
I just want to do something to help... but I keep doing the wrong thing... buying small clothes is wrong... and throwing out food is wrong... and telling you you're fat is wrong... and telling you you're not fat is wrong...
(steps in front of Vicky to make her face him)
Vicky, tell me what I should do.

VICKY
Nothing...
(more assured now)
It's just none of your business.

JACK
Vicky... I'm your husband.

VICKY
... Yeah...

JACK
That's how you feel about it? Yeah?

VICKY
That's how I feel about... everything... yeah...

She wanders out of the kitchen still deep in these new thoughts. A beat, then Jack follows to:

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vicky walks about the room, automatically straightening pillows, picking up kids' clothes and toys, etc. Jack follows, as --

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JACK

Since when?

VICKY

I don't know... Somewhere between the ranch house and the station wagon...

JACK

You wanted them.

VICKY

Yeah... I did, didn't I?...

She puts some kids' clothes in Jack's hands, and buried in her thoughts, goes back to straightening. Jack, trying to understand, follows.

JACK

Okay, if you don't want them... what do you want?

VICKY

I want... I want to... do something with my life... I want to... be... somebody...

HOLD ON Vicky thinking.

INT. ART ACADEMY OFFICE - DAY

The office is small, a chaotic combination of art supplies, snack food machines, paintings and office materials. Two students -- blue jeaned, slender, young, are hanging around the snack machines, talking, laughing, eating.

BOY STUDENT

You have any uppers? I'm exhausted.

GIRL STUDENT

(as she eats a candy bar)

Dexadrine -- they don't help me diet -- but they really keep me awake.

She hands him some, and he downs it with canned soda. As they walk out, they pass Vicky coming in, anxiously. She gazes wistfully at their bodies -- and then they're gone -- and Vicky is alone with the clerk MIKE, bearded, blue jeaned and sneakered.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He sits, with his back to her, and types, hunt and peck method, at the moment hesitating and looking for a letter. Vicky, waiting, growing more nervous, finally looks over his shoulder.

VICKY
The z is in the lower left corner.

Mike looks at her, at the typewriter, hits the z, and turns back to Vicky.

MIKE
You just saved my life.

VICKY
I hope you can do the same for me.

MIKE
(comically serious)
I almost made Eagle Scout.

VICKY
That might do it... Is Eric here?

MIKE
(handing her an entry form)
No. I'm Mike. You want to enroll, right?

VICKY
Actually... re-enroll.

MIKE
You've been in school here?

VICKY
A long -- not too long ago.

MIKE
(takes the form away from her)
What's your name?

VICKY
Victoria Matthews.

Mike opens a file drawer and begins to look.

VICKY
(continuing)
It was Victoria Broner when I was here.

(CONTINUED)
Mike closes the file drawer and opens another.

VICKY
(continuing)
It was... twelve years ago.

Mike closes the file drawer.

MIKE
What were you, a child prodigy?

He opens another drawer, and looks for the file.

VICKY
Yeah, I came here straight from finger painting 101.

Mike looks at her and grins... and in a moment she grins back.

MIKE
Funny lady.

He finds the folder, and looks at it as he comes back to the desk, disapproves.

MIKE
(continuing)
Advertising?

Before Vicky can respond, ERIC, a grizzly, 70ish, non-conformist comes in, overalled and paint covered.

ERIC
Mike, we're running low on turp --
(see's Vicky, studies her)
Vicky? Is it Vicky?

VICKY
(leaping into his arms)
Oh, Eric!

ERIC
(to Mike)
Mike, it's Vicky! It's my darling, funny, sweet Vicky!
(plants a noisy smack on her cheek)
My most brilliant student!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

VICKY
Oh, thank you! I need that!

She kisses him.

ERIC
You met Mike? My most brilliant student, but a terrible office clerk.

MIKE
Hi, Vicky.

VICKY
... Hi...

They grin... and Vicky begins to relax. She knows now -- she's doing the right thing for herself.

EXT. A PARK - DAY

We're CLOSE ON Vicky, as she jogs. She's in a sweat suit, soaked with perspiration, but we can SEE she's lost some weight. WIDEN THE SHOT TO INCLUDE Ben several feet in front of her and Joyce several feet behind. As they approach a street corner, Ben, then Vicky, jog in place, waiting for a traffic light to change. Joyce catches up, stops to rest.

VICKY
Don't stop. Jog in place.

BEN
Come on, Joyce -- we're getting skinny.

Joyce's look shows how much she likes him. She starts moving again.

JOYCE
If I get skinny, will you marry me?

BEN
I'll probably marry you anyway, but skinny would be nice.

The light changes, and they move ahead -- with Joyce taking the lead.
Joyce and Ben sit, exhausted, on the bench at a table in front of the hot dog stand, as Vicky looks at the menu printed on the wall behind the counter, and an ATTENDANT, a pimply youth, waits lethargically, to serve her. The meager offering includes hot dogs, fires, chips, and sugared soft drinks.

VICKY
Don't you have anything like... cottage cheese... or a salad?

ATTENDANT
All we got's what's on the board, lady.

VICKY
Oh... What do you put on the hot dogs?

ATTENDANT
Mustard, catsup, relish, onions.

VICKY
Three orders of onions. And three glasses of water.

ATTENDANT
I don't have a price list for onions.

VICKY
Be creative.

Vicky, Ben and Joyce are eating chopped raw onions out of paper hot dog dishes, and drinking lots of water out of paper cups to help them do it, as --

JOYCE
If we lose too much weight, we'll get wrinkles, you know.

BEN
So we'll get face lifts.

He pulls his face upward.

VICKY
Then my husband can stop telling me I look like his mother and start telling me I look like his daughter.

(CONTINUED)
And she thinks about that, frowning, as Joyce and Ben exchange a compassionate look.

JOYCE
Did he really say that?

VICKY
Yep, when I told him I was going back to school.
(checks her watch)
Oh! School! I have a class!

Takes her used dish to trash barrel as:

BEN
Does he still resent your going?

VICKY
... I don't know. We don't talk much -- See you tomorrow.

And she jogs off.

INT. ART SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

We're ON a life drawing model. A young, svelte woman, nearly nude. WIDEN THE SHOT TO INCLUDE several students all drawing her with various degrees of ability and passing around cookies. Then we SEE Mike. His drawing is impressionistic. The model looks almost Rubenesquely rounded. And then we SEE Vicky, near him. Hers is emaciated. Both are good. Vicky steps back to examine her work... and then notices Mike's.

VICKY
You've put twenty pounds on her.

MIKE
I like my women rounded.

VICKY
(striking a comic pose)
You've got the wrong model.

MIKE
When?

VICKY
I was kidding.

(CONTINUED)
52 CONTINUED:

MIKE
I wasn't. I'd love to paint you.
With or without clothes.

A beat, Vicky can't accept this kind of compliment, it
embarrasses her. She turns back to her work.

VICKY
You're crazy.

MIKE
You're very attractive.

Vicky makes a funny face.

MIKE
(continuing)
How about Saturday?

VICKY
I'm giving a party Saturday.

MIKE
Great! What time?

HOLD ON Vicky's reaction... as she realizes he has in-
vited himself.

53 EXT. THE MATTHEWS BACK YARD - DAY

We're ON a CLOSEUP of a large birthday cake on which is
printed "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JACK"... and 39 lit candles.
It's silent for a beat, then;

HELEN (O.S.)
Blow it out before it drips on
the cake.

And several O.S. voices, adult, some children. AD LIB
more encouragement. Jack's face, frowning, APPEARS. He
blows out the candles, and we WIDEN THE SHOT during
applause and singing "Happy Birthday to You"... TO IN-
CLUDE the entire party. The back yard is decorated
with the usual crepe paper and streamers -- but with a
touch more artistry than usual... and lots of people.
Patty (without Phil), Marge and her husband, Joyce and
Ben, Mike, Eric, Helen, Danny, Lisa, Vicky, a trio from
Jack's office: TOM, 50ish, STEVE, late 20's, and
Jack's secretary, KATIE, very young, very cute, and
several people from Patty's party. They're all gath-
ered around Jack, as they sing... and he tries not to
show how much he hates it.

(CONTINUED)
The song over, people gather into small groups. At the table, Vicky cuts cake, while Helen, Lisa and Danny serve. Vicky puts a piece of cake on a plate, puts her fingers to her mouth to lick off frosting, and then stops at the first taste. She grabs a napkin, wipes off the frosting and hands the knife to Helen.

VICKY
You cut the cake.

HELEN
It's your husband's birthday!

VICKY
It's 500 calories a slice.

She walks away from the table, taking a plate of cake. We GO WITH HER to Jack, who is standing with his office buddies. Katie is hanging on Jack's arm, but pulls away as Vicky arrives.

VICKY
(to Jack)
You get the first piece.

JACK
(taking it, nodding toward Mike)
Where'd you find him?

VICKY
He followed me home from school. Come on Jack, enjoy yourself, it's a party.

JACK
I didn't want a party.

TOM
Jack's mad because we kidded him about retirement at the office yesterday.

JACK
I'm only 39.

TOM
But you've been with the company 18 years. Two more years and you can retire.

KATIE
Oh, don't Jack. Katie doesn't want to work for anyone else.

(CONTINUED)
She bats eyelashes at him and then smiles at Vicky as if 'I'm only kidding' and Vicky walks away.

NEW ANGLE

Vicky is with Joyce and Ben -- all three of them just drinking coffee, and watching the cake eaters. Vicky sees Jack feeding cake to Katie.

VICKY
I thought 40 was when it hurt.

BEN
No, 39. At 39, you have 365 days to worry about being 40.

NEW ANGLE - AT THE PRESENT TABLE

Vicky, Patty and Marge are arranging presents as Danny and Lisa round up people. Patty watches Mike, who suddenly swoops Danny up to his back for a piggyback ride, to Danny's delight.

PATTY
(indicating Mike)
He's adorable.

VICKY
He's twenty-seven years old.

PATTY
That's what makes him so adorable.

MARGE
Getting tired of Phil?

PATTY
(as she moves against the crowd toward Mike)
Phil moved out.

As Vicky reacts surprised:

MARGE
Believe me, kid, we've got it better.

Everyone else is now gathered around, some bringing chairs, some sitting on the lawn. Patty sits with Mike. Lisa escorts Jack to Vicky at the table.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LISA
You have to open them, Daddy,
but I'll help.

JACK
(aside to Vicky)
I didn't want a party, and I don't
want presents.

VICKY
(aside to Jack)
Then don't open them.

And she leaves.

NEW ANGLE

Jack is opening gag and real gifts in the b.g. as Vicky
and Helen watch from across the lawn. Vicky is really
low now, as:

HELEN
You won't eat his birthday cake,
you argue with him in front of
the guests, you... you bring
hippies to his house! You know
what your father, may he rest in
peace, would say to you?

VICKY
I know what he'd say to you, Mom.
He'd say, 'Leave Vicky alone.'

HELEN
Well, he'd be wrong, as usual.

VICKY
Mom... leave me alone.

HELEN
There you go, listening to your
father again!

Vicky almost answers, but instead turns away and starts
into the house. Mike, who'd been wandering on the out-
side of the gift opening, approaches her.

MIKE
You okay?

VICKY
Not really.
as he watches Mike and Vicky talking MOS, then sees Mike comforting Vicky in his arms as they go into the house. Jack gets even more upset now and doesn't hear as:

DANNY
Open this one next, Daddy, it's from me!

JACK
You open it, Danny. I'll be right back.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, we can SEE Vicky and Mike on the couch, as Jack hurries to the house. Danny looks after him, disappointed, Helen, disapproving, and everyone else puzzled.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jack marches into the house, as if he expects Vicky and Mike to jump up guiltily. But they don't, they merely look up. Mike's arm is around Vicky's shoulders. He really has been consoling her, but that's not the way Jack sees it. He glares at them a moment, then --

JACK
Take your hands off my wife --
What do you teach at that school? Wife stealing?

VICKY
He's a student.

JACK
(to Mike)
Well, there're a couple of things you could learn.

VICKY
Jack, I want to talk to you.

JACK
Yeah, and I have something to say to you.

MIKE
Go ahead, say it.

JACK
Not to you. To her!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
Mike, please go.

She pushes him to door.

MIKE
If he lays' one hand on you...

Vicky gets Mike out the door, but he stands near the window looking in, so Jack pulls the drapes.

JACK
You got something going with him?

VICKY
No. You got something going with Katie, the little lady of the night?

JACK
Don't be gross.

VICKY
Gross? Me? You're the one who's storming around like a gored bull! What's the matter with you?

JACK
Nothing! Everything! I can't stand it anymore!

VICKY
Meaning me?

JACK
Meaning... everything... everything... something's happening... to me... you... you... you're different... and the kids are... so big... and... and I'm 39 years old...

(really desperate now)

... and... I... I never have any fun.

VICKY
Well... go... have some fun.

JACK
How can I when I'm saddled with a house, and kids, and lawns, and furnaces, and --

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
Well, unsaddle. Move out if that's how you feel about it!

JACK
Oh, Vicky, I want to... I need to... please!

VICKY
... What?

JACK
A... a furnished apartment... a ... a hotel room, even... It's probably a phase or something ... but I need to... I need to find out if I'm missing anything!

VICKY
(awed as she realizes)
... You want to... move out?

JACK
Just... to try it.
(kisses her cheek)
Oh, Vicky, you really do understand.

He goes out. A beat. Vicky starts out slowly, almost in a state of shock.

EXT. THE BACK YARD

Vicky comes out of the living room slowly, looks at the people milling about, laughing, talking, the kids running around, everyone happy... but her. She's standing near the cake table, and half of the cake is still there. She looks at it... and we MOVE IN CLOSE TO HER ... looking at the cake... and hurting...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE
ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The shades are drawn. Vicky is in bed, staring numbly at the ceiling. Helen opens the door. She's carrying the breakfast tray: French toast laden with jelly, plus juice and coffee.

HELEN

Breakfast.

She puts the tray on a chair, starts opening the drapes, letting in the bright morning sunshine, as Vicky sits up. She's puffy eyed and looks terrible. Helen comes back to put the tray on Vicky's lap.

HELEN

(continuing)

When you were a little girl and you went to bed crying about something, I always made you French toast with jelly on it.

Vicky starts to eat, without enjoyment but rapidly.

HELEN

(continuing)

All right, Vicky, that's enough mourning. It's time to get on with our lives.

VICKY

It's my life, and I don't want to get on with it.

HELEN

We'll start by figuring out how to get him back.

VICKY

I don't ever want to see him again.

HELEN

Listen, Miss America. You think men are standing in line waiting for you?

VICKY

I don't want to see them again, either.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She finishes eating, lies down, and pulls the covers over her head. Helen looks at the covers, remember:

HELEN
That's how I felt when Jerry died. I never wanted to look at a man again. Then, when I stopped crying, I realized I hadn't been that happy with him in the first place.

Vicky looks out from the covers. As Helen gets on the exercycle, she cycles, Vicky watches. Then:

VICKY
... Why didn't you get married again?

HELEN
I wanted a young man, not an old goat... and all the men I met had the same idea. Vicky, I was forty-six when Jerry died. You're only twenty-eight.

VICKY
Thirty-two.

HELEN
You don't have to broadcast that! Go find yourself a nice young man ... with a decent job... and a good future... Likes kids... doesn't mind mother-in-laws...

As she talks, we FOCUS on Vicky, thinking.

INT. A SNACK SHOP - DAY

A funky students' hangout, obviously near the art school. A pop art mural of soft drinks, fries, desserts, cover the walls. Vicky and Mike are in a small booth and we MOVE IN CLOSE to them. Vicky is eating a small bowl of cottage cheese, in a dutiful manner, and longingly watching Mike eat his hamburger and fries.

VICKY
(in the same enumerating tone Helen was using)
Office girl, gofer, paint brush cleaner, anything.

(CONTINUED)
MIKE
How about advertising art?

VICKY
No. I have to lose more weight before I can do any artwork.

MIKE
Why?

VICKY
Did you ever see a fat artist?

MIKE
Sure. And you're not fat.

VICKY
I know, you like your women rounded.

MIKE
(leaning to her)
Very much.

VICKY
Well, I don't... like myself rounded.

MIKE
Do you like yourself -- period?

VICKY
... Not at the moment.

Almost without realizing it, she takes a fry from his plate and nibbles on it, as:

MIKE
You miss your old man?

VICKY
(shrugs)
I don't know... I just feel so...

MIKE
Deserted?

VICKY
Discarded... discarded is a better word... I feel discarded... like a ... bag of garbage.

MIKE
Heavy...

(continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

Vicky looks at the French fry, halfway up to her mouth.

VICKY
Yeah, that, too.

She puts the fry down in her empty bowl.

MIKE
(pushing his plate at her)
Hey, if you're hungry...

VICKY
(pushing his plate back)
If I ate every time I was hungry, I'd weigh 200 pounds.

MIKE
You'd still be adorable.

VICKY
You're crazy.

MIKE
(shrugs)
I like you.

VICKY
Oh... go... pick on someone your own size.

MIKE
I like you.

EXT. A SHOPPING MALL - DAY

Vicky, Patty and Joyce, carrying some things they've already bought, walk along, looking in store windows. Joyce is noticeably slimmer. Vicky keeps talking MOS: as they pass a dress shop displaying lean mannequins in slinky clothes, Patty stops to look and then catches up; at the Diet Dessertery Joyce stops to look and then catches up, passing an advertising board displaying a lean, gorgeous couple, eating spaghetti at a candlelit table, and in love. When they're all together again, we MOVE IN CLOSER and can HEAR them.

VICKY
How can he like me?

(CONTINUED)
JOYCE
You're a likeable person. Why
don't you go out with him?

VICKY
He's a baby.

PATTY
I went out with him.

VICKY
You were getting over a broken
romance.

Patty and Joyce stop, looking at her meaningfully, and
Vicky understands. She stops, too.

VICKY
(continuing)
Yeah...

They stop at three adjoining stores: Patty at a
furrier, Joyce at the lingerie shop and Vicky at an
appliance store where she looks at the TV displayed
in the window. A commercial is on: a before and
after ad for a reducing wafer, showing silhouettes of
a fat and slender woman. Vicky joins Joyce.

JOYCE
How would I look in that?

VICKY
Great, let's see if they have your
size.

JOYCE
(walking on)
I don't want it my size. I want
it size 11.
(grinning; she's
been waiting to
say this)
For my trousseau.

VICKY
Ben proposed!

JOYCE
Well, actually I did. But he
accepted.

VICKY
Oh, Joyce!

(continued)
And she hugs Joyce. Patty notices and joins them.

VICKY
(continuing;
to Patty)
She's getting married!

PATTY
Poor thing --

VICKY
(to Joyce)
When's the wedding?

JOYCE
As soon as I can wear my mother's
size 11 wedding gown.
(grins)
About a month.

VICKY
How can you be a size 11 in a
month?

Joyce grins, takes a small plastic bottle from her
purse. It contains a brownish liquid.

JOYCE
With my trusty sword.

VICKY
(taking it,
looking at it)
What is it?

PATTY
Liquid protein.

Vicky gives it back as if she'd touched hot coals.

VICKY
I thought they took that stuff
off the market.

JOYCE
You can still get it some places.

PATTY
Security Drugs carries it.

Vicky and Joyce react, surprised.

(CONTINUED)
JOYCE
You use it, too?

PATTY
When the scale goes up four pounds.
But it usually doesn't. I keep it
under control with appetite
depressants.

They walk on.

VICKY
That stuff's dangerous.

JOYCE
So is being fat. It can give you
diabetes, high blood pressure,
arthritis, colitis, kidney problems...

As they walk AWAY FROM CAMERA:

JOYCE
(continuing)
Patty, can you get me some of those
appetite depressants?

EXT. THE MATTHEWS' HOUSE - DAY

Jack drives a shiny new Mercedes up the driveway.
Danny and Lisa and piles of presents are in the back
seat. The garage door opens automatically, revealing
Vicky's wagon and Helen's Ford parked side by side.
Jack doesn't like his place being usurped.

INT. THE MATTHEWS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vicky and Helen are at the front window, peeking out
through the curtains. We can SEE the kids pulling
Jack toward the house, all of them balancing presents.
As Vicky hurries toward her bedroom, Helen opens the
front door.

DANNY
We went to the baseball
game!

LISA
We had lunch at a
sidewalk cafe!

JACK
... Hello, Helen.

HELEN
Come on in, don't stand in the
doorway like a stranger.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jack isn't sure, but the kids drag him inside. Helen closes the door.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Vicky can hear them, as she goes to the dresser for her candy bar.

DANNY (O.S.)
We won eleven to five.

LISA (O.S.)
Look at the sweater Daddy got me.
I want to show Mommy.

BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM

as the kids dash into Vicky's bedroom.

JACK
I brought Vicky some sugarless candy... How is she?

HELEN
Oh, she's fine. Busy, running around, dates every night.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

The kids are showing Vicky their presents as she eats her candy and listens through the door.

JACK (O.S.)
Oh? Great... You think she'd talk to me?

Vicky shakes her head emphatically "no."

HELEN (O.S.)
Of course.

Vicky struggles to swallow and shoves the rest of the candy away.

HELEN (O.S.)
(continuing; coming closer to bedroom)
She's probably be furious if she missed you.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Vicky puts on a wide grin and opens the door before Helen can.

INT. LIVING ROOM

As Jack starts toward the bedroom, the door opens. Vicky appears, smiling, wiping any trace of candy from her mouth.

VICKY

Oh, Jack! I didn't know you were here!

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

Vicky and Jack walk around the Mercedes, admiring it. Vicky is working hard to keep the casual pose, and Jack is very nervous.

VICKY

Well, I saw it and I'm impressed.

She starts inside, but Jack stops her with:

JACK

Vicky... How've you been doing?

VICKY

Great.

JACK

... You dating?

VICKY

(hesitates, then)

... Mom told you I was.

JACK

That bum at the art school?

A beat... he's getting to Vicky now.

VICKY

Among others.

JACK

You're really living it up, aren't you?

VICKY

And without a Mercedes, too.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JACK
I need the Mercedes!

Vicky lifts one of the neck chains he's wearing.

VICKY
Can I borrow these sometime?

JACK
Don't get petty.

VICKY
(turns and starts for the house)
Well, thanks for taking the kids out. See you next Sunday.

JACK
No -- I can't.

Vicky looks back, questioningly.

JACK
(continuing)
I'm... going on a cruise...
with a friend.

VICKY
Oh... Remind her to roll you over when you start snoring.

And she marches into the house.

INT. MIKE'S STUDIO - NIGHT

A tiny, one-room garage apartment, funkied up with Mike's artwork, collections of "found art," pillows all over the floor. There's no bed. Vicky, in the same clothes as in the last scene, is still tense and angry. She paces as Mike sits back on pillows.

MIKE
So what do you care?

VICKY
I care!

MIKE
Do you really want to go back to that housewife routine? Don't you want your own life?

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
Yes, I want my own life!... and
I also want... I'm lonely...

MIKE
Well, there's always me.

VICKY
Oh, come on, Mike. You're my
friend. I need...

MIKE
A lover.

VICKY
... Yeah...

MIKE
I'm very versatile.

VICKY
Aw, Mike.

MIKE
Try me.

VICKY
Some other time.

MIKE
After you lose weight?

He's pushed a button. Vicky glares at him, then:

VICKY
See, you think so, too.

MIKE
(getting up and
going to her)
I think you're one terrific lady.

VICKY
No, a couple of terrific ladies.

MIKE
(getting romantic)
Stop putting yourself down, Vicky.
You're fun, and you're funny and
you're warm, and bright... and just
generally... great...

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
Yeah, great... as in big.

MIKE
No, great as in --
(turns away from her)
Hell, no. I'm not going to feed into that game. You want to think you're a big, fat zero, go ahead. Only do it somewhere else.

He opens the door and stands as if to usher her out.

VICKY
No, wait. Mike... I want to talk to you.

MIKE
Enough talk. I want you.

VICKY
You don't.

MIKE
Okay, I don't.
He gestures for her to leave.

VICKY
(not moving)
You do?
Mike gestures for her to leave.

VICKY
(continuing)
You'd really want this?
She gestures at her body.

MIKE
... Damnit, Vicky, I'm interested in you. Not just your body, all of you, and don't you dare make a joke about that.

Vicky was going to, but she holds it back.

MIKE
(continuing)
I dug you the minute I saw you...
(MORE)
MIKE (CONT'D)
And I've seen you now, a couple of different sizes... and it doesn't matter. I like you. I'd like to make love to you.

VICKY
(afraid)
... I'd like that.

MIKE
Okay...

He slams the door hard, and a Murphy bed, that had been hidden by a large hanging, falls from the wall. Vicky looks at it, surprised, and then back at Mike, nervously, as he takes her into his arms. They begin to kiss.

VICKY
Turn out the lights.

He looks at her, then very definitely:

MIKE
No.

And he goes back to kissing her. Vicky is stiff and afraid at first. As she begins to melt...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FOUR
ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. THE MATTHEWS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vicky, several pounds slimmer, looking good, stands before Helen, Jack, Lisa and Danny. She's just made a speech that has left them all surprised.

LISA
What's the Magic Circle?

HELEN
A fat farm.

JACK
A fat farm?

DANNY
What do they grow?  Fat?

VICKY
Knock it off, Danny.

JACK
What's it going to cost me?

VICKY
Less than a cruise.

Vicky and Jack glare at each other, then turn to look at the kids.

LISA
Come on, Danny.

They go out, then:

JACK
You don't need a fat farm. You look... okay.

VICKY
Thank you.

JACK
Must be that... swinging life you're leading.

VICKY
(almost argues, then cools it)
Could be.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Jack frowns, but doesn't answer.

HELEN
So what do you need a fat farm for?

VICKY
I've hit a plateau. I have fifteen more pounds to go, and I can't budge them.

Then, overlapping:

HELEN
You know what happens at fat farms? They take it off, and you come home and put it on.

JACK
I agreed on support money, not on fat farms.

HELEN
Who takes care of the kids? The old standby?

Gesturing at herself.

JACK
You can't just walk out on your kids --

VICKY
(topping that)
You did!

That stops them. Jack takes a moment to find a retort, but before he can give it:

VICKY
(continuing)
I'm not walking out on my kids. That's why I wanted this meeting. I have it all planned. The refrigerator is filled. There are some precooked things in the freezer. Jack, you'll stay here with the kids. Mom, you'll be here when the kids get home from school.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JACK
You know what, Vicky? I liked you better when you were fat.

VICKY
Yeah, but I like me better now.

HOLD on Vicky, and...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSEUP OF VICKY

in a leotard, huffing and puffing, through a rigorous exercise. But unlike the earlier gym scene, she's doing it. WIDEN the SHOT and we're in...

INT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE GYM - DAY

The gym, like everything at this place, is a temple to slimness and beauty. Soft colors, slender shapes in furniture and decor, beautiful employees. A group of women and some men, of varying sizes, from gorgeous to mountainous, are doing exercises with a slender, but muscular woman GYM INSTRUCTOR. The guests wear a conglomeration of clothes from scruffy sweat suits to plastic see-through sauna suits to revealing bikinis. The Gym Instructor and some of the slimmer people are watching themselves in the mirrored wall -- the others, including Vicky, are not.

GYM INSTRUCTOR
And bounce and two and three and four, other way, two and three and four... and back and two... and all... the way...

Vicky falters, takes a breath, and starts again.

EXT. A JOGGING TRACK - DAY

The same group of people, now in jogging suits, one of them a silver lame, are jogging -- or dragging -- around the track, behind a different instructor, a slim young woman. A heavy man near the back sneaks candy from his pocket as he runs. And further back, a woman pulls an orange blossom from a tree and pops it in her mouth. Vicky is near the middle. An attractive muscular man, GARY, slows down to run beside her, smiles at her. Vicky is surprised at first, and then likes it and smiles back.
CLOSEUP OF VICKY

as she lies, nude, covered by towels... being massaged vigorously. WIDEN the SHOT and we're in...

INT. THE MASSAGE ROOM - DAY

Vicky's MASSEUR is a mass of muscles. He pounds away at her relentlessly, as Vicky groans and grunts.

MASSEUR
Tell me if I'm being too rough.

VICKY
No... it's... uh... fine... ow!
... fine...

MASSEUR
You've got great muscle tone. Pull a few more pounds off here... and tighten a bit there... You're a great looking woman.

VICKY
(grins up at him)
I bet you say that to every woman you beat up on.

MASSEUR
No, only the great looking ones.

The massage goes on, and Vicky relaxes, smiling, very pleased with herself.

INT. THE GYM - NIGHT

The participants are now in casual resort wear, learning disco dancing from the DISCO INSTRUCTOR, a very slender chorus boy type. Vicky is keeping up better than most -- and Gary is right beside her.

DISCO INSTRUCTOR
And dip... and again... and start over -- front left, right, left, kick and turn and -- the same --

And they go on, Vicky getting more sure of herself and adding a frill or two of her own. Gary turns to her, and they become a twosome as the others continue in the straight lines.
The floor and walls are covered with machines to pull and tighten every muscle in the body. Three walls are mirrored. The fourth leads to the jacuzzi, which is an ell off the gym, and the sauna and steam room, visible through steamy glass doors. Most of the machines are in use -- a heavy woman is giggling as the vibrating machine jiggles her bottom, a man struggles unsuccessfully with a pulley, people on slant boards do a variety of things with their arms and legs. A man comes from the sauna, wrapped in a towel, and nearly fainting -- a woman comes from the steam room, also wrapped in towels and nearly fainting -- they stumble past each other; he goes to the steam room, she into the sauna. We MOVE IN CLOSER to the jacuzzi. In the bubbling water, people relax against the water jets, or swim lazily about. We PICK OUT Vicky, sitting beside her jogging partner, Gary.

GARY

Staying long?

VICKY

A week.

GARY

Two weeks. I'm Gary Radford. Chicago. Single. I'm in electronics.

VICKY

Vicky Matthews. Los Angeles. Separated. I'm... an artist... when I find a job.

GARY

(moving closer)

Oh, an artist. How interesting.

It's a come-on, Vicky knows it, and isn't sure how to react... but she's enjoying it.

INT. THE MAGIC CIRCLE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The PARTICIPANTS wear bulky robes or glamorous leisure outfits. They sit about tables for four, finishing tiny portions of very dietetic looking food. As we SLOWLY PAN the room, we pick up bits of conversation. First table:

(CONTINUED)
MAN #1
The saddest moment of the day is when I look down at my plate and there's nothing left.

Second table:

WOMAN #1
I'd eat until I was sick -- and then take a triple dose of a good, strong laxative.

Third table:

MAN #2
I've lost 755 pounds... in between gaining 874 pounds.

Fourth table:

MAN #3
That wasn't a forward pass, it was a forward fumble!

MAN #4
They call themselves a football team!

Fifth table: Vicky sits with Gary; MARV, a paunchy older man; and SYLVIA, a well-preserved older woman.

MARV
You can't get jobs, you can't get insurance...

SYLVIA
You can't find a decent dress. Half the people in the country are overweight, and all the stores carry junior miss.

We PUSH IN CLOSE to Gary and Vicky, who are involved in their own conversation.

GARY
After you start work, I'll come over and take you away from your drawing board. I get out here a couple times a year.
VICKY
(pleased with herself)
Okay... a couple of times a year you can take me away from my drawing board.

GARY
How about tonight?

VICKY
I don't have a drawing board here.

GARY
I have a room.

VICKY
So do I. A single... But thanks for asking.

And they grin at each other.

INT. VICKY'S ROOM AT THE MAGIC CIRCLE - NIGHT

Vicky, in the robe she wore at dinner, is sprawled, exhausted, across the bed... and talking on the phone.

VICKY
... I sound tired, because I am tired. But I'm feeling great... Joyce is picking me up... Mom... Mom, let me talk to the kids... Hi, Lisa, how are you?... That's nice... I never said he was a bad father. I said... Oh, hi, Danny, how are you?... Yeah, Lisa just told me... No, tell him I don't want to talk... (cooler)
Hello, Jack... How's it going?
(growing angry)
You can go skiing next week.
The mountain will still be there... Jack, I'm going to hang up now... We can talk about it when I get back... I'm going to hang up now... Jack, I'm going to --

And she pulls the phone from her ear, as Jack SLAMS the PHONE DOWN. Vicky looks at the dead phone, and hangs it up.
INT. THE GYM - DAY

It's almost the end of a gym class. The class is on the floor doing sit ups -- with varying degrees of difficulty. Most are exhausted.

GYM INSTRUCTOR
And one more time... all the way to your toes... and back... slowly ... one vertebrae at a time.

And they finish.

GYM INSTRUCTOR
(continuing)
Not too shabby. Pool exercise in ten minutes. Let's go.

She bounces up, and goes out. Several people get up, more slowly, and go after her. A WOMAN heads for the scale in one corner. Another WOMAN watches.

WOMAN ON SCALE
One quarter of a pound.

WOMAN WATCHING
Don't drink water -- you'll gain it all back.

They go out. Then only four people are left including Vicky, Gary, Marv and Sylvia, all lying on the floor, wiped out. They don't move for a moment. Then, still lying prone on the floor:

MARV
You know what we are? We're a bunch of masochists.

SYLVIA
Not me. I'm a young woman wrapped in an old package... I'm trying to doll up the package.

GARY
I'm drying out.

The others look at him, surprised.

GARY
(continuing)
And losing weight. Did you know a screwdriver has more calories than a chocolate doughnut?

(CONTINUED)
A beat.

MARV
So, who needs enemies, we've got ourselves.

A beat, Vicky is really thinking now, really trying to figure it out.

SYLVIA
Not me. I'm good to myself. Too good. That's why I have to come here every six months.

VICKY
That's not being good to yourself, going up and down like a yoyo.

SYLVIA
Well, I like to eat.

VICKY
... I'm not sure I do... Half the time I don't even know what I'm putting into my mouth.

MARV
Or how much.

VICKY
I don't think I eat because I'm hungry either... I don't let myself get hungry.

MARV
Yeah, my mouth's going all day, when does my stomach have time to get hungry?

GARY
(to Vicky)
So why do you eat?

VICKY
I don't know... It's... something... it gives me something.

GARY
But that's not what you really want.

(Continued)
No... what I really want is...

A job?

I want... to like myself.

What's not to like?

Well, I'm...

(looks in mirror)
What's not to like?
(to others)
I'm not some kind of... rotten person, am I?

The others shake their heads in unison, no.

(continuing)
There is something to like. I'm a... a good daughter, and a good mother...
(shrugs)
... I wasn't a bad wife...
(intently)
I'm a pretty talented artist...
(looks in mirror)
... And I'm not that bad looking.

Gary wolf whistles.

(continuing)
So... I don't have to eat.

Looks in mirror, straightens up, does a bit of a model's stance, likes it, looks back at them, smiling broadly.

(continuing)
I don't have to eat!

HOLD on Vicky.
EXT. FAT FARM - DAY

Gary, Sylvia and Marv wave goodbye as Vicky, in a fitted jump suit, throws her bag into the back seat of Joyce's car and gets in. Vicky is looking slimmer and terrific; Joyce is also slimmer, but very pale and wan.

INT. JOYCE'S CAR - DAY

as they greet each other with a hug. Vicky studies Joyce worriedly.

VICKY
How are you doing?

JOYCE
(as she pulls away)
Great. Lost six pounds this week. How about you?

VICKY
Seven.

JOYCE
Ah, but I didn't have to move a muscle.

VICKY
Ah, but moving muscles was so much fun!

JOYCE
Oh?... Tell me about him.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - DAY

Joyce's car rounds a corner, and pulls to the curb as:

JOYCE (V.O.)
We've set the wedding date. October sixth. You're matron of honor.

VICKY (V.O.)
I'd be honored.

The car pulls up to Vicky's house. Helen's Ford really blocks both sides of the driveway. Jack's Mercedes is at the curb in front. Joyce pulls her car up behind it.
INT. JOYCE’S CAR - DAY

VICKY
You really going to stay on the protein until then?

JOYCE
Until I get into that gown.

VICKY
Are you all right, Joyce?

JOYCE
I feel fantastic. And you look fantastic. Go in there and show them.

EXT. THE HOUSE

Vicky gets her bag out of Joyce's car, waves as Joyce pulls away, and then turns and faces the house. She pulls her stomach in, stands straighter and starts up the walk.

INT. THE MATTHEWS LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vicky stands in the middle of the room and turns, like a model, as Helen, Jack, Lisa and Danny examine her. Danny is awed, Lisa unsure, Jack getting turned on and Helen unimpressed.

HELEN
How long will it last?

VICKY
Thank you, Mother, for the vote of confidence.

DANNY
You're beautiful, Mommy.

VICKY
(kissing him)
Thank you, handsome. What do you think, Lisa?

LISA
You're so... different!

And she runs to her own room.
INT. LISA'S ROOM - DAY

The room is combination frilly girl, and leftover child. Lisa is lying face down on the bed, and Vicky goes to her.

VICKY
Hey... Lisa... I'm still me...

LISA
No, you're not. You're different.

VICKY
Look at me.

She picks Lisa up, and turns her so that they're face to face.

VICKY
(continuing)
See? Same face. Same eyes, same nose, same mouth --

LISA
Different chin.

VICKY
I should hope so... Lisa, I feel great about myself. Be happy for me!

A beat.

LISA
Oh, Mommy... don't go away and leave me like Daddy did.

A beat, and Vicky gathers Lisa into her arms and holds her tightly. HOLD on them.

INT. VICKY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Vicky, drained from her session with Lisa, doesn't see Jack lying on the bed, trying to look sexy, as she comes in and unzips her jumpsuit.

JACK
You look fantastic.

Vicky jumps, sees him, and tries to zip the suit back up, but she's nervous and the zipper sticks.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
I thought you'd left.

JACK
No... I'm still here...

Vicky can't budge the zipper, she holds the jumpsuit closed and sidles toward the closet.

VICKY
I thought... you'd be happy to get out of here... by now.

JACK
I thought so, too...

Vicky hurriedly gets out of the jumpsuit and grabs something from the closet to put on, a filmy negligee.

JACK
(continuing)
Until I saw you.

Vicky realizes what she's doing, throws the negligee into the closet and grabs a shapeless old chenille robe.

VICKY
So... did you have any problems?

JACK
Yes... I missed you.

She turns away from him, getting the robe on, and Jack hurries over from the bed. When she turns back, he's face to face with her.

VICKY
Oh...!

She moves away from him, and he follows as:

JACK
It's been a long time, Vicky.

VICKY
Not so long... actually...

He grabs at her, and pulls her to him.

JACK
I want you.

(continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

VICKY
So how come you walked out on me?

JACK
(shrugs)
Well, you know what you were like before.

Vicky stops struggling, looks at him, and shoves him away.

VICKY
Well, this is after. Get out of my bedroom.

JACK
(getting angry)
Sure!... I pay for that fat farm, and that... that hippy gets the benefits, is that it?

Vicky throws a pillow at him.

VICKY
Out!

JACK
You wouldn't take the weight off for me! Why'd you do it for him?

Vicky throws another pillow.

VICKY
I did it for me! Can't you understand that? I did it for me. For me!

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE
ACT SIX

FADE IN:

INT. MIKE'S STUDIO - DAY

Mike is painting at an easel and looks up to see Vicky, very angry, at his open door. He looks at her questioningly, and she slams the door hard. The bed comes down.

MIKE
(looking her over)
Hey, you look fantastic!

VICKY
Do you know what Jack said?

MIKE
No. And I don't want to.

VICKY
(a beat)
Neither do I.

And she starts for the bed, taking off her jacket at the same time.

TIME LAPSE

Vicky and Mike are in bed, they've made love and are now nestled in each other's arms.

MIKE
So what did Jack say?

VICKY
He said that I changed, that I'm a different person.

MIKE
You are.

VICKY
How?

MIKE
You're sure of yourself, you know what you want.

VICKY
... I want a job.
INT. AN ACADEMY CLASSROOM - DAY

Eric is showing samples of Vicky's work to FRANK LESSER, a handsome, 40ish businessman... as Vicky watches nervously, and Mike protectively. Frank is interested in the work... but is more interested in Vicky.

FRANK
(to Vicky)
You'd have to start as an
apprentice.

VICKY
Fine.

MIKE
No, I don't think so.

ERIC
(taking Mike aside)
Just to start. He's giving her
a job.

MIKE
He's giving her the business.

ANGLE ON VICKY AND FRANK
with Mike and Eric still arguing MOS in b.g.

FRANK
There'll be an opening in a week
or two. I'll call you.

VICKY
Great.

FRANK
Maybe we can have lunch... or
dinner?

He takes her hand. Mike sees, starts toward them, and
Eric holds him back. Eric goes to show Frank out,
leaving Mike and Vicky alone in the room.

MIKE
What was all that about...
(caricaturing
Frank)
Lunch... or dinner?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
You almost blew it for me!

MIKE
There's nothing to blow. He didn't offer you a job. He offered you...
(caricaturing)
Lunch... or dinner... and after that, who knows?

VICKY
Mike, he liked my work!

MIKE
He barely looked at your work!
The only thing he's interested in is you... as a... a sex object.

Vicky reacts -- her, a sex object?

EXT. A WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

We HEAR the last strains of "THE WEDDING MARCH," as it ends.

HELEN (V.O.)
It should only happen to you.

VICKY (V.O.)
It did.

INT. THE WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

fully decorated for a wedding. Joyce and Ben stand before the minister -- Joyce wearing her mother's wedding dress. It's tight, but it fits. She's really baggy-eyed and very sick looking, but also very happy. As is Ben, also slimmer. Among the guests are Vicky as matron of honor, standing close to the couple, Helen next to her, and elsewhere -- Mike with Lisa and Danny and Patty and Marge. A table laden with rich food and liquor is at the back of the room, waiting. Danny sneaks over for a taste as the ceremony goes on MOS as:

HELEN (V.O.)
It could happen again... you could give up the hippy and find yourself a man.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY (V.O.)
Shh, I'm listening to the
ceremony.

We HEAR the ceremony as an unintelligible MURMUR for a
beat, as we MOVE IN CLOSE to Vicky and Helen, then
it's MOS again, as:

HELEN
Or, if you came to your senses,
you could get Jack back.

VICKY
I don't want Jack back.

HELEN
You can't support yourself.

VICKY
Mom, please --

HELEN
As bad as it was with your father,
at least I had someone to take care
of me.

Vicky looks at her sharply -- opens her mouth for a
sharp rebuttal -- and at that moment the ceremony is
over. Vicky and Helen are caught in the mob of people
going to congratulate the newlyweds, and others head-
ing for the food; they try to hear each other over
that.

VICKY
What was so bad about my father?

HELEN
What?

VICKY
(louder)
Why are you always picking on my
father?

A couple of people look their way, and Vicky, embara-
rassed, takes Helen's arm and steers her away from
the mob. As they pass Mike on his way to the newly-
weds:

MIKE
Where are you going?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

VICKY
Tell Joyce and Ben congratulations
and I'll be right back.

Helen shrugs an "I-don't-know-what's-going-on" to Mike,
as Vicky pushes her toward the back of the room.

ANGLE - OUTSIDE THE RESTROOMS IN THE CHAPEL

Vicky steers Helen toward the women's restroom.

HELEN
What are you doing?

Vicky opens the restroom door, but the room is packed
with women waiting their turn. She closes the door on
them, and pushes Helen toward the men's restroom near-
by.

HELEN
(continuing)
I knew it, she's going crazy.

Just as they start to open the men's room door, a MAN
comes out, checking his fly.

MAN
What?...

As Vicky shoves Helen inside.

HELEN
We can't go in there!

MAN
You can't go in there!

And the door closes. We can HEAR the lock turn.

INT. THE MEN'S RESTROOM - DAY

HELEN
If you have something to do in
here, do it, and let's go back
to the wedding.

VICKY
After we get something settled.
BACK TO THE CHAPEL

People are milling around now, the children chasing each other. Joyce looks about, sees Mike, who's looking off toward the restrooms. She works her way through the crowd, accepting congratulations, and gets to Mike.

JOYCE
Where's Vicky?

MIKE
In the men's room.

Joyce and Patty, near her, do takes, and Mike shrugs.

BACK TO THE MEN'S ROOM

VICKY
You're always picking on me, and you're always picking on Daddy.

HELEN
What did I say? I said he supported me.

VICKY
No, what you said is, I can't support myself. And I can!

BACK TO THE CHAPEL - JUST OUTSIDE THE MEN'S ROOM

Joyce, Patty and Mike approach the door, and Marge is pushing through people to get to them. Joyce knocks as Lisa and Danny join them.

LISA
Is Mom in there?

BACK TO THE MEN'S ROOM

HELEN
Look what you're doing to your life!

VICKY
All right, look what I'm doing! I have a job -- almost.

(CONTINUED)
HELEN
Apprentice. Thirty-four years old, and she's going to be an apprentice.

VICKY
Thirty-two!

There's a KNOCK.

JOYCE -(O.S.)
Vicky, is anything wrong?

HELEN
You had a husband, and a home, and a decent life --

VICKY
It wasn't enough!

HELEN
Oh, you're so independent!

VICKY
Yes, I am! Finally, I am!

MIKE -(O.S.)
Vicky, come on out.

HELEN
How about your children?

VICKY
I'll support them.

HELEN
A child needs a father!

VICKY
A child needs a mother, too!

Vicky and Helen glare at each other, as:

MAN -(O.S.)
What's the matter? Is it out of order?

HELEN
I was a good mother... I gave you everything you needed.

VICKY
Food! You gave me food!

(Continued)
HELEN
What should I have done? Starved you?

VICKY
I needed more than that. I needed you to... to tell me that I was... pretty... and smart... and talented...

HELEN
Like your father did. He gave you a big head, your father.

VICKY
He made me feel... like I was somebody.

BEN (O.S.)
What's going on?

LISA (O.S.)
Mom and Grandma are fighting!

DANNY (O.S.)
(excited)
Wow, are they ever!

HELEN
I don't understand that you're talking about.

VICKY
Mom, I needed you to believe in me... so I could believe in myself.

PATTY (O.S.)
Vicky, are you okay?

HELEN
... Is that why you were so... so tight with him?... Your father?...

VICKY
He believed in me.

HELEN
(wistfully)
You were so close, the two of you.

MARGE (O.S.)
Vicky, please, come out.

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
(realizing)
Mom...? Were you jealous?... Of me?

Helen's look is the answer -- yes.

MIKE (O.S.)
Vicky, I'm coming in there!

HELEN
It was always the two of you... together...

VICKY
He loved you so much...

HELEN
He was so proud of you.

VICKY
(on an incredulous giggle)
I think we were rivals.

HELEN
... That's ridiculous...

She starts to giggle.

VICKY
Ridiculous...

The giggling grows into a relieved guffaw. Vicky puts her arms out, and Helen, like a little girl, goes into them. They've reversed roles. Vicky rocks her gently, as the laughter subsides.

BACK TO THE CHAPEL - AT THE MEN'S ROOM DOOR

There's a mob in front of the door now -- all staring as Vicky and Helen, their arms about each other, come out. Over that a high-pitched TV ANNOUNCER'S VOICE:

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
All your troubles are over -- or will be --

CLOSEUP - TV SCREEN

A split-screen picture of a woman -- before and after. (CONTINUED)
The before grotesque and frowning; the after, pencil thin -- and smiling sexily.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
... after just 14 days in the famous Meltaweigh.

The word "Meltaweigh" appears, superimposed over the slender woman in a space-suit-like contraption hooked to a vacuum cleaner.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
(continuing)
Guaranteed to take off a minimum of two pounds a week, or your money back.

(voice changed for disclaimer)
Manufacturer's diet must be followed to take advantage of this offer.

The words move up the screen and the phone number "555-THIN" appears under it. WIDEN THE SHOT and we're in...

INT. MATTHEWS KITCHEN - DAY

Vicky, slender and cute in her blue jeans, cleans up three breakfast servings and stares at the small countertop TV, only half listening.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Call 555-THIN and ask for Meltaweigh.

It gets to Vicky now, and she switches the channel... to a picture of a rich chocolate cake.

WOMAN ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Professional? No, yours? You can make this cake right in your own kitchen!

The Woman Announcer is on camera now -- slender, beautiful, and cutting herself a piece of the cake, as:

WOMAN ANNOUNCER
Your husband and children will adore you when you present them with this moist, rich taste.

VICKY
(looking to the phone) Ring, damn you!

(CONTINUED)
The PHONE RINGS, and Vicky jumps, as if she’d really made it happen. She turns OFF the TV and runs for the phone.

VICKY
Hello?
(disappointed)
Oh, Mike... No, I didn't mean 'Oh, Mike,' I meant, I thought it was
Frank Lesser... He will, too, call me... No, not for a date! I mean
not only for a date!... Well, then
I'll go over there... Uh, tomorrow.
If he doesn't call today, I'll go --

The DOORBELL RINGS.

VICKY
(continuing)
My doorbell's ringing... No, I
don't think Frank would come over
here... I'm expecting Joyce.

The DOORBELL RINGS again, more insistently.

VICKY
(continuing)
Mike, I have to go to the door...
I can't go out with you, I have
to wait for his call...

The DOORBELL RINGS nonstop.

VICKY
(continuing)
I have to go, Mike... Well, maybe
he would call if you wouldn't tie
up the phone!... No, Mike, wait,
I didn't mean --

She reacts to the phone being hung up on her. Then hangs up and runs out of the kitchen.

EXT. VICKY'S HOUSE - DAY

At the front door. Joyce, half-unconscious, leans on the doorbell. Vicky opens the door and Joyce almost falls into her arms.

JOYCE
Vicky... help me...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Vicky, holding her, is horrified. FREEZE on them.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SIX
ACT SEVEN

FADE IN:

INT. JOYCE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Joyce is unconscious, hooked up to life supports. Though she can't hear him, Ben talks to her gently, as he holds her hand, and the tears run down his face.

BEN
I didn't fall in love with a size 11. . . I didn't fall in love with you when you were skinny... why'd you think...? Why didn't you tell me what...? I would have... Joyce... don't die...

During this we PULL BACK from them, and realize that Vicky is in the room, sitting, numbly, and watching.

INT. HOSPITAL CAFETERIA - DAY

Surrounded by bustling activity and noise, Vicky and Ben enter and get into line as:

VICKY
(taking coffee for both of them)
And she didn't take the lab tests? Or the supplements for the liquid protein?

BEN
(shakes head, no)
Just appetite depressants, tranquilizers, uppers, downers, who the hell knows what... and all for a damned dress size!... It's not worth it, Vicky! We don't all have to look like sticks!

VICKY
But you were losing weight, Ben. And she was afraid you would find someone else... someone... slender.

They're now at the desserts.

BEN
That's... crazy...
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
BEN (CONT'D)
It's... I love Joyce... I love
her!... It's... It's crazy!
(glaring at the
rich desserts)
Everyone's throwing food at us... and then, they're saying we
can't eat it!... It's on television, it's in the papers, it's on the
billboards... It's in the damned restaurants... They're shoving
the calories at you, and they're saying come on in, and eat those
gigantic plates full of stuff...
But!... But you'd better be skinny when you're doing it, or you won't
be able to buy clothes you can wear while you're doing it!

Half-crazed with worry and anger, now, he suddenly grabs at a piece of cream pie... doesn't know what to
do with it.

BEN
(continuing)
Well... if that's what they want...

He suddenly puts the pie on his tray and begins to grab more pie, and cake, and ice cream, and every no-no he
can see, and pile them in a precarious tower on his tray, as:

BEN
(continuing)
If that's what they want... then let's do it... let's eat it all... this is for us, Vicky... for you and for me... and for Joyce...

In a final burst of frustration, Ben sweeps his arm across the tray knocking the tower of desserts in all
directions.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

A sterile, cold room, with hard chairs. A window looks out on a parking lot and a billboard of a bikini-clad beauty standing in front of a low slung sports car. Patty and Marge stand at the window staring out. Vicky sits alone in a corner, deep in her own thoughts.
PATTY
Eventually he would have, you know... left her for a slim young chick.

MARGE
He's not like that.

PATTY
They're all like that.

MARGE
Well... if that's what he wants, she's better off without him.

PATTY
... or dead...

MARGE
(angry, but with compassion)
Patty, you and Vicky and Joyce and... everyone... you can't buy that dumb hoopla... I'd blow up to 400 pounds before I did that to myself.

Gesturing vaguely toward where Joyce might be.

PATTY
You just don't care how you look.

MARGE
And you don't care about anything else! There's a lot more to life than wearing a size 9!

PATTY
But you don't get it unless you are!... Size 9... and wrinkle-proof.

Marge walks away from that and goes to Vicki. Vicki, deep in thought, doesn't acknowledge her.

MARGE
If you're sitting there blaming yourself --

VICKY
I made her start dieting... she didn't want to.

(CONTINUED)
MARGE
You didn't turn her into a liquid protein junky. She did that herself.

Patty joins them, as:

VICKY
I've been trying to strike a bargain... with someone... God, maybe... that if Joyce could live... I'd offer to gain all the weight back again.

PATTY
You don't have to do that.

VICKY
(more guilty)
I can't... I tried to promise... but I can't do it... I'm so... selfish...

PATTY
Vicky, you earned the right to take care of yourself -- Don't blow it now.

Vicky has a moment to think about that, then Ben appears at the door. Worn out, unshaven... Vicky sees him first. She stands, afraid.

VICKY
Ben...?

At beat... Ben manages a small grin... and puts his hands up in a winner's gesture. And everyone relaxes, gathers around him, and hugs him, Vicky sobbing in relief. All AD LIBBING questions, assurances that they always knew she'd pull through, etc.

INT. FRANK LESSER'S OFFICE SUITE - DAY

A large room, filled with artists at drawing tables, office workers... a refreshment cart with soft drinks and doughnuts... NOISE... work. In a sharp business outfit and looking terrific, Vicky comes in from a corridor, looks about, and we PAN the room, her POV... until we FIND a glassed off partition in one corner. Frank works in there. We APPROACH it.
INT. FRANK'S OFFICE - DAY

Frank works at a large desk. There's a couch across the room. Vicky can be SEEN outside, knocking. And we HEAR the KNOCK.

FRANK
(without looking up)
Come in.

Vicky opens the door, stands in the doorway a moment, and waits. Frank looks up.

FRANK
(continuing)
Yes?... Oh... Eric's most brilliant student, right?

Vicky grins, shrugs, nods. Frank, very interested now, goes to the door to lead her in, and close the door, and the NOISE OUT. He gestures her to the couch and they both sit, as:

FRANK
(continuing)
How nice of you to drop by.

VICKY
Well, I didn't just drop by... you did say... there was going to be an opening.

FRANK
Have you done something to yourself since I last saw you?

VICKY
... Put on a dress... took off a few pounds...

FRANK
Well, you look wonderful! You'll be a pretty addition to the office.

VICKY
Then I do have a job?

FRANK
(moving closer)
Well... let's talk about it.
(takes her hand)
I think we're going to be great friends.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

VICKY
... When can I start?

FRANK
You're divorced, aren't you?

VICKY
Getting.

FRANK
Nice. If it's what you want.

VICKY
(carefully)
What I want... is a job.
(takes her hand
out of his)
Just a job.

And she looks at him, questioningly.

INT. MIKE'S STUDIO - DAY

The bed is up. Mike works at an easel, as Vicky opens the door.

VICKY
Let's celebrate!

She slams the door hard. And the bed doesn't fall. Both notice it briefly, as Mike comes to the door.

MIKE
Okay, let's celebrate.
(hits the wall,
no bed)
Celebrate what?

VICKY
I got the job.

She puts her purse and jacket down and slams the door again... No bed.

MIKE
You went to his office?

VICKY
Yep. And I start tomorrow.
(goes to pry
on the bed)
What's wrong with this thing?

(CONTINUED)
MIKE
(losing interest
in the bed)
What happened there? In his
office?

VICKY
Oh, a little chasing around the
desk.
(forgets the bed,
remembering
delightedly)
I, Vicky Matthews, was actually
chased around the desk. Isn't
that great?

MIKE
Did he catch you?

VICKY
Of course not. But he chased me!
(goes back to
working on the bed)
What'd you do to this thing?

MIKE
It doesn't come down if the vibes
aren't right.

A beat.

VICKY
Mike, be proud of me! I came out
of my refrigerator and I got a job!

MIKE
It'll be two jobs... one in his
office... and one in his bed.
You can't handle that.

A beat; they're both growing more angry and upset.

VICKY
Oh, Mike... don't...

MIKE
You really think he needs an
apprentice?

VICKY
Mike... don't pull a Jack on me
... Don't tell me how to run my
life...

(CONTINUED)
MIKE
Vicky, you don't know what's happening out there!

A beat. Vicky picks up her purse and jacket.

MIKE
(continuing)
Where are you going?

VICKY
(on her way out the door)
On with my life.

MIKE
What?

He goes to her.

VICKY
I'm going on with my life... My life, Mike... not yours...
(kisses him gently)
Goodbye.

She goes, closes the door, just normally. And the bed falls. And Mike is in the room alone.

EXT. MATTHEWS HOUSE - NIGHT

Helen's and Jack's cars are parked side by side in the driveway, as Vicky's car comes down the street... hesitates at the filled driveway... and then pulls into place at the curb.

INT. THE MATTHEWS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jack is on the easy chair, looking very much at home. Helen hurries to the door, excitedly, as Vicky enters.

HELEN
(sotto voce)
Jack's here!

VICKY
-warily-
So I see.
JACK
(standing at his
chair,
compassionately)
I came over as soon as I heard.

VICKY
Heard what?

Jack looks to Helen, who takes a beat to understand, and then does. She goes about gathering her purse, jacket, knitting, as:

HELEN
The children were angels, as usual. They went right to bed. It's a good thing Jack came over. I had company.

She's at the door now, and near Vicky.

HELEN
(continuing;
sotto voce)
Whatever is best for you, Vicky. I just want you to be happy.

VICKY
Thanks, Mom.

HELEN
(more sotto voce)
But he's not such a terrible man, you know.

VICKY
(grins, kisses
Helen's cheek)
Bye, Mom.

And Helen looks back at Jack for a final smile, and a wave, and goes. As the door closes, Jack goes to Vicky.

JACK
I was looking for you... at that school... and Mike told me about your job. Congratulations.

VICKY
(wary)
Thank you.
She goes to Lisa's door and looks in on her. Jack follows.

JACK
You're lucky you're rid of him,
Vicky. He's not for you!

VICKY
That must have been some session.

She looks in on Danny -- Jack stays with her.

JACK
When he told me what happened,
I was over here in a flash.
Because I know how you get, and
I wanted to be here for you.

VICKY
Oh?... How do I get?

She goes into the kitchen. Jack follows.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

JACK
(as they enter)
I know there are times you have
to eat, Vick. After all, you
need something comforting.

VICKY
I didn't eat.

She starts to prepare tea as:

JACK
(almost disappointed)
Well... well, that's great... but,
I'm just saying, it's all right
if --

VICKY
Don't sabotage me, Jack.

JACK
Vicky, I love you. I'm trying to
tell you that I love you, no matter
how fat you are.
VICKY
(calmingly)
I'm not fat.

JACK
But if you gain weight --

VICKY
I'm not gaining weight.

JACK
Good, I know that. I'm just saying --

VICKY
(looks for his jacket)
I know what you're saying and I don't want to hear it.

JACK
You're right, you don't need to hear it.

Vicky nods her agreement and goes back to her tea. Jack drapes his arms around her.

JACK
(continuing)
And you don't need Mike, and you don't need that job either... You need me, Vicky. And from now on, I'm going to be here for you.

VICKY
(easing out of his arms)
I don't need you!

She moves so that the table is between them.

JACK
I've changed, Vicky. I understand you now. I can help you. You do need me!

VICKY
Like I need a hot fudge sundae.

She goes into the living room and Jack follows.

BACK TO THE LIVING ROOM

They enter, Vicky finds Jack's jacket, gives it to him and leads him to the door.

(CONTINUED)
VICKY
What I need is more time to myself.

JACK
(solicitous)
You're tired.

VICKY
No -- I'm excited, and proud of myself and I want to relish it all alone.

At the door:

VICKY
(continuing)
I'm going to treat myself to a long delicious bubble bath.

JACK
(coming on)
I'll scrub your back.

VICKY
I can scrub my own back. I can do anything.
(with growing exuberance)
Anything!

She opens the door.

JACK
I'll see you Sunday?

VICKY
(happily)
Right.

Getting him out.

JACK
Want to go to Disneyland with me and the kids?

VICKY
Maybe.

Shutting the door.

JACK
It'll be like old times, Vick.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

VICKY
(warmly)
Good night, Jack.

She closes the door and leans on it, thinking. Then she smiles... accepts what she's done... and likes it... And then, gets a new idea. She grabs her purse, and searches in it.

EXT. THE HOUSE - DAY

There are no cars in the driveway. Vicky's wagon is still at the curb. Vicky runs out of the house, carrying her keys. She hops into the wagon, pulls it into the driveway. The garage door goes up. Vicky drives inside, parking in the middle and taking up both sides. The garage door lowers. We HOLD on that.

FADE OUT.

THE END