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# I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac: A Screenplay

Walter Howard

*Eastern Illinois University*

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I WAS A TEENAGE NECROPHILIAC

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A Screenplay

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(TITLE)

BY

Walter Howard

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIRMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Arts in English

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1999

YEAR

I HEREBY RECOMMEND THIS THESIS BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING  
THIS PART OF THE GRADUATE DEGREE CITED ABOVE

13 Sept. 1999  
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## Abstract

The critical essay that introduces this thesis pays homage to three people in the movie business who have most influenced my original screenplay, I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac. Also included is a section that briefly explains the impetus for this project, and a closing argument that examines the intentional use of cliché as a creative tool.

The zany style of writer/director John Waters is the first major creative influence described. Although my story is not as graphically extreme as some of Waters' earlier work (it would be easy to make a comedy about necrophilia a vile exploitation film), it does emulate the somewhat more accessible approach he took with later pictures like Hairspray, Cry-Baby, and Serial Mom.

The work of director Tim Burton and screenwriter Caroline Thompson, who collaborated on the 1990 film Edward Scissorhands, has also made a large impact on my creative pursuits. Besides Burton's striking backdrop of bleak suburban conformity in Edward Scissorhands, the thematic nature of Thompson's story has influenced several of the satiric shots I've aimed at domestic life in the 1950's. Burton is mentioned by name in some of my screenplay's visual direction, and the flavor of Thompson's witty, "Cleaveresque" dialogue permeates many lines in the script.

The creative body of my thesis focuses on the turbulent life of popular teenager Lance Goodrich, the main character,

protagonist, and necrophile in question. Lance faces numerous problems being a necrophile in the conservative 1950's. First is the obvious societal frown on having a sexual attraction to corpses. Second is Lance's popularity. His character ironically functions not as a creepy pervert, but as a polite, down-to-earth guy with great grades, good looks, and a starting position on the school football team. Naturally, these "big man on campus" attributes make him a real catch, and he frequently has to fight off girls from school who dream of going out on a date with him.

Besides feeling pressure at school to keep his obsession secret, Lance must deal with the Donna Reed-like advice of his mother, who would love nothing more than for him to meet a nice girl, get married, and eventually have her grandchildren. He is also forced to lie to Abigail, his nose kid sister. Abigail is at that tender, pre-adolescent age when sex and relationships are still a big mystery; this fuels her tendency to pry into her big brother's secret affairs. Lance's biggest adversary, however, comes in the form of head cheerleader Kalene Casner, his female equivalent in terms of the high school social hierarchy. Kalene, more than anyone, would like to be Lance's steady girl, but purely for the added social power this pairing would give her.

The bizarre subject matter of this script offers a

unique social satire of the way many people (particularly adolescents) harshly treat those they consider different or unique. Lance's character provides an interesting looking-glass for this concept, because although he is popular, almost everyone is suspicious of the fact that he doesn't date--(as far as they know). The social phenomenon recently recognized as the "closet" creates the underlying backbone of tension in my story, as Lance nervously goes through life in this metaphorical haven for deviants. By updating an old formula (the teenage monster movie), I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac provides a campy, non-offensive look at a fundamental issue that has always burdened young people: the need to be accepted.

To My Mother and Father

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend a huge thank you to David Radavich, my thesis director, for his tremendous encouragement and support during the writing of this script. Dr. Radavich's expert critical advice and keen sense of dramatic structure have consistently engaged my creative pursuits. More importantly, your friendship and patience have made the completion of this project a distinct pleasure.

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Thirdly, I would like to thank several close friends for their wonderful companionship and support during my grad school years at Eastern. To Stuart, Sharon, Sue, Sandy, Pete, Jill, Jon, Tim, Chris, Andy, Kevin, Kim, Leslie, Darcy, Jason, Emilie, and Breadbasket: You guys are hard-core! I couldn't have done it without you. Extra-special thanks go to Stuart, for helping me in my initial development of the Martin Feece character, and for suggesting so many great death-rock anthems as potential soundtrack fodder.

I would like to thank my parents for giving me free reign over my academic and creative endeavors, and always encouraging me to follow them. Your enormous trust is



something I will always cherish.

Finally, I would like to extend a special thank you to my wife Cara, who has seen me through this entire project with love and understanding, even when I was sinking to new depths of procrastination and self-loathing. Your confidence in me has been my biggest inspiration. All my love.

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I WAS A TEENAGE NECROPHILIAC, A Screenplay . . . . . 1

## Introduction

### Early Inspiration

Some men love women, some love other men, some love dogs and horses, and occasionally you find one who loves his raincoat.

-- Max Schulman  
from I Was a Teen-age Dwarf

The first time I gave any serious thought to necrophilia was during my freshman year in college. I was taking Introduction to Psychology, and we had just covered a unit on sexually-deviant behavior. Along with most of my classmates, I initially reacted with varying levels of amazement and disgust to lurid cases of necrophiles, pedophiles, and all sorts of other "-philes," commonly referred to as "perverts" by society at large. Although I don't condone criminal sexual activity (as a point of reference, I will loosely define "criminal sexual activity" as that which does harm, either physically or psychologically, to oneself or others), I'll be the first to admit that my curiosity had been sparked, and I was quickly becoming more intrigued than horrified by these cases. This experience can only be compared to the unique rush of being led through a carnival sideshow: there is the natural feeling of uneasiness, but strangely coupled with an odd sense of glee and wonder.

Popular horror writer Stephen King has reflected on this emotional duality when considering the reasons people

are drawn to his tales of the macabre. In the foreward to Night Shift, his 1978 book of short stories, King cites a line of movie criticism from Newsweek that suggests we are fascinated by horrific people and events for the same reason we slow down to look at car accidents (xiv). Like the carnival sideshow, our curiosity is fueled by simple human nature--no matter how sickened we may feel, it is difficult, if not impossible, to turn away. "Our interest in these pocket horrors is undeniable," writes King, "but so is our own revulsion. The two of them mix uneasily, and the by-product seems to be guilt . . . a guilt which seems not much different from the guilt that used to accompany sexual awakening" (xv).

Sexual guilt and naivete are themes I've certainly explored in my own writing, although it took several years before I considered the story potential behind necrophilia, a fetish universally heralded as shocking and depraved. I had read some case studies about necrophiliacs, as well as a real-life, play-by-play account of this bizarre fetish. Although much of the material was indeed disturbing, I could not bring myself to dismiss the human element behind all the clinical jargon. The emotional cocktail of guilt and excitement I felt in freshman psychology persisted, but my curiosity consistently outweighed my disgust. Creatively, I never would have guessed such a gruesome subject could yield any comic results, but my opinion began

to change when I pondered the arrogant, often self-serving attitudes many people have about the sexuality of others. Thoughts of satire began to enter my brain as I dwelt on the blatant hypocrisy that has historically identified America's puritanical roots, and I started to realize that necrophilia might work very nicely as the basis of a dark teen comedy. The screenplay format seemed like a good creative vehicle, because I originally wanted to use the extreme ghoulishness of necrophilia to parody the numerous high school monster movies of the 1950's. I had some prior experience writing for the screen and felt that with diligence, my necrophilia idea could be developed into a full-length feature script. Writing a screenplay about the absolute fringe of teenage sexual repression and human deviance seemed like a provocative idea (if nothing else), inspiring me to map out a rough story-line in three acts.

Creative Influences: John Waters

Writer/director John Waters has been a creative hero of mine ever since I saw his 1972 film, Pink Flamingos. Quite an introduction to Water's twisted sense of comedy, Pink Flamingos includes painfully graphic scenes of cannibalism, bestiality, arson, murder, artificial insemination, incest, and "shrimping." This film, even today, challenges our ability "to still be shocked by something" (Waters 2)--definitely a type of audience litmus test in this respect. While the shock value of Waters' early work has left an indelible impression on me, I never intended to reproduce this level of shock in my own screenplay. Although it would be easy to craft a screenplay about necrophilia as a vile exploitation film, I wanted to make the story accessible, more along the lines of Waters' later pictures, like the audience-friendly Hairspray (1988) and Cry-Baby (1990). Conceptually, I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac is modeled after these films; the bizarre comedy is still present, but in a somewhat toned-down version. Rather than prying into the lurid physical aspects of a necrophile meeting with a corpse, I attempted to stress the romantic possibilities of such a relationship.

The comedy comes when one considers the odd setting for such a concept. I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac takes place in 1950's middle America--a Norman Rockwell painting of the Cleavers on the surface, with repressed teen sexu-

ality about to explode through the canvas underneath. But this time there's a twist. It's not just regular teen sexuality, as in the slew of other "I Was" films of the fifties; it's the most deviant of all sexual relationships, a type of sexuality most Americans probably didn't even know existed at the time. Middle America could barely bring itself to say "homosexual" in the 1950's, let alone "necrophile."

A second Waters influence is his passion for "tortured" lead characters (usually female) who are shunned and ostracized by popular society. We see this with Divine and her family in Pink Flamingos, with Dawn Davenport in Female Trouble, and later with Tracy Turnblad in Hairspray. These characters are distinguished by all sorts of strange affectations and beliefs that keep them from fitting in, including their physical appearance, sexuality, career goals, and political agendas. Although the lead character, protagonist, and necrophile in my story appears to go against this trend to a large degree, he is actually a tortured soul himself, and his apparently blissful life represents a superficial charade.

On the outside, Lance Goodrich is a popular teen growing up in the 1950's Norman Rockwell painting, with good looks, good grades, and a starting quarterback position on the high school football team. He seems, by all accounts, the quintessential stereotype of adolescent male



popularity. Lance runs with an "in-crowd" clique consisting of jocks and cheerleaders, and is seen as a school leader who will go on to do great things. This is where Lance struggles; he enjoys his role of leadership but understands that if people learn about his alternative lifestyle, he will surely be condemned. Lance comes across as a puzzling and complex character because of this, as well as a bit of a hypocrite. Although he wants to divulge his secret love life to his friends and family, he does not want to lose the added power that being on top of the high school social hierarchy gives him.

Many of Waters' stories and my own share the concept of a war between an oddball minority and the relatively "normal" faction of society. Waters himself has claimed that this type of conflict exists, to some degree, in all of his films. Waters biographer John Ives points out that "the good guys in a Waters film most often resemble the bad guys in most films," and "the hero (or heroine) may be weird, but usually wins in the end" (9). Like some of the deranged protagonists in Waters' films, Lance could easily be considered a bad guy even today, as necrophilia "is considered by experts to be psychotic and extremely deviant" (Hyde 468). However, like Waters, I have attempted to beg empathy and understanding for my protagonist, because by all other accounts, Lance is a very nice guy, and an ultimately likeable character. Part of the reason for

his appeal stems from the fact that he ends up sticking his neck out for one Martin Feece, the school nerd and polar opposite of Lance on the social spectrum. Martin has ironically been picked on by most of Lance's "friends" his entire life. Lance befriends Martin in spite of this, because he understands all too well what it means to be an outsider. The foil connection between Lance and Martin naturally blossoms, and their bonding signifies a smack in the face to high school pretty people everywhere. The fact that Lance comes out on top at the end of my script is a testament to weirdos everywhere, and proof that even a necrophile can win in the end.

Creative Influences: Tim Burton and Caroline Thompson

The work of Tim Burton and Caroline Thompson, who together produced Edward Scissorhands, a Christmastime film released in 1990, has probably had the greatest impact on I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac. Written by Thompson and directed by Burton, Scissorhands tells a satiric fairy tale that centers on the adventures of a quasi-human (Edward) created by a mad inventor. The inventor dies before his creation is complete, and Edward is left to fend for himself, alone in a giant mansion where the inventor resided. Like the underdog protagonists of John Waters' films, Edward has a special affliction to contend with: his inventor has given him scissors to use for makeshift hands. These shears eventually prove to be a detriment to Edward; his dangerously sharp appendages make it nearly impossible for him to sustain a day-to-day relationship with anyone, physical or otherwise. Edward knows he must lead a life of solitude because of this, sadly realizing that the bane of his existence lies in the fact that he is unfinished. Thompson and Burton give an obvious nod to Mary Shelley's Frankenstein by exploring this dilemma, and the element of creationism-gone-awry that Frankenstein helped pioneer (found in many of the teenage monster movies of the fifties) uniquely surfaces in both Scissorhands and I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac.

An additional link between Edward the protagonist

and the heroes of Waters' films involves the trials that come with being forced into the ever-present "normal" faction of society. These trials are instigated at the beginning of Thompson's screenplay, when Edward is paid a visit by Peg, the local Avon lady who has been having a slow business day. When Peg notices Edward's mansion in the side-view mirror of her car, she decides that the old, ramshackle house is a place where she might be able to sell some cosmetics, though she seems unaware of who, if anybody, lives there. When Peg finds Edward cowering in a corner of the house by himself, she decides to play good Samaritan and take him home with her.

The story unfolds with Edward being introduced to the neighborhood suburbanites and the world they dwell in. At first, everyone accepts Edward as a unique individual, because he can perform many aesthetically-pleasing tasks with his scissor-hands, including trimming the neighborhood bushes, grooming the neighborhood dogs, and, eventually, grooming the neighborhood women. Initially, everything seems hunky-dory, but Edward's apparent acceptance systematically shatters when he makes the mistake of falling in love with Peg's beautiful daughter, Kim. Kim's jealous boyfriend Jim, who has loathed Edward from the start, takes pleasure in teasing and bullying him, eventually getting Edward in trouble with the law by using him in a "no-fail" burglary scam. Edward knows

he is doing wrong and has the option not to go through with it, but he does so anyway--out of devotion to Kim. When he gets caught, he doesn't rat on Jim--again, out of love for Kim.

After the gossipy neighborhood-dwellers learn that Edward has attempted theft, their attitude toward him changes drastically. He no longer appears "special," and nearly everyone who acted friendly toward him early on now grossly rejects him. Only Kim knows what has really transpired: she admires Edward's silent loyalty in the face of such backstabbing. Her romantic link with Edward predictably blossoms, and for a brief moment in time, the couple feels truly happy. This happiness can't last, of course, as negative feelings about Edward snowball into an ill-fated series of events. The dark hypocrisy and vengeful feelings exhibited by the local residents force the major showdown in the third act: a good old-fashioned witch-hunt followed by a tragic climax of destruction.

Perhaps the most disturbing point a film like Edward Scissorhands raises is the way a small-but-powerful clique can place someone on a pedestal, then callously knock the pedestal out from underneath him with virtually no warning. A trademark of teen melodrama, Thompson's satirical treatment of this long-standing theme has influenced my own story. Her movie demonstrates how unique individuals are frequently built up and praised for their uniqueness, then

chewed up and spit out if their uniqueness loses its usefulness or originality. The neighborhood-dwellers in Edward Scissorhands follow this ugly trend by judging Edward's foul-up in the burglary scam before all the evidence is in. Because Edward will not admit he was set up, the local residents immediately become distrustful of him, despite the fact he has displayed nothing but naive kindness and community service to the residents since day one.

Lance Goodrich, the protagonist of I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac, experiences a similar treatment in the way his friends and family simultaneously encourage and exploit him. Indeed, everything looks terrific when Lance is smiling and leading the school football team to victory, but Lance knows in his heart that disaster would ensue were he to let others in on his alternative lifestyle. Although the surrounding community never actually gets to the point where they want to lynch him, they are always suspicious of his peculiarities and come very close to finding him out on a number of occasions. Because Lance's attraction to corpses (like Edward's hand affliction) has been kept a secret for so many years, he feels utterly unprepared whenever the possibility of being "outed" forces him to deal with the reality of everyday social encounters. The major drama and suspense of my screenplay have been built by crafting a few pivotal scenes that bring Lance close to the edge of such a disaster, with each one height-

ening in intensity.

Edward Scissorhands remains one of my favorite films, largely because it challenges our perception of what it means to be abnormal or impaired. Burton and Thompson have created a wonderfully-complex protagonist in Edward, who has a heart of gold that is overshadowed by a physical handicap. Lance Goodrich suffers a reversed version of Edward's existence: he has a pleasing exterior, but is tormented internally. The duality of these characters force us to keep our notions of stereotype in check, and take pains to understand real human motivations, which are anything but black and white.

### Thoughts on Cliche and the Use of Hyper-Realism

Cliche is something creative writing instructors commonly advise against. Often targeted as a sign of immaturity in student work, trite expressions and overused themes usually fall prey to a discriminating red marker. Cliche frequently stems from the urge (often subliminal) to repeat tricks learned from years of ingesting the work of older, more experienced authors. Although imitation may be the sincerest form of flattery, it usually does not hold up for very long in the writing workshop and may eventually be viewed negatively in terms of a student's long-range potential. Ideally, the student-writer will learn to create a synthesis between past and present influences, in time establishing his or her own unique "voice." This voice, if developed properly, can sometimes lead to moderate success in fiction, poetry, and/or play-writing circles, with the author's originality always being seen as paramount in importance.

The mainstream screenplay is an entirely different beast. Hollywood remains exceptional as a place where unoriginal writing curiously survives. Quite frequently, the role of the modern screenwriter is judged by the ability to market formula. Does this mean screenwriters and filmmakers are not challenging themselves creatively? In many cases, yes. Folks in the movie business have a long history of relying on previously established material; consequently,



only a small amount of significant innovation has emerged in mainstream filmmaking over the last several decades. For the most part, Hollywood has become increasingly adept at regurgitating many well-established "hooks" in its vast effort to keep audiences coming back to the local megaplex each weekend. Just look at the ridiculous number of bad sequel films studios have hoped to cash in on in recent years; producers never seem to understand (or care) that these pictures usually convey artistic mediocrity at best, and that trends in audience taste are nearly impossible to predict. Film critic Roger Ebert aptly summed up this safety net philosophy by recognizing that "American directors are not trying to make great movies, they're trying to make succesful movies" (70).

Although most writers and directors who work outside the studio system agree that "cookie-cutter" movies signify a creative stumbling block, I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac actually embraces this Hollywood tradition, shamelessly presenting several familiar hooks and cliches that have been used in countless other films as a way to draw crowds. Even though there was no Hollywood executive breathing formula down my neck, I felt that using a familiar genre (the teenage monster movie) would be the best way to cushion audience response to the very unfamiliar (and potentially upsetting) topic of necrophilia. While this could be viewed as a creative cop-out, it actually serves a double purpose:

1) to sweeten the distasteful nature of a story involving corpse humor, and 2) to allow audience members a chance to sample the screenplay's satire in subtle (but increasingly potent) doses. A story that carries such high potential for gross-out humor almost has to utilize this technique; if audience members take objection to a film's deviant subject matter early on, the greater meaning of the script's social commentary could easily be lost.

Nevertheless, rehashing tired material as a type of postmodern reverse psychology can be risky in any writing environment. My fears were substantiated when one of my thesis committee members commented that many sections of the script seem "dreadfully overfamiliar." Whether or not I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac succeeds in satirizing the ultra-conservative, saccharin world we associate with the 1950's has been perplexing from the start. Would the play work as an intelligent, multi-level comedy, or would it simply recreate a one-dimensional composite of the "Jeckyl and Hyde" theme found in all "I Was a Teenage" monster movies? Pressed for an answer, I turned to the previously-described filmmakers I admire. John Waters, Tim Burton, and Caroline Thompson have all embraced formulaic period films from dated genres (Waters with Hairspray and Cry-Baby, Burton and Thompson with Edward Scissorhands), gleefully using movie cliches to the point of absurdity. Their wild characters and situations fre-

quently become self-mocking parodies of themselves and establish a world of what another one of my thesis committee members called "hyper-realism."

Hyper-realism, as it functions in the films of Waters, Burton, and Thompson is a type of fiction so real it becomes surreal. It often involves characters and situations so familiar to us we are instantly struck with a nostalgic type of *deja vu*. At its best, hyper-realism is a unique offshoot of postmodernism that, like the exaggerated Benday dots of a Lichtenstein painting, allow us to see an author's contrived view of reality from a different angle. In many cases, it helps us realize just how programmed or conditioned we have become to accept various memories of an era as fact--memories we might not have even had first-hand experience with. Take, for example, the sugar-coated media portrayal we have of the mainstream 1950's family that inspired the Goodriches of my story. Decades ago, film and television used Dick Van Dyke and Donna Reed as templates for what they conceived of as the typical post-war American family. This, of course, was ridiculous even then. Nevertheless, pop culture's skewed version of domesticity undoubtedly caused many families to believe something might go seriously awry if they stopped modeling themselves after a strictly-regimented "father knows best" hierarchy.

It is easy to be objective today, now that we realize dysfunctional domesticity was alive and well in the 1950's.

In fact, it is precisely this objectivity that makes the use of hyper-realism possible. Once we acknowledge that things like angst, guilt, and sexual repression did co-exist with the so-called innocence of the time, satire and parody become very plausible. The best way to poke fun at the dated, superficial value system explored in my work is to blow it completely out of proportion, so that audience members feel trapped in a world of predictable lines, exaggerated caricatures, and corny melodrama--as though they are living in a new car ad they can't get out of. Like a literary version of the Lichtenstein comic book painting, I Was a Teenage Necrophiliac unflinchingly exposes and magnifies the truth and sometimes harsh reality of many social situations, and audience members quickly realize the distinct and recognizable barrier that exists between real emotion and soulless (media-induced) conformity.

If my screenplay works, readers will understand that it challenges our perception of reality in this fashion. On the one hand, the off-the-wall and risqué subject matter even today might be construed as offensive or distasteful. On the other hand, because we've rarely seen sexual deviance so flippantly juxtaposed against a decade known for its revolting innocence and bliss, the story takes on multiple shades of meaning. Up until recently, mainstream film and television personified the 1950's in that overly-anxious, cheery person who wakes up at six every morning

with a bright smile and perfect hair--the person, incidentally, whom most of us would love to punch in the nose. My screenplay serves to undercut that persona. This will hopefully be gratifying to audience members, who, if they understand and enjoy the intended comedy, will agree that the cheery go-getter who wakes up at six in truth represents a minority. More than anything, the script has been kept consistently light-hearted and fun (in the vein of John Waters), so that audience members will forgive the major characters when they commit acts that would be viewed as mean-spirited or malicious in almost any other setting. Is this postmodern, or merely a plagiaristic regurgitation of past events? The reader can decide, but the guiding principle can best be summed up by Mr. Waters, who believed that "If [we] can laugh at the worst fears of [our] psyche, isn't that actually healthy?" (49).

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I WAS A TEENAGE NECROPHILIAC

A Screenplay

by

Walter Howard

FADE IN:

Bluesy rock 'n' roll from the late 1950's plays softly on a small radio.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

College pennants, sports paraphernalia, and various trophies and awards suggest that the owner of this room is a successful, high school-aged student/athlete. Laid out on the bed is all the gear necessary for a football player, including pads and helmet. On the side of the helmet is a large "W," which shines brightly in the afternoon sun.

LANCE GOODRICH, the inhabitant of the bedroom, enters wearing a conservative sports jacket and carrying a large duffel bag. He carefully puts the football gear in the bag and zips it up.

Lance walks over to a mirror in the room, looks at himself briefly, and straightens his tie. He is a clean-cut, good-looking young man, with all the physical attributes of male high school popularity in the 1950's.

Although Lance could easily pass for one of the Hardy boys, he wears a deeply perplexed, studious look of concentration on his face. He cautiously walks over to the bedroom door, cups his hand to his ear, and listens intently before stepping into the upstairs hallway.

IN THE HALLWAY

Lance tiptoes to his parents' bedroom at the end of the hall. The door to the bedroom is slightly ajar. He quietly pushes it open and sneaks inside.

IN THE BEDROOM

The bedroom of MR. and MRS. GOODRICH is decorated in typical post-war, middle-class Americana. Hanging on a chair next to the bed is a dark blue shirt that reads "CITY MORGUE" on the back in big white letters.

Lance picks up the matching dark blue trousers that are sitting on the chair and fishes a set of keys from the pocket. He goes through several keys, and when he finds the one he wants, he slips it off the key ring and hastily puts it into the breast pocket of his jacket.

Lance looks torn for a moment, apparently realizing his

dishonesty. He almost seems to consider putting the key back, but opts to go with his first choice, and exits the bedroom quickly. Lance nervously shuts the door behind him, perhaps a little too loudly.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Murmurs of excitement fill the air. The homecoming football game at Lance's big suburban high school is about to get under way.

The West High MARCHING BAND, lined up in block formation on the field, is poised and ready to play.

A DRUM ROLL sounds.

The band's DRUM MAJOR gives a downbeat, and the ensemble launches into an out-of-tune but enthusiastic rendition of "The Star-Spangled Banner."

FANS, STUDENTS, FOOTBALL PLAYERS, COACHES, and CHEERLEADERS stand respectively during the playing of the national anthem. Old Glory waves proudly in the clear October night, as autumn leaves blow listlessly across the field.

Lance, now dressed in his football uniform, is flanked by his team-mates. With his helmet in his left hand, and his right hand on his heart, he is the all-American boy.

In the stands are Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich, holding West High pennants and looking proudly at their son. He is a short, conservative-looking man with glasses. She is pretty but prudish in appearance, a sort of Donna Reed/June Cleaver hybrid.

A beautiful blond pom-pom girl stands behind Lance with a coy look on her face. This is KALENE CASNER, the bitchy head cheerleader. She is Lance's female equivalent in terms of the high school social hierarchy.

KALENE  
(whispering loudly)

Lance!

Lance turns his head slightly at this. He isn't sure who is calling his name.

KALENE  
(a bit louder)

Lance!

Lance turns his head even more this time, straining to look over his shoulder.

LANCE

Kalene?

KALENE

Are you looking forward to the dance tomorrow?

LANCE

The dance?

KALENE

(in disbelief)

The homecoming dance, silly.

(pause)

I saw the gym this afternoon, and the decorations look absolutely sensational.

(self-importantly)

I was in charge of the decorations, you know.

LANCE

(struggling to be cordial and respectful to his country at the same time)

Well, uh, sure. Of course I'm looking forward to the dance. If you were in charge of the decorations, I'm sure it'll be swell.

KALENE

(disappointed)

Swell? It'll be more than swell. It will be . . .

(melodramatically, like Connie Marble in Pink Flamingos)

It will be divine. Just think, Lance, by this time tomorrow you will be crowned homecoming king, and I will be your faithful queen. With our combined power, we can finally rule West High . . . together!

LANCE

(confused)

Rule West High? What do you, uh, what do you mean? I don't think I quite --

A ROAR of applause fills the stands as "The Star-Spangled Banner" comes to an end.

Suddenly, a BOOMING ANOUNCEMENT projects over the stadium's public address system, with all the plastic enthusiasm of a phony television personality.

ANNOUNCER

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to West Avenue High School, home of your Westside Warriors!

Thunderous APPLAUSE from the stands.

KALENE

(seductively)

Well, gotta go. Maybe I'll see you after the game?

LANCE

After the game? Kalene, wait, I can't --

Kalene waves as she trots off the field to join the other cheerleaders.

KALENE

-- Bye, Lance. Knock 'em dead tonight.

LANCE

Kalene!

Lance is left with that grave, perplexed look on his face again.

MONTAGE - FOOTBALL GAME ACTION

Two or three exciting football plays occur in a condensed sequence with occassional shots of the scoreboard at various high points of the game.

-- Folks are waving all kinds of signs, banners, flags, and pom-poms to support the West High Warriors.

-- TIM HAIGHT, one of West High's receivers, catches a pass, gets creamed, and drops the ball in the final football action sequence. West High narrowly recovers this fumble.

-- The West High Cherleaders GASP on the sidelines.

-- COACH WALKER smacks his palm on his forehead in frustration. Walker is a large, muscular black man who used to play pro-ball and is head coach of the Warriors. He is built like a tank.

- The scoreboard reads: HOME:17, VISITORS: 22, with eight seconds left in the game.
- The West High Band, now seated in the stands, kicks off a spirited rendition of "Hot Time."
- The cheerleaders do a crazy routine, then jump up and down, SCREAMING and YELLING.
- Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich look at each other, exchanging worrisome glances.

END MONTAGE

IN THE STADIUM PRESS BOX

The ANNOUNCER sits in front of a microphone in the press box, calling plays for a local radio station.

ANNOUNCER

Wow, what an incredible game this has turned out to be, folks! There are just eight seconds left here in the fourth quarter, and West High must score on this fourth down attempt in order to win the game. They have taken their last time-out.

BACK TO THE PLAYING FIELD

The pressure is on the West High huddle to come up with a clutch play. Tim Haight, ROB ASHBURY, and TREVOR MCINTYRE listen to the plan of attack from Lance, their field general and friend.

LANCE

All right, guys. We're gonna do that play we worked out in practice yesterday.

TIM

But, Lance, we only tried that play once! I mean, it was just for kicks. This is the homecoming game!

LANCE

(exuding confidence)

Look, it worked yesterday and it's gonna work tonight! I'll fake the hand-off to Rob, you break to the back left corner of the end-zone, and I'll hit you right between the numbers. I promise.

TIM

Lance, I don't know if this is such a good idea. I mean, it's not in the playbook. We didn't tell Coach about it, and --

LANCE

-- Timmy, trust me for once. It's gonna work. I've been watching their defense, and they've been leaving the back left corner wide open all night. Piece of cake. Rob, Trevor, are you guys with me?

ROB

Whatever you say, boss.

The Crowd, Football Players, and Cheerleaders on the sideline are going crazy in anticipation of the big play. SHOUTS of "Go West!" and "Come on, Lance!" resound. Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich exchange worrisome glances.

IN THE STADIUM PRESS BOX

ANNOUNCER

The crowd is going nuts here tonight at West High! It looks like the Warriors' offense will once again be looking to senior quarterback Lance Goodrich to come up with a clutch play for them.

BACK TO THE PLAYING FIELD

TREVOR

Lance is right, Timmy. They're gonna be looking for a hand-off to Rob. We've been running the ball almost every play.

LANCE

Are you with us, Tim? C'mon, you're our best receiver! You're the only one who can pull it off.

Tim pauses, looks at his feet, and EXHALES loudly.

TIM

All right, all right. I'm in! Let's do it. This better work.

LANCE

Right between the numbers, Timmy, just like I said. You'll be a hero . . . no sweat. Okay, ladies? On three.

The huddle makes those WEIRD MACHO NOISES football players always make before returning to the line of scrimmage, and there are pats on the butt for all. The football players get into position, and Lance lines up behind the CENTER confidently. He looks to his right and left.

LANCE

23! 49! 61! Huht -- Huht -- Hike!

Lance gets the ball, falls back, and fakes a hand-off to Rob.

Tim struggles deperately to get open in the end-zone.

Lance dodges a couple of tackles.

The clock ticks down and the crowd holds its breath.

Tim finally gets open, and Lance throws him a perfect pass, right between the numbers.

Tim catches the ball and quickly cradles it to his chest. He looks extremely relieved.

Lance raises his arms in triumph as the final buzzer SOUNDS.

Pandemonium ensues as the ecstatic crowd rushes onto the playing field.

IN THE STADIUM PRESS BOX

The Announcer and REPORTERS are going crazy in the press box, jumping up and down.

IN THE STANDS

The band plays an enthusiastic but sloppy rendition of the school song, while The Drum Major hopelessly tries to conduct them.

BACK TO THE PLAYING FIELD

Lance is hoisted on to the shoulders of his team-mates, and instantly swarmed with fans, students, cheerleaders, and reporters.

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich struggle to get through the crowd to congratulate their son, but can only get within about ten feet, and have to call out to him.

MRS. GOODRICH

Lance!



LANCE

Mom! Dad!

MR. GOODRICH

Congratulations, Son!

LANCE

What's that?

MR. GOODRICH

(louder)

I said, congratulations!

LANCE

Oh. Thanks, Dad!

MRS. GOODRICH

What time will you be home tonight,  
dear?

LANCE

(this reply begins excitedly,  
but ends almost inaudibly)

Uh, I don't know. I've gotta talk to  
some reporters, and then I'm going on  
a . . .

(clears throat)

On a, um . . .

MRS. GOODRICH

On a what, dear?

LANCE

Well, on a . . . a date.

MRS. GOODRICH

(suddenly very interested--  
almost scoldingly)

A date? Lance, you didn't mention  
anything about a date before the game!

LANCE

Yeah, uh . . . well, it was kind of a  
last-second sort of thing. You know.

MRS. GOODRICH

(upset with the lack of  
information she has)

Well, what time will you be home?

LANCE

I, I don't know! Midnight? --

MRS. GOODRICH  
-- Lance, who is this girl?

LANCE  
I'll tell you all about it tomorrow,  
okay?

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich begin to get lost in the shuffle.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(reluctantly)  
Uh, well, okay. See you later, uh,  
Lance. Have a nice evening.

Lance waves.

LANCE  
Bye, Mom! Bye, Dad!

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich wave.

Lance is carried off into the commotion.

Kalene stands by the sidelines with ANDREA LUX, her best friend and fellow cheerleader. They have overheard the exchange between Lance and his parents. Kalene has a scheming look in her eyes, and coldly stares at Lance with fists on hips.

KALENE  
A date? Lance has a date tonight?

Kalene grabs Andrea's arm, startling her.

KALENE  
(enraged)  
Lance Goodrich already has a date!

#### OPENING CREDITS/MUSIC

The first few credits are sequenced with the breaks at the beginning of John Zorn's "Batman," as performed on the "Naked City" album. The credits should appear as they might have in a low-budget, 1950's horror/exploitation film. "Batman" continues until the credits are complete or the music fades out.

#### INT. WEST HIGH LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Lance talks to reporters as he changes in the West High

locker room after the game. There is a lot of COMMOTION and a film crew is present, taping an interview with Lance. fans, football players, assistant coaches, and various others are milling about excitedly.

REPORTER #1

So, Lance, how did it feel to pull off such a risky, last-second play? I mean, the pressure must've been tremendous!

LANCE

Well, you know . . . I have complete confidence in my team-mates.

Lance is sitting close to Tim. He puts his hand firmly on Tim's shoulder.

LANCE

I knew Tim here would come through for us in the clutch. He's the real --

There is a quick shot of Trevor standing in the background, observing the interview.

REPORTER #2

-- Lance, tell us your thoughts on being named this year's starting quarterback for the All-Suburban team!

INT. GOODRICH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

ABIGAIL GOODRICH, Lance's bubble gum-chewing younger sister, lies on the family room floor at home, watching her brother being interviewed on the family television set. The Goodrich living room is decked out in all the modern stylings of the Atomic Age.

REPORTER #2 (on TV)

I guess basically what I'm asking is . . . do you think we stand a chance against the Inner-City All-Stars this year? Are they, in fact, beatable?

LANCE

Gosh, that's a good question. They've got some big linemen this year. It'll definitely be a challenge.

Abigail stares wide-eyed at the TV, awe-struck by her brother's fame and popularity.

EXT. GOODRICH HOUSE - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich have returned home from the game. Mr. Goodrich unlocks the front door to the house, and they step inside.

IN THE FOYER

Mr. Goodrich shuts the front door and begins taking off his coat.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(calling)  
Abigail, we're home!

ABIGAIL  
Mom! Dad! Come quick, Lance is on TV!

MRS. GOODRICH  
(excitedly)  
Did you hear that, Bill? Our son is on TV!

Mrs. Goodrich grabs a startled Mr. Goodrich, who is still in the process of taking off his coat, and drags him toward the family room.

MR. GOODRICH  
Hey!

BACK TO THE LOCKER ROOM

REPORTER #3  
Okay, one final question everyone's curious about. Young man, how in the world do you find time to be such a great athlete and maintain such high marks in school?

BACK TO THE GOODRICH FAMILY ROOM

LANCE (on TV)  
(pauses and scratches chin)  
Hmm. I guess I'd say just plain hard work. You know, my folks always raised me with a good work ethic. And, of course, to believe in myself and be a good Christian.

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich, now watching the television, clasp their hands and sigh in approval of their Wally Cleaver son as "Take Five," performed by The Dave Brubeck Quartet,

begins playing.

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Lance leaves West High, fighting off girls and signing autographs for little kids on the way to his car. He gets in his car, a sporty convertible, and starts the engine while dozens of people cheer and wave to him. Lance smiles modestly, waves back, and speeds off into the dark night.

Various shots of Lance driving evoke an eerie, film noir quality.

It begins thunderstorming. Lance puts up the top of his convertible. He drives to a somewhat desolate part of town, cast in dim yellow light from a number of random street lamps. He approaches a macabre-looking building with a dark sign above the door, and we see by a dramatic crack of lightning that the sign reads: "CITY MORGUE."

INT. GOODRICH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich sit at home, waiting up for Lance. Mrs. Goodrich sits on a couch, absently playing solitaire, and glancing at her watch every few seconds. Mr. Goodrich sits in a big easy chair reading the paper.

MRS. GOODRICH

Lance is now officially ten minutes late.

Mr. Goodrich doesn't respond, and flips a page of his newspaper.

MRS. GOODRICH

(yells)

Bill!

Mr. Goodrich inadvertently crushes his paper.

MR. GOODRICH

What?

MRS. GOODRICH

Your son isn't back from his date yet. He said he'd be home at midnight.

Mr. Goodrich shakes out the crumpled newspaper.

MR. GOODRICH

Aw, c'mon, Lorna. The kid's seventeen.  
He's just out having fun.

MRS. GOODRICH

Well, who is this girl he's out with?  
That's what I'd like to know. How come  
he didn't mention anything about her  
to us earlier? Why does Lance always  
have to be so secretive about his dates?

MR. GOODRICH

Secretive? Now, wait a minute. Lance  
is just out doing what any normal teen-  
age boy would like to be doing on a  
Friday night. He's probably just --

MRS. GOODRICH

-- Shh! Be quiet. I think I hear  
Lance's car. Now, go back to reading  
your paper!

Mr. Goodrich rolls his eyes and goes back to reading the  
paper. We hear the front door to the house open.

IN THE FOYER

Lance opens the front door of the house, steps inside,  
and quietly closes the door behind him. He cautiously  
starts to climb the stairs to his bedroom.

MRS. GOODRICH (OS)

(calling)

Lance, is that you, dear?

Lance freezes in his tracks, busted. He hangs his head  
in shame, and pauses a second before answering.

LANCE

Yes, Mom. It's me.

MRS. GOODRICH

Will you please come here for a minute?  
Your father and I would like to have a  
word with you.

Lance looks ashamed of himself. He knows he's late.

LANCE

Um . . . sure, Mom. Coming.

Lance quickly and nervously brushes off his clothes, and

smells the collar of his shirt. He takes a deep breath, straightens his tie, and tentatively proceeds to the family room.

IN THE FAMILY ROOM

MRS. GOODRICH

Do you realize you're almost fifteen minutes late, young man?

LANCE

Mom, I'm sorry. I can explain everything. You see, after the game I was talking to Rob and Trevor, and --

MRS. GOODRICH

(strictly)

-- Lance Goodrich, I don't want to hear any of your excuses. You were to be home at midnight, and here you just waltz in at quarter after twelve! I . . . I --

Mrs. Goodrich loudly sniffs the air, smelling corpse-preserving chemicals on Lance's clothing.

MRS. GOODRICH

What is that horrible smell?

Lance shrugs.

LANCE

Smell? I don't smell anything. It's probably just --

MRS. GOODRICH

-- Sneaking in the door like nothing's happened. Why, I oughta --

MR. GOODRICH

-- Aw, Lorna, will ya cut the boy some slack? He was only fifteen minutes late. And it's not like he was out sneaking beers or playing mailbox baseball or anything.

Mrs. Goodrich looks unsatisfied, but the perturbed expression on her face eventually changes and she gives in to the wisdom of her "father knows best" husband.

IN THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Abigail sits at the top of the stairs, eavesdropping on

the conversation between Lance and his parents. She looks fascinated by the exchange.

MRS. GOODRICH (OS)

Oh, Lance. I know you wouldn't do any of those awful things.

(pause)

But do tell your father and me about your big date!

LANCE

Oh, well . . . gee, Mom. I wouldn't really go so far as to call it a big date.

BACK TO THE FAMILY ROOM

MRS. GOODRICH

(suddenly excited, like she's at a gossip fence)

Now, now. I don't want you to hold anything back and tell your father and me all about it. Who is this lucky girl?

LANCE

(slowly)

Well, first of all, she doesn't go to West. She's --

MRS. GOODRICH

-- She's from another school? Oh, Lance, this is exciting! But how on earth did you meet her?

LANCE

Well, see, the thing is . . . I wouldn't exactly say she's from another school. I mean, she does, er, did go to school . . . But the truth of the matter is --

AT THE STAIRCASE

Abigail quietly sneaks down the steps, backwards on her hands and knees.

MRS. GOODRICH (OS)

(a bit panicked)

She's not from another school? Well, who in the world is this person?

BACK TO THE FAMILY ROOM



LANCE

(a bit panicked himself)  
Well, you see, Mom, it's kind of difficult to explain. The thing is . . . well --

MRS. GOODRICH

-- What, dear?

LANCE

(taking a deep breath)  
Well, the thing is, she's . . . she's --

MRS. GOODRICH

-- Yes?

Abigail leaps into the family room.

ABIGAIL

(yells, excitedly)  
She's an older woman!

Abigail scares the hell out of Lance and her parents with this outburst.

Mr. Goodrich inadvertently crushes his newspaper as Mrs. Goodrich shakes her head in disbelief.

Lance puts his hand on his forehead.

MRS. GOODRICH

(scoldingly)  
Abigail Goodrich, it's way past your bedtime! What are doing up at this hour?

ABIGAIL

Aw, Mom. I wanna hear about Lance's date too!

(pause)

Did ya get to second base?

MRS. GOODRICH

(sternly)  
Watch your mouth, young lady!  
(gently clears her throat,  
then pleasantly)  
Lance, are you planning on taking this girl to the homecoming dance tomorrow?

LANCE

Well, gee . . . I hadn't actually thought  
(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)  
of that. To tell you the truth, I don't think she's really much of a --

MRS. GOODRICH  
-- Kalene called tonight. You know, your father and I think she's a very lovely girl. She didn't say so, but I think she's just dying for you to ask her out sometime.

LANCE  
Gosh, I dunno, Mom. I mean, Kalene's really great and everything, but --

MRS. GOODRICH  
-- But, what? Lance, what's the matter with you? Don't you think Kalene looked pretty in her cheerleading outfit tonight?

LANCE  
Well, sure, she looked terrific, but --

MRS. GOODRICH  
-- She's homecoming queen. You're homecoming king. You two are practically a match made in heaven.

ABIGAIL  
(sarcastically dreamy voice)  
But Lance wants someone with more than looks. He needs a girl with brains, ambition, personality --

LANCE  
-- Knock it off, Abbey! You want me to box your ears?

Abigail mockingly pretends to be scared.

Mr. Goodrich gets out of his chair.

MR. GOODRICH  
Abigail! Go to bed!

ABIGAIL  
But, Daaad!

MR. GOODRICH  
No "buts," young lady. It's almost 12:30.

MRS. GOODRICH  
You heard your father, Abigail.

ABIGAIL  
But I wanna know if Lance --

MR. GOODRICH  
-- Abbey!

ABIGAIL  
(solemnly)  
All right, I'm going.

Abigail quietly leaves the room, but not before sticking her tongue out at Lance.

Lance makes a quick motion, as if he's going to chase after her, and Abigail scurries away.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Lance, you musn't encourage her.

LANCE  
(sheepishly)  
Sorry.

Mr. Goodrich sits.

MRS. GOODRICH  
We just want you to be happy, dear. This is your senior year. There are a lot of girls who would love to go out on a date with you. Why don't you live it up a little?

LANCE  
I guess I'm just not big on dancing, that's all.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Well, you suit yourself.

Mrs. Goodrich stands.

MRS. GOODRICH  
But I'll bet Kalene would go out with you in a heartbeat if you asked her.

LANCE  
(a bit surprised at his mother's tenacity)  
Mom!

MRS. GOODRICH  
 (disappointedly gives up)  
 All right, all right. We'll see you in  
 the morning, dear.

Mr. Goodrich gets up.

LANCE  
 Okay. Uh, I think I'll have a glass of  
 milk before I head up.

MRS. GOODRICH  
 Just be sure to turn the lights out. And  
 put your clothes in the wash. They smell  
 terrible.

LANCE  
 Sure thing. Goodnight, Mom. Goodnight,  
 Dad.

MRS. GOODRICH  
 Goodnight, Lance.

MR. GOODRICH  
 Goodnight, Son. Helluva game tonight.

LANCE  
 Thanks, Dad.

Mr. Goodrich pats his son on the shoulder.

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich exit.

Lance looks very relieved. He exhales slowly. Standing  
 in the family room for a few seconds, Lance takes off his  
 jacket and smells it in a few places.

INT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

A tenor sax player wails a screaming high note, followed  
 by a smoldering blues riff.

The sax player belongs to a hot jump-swing band, made up  
 solely of black musicians, that is grooving at the West  
 High homecoming dance.

We see a MONTAGE of shots depicting white students dancing  
 and having a good time. Among the twisting melee is Kalene,  
 Andrea, Tim, Rob, and Trevor. Kalene and Trevor talk loudly  
 over the music as they dance.

KALENE

So, what happened with Lance's big mystery date last night? Why didn't he bring her to the dance?

TREVOR

Beats me. All he said was that he had such a good time on Friday, he might go over to her place and see her again tonight.

KALENE

(fuming)

He went to her place?

TREVOR

That's what he said.

Kalene continues dancing, but is visibly steamed.

Lance suddenly approaches the group, holding several glasses of punch.

LANCE

Punch, anyone?

Kalene and Trevor are momentarily startled. They don't know if Lance has been in earshot of their conversation. We realize this could be a potentially awkward moment, but it is quickly interrupted by an amplified voice, coming from the direction of where the band is performing. The voice belongs to MR. PINGEL, a kindly older gentleman who is the longtime principal of West High School.

MR. PINGEL

Excuse me. Excuse me, everyone. We need all members of the homecoming court to report to the stage immediately. All members of this year's homecoming court, please report to the stage area.

LANCE

(matter-of-factly)

Well, I guess that's our cue.

Lance hands the glasses of punch to a surprised Trevor.

Kalene, who was seething just moments earlier, quickly composes herself and makes a vain attempt at flirting with Lance. She saunters over to him, sticks her arm out for him to take, and flashes a coy, seductive smile.

KALENE

Ready whenever you are, your majesty.

Lance smiles timidly and takes Kalene's arm.

IN FRONT OF THE STAGE

Mr. Pingel stands amongst the homecoming court with a microphone. He is having fun announcing the members of the court, even though we can tell by the look on his face he has done it a hundred times before. The court members, starting with Lance and Kalene, are preparing to lead the rest of the students and alumni in a dance. The freshman, sophomore, and junior attendants have already been announced, and are awaiting the recognition of the senior attendants.

MR. PINGEL

Okay, West High, let's have a big round of applause for your senior attendants. Let's hear it for Trevor McIntyre and Andrea Lux!

Big APPLAUSE from the crowd.

Trevor escorts Andrea to the middle of the gymnasium, then off to the side with the other attendants.

MR. PINGEL

And now, the moment you've all been waiting for. Your 1957 West High Homecoming King and Queen . . . Lance Goodrich and Kalene Casner!

Big APPLAUSE from the crowd.

Lance, now donning a corny-looking homecoming crown, escorts Kalene to the center of the gym.

Kalene, obviously star-struck by all the attention being lavished on her, mugs for the crowd.

MR. PINGEL

(teasingly)

Of course, as we all know, no homecoming coronation would be complete without the traditional homecoming kiss.

WHOOPS, CHEERS, and WHISTLES from the crowd.

MR. PINGEL

King, you may kiss your queen!

Kalene smiles gingerly at Lance and bats her eyelashes.

Lance smiles back, leans over, and gives her a cordial peck on the cheek.

Kalene looks frustrated at only receiving a peck.

Big APPLAUSE from the crowd.

CUT TO:

Lance and Kalene slow-dancing.

KALENE

(pouting)

Lance, why did you kiss me like that?

LANCE

Pardon?

KALENE

The way you kissed me. That's your idea of a homecoming kiss?

LANCE

What do you mean?

KALENE

Don't you like me? You kissed me like, like I was a corpse or something. Do you find me unattractive?

LANCE

Unattractive? Of course not. What makes you say that?

KALENE

I don't know.

Kalene puts her head on Lance's shoulder and thinks. After several seconds, she pulls back and addresses him again.

KALENE

Lance, can I ask you something?

LANCE

Shoot.

KALENE

You don't have to answer, you know, if you don't want to. I . . . I was just wondering.

LANCE  
Wondering what?

KALENE  
Well . . . I was just wondering how you  
spend your evenings. You know, what sort  
of things you do when you go out at night.  
(pause)  
You don't have to tell me if you don't  
want to.

Lance gives Kalene an inquisitive look.

LANCE  
How I spend my nights?

KALENE  
You don't have to tell me.

LANCE  
No, no. I don't mind. I'll tell you.

KALENE  
You don't have to.

LANCE  
Well, I . . . well, I want to. I  
wouldn't tell you if I didn't want to.

INSIDE LANCE'S CAR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Lance drives to the city morgue after the dance. With his right hand, he pops open the door to the glove compartment and produces a beautiful white corsage, which he places on the passenger seat. Lance and Kalene's dialogue at the dance continues and is voiced over this scene.

LANCE  
(matter-of-factly)  
Mostly I just drive around.

KALENE  
Drive around?

LANCE  
Yeah. I guess . . . I guess I find it  
sort of . . . relaxing.

KALENE  
(skeptically)  
Driving around?



LANCE

Yeah. It seems to take my mind off things . . . You know.

AT THE CITY MORGUE

The desolate, creepy morgue stands ominously in the night.

Lance's car slowly pulls up. He gazes at his favorite building with a very neutral expression on his face.

BACK TO THE DANCE

KALENE

Well, surely you don't drive around all night.

LANCE

No, no, of course not.

(pause)

Sometimes I go and dig up bodies from the local cemetery.

KALENE

Lance, be serious.

LANCE

Oh, but I am, my dear.

(laughs maniacally, like  
Vincent Price)

Ah, ha, ha, ha, ha!

KALENE

(flatly)

Are you seeing someone?

Lance suddenly recoils like he would under his mother's interrogation.

LANCE

Seeing someone?

KALENE

Yeah.

LANCE

Kalene, I --

KALENE

-- Never mind. Never mind, it's none of my business. How you spend your evenings is entirely up to you.

LANCE

But, Kalene --

KALENE

-- Forget it. I . . . I apologize, Lance. It really is none of my business. Look, let's not say another word. We'll just keep dancing and not say one other word.

LANCE

Kalene --

KALENE

-- Shhhh . . . Shhhh . . . Forget it.

Lance gives up. His face contorts as he struggles to find the right words, but takes Kalene's advice and says nothing. He tries to comfort her by hugging her close, but we can tell by the wounded expression on Kalene's face that she is heartbroken. The song the band is playing comes to an end. Couples separate and clap for the music.

INT. CITY MORGUE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The band begins a new slow song as Lance opens a door in the morgue and flips on a row of fluorescent lights. They flicker to life and cast a harsh, unforgiving glow on a very sterile-looking room with a tiled floor. There are several meat lockers along the far wall of the room. Lance stands in the doorway, still dressed in his suit and holding the white corsage from the glove compartment of his car. He looks sweaty and a little strung out, but relieved to be away from the crowd at the dance. Lance straightens his tie, wipes his brow, and proceeds toward the meat lockers.

BACK TO THE DANCE - LATER THAT NIGHT

The music continues. Couples are strewn about the dance floor, wrapped in each other's arms.

Kalene stands by herself with her arms crossed, still looking mad and heartbroken. Trevor approaches Kalene and asks her to dance by motioning to the floor. Kalene doesn't look too excited, but concedes.

BACK TO THE MORGUE

The romantic music from the dance continues as Lance cuts a rug with a young female corpse. The corpse is

wrapped in a blue sheet, which Lance has fashioned into a makeshift strapless dress. Lance's white corsage is pinned on the sheet. Although he is supporting dead weight, Lance dances quite gracefully with the corpse, and his motions look effortless. As the song ends, Lance gives the pale girl a tender kiss on her blue lips.

INT. BIOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

A West High biology class erupts with chaos as the students wait for their teacher, MR. VALENTINO, to arrive. It is a typical biology classroom, complete with aquariums and a plastic skeleton in the corner. Paper airplanes are flying, and someone has put a cigarette in the skeleton's mouth.

Amidst the pranksters sits MARTIN FEECE, quietly. Martin is the school nerd, complete with taped Buddy Holly glasses and a pocket protector. He has greasy, unkempt hair, and is looking at a frog in a specimen jar. Martin brings the jar close to his face, deeply fascinated by it.

Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor sit at the lab table behind Martin, laughing and joking.

Kalene and Andrea sit at the lab table in the back of the room. Andrea is drawing hearts in her notebook, but Kalene's notebook is clenched tightly to her chest. She stares disappointedly at Lance.

Trevor leans forward in his seat and slowly draws back his open palm. He sharply smacks Martin, who is still staring at the frog jar, on the back of the head.

Tim, Rob, and Trevor break into hysterics, and classmates in the immediate area surrounding them follow suit.

Noticeably jolted, Martin's twisted glasses dangle from his face. He drops the frog jar, and it begins rolling toward the edge of the table.

The students sitting close to Martin obviously have time to save the jar, but don't. It falls with a loud CRASH to the tiled floor, and shatters.

TREVOR

Nice play, Shakespeare!

Martin, appalled at what has happened, begins wretchedly crawling on the floor, hoping to salvage the fallen specimen.

Andrea laughs loudly at the frog incident, but quickly shuts up when Kalene shoots a disapproving glare at her that cries: "You should be paying attention to me!"

ROB  
(laughing)  
So, Lance, what happened to you  
Saturday night?

TREVOR  
(a bit suspicious)  
Yeah. And Friday night, for that matter.  
Did you score? I'm not talking about the  
game either, you big stud! I mean af-ter  
the game.

LANCE  
(cooler than the other side  
of the pillow)  
Well, let's just say we did a little more  
than talk.

ROB  
(suddenly turned on)  
No shit? What happened? Did you get  
a chance to feel her --

Rob is interrupted when the classroom door suddenly SLAMS shut. Mr. Valentino, the biology teacher, enters with a disgusted look on his face. He shakes his head disapprovingly as he battles grounded paper airplanes on his way to the front of the classroom.

MR. VALENTINO  
All right, people. Who opened the  
formaldehyde? It stinks in here!

The class shares a collective vacant stare.

MR. VALENTINO  
McIntyre, did you open one of the frog  
jars?

Trevor holds his right hand up with mock innocence.

TREVOR  
No, sir! I didn't open any of the  
specimen jars. Scout's honor.

MR. VALENTINO  
Well, if McIntyre didn't open one of the  
jars, who did?

Class shares the same blank stare as before.

MR. VALENTINO  
Nobody's going to confess, huh?

Nobody confesses. Mr. Valentino shakes his head and walks over to the skeleton in the corner of the room. He eyes the cigarette with feigned amusement.

MR. VALENTINO  
(quietly)  
What am I going to do with you kids?

Mr. Valentino pulls the cigarette out of the skeleton's mouth and tosses it in the garbage. A few kids snicker. Reaching into his breast pocket, he produces a pair of reading glasses and puts them on.

MR. VALENTINO  
Okay . . . let's get to work.

Mr. Valentino opens his gradebook.

MR. VALENTINO  
Ammons?

AMMONS  
Here.

MR. VALENTINO  
Anderson?

ANDERSON  
Here.

Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor converse quietly as Mr. Valentino continues to take roll.

ROB  
So, what happened? Did you get lucky or what?

TREVOR  
Yeah, buddy boy. Did she put out for ya?

LANCE  
Well, you know. We fooled around a little. I'm not gonna say nothing happened, 'cause it did. But it was our first date.

TREVOR

Well, shit. As long as she didn't lay there like a board or nothin'. I hate it when chicks do that. Tell me, did you at least get to second base?

TIM

Yeah, Lance. Tell us what happened. Exactly.

MR. VALENTINO

Martin Feece?

Martin, still under the lab table, picks pieces of broken glass out of the dead frog. When his name is called he gets startled and jumps, hitting his head on the bottom of the lab table.

The class explodes in laughter.

Martin rubs his head.

MR. VALENTINO

(losing patience)

Is Martin Feece here today? Martin, where are you?

Martin slowly gets up from underneath the table and raises his right hand.

MARTIN

Here, sir.

MR. VALENTINO

Martin, why were you under the lab table?

A few students snicker.

MARTIN

Well, sir . . . it's kind of hard to explain. You see --

MR. VALENTINO

(continues taking roll)

-- Never mind. Gonsalves?

GONSALVES (OS)

Here.

Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor continue talking quietly as Mr. Valentino calls roll.

TREVOR  
All right. You can't hold out on us any longer, Lance. Tell us the whole story, and don't hold anything back.

LANCE  
Okay. Here it is.

MR. VALENTINO (OS)  
Goodrich!

LANCE  
Here, sir!

ROB  
Well? What happened?

LANCE  
Well, first of all, we didn't go up to the bluff or anything. Her parents weren't home, so I went over to her place.

ROB  
Her parents weren't home? You mean you had the whole place to yourself?

LANCE  
Yep. They were gone for the whole night.

MR. VALENTINO (OS)  
McIntyre!

TREVOR  
The whole night? You gotta be shittin' me, Goodrich. Why would her parents leave you alone with --

MR. VALENTINO  
(angry)  
-- McIntyre!

Trevor raises his right hand.

TREVOR  
(sarcastically)  
Present, Mr. Valentino.

Trevor pauses for a second with a dumb expression on his face, then returns to the group conversation.

TREVOR

So, if you did have the whole place to yourself with this chick, I mean, did you get into her pants or what?

Kalene and Andrea gossip in the back of the classroom.

KALENE

I can't believe the nerve of that Lance Goodrich! I'm obviously the most popular girl in school.

Kalene looks Lance's way.

KALENE

Why won't he ever ask me out on a date?

ANDREA

Beats me, Kalene.

KALENE

(melodramatically tearful)

Did you see the way he kissed me Saturday night? I mean, I can name at least a hundred other boys at this school that would pay to kiss me. And Lance gives me this crummy peck on the cheek like I was his mother or something!

BACK TO Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor.

ROB

(completely amazed)

You were in her bedroom? Jesus, how did you manage that?

LANCE

Well, you know. If you've got it, you've got it.

TREVOR

All right, so you got her up to her bedroom. So what? That doesn't mean anything. She could've just been showing you her stuffed animals or something.

ROB

Yeah, she could've just been showing you her stuffed animals! What happened next, Lance?



LANCE

Oh, she definitely showed me more than her stuffed animals . . . once I got her on the bed.

TREVOR

You got her on her bed?

ROB

Ho-ly shit!

BACK TO Kalene and Andrea

KALENE

So, my question is, if Lance was out on a date on Friday and Saturday, who did he go out with? It certainly wasn't anyone from West. I would've known a long time ago if he was taking out a girl from West. It wasn't any of the cheerleaders, that's for sure.

ANDREA

Do you think Lance is seeing a girl from another school?

KALENE

That's what I can't figure out. I mean, he might be. But even if he is, how come he never brings her to any sock hops or anything? You know what's really weird? I honestly don't think I've ever seen Lance with a girl!

ANDREA

What are you saying, Kalene? Do you mean you think Lance is . . . well, you know.

KALENE

(suddenly giddy)

You mean . . . oh, are you asking me if I think Lance is --

Kalene waves her hand to designate that Lance might be gay. Andrea nods and smiles at Kalene. They break into gossipy hysterics.

MR. VALENTINO

(to Kalene and Andrea)

You two quiet down over there.

(pause)

All right, people. Let's get started.

Kalene and Andrea share their private joke as Mr. Valentino starts his lecture.

MR. VALENTINO (OS)

Last time we were discussing X and Y chromosomes, so let's open our text to page 234.

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS - DAY

Several bimbos from the cheerleading squad, dressed in skimpy t-shirts and shorts, are practicing their pom-pon routines during P.E. Kalene, the captain of the squad, and Andrea, the co-captain, are not present yet.

CHEERLEADER #1

So, did you hear?

CHEERLEADER #2

Hear what?

CHEERLEADER #1

Oh my god! You haven't!

CHEERLEADER #2

What?

Cheerleader #1 doesn't answer, but breaks out in a big grin.

CHEERLEADER #2

(impatient this time)

What?

CHEERLEADER #1

(giggles)

Well, I don't know if I should tell you. This is some pretty serious dirt.

CHEERLEADER #2

Suzie! Come on!

SUZIE

Well . . .

CHEERLEADER #2

Come on.

SUZIE

Well, okay, JoAnn. You're never gonna believe this.

JOANN

What?

SUZIE

Promise you won't tell anyone.

JOANN

I promise! I promise! What is it?

SUZIE

Well, it just happens to concern West High's own "knight in shining armor."

JoAnn looks puzzled.

SUZIE

You know . . . Mr. star quarterback himself!

JoAnn looks shocked. Her mouth drops.

JOANN

You mean Lance? Lance Goodrich?

Suzie nods her head.

SUZIE

Mmm-hmm.

JOANN

Well, what about Lance? I think he's dreamy.

SUZIE

Promise you won't tell anyone.

JOANN

Suzie!

SUZIE

Well, Andrea told me he's, uh, you know . . .

JOANN

(racked with anticipation)  
He's what?

SUZIE

He's, well, that he's . . .

Suzie makes the universal gay gesture that Kalene made with her hand in biology class.

JoAnn doesn't understand.

SUZIE  
 (whispering loudly)  
 Andrea said Lance is queer! A fairy!  
 You know, he likes guys!

JoAnn is visibly blown away.

JOANN  
 (loudly)  
 Lance Goodrich likes guys?

All the cheerleaders stop their routines and turn toward Suzie and JoAnn. There is complete silence, almost like a silent mourning, since most of these girls have been fantasizing about getting into Lance's pants since the fourth grade. They are in complete shock. A number of the cheerleaders begin murmuring and gossiping excitedly.

Suddenly, Kalene and Andrea enter, and there is dead silence once again. Kalene looks pissed.

KALENE  
 (stone cold)  
 All right, ladies, let's go. We've  
 got work to do.

The cheerleaders line up into formations.

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

A school bell RINGS and hordes of students pour out of West High's front doors. The scene is festive, and should convey a "High School Confidential" sort of feel, complete with leather jackets, mini-skirts, saddle shoes, and bobby socks. There is dancing and carrying on, like a scene straight out of Grease. Souped-up cars SCREAM around the parking lot, and many students gossip and wave to each other. There are calls and cat-calls.

This chaotic party scene sets up the grand exit of West High's big men on campus, Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor. The four hot-shot football players casually stroll through the front doors of West High, with varsity letter jackets slung over their shoulders, acting cool and tough. Their "coolness" offsets the goofy, immature nature of the other "average" students, as Fonzie did on so many occasions with Richie, Potsie, and Ralph.

Trevor laughs and starts jokingly punching Tim's arm.

TREVOR

Hee hee! Did you see the look on Valentino's face when he saw the skeleton this morning?

Tim pushes Trevor away.

TIM

Cut it out, ya wet-end!

ROB

(with a conforming laugh)  
Yeah, that was a good one, Trevor!

TIM

Big deal. That's the oldest trick in the book.

TREVOR

(mocking Tim)  
That's the oldest trick in the book!  
That's the oldest trick in the book!

Trevor puts Tim in a headlock and gives him a friendly noogie.

TIM

Knock it off, McIntyre!

Lance and Rob laugh.

TREVOR

Say "uncle!"

Tim shoves Trevor this time.

TIM

I said, cut it out, ya friggin' homo!

Lance and Rob laugh louder.

TREVOR

Ooooh . . . What's under Timmy's skin today?

Tim charges at Trevor, but Lance comes between the two.

LANCE

(laughing)  
Girls, girls, girls! Am I going to have separate you two?

A car horn HONKS, interrupting the skiff. Kalene, Andrea, Suzie, and JoAnn pull up in a big Chevy convertible. Andrea sits behind the wheel with Kalene on the passenger's side, closest to the guys.

GIRLS IN THE CAR  
(playfully seductive)

Hi, boys!

TREVOR  
(suddenly switches gears)

Whoa! Girls indeed!

Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor walk over to the car.

Tim tries to fix his hair, which is messed up from Trevor's rough-housing.

TREVOR  
What's goin' on, ladies?

ANDREA  
Nothin' much. We're probably gonna go over to Suzie's to steal some booze for the weekend. What are you doin'?

TREVOR  
Hey! Now, that sounds like a plan!

ANDREA  
Why don't you join us? Suzie's folks are on vacation until Sunday, and we just might persuade her to open a bottle early.

The girls giggle. Suzie has a smug look on her face.

TREVOR  
Like, I'm there!

ROB  
Shit, yeah! Let's go!

TREVOR  
Lance, Timmy, you guys up for a little party?

TIM  
Hey, if you girls can get your hands on a bottle, my arm can be twisted.

Trevor jokingly twists Tim's arm. Tim shoves Trevor,

his mood lighter this time.

TREVOR  
You in, Lance?

LANCE  
Well, no, I better not. No, thanks. You guys go ahead. Actually, I've got some studying to do.

TREVOR  
Studying? Ah, man, can you be square sometimes, Goodrich! Come, on! Girls, booze, what more could you ask for?

ROB  
Yeah, Lance. Come, on!

LANCE  
It's just that I've just got this big history test, that's all. You guys go ahead. Really.

TREVOR  
(like a scornful parent)  
I must say I'm very disappointed in you, young man. Hey, it's your loss, pal.

ANDREA  
(sarcastically)  
Hey, leave Lance alone. Drinking alcohol might break his concentration for the big game this weekend!

SUZIE  
Yeah, and we certainly wouldn't want to have him corrupted by a bunch of females!

The girls in the car break into the giggles.

TREVOR  
(under his breath, to Lance)  
What's that supposed to mean?

Lance shrugs.

ANDREA  
Well, suit yourselves. See ya later, boys!

The girls speed off.

Trevor runs after the car, shouting.

TREVOR

Hey! Hey! Where does Suzie live?  
Where does Suzie live?

The girls don't respond, and Trevor eventually turns around, utterly disgusted.

TREVOR

Shit! Thanks a lot, Goodrich!

ROB

Yeah. Now, what are we supposed to do,  
homework?

Lance shrugs.

Rob stands frozen for a second with a dumb look on his face as some crazy beatnik lounge music begins playing.

INT./EXT. POST-WAR SUBURBIA - DAY

The music continues as we see a montage of images depicting the suburban hell hole our characters dwell in. These shots should be reminiscent of the surreal look Tim Burton got in Edward Scissorhands, with his countless rows of aluminum-sided, cookie-cutter houses. The mood conveys a very bland and conservative existence--a satirical, nightmarish vision of Atomic-Age conformity.

Mixed in with shots of the American Dream are old childhood photos and grainy, 8-mm film footage of the story's main characters at various stages in their young lives. These are mostly cute, nostalgic images that portray things like family picnics and fishing trips. There are young boys with toy footballs and little girls dressed up as cheerleaders for Halloween. It is difficult to tell who most of the cute little kids in the pictures are, but one little boy stands out: Martin Feece, with his trademark glasses, is showcased doing clumsy things and getting harassed and beat up for it at different times in his life. One particular shot pays special attention to Martin examining a worm by a pond. Suddenly, another boy rushes up behind him and pushes him into the water. We assume this might be the young Trevor McIntyre.

The montage eventually shifts toward the present, and we see Martin continuing to get picked on in high school. There are several shots of Lance and Co. horsing around, as well as Kalene and her bitchy cheerleader friends



stealing liquor and partying. This dizzying, whirlwind of events ends up at the public library as the music fades out.

EXT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

A car drives past the dark, desolate library. The wind blows, stirring up fallen leaves.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - NIGHT

The nearly-empty public library is getting ready to close. Lance sits at a table and studies for his history test, as promised. He looks distracted, however, and fidgets nervously.

After a few seconds, Lance puts down his American History book and ventures over to the card catalog. He looks in the "P" drawer, under "Psychology." Lance flips through a few cards, then shuts the drawer. He looks around, as if someone might be watching him, then walks cautiously to the stacks.

IN THE STACKS

Lance flips his index finger along a row of books until he finds the one he wants, titled Abnormal Psychology. The stacks should convey a Gothic look, with creepy organ music swelling in the background. Lance looks around every so often, paranoid that someone will see him.

Lance flips to a page with a chapter titled "Necrophilia," and begins to peruse it. Seconds later, he is nearly scared out of his wits when an ominous old female librarian appears, seemingly from thin air.

LIBRARIAN

Young man, the library is closing. Would you like to check out that book?

The organ music ceases as Lance's blood curdles.

He YELLS, nearly startled to death.

LANCE

Oh, uh . . . uh, sure.

Lance clears his throat, then remembers his manners.

LANCE

Yes. Yes I would, thank you.

Lance holds the book tightly against his chest, he has had the scare of a lifetime.

EXT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

The Gothic horror vibe comes to a head as we see the scary library again from the outside. The creepy organ music rapidly swells to a booming climax as Lance exits the building, looking frightened and moving quickly.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOODRICH HOME - DAY

The Goodrich residence gleams in the morning sunshine. Birds are CHIRPING and a paper boy rides by on his bicycle, tossing a paper on the front porch.

INT. GOODRICH HOME - DAY

Lance, Abigail, and Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich are seated around the kitchen table having breakfast before school, work, and housework, respectively. Lance, Abigail and Mrs. Goodrich are politely dining on bacon and eggs, while Mr. Goodrich reads the morning paper. Mr. Goodrich is dressed in his blue "City Morgue" outfit.

Every so often, Lance looks up from his food and peers at the paper his father has his nose buried in.

Eventually, Mr. Goodrich puts the paper down. He takes a bite of scrambled eggs.

MR. GOODRICH

Fine breakfast, Lorna.

MRS. GOODRICH

Why thank you, dear.

(pause)

Lance, you never told us about the dance on Saturday. Did you have a nice time?

LANCE

Oh. Uh, yeah, Mom. It was terrific.

A slight tension lingers in the room before Mrs. Goodrich

speaks again.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Did the gym look nice? How were the  
decorations?

LANCE  
(caught off guard)  
Decorations?  
(slight pause)  
Oh, the decorations were swell.

Abigail looks up at Lance, enjoying watching him squirm.

The verbal silence is magnified by the CLANKING of silver-ware.

Lance eyes the newspaper again.

Just when "Old Nosey" looks like she's about to ask another question, Lance interrupts.

LANCE  
Dad, could I take a look at the paper?

MR. GOODRICH  
Of course, Son. Which section would you  
like? The sports? The funnies?

LANCE  
The front page, please.

Mr. Goodrich looks impressed at the fact that his son might be interested in politics or world news. He hands Lance the paper.

MR. GOODRICH  
Here you go.

Lance opens the front page, and peers over the top of the paper for a second. He then fixes his eyes on the obituaries, pretending to read some dumb local article on the following page. He scans several obituaries of older folks who have recently passed on. The write-ups on these folks are certainly kind, but by the frustrated look on Lance's face, we understand how he feels: with all of them being more than twice his age, they are simply undateable.

Lance all but gives up and tosses the paper on the table. Then, as if it were an act of god, a miracle: Lance notices a boldfaced article on the front page. It reads:

### AREA YOUTH COMMITS SUICIDE

An eastside youth was found dead Saturday night in what officials later confirmed to be a suicide case.

Darla Pribble, 17, of Parkview Estates apparently took her life by means of carbon monoxide inhalation. Her parents found her in the family car after . . .

Lance looks up from the paper at roughly this point. He seems distraught by the news, but there is also an ironic look of joy in his eyes, a look more commonly reserved for the ugly duckling who is never asked out, and then suddenly has a date to the prom with the captain of the football team. His whirling thoughts are broken by his mother's voice.

MRS. GOODRICH

Lance, would you like some more eggs?

LANCE

(a bit startled, he puts  
the paper down)

Uh, no, Mom. No thanks. I better get going to school.

MRS. GOODRICH

Oh, my word, yes! Look at the time.

The Goodrich family bustles to get ready for school and work.

MRS. GOODRICH

Abigail, don't forget your lunch.

ABIGAIL

(insulted)

Yes, Mother.

(to Lance, under her breath)

So, Fred Astaire, you liked the decorations, huh?

Abigail doesn't actually know where Lance spent his Saturday evening, but she has a hunch it wasn't at the dance.

Lance looks a bit shocked at his younger sister's intuition.

ABIGAIL

(playfully whispers)

Did ya get to second base?

Lance makes a fist.

LANCE  
Watch it, pip-squeak!

Abigail scurries away giggling.

MRS. GOODRICH  
I've got your briefcase, Bill.

Mrs. Goodrich hands the briefcase to her husband.

MR. GOODRICH  
Thank you, dear.

Mr. Goodrich gives his wife a kiss goodbye.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Lance, Andrea, and Kalene are sitting in American Lit. Despite her disappointment with Lance, Kalene stares at him dreamily, unaware of the great wisdom the ENGLISH TEACHER is imparting on her students.

ENGLISH TEACHER  
So, this is a little different than the Hemingway we've read, wouldn't you say?

Lukewarm response from the class.

ENGLISH TEACHER  
You know, this book caused quite a stir when it was first published. It's been banned in schools across the country, and I think we were very lucky to get it.

The class doesn't care.

ENGLISH TEACHER  
But, we'll talk about that later. Now, Holden Caulfield is an example of what we call an "antihero." Can anyone tell us what an "anti-hero" is?

No response.

Kalene stares dreamily at Lance.

Andrea's face is buried in her copy of The Catcher in the Rye.

The English Teacher scans the room and sees Kalene off in space.

ENGLISH TEACHER

Kalene, can you tell us what an "anti-hero" is?

Kalene is still daydreaming.

KALENE

Huh?

ENGLISH TEACHER

"Anti-hero," Kalene. Do you know what an anti-hero is?

KALENE

(deeply confused)

Anti-hero?

The class erupts in laughter.

The English Teacher looks taken aback for a second, but knows Kalene has been lusting after Lance, and enjoys a little laugh with the class.

ENGLISH TEACHER

Are you all right, Kalene?

Kalene still doesn't fully comprehend what's going on.

The division bell RINGS.

ENGLISH TEACHER

Okay, class we'll pick up with this on Monday. Have a nice weekend.

The class bustles to get out the door.

IN THE HALLWAY

Kalene and Andrea walk down the hall.

ANDREA

Gee, Kalene. For someone who thinks Lance is queer, you sure have the hots for him.

Kalene doesn't respond. The girls suddenly pass a big poster, which snaps Kalene out of her trance. Kalene stops to look at the poster, but Andrea keeps walking. The poster reads:

HALLOWEEN COSTUME BALL  
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31st  
8 PM

Kalene makes a quick mental note of this opportunity, then jogs after Kalene.

KALENE  
Hey, Andrea! Wait up!

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC FIELDS - DAY

The West High football team is practicing after school.

A formation lines up, and the ball is hiked to Lance.

Lance falls back and makes a deep pass to a receiver, who catches the ball and gets creamed.

Lance and his buddies are mostly goofing off, since Coach Walker has not shown up yet. While they are busy knocking each other around and acting macho, Martin Feece timidly walks by carrying a specimen jar. Several football players, including Lance, Tim, Rob, and Trevor come crashing down in a big pile following a play before Martin is noticed.

Trevor looks up from the bottom of the pile.

TREVOR  
Hey! Hey, Martin! Did ya get a new cadaver?

Several football players snicker.

Lance looks a bit startled by Trevor's word choice.

Trevor gets up.

TREVOR  
Hey, jerk! I'm talkin' to you!

Martin begins walking away quickly.

Trevor chases after Martin.

TREVOR  
Hey! Get over here!

MARTIN  
Leave me alone, Trevor. I just wanna go home.

Trevor grabs Martin by the shoulder.

Martin is noticeably jolted, but does not drop the specimen jar this time.

Trevor steps in front of Martin and blocks his path.

TREVOR

Whatcha got in the jar, Feces? Another dead toad? Ribbit ribbit?

MARTIN

If you are referring to the croaking sound uttered by the North American bullfrog, then you would be correct. There are, however, several distinct differences between toads and frogs.

Several football players catch up with Trevor and Martin.

TREVOR

Well, I guess it takes one to know one, you amphibious little weasel!

The football players snicker.

MARTIN

Trevor, leave me alone! Why don't you pick on someone your own size?

Martin tries to step around Trevor, but Trevor blocks his way.

TREVOR

Just answer one question for me first, nerd.

Martin tries to leave again, but Trevor grabs him by the back of the neck, applying pressure this time.

Martin crumbles under Trevor's grip.

MARTIN

Ow! Ow! Ow! What? What?

TREVOR

(snickers)

Well, it's like common knowledge that you're gonna remain a virgin for the rest of your life, right? So, I mean, what I wanna know is, do like dead animals turn

(MORE)



TREVOR (cont'd)  
you on or something? Are you gonna go  
home and like, have sex with that frog?

The football players laugh loudly, but many are grossed out at the same time.

Lance has a pained look on his face.

MARTIN  
(angry)  
Leave me alone, Trevor! That's disgusting!  
I would never --

Martin tries to bolt, but Rob sticks his foot out and trips him. The specimen jar goes flying, and lands in the hands of Tim Haight.

TREVOR  
Over here, Timmy!

Tim cocks the jar by his right ear, and throws a spiral pass to Trevor.

TREVOR  
Woo-hoo! Touchdown, McIntyre!

Trevor starts to do a victory dance.

Martin gets up and charges at Trevor.

Trevor and a few football players play "keep-away" from Martin for a few seconds, laughing and having a grand time.

MARTIN  
(with all the courage he  
can muster)  
Gimme back that jar, McIntyre, you big  
Neanderthal!

Martin charges at Trevor again.

Trevor casually sticks his palm out and straight-arms Martin, knocking him to the ground. Trevor doesn't actually shove Martin, but the force of running into Trevor's palm knocks him down.

TREVOR  
Lance! Let's run that winning play!

Trevor tosses the jar to Lance.

Lance hands the jar back to Trevor.

LANCE  
Nah. You guys go ahead. I don't feel like it.

Trevor looks disgusted with Lance.

TREVOR  
(self-importantly)  
All right, Goodrich. I'm the new QB!  
Come on, guys!

Trevor motions to Martin, who is just starting to get up.

TREVOR  
Feces, you're on defense!

Tim, Rob, Trevor, and a few other football players line up in a make-shift formation, with Trevor as quarterback.

Trevor hands Rob the jar, who lines up in front of him.

TREVOR  
23! 49! 61! Huht!-- Huht!-- Hike!

A few football players struggle to get open.

Rob runs deep.

ROB  
Trevor! I'm open! I'm open!

Trevor throws Rob a long, awkward pass, surely spelling doom for the jar.

Martin looks terror-stricken.

The jar is expertly caught by a large pair of strong, black hands.

The football players are having a hoot until they realize it is Coach Walker who has caught the pass with all the precision of a gifted wide receiver, his former position. Suddenly, there is dead silence.

TREVOR  
Coach!

COACH WALKER  
(sternly)  
What's going on here, McIntyre?

Trevor has the fear of god in his eyes--he knows Walker can pummel him, and is the one person he is afraid to give any lip to.

TREVOR

Oh, uh, nothing, Coach. Nothing at all. We were just fooling around, that's all. Playing a little catch.

COACH WALKER

You're supposed to be doing calisthenics on the practice field. Why, may I ask, are you playing catch with a --

Coach Walker examines the contents of the jar.

COACH WALKER

-- a bullfrog?

TREVOR

Uh, it's Martin's frog, sir: We were just havin' a little fun.

COACH WALKER

Martin Feece?

(turning to Martin)

Martin, is this your specimen?

A few football players snicker at the word "specimen."

Martin takes a timid step toward Coach Walker.

MARTIN

Yes, sir.

COACH WALKER

Were these guys giving you a hard time?

Martin pauses for a second and takes a deep breath.

MARTIN

No.

COACH WALKER

No? You sure now? You can tell the truth.

Martin looks coldly at Trevor.

MARTIN

I am, Coach. There's no problem. No problem at all.

COACH WALKER

(hesitantly)

Well, I suspect otherwise, but I'll take your word for it. Nevertheless, you guys were screwing around when you should have been warming up for practice. Get over to the field and give me five laps.

There are some murmurs of complaint.

COACH WALKER

(enraged)

Now!

The team takes off running--they know he means business.

COACH WALKER

And McIntyre, you owe me fifty push-ups!

MARTIN

This really isn't necessary, Coach.

COACH WALKER

Look, are you okay, Feece?

MARTIN

Yeah. I'm fine. I'm fine.

COACH WALKER

You sure?

MARTIN

Yeah. Yeah, I'm sure.

Coach Walker hands Martin the jar.

COACH WALKER

All right. Look, now. If any of those guys give you any trouble, you let me know, you understand?

MARTIN

(familiar with the routine)

Yeah. Sure.

COACH WALKER

I mean it, Martin. You let me know.

MARTIN

Sure, Coach.

Martin realizes that blabbing will only get his face turned

into a punching bag, a sad irony in the logistics of the high school social order. He walks away dejectedly.

Coach Walker watches sympathetically. He knows that every high school in America has a punching bag just like Martin.

INT. KALENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kalene, Andrea, JoAnn, Suzie, and several other cheerleaders are having a slumber party. They are dressed in skimpy nighties and pajamas, and acting like teenage girls. There is a lot of giggling and gossip, junk food, and a bottle of cheap booze being passed around.

One of the cheerleaders takes a swig from the bottle and makes a face like "Mr. Yuck."

KALENE

(self-importantly)

Well, since Andrea took it upon herself to open her big mouth and blab to everyone in school about a certain star quarterback we all know, I thought I should have you guys over to set the record straight.

ANDREA

Kalene, I didn't --

KALENE

(flatly)

-- Shut up, Andrea.

Andrea pouts.

KALENE

Now, as we all know, the kiss that Lance gave me at the homecoming dance was hardly adequate.

SUZIE

A disgrace!

JOANN

Totally embarrassing!

KALENE

(hopeful)

And although there's a slim possibility it means he likes guys, I'm holding out

(MORE)

KALENE (cont'd)

on the notion that Lance, for a split second, went temporarily insane. Any guy would have to be insane not to want to kiss me!

CHEERLEADER #3

I'd kill for a kiss from Lance. Even it was just a peck on the cheek!

The other cheerleaders giggle and murmur in agreement.

KALENE

(interrupting)

Well, at the risk of sounding arrogant, we all know that I'm the most popular, beautiful girl in school, and if Lance had the opportunity to kiss anyone, he would want to kiss me.

(suddenly melodramatically  
tearful)

Which leads me to suspect the worst!

Suzie puts her arm around the grieving Kalene.

JOANN

It's like, really weird, ya know? This is our senior year, and the whole time we've been at West, I've never seen Lance with a girl. Ever!

ANDREA

That's what me and Kalene were talking about, JoAnn. Lance hardly ever comes to any sock hops or dances either. I've never seen him with a girl as long as I can remember.

EXT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Lance walks outside the morgue, looking around every so often to make sure nobody sees him. He is carrying a bouquet of flowers. He walks to the side door of the building, which is located in a dark alley. There are city noises in the background, and a police siren BLARING in the distance. Lance produces his father's key and unlocks the door. He casually slips inside the building, and quickly shuts the door behind him.

INT. KALENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The girls are giggling.

SUZIE

So, basically we've narrowed it down to three possibilities. One: Lance is a fairy.

JOANN

Or two: Lance is seeing another woman.

KALENE

(defiantly)

Or three:

A hush falls across the room.

KALENE

Lance is a genuine, certifiable, bona fide looney tune.

INT. MORGUE HALLWAY - NIGHT

Lance is now inside the morgue. He takes a flashlight out of his pocket and flips it on, walking with a bit more confidence down a dark hallway. Lance eventually comes to a door that reads: "EMBALMING." He turns the handle, and steps inside.

IN THE EMBALMING ROOM

The room is completely dark with the exception of Lance's flashlight. He closes the door and flips a lightswitch, turning the room from completely black to a harsh, fluorescent illumination. This is the same room Lance was in when he danced with the corpse on homecoming night. He quickly scans the rows of lockers, quietly counting them before he approaches.

Lance produces the newspaper he was reading earlier, unfolds it, and looks at it. He looks down at the names on the various lockers and pulls one open. A sterile blue sheet covers the body inside, and Lance slowly removes it. Staring back at Lance is a horribly disfigured corpse, and Lance quickly shuts the locker in disgust.

LANCE

Yuck!

Lance points his finger across a number of other lockers,

scanning a couple more names as he goes.

LANCE  
 (under his breath)  
 Let's see . . . Pribble, Pribble,  
 Pribble . . .

Lance comes to a locker that reads "Pratt, Sarah," and opts to open it. When he removes the blue sheet we see a pretty young brunette girl with a large scar on her head, apparently the victim of an auto accident or something of that nature. Lance seems more impressed with his second choice, but not blown away.

LANCE  
 (sheepishly)  
 Hi, uh . . .

Lance looks down at the name on the locker.

LANCE  
 Sarah. My name is Lance.

An uncomfortable silence ensues as Lance somehow realizes he has picked an inadequate blind date. Realizing there is no chemistry here, he nervously glances at the newspaper in his hand, and clears his throat.

LANCE  
 So, . . . did you go to Crestwood . . .  
 or, uh, Eastside?

Lance looks down at his feet, avoiding eye contact with Sarah. When he looks up, he bites his lower lip. The clinical silence of the room is marred by the hum of the fluorescent lighting. Suddenly, Lance realizes he must bail out of a conversation that's obviously going nowhere.

LANCE  
 Well, it was nice meeting you! See  
 ya around!

Lance hastily throws the sheet back over Sarah, and slams the locker shut, looking embarrassed at his misjudgement.

INT. KALENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The slumber party has noticeably died down. Many of the girls are either yawning, or passed out. Kalene is still wide awake, however, with a devious look in her eyes.



Andrea, who is sitting next to Kalene, begins to nod off.

KALENE

Another woman! Hmmph! We'll just see about that.

Kalene snatches a phone that is sitting on the floor next to her. She puts the handset to her ear and rapidly dials Trevor's number.

INT. MCINTYRE REC ROOM - NIGHT

Trevor and the football thugs are lounging around in his family's rec room, drinking beer and acting like testosterone-crazed maniacs. The phone RINGS several times before Trevor, struggling to get out of a headlock being applied by Rob, makes an effort to answer it.

TREVOR

(yells, drunkenly)  
Get offa me, ya goddam homo!

Trevor breaks free from the headlock and picks up the phone in a clumsy manner.

TREVOR

Hello?

RETRO-STYLE SPLIT SCREEN BETWEEN KALENE AND TREVOR

KALENE

(in a serious tone)  
Trevor.

TREVOR

(slurring his words)  
Yeah. Whaddya want?

KALENE

This is Kalene.

TREVOR

(absent-mindedly)  
Yeah.

Trevor turns his head from side to side, trying to relax the muscles in his neck.

Kalene looks irked.

KALENE  
 (louder this time)  
 I said, this is Kalene!

TREVOR  
 Oh.  
 (suddenly excited)  
 Oh, hey, dollface! What's goin' on?  
 Wanna come over and have a beer?

KALENE  
 (flatly)  
 No. Look, is Lance there?

TREVOR  
 (disappointed)  
 Awww . . . c'mon! Come over and have a  
 drink. I won't bite.

KALENE  
 You're such a pig, Trevor. Just get  
 Lance, will ya?

TREVOR  
 Lance? Lance ain't here! That wet end  
 pussied out on us!

Trevor momentarily stops paying attention to his conversation with Kalene and pretends he is cracking a whip, making the "pussy-whipped" sound under his breath.

KALENE  
 (getting angry)  
 What do you mean? Where is he? He's  
 not drinking with you guys?

Trevor snaps out of his daze.

TREVOR  
 Nah. Romeo said he had another date.

KALENE  
 A date? With who?

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

Lance comes to the locker that is marked "Pribble." He slowly takes a deep breath and exhales.

TREVOR (VO)  
 I dunno. Some chick.

KALENE (VO)  
(demanding)

Who?

Lance slowly but surely grasps the handle of the locker marked "Pribble" and begins to pull it.

TREVOR (VO)  
(a bit defensive this time)  
I dunno! He uh, he got . . . Oh, yeah.  
He had her address and was uh, he was  
gonna go meet her.

INT. KALENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

KALENE  
(fuming)  
Meet her? Where?

TREVOR  
(through the receiver)  
Kalene, I don't know! I didn't ask,  
all right? All he said was he had her  
address and he was gonna go meet her at  
her place!

KALENE  
Her place? Her place?  
(like Peppermint Patty)  
Arrrrghhhh!!!

Kalene slams down the receiver and does some serious pouting, this time like Lucy Van Pelt.

INT. MCINTYRE REC ROOM - NIGHT

The drunken Trevor is left with a dial tone.

TREVOR  
Hello? Hello? Kalene?

Trevor disappointedly hangs up the phone.

TREVOR  
Shit.

Rob tries to put Trevor in another headlock, but Trevor, in no mood to rough house this time, shoves him with authority.

TREVOR  
Knock it off!

INT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Lance has pulled the Pribble locker all the way out and is staring at the blue sheet covering the corpse. He looks nervous, and rubs his hands together in anticipation of what he might find underneath. Lance slowly begins to draw back the sheet. Beneath the sheet we see a beautiful female corpse with long blond hair and fair skin. With her eyes being closed, she looks truly peaceful--a real sleeping beauty. Prince Charming is noticeably awe-struck when he sees the fair Darla Pribble for the first time.

LANCE  
(softly and sincerely)  
Gosh.

Lance swallows, overcome with emotion. He doesn't say anything for several seconds.

LANCE  
Uh --  
(clears his throat)  
-- Darla, my name is Lance . . . Lance  
Goodrich. I read about you in the paper.

INT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR - DAY

The division bell RINGS. Students come out of various classroom doors and bustle through the hallway. Kalene, Andrea, Suzie, and JoAnn end up in front of the poster for the Halloween dance, posing.

JOANN  
So, like, who are you gonna go to the  
Halloween dance with, Suzie?

Suzie shrugs her shoulders.

SUZIE  
I don't know. No one's asked me yet.  
What about you?

JOANN  
(proudly)  
I'm going with Bif.

ANDREA  
 (jokingly)  
 McIntyre? You mean Trevor's little punk  
 brother?

The girls giggle. Kalene is silent for a moment, then  
 lets out a sarcastic snicker.

JOANN  
 He's not a punk. I think he's kinda  
 cute.

ANDREA  
 Maybe a little cute. It's just that he's  
 so . . . so . . . oh, how shall I put it?

KALENE  
 Young?

ANDREA  
 No. No, I didn't mean that. Well, Bif's  
 what, a sophomore? He's not that young.

KALENE  
 (condescending)  
 Andrea, he's a child, for god's sake!

JOANN  
 (protesting)  
 Bif is not a child! Just because he's  
 an underclassman doesn't mean anything.  
 I think he's cute, and besides, Coach  
 Walker is already scouting him for the  
 varsity squad next year. He's  
 practically --

Kalene looks coldly at the peasant cheerleader JoAnn like  
 Darth Vader looked at the cocky Imperial Senate member  
 who doubted his religious beliefs in Star Wars.

JOANN  
 -- He's . . . I --

JoAnn lowers her head when she realizes she has raised  
 her voice at Queenie.

ANDREA  
 (standing up to Kalene)  
 So, who are you going to the dance with,  
 Kalene?

Kalene looks surprised at the blunt inquisition.

ANDREA

Well?

KALENE

(gravely)

I don't know yet.

Trevor suddenly comes out of nowhere and surprises the girls. He pinches Kalene's fanny and she jumps.

TREVOR

She's going with me! Right, Sweetheart?

Kalene looks severely annoyed.

KALENE

Wrong! Cut it out, Trevor!

Trevor laughs and pokes Kalene in the ribs.

TREVOR

Ah-ha! Looks like someone got up on the wrong side of the bed this morning.

(to Andrea)

Mr. Star Quarterback hasn't asked her out yet, huh?

Andrea begins to shake her head, "no."

KALENE

That's really none of your business, Trevor!

TREVOR

Oh. Well in that case, pardon me. Since it is none of my business, I guess you wouldn't be interested in hearing about Lance's big date tonight.

SUZIE

Lance has got another date?

Trevor begins walking away.

TREVOR

So I hear.

Kalene runs up behind Trevor, grabs him, and pins him against a locker, hinting toward the idea that she might threaten his manhood if he doesn't speak up.

KALENE

Who? Who is she, Trevor? It's the same girl from the other night, isn't it?

TREVOR

Hey, take it easy! I don't know who she is. All Lance said was that he was gonna go meet her again. Look, if you really wanna know, why don't you just ask Lance yourself?

Kalene considers this for a second. She then reconsiders with a look of frustration and releases Trevor.

KALENE

Oh, for Pete's sake.

Andrea puts her hand on Kalene's shoulder.

ANDREA

Come on, Kalene. Forget it.

Kalene is noticeably upset at being informed that Lance has another date. She huffs and puffs and eventually walks away sulking.

Trevor, who genuinely likes Kalene, or at least would like to get her into the back seat of his car, makes a vain attempt at being serious for once.

TREVOR

Kalene, I'm only telling you what Lance told me. Kalene --

Kalene turns a corner and exits.

TREVOR

(to himself)

Damn.

Some of Trevor's football buddies come up to him, laughing and joking. Trevor feigns amusement; we can see he has been disheartened by this incident.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Lance sits in study hall, engrossed in his abnormal psychology book from the library. Suzie, JoAnn, and Andrea are sitting in the seats behind him. Andrea leans forward and whispers to Lance.

ANDREA

Hey, Lance. You know, Kalene really has the hots for you.

Lance slams the book down on his desk quickly and covers it with his hands, like a kid who just got busted by his mother for reading Playboy. Andrea, however, is oblivious to the psychology book.

LANCE

(startled)

What?

ANDREA

Yeah. She really digs you. She told me she thinks you're boss.

LANCE

She thinks I'm boss?

ANDREA

That's what she said.

LANCE

Andrea, I don't really, uh, I don't --

Andrea leans back before Lance can finish his sentence.

Lance looks bewildered for a moment. He tentatively picks up his book again, and finds his place. Just when he is about to start reading, Suzie leans forward. Lance hides the book again, somewhat irritated this time.

SUZIE

Kalene said she really wants you to ask her to the Halloween dance. Has she mentioned anything about that to you?

LANCE

The Halloween dance? Why, no, she hasn't.

SUZIE

Oh, yeah, yeah. It's all she's been talking about the past week.

LANCE

All she's been talking about? Are you serious?

SUZIE

Deadly.



Lance raises an eyebrow at this.

Suzie leans back.

Lance turns around to question Suzie with an index finger raised, but finds her sitting back in her seat. He rolls his eyes at the teasing bits of information he is receiving and demands answers.

LANCE

Suzie, you better tell me what's going on here, or --

STUDY HALL TEACHER

-- Hey! You kids quiet down back there!

Lance is momentarily startled by the teacher's voice, but quickly regains his composure.

LANCE

(softly, but intense)  
You better tell me what's going on.

JOANN

Or what? You'll ground us?

The girls giggle.

ANDREA

Look, all we know is what Kalene said.  
If I were you, I'd talk to her soon.

(pause)

Of course, if you don't want to go with Kalene, I think Suzie could make space on her busy social calendar.

SUZIE

Andrea!

The girls giggle.

STUDY HALL TEACHER

Quiet!

Lance looks frustrated. He grips his desk tightly, and mulls over the tough new situation he's facing.

He considers and reconsiders his plight via body language, then turns to face the girls.

LANCE  
 (hotly, under his breath)  
 Look, the truth is, I've already got  
 a date.

Lance turns around and opens his book.

The girls look at each other, awe-struck. This is the  
 surprise of the century.

The division bell RINGS.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Students bustle through the hall.

JoAnn, Suzie, and Andrea have congregated at Kalene's  
 locker, murmuring excitedly. A moment later, Kalene shows  
 up and the gossiping ceases.

KALENE  
 Well?

ANDREA  
 He said he's already got a date.

KALENE  
 Already got a date? Andrea, did you  
 tell him how much I --

Something catches Suzie's eye.

SUZIE  
 Shhh! Here he comes.

The girls pipe down and try to act oblivious to Lance as  
 he strolls by.

Lance opens his locker which is on the other side of the  
 hall and begins to put his abnormal psychology book away.

Kalene catches sight of the book.

Lance puts the book in the locker, shuts the door, and  
 walks off.

KALENE  
 (matter-of-factly)  
 Abnormal psychology. That confirms it.  
 Andrea, call me when you get home  
 tonight.



Abigail grows impatient. She walks over to Lance's desk and picks up the key.

ABIGAIL  
The key. Why do you have Dad's key to work?

LANCE  
Uh --

The phone RINGS.

LANCE  
-- Well, you see . . . it's actually --

MRS. GOODRICH (OS)  
-- Lance! Telephone!

Lance is saved--temporarily.

LANCE  
(to Abigail)  
Hang on.

Lance goes into his parents' bedroom to pick up the phone.

He picks the phone up cautiously and cups his hand around the mouthpiece, like in some old detective movie.

LANCE  
Yeah. Mom, I've got it.  
(pause, then cautiously)  
Hello? Oh . . . Hi, Kalene.

Abigail appears in the doorway.

LANCE  
What am I doing tonight? Uh, well, nothing much. Actually, I promised my dad I'd go over to the morgue tonight and file some paperwork for him.  
(pause)  
Yeah. Yeah, he's been real busy lately.

Abigail still looks suspicious, but somewhat satisfied at Lance's answer. She turns and leaves.

Lance looks noticeably relieved.

LANCE  
Yeah. Okay. Well, I'll see you at  
(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)  
school tomorrow, Kalene. Yeah. It was  
nice talking to you. Okay. Bye.

Lance hangs up the phone. He returns to his room to finish getting dressed.

After a few seconds, Abigail re-enters Lance's room and makes him jump--she's on to him.

ABIGAIL  
If you're only going to file paperwork  
at the morgue, why are you getting all  
dressed up?

LANCE  
I dunno. Just feel like it.

ABIGAIL  
You're weird.

Abigail exits.

Lance grabs the key and follows her to her room.

IN ABIGAIL'S BEDROOM

LANCE  
Hey, Abbey, don't tell Dad I'm going to  
the morgue, okay? It's a surprise.

ABIGAIL  
Your secret's safe with me, lover-boy.

LANCE  
What's that supposed to mean?

ABIGAIL  
Nothing. Have a good time.

LANCE  
Right. Don't tell Dad, Abbey. I'm  
warning you.

Lance leaves and Abigail silently and sarcastically mimics his warning, then picks up a book to read.

INT. ANDREA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Andrea sits on her bed. The phone next to her bed RINGS. She picks it up.

ANDREA

Hello?

INT. KALENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kalene sits on a chair in her room with her legs crossed, holding a telephone handset. She gently strokes a cat that is sitting on her lap, giving the impression she is a dangerous supervillain from a 1960's spy movie.

KALENE

Hey, it's me.

(pause)

Yeah, it's on tonight. I just got done talking to Lance. Meet me out front in ten minutes and I'll pick you up. Okay. Right. Bye.

Kalene hangs up the phone. She wears a demented look of excitement on her face as she schemingly clasps her hands together.

INT. FOYER IN ANDREA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Andrea comes down the staircase in the front of her house.

She retrieves her coat from the front hall closet, and begins putting it on.

OUTSIDE ANDREA'S HOUSE

Kalene pulls up in Andrea's driveway. When Andrea does not appear right away, Kalene honks the horn.

IN THE FOYER

ANDREA

(to her folks)

Bye!

Andrea exits through the front door to her house.

INSIDE KALENE'S CAR

Andrea opens the door to Kalene's car.

KALENE

Hurry up!

ANDREA  
What's the rush?

KALENE  
I don't want to miss this.

ANDREA  
Why? Lance already told you where  
he's going.

KALENE  
Andrea, please. Even you couldn't  
possibly be so naive.

Kalene peels out.

EXT. LANCE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lance calmly gets in his car and shuts the door. He keys  
the engine, and it ROARS to life.

INT. KALENE'S CAR - NIGHT

Kalene drives at a rapid pace.

ANDREA  
Kalene, would ya slow down for Pete's  
sake!

KALENE  
Lance could be anywhere. We can't  
afford to waste time.

ANDREA  
But you said he told you he was going to  
the morgue to file paperwork for his dad.

KALENE  
That's what he said. But that doesn't  
mean that's where he's going.

ANDREA  
Where else would he go?

KALENE  
Andrea, all that stuff about filing  
paperwork is just smoke. Lance obviously  
made it up so we wouldn't know where  
he's . . . uh --

ANDREA  
Where he's what?

Kalene looks at Andrea for a moment, then stares straight ahead, angered that she's been reduced to this pathetic sneaking around.

KALENE  
(in denial)  
Where he's meeting his secret friend.

Andrea backs off for a moment.

ANDREA  
Well, how long is this gonna take,  
Kalene?

KALENE  
Why? Are you chickening out?

ANDREA  
(defensively)  
No.

KALENE  
Then hang loose. We've got all night.

Kalene stares straight ahead again, ignoring Andrea and concentrating on the task at hand.

EXT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Lance gets out of his car, parked well off the beaten path, and shuts the door. He opens the trunk of his car, and retrieves a beautiful bouquet of flowers. He then jogs to the building's entrance in the back. We can see Lance's breath in the cold, dark air as he fishes out his father's key to unlock the door. He is shivering. Lance unlocks the door, yanks it open, and hurries inside.

INT. KALENE'S CAR - NIGHT

Kalene and Andrea roll past a drive-in diner. Kalene scans the lot for Lance's car.

KALENE  
All right, keep your eyes peeled.

Andrea looks around, putting her hand up to the window of the car.



ANDREA

I don't see it.

KALENE

I don't either. I don't think he likes this place anyway.

(pause)

Come on, there's a couple more places I want to check.

Kalene and Andrea drive off.

INT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Lance stands in one of the morgue's dark rooms. He flips on one of the bright fluorescent lights with a loud CLICK. The room flickers into full view as the lights warm up to full power. Lance begins slowly walking toward the embalming room.

INT. KALENE'S CAR - NIGHT

ANDREA

I still say we should check the morgue.

KALENE

The morgue's way too obvious. That's the last place Lance will be.

(pause)

Besides, I doubt there's many people at the bluff tonight. Maybe he's there.

ANDREA

The bluff? You wanna drive all the way up to the bluff?

KALENE

(gravely)

I just want to see her. That's all.

Kalene and Andrea speed off to "The Bluff," a big overlook that doubles as a make-out haven. It is the town's version of "Inspiration Point."

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

Lance gently grasps the handle to the locker marked "Pribble," and slowly pulls it open, until it stops with a BANG that seems amplified because of the room's eerie

quietness. He uncovers Darla and presents her with the bouquet of flowers.

LANCE  
 (speaking softly)  
 Hi, Darla. I brought you some flowers.

Lance sets the flowers down by Darla's side. Much of the following "dialogue" can obviously be improvised.

LANCE  
 (softly, but conversationally)  
 Oh . . . no. No, of course not.  
 (short pause)  
 Well, sure. Sure. It's my pleasure.  
 (short pause)  
 Good, good. Well, I'm glad you like them.  
 (medium pause)  
 You're very welcome. It's nothing, Darla . . . really.  
 (short pause)  
 You know, I really missed you. It seems like it's been forever, doesn't it? Since we last saw each other, that is.  
 (pause)  
 Did . . . did you miss me?

No response from Darla.

LANCE  
 You did? Really?  
 (pause)  
 Oh, Darla, you're the best. You mean that?  
 (medium pause)  
 Gosh, I think you're swell too.  
 (short pause)  
 Yeah. The swellest gal a guy could ask for, as a matter of fact.  
 (short pause)  
 Well . . . well, because you're someone who doesn't run away when you need them. And someone I can talk to without . . . without being so insincere.

EXT. THE BLUFF - NIGHT

Kalene's car circles around, exploring the bluff. There are a few cars present, but none are Lance's. Rock 'n' roll plays softly on one of the car's radios.

INT. KALENE'S CAR - NIGHT

Tension lingers between Kalene and Andrea as Kalene begins to lose hope of finding Lance. Kalene looks dejected and ready to give up.

ANDREA

Give up yet?

Kalene seemingly doesn't hear Andrea at first, then suddenly gets fired up again.

ANDREA

Kalene?

KALENE

No way. The night's still young.

(Kalene pauses, then  
swallows her pride)

Maybe Lance is at the morgue. You know--  
what do they call it? Reverse psychol-  
ogy?

Andrea rolls her eyes.

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

Darla is now propped up in her locker and Lance is holding her hands.

LANCE

See, the thing is, I . . . I never under-  
stood before. What it's like . . .

(clears throat)

What it's like, that is, to . . . uh --  
-- to love somebody.

(pause)

Until now. And, and it's so easy. Why  
is it so easy now?

(short pause)

All this time I've been looking for  
someone to love me, and now I love  
someone.

(short pause)

Darla, why is it so easy now?

No response from the corpse.

LANCE

(suddenly overcome)

Oh, Darla, I love you. I really mean it.

Lance slowly pulls Darla close and kisses her full on the lips.

EXT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Kalene and Andrea drive past Lance's car. Kalene peers inside, but the car is empty.

KALENE

Well, I'll be --

ANDREA

-- Told ya he'd come here.

KALENE

Well, well.

Kalene kills her headlights, and drives several car lengths ahead of Lance before parking in the darkness.

EXT. CITY MORGUE - NIGHT

Kalene briskly walks toward the morgue, with Andrea hesitantly following alongside her.

ANDREA

I gotta be honest with you, Kalene. This place gives me the creeps.

(pause)

We've seen Lance's car. Can't we just go home now?

KALENE

No way. I don't buy this sorting paperwork story for a minute.

Kalene and Andrea begin to slow down and be more cautious as they get closer to the building.

The sound of the morgue sign banging in the wind startles them and they jump.

Eventually, they come to a window, but it is too high to see inside. The girls take turns jumping, but to no avail.

KALENE

Hoist me up on your shoulders.

ANDREA

Are you crazy?

KALENE

Andrea, I've gotta see. C'mon, it'll only take a second. Don't you wanna know how Lance has been spending his nights?

ANDREA

I don't know. I don't know if I want to know. This place is weird, Kalene. I mean, besides, isn't it illegal? You know, peeking in windows?

KALENE

Andrea, I said this will only take a second. Now, are you gonna help me or not?

Andrea unhappily gives in, for fear of jeopardizing her spot on the varsity cheerleading squad.

ANDREA

Fine.

Andrea unsteadily hoists Kalene on to her shoulders. They wobble for a moment, but it does give Kalene a clear view inside.

ANDREA

Can you see anything?

KALENE

Not yet. Hold still!

Andrea loses her balance again, and Kalene has to flail her arms to keep from falling. Andrea suddenly lunges forward, and Kalene grabs the window sill to keep from crashing through the window. This makes a loud RATTLE.

INT. EMBALMING ROOM - NIGHT

Lance is sitting next to a reclining Darla. He looks up with a start when he hears the racket outside. Immediately suspicious, he quickly covers Darla with her blue sheet.

EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Kalene cups her hands to the window, straining to see inside.

ANDREA

Anything?

KALENE

No. Now, will you just hold your . . .  
Wait a second, I see a flashlight! It's  
Lance!

ANDREA

What's he doing?

KALENE

I don't know, it's hard to tell.

A policeman wanders by. He shines his flashlight on the girls.

Kalene and Andrea scream. Andrea almost drops Kalene.

POLICEMAN

Can I help you girls?

Kalene, still on top of Andrea's shoulders with a flashlight shining in her eyes, mulls this over for a second.

ANDREA

Uh . . . Well, you see, sir . . .  
the thing is . . . we've, uh . . .  
we've --

KALENE

(matter-of-factly)  
-- We've never seen a dead body before,  
officer.

The policeman tries to comprehend what's going on.

POLICEMAN

(positively baffled)  
Never seen a dead body before?

KALENE

(innocently)  
Yeah. Is it a crime to be curious?

Andrea looks like she's going to faint and wobbles a bit.

AT THE BACK OF THE MORGUE

Lance quickly and quietly exits through the back entrance of the morgue. He makes his way to the side of the building to see what the noise outside is. We can hear Kalene and

Andrea murmuring to the cop in the background as Lance cautiously moves along the side of the morgue to the front of the building. When Lance notices the police car parked across the street, he freezes in his tracks, backs up slowly, then turns around and hightails it out of there.

INT. BIOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

Same scene as the previous biology class: total chaos. Trevor and Kalene sit in the back of the room.

KALENE

So, I just told him we'd never seen a dead body before.

TREVOR

I don't believe it.

KALENE

I'm totally serious. I was up on Andrea's shoulders, and all of a sudden this big cop comes over and --

TREVOR

-- Whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait. Start over from the top.

KALENE

Well, it's like I said. I wanted to see where Lance has been spending his nights. You know, with this so-called girlfriend of his. So, Andrea and I decided to spy on him.

TREVOR

Okay. I'm with you so far.

KALENE

And we ended up finding his car at the city morgue. He told me he had some paperwork to do for his father.

TREVOR

Man, that's weird.

KALENE

Tell me about it. I couldn't see too good inside, but I know I saw Lance. No question about it.

Kalene and Trevor ponder this dilemma.

TREVOR  
So you think . . .

KALENE  
Yes, I do.

TREVOR  
That's sick.

KALENE  
He's your friend.

Trevor looks bewildered.

TREVOR  
(completely confounded)  
I mean, what kind of guy would bring a date to a morgue? Sure, I'd love to have a make-out pad of my own, but that's so, so --

KALENE  
-- Morbid? Perverse?

Lance enters the room.

TREVOR  
Man, stealing his dad's keys just so he could get a little action. In a building full of dead bodies, no less. And I felt bad that time I was making out with Suzie in the back of my dad's pick-up truck.

KALENE  
Oh, shut up, Trevor. You're hornier than anyone I know. You'd probably jump at the chance.

TREVOR  
Now, look, Kalene. Fooling around behind your parent's back is one thing. But to do it in a morgue . . . I just can't believe --

Lance approaches.

KALENE  
-- Shhh!

LANCE  
Hi, guys.



TREVOR

Hey, buddy. Have a good time last night?

Lance sits down at the table behind them.

LANCE

Pretty quiet, actually. Why?

TREVOR

Just curious.

Trevor, thrilled at the possibility of unseating Lance as the reigning king of West High, turns back to Kalene and makes his move.

TREVOR

So, Kalene. I was just wondering.

KALENE

If I'd go to the Halloween dance with you?

TREVOR

How'd you know? I --

KALENE

-- I'll tell you what. I'll think about it. Okay?

Trevor gives Kalene a funny look, then leans back in his chair, elated. He knows he's got her.

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

The football team is running plays. Coach Walker is not on the field yet.

Trevor walks past Lance and bumps him "accidentally" with his shoulder. Lance just looks at him.

LANCE

All right, let's run that one we worked on yesterday.

The scrimmaging offensive and defensive sides line up, with Trevor on defense.

Lance hikes the ball, falls back, and gets ready to pass.

Trevor breaks through the offensive line and tackles Lance

hard, throwing him to the ground.

Lance gets up and pulls off his helmet.

LANCE  
What's your problem, McIntyre?

TREVOR  
Nothin'. Just playing defense.

LANCE  
Bull! You know darn well if my arm gets hurt, we won't have any chance at --

TREVOR  
-- Aww . . . poor little baby.

Lance is momentarily shocked that Trevor is mocking him, but recoils with confidence.

LANCE  
Screw you. Let's go. I want to get this play down before Coach gets out here.

TREVOR  
Or what? You'll make us run laps?

A few football players snicker.

LANCE  
I said, let's go. I'm not getting in trouble with Coach on account of you.

The football players begin to line up.

Trevor passes Lance and intentionally bumps him with his shoulder again.

Lance turns around and shoves Trevor in the back.

TREVOR  
(laughing)  
Yeah, that's right, you big pussy.

LANCE  
What's your problem, Trevor?

The football players begin to form a circle around Trevor and Lance.

Trevor takes his helmet off.

TREVOR

I don't have a problem. You've got the problem, Goodrich. Sneaking around all the time. You don't drink. You don't smoke. And what's really queer . . . no one's ever seen you with a chick before.

A few football players snicker.

TREVOR

Are you a fag or something?

The team erupts in laughter.

Lance looks furious. He turns around for a moment and collects his thoughts. When he turns back, he turns back swinging, and connects his right fist to Trevor's nose.

The laughter is broken by the dull SMACK of flesh meeting flesh. Trevor hits the dirt and the fight is on. Lance and Trevor roll around for awhile, to the delight of the football team. There are cheers for both boys as the battle intensifies.

Finally, Trevor gains the upper hand, and forces Lance onto his back. Trevor's nose is bleeding, and he pounds Lance unmercifully.

Lance covers his face in defense.

The team cheers.

Trevor stops for a moment, panting hard.

TREVOR

You friggin' homo! I always thought you were queer. You couldn't get laid in a morgue!

Trevor punches Lance again.

All of a sudden Mr. Valentino, the biology teacher, wanders by and sees the commotion. He rushes over to see what's going on.

MR. VALENTINO

Hey! Hey, you boys break this up right now!

The team is oblivious at first.

MR. VALENTINO

I said, break it up! Or you'll all get  
"F's" in biology.

The team seems to be woken up by this threat. One of the offensive linemen, a giant brute, pulls Trevor off Lance.

Lance and Trevor, covered in dirt and blood, stand glaring at each other.

Lance picks up his helmet and begins walking toward the school.

Trevor spits at him.

TREVOR

Friggin' homo!

Lance breaks into a trot.

MR. VALENTINO

Lance Goodrich? Is that you?

(to Trevor)

You let Lance know that both of you boys can expect detentions for this. I don't care who started it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Lance storms into the locker room, tearing off his football gear as he goes. He throws his helmet at a row of lockers and there is a loud CRASH.

Coach Walker, who was on his way out to the practice field, steps out of his office to see what all the commotion is about.

COACH WALKER

(a little angry)

What's all the racket out here?

Goodrich? Is that you?

LANCE

(pauses, then sheepishly)

Yeah, Coach. It's me.

COACH WALKER

What are you doing throwing your gear all over the place? Why aren't you out on the practice field?

LANCE

I quit.

COACH WALKER

(astounded and upset)

You quit? Goodrich, this better be some kind of practical joke.

LANCE

No joke, Coach. I'm not playing anymore.

COACH WALKER

Not playing anymore? What are you talking about? The playoffs start in two weeks!

LANCE

I know . . . I know.

COACH WALKER

You know? So what's the big idea? Goodrich, you're our star player! We won't be able to beat Central without you! Why do you want to let your teammates down like this?

LANCE

(beginning to calm down a bit)

Coach, it's not . . . it's not that I want to let the team down. I just --

COACH WALKER

-- Wait, wait. Let me guess.

(pause)

Your grades aren't slipping, are they?

LANCE

No. Not at all.

COACH WALKER

Of course. That was a dumb question. Hmm . . . Problems at home? No, no. That can't be it.

(pause)

This can mean only one thing . . . Female trouble, right?

LANCE

Well, sort of, I guess. I --

COACH WALKER

-- You didn't knock anyone up, did you?

LANCE  
 (almost insulted)  
 No! Nothing like that!

COACH WALKER  
 (exhales in relief)  
 Good. Good. Very good.  
 (pauses to clear his throat)  
 Well, now. You listen to me, Goodrich. Listen closely. There ain't one young lady at this school that's worth screwing up your football career over. Let me tell you something. High school romance . . . it doesn't last. But football, man . . . You could play a solid ten years of pro-ball if you don't screw up your knees! Just look at me. One season with the Eagles--dislocated my knee three times. But, hey. Now I've got it made, coaching high school. Makin' so much money I don't know what to do!

Lance and Coach Walker stare at each other for a second, then share a hearty laugh.

COACH WALKER  
 The point is, Goodrich, you've got a gift. A natural talent. And I don't wanna see you blowin' it on account of some skirt. Now, there's gonna be scouts from three Big Ten schools at the first playoff game, and I guarantee they're gonna have their eyes on you. I mean, you could be lookin' at a full ride to one of them fancy colleges!

LANCE  
 Coach, that's very flattering coming from you, believe me. But I, I just don't think I can handle this pressure anymore!

COACH WALKER  
 Pressure? What pressure? You sure you didn't get some girl pregnant, Goodrich?

LANCE  
 Yeah, I'm sure. Don't worry, we haven't even gotten that far yet. It's just that . . . well, this girl I'm seeing doesn't go to West. And --

COACH WALKER

-- And your folks don't approve of her, right?

LANCE

They don't even know about her yet.

COACH WALKER

From the wrong side of the tracks, huh?

LANCE

Yeah. I guess you could say that. I know Trevor and the guys wouldn't approve of her, she's --

COACH WALKER

-- Look. Never you mind what Trevor or your parents or anyone else thinks about her. If you see something special in this girl, then that's all that counts.

LANCE

But Coach, she's not like other girls.

COACH WALKER

Goodrich, don't you know that inner beauty is the most important thing in a person? You can't put a price on something like that.

LANCE

I know, Coach, I know. But you've gotta trust me. She's not like other girls.

COACH WALKER

(getting angry and impatient,  
but pleading at the same time)  
Look, Goodrich . . . dammit! I don't care if "she" is one of your Uncle Wilbur's sheep! We need you in that playoff game against Central. We can't win without you!

Lance's eyes light up at the prospect of Coach Walker's liberal attitude toward sex. He doesn't realize that the Coach isn't really serious.

COACH WALKER

Now, I'm sure whoever this girl is that you're seeing is terrific and you're both madly in love with each other and every-

(MORE)

COACH WALKER (cont'd)  
 thing, but you gotta get your head in the game, man! Forget about the sex stuff-- at least temporarily! You got your future to think about. And don't worry about what everyone else thinks. If this girl really cares about you, she ain't gonna go nowhere.

LANCE  
 Gee, Coach. You really think so?

COACH WALKER  
 I know so! You just gotta give things a little time. If it's meant to be, great. If not, things will work themselves out naturally. They always do.

LANCE  
 Gosh . . . maybe you're right.

COACH WALKER  
 Of course I am. Look, you got a lot of things goin' for you, Goodrich. I just don't want to see you waste an opportunity like this, understand? Now, are you gonna help us beat Central and go downstate this year or what?

Lance thinks for a second and becomes noticeably inspired.

LANCE  
 You can count on me, Coach!

COACH WALKER  
 All right, then. I'm not gonna hear anything more about this quitting business, am I?

LANCE  
 No, sir!

COACH WALKER  
 'Cause you ain't a quitter, are you, Goodrich?

LANCE  
 No, sir!

COACH WALKER  
 All right. You pick up your gear and get back out on the practice field.



LANCE

Yes, sir!

Lance starts picking up his gear.

Coach Walker heads toward the practice field.

COACH WALKER

(regaining his authority)

And if you're not out there in two minutes, you're gonna be runnin' laps, you hear?

LANCE

You got it, Coach!

INT. GOODRICH KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Goodrich is doing some ironing in the kitchen.

EXT. GOODRICH HOME - DAY

Lance pulls into the driveway in his convertible. He gets out and walks confidently to the front door. Lance opens the door and steps inside.

INT. GODRICH FOYER - DAY

Lance hangs up his jacket in the front hall closet. He looks very happy, inspired by the pep-talk he has had with Coach Walker.

IN THE KITCHEN

MRS. GOODRICH

Lance, is that you?

LANCE (OS)

Yeah, it's me, Mom.

Mrs. Goodrich sets the iron in an upright position.

MRS. GOODRICH

How was school today?

Lance enters the kitchen after a beat.

LANCE

Terrific. School was just great.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Oh, yeah? How was practice?

LANCE  
Great. Practice was great.

Lance gets himself a glass of milk, then pulls out a kitchen chair and sits down.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Well, I must say you certainly seem to be in a good mood this afternoon.

Cupid has scored a direct hit with Lance. His mind is on Darla, and he responds dreamily.

LANCE  
Yeah. It was a great day.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(laughing)  
Well, I'm glad to hear it.

Mrs. Goodrich smiles and goes back to ironing.

Lance takes a drink of milk.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(playfully coy)  
Uh, Lance, did anything else happen today that was particularly noteworthy? I mean, you've been so worried about the playoffs recently. When do the playoffs start? Three weeks?

LANCE  
(off in space)  
Yeah, three weeks.

More ironing.

MRS. GOODRICH  
So . . . any other big news? What's with all the bright smiles?

Lance is shy, but beaming. He wants to tell his mother about his secret love.

Mrs. Goodrich looks up from her ironing, notices that Lance is blushing, and puts the iron in an upright position again.

MRS. GOODRICH

Lance?

Lance's grin widens.

MRS. GOODRICH

(jokingly)

All right, fess up. Your face is turning beet red. What is it?

LANCE

Well, Mom, I've got some good news.

Lance holds back for a moment.

MRS. GOODRICH

(suddenly giddy)

So tell me, already. What is it? Don't keep your poor mother in suspense like this!

LANCE

Okay, okay. You're going to like this.

MRS. GOODRICH

Yes?

LANCE

(slowly)

Mom, I've got a date for the Halloween dance.

Mrs. Goodrich SCREAMS.

MRS. GOODRICH

Oh, Lance! That's absolutely wonderful. Just fantastic.

LANCE

(excitedly)

And what's more, I really like her. It's the first girl I've ever met that I really feel comfortable --

MRS. GOODRICH

-- Your father will be so excited. He's out in the back yard right now, raking leaves. Let me get him.

LANCE

(embarrassed)

Mom.

Mrs. Goodrich walks to the back door of the house and opens it.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(yelling excitedly)  
Bill! Hey, Bill! Good news! Lance has  
got a date for the Halloween dance!

Lance looks a bit perturbed that his mother has just announced this to the whole neighborhood, but smiles agreeably.

Mrs. Goodrich returns to question Lance.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(as if it was the most  
important issue)  
So, have you decided what your costume  
will be?

LANCE  
Well, to tell you the truth, I hadn't  
really given it that much thought.

MRS. GOODRICH  
You'll need a good costume. A good  
costume is key. They've got some great  
costumes downtown, you know.

Mr. Goodrich enters, wearing work gloves. He begins to take them off.

MR. GOODRICH  
(more laid back than his  
hysterical wife)  
Wow. Congratulations, Lance. That's  
great news. Really great.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Isn't it exciting?

MR. GOODRICH  
I think you just made your mother's day.

LANCE  
(chuckles nervously)  
I can tell.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Why didn't you tell us earlier?

LANCE

Well, I only found out today, after football practice. I mean, that's when I popped the question.

Abigail enters.

ABIGAIL

(mockingly)

Popped the question? What's going on? Is lover-boy here getting married or something?

MRS. GOODRICH

Abigail, your brother has a date for the Halloween dance! Aren't you happy for him?

ABIGAIL

Ecstatic. Who's the lucky stiff?

MRS. GOODRICH

(scoldingly, then pleasant)

Abigail, knock it off! Now, Lance dear, who is this girl?

LANCE

(clears his throat)

Well . . .

(bashfully)

Her name is Darla. She's really great. I just know you're going to like her. She's really pretty, and, and she has a great sense of humor.

MR. GOODRICH

Darla, huh? That's an unusual name. Darla, Darla . . . why does that name sound so familiar?

Lance looks hopeful that his father will guess who his mystery date is, since he's probably already "met" her.

MR. GOODRICH

Wait a minute . . . I know. There's a Darla down at work.

Lance nods happily, about to spill the beans.

MR. GOODRICH

Yeah, she just came in a few days ago.

(MORE)

MR. GOODRICH (cont'd)  
 Very young. Poor girl committed suicide,  
 I hear.

MRS. GOODRICH  
 Oh, you mean Darla Pribble. Sure, I just  
 read about her in the paper.

MR. GOODRICH  
 Pribble, that's right. Yeah, we just  
 prepped her today, as a matter of fact.

LANCE  
 (turning white)  
 Prepped her?

MR. GOODRICH  
 (matter-of-factly)  
 Prepped her. You know. Embalmed her,  
 put on her makeup. She was scheduled to  
 be buried today.

LANCE  
 (suddenly panic-stricken)  
 Scheduled to be buried?

MR. GOODRICH  
 Yeah, scheduled to be buried. Is there  
 an echo in here?

LANCE  
 So, so that means her funeral is today,  
 right?

MR. GOODRICH  
 Probably over by now, actually.

LANCE  
 (wrenched with anxiety)  
 Uh, uh, Mom, Dad . . . I, I gotta run.

MRS. GOODRICH  
 Where are you going dear? Aren't you  
 going to tell us about your date?

LANCE  
 I'd love to Mom. But I, I think I left  
 my wallet at school. In the locker room.

MRS. GOODRICH  
 Can't you get it after supper? I've got  
 a pot roast in the oven.

LANCE

(anxious)

I really think I should get it now. I was carrying a lot of money today.

MRS. GOODRICH

Oh, Lance. Where's your head? All right. You'd better go get it. I'll keep a plate warm for you..

LANCE

Thanks, Mom! Thanks a million!

Lance rushes out of the house.

LANCE (OS)

I'll be back as soon as I can!

MR. GOODRICH

What's wrong with that boy? He acts like he just saw a ghost!

ABIGAIL

Maybe he's retarded.

INT./EXT. LANCE'S CAR - DAY

Lance speeds off to the funeral. This should employ the overused spin-off on the famous scene from The Graduate when Ben rushes to Elaine's wedding. A Simon and Garfunkel record begins playing and we see Lance's worried face, tortured by Simon's percussive hippie guitar.

Suddenly, we hear the Simon and Garfunkel record SCRATCH. The turntable's tone arm is adjusted, and new vinyl starts CRACKLING at the empty leader space found at the beginning of the LP.

Simon and Garfunkel is replaced by a killer rhythm and blues track from the period. The tune should be upbeat and driving, invoking a chase.

Lance eventually comes screaming into a gas station. He hastily jumps out of his convertible and runs toward the door.

INT. GAS STATION - DAY

An old attendant sits behind the counter. He looks a bit startled as Lance rushes in the door.

LANCE  
Have you got a phone?

ATTENDANT  
What?

LANCE  
A phone. A pay phone. It's very important.

ATTENDANT  
Sure. Right behind you.

LANCE  
Thanks. Thanks a lot.

Lance swings around to the phone and realizes there isn't a phone book. He turns back to the attendant.

LANCE  
Is there a phone book?

ATTENDANT  
Say, aren't you Lance Goodrich, the star quarterback?

LANCE  
Uh, yes. Yes, sir. That's me. I --

ATTENDANT  
-- That was one helluva game you had there last week. Boy, you've got the best arm I seen come outta West High in about thirty years. You thinkin' about playin' college ball?

LANCE  
Well, yes, actually. I was just --

ATTENDANT  
-- 'Cause you got one helluva arm. Arm like that'll take you a long way. Yes, sir. Back when I was in the service, I played a little ball m'self. Wasn't too shabby either, I might add. Tailback was my position. I remember --

LANCE  
(a little impatiently)  
-- Sir, I don't mean to be impolite, but I'm really in a hurry. If I could just use your phone book.



The attendant pauses for a beat, then shrugs and hands Lance the book.

ATTENDANT

Here you go.

LANCE

Thanks a million, mister.

Lance turns back to the pay phone and frantically flips through the phone book. Coming randomly to a Methodist church, he fishes a nickel from his pocket on instinct. He pops the nickel in the phone and dials hastily. There is a tense pause before Lance speaks.

LANCE

(impatiently)

Hello, First Methodist? Is there a funeral for a Darla Pribble at your church today?

(pause)

Yes, I'll hold, thank you.

There is a short pause and Lance's eyes meet with the gas station attendant's for a moment.

The attendant gives Lance a look that defines the boundaries between their respective generations.

LANCE

No? No. Okay. Yes. No, no, not at all. Oh, okay. Thank you very much. I will, thank you.

Lance hangs up the phone and searches for another nickel. To his dismay, he realizes he doesn't have one.

Lance turns to the gas station attendant for help.

LANCE

(sheepishly)

Excuse me, sir. Uh, I hate to ask, but could I trouble you for a nickel? I seem to be out of change.

The attendant doesn't respond.

LANCE

Sir?

The attendant pops open the cash register and retrieves a nickel.

ATTENDANT  
 (a bit agitated)  
 Yeah, yeah. Here you go.

The attendant tosses the coin to Lance.

ATTENDANT  
 Crazy kids.

Lance holds the phone book up to his face and mouths a new number to himself. He puts the nickel in the phone and dials, a bit more cautiously this time. There is a pause before Lance speaks.

LANCE  
 Hello, First Presbyterian? Are you holding a funeral today? The last name is Pribble.  
 (pause)  
 You are? Is it over yet?  
 (pause)  
 It's just getting started? Great. No. No, no. Yes. Yes. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Lance hangs up the phone and hands the phone book back to the attendant, as he rushes out the door.

LANCE  
 Thanks. You saved my life.

ATTENDANT  
 You in some kind of trouble, kid?

EXT. LANCE'S CAR - DAY

Lance speeds to the church. He rounds a corner and comes screeching into the church parking lot. Lance gets out of his car, slams the door, and runs toward the building.

INT. CHURCH FOYER - DAY

Morose organ music is playing faintly.

Lance bolts through the double doors that lead to the church sanctuary. When the doors swing open, the music gets noticeably louder.

## INT. CHURCH SANCTUARY - DAY

Lance comes to a screeching halt when he enters the church sanctuary. His frantic pace is halted by the formal, somber nature of the funeral in procession.

Several old curmudgeons who are attending the funeral glare at Lance in the same fashion that the gas station attendant did just moments earlier. Only at this point does Lance realize he is not wearing a tie and is underdressed for such an occasion.

Lance tucks in his shirt and tries to regain his composure. He proceeds more slowly toward the front of the sanctuary, where a line has formed to pass by Darla's open casket.

Lance waits at the end of the line impatiently. He checks his watch occasionally and tries to see what's going on ahead of him by standing on his tiptoes. This only provokes more disapproving glances from the old curmudgeons. Just when it looks like Lance might explode, he reaches the casket. He waits until the person in front of him is sufficiently out of earshot, then kneels down by the casket. Darla looks very peaceful and beautiful in a floral dress. Her makeup job is questionable, however.

LANCE

(whispers anxiously)

Darla, are you okay? God, what have they done to you? Your color is so, so healthy!

Lance touches Darla's cheek, and some of her caked-on makeup comes off.

LANCE

(grossed out)

Yuck!

Lance wipes the makeup on the plush lining of the casket.

LANCE

My father told me they took you in for embalming today. I would've come sooner, but, but . . . Oh, Darla, I'm so sorry, I had no idea it was gonna be this soon! You should've told me. I didn't even know which church to come to. I . . . Huh? --

Lance is interrupted by a kindly old woman who puts a comforting hand on Lance's shoulder.

OLD WOMAN

-- Son, they're getting ready to start the service.

LANCE

Oh. Uh, okay. I'll just be another second, all right?

The old woman nods understandingly and walks away.

Lance watches her go, then turns back to Darla.

LANCE

Now, don't you worry about a thing. I'm gonna get you outta here! I've just gotta come up with a plan. Let's see. If I could only think of some way to --

The morbid organ music ceases and a deafening silence falls across the room. Lance seems oblivious. He puts two fingers to his lips while he searches for a plan.

LANCE

-- Hmm. I've gotta somehow intercept the casket before it's buried! Yeah, that's it! If I could just --

A PASTOR steps up to the pulpit.

PASTOR

-- Son, I know you're grieving right now, but we're getting ready to start.

LANCE

I'll just be another second, father! I promise.

An old curmudgeon in one of the pews stirs restlessly.

OLD CURMUDGEON

Hey, you! Hurry up!

Lance shoots an angry glare at the old man, then looks lovingly back at Darla.

LANCE

Don't worry, Darla! I'll get you out of here! I swear!

Lance crouches close to Darla and gives her a deep, melodramatic kiss on the mouth.

After several seconds, the funeral-goers look on in horror.

First, we see the pastor's disturbed reaction, which is followed by the immediate family's, and finally the old curmudgeons.

Some old lady in the crowd faints.

There are loud GASPS.

Two guys near the front of the church grab Lance by the arms and begin to drag him away. Lance's lips part from Darla's with a loud SMACK! He has smeared lipstick on his face.

LANCE

Wait! You don't understand!

GUY #1

I don't wanna understand, kid!

Lance wrenches free and runs back to Darla. The two guys grab him and drag him away again, this time more forcefully.

LANCE

Darla! I'll be back! I love you!

Darla's immediate family looks sufficiently horrified by the events. They converse frantically with each other, wondering what could possibly be going on. Lance gets dragged out of the sanctuary, kicking and fighting all the way. He calls out to Darla several more times in desperation. The congregation is genuinely shocked.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Lance is roughly thrown out through the front doors by the two guys.

GUY #2

And stay out, ya damn pervert!

The two guys go back inside the church.

Lance picks himself up, dusts himself off, and looks around. He then walks around to the side of the church, hoping to get a look through one of the stained glass windows. Lance realizes he is not tall enough to see in the windows, so he jumps up and down a few times. He just clears the very bottom of the window, and after several valiant

efforts, gives up. Lance walks away dejectedly to his car.

EXT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

A young couple excitedly exit the costume shop with bags containing their Halloween get-ups.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL a hardware store next to the costume shop.

INT. LANCE'S CAR - DAY

Lance drives.

EXT. COSTUME SHOP/HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Lance drives past the costume shop/hardware store on his way home.

Lance's car SCREECHES to a halt when it exits the frame.

Lance puts his car in reverse and backs up into the frame again, pulling up alongside the two stores.

INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

Kalene stands on a stool, wearing a long, flowing dress. She is made up to be a fair, Medieval princess, and holds a silver wand in her hand.

Two women are frantically attending to her, obviously not quickly enough for Kalene. She shifts impatiently. KALENE'S MOTHER sits in a chair, watching her daughter.

KALENE'S MOTHER

Stand still, Kalene! For god's sake.

KALENE

(whining)

Can't they go any faster?

KALENE'S MOTHER

(fed up)

No, they can't.

(pause)

Don't you want to look pretty for the dance?

KALENE

Oh, what difference does it make? I'm going with Trevor McIntyre. He should be happy I even agreed to be his date.

KALENE'S MOTHER

Well, that's a fine attitude! I don't see what is so wrong with Trevor.

Kalene fumes.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Lance enters the hardware store with a determined look on his face.

INT. COSTUME SHOP - DAY

KALENE'S MOTHER

He's a perfectly nice boy, Kalene. Besides, if Lance can't see what a terrific gal you are, well . . . well, he oughta have his head examined!

Kalene's anger visibly subsides a bit. The women attending to Kalene continue working rapidly.

KALENE

(exhales)

Oh, I know that. It's just . . . well, it's just that --

KALENE'S MOTHER

-- I know, dear. I know. Love hurts.

Kalene thinks for a moment about this wisdom, suddenly snaps back to her version of reality, and proceeds to "accidentally" stomp her foot on the hand of one of the women attending to her. The woman recoils in agony, but does not cry out.

KALENE

(pouts loudly)

Arrghhh! I wish I knew where he was right now! LAAANNNCE!!!!

INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Lance rushes through the hardware store with a shopping

cart. In the cart we see an industrial strength flashlight, a black ski-mask, a length of thick rope, and a small spade. He cruises down the aisle until he finds what he is really looking for: a hard-core, heavy duty shovel. Lance's eyes widen when he reaches the shovel display, and he picks one up carefully, like a beautiful-but-deadly Samurai sword. He turns it back and forth in his hand, testing its weight and feel.

AT THE HARDWARE STORE COUNTER

A CLERK checks Lance out. He glances up momentarily, a bit suspicious because of the odd but coincidental assortment of items in the cart. The clerk takes special notice of the large shovel Lance has chosen.

Lance pays the clerk and gives him a hearty nod.

LANCE

Thanks.

The clerk watches Lance leave the store. A bell RINGS on the door as Lance exits.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

Lance makes his way to his car, carrying a bag of items in one hand, and the fierce-looking shovel in the other.

Kalene and her mother are parked across the street, getting in their car with the princess costume.

When Kalene sees Lance, she drops her bag with the costume.

KALENE

(calling to Lance)

Laannce! Laannce!!

Lance looks over and waves. He opens the trunk of his car and begins putting his items away.

LANCE

Hi, Kalene! Hi, Mrs. Casner!

Lance closes the trunk and gets in the car.

KALENE

Lance, wait! Wait!!

Kalene runs into the middle of the street, as Lance drives off. She narrowly escapes being hit by another car.



The car HONKS loudly, but Kalene seems oblivious.

KALENE'S MOTHER

Kalene!

KALENE

Lance!!

(long pause, then under  
her breath)

Rats!

Kalene stands in the empty street.

A moment later, her mother comes to console her.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GOODRICH HOUSE - NIGHT

Crickets are chirping.

INT. GOODRICH HOUSE - NIGHT

Lance sits in the kitchen, eating left-over pot roast and drinking a glass of milk.

Darla's obituary has been clipped from the local paper and is lying on the kitchen table. Lance stares at it, longingly.

Lance takes a last bite of the pot roast, and downs the glass of milk. He puts his dishes in the sink, and puts the obituary in his pocket.

INT. DARK GARAGE - NIGHT

A figure, clad in black, is getting a set of tools (shovel, rope, flashlight, etc.) together to go grave robbing.

It is difficult to identify this mysterious person, because the garage lights are off. The figure looks suspiciously short to be Lance, however.

When the figure is ready to go, he pulls a small slip of paper from his pocket and looks at it briefly. It is Darla's obituary. We briefly see that the figure is wearing eyeglasses, and there is a slight reflection from the lens.

The figure puts the slip of paper back in his pocket, and

exits through the garage door, shutting it rather loudly.

In the brief moment the figure is illuminated in the doorway, we see that it is definitely not Lance who has been making preparations.

EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

The yellow headlights of Lance's car make their way through the spooky town cemetery.

Eventually, the car comes to a slow stop and the headlights are killed.

Lance gets out of the car dressed in burglar black. It is eerily quiet outside--only the sounds of crickets CHIRPING pierce the cool night air.

An owl HOOTS for dramatic effect.

The wind BLOWS gently, and leaves on the trees RUSTLE.

Lance goes to the back of his car and opens the trunk. He produces the shovel he purchased earlier and his duffel bag. Closing the trunk quietly, he starts off into the darkness, climbing over a small hill lined with tombstones.

Lance moves slowly and cautiously across the cemetery. He holds the shovel in front of his chest with two hands, defensively.

Headlamps from a truck driving on the nearby highway suddenly light up the cemetery, causing Lance to duck behind a large headstone. When the cemetery is sufficiently dark again, he slowly gets up.

Lance continues to make his way across the grounds until he comes upon a particular row of headstones and stops. He carefully places the shovel and duffel bag on the ground. Unzipping the bag, Lance produces a flashlight and a bouquet of flowers. He flips the flashlight on and off to make sure it works, then puts it inside his coat pocket. Lance zips the duffel bag back up, picks up his gear, and quietly makes his way along the row of graves.

Finally, Lance comes to a fresh grave and stops. He hastily puts the shovel down, pulls out his flashlight, and flips it on again.

An owl HOOTS loudly, and this frightens Lance momentarily.

He runs behind a tree, realizes it is just an owl, and returns sheepishly to the grave.

Lance shines his flashlight on the headstone. It reads:

DARLA L. PRIBBLE  
REST IN PEACE  
1940-1957

Lance collects his thoughts and musters up all the courage he can. He has a brief look of uncertainty on his face, but it changes quickly and he sets to work.

Lance flips the flashlight off and puts it back in his coat pocket.

Under the glow of a full moon, Lance raises the shovel and brings it down swiftly, breaking the earth with authority.

EXT. MARTIN'S CAR - NIGHT

Martin Feece mans the wheel of his father's car, a clunky old Studebaker. He is driving on the highway that eventually runs parallel to the cemetery where Lance is robbing Darla's grave.

Martin looks excited to the point of dementia. A determined, creepy stare lingers behind his broken Buddy Holly glasses. He reaches down and turns on the car's A.M. radio, which blares 50's bubble gum pop music.

Suddenly, Martin starts acting cool. He nods his head along with the music, and rests his elbow on the open sill of the driver's side window. Spacing out temporarily, Martin swerves into the other lane of oncoming traffic.

Martin finally snaps out of it when an approaching truck BLARES its horn. His attempt at cool turns to pure terror as the semi's bright headlights fill the interior of the Studebaker.

Martin wedges himself backward into the driver's seat and quickly swerves the car back into the correct lane. The Studebaker SCREECHES as Martin turns the wheel.

Martin looks rattled. He puts both hands firmly on the steering wheel in a traditional ten o'clock, two o'clock position, and keeps his eyes fixated on the road. Trying to regain his composure, Martin moves his head around in a circular motion, takes a deep breath, and exhales.

## EXT. CEMETERY - NIGHT

Lance is making progress digging up Darla's grave. The fresh earth comes up fairly easily. Lance has dug himself a decent hole; he is in up to about his waist. He pauses for a moment and puts the shovel down. Pulling out his flashlight, he shines it into the open grave and looks around. Wiping the sweat off his brow, Lance pulls an earthworm out of the ground and flings it out of the grave. Picking up his shovel, he resumes work.

## AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE CEMETERY

Martin's car pulls into the cemetery. He unknowingly zooms past Lance's car, which is parked at an angle in a gully.

Martin parks his car, gets out, and shuts the door loudly.

## AT DARLA'S OPEN GRAVE

Lance jerks his head up with a start. He has heard the car door slam shut in the distance. Lance nervously scopes out the area, but comes to the conclusion that he has simply heard a "bump in the night." Since he is coming close to hitting wood, he hastily resumes work.

## AT MARTIN'S PARKED CAR

Martin SLAMS the trunk of his father's car, much less tactful than Lance was in his approach.

## AT DARLA'S OPEN GRAVE

Lance knows it's not just a "bump in the night" this time.

LANCE

Shit! What was that? I can't stop digging now!

Lance continues digging at a furious pace.

## ON THE CEMETERY GROUNDS

Martin walks across the cemetery grounds at a confident pace. He is carrying a shovel over his shoulder and a paperback copy of Frankenstein. Martin also wears a hardhat with a flashlight duct-taped to the top of it. With the hat and his taped up glasses, he looks utterly ridiculous. Nevertheless, Martin has a gleeful look in his eyes, like a kid in a candy store. He begins to WHISTLE cheerfully.

## AT DARLA'S OPEN GRAVE

Lance strikes the coffin. He quickly begins digging off the last of the dirt, which is heaved out of the grave onto an immense pile.

Lance sweats profusely as he sweeps the last of the dirt off the top of the coffin with his bare hands. He throws the shovel out of the grave.

## ON THE CEMETERY GROUNDS

Martin climbs the same hill Lance climbed earlier, completely unaware that Lance is in the cemetery.

## AT DARLA'S OPEN GRAVE

Kneeling down in the grave, Lance tries to pop open the coffin's latches, but realizes they are locked.

LANCE  
(agitated)  
Dammit!

Lance stands up and begins hammering the latches with his shovel.

## ON THE CEMETERY GROUNDS

Martin continues walking, unaware of Lance's presence.

## AT DARLA'S OPEN GRAVE

Lance has broken three of the coffin's latches and is pounding on the fourth. He is drenched with sweat and breathing heavily, looking desperate but determined. Finally, the fourth latch gives and Lance exhales loudly in relief. He slowly opens the coffin's lid.

Lance's eyes widen. He is in love.

LANCE  
(extremely relieved)  
Oh, Darla, are you a sight for sore eyes!  
(pause)  
Yes. Yes, I know. I know.  
(pause)  
Well, I missed you too. I've been thinking about you ever since the funeral. It just broke my heart when I found out you were going to be buried. I mean, I guess  
(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)  
 what I'm trying to say is that, well . .  
 . . Oh, here --

Lance flips up Darla's closed eyelids. Her pupils have rolled to the back of her head.

LANCE  
 - What I'm trying to say is that, is that I've had plenty of other girlfriends who were buried before. You know . . . that I've had to say goodbye to. But, but none that . . . none that I ever fell for the way I've fallen for you! I mean that, Darla. And all the things I said the other night at the morgue, too. I'm crazy about you.

Lance strokes Darla's hair.

LANCE  
 Now, don't you worry about a thing. I'm gonna get you out of here just as fast as I can.

WITHIN SEVERAL FEET OF DARLA'S GRAVE

Martin gets closer and closer to Darla's grave. He is still unaware that Lance is robbing it.

AT DARLA'S OPEN GRAVE

Lance now has Darla propped up inside the grave. He climbs out and brushes dirt off himself. Lance bends down and slowly begins to extract the heavy corpse from the earth.

Martin checks the names on the headstones in the row of graves where Darla is buried. He passes several plots and stops about seven or eight feet in front of Lance.

Still unaware that Lance is present, Martin stops to adjust his hardhat, which has sloped down in front of his eyes. Martin situates the makeshift coalminer's hat with a smug look on his face--he is proud of his invention. He reaches up and flips the flashlight on, shining the light directly on Lance and Darla.

Startled by the light, Lance YELLS and drops Darla back into the grave. She lands with a dull THUD, face down in the open coffin, and her pretty floral dress flops up around her ears.

Martin SCREAMS.

Lance squints, because the flashlight is still shining in his eyes. He puts a hand up to his eyes and tries to see who is wearing the obscene hardhat.

LANCE

Hey! Who's there? Who is that?

MARTIN

(trembling with fear)

Um . . . uh . . . I gotta go!

Martin takes off running, the light from his hardhat bobbing up and down as he goes.

LANCE

Hey!

Lance chases after Martin. Martin doesn't get very far before Lance, the star football player, tackles him. He pins Martin to the ground. Martin covers his face in a state of panic.

MARTIN

Don't hurt me! Don't hurt me! Please, I didn't see anything! I won't say a word, I swear! Please, don't hurt me!

LANCE

Hey. Hey, hey. Look, take it easy! I'm not gonna hurt you!

(pause)

Martin, is that you? Martin Feece?

MARTIN

Just lemme go! I won't tell anybody I saw anything, I promise! Just lemme go! Don't hurt me!

The flashlight shines in Lance's eyes again. Martin struggles violently like a stuck pig.

LANCE

(beginning to lose patience)

Martin. Martin. Martin! Now, just calm down. Here, would ya just turn this thing off?

Martin continues struggling, but Lance grabs hold of the flashlight and shuts it off.

LANCE

You're Martin Feece, right? Aren't you  
in my first-hour biology class?

Martin suddenly stops struggling, apparently intrigued  
by the fact that Lance has mentioned "biology." He  
uncovers his face and slowly opens his eyes in curiosity.

MARTIN

(absolutely shocked)

Hey, you're Lance Goodrich, the quarter-  
back! I know you. You're like the most  
popular kid in school!

(pauses, perplexed)

But what are you doing out here robbing  
Darla's grave?

LANCE

(suddenly puzzled and angry  
that Martin knows Darla)

Hey! How do you know Darla? She's --

MARTIN

-- Oh, I know! It must be some sort of  
wild football prank or something!

LANCE

Huh?

MARTIN

What were you going to do, stuff her in  
some freshman's locker? Put her in  
Pingel's office? That'd be a good one!  
But I'm surprised you don't have some  
rookie out here doing the dirty work. I  
mean, really. Aren't initiation rites  
sacred anymore? Don't you guys believe  
in --

LANCE

(angry and nervous at the  
same time)

-- Just shut up for a minute, will ya?  
You're talking a mile a minute. One  
thing at a time, okay?

(pause)

Now, look . . . This isn't what you  
think. I mean, it's not a football prank  
or anything.

Martin's eyes widen.



MARTIN

It's not?

LANCE

No, it's not. But, look . . . first, you tell me how you know Darla!

MARTIN

(tries to play it cool)

Hey, well, you know. I've got my ways.

Lance grabs Martin by the collar.

LANCE

Don't be a wiseguy! You tell me how you know her right now!

MARTIN

All right, all right! Gee whiz, you don't have to have a fit!

(pauses to clear throat)

Well, I guess I probably found out about her the same way you did . . . in the paper. I mean, don't you read the obituaries? I sure do, and my folks always said I should go to a head-shrinker because of it! They always said that --

LANCE

-- The obituaries? Now, look, Darla didn't say anything about another guy! I met her in the city morgue last week, and she didn't say anything about another guy! In fact, she was considering being my steady girl.

Lance takes a class ring off his finger.

LANCE

(confused and angry)

Heck, I was gonna ask her to wear my ring tonight!

Martin stopped listening to Lance when the word "morgue" was mentioned.

MARTIN

(awe-struck)

You were in the city morgue? Holy smokes, how did you manage that? I'd

(MORE)

MARTIN (cont'd)  
 kill for the chance to visit a morgue.  
 (pause)  
 Well, that's why I knew I had to rob a  
 new grave, anyway. Outside of the  
 morgue, that's about as fresh as they  
 come, right?

Lance looks completely bewildered.

LANCE  
 I don't know. I never really thought  
 about --

MARTIN  
 -- Gee, Lance, I didn't know you were  
 interested in biology too! I mean, I  
 always knew you and Trevor copied my  
 tests in Valentino's class, but this is  
 an absolutely unprecedented display of  
 love and devotion you've shown for  
 science tonight!

LANCE  
 (deeply confused)  
 Science?

MARTIN  
 Yeah, science.  
 (pause, then excitedly)  
 Say, did you see Frankenstein? You know,  
 the one with Boris Karloff as the monster?  
 (mocking the cheaper  
 imitations)  
 I'm not talking about Frankenstein Meets  
 the Wolfman, or I Was a Teenage Franken-  
 stein, but the original. That's my all-  
 time favorite.

LANCE  
 Frankenstein?

MARTIN  
 You know, Frankenstein's monster! Dr.  
 Frankenstein is this mad scientist who  
 robs a grave and brings the corpse back  
 to life with electricity from a lightning  
 bolt! Some people think it's creepy, but  
 I don't. Here . . . here, look.

Martin produces a paperback version of Frankenstein and  
 holds it up. Lance takes the book and examines it.

LANCE

Martin, I've seen Frankenstein. You don't need to --

MARTIN

-- This book explains everything you need to know, see. Well, at least I think it does . . . I've haven't actually read it yet. But I've seen the movie six times, and --

LANCE

-- Look, will you just calm down for a second and tell me what you're doing here? Exactly. Why were you gonna rob Darla's grave?

MARTIN

Well, wh, wh, who said anything about robbing her grave? Maybe I was just going for a little midnight stroll! What's wrong with a guy getting a little fresh air by walking around a cemetery late at night?

Lance grabs Martin by the collar again.

LANCE

Don't play dumb with me, Martin! I saw you drop a shovel when you took off running.

Lance lets go of Martin's collar and Martin's head falls backward with a dull THUD against the earth. He grabs Martin by the flashlight attached to his hat this time, lifting him back up again.

LANCE

And what about this ridiculous light? Having trouble seeing in the dark?

Lance flips the light on and off a few times.

LANCE

Now, you tell me why you were gonna rob Darla's grave. You better be straight about it, too.

Martin SWALLOWS loudly and closes his eyes.

MARTIN

Please don't hurt me, Lance! I wasn't gonna do anything bad to her, I swear.

LANCE

Martin, if you don't tell me what you're doing here right now, I'm gonna --

MARTIN

-- Okay, okay, okay. Sheesh!

(pauses for a second to collect his thoughts)

Well, you remember how our biology field trip to the hospital last month got cut short, and we had to go home early?

LANCE

Yeah. So what?

MARTIN

You know, when the doctor showed us that cadaver that was all cut open, ready to have an autopsy performed on it, and Trevor had to be a smart ass with that fake vomit that he put on the --

LANCE

-- Yeah, yeah. So what? What are you getting at?

MARTIN

Well, we never got to see the stiff! Ever since my freshman year at West, I've been looking forward to Mr. Valentino's senior biology class trip to the hospital so I could see a real human cadaver in all its glory! And then McIntyre ruins the whole thing with his stupid prank. We never even got to see the inside of a large intestine!

Lance stands up abruptly and awkwardly.

LANCE

Whoa, whoa, whoa, hang on a second! Martin, we need to talk!

INT. LANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Lance drives his car, with Martin on the passenger side and Darla propped up in the back seat.

LANCE

We can get your dad's car later, okay?

Martin looks frustrated.

LANCE

Okay?

Martin exhales.

MARTIN

Well, where do you wanna take her?

Lance considers this for a moment before answering.

LANCE

(gravely)

I don't know. I hadn't thought of that.

(pause)

Any ideas?

Martin contemplates.

MARTIN

I know of a place that's safe.

Lance looks at Martin.

Martin looks like a real worm-eating goon in the moonlight.

MARTIN

(slowly)

Where no one will bother us.

(pause)

You can trust me, Lance. Because . . .  
because, we're friends now.

Not knowing what to expect, Lance looks a little weirded-out, but agreeable.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Martin and Lance pull up in front of Martin's house.

Martin and Lance get out of the car. Lance shuts the door loudly.

MARTIN

Shhhh!!

LANCE

Sorry.

Lance extracts Darla from the back seat in a fireman-style carry. He shuffles across the driveway with her, with Martin nervously at his side.

AT THE OUTSIDE CELLAR DOORS TO MARTIN'S HOUSE

Martin fumbles with a set of keys to the twin cellar doors. Lance begins to wince from the dead weight he is supporting.

LANCE

Hurry up, would ya?

MARTIN

I'm moving as fast as I can!

Finally, Martin finds the right key and turns the door's lock. He looks at Lance with a wild grin, and heaves one of the large doors open.

MARTIN

Welcome to my palace.

Lance reaches down and heaves the other door open with a CRASH.

Martin suddenly panics.

MARTIN

Shhh!! You're gonna wake up my parents!

LANCE

C'mon! Let's get her inside.

INT. CELLAR OF MARTIN'S HOME - NIGHT

The cellar of Martin's home is like any typical cellar, except that Martin has converted it into a mad scientist's laboratory, where he can conduct experiments. There are beakers and test tubes and Bunsen burners strewn about George Jetson style, with bubbling liquids and space-age gadgetry everywhere. The scene is almost cartoon-like.

MARTIN

Well? What do you think?

LANCE

Gosh!

Lance sets Darla down next to him.

LANCE  
 (to Darla)  
 Shew. And what do you think, dear?

No response from the stiff.

LANCE  
 Wow! Gee, she thinks it's great.

Martin gives Lance a puzzled look.

An uncomfortable silence lingers between the boys.

LANCE  
 Uh, do you think we could sit down?

MARTIN  
 Oh! Of course. Sorry. Here . . . right  
 this way.

Martin directs Lance and Darla to a musty old loveseat, covered with a gaudy sheet. Martin sits down on a folding patio chair. After a beat, Lance tries to make small talk.

LANCE  
 So.

MARTIN  
 So.

LANCE  
 This is some place.

MARTIN  
 Yeah. I come down here a lot. You  
 know . . . when I want to be alone.

LANCE  
 Must be nice.

MARTIN  
 Nice?

LANCE  
 Yeah. You know, to have some place  
 where you can go and be by yourself.  
 Not be constantly hassled by everybody.

Martin reflects on Lance's impression of his hideout.

MARTIN

Well, sure. It's nice sometimes, I guess.

(pause)

Although, every once in a while I think it might be good to have some company.

Lance considers this.

LANCE

Hmmm.

MARTIN

(matter-of-factly)

I mean, I've come to grips with the fact that no one at school likes me. Or even understands me, for that matter.

(exhales)

It can be pretty tough sometimes--being an outcast . . . the scapegoat, the butt of everyone's jokes.

(pause)

Just once it might be nice to have someone to talk to. Someone who . . . understands.

LANCE

This might amaze you, Martin, but I know exactly what you mean.

Martin looks genuinely taken aback by this statement.

MARTIN

(a little annoyed)

You know what I mean? You know what I mean? How could you? You have everything you could possibly want. Captain of the football team, president of the student body, a great car, a beautiful girlfriend . . . Well, wait--I guess you don't have a girlfriend. But you've got all that other stuff. And you're still the most popular guy in school.

(pause)

You're lucky, Lance. I mean, people look up to you. They listen to you when you have something to say. I don't get that kind of respect. My whole life has been one big screw-up after another.



LANCE

(jaded)

I wouldn't lose too much sleep over it. Fame and popularity isn't all it's cracked up to be.

MARTIN

How can you say that? I'd trade places with you in a second.

LANCE

Ha! You wouldn't want to.

(pause)

Look, it's true about the car and all that other jazz, but the fact is, the rest of my life--the rest of my life is just a bunch of lies.

MARTIN

Lies? What do you mean?

LANCE

Well, it isn't easy being popular. I mean, don't get me wrong. The football team, the student council . . . that stuff is a piece of cake. Just a big charade, really.

(pause, then dejectedly)

I'm not naive. Nobody will care how many touchdown passes I threw for West High in ten years. What worries me is . . . is whether anyone will remember anything besides those touchdowns. Will anyone remember the real me in ten years?

MARTIN

The real you?

LANCE

Yeah. See, I hate being constantly reduced to this image. This . . . this category. Mr. Star Quarterback, Mr. Popular, Mr. Good-looking --

MARTIN

(sarcastically)

-- Yeah, it must be rough.

LANCE

Look, I know you must think I'm full of it. Just another phony, conceited S.O.B.

(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)  
with a lot of money and a bunch of  
insincere friends. But it's not like  
that. It's not like that at all. I hate  
those people. It's all just a bunch of  
smoke. An act.

MARTIN  
Well, it's some act. At least you  
haven't had to go through life with a big  
giant egg on your face . . . always get-  
ting tripped in the cafeteria, having  
notes stuck on your back, getting stuffed  
into lockers . . .  
(hurt and angry)  
Having your head dunked in a toilet for  
cryin' out loud!

LANCE  
That was you?

MARTIN  
(sarcastically mocking Lance)  
Yes, that was me.

LANCE  
Martin, I --

MARTIN  
-- Tell me . . . If you hate your  
friends so much, why do you hang out with  
them?

Lance wrestles with this.

LANCE  
I . . . I honestly don't know sometimes.

MARTIN  
Yeah, well, they're all gonna be sorry  
real soon . . . now that I have such a  
pristine specimen.

LANCE  
Specimen?

MARTIN  
This cadaver here is going to make me  
famous. The fact that she took her life  
with sleeping pills and carbon monoxide  
has left virtually all her vital organs  
perfectly intact. A rare find, this one.

Lance looks horrified.

MARTIN

Dr. Frankenstein may have cut a few corners here and there, but not me. I'm going to learn from his mistakes, and some day people will say I'm a genius. Someday I'll command the respect I deserve!

LANCE

Uh, Martin . . . You know when you said I didn't have a girlfriend --

Suddenly, a door CREAKS open, and yellow light fills the dimly-lit room. Martin's mother stands at the top of the stairs.

MRS. FEECE (OS)

Martin? Martin, is that you down there?

MARTIN

(agitated, under his breath)  
It's my mother.

Lance looks panic-stricken.

LANCE

What are we gonna do?

MARTIN

I'll take care of it. I'll take care of it.  
(to his mother)  
Yeah, Mom. It's me.

MRS. FEECE (OS)

What are you doing up so late, dear?

MARTIN

Oh, nothing. Just an extra-credit experiment for biology.

MRS. FEECE (OS)

Extra credit? Martin, what is that horrible smell?

MARTIN

Uh, it's uh . . .

Martin eyes his frog in the formadehyde jar, which he has carefully situated on a table in the corner.

MARTIN

It's just my bullfrog, Mom.

Lance closes his eyes in relief.

MRS. FEECE

Your bullfrog? It doesn't smell like formaldehyde. What's going on down there?

The stairs start to CREAK as Mrs. Feece makes her way down to the basement.

Lance's eyes pop open in a panic.

LANCE

We gotta hide her. C'mon!

Lance and Martin frantically look for a place to stash the corpse.

MARTIN

Here, behind the sofa!

Lance and Martin crudely pick up Darla and drop her behind the loveseat. Lance looks thoroughly anguished at having to be so rough with his girl.

Mrs. Feece enters.

MRS. FEECE

Martin, how many times have I told you to open the windows when you're experimenting with dead things. It smells terrible down here. Why don't you --

Mrs. Feece sees Lance.

MRS. FEECE

Oh, hello. Martin didn't tell me he had company. Who are you?

MARTIN

Uh, Mom, this is Lance. He, uh --

LANCE

(ultra-cool)

I'm sorry to barge in so late like this, Mrs. Feece. I'm Lance Goodrich. I'm in Martin's biology class and, well, he was just helping me with some homework. That

(MORE)

LANCE (cont'd)  
smell you smell is probably me. I was at  
the lab after school today, and let me  
tell you, it's no rose garden.

(pause)

Oh, uh, pardon my manners. I'd offer to  
shake your hand, but . . .

Lance smells his right hand.

LANCE  
Phew! Probably a bad idea.

Martin looks awed by Lance's social skills.

MRS. FEECE  
Is this true, Martin? You were helping  
this young man with his homework?

Martin nods "yes," still overcome by the suave manner in  
which Lance has handled the situation.

LANCE  
Oh, Martin's a whiz at this biology  
stuff, Mrs. Feece. Practically a genius.

MRS. FEECE  
Well, I can't say that I approve of this  
late hour . . . even if you are studying.  
But it's awfully nice of you to say such  
kind things about our Martin. I must  
admit, he always has had a knack for  
science.

MARTIN  
Well, goodnight, Mom. Lance was just  
leaving. I probably should see him out.

MRS. FEECE  
Don't be rude, Martin. Lance seems like  
a very nice boy. And you have such  
trouble making friends.

LANCE  
Actually, I should get going, Mrs. Feece.  
It's pretty late.

MRS. FEECE  
Can, can I fix you a glass of milk? Some  
cookies before you go?

LANCE

No. No, thank you. It sounds great, but I do have to get up early tomorrow.

MRS. FEECE

Well, maybe another time, then.

(pause)

Lance, it was nice to meet you.

(sternly)

Martin, be sure to turn off the lights before you come upstairs.

MARTIN

I will, Mom. I will.

MRS. FEECE

Goodnight, boys.

MARTIN

Goodnight, Mom.

LANCE

Goodnight, Mrs. Feece.

Mrs. Feece heads up the stairs.

Lance and Martin breathe a collective sigh of relief.

MARTIN

Thanks, Lance. Thanks a million. You really saved my hide.

LANCE

Don't mention it. Look, I need you to promise me something.

MARTIN

Anything, Lance. Name it.

LANCE

Can you find another place to hide her?

MARTIN

Well, sure. I've got a place right over there in the lab where nobody will --

LANCE

-- Okay, good. Now, I need you to promise me something else.

MARTIN

Shoot.

LANCE

I want you to give me your word you won't touch her. Not until we talk. No experiments.

MARTIN

No experiments? But --

LANCE

-- Promise me.

MARTIN

Okay, I promise, but --

Lance starts to bustle for the door.

LANCE

-- I'll explain everything in the car. C'mon, we've gotta go back to the cemetery and get the Studebaker.

Martin is left looking a bit perplexed.

MARTIN

Yeah . . . sure.

EXT. KALENE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Shot of Kalene's house--crickets are chirping faintly.

INT. KALENE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kalene sits in the middle of her bed, sulking. She clenches a pink teddy bear to her chest so tightly her knuckles are white.

KALENE

(softly, to herself)

It doesn't make sense. I'm the most popular girl at West High. It doesn't make any sense.

Kalene ponders this for a moment, then lowers her head. She looks up again, biting her lower lip.

KALENE

(almost in a trance)

It just doesn't make sense.

Suddenly, Kalene loses it. She begins SHRIEKING violently

and tears her teddy bear to shreds.

KALENE

It doesn't make sense! It doesn't make sense! I'm the most popular! I'm the most popular!! I'm the most popular!!!

Kalene gives a final SHRIEK of frustration and hurls the teddy bear remains across the room. She heaves brutal SOBS as teddy bear stuffing cascades all around her. Kalene puts her face in her hands and CRIES loudly.

INT. LANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Lance's car motors it's way back to the cemetery to get Martin's car.

Lance drives with a somber look. Martin is not in the frame yet.

LANCE

So, anyway, that's the long and short of it. I do like girls--I just don't like ones that are alive.

(pauses to clear his throat,  
then matter-of-factly)

They talk too much.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL the expression on Martin's face. He is shocked out of his wits.

LANCE

The psychology book says it's called "necrophilia." What do you think?

Lance looks at Martin.

MARTIN

(blown away)

Man . . . and people tell me I'm weird.

LANCE

That's my big secret.

EXT. LANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Lance's car roars through the cemetery gates.



INT. LANCE'S CAR - NIGHT

Lance is parked behind Martin's father's Studebaker.

LANCE

Do you think I'm crazy?

Martin thinks.

MARTIN

Well, I've gotta admit, it wasn't exactly what I was expecting to hear.

LANCE

That's why you can't, under any circumstance, dissect her, conduct experiments on her . . . or bring her back to life. Especially that. If you bring her back to life, it'll ruin everything. She'll start talking, and the next thing you know . . .

(pause)

I'm in love with her, Martin. I can't afford to screw this up.

Martin looks at Lance.

LANCE

Do you trust me?

Martin thinks.

MARTIN

You know, strange as it may seem, I do. If you're really in love with Darla, I can wait. There'll be other corpses.

LANCE

Then you'll help me . . . with the Halloween dance?

Martin suddenly switches gears. He looks shocked at this proposal.

MARTIN

The Halloween dance?

LANCE

You know, the big costume ball on Halloween night. I want to bring Darla. Everybody who's anybody goes to the Halloween dance.

MARTIN  
(sarcastically)  
I've never been to the Halloween dance.

LANCE  
Yeah, but --

MARTIN  
(resentful)  
-- You just got through telling me what  
a bunch of phonies your friends are. How  
you can't stand them.  
(pause)  
Why would you want to take Darla to some  
crummy dance? Those dumb sock-hops  
are a haven for phonies.

LANCE  
Don't you understand, Martin? That's the  
whole point. I need to take Darla . . .  
to . . . to show them.

MARTIN  
Sounds to me like you're using her.

LANCE  
(shocked)  
Using her?

MARTIN  
That's right. And maybe you're using me.  
Look, Lance, I'm not stupid. You and  
Trevor have pulled enough pranks on me  
over the years to . . . to . . . Ah,  
forget it. You don't understand. No-  
body understands. I'm leaving.

Martin gets out of the car. Lance chases after him.

LANCE  
Martin, wait!

Martin tries to get in the Studebaker, but Lance grabs  
hold of his wrist.

LANCE  
Martin, I'm not pulling a prank on you.  
And I'm not using Darla. I thought you  
said you trusted me.

Martin pulls his wrist free.

LANCE

Martin?

Martin sulks a bit before responding.

MARTIN

I did, Lance . . .

(pause)

I do. But, don't you understand? You don't wanna mess with those kids. It's hard to make friends. Bringing Darla to the dance . . . I don't get it. It's a bad idea. It's . . . it's suicide.

LANCE

Bad idea? What could possibly go wrong?

MARTIN

(sounding oddly like  
Lance's mother)

Lance, the dance is tomorrow. Have you even thought about a costume to wear? How about a costume for Darla? Don't you think it's a little late to be running off like a madman to the Halloween ball without a game plan? This whole thing sounds pretty half-baked.

LANCE

Hey, don't worry. I know what I'm doing. I've been to plenty of dances before.

MARTIN

Never with a date like this.

Lance considers this. Martin has a valid point.

LANCE

(exhales)

Never with a date, period.

MARTIN

That's what I'm talking about. You can't just expect to waltz onto the dance floor and steal the show this time.

(pause)

Now, admittedly, you have a genuine talent when it comes to the social graces . . . and the football field, and the student council . . . You're a

(MORE)

MARTIN (cont'd)  
 natural born leader, Lance--a real charmer. No one's denying that. But, to take Darla to the dance before you're ready--you've gotta be crazy.

LANCE  
 (protesting)  
 But, I'm as ready as I'll ever be.

MARTIN  
 I'm only telling you this because I know how cruel your so-called "friends" can be. I've been through enough to know how they'll react if you come to a big social event unprepared. If you and Darla can't handle the heat, it could spell doom. And you don't want to jeopardize your reputation at this point . . . not on account of some girl.

LANCE  
 But, she's not just any girl, Martin. Can't you see that? What do you think I've been trying to tell you? I know this is last second, but she means everything to me. I don't care about my reputation. I've got to show them that I'm not afraid anymore.

Martin recoils bitterly, from the jaded perspective of someone who has been picked on most of their adolescent life.

MARTIN  
 (slowly and deliberately)  
 Not afraid? Not afraid, huh? Why do you have to be afraid at all? I don't get you, Lance. You've got everything, and you're just gonna throw it all away.

LANCE  
 I won't be throwing anything away if I can have a date with Darla. And be normal . . . just this once.

MARTIN  
 Normal . . . What does that mean? Do you have any idea how many times I've wished I could walk in your shoes? Just for a day. To see what it's like . . . to be normal.

LANCE

You wouldn't want to. Believe me, my version of "normal" stinks.

After a brief pause, Lance and Martin look at each other and share a constrained chuckle, which lightens the mood. This is followed by another rather somber pause--Martin seems to truly sense Lance's persistence. He tries once more to dissuade his new confidant.

MARTIN

(flatly)

There isn't one costume shop in town that's gonna have anything decent left to choose from tomorrow.

LANCE

What's your obsession with these costumes?

MARTIN

In a situation like this, you've got to protect yourself. If you don't have a good costume to wear, you could leave yourself--and Darla--vulnerable. Wide open.

Lance considers this, but is too proud to back down.

LANCE

I don't care. For once in my life I want to take a chance . . . Martin, I want to come clean.

MARTIN

You'll get hurt.

LANCE

That's a risk I'm willing to take.

MARTIN

How can you be so confident?

Lance thinks for a moment before answering.

LANCE

(confessing)

It's . . . it's not confidence. I'm scared as hell, to tell you the truth. But it's who I am. And I can't hide it anymore. Will you help me?

Lance looks Martin in the eye.

LANCE

Please. I can't do this without you.

Lance slowly extends his right hand.

Martin considers. Lance's pride and self-confidence has rubbed off on him. He opens his mouth, as if to protest one more time, then reconsiders and shuts it. He extends his right hand and firmly shakes Lance's.

LANCE

Good. Then it's settled. On behalf of weirdos and outcasts everywhere.

MARTIN

On Halloween night, no less.

The boys share another laugh.

MARTIN

(melodramatically)

Lance, I have a plan. A plan that will celebrate your long-awaited declaration of normality with vigor . . . and style. On All Hallows Eve you will not only have a costume at the ball, you will have the best costume.

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Couples dressed in various costumes flock into West High School to go to the Halloween dance. Some costumes are funny, scary, and original--others are not.

INT. LANCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lance puts on his costume. He looks poised and confident again, ready to tackle the world. The costume is his father's blue "CITY MORGUE" uniform.

INT. WEST HIGH GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

A tenor sax player, dressed up as "The Mummy," wails a screaming blues riff.

A large number of students in costume dance to the sounds of a swingin' band.

## INT. WEST HIGH MAIN FOYER - NIGHT

Kalene, dressed up in her fair medieval princess costume, enters with Trevor, who is dressed as a frog. Kalene doesn't look too thrilled.

## INT. MARTIN'S SECRET LABORATORY - NIGHT

Darla is strapped to a lab table in the upright position, still in her floral burial dress. Martin busily prepares her for the dance. He enters holding a bottle of champagne, apparently purchased to celebrate the long-awaited coming out of Lance. Now dressed in a white lab coat, Martin looks very much like the mad scientist that forms his alter ego.

Martin tries to open the bottle, but has difficulty with the corkscrew. He struggles for several seconds, then finally uncorks it, spraying wine all over himself.

Martin blows on the bottle and waves his hand over the opening, trying to stop the rampant carbonation. Finally, he puts the bottle down and we realize why he has opened the champagne early. Martin produces a Zippo lighter from his pocket and lights it. He burns one end of the cork for several seconds, then extinguishes the lighter and blows out the cork. Smearing burnt cork residue on his right index and middle finger, Martin applies black, makeshift makeup to Darla's pale face. He puts dark bags around her pupil-less eyes, making them look even more sunk-in than they already are.

## INT. GOODRICH HOME - NIGHT

Lance comes down the stairs in the front of the house, dressed in his costume.

LANCE  
(calling to his family)  
I'm leaving!

## IN THE KITCHEN

The rest of the Goodriches are sitting around the kitchen table, having dinner.

Mrs. Goodrich gets up when she hears Lance.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Can't we have just one little peek?

IN THE FOYER

Lance puts on a jacket.

LANCE

No! The costumes are a surprise.

IN THE KITCHEN

LANCE (OS)

We'll be by later to help give out candy.  
You can see them then.

Mrs. Goodrich stomps her foot. She turns to the rest of her family for support, but they don't especially care. They are busy inhaling mashed potatoes.

IN THE FOYER

Lance exits through the front door.

LANCE

(calling)

Bye!

OUTSIDE THE GOODRICH HOME

Lance leaves the house, looking rather grisly in his "creepy old mortician" costume. His gruesome appearance is offset by the beautiful flowers he is carrying. He gets in his car and starts the engine.

INT. MARTIN'S SECRET LABORATORY - NIGHT

Martin looks at Darla critically. Her costume doesn't seem to be quite right yet.

MARTIN

(to himself)

Hmmm . . . seems to be missing something.

(pause)

Wait a second, I know!

Martin approaches Darla.

MARTIN

Now, don't think I'm gettin friendly or nothin'. Lance would pummel me if he had any reason to suspect I was getting fresh with you. But, you see, we gotta make

(MORE)



MARTIN (cont'd)  
your costume look more realistic. It's  
just not quite believable yet.  
(pause)  
Now . . . let's see, here.

Martin takes the shoulder of Darla's dress and rips it slightly.

MARTIN  
(impressed by his handiwork)  
Hmmm. Not bad.

INT. WEST HIGH MAIN FOYER - NIGHT

Kalene is getting her picture taken with Trevor in front of an Autumn/Halloween motif backdrop. This backdrop might include hay bales, jack-o-lanterns, fallen leaves, cobwebs, etc. A PHOTOGRAPHER gets his gear ready to shoot.

PHOTOGRAPHER  
Okay now, you two. Say "cheese!"

TREVOR  
Cheese!

Kalene looks mortified.

EXT./INT. LANCE DRIVING - NIGHT

Lance drives to Martin's house with an excited look on his face.

INT. MARTIN'S SECRET LABORATORY - NIGHT

Darla's dress, now tattered in several places, looks suspiciously like costuming for a low budget zombie film. Martin steps back and eyes his work proudly. A few moments elapse, and there are three loud KNOCKS at the cellar door. Martin looks up from his work with a demented grin.

EXT. MARTIN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Lance stands outside the cellar doors that lead to Martin's laboratory, holding the bouquet of flowers nervously.

Suddenly the doors are flung open with a CRASH that makes Lance flinch.

Martin ominously appears from the dark labyrinth with the same demented grin on his face.

LANCE  
Well? How did it go?

MARTIN  
(imitating a mad scientist's  
deranged assistant)  
Very successful, master. Very  
successful.

LANCE  
I like your costume. Is she ready?

MARTIN  
(in a normal voice)  
Yeah, she's ready.

Lance motions expectantly with his hands.

LANCE  
Are you going to get her?

MARTIN  
Oh! Right. Hang on.

Martin disappears back into the darkness. Lance fidgets nervously. A few seconds later, we hear Martin GRUNTING as he tries to get Darla up the steps. Lance looks as if he's going to explode with anticipation.

LANCE  
Darla?

MARTIN (OS)  
I think I'm gonna need some help getting  
her up the stairs!

LANCE  
Right.

Lance quickly descends into the darkness. Moments later, we hear a distinct CLUNKING sound. This CLUNKING comes from a metal dolly being hoisted up the stairs, one step at a time.

All of sudden, Darla appears from below. She rests inside a crude, open coffin Martin has nailed together out of scrap wood. The coffin is strapped to the dolly with thick rope.

Lance sets Darla down when they get to the top of the stairs. He sees her costume for the first time, under the glow of a full moon.

Martin waits nervously for Lance's reaction.

LANCE

Martin . . . wow . . . she looks . . .  
she looks --

Anticipatory look on Martin's face.

LANCE

-- She looks absolutely breathtaking!

MARTIN

Gosh . . . you think so?

LANCE

Without a doubt. You've really outdone yourself.

MARTIN

Do you mean it, Lance?

LANCE

Well, of course I do. I couldn't have pulled this off without you. I don't know what to say.

Martin smiles.

MARTIN

Thanks.

LANCE

Thank you.

Lance looks at his watch.

LANCE

Hey, look, we'd better get going. Don't want to be late.

MARTIN

Right.

Lance wheels Darla over to Martin's father's Studebaker.

Martin opens the back door of the Studebaker for the couple.

Lance loads his date into the back seat, coffin and all. He shuts the door, but realizes the coffin doesn't fit. Martin rolls down the back door window, and Lance adjusts the coffin so that one end sticks out. Martin takes the driver's seat, and Lance gets in on the passenger side. Martin keys the ignition and the Studebaker's engine ROARS to life. He slowly backs out of the driveway.

EXT. WEST HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Various costumed students mill about outside the school.

The Studebaker pulls into the lot.

INT. STUDEBAKER - NIGHT

Martin pulls the car into a space and parks. He turns around and faces Lance.

MARTIN

You ready for this?

LANCE

Ready as I'll ever be.

MARTIN

Want me to drop you off by the doors?

LANCE

(panicks)

Aren't you going in with me?

MARTIN

Do you want me to?

LANCE

Well, yeah.

MARTIN

Okay . . . no problem.

Martin turns off the car.

MARTIN

Ready?

Lance closes his eyes and takes a couple of deep breaths, as if he were getting psyched up before a big football game.

MARTIN

Lance?

LANCE

Okay.

Lance gets out of the car first. He opens the back door to the Studebaker and carefully begins pulling Darla's coffin out of the back seat.

Martin comes around back to help set up the dolly.

Once the coffin is upright, Lance begins wheeling it toward the main entrance to the school. Martin follows alongside the couple. This scene is oddly reminiscent of a golfer (Martin) on the fairway with his caddy (Lance).

LANCE

Wish me luck.

Martin claps his hand on Lance's shoulder.

MARTIN

Break a leg.

LANCE

(confused)

What?

MARTIN

It's what they say in the theater . . .  
to wish someone luck.

Lance smiles.

The three grisly-looking dance-goers approach the first of several students, who begin gawking at the spectacle.

Lance and Martin have to struggle a bit to get Darla up the front steps to the school, and this intensifies the curiosity of many nearby onlookers. MURMURS of gossip fill the cool night air.

Lance, Martin, and Darla reach the front doors to the school. Aside from the steps, things are going pretty smoothly so far--no one is particularly suspicious of Lance's entourage.

LANCE

Mind if we switch places?

Lance turns the dolly's handles to face Martin.

Martin takes hold of the handles and nods to Lance.

With a deep breath, Lance opens one of the school's front doors. Martin wheels Darla inside, and Lance follows.

INT. WEST HIGH MAIN FOYER - NIGHT

Martin slowly pushes the dolly through the front hall of the high school, while Lance walks alongside Darla, holding her hand. There is great excitement among the students at the sight of this, but nobody seems freaked out. The students seem more shocked that Lance has actually brought a date than about the fact that she's dead. Also, dancers appear to be impressed with the inventiveness of the costumes, and the portable coffin/date. People begin to fall back and clear a path for the couple. Some even begin CHEERING and CLAPPING. Lots of stir here.

Kalene stands in the background with Trevor. She is not clapping. Trevor seems to be getting a kick out of the spectacle, but Kalene is utterly shocked, her eyes like saucers and her mouth gaping.

Coach Walker, a chaperone for the dance, stands amongst the cheering students.

COACH WALKER

Way to go, Goodrich. You did it.

INSIDE THE GYM

The band plays as Lance, Martin, and Darla stand by the bleachers in the West High gymnasium. Lance notices that Kalene, Trevor, and some of the others in his group of "friends" are heading their way.

LANCE

(talking loudly over the  
music in the gym)

C'mon . . . let's get some punch.

Lance and Martin wheel Darla toward the punch bowl.

When they reach the punch, Lance grabs one of the glasses from the table.

LANCE

(to Darla)

Would you like some punch?

Lance puts the glass of punch to Darla's blue lips.

LANCE

Here, let me help you.

Some punch goes into Darla's mouth, but most of it dribbles down her chin. Lance pulls out a handkerchief, and dabs Darla's chin.

LANCE

Sorry.

Kalene, Andrea, Trevor, and the gang stand at a distance, gossiping.

ANDREA

Who do you suppose she is? I've never seen her before.

SUSIE

She doesn't go to West, that's for sure.

KALENE

I don't know who she is either. But I intend to find out. Trevor, be a dear and get us some punch.

TREVOR

Right away, your majesty.

Trevor approaches Lance's group at the punch bowl.

TREVOR

Lance.

LANCE

Trevor.

Martin does his best to hide behind Darla's coffin and avoid Trevor.

TREVOR

Sorry about the other day. You know.

LANCE

No big deal.

Trevor cranes his neck to see who is hiding behind Darla's coffin.

TREVOR

Feces, is that you back there?

Martin sticks his head out.

MARTIN  
 (sheepishly)  
 Hi, Trevor.

A great tension begins to grow between the boys.

Trevor suddenly looks around, reaches into the front of his frog costume, and produces a metal flask.

TREVOR  
 Well, I just came over to help get this party started, if you know what I mean.

Trevor opens the flask and pours its contents into the punch bowl.

TREVOR  
 There. That should liven things up.

Trevor puts the flask back in the frog costume.

Lance nods agreeably--he just wants Trevor to leave.

Trevor pours a few ladles of the newly-spiked punch into glasses. When he finishes he turns back to Lance.

TREVOR  
 Well?

LANCE  
 Well, what?

Trevor motions to Darla.

TREVOR  
 Aren't you going to introduce me to your date?

LANCE  
 (flustered)  
 Oh . . . pardon me . . . of course.  
 Trevor, this is --

Suddenly, Mr. Pingel, the elderly school principal, enters the scene. This startles Trevor.

TREVOR  
 -- Mr. Pingel!

Mr. Pingel SNIFFS the air.



MR. PINGEL  
(scoldingly)  
Trevor McIntyre, that wouldn't happen to  
be cheap vodka I smell, would it?

TREVOR  
Vodka? No, sir. Whatever gave you that  
idea?

MR. PINGEL  
Your track record speaks for itself, Mr.  
McIntyre.

TREVOR  
(nervously)  
Right . . . Uh, I better get back to  
the . . .

Trevor points toward Kalene and Co.

TREVOR  
(acknowledging Lance and  
Martin)  
Lance . . . Martin.

Trevor exits quickly, leaving the glasses of punch behind.

MR. PINGEL  
Everything okay over here, Goodrich?

LANCE  
Fine, sir. Just fine.

MR. PINGEL  
Good. Glad to hear it.

Lance smiles agreeably.

MR. PINGEL  
Uh, Goodrich, aren't you going to intro-  
duce me to your lovely date here?

LANCE  
Mr. Pingel, I'm sorry. This is Darla.  
Darla Pribble.  
(to Darla)  
Darla, this is Mr. Pingel, our principal.

Mr. Pingel extends his hand to Darla.

MR. PINGEL  
Pleasure to meet you, young lady.

Darla doesn't respond.

After a few seconds, Mr. Pingel puts his hand down. He is confused, but not angry about the lack of response.

MR. PINGEL

Pribble . . . Pribble . . . that name sounds so familiar.

(pause--then, clearing his throat)

Well, I must commend you on your very original costume.

No response.

MR. PINGEL

All three of you, in fact. Lance, Martin . . . very nice, very nice.

LANCE

Thank you, Mr. Pingel.

Lance smiles.

MR. PINGEL

Well, I'd better check up on Mr. McIntyre. That young man is nothing but trouble.

(to Darla)

Darla, you've got nothing to worry about with our Lance here. He's one of West High's finest.

(laughs nervously)

Uh, have a nice time at the dance tonight --

No response from the stiff.

MR. PINGEL

(to Lance and Martin)

-- Lance, Martin.

Mr. Pingel waves nervously and scurries away.

LANCE

Thank you, sir.

MARTIN

Thanks, Mr. Pingel.

ON STAGE

The band finishes a jumpin' tune to enthusiastic APPLAUSE. The BAND LEADER, dressed like a werewolf, takes the microphone.

BAND LEADER

All right, West High, we hope you're havin' as much fun as we are this Halloween night.

The Band Leader HOWLS into the microphone.

BAND LEADER

Hey, we gotta take a short break now, but we're gonna be back real soon with more music. Remember, the contest for best costume starts at eleven, and there's dunking for apples right - over - there.

The Band Leader points to a giant basin of apples, where no students are standing.

BACK TO Lance, Martin, and Darla.

LANCE

C'mon, I wanna request a song.

Lance and Martin wheel Darla toward the stage, and Lance catches up with the Band Leader.

Kalene, Trevor, Andrea, and Co. stand by the bleachers. Trevor has come back to report on his findings, and is trying to defend his lack of information.

TREVOR

(agitated)

I didn't get a chance to get her name. I tried to ask, but Pingel came over and was suspicious about the punch.

KALENE

So, what you're saying is, you have no information.

TREVOR

She's got a great costume, I'll give her that.

KALENE

As usual, I guess I'll have to take matters into my own hands.

INT. GOODRICH FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Goodrich has his nose buried in the paper.

MRS. GOODRICH  
Bill, what do you say we check up on  
Lance.

MR. GOODRICH  
Check up on him?

MRS. GOODRICH  
Don't you want to see Lance all dressed  
up? With his new date?

Mr. Goodrich lowers the paper.

MR. GOODRICH  
(disapprovingly)  
Lor-na.

Mr. Goodrich resumes reading the paper for a few seconds,  
then lowers it again with a SMACK. He knows he must cave  
in to his wife's wish.

MRS. GOODRICH  
(triumphant)  
Abigail, get your coat, dear!

INT. WEST HIGH GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Various couples dance to an upbeat number.

Lance, Martin, and Darla stand at the perimeter of the  
dance floor.

LANCE  
(to Darla)  
Would you like to dance?

Martin looks on in anticipation of a response.

LANCE  
(to Martin)  
She says she'd like to dance. Can you  
give me a hand?

Martin nods "yes."

Lance and Martin wheel Darla onto the dance floor.

Lance begins doing the twist. Martin stands behind Darla, moving the dolly back and forth.

After several seconds of "dancing," some guy dressed up as "The Fly" approaches Lance.

THE FLY  
Mind if I cut in?

Lance stops abruptly and clears his throat. He seems reluctant to pass the stiff over to another guy.

LANCE  
Uh, well, actually . . . I'm not so sure that would be such a great idea.

THE FLY  
Aw, c'mon. I'll be gentle.

LANCE  
Look, that's . . . I know. .But --

Kalene enters the frame.

KALENE  
-- Hey, Lance.

LANCE  
(startled)  
Kalene! Hi.

The rest of Lance's friends soon follow behind Kalene.

Lance looks distressed. He tries to keep one eye on The Fly, and the other on Kalene.

KALENE  
You've been avoiding us like the plague all night, my dear. Aren't you going to introduce us to your friend?

Lance motions to Martin.

LANCE  
(halfway joking)  
Sure. Uh, Kalene, you know Martin.

Martin waves.

KALENE  
Not Martin, silly. Your other friend. The corpse . . . the girl in the coffin.

LANCE

(sweating bullets)

Oh! Well, I've . . . I've been meaning to. I just got a little sidetracked, that's all. The Fly here . . . he . . . he was going to cut in, but . . . but --

Lance struggles to bide time.

Martin looks panicked as well. He empathizes with Lance.

THE FLY

-- Yeah, so, what's the story? Can I dance with your date, or what?

Lance's mouth opens, but he is unable to speak. He looks at Kalene, who has crossed her arms and is enjoying watching him squirm. He looks at The Fly, who is growing impatient. He looks at Darla, who says nothing. Finally, he turns to Martin, and although their friendship is still relatively embryonic, their eyes communicate a deep and genuine trust. In a unique act of bravery, Martin advises Lance by shaking his head with a definitive "NO!"

Kalene gestures in a rudely expectant circular motion with her hands, trying to help draw out a concession, but Martin has inspired fresh confidence in Lance.

LANCE

No. Darla's my girl. She doesn't want to dance with anyone else.

Kalene looks clearly defeated when she finally hears Darla's name. She closes her eyes for a moment, and inhales deeply.

KALENE

(quietly and resentfully,  
to herself)

Darla.

LANCE

(to The Fly)

Yeah. So, so, buzz off!

The Fly mumbles some vague words of insult, and waves a dismissive hand/wing in Lance's face before leaving.

There is an awkward moment of silence. Suddenly, Kalene boldly puts on her cocky head cheerleader face.

KALENE

So, Darla, where do you go to school?

No response from Darla.

The band finishes the number they've been playing to moderate APPLAUSE.

Lance looks a little nervous, but not shaken, as the applause dies down to a seemingly deafening silence.

KALENE

Darla?

Another awkward silence. The tension is so thick you could cut it with a switchblade.

Trevor, Andrea, et al. crane their necks to hear a response.

Lance looks at Darla with a mixture of love and empathy as Kalene waits for an answer. He knows he cannot will her to speak--at least not to "others." He reaches out and takes her hand, for what seems like an eternity.

Suddenly, the Band Leader cuts in on the microphone, bailing Lance out of yet another close call.

BAND LEADER (OS)

Okay, folks, we're gonna slow things down a little now for all you ghouls, ghosts, and goblins in love out there.

MILD APPLAUSE.

ON STAGE

BAND LEADER

Here's a classic by The Penguins . . .  
from Lance to Darla.

The Band Leader counts off "Earth Angel," the obvious choice for Lance's request.

Couples begin joining together.

Kalene waits for a response from Darla.

Lance just shrugs. With Martin's help he wheels Darla onto the dance floor.

Kalene looks like she might blow a gasket. Trevor approaches her to dance, and she reluctantly agrees.

Lance dances romantically with Darla, as Martin "steers" the dolly.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Goodrich pull into the high school parking lot and park. Mrs. Goodrich gets out hastily and races toward the front doors of the school. Mr. Goodrich and Abigail lethargically lag behind.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Lance and Darla continue to dance romantically, oblivious to the outside world.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Mrs. Goodrich runs toward the gymnasium doors. She tries to put on the brakes when she reaches them, but slides past--the floor has recently been waxed.

Mr. Goodrich walks toward the gymnasium, picking up his pace a little.

MR. GOODRICH

Lorna, for god's sake.

MRS. GOODRICH

Bill, come here! Quick!

Mrs. Goodrich mashes her face against the glass on the gymnasium door, cupping her hands around her eyes to see inside.

Mr. Goodrich reaches the doors.

MRS. GOODRICH

(dreamily)

Bill, look . . . our Lance is all grown up now.

Mr. Goodrich cups his hands around his eyes, looking inside. He turns back to his wife.

MR. GOODRICH

Heh-heh. He certainly is, dear. He certainly is.

Abigail jumps up and down, trying to see inside the windows on the doors. Mr. Goodrich picks her up so she can see inside. Inspired by this romantic scene, puts his arm around his wife.



Mrs. Goodrich gives him an "Oh, Bill" look.

They smile at each other and peer back through the window as the music swells.

IN THE GYM

Lance gazes lovingly into Darla's vacant eyes as "Earth Angel" comes to a close.

BIG APPLAUSE from the crowd.

For a brief moment in time, the gym scene appears to be one of total bliss--innocent 1950's Americana to the max.

In a wave of emotion, Lance unstraps Darla from her coffin and sweeps her into his arms. Martin is left with an empty container on his dolly.

To Kalene's horror, Lance gives Darla a deep, passionate kiss.

Martin smiles and applauds this.

OUTSIDE THE GYM, Lance's folks are beaming. Abigail sticks out her tongue like she might gag.

BACK INSIDE, Kalene stands with her arms crossed. She looks for some type of sympathetic reaction, but gets none. Even Andrea now seems oblivious to Kalene's vast narcissism.

After several seconds pass, some of the surrounding students appear to notice a unique new smell in their beloved gymnasium, and it's not old sweat.

Lance holds Darla lovingly, completely unaware of the crowd that is slowly moving in on him.

Kalene begins sniffing the air loudly. She smells something rotting, but can't figure out where the vile odor is coming from. This seems to heighten her anger, and she eventually turns to Trevor.

KALENE

(under her breath)

Do you smell something?

TREVOR

What?

KALENE

Did you take a shower today?

Trevor raises his left arm and smells his armpit, to check. He doesn't notice anything out of the ordinary, and shrugs.

ON STAGE

The Band Leader counts off "Sh-Boom," by The Chords.

Lance, in a state of total euphoria, smiles lovingly at Darla.

FADE OUT

CLOSING CREDITS

"Sh-Boom" is followed by "I've Got a Woman," by the great Ray Charles.

THE END