

MR. CHRISTMAS

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MR. CHRISTMAS

FADE IN:

EXT. GREENLOW PARK, GREENWICH, CT. - NIGHT

A BUM (65) in raggedy hat and topcoat with a big long beard trundles through the heavy snow. Carrying a shoebox wrapped in newspapers and rags, he exits the park.

EXT. ANY STREET, GREENWICH, CT.

Fighting cold and wind, he crosses the street and is nearly run down by a car. The driver slides to a halt and rolls down the window.

DRIVER

Hey, you! Ya bum! Watch where you're going.

BUM

Sorry.

The car speeds off. The bum trundles on through the wind and snowdrifts. He stops, wipes the sweat from his brow and, panting, looks up at the swirling sky.

BUM (CONT'D)

My God!

VOICE (O.C.)

Yes?

BUM

Very funny.

VOICE (O.C.)

You're almost there. Keep going.

Mumbling to himself, the bum turns a corner. A wind gust nearly knocks him off his feet. He clutches the bundle.

BUM

Always in winter. Why is it always in winter?

VOICE (O.C.)

Don't blow it, Herbert. You know the consequences.

BUM

(burps)

I'm not gonna blow it.

He swerves a bit.

VOICE (O.C.)

Just how much eggnog did you have?

The bum heads into the bushes to take a whiz.

BUM

I'm an angel -- it goes right through me.
Very unfortunately.

Finished the bum looks up through the wind and snow at a well-appointed home, lights on, Christmas music blaring.

VOICE (O.C.)

You're doing good, Herbert. I'm gonna
put you in for a citation. Golden wings,
Herbert. You know what that means.

BUM

These humans, they don't know how lucky
they are.

The bum leans against a big oak, clutching the shoebox.
Watching the house, he waits in the freezing cold.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

EXT. ANY STREET, GREENWICH, CT. - DAY

A fine autumn day breaks over the same street in the quiet suburban town. Pink sun peeks through fluffy clouds. Dogs bark in the distance.

Colorful leaves swirl past the grammar school where crayon pictures of Halloween witches and Thanksgiving turkeys hang in windowpanes.

SUPER: "THREE MONTHS AGO"

Leaves whirl up the makeshift basketball courts in the drives and the covered swimming pools in the backyards.

An alarm clock buzzes, then another with morning news and another with pop music. The lazy town awakes.

INT. SWIFTER HOME

In the master bedroom JACEY FAIRWAY(34), brown-haired, attractive, opens one eye, moans, reaches over and hits the alarm clock. It reads 6:15.

JACEY

Oh, no. It can't be!

She rolls on her side and puts the pillow over her head. A wedding ring glistens on her finger.

A MALE HAND reaches over and tugs the pillow off. Jacey plays dead.

DONALD (O.C)

Oh, come on, now. No cheating!

DONALD SWIFTER (42) handsome businessman, dressed for work, sits at the edge of the bed. He lifts her wrist, drops it.

JACEY

I'm not dead.

(eyes shut, but smiling)

I'm asleep.

DONALD

You can't hide out here forever you know.

He kisses her cheek.

DONALD (CONT'D)

The girls are making breakfast.

He kisses her neck.

JACEY

Oh, no! I was supposed to make breakfast.

(pulls the sheets over her head)

They hate my breakfasts. They hate everything about me.

He reaches beneath the sheets.

DONALD

No, they don't.

JACEY

Yes, they do.

The alarm clock erupts again. Jacey slaps it.

JACEY (CONT'D)
(laughing)
OK, all right, I'm up already!

Donald starts to exit.

JACEY (CONT'D)
Wait!

She grabs him and kisses him.

DONALD
The girls...

She keeps kissing him. He removes her arms from his neck.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Come on, now.

Jacey throws herself back on the bed in mock frustration. She peeks out from the pillows.

JACEY
I'm gonna miss you, you know.

DONALD
You're just terrified to be alone with them, aren't you?

JACEY
NO!

They share a laugh. It's true, she is terrified.

DONALD
You're gonna be great, sweetheart. We're great together, all of us. That's why I married you.

Jacey wraps a leg around him.

JACEY
Is that the only reason?

DONALD
(amused, blushing)
OK, serious talk is done. I'm going now.

He exits. She lies there for a moment, then gets up, heads into the bathroom and turns the shower on.

KITCHEN

SIERRA (16) middle-class, emo teen in a Radio Head T-shirt and black jeans (aka always miserable) works the blender, while TIFFANY (12) wanna-be model in a white sweater, pink-mini and braces presides over a mess.

Orange juice, toast, coffee, jam, and eggs cram the table. Tiffany stares at a delicate gold bracelet around Sierra's wrist amidst plastic and heavy metal arm bands.

TIFFANY

When she comes down, I'm going to tell her.

Sierra flicks her hair out of her eyes. A short asymmetrical cut, always in at least one eye.

SIERRA

Go ahead, see if I care --

She stuffs an egg sandwich into her mouth.

SIERRA

-- see if she cares.

TIFFANY

You're gonna get fat.

Tiffany picks up *Seventeen Magazine* and plops down at the table.

SIERRA

Unlikely. My caloric intake isn't equivalent to my caloric output. Hence, no fat.

Donald enters and sits. The girls rush to place toast, jam, and eggs before him.

TIFFANY AND SIERRA

(overlapping)

Daddy, I made the toast and I made the eggs and I --

DONALD

Whoa! Hold on there! What's all this?

SIERRA

Dad, when you get to Germany can you buy me a Heaftling shirt? It's a real prison shirt made by prisoners.

DONALD

What? No!

SIERRA

Please, Dad, it's awesome! In black.

TIFFANY

I like pink.

SIERRA

(rolls her eyes)

Pink prison stripes?

DONALD

I said, no!

TIFFANY AND SIERRA

But Daddy --

Their faces fall.

DONALD

OK, look, we'll see... Relax, girls.
I'll only be gone a week.

Sierra pouts. This is, in fact, the problem.

Jacey enters, dressed for work, still fixing her sleeves.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Be back in plenty of time for Turkey Day.

She kisses Donald on the top of the head, heads to the fridge.

SIERRA

This year.

DONALD

Yes. This year.

Sierra, not at all happy, watches Jacey.

SIERRA

I am not going down to mom's, in Florida.
Not again.

Jacey takes out the orange juice and pours herself a glass, standing apart from the family.

DONALD

Your mother loves you.

The girls roll their eyes. Jacey's discomfited but joins them at the table.

JACEY

He said he'll be back. He'll be back, girls. Besides, you always have me.

An uncomfortable silence.

JACEY (CONT'D)

Look, I'm sorry about breakfast, all right? I'll make dinner tonight. What do you want? Anything you want, OK?

A bigger silence. Jacey looks at Sierra, at her wrist.

JACEY (CONT'D)

Is that my bracelet?

TIFFANY

(to Sierra)

I told you she would care.

JACEY

No, I don't care. I just... It would be nice to know. That's all.

As they eat, Jacey gets up and goes to the door.

DONALD

Sierra, you shouldn't just take things.

SIERRA

Fine, all right. She can have it back.

Sierra tosses the bracelet on the table.

DONALD

That's not the point.

SIERRA

Then what is?

Tiffany elbows Sierra re: Jacey at the door.

SIERRA (CONT'D)

She's going to do it again.

TIFFANY

A dollar says she's not.

Sierra pulls two dollars out of her backpack.

SIERRA
Two dollars says she is.

The girls watch her with baited breath.

DONALD
Girls, c'mon. Don't.

EXT. SWIFTER'S STREET

A PAPERBOY rides by, hurling newspapers hard against the front doors.

PAPERBOY
G'morning!
(thud!)
G'morning!

Another louder thud.

INTERCUT PAPERBOY WITH JACEY AND THE GIRLS

In the parlor, Sierra counts on her watch.

SIERRA
One, two... now!

Jacey opens the front door, just as the paper hurls into it -- or her.

JACEY
(doubles over)
Ow! Hey, watch it!

Sierra pumps her fist up and down.

SIERRA
Yes!

Tiffany frowns. Outside, the paperboy waves back.

BOY
G'morning, Mrs. Swifter.

JACEY
It's Fairway. My name is Fair -- Oh, whatever! Good morning!

Tiffany hands her older sister two dollars.

SIERRA

Some people learn, some people don't.

Tiffany hands over the money. Donald shakes his head.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Tiffany and Sierra, iPods in their ears, are ready for school. Donald carries his luggage.

DONALD

Look, I'm gonna e-mail what I want and you can get it into that iPod for me, download it or whatever.

SIERRA

You sure you want all that 80's crud?

Jacey and Sierra help Donald load his bags into the car.

JACEY

Sierra!

DONALD

It's great music.

SIERRA

There's better stuff. How about punk -- you were alive for punk, right? She wasn't but you were.

Jacey, despite herself, laughs.

DONALD

It's really simple, Sierra. Either you'll do it or you won't.

SIERRA

OK, OK, I'll do it. So, g'bye.

Donald hugs her but when Jacey comes forward, Sierra keeps her distance, bopping to the music. Tiffany runs up.

TIFFANY

Bye, Dad! Bye, Jacey!

Tiffany kisses them both, then turns to her dad.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Hurry back.

DONALD
Course I will, pumpkin.

TIFFANY
Daddy, don't call me that!

DONALD
OK, sugar.

TIFFANY
Daddy!

The girls walk off to school. Jacey waves to them. Only Tiffany waves back.

Donald closes the boot.

DONALD
I can't tell anymore -- are they girls or women?

JACEY
Both.
(they laugh)
Don't worry, I can handle it... for a week. You have everything you need?

DONALD
No. I don't.

He means her and the girls.

DONALD (CONT'D)
But on short notice this is the best I can do.

He puts his arms around her, kisses her.

DONALD (CONT'D)
Sure you won't come? Europe's gorgeous this time of year.

JACEY
I dunno. We'd have to get a sitter for the girls and -- I just -- we just started bonding, you know?

Jacey is upset.

DONALD
What is it?

She shakes her head. She doesn't really know.

DONALD (CONT'D)

Is it Sierra? She's not angry at you, sweetheart. She's been this way ever since the divorce, even before. Maybe since she was born.

JACEY

I know.

He takes her chin in his hand, tilts her head up at him.

DONALD

You can help her. You are helping her. You're a role model.

JACEY

(skeptical)

Right.

They kiss one more time, lingering.

JACEY (CONT'D)

It's just... I've never been in a family before and I -- I don't wanna blow it.

DONALD

You won't blow it. You couldn't if you tried.

He gets in his car and drives off, waving. Jacey gets in her car and drives in the other direction, waving back.

EXT. CARLYLE ADVERTISING, NEW YORK - DAY

Well-heeled EXECUTIVES enter and exit the bustling building.

INT. CARLYLE ADVERTISING

Jacey commands a corner office, reviewing storyboards for ad campaigns. Recent wedding photos show her and Donald, girls in tow, as he carries her over the threshold.

MARK (38) nerdy-cute, insecure, knocks and enters.

MARK

Break for lunch?

JACEY

Oh, Mark, that time already?

He fingers his tie that is already halfway off. He tugs at the odd end, trying to fix it.

JACEY (CONT'D)

What do you think of these?

She points to two different ad posters for a jam band, one is bright and cheery. The other is dark, disturbing.

MARK

That one. Speaks to the 16-year-olds.

JACEY

Yeah, well, they're not the only market.

MARK

No?

She rounds her desk, picks up some charts.

JACEY

From the numbers you'd think teenagers were taking over the world.

MARK

This stepmom thing is really eating you, isn't it?

She sits, upset.

JACEY

I can't believe I married a guy with two kids.

MARK

Neither could anyone else.

She stares him down.

MARK (CONT'D)

You'll be fine, you know. You're the hottest ad exec this side of the Mississippi. You know how to talk to teenagers.

(she frowns)

OK, the hottest ad exec in the entire universe of being.

(Jacey smiles)

Look, when Michael I were going to adopt, we weren't sure either. But teenagers, they really need parents.

JACEY

Yeah, well, these kids have more parents than they need.

Before Mark can answer, a co-worker, PEGGY (45) friendly, rotund, calls from the door.

PEGGY

Hey, Mark! Mark, sweetie, let's roll!

(to Jacey)

We're headed to New Green Bo, best soup dumplings in the world. Guaranteed to cheer you up.

JACEY

I don't need cheering up. I need to get these to the board by 2. Plus I promised the girls burgers tonight. I don't have a thing in house. And I --

Mark clears his throat, about to offer advice.

JACEY (CONT'D)

Don't. OK. No advice. OK?

Peggy, who exits, calls out from the hallway.

PEGGY (O.S.)

Ma-ark! I'm starvin'!

MARK

Piggy, I mean Peggy, is on the war path. A new diet. Talk later?

JACEY

Yeah, sure.

He exits, joining Peggy in the hall.

PEGGY

I told you. I have to eat at noon, exactly, or I'll eat all day.

MARK

Relax. You're way early. In Chicago it's 11:45.

Jacey, watching them, smiles.

EXT. LOWER SCHOOL - DAY

Tiffany hangs in the schoolyard with other 8TH GRADERS, including overdeveloped SUSAN (12) and nerdy JANE (11), eye-glassed, freckle-faced and flat-chested.

Jane comes up to Susan's chest.

JANE

I'm eleven, OK? My birthday comes in late November.

SUSAN

Eleven? You shouldn't even be in our grade.

TIFFANY

Oh, come on now!

SUSAN

She's ruining the statistics.

TIFFANY

On what?

Susan stands tall, sticks out her breasts. A couple of passing high school boys, TODD (17) athletic, definitely a ladies man and JEREMY (16) a geek, hoot and whistle.

SUSAN

You know what.

Susan walks off. Jane calls after her.

JANE

I'll be 12 in a week!

Susan keeps going, headed for the boys.

JANE (CONT'D)

She hates me.

TIFFANY

She hates everyone who's pretty.

Jane smiles, all braces, not the prettiest girl.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Anyhow, she's too fat to be a model.

JANE

Want a Twinkie?

TIFFANY

No!

Jane rummages through her backpack and finds them.

The girls watch wistfully as the boys board a city bus, books in hand, Susan following.

Tiffany grabs Jane's Twinkie and takes a bite.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The same boys exit the bus in front of the high school. Jostling one another, the boys pass Sierra. Todd grabs a book from her.

TODD

Albert Einstein: Theory, Life and Times
So, how is our resident genius?

Sierra grabs her book back.

SIERRA

Lay off, Todd. You're such a dweeb!

She walks past him and joins DEBRA (18), a popular girl, who looks back at Todd, smiling.

TODD

I love that girl. I LOVE that girl.

JEREMY

Which one?

TODD

All of'em!

The boys follow the girls into the school.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL

Sierra and Debra stop at their lockers.

SIERRA

Why are boys such idiots?

DEBRA

Compared to you, everybody's idiots.

SIERRA

You have no idea.

DEBRA
What're you doing for the holidays?

SIERRA
Family stuff. Ugh!

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Jacey, burdened with laptop bag, briefcase and purse shops for burgers. This is clearly not her strong suit.

JACEY
100% sirloin... Chopped chuck... Filet mignon.
(to the butcher)
Excuse me, do you have chopped filet mignon?

BUTCHER
Sure, lady. And caviar puree, too.

The joke is lost on Jacey. Her cell phone rings. She fishes it out of her bag.

JACEY
Hello!

INTERCUT JACEY IN THE STORE WITH DONALD AT THE FRANKFURT AIRPORT, WHERE IT IS LATE EVENING

DONALD (ON PHONE)
I just landed and I miss you already.

JACEY (ON PHONE)
Me too.

A crash, as she drops her packages. The butcher stares. She scrambles to pick them up.

DONALD (ON PHONE)
Are you OK?

BUTCHER
Hey, lady? You OK?

JACEY (ON PHONE)
Yeah, sure, just getting some hamburger.

DONALD (ON PHONE)
Tiffany doesn't eat meat.

JACEY (ON PHONE)

Shoot! I knew that!

(waves to the butcher, covers
the phone)

Tofu. I need tofu, the kind you make
into... stuff.

BUTCHER

You mean tempe, lady. Aisle 3 lady, near
the dairy.

DONALD (ON PHONE)

Who are you talking to?

JACEY (ON PHONE)

No one.

The butcher hands her the ground filet mignon.

JACEY (CONT'D)

Can you make it into patties?

The butcher shakes his head.

DONALD (ON PHONE)

(laughing)

I'll be back soon. I promise.

EXT. SWIFTER HOUSE (LIVING ROOM) - NIGHT

Tiffany sits on the sofa watching America's Top Model.
Sierra sprawls on the rug with a chemistry book and cell.

SIERRA (ON HER CELL)

Because it's a benzene ring, 6 carbons, 6
hydrogens. Used in rubbers, dyes,
detergents, drugs, explosives. Oh, and
napalm. How quaint.

Jacey enters with a tray of burgers, buns, chips and
condiments. She sets them down on the coffee table.

JACEY

OK, girls. Here we are... Sierra,
dinner!

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

Quaint. As in old fashioned and charming
or peculiar and strange, take your pick.

JACEY

Sierra!

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

Gotta go. Call you later!

She hangs up, grabs two tempe burgers and some chips. There are only real burgers left, so Tiffany makes a plate of lettuce and tomato, no burger, no bun.

TIFFANY

We're eating in here?

JACEY

Just don't tell your father, OK?

Sierra smothers her burger with Five Alarm jalapenos.

SIERRA

Want some?

JACEY

Are you kidding? I can't touch that stuff.

SIERRA

Capsicum. *Capiscum frutescens*, to be exact. Hotter than a red bell pepper but technically not that hot. Only as hot as 1/10,000th of the hottest pepper in the world.

JACEY

Whatever. It still hurts my tongue.

Tiffany sits, carefully unfolds her napkin.

JACEY (CONT'D)

Is that all you're going to eat?

TIFFANY

I don't like meat.

JACEY

There's tempe.

Tiffany's eyes the burger on Jacey's plate.

TIFFANY

Yeah, I know. That's a tempe burger.

JACEY

No, it isn't.

TIFFANY

Yes, it is.

Jacey bites into her burger -- it's tempe. Ugh!

JACEY

Oh, geez... Here take it.

Jacey hands her the burger.

TIFFANY

But you already took a bite.

SIERRA

There's more germs in that burger than in her mouth. Or yours. Eat it!

The phone rings. Sierra jumps up to grab it, but Jacey gets there first.

JACEY (ON PHONE)

Donald? Hi, honey... We're all here.

Tiffany tentatively bites into the tempe burger.

Sierra takes a bite of a real burger. It's dry.

SIERRA

Ugh! What is this?

JACEY

(covering the phone)

It's filet mignon, the best kind.

Sierra smothers the filet mignon burger in ketchup. Tiffany cuts the tempe burger in half, putting the chewed half on Jacey's plate.

JACEY (CONT'D)

We're getting along great, hon, having a swell time. How's Germany? How's the deal?

When Jacey turns her back, Sierra opens Jacey's burger up, puts a pile of jalapenos in it and closes the bun.

EXT. HEAVEN

The bum sits on a cloud throne, looking down.

BUM

Oh, this is not good. Not good at all.

VOICE

Get off my throne Herbert.

BUM

Oh come on! I can hardly see anything
from those silly gallery seats.

White plastic seats line the periphery of the cloud.

A thunderclap from an angry God.

BUM (CONT'D)

OK, all right, already!

Herbert gets up and makes his way to the periphery.

EXT. RESTAURANT, FRANKFURT

The thunderclap hits earth. Rain pours down. Donald
pulls up his collar, talking on his cell phone.

DONALD (ON PHONE)

Deal's a mess. Lapper's inserting
himself into the project. This just might
be a waste of time. How're the girls?

INTERCUT DONALD IN FRANKFURT WITH THE GIRLS AT THE HOUSE

Jacey takes a bite of the "jalapeno" burger. Tiffany and
Sierra smile at her sweetly.

JACEY (ON PHONE)

Fine, hon.
(the jalapenos hits)
Oh my gosh!

Sierra switches the TV to 60 Minutes.

SIERRA

(to Tiffany)

Don't you wanna know what's going on in
the world?

TIFFANY

No!

Tiffany switches it back to America's Top Model. Jacey,
mouth on fire, shoves the phone at the girls.

JACEY

Your father wants to talk to you.

TIFFANY

Me. I want to. Me!

Tiffany grabs the phone.

TIFFANY (ON PHONE)

(CONT'D)

Hi, Daddy!... Watching TV, eating tempe
burgers in the livingroom... Because
Jacey said we could...

Jacey, slugging down water, makes a face like "NO!"

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I love you too, Daddy. Yeah, she's here.

Sierra reluctantly answers, one eye on the TV.

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

Hullo?

DONALD (ON PHONE)

What's up, sweetie?

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

Nothing.

DONALD (ON PHONE)

How're you doing?

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

OK.

DONALD (ON PHONE)

Whatcha working on?

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

Nothing. Can we talk later?

His ASSOCIATES wave to him from inside the restaurant.

DONALD (ON PHONE)

Stop it, Sierra!... It's already midnight
here. I just called to say goodnight.

(another thunderclap)

Love you.

SIERRA (ON PHONE)

Sorry... G'night, Dad... Love you too.

She hands the phone to Jacey.

DONALD (ON PHONE)
 TV in the livingroom? Tempe burgers?
 You're pulling out all the stops.

Jacey's tongue is thick and she slurs her words.

JACEY (ON PHONE)
 OK, so I'm busted.

Jacey stares daggers at the girls, who giggle.

DONALD (ON PHONE)
 It's not that. What you're trying to do
 is great. I'm just exhausted, that's all.

Donald's associates signal him through the window MOS,
 they're clearly arguing.

DONALD (CONT'D)
 Geez, I gotta go, hon.

JACEY (ON PHONE)
 So soon?

Another thunderclap. He's getting drenched.

DONALD (ON PHONE)
 Deal's falling apart. Love you!

Donald runs back into the restaurant.

JACEY (ON PHONE)
 Love you, too... Wait! Should I invite
 the Delroy's for Thanksgiving?

But he's already gone. The girls are in hysterics.

JACEY (CONT'D)
 (tongue thick)
 OK, who put shalapenos on my burger?

SIERRA AND TIFFANY
 Not me.

JACEY
 It's not fuddy. It huts!

But it is kind of funny.

EXT. HEAVEN

A drenched Herbert shakes his head.

BUM

Why was it you allowed humans to
procreate?

A huge thunderclap.

BUM (CONT'D)

OK, all right! It was a rhetorical
question.

VOICE

You're gonna have to do better than this.

EXT. SWIFTER HOUSE - DAY

Bright sun and brisk air. It's a weekend, judging by how
silent everything is and the heft of the morning paper.

PAPERBOY

G'morning!
(thud)
G'morning.

INT. SWIFTER HOUSE - DAY

Jacey opens the door.

PAPERBOY

G'morning!

The paper hits her square in the tummy, but at least she
catches it this time.

JACEY

Oooof! Good morning.

EXT. HEAVEN

The bum throws his arms in the air and pulls hard, like
reeling in a fish.

The wind grows incredibly strong.

EXT./INT. SWIFTER'S HOUSE

The paper flies open. Page after page swishes past, as
Jacey struggles to close the door.

The fashion section leaps out. She picks it up -- big sales, everywhere in town. Chanel suits, Haeftling shirts. She breaks into a smile.

JACEY

I can do this. I know how to do this.
This is female genes.

Ads in hand, she races upstairs into Sierra's room.

SIERRA'S BEDROOM

Sierra sleeps under posters of Chris Angel Mindfreak and the bands Boy's Life and Prozac Memory. Skateboards and ski boots lie against one wall.

Mac, iPod dock and speakers, and PSP sit amidst the clutter on her desk. Jacey steps over soda cans, pizza rinds and unidentifiable green smudge to reach the bed.

JACEY (CONT'D)

Wake up! Wake up! We're going shopping!

Sierra pulls the pillow over her head.

SIERRA

It's Saturday!

Jacey rushes out and into Tiffany's room.

TIFFANY'S BEDROOM

The room is decidedly pink. Stuffed animals and Barbie dolls line the desktops and windowsills. Posters of models and pop stars hang on the walls.

Tiffany's head is under her pillow. Jacey pulls the pillow off.

JACEY

We're going shopping!

TIFFANY

What?

(groans)

It's not even light out. Leave me alone!

JACEY

The early bird catches the silk worm.
Up you two! Let's go.

SIERRA'S ROOM

Sierra sits up, looks around.

SIERRA
 (calling out)
 I hate shopping!

EXT. FANCY STORE STREET, GREENWICH

Jacey pulls up and parks in the town lot. Jacey and the girls exit the car, talking MOS, and join the long line of SHOPPERS waiting for the stores to open.

Tiffany spots a Haeftling shirt in a window. She grabs her sister.

TIFFANY
 Sierra, look!

SIERRA
 Awesome!

They run inside, Jacey following.

MONTAGE

Seen through the window:

- 1.) Jacey and Tiffany fight the crowd, rifling through sales bins. Laughing, talking MOS, they hold up shirts, dresses and skirts to their bodies. Sierra stands aside on her cell phone, eyeing a rack of black t-shirts.
- 2.) Tiffany picks a torn tiny Brittany Spears skirt which Jacey grabs away. To Tiffany's dismay, she replaces it with a demure blue shift.
- 3.) Sierra, half-heartedly pushing through the rack, is rewarded with a black Haeftling shirt, which Tiffany and Jacey give two thumbs up.
- 4.) Jacey holds up a pink Haeftling shirt in Tiffany's size. Tiffany grabs it. Sierra shakes her head and sighs.
- 5.) Tiffany presses a pink party dress with straps and ruffles on Jacey. It's suitable for a prom. Sierra grabs it away and hands Jacey a black skintight dress with silver buckles down the arms.
- 6.) Jacey comes out of the dressing room in the dress.

JACEY

Oh, come on now. It has no belt, no collar, no waist, no...

(blushes)

... No anything!

SIERRA

Exactly! It's awesome!

TIFFANY

That is so wrong.

Jacey, defeated, starts to turn back.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I mean, you need shoes.

Smiling, Tiffany hands her the perfect pair.

JACEY

Well, then, I guess I'll take it!

PARKING LOT

They exit the store, laughing and carrying shopping bags.

TIFFANY

This is just the best time!

SIERRA

(smiling despite herself)

It's OK.

Jacey's cell phone rings. Juggling her bags, she answers.

JACEY (ON PHONE)

Hello, Donald?... I'm sorry, who?...

A noisy FAMILY passes. Jacey covers one ear.

JACEY (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)

Yes, this is Jacey, his wife... It's Fairway, not Swifter. That's OK, everybody makes that mistake.

TIFFANY

She said we can go to a movie. I get to pick.

SIERRA

What? Some mindless sentimental chick flick?

It's still hard to hear.

JACEY
Girls, please! I'm on the phone!
(on phone)
I... I'm sorry, what?

TIFFANY
(brightening)
It's daddy.

Jacey holds up her hand.

JACEY
Excuse me?

Jacey's face darkens, she stops.

JACEY (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Oh, god... no... But how? When?

Jacey looks as if she's been hit in the stomach. She drops the bags, leans on the nearest car.

JACEY(ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Are you sure?...

She looks at the girls who have stopped arguing, their faces fresh, questioning. Jacey tries to pull it together.

JACEY (CONT'D)
It's all right. I... I understand.

She hangs up, tears in her eyes.

TIFFANY
But I wanted to talk to daddy!

SIERRA
Shut up, Tiff!

Jacey breaks down.

TIFFANY
What? What I did I do wrong?

Jacey kneels, pushes back Tiffany's hair.

JACEY
Listen, sweetie, it's about your father.

TIFFANY
He's coming home early, right?

JACEY
He... he's had an accident.

TIFFANY
What?

JACEY
There was an accident, a car crash and...
She can't go on.

SIERRA
(backing off)
No. You're lying. No!

JACEY
I'm sorry. I'm so, so sorry.

SIERRA
Nooo!

Sierra drops her bag and runs back into the mall.

JACEY
Sierra!

MALL

Sierra leans against a post just inside the doorway,
sinks into a crouch and cries.