

The Crack In Peggy Sue's Floor
By
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FADE IN:

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - 1945

A two story Victorian in need of repair sits far off the street on a two acre lot. The dark sky growls as the wind whips the trees and bushes.

As we PULL BACK, we discover standing barefoot in the grass, a fair skinned seventeen-year-old girl with Down syndrome, staring at us. Her white cotton nightgown and long blonde hair flap like a flags on a flagpole.

The wind rests. As her gown and hair settles, her hair BURSTS back up into a thunderous-

EXT. GEORGIA STATE SANITARIUM - NIGHT - 1927

CRACK of lightening. A harsh wind sweeps leaves across the grounds. Parked in front, a black 1927 Willys Knight Sedan rocks back and forth fighting the bluster. Through the wind's whistle, we FAINTLY HEAR pounding and cries into-

INT. SANITARIUM NURSES STATION - SAME TIME

A NURSE ignores the cries, reads a LIFE MAGAZINE dated October 20, 1927. On the cover: A man and woman being kicked out of the Garden of Eden.

INT. INSANE ASYLUM ROOM - SAME TIME

TWO HANDS POUND fiercely on the steel door. The hands, that of a woman's, are raw from the beating. We hear her hysterical cries. Then, exhausted, the hands surrender, rest against the door, slowly slide down, smearing blood. Her cries subside into-

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

My baby. Gimme back my baby.
Give her back. My poor baby.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1945

CLOSE UP on PEGGY SUE'S EYES as they open with a gasp, breaking her free from the nightmare that haunts her.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

A light on the second floor turns on. Through thin, worn, lace drapes, her silhouette comes to the window, peeks out.

The girl is gone.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S HALLWAY - MORNING

A richly ornate Grandfather Clock CHIMES. It is 6 a.m.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

A kettle WHISTLES violently. A BLACK CAT scatters. A HAND turns off the stove. The whistle subsides.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Sharing Peggy Sue's property line, a single story traditional farmhouse. WALSH, 50's, portly, stands on his porch staring at Peggy Sue's. He has half the house. Half the acreage. And twice the envy.

WALSH

It ain't right, I tell ya. Just ain't right.

He spits tobacco, a glob stuck on his beard as he tucks more in his cheek. Walsh sees someone approaching down the road, squints for a better view.

WALSH (CONT'D)

What the...?

He picks up his shotgun and leans against the rails. The weight irritates his back.

EXT. THE ROAD - SAME TIME

A pair of ragged shoes walk along the dirt road. You can tell by their uneven step, they have journeyed far. They stop to rest. We PAN UP to see the traveler -

HOWARD TURNER, 17, Black, takes in the morning air, tries to revive himself. His body strong, chiseled, fit for survival. His face is kind, trustworthy. Yet a few scars put it into question.

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He holds an envelope, reads off the back of it, tucks it in his back pocket. He looks at Walsh's home-made mailbox. Painted on it "12". Howard looks over to Peggy Sue's, grins. Glad he's found it. As the next house is quite a ways down the road. He peruses her house with wonderment as he regains his strength.

EXT. WALSH'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Walsh widens his stance to intimidate, calls out-

WALSH

What you lookn' at, boy?

Howard quickly gets submissive.

HOWARD

Nothin', sir. Twelve. Just a nice number, that's all.

WALSH

Well, it ain't for you, so keep walkin'.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Sorry to bother.

Howard looks at Walsh's well, coughs, then coughs some more. He rubs his chest, parched, hoping for a little generosity. Walsh knows what he wants.

WALSH

It's dry.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Most are around here.

Howard notices a large woodpile on the side of the house.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

See ya got a lot of wood needin' choppin'. I can help ya if ya need.

WALSH

I look like I need helpin'?

HOWARD

No, sir. Strong man like you don't need no help. Thought maybe ya could teach me a thing or two 'bout choppin'.

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Walsh lightens a bit, this boy knows his place. He signals Howard closer for a better look. Howard obeys.

WALSH

What's your name, boy?

HOWARD

Howard. Howard Turner, sir.

WALSH

Where you from?

HOWARD

Jus' outside Louisville, sir.

WALSH

Kentucky?

HOWARD

No, sir. Mississippi.

WALSH

You a long way from home, boy.
Georgia not exactly next door.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Mighty long walk, sir.

WALSH

You tellin' me you walked all the
way here from Mississippi?

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Had to. No one offered
a ride, sir.

WALSH

How long somethin' like that take?

HOWARD

Well, that depends.

WALSH

Depends on what?

HOWARD

What day it is, sir. I left on
Sunday. Right after church. So I
could walk with the Lord.

WALSH

Well, it's Wednesday. You gonna
tell me you walked here in three
days?

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HOWARD

No sir. It was the Sunday before.

WALSH

That's too bad. Would've been mighty impressive. Where you goin' boy?

HOWARD

Nowhere, sir. Just walkin' with the Lord, sir. Helpin' on my way when I can.

He looks back to the woodpile. Walsh arches his back, tries to relieve its pain.

WALSH

Well, you look pretty strong. I can teach ya how to chop up that wood properly. Got plenty of other chores you might need learnin' in if you want. Can't pay ya, but my wife's a good cook and you can stay in the barn.

HOWARD

Oh, thank ya. Thank ya, sir.

WALSH

But only a few days now, then back on your way.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Thank ya, sir.

Walsh grabs a dirty tin cup left on the porch, tosses it to Howard.

WALSH

This for you. Take it when you go. No one else can use it now. Gonna let my wife know you're here. Get a drink from the well, then meet me at the barn.

Howard rushes to the well, happy as can be.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Will do, sir. Ya won't be sorry, sir.

Walsh contemplates putting his rifle back, takes it inside the house instead.

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THE WELL

Howard lowers the bucket enthusiastically until Walsh is gone. Then suddenly his mood shifts. He stands up straight, strong. No longer submissive. Tense, he looks over to Peggy Sue's house, possessed by it. He pulls up the bucket, dips his cup, sips and sighs. He's arrived.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER

A MAUL AX CRASHES down, splits a large chunk of wood.

Walsh leans against his weathered 1933 Ford pickup truck, rifle in tow, watches Howard chop.

WALSH

Damn, boy. You got some power.
Keep goin' like that, gonna have
to tell the missus to put some
gravy on your biscuit.

HOWARD

Mighty kind of ya, sir.

WALSH

When you finish, wait in the barn.

Howard nods. Walsh heads back into the house.

Howard looks out in the distance to the back of Peggy Sue's house. He squints, makes out a chicken coop. Two goats corralled next to it. Then, he does a double take. The sun shines in his eyes as a WOMAN dressed in a soft pink nightgown and large red Victorian Garden Hat, netting covering her face, works the garden.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S GARDEN - SAME TIME

A considerate size that can easily sustain more than one.

The woman's HAND pulls a potato from the dirt and places it into a "Snow White Cake and Pastry Flour" bag featuring an image of Disney's Snow White rolling out pastry on it.

Her hat tilts up, faces a second story window.

EXT. THE SECOND STORY WINDOW

LILY, the Down syndrome girl we saw earlier, in a white dress with white and yellow flowers, watches, smiles upon being noticed.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Howard watches, intrigued. BANGING startles him, breaks his trance. He looks up, finds Walsh in the window, tapping it with his rifle. Howard smiles, nods, gets back to chopping.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - A SHORT TIME LATER

We see the bag of potatoes in the woman's arms. As she places them on the counter the bag breaks, sending potatoes in every direction. One takes off fast, rolls into-

INT. THE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Across the old wood floors straight for the front door. It almost makes it, but is stopped by a tattered area rug, and rests in a crack in the floor.

INT. WALSH'S BARN - NIGHT

The door is wide open. Howard sits in the small barn packed with old rusted farm equipment long since used. A kerosene lamp by his side. He watches Peggy Sue's house. He finishes his dinner, runs his fingers across the plate catching any last flavor, grunts, satisfied.

He starts to get up-

WALSH (O.S.)

Goin' somewhere?

Walsh stands with his rifle. Howard settles back down.

HOWARD

No, sir. Jus' returnin' the plate, sir.

Walsh takes it from him.

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WALSH

I already told ya. You stay between the barn and the old outhouse yonder. Don't be goin' near my house less I tell ya. Round these parts... Just because we can't own you no more, don't mean we can't act like it.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Sorry, sir. (then)
Wife a mighty fine cook, sir.
Mighty fine. Gen-rus, too. She know how to pack a plate.

WALSH

Yes, that she does.

Walsh starts to head out, glances over to Peggy Sue's.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Her bedroom light turns off.

INT. WALSH'S BARN - SAME TIME

WALSH

She crazy, you know.

HOWARD

Who, sir?

WALSH

Boy, you don't fool me. I see you lookin' over there. Everyone in town know. Peggy Sue. Crazy as a shit-house rat.

HOWARD

No, sir. Don't know. Not from 'round here.

He looks to her house, a bit saddened.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

It true, sir? She crazy?

WALSH

Hell, yeah, it's true. You seen her in the dirt in her crazy clothes.

(MORE)

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WALSH (CONT'D)

Sometimes at night, you can catch her stannin' in her window, just starin' out.

HOWARD

How she get that way?

WALSH

Weak constitution. Her type of people known for it.

HOWARD

Type, sir?

WALSH

People with too much money. Every time somethin' bad happen, they go crazy. Now it's the two of them.

HOWARD

Two, sir?

WALSH

Yeah. Her and her "daughter."

Walsh stares at Peggy Sue's, smiles, aroused.

WALSH (CONT'D)

But, I do like to visit time to time.

HOWARD

Visit, sir?

WALSH

You know what I'm talkin' 'bout. She sure is good, too. Make any man want to get a little crazy.

Howard looks at Peggy Sue's.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Don't you be gettin' any ideas. I already let you dip into one well.
(grabbing the door)

In the mornin' you can wash my truck. Needs a good cleaning. Now sleep.

Walsh slams the door shut.

EXT. WALSH'S BARN - CONTINUOUS

Walsh heads back to the house, stops, glances over to Peggy Sue's, then back at the barn.

INT. WALSH'S BARN - SAME TIME

Howard turns up the kerosene lamp. Pulls the letter out of his back pocket. He opens it, leans back, reads it again, as he has so many times before.

EXT. FARNSWORTH ESTATE - NIGHT - 1927

THUNDER roars as heavy rain pounds a mid-eighteen-hundred Georgia mansion. In front, the same black 1927 Willys Knight Sedan. Lights are on in a second story room. Its shutter, blown loose, CLACKS endlessly through-

INT. FARNSWORTH BEDROOM - SAME TIME

A harried birth in progress. We HEAR Peggy Sue cry out in pain as SANDERS, the doctor, has trouble delivering. HATTIE, black, late forties, stands next to him.

SANDERS

I got him turned around now.

He looks at the clock. 11:58.

FARNSWORTH

Push Peggy Sue! Push!

PEGGY SUE, nineteen, cries out, pushes hard. Even in this moment, her beauty is obvious.

FARNSWORTH, early thirties, holds her hand tight, looks at her lovingly.

FARNSWORTH (CONT'D)

We're going to have a beautiful baby. Don't you worry.

Peggy Sue smiles through pain, pushes again.

SANDERS

Here it comes! Here it comes!

Sanders PULLS the baby out, STARES in disbelief.

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Her knees up, blocking her view, Peggy Sue relaxes back, relieved of delivering.

Hattie GASPS, covers her mouth, horrified. Sanders looks at her, then Farnsworth, afraid to tell him.

FARNSWORTH

What? What's wrong with my child?

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Something wrong with my baby?

FARNSWORTH

It's not crying. Why isn't it crying?

Sanders and Hattie look at it, speechless. Farnsworth dashes over to see his child, stopped in his tracks upon seeing it. He tries to keep from vomiting as his anger builds. He glares at Peggy Sue. Sanders steps back, afraid of violence.

FARNSWORTH (CONT'D)

You give me this...this mongoloid child? You bring this shame into my family? My home?

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Let me see! Let me see my baby!

Farnsworth looks at Sanders.

FARNSWORTH

Slice it's throat! Make sure it's dead!

Sanders grabs his scalpel, just as he strikes Hattie screams, stops him.

HATTIE

Leave it be! Leave it be! The Lord already take the cry out of it.

The clock strikes midnight, CHIMES.

FARNSWORTH

Give it to me.

Sanders wraps the body in the bloodied sheets, hands it to Farnsworth.

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FARNSWORTH (CONT'D)

(sotto)

Make it so she'll never be able to
bring another one into this world.
Then put her somewhere she can't
be found until I decide what to do
with her.

Sanders nods, looks at his surgical tools. Farnsworth
storms out with the baby.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Give me my baby! Let me see my
baby!

Hattie runs to Peggy Sue's side.

HATTIE

No, Missy Sue, no. You don't need
to see that baby. She ain't right,
you hear me? She ain't right.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

She's a girl?

Sanders glares at Hattie, but she defies him, continues.

HATTIE

Yes, Missy Sue. Just like you
always wanted. A baby girl. And
lily white just like you. Lily
white.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1945

PEGGY SUE'S EYES open. We hear her whisper-

PEGGY SUE

Lily.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Her bedroom light turns on. Her silhouette comes to the
window, peeks out.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S HALLWAY - MORNING

The Grandfather Clock CHIMES.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The kettle WHISTLES.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Walsh CHARGES towards the barn with his rifle, enraged.

INT. WALSH'S BARN - MOMENTS LATER

Walsh swings the door open.

WALSH

Get up, boy.

Howard is gone. Walsh looks around, a bit panicked.

EXT. WALSH'S BARN - CONTINUOUS

Walsh looks over at Peggy Sue's, scopes for activity.

HOWARD (O.S.)

Mornin', sir.

Walsh swings around, finds Howard smiling. Trains his gun on him.

WALSH

Mornin', my ass. I figured you out, boy. Figured you. Been goin' through my mind all this time. What you mean "Twelve" bein' a nice number and all. But I know why, 'cause I smarter than you... Cause it's next to hers, isn't it? You know, don't ya?

HOWARD

Know what, sir?

WALSH

(cocking his gun)
I'll blow a hole right through ya, boy. That's why you can't take your eyes off her. You know about the money.

HOWARD

No, sir. I don't know nuthin'!

(CONTINUED)

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WALSH

You can be sure of that after I scatter your brains. Now I don't know how someone like you found out, but 'nough of us know she's hidin' money somewhere.

HOWARD

Money, sir?

WALSH

Don't bullshit me! How you think she live? Buy that house? Not a single bank in town say she got an account with 'em, and I know for a fact she don't keep it in her mattress.

HOWARD

I don't know nuthin', I swear!

WALSH

Tell the truth or I'll blow your head off, nigger!

HOWARD

Okay, I know! I know! I know about the money. Don't shoot me. Don't shoot me, please. I'll go. I swear, I'll go and never come back.

Walsh lowers his rifle a bit.

WALSH

What they tell you?

HOWARD

What you say. She got money someplace.

WALSH

Tell you where it was?

HOWARD

No, sir. They just wrote down the address and sent me on my way.

WALSH

That's all?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

Yes, sir. Didn't even know her name 'till you told me. No one know more than you, sir.

WALSH

Damn right about that. Now you get gone before I make you gone for good.

Howard hurries to the road as Walsh follows.

HOWARD

Yes, sir. I'm gone, sir. Gone for good, sir. I won't tell anybody. I swear, sir. Not a soul. I don't know nuthin', sir.

EXT. THE ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Howard takes off in the direction of his arrival.

WALSH

That's right. Go back from where you came, boy. Back from where you came.

Walsh AIMS his rifle at Howard's back, laughs as he runs.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Ooh, you sure can run, boy!

He FIRES his rifle, barely misses on purpose. Laughs heartily. He turns around, aims his rifle at Peggy Sue's bedroom widow, mutters-

WALSH (CONT'D)

Bang. Bang.

He lowers his gun, smiles, aroused.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S FRONT DOOR - A SHORT TIME LATER

The KNOB SLOWLY TURNS. The door gently OPENS not to be heard.

INT. THE HALLWAY FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

WALSH'S SHOES slowly walk towards the kitchen. He STEPS on the CRACK in the floor. The floors CREAK. He sets his RIFLE down, leans it against the Grandfather clock.

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Thick shrubs of Cherokee Rose bushes line the back of the house off both sides of the kitchen door.

We HEAR a scuffle in the kitchen, hear Peggy Sue SCREAM.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

A Tea cup CRASHES to the floor.

We see Walsh's backside as he pins Peggy Sue down on the kitchen table. Only her arms and legs visible.

WALSH

Tell me where the money is!

PEGGY SUE

There isn't any!

Peggy Sue fights him.

PEGGY SUE'S POV

Walsh grins.

WALSH

Ooh, you're feisty today. My favorite.

(Unzipping his pants)

I just love it when the fish are bitin'.

PEGGY SUE

Not in front of Lily! Not in front of Lily!

WALSH

Don't you worry about her. Sure she's hiding in her room like usual.

Peggy Sue screams.

WALSH (CONT'D)

Why you bother with that? You know ain't nobody comin'. Ain't nobody care. So you can tell me now, during, or after. But you gonna tell me.

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CONTINUED:

Walsh THRUSTS forward as a THUMP and CRACK is heard. His EYES OPEN WIDE, then ROLL BACK as his body SLUMPS to the floor... REVEALING Howard holding a BLOOD-DRENCHED MAUL.

He stares into Peggy Sue's eyes, frightened. Unsure if he did the right thing.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Howard stays silent, his emotion grows as he takes in his first close up view of the woman called "crazy."

Peggy Sue, now thirty-seven, along with her soft pink nightgown, are both weathered from the wear. She lay still on the table. Not sure if she should move.

Howard stares mesmerized. Takes in the softness of her hair, the drape of her neck, the paleness of her skin. He reaches for her gown, she flinches, anticipates his advance. He pauses, then gently pulls it down, covering her. Their eyes lock, a trust building.

PEGGY SUE

Thank you.

Howard chokes back a tear. Then, with perfect diction-

HOWARD

You're welcome. I apologize for entering your home without being invited.

PEGGY SUE

Under the circumstance, I'd say it was a welcomed inconsideration.

They look at Walsh on the floor, clearly dead.

HOWARD

I didn't mean to kill him.

PEGGY SUE

Sweetie, you lodge a maul into a man's back, chances are he's gonna die.

Howard offers his hand as a gentleman should, she accepts it, escorted off the table.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Who are you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Howard Turner, ma'am.

PEGGY SUE

Ma'am. That's the nicest thing anyone's called me in a long time. I'm Margaret. Everyone calls me Peggy Sue. But something tells me you already knew that. You're the boy I saw yesterday working for Walsh.

HOWARD

Walsh?

PEGGY SUE

Yes, Walsh. That's his name. I figured you a better acquaintance. Which would explain wanting to drive a maul into him.

HOWARD

What should we do?

PEGGY SUE

Would you like some tea?

HOWARD

Tea?

PEGGY SUE

Yes, tea. When someone does you a favor, it's polite to offer one in return.

Harold looks at her, then at her Victorian hat hanging on a hook next to the door, afraid the rumor is true.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I don't know what to do, either. Maybe we can figure it out over tea.

Howard looks back to the hall, afraid someone may enter.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, Howard. No one's coming. No one ever does. My daughter Lily is upstairs. But, she knows not to come down 'less I tell her.

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HOWARD

What about his wife? Maybe she heard? Maybe she's on her way over now?

PEGGY SUE

Helen? Oh, she heard plenty in her day. Never once stepped a foot over here. But she's been gone for years now.

HOWARD

Gone?

PEGGY SUE

Yes. Died years ago. Suicide. Walsh always said she had a weak constitution. But I think she just wanted to get away from him. If they went to the same place, I bet she's mad as hell right now.

(giggles, then)

I'm sorry. I know it's rude to speak ill of the dead. It just proves hard for those who did so about the living.

Howard relaxes a bit, out of any immediate threat.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Now... How about that tea?

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A rusty bucket pours bloody water into the sink. There's a KNOCK at the back door.

PEGGY SUE

Come in.

She sets the bucket on the counter, fills it with chicken remains. Howard enters covered in blood stains and dirt. He picks a Cherokee Rose blossom off his shirt.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

You don't have to knock every-time Howard. It's not that kind of house.

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

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CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

We all finished?

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am.

PEGGY SUE

Wash your hands in the sink. Later you can bathe upstairs. You must be starving by now.

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. Have to admit, I am.

PEGGY SUE

I have a chicken and some nice vegetables roasting.

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. Smells delicious. What about Lily?

PEGGY SUE

Oh, I fed her and put her to bed an hour ago. You've been out there digging a long time. Understandably, considering the size of that man.

Howard washes his hands gingerly, covered in small cuts. He flinches in pain, alerting Peggy Sue.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Didn't you wear the gloves like I told you?

HOWARD

No, ma'am. They were too small.

Peggy Sue grabs a towel, wipes her hands.

PEGGY SUE

Howard, you're going to "Yes, ma'am" me to death. No need for the formalities. I'm just Peggy Sue. Please call me Peggy Sue.

Howard smiles, nods.

HOWARD

Thank you... Peggy Sue.

PEGGY SUE

Oh... say it again. My name.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Howard smiles, obliges.

HOWARD

Peggy Sue.

PEGGY SUE

Again, like the first time. Throw
in that little nod you did.

Howard smiles, nods.

HOWARD

Peggy Sue.

Peggy Sue, moved, hands him the towel, then goes to a
chair, lowers herself into it.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Something wrong? I can try it
again if you'd like.

PEGGY SUE

No. It was perfect. Better than
I remember.

HOWARD

Remember what?

PEGGY SUE

What is was like to have someone
say your name with a smile on
their face that was true.

Howard goes to her, kneels to speak eye to eye.

HOWARD

My smile for you will always be
true. Your name will always make
me smile. Peggy Sue.

PEGGY SUE

My, goodness. You talk like a
poet. I bet the girls just eat
you up.

HOWARD

Not like I want that dinner you
got cooking.

PEGGY SUE

Then dinner you shall have.

INT. THE BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Howard washes in the tub. He smells the soap, delighted, can't believe it's for him. He notices the cuts on his hands are bleeding again. He lowers them into the milky white water, watches the blood swirl, blend.

INT. THE HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue picks up Walsh's rifle leaning against the clock. She rubs the clock, making sure it didn't leave a scratch. She raises the rifle, checks its aim.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

The room is scarcely furnished. One Wing Back chair. A coffee table. And a smaller chair next to a radio console. Peggy Sue clicks it on, finds a tune to her liking, turns the SOUND UP, LOUD.

INT. THE BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Howard hears the music, hums along.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue dances with the rifle as if it were a man. She stops, sullen, then looks towards the stairs.

INT. THE BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Howard finishes toweling his hair, stands nude. He looks around, inspects the room. He opens the drawers, they're empty. He notices loose tiles, checks why. They're just old. Looks under the claw foot tub. Nothing. Looks in a large basket in the corner, finds three soiled, soft pink nightgowns.

EXT. THE BATHROOM DOOR - SAME TIME

It's CRACKED OPEN as Peggy Sue silently approaches with the rifle. She stops at the door, looks down the hall, sees Lily peeking through her bedroom door. Peggy Sue nods. Lily closes her door. Peggy Sue gently leans the barrel against the bathroom door, quietly pushes it open a bit, sees HOWARD'S NUDE BACKSIDE, quickly retreats, afraid she's seen too much.

INT. THE BATHROOM - SAME TIME

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

Howard?

He quickly wraps the towel around his waist.

HOWARD

Yes?

HOWARD/PEGGY SUE - INTERCUT

PEGGY SUE

Just wanted to tell you I found those clothes I mentioned over dinner. The ones in the attic. I put them in the guest room.

HOWARD

Guest room?

PEGGY SUE

Yes. Lily's at the end of the hall. You're just the next door over. I left it open so you can't miss it. You're going to stay aren't you?

HOWARD

I... I didn't know.

PEGGY SUE

You can if you want. Leave in the morning. A fresh start. I'll make you and Lily some flapjacks. And tea. You liked my tea.

HOWARD

Yes. Flapjacks sound good. That would be nice.

PEGGY SUE

See you in the morning?

HOWARD

See you in the morning.

He listens for her to walk away, suddenly remembers something.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Oh, shit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He grabs his pants off the floor. Pulls the envelope from his back pocket, sighs with relief. Holds it, safe. He looks in the mirror, contemplates his next move.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

The walls, like all in the house, are well-aged with time. The room is empty except for a small wood table next to a single mattress bed, its boxed-springs exposed underneath. Howard, in new, yet slightly worn shirt and pants, sits on the edge of it, coils creaking. He looks at his bare feet on the floor. His tattered shoes rested next to them. Addresses them-

HOWARD

I don't know where we're going. I just know we can't go back. And may God forgive us for going forward.

EXT. THE GUEST ROOM DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Howard opens it just a hair, scans for Peggy Sue. All clear, his bare feet inch out.

EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Howard moves slowly. A floorboard CREAKS. He stops, then continues even more lightly to Lily's room. He reaches the door, quietly opens it, only enough to peek in.

INT. THE BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

We see Howard looking in from the door. He squints in the darkness, but as his eyes adjust, his face melts with compassion as-

INT. WALSH'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The phone RINGS. And rings.

EXT. FARNSWORTH ESTATE - DAY - 1925

And rings in the distance from the house.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peggy Sue wears a soft pink, layered, beaded chiffon dress, walks along a wall of pink oleander bushes in full bloom. She gazes at them, delighted, introduces herself.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

How do you do? Why yes, I am Mrs. Farnsworth. You read it in the paper? A pleasure to meet you, too. May I say you are absolutely gorgeous in those blossoms. My favorite color. I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name.

HATTIE (O.S.)

Oleander.

Hattie stands watching.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

Miss Oleander.

Peggy Sue smiles, embarrassed.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

I was just practicing for the party tonight. All my husband's friends are so high-brow. I don't want to disappoint.

HATTIE

Well, stay away from her. She'll kill you. She might look pretty, but poisonous as all get out. That's why she don't got no husband.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Poisonous?

HATTIE

Yeah. Everybody know that. Now come on, Missy Sue You don't want to be late. You know how that man get. He screaming already.

Hattie heads back to the house. Peggy Sue braces herself, drums up the courage to join her husband.

A HAND GRABS her wrist. It's Lily, she PULLS her.

LILY

Don't go. Don't go.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1945

PEGGY SUE'S EYES open.

EXT. LILY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Howard slowly closes the door, steps quietly to his room. A cat SCREAMS, SCATTERS from under him. Howard JUMPS, frightened, STUMBLES back against the railing HARD, almost goes over as it CRACKS. Dust flies as he regains his footing, settles. He grasps his chest, catches his breath.

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

Howard!

He JUMPS again, finds Peggy Sue.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

What are you doing? You'll wake Lily!

HOWARD

I just... I was just going to the bathroom. There was a cat.

PEGGY SUE

You're not allergic are you? Some people are allergic to cats. Deathly allergic. Wouldn't want that to happen to you.

HOWARD

No. Just didn't know you had a cat.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, Clarence? He's not mine. Just likes to visit.

HOWARD

Clarence?

PEGGY SUE

That's what I call him, anyway. I just love that name. If I had a son, that's what I'd name him. Clarence.

HOWARD

Really?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Oh, yes. I feel loved just saying it. Don't you have a name, that every time you say it, makes you just feel loved?

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. Florence.

PEGGY SUE

She raised you nicely.

HOWARD

How did you know she raised me?

PEGGY SUE

When you said her name, I could feel the love from here. That's why you called me ma'am again.

She turns to her room.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Good night, Howard. Sleep tight. Don't let anymore black cats cross your path.

She closes her door.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S HALLWAY - MORNING

The Grandfather Clock CHIMES.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

The kettle WHISTLES. Peggy Sue turns off the stove. A bag of "Snow White Cake and Pastry Flour" sits on the counter. Peggy Sue places a plate piled high with flapjacks in front of Howard, smothers them in syrup.

PEGGY SUE

That's pure maple, Sugar. Sure is rich, but you deserve a sweet send-off.

Howard sits stunned, it's a lot of food.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Well, go on.

HOWARD

Shouldn't I wait for Lily?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Please don't take offense. But Lily isn't quite comfortable with you in the house. And please don't think it's the color of your skin, 'cause it's not. She's not easy around male visitors. The ones we get aren't exactly proper. So she's used to hiding in her room.

Peggy Sue waits for him to dig in, but he doesn't.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Something wrong? I thought your people loved flapjacks? Hattie taught me how to make them. I'm sorry. That sounded awful. "Your people." I didn't mean it like that. I love your people.

She gasps, she's said it again, starts to-

HOWARD

It's okay. My people do love flapjacks. No offense taken... From you or Lily.

He gives her the smile and nod that pleases her.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Peggy Sue.

She rests easy. Pours his tea.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, you so smart. Already know how to win me over, do you?

HOWARD

Have I?

Howard notices his envelope shows out his back pocket.

PEGGY SUE

(pours her tea)
Is that what you're here to do?

He pushes the envelope into his pocket, conceals it.

HOWARD

What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEGGY SUE

Howard, please. No one kills a man for flapjacks.

HOWARD

How do you know? I haven't tried them yet.

(takes a bite)

Oh...wow. Who else you want dead?

Peggy Sue fills a vase with water.

PEGGY SUE

You're a little charmer, aren't you? Now eat your flapjacks before they get cold.

Howard digs in voraciously.

HOWARD

These are amazing. Best I ever had.

Peggy Sue fills the vase with Oleanders.

PEGGY SUE

Told you they were good. Eat up, there's plenty more.

HOWARD

Don't mind if I do. Hattie sure did teach you well.

PEGGY SUE

She certainly did.

HOWARD

Who is Hattie, anyway?

PEGGY SUE

Just an old friend.

HOWARD

Must have been. Seeing how she gave you her "secret recipe" and all.

She sets the Oleanders on the table, admires them as Howard pours more syrup.

PEGGY SUE

No secret at all. Everybody knew. She was kind that way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She picks up a butcher knife, sharpens it across a stone.

HOWARD

My grandmother never gave a soul
her recipes. Kept her secrets
tight.

PEGGY SUE

Florence?

Howard stops eating.

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. Florence.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, don't stop. Eat up. I want
you to enjoy yourself.

He eats.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

That's better.

(then)

She still alive? Florence?

HOWARD

No, ma'am.

She holds up the knife, intensely inspects the blade.

PEGGY SUE

I never understood people who take
their secrets to the grave. It's
such a waste of information. I'm
not taking any of mine. Are you?

She looks back at him. His mouth is full, can't answer.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

It's okay. You just enjoy those
flapjacks.

She pulls another full plate out of the oven, sets it on
the stove, joins him at the table.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

You have no idea how happy it
makes me to see you enjoy them
like that.

(sips her tea,
realizes)

You're not drinking your tea.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Howard. You don't like tea, do you?

HOWARD

(reluctantly picking
it up)

No, it's very good, really.

PEGGY SUE

"No", I believe. The rest is just hogwash, isn't it? A boy lies, Howard. A man tells the truth. You can be honest with me, Howard. I can handle it.

HOWARD

I'm just more of a coffee man.

He sets it down, escapes into his flapjacks. Peggy Sue sips her tea, enjoys watching him eat. Howard starts to feel ill, suppresses it. He holds his stomach. It builds. He buckles in pain, looks to Peggy Sue-

HOWARD'S POV

Increasingly dizzy as she sips her tea, smiles at him.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S CHICKEN COOP - A SHORT TIME LATER

Peggy Sue's rusted bucket sits next to a blood-stained wood stump used for slaughter.

Baby chicks follow their mother.

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

The Cherokee Roses sway in the breeze.

Peggy Sue and Howard sit outside the kitchen door. She rubs his back as he recovers.

PEGGY SUE

Feel better?

HOWARD

Yeah. You were right. That syrup was mighty rich. Guess it's been so long having anything sweet, it caught up with me. Sorry for ruining such a nice breakfast... Embarrassing myself.

The goats stare, bleat from the corral.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Even those two are laughing.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, I wouldn't worry about Mabel and Betty, they're just low on entertainment.

She brushes crumbs off his sleeve.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Those clothes fit you nice. Real nice, in fact.

HOWARD

Who did they belong too?

PEGGY SUE

Who ever lived here before me. Left a few boxes in the attic. Those were the pick of the litter. Glad I kept them.

She looks at his beat up shoes.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Those on the other hand are another story. You definitely need a new pair.

HOWARD

Yeah, in time. But, you should've seen me giving Mister Walsh's shoes a good look. Right size, too. Couldn't bring myself to taking them.

PEGGY SUE

Well maybe this might help.

She pulls out four five dollar bills, folds them together, offers it to him.

HOWARD

Oh, Peggy Sue, thank you. But I can't take your money.

PEGGY SUE

Take it. I want you to have it. After what you did for me, it's clearly not enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD

It's too much. I could buy several pairs with this.

PEGGY SUE

Then do just that. You deserve it.

HOWARD

It's too much, really. You don't have money like this to give away.

PEGGY SUE

Obviously, I do. So take it. Take it, Howard.

He takes it, puts it in his pocket.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

HOWARD

Thank you.

She gets up, strolls along the Cherokee Roses, enjoys their scent.

PEGGY SUE

Aren't these just divine?

HOWARD

Smell familiar. What are they?

PEGGY SUE

You don't know? This is Cherokee Rose. Georgia state flower. You don't know the legend?

He shakes his head "no."

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Legend goes, over a hundred years ago, the Cherokees were forced off their land when gold was discovered there. The journey was so rough, many lost their children. The women wept so much, it became known as "The Trail of Tears." The Great One knew the mothers must stay strong to survive. So he caused a plant to grow everywhere a mother's tear had fallen. The rose white for their tears;

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

the gold center represents the
gold taken from them.

HOWARD

Is that true?

PEGGY SUE

Oh, yes...very.

Peggy Sue looks over, sees Lily watching from the kitchen window.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Although I don't think the Great
One had anything to do with it. I
think it was the power of a
mother's love for her child alone.
Because there's nothing stronger
than a mother's love. That was
the power that made them rise.
That's what happened to Lily.

She looks down, fallen Cherokee Rose petals at her feet.

HOWARD

What happened to Lily?

PEGGY SUE

Lily wasn't alive when she was
born. Maybe that's why she's not
totally right. But, I loved her
anyway. I loved her so much, she
came back alive. And Hattie knew
it.

BANG! BANG! BANG!

They look at each other, not sure where it's coming from.
It POUNDS again. Peggy Sue knows.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Someone's at the front door. You
should go.

Lily abandons the window, runs.

EXT. THE FRONT DOOR - SAME TIME

QUINCY, forties, a police officer, stands waiting.

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Howard jumps to his feet as Peggy Sue runs inside.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

It's okay, I'll stay.

PEGGY SUE

No Howard. Anyone find out-

HOWARD

It wasn't your fault. I was the one-

PEGGY SUE

It doesn't matter. They'll hang the both of us, so go. Go now. And never come back, you hear me? Never.

HOWARD

Please-

PEGGY SUE

Never, Howard. Never. Now run as fast as you can out past the barn, then cut across to the right. They won't see you. Now, go!

She shuts the door. Howard hesitates, then runs.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue composes herself. The door BANGS again.

PEGGY SUE

Coming!

She picks up the butcher's knife, holds it down by her side. We follow Peggy Sue, from the waist down, with the knife as she goes to the door.

ON THE PORCH

Quincy waits, impatient.

PEGGY SUE

Stops at the door, looks up the stairs, finds Lily peeking through the rails, shoots her the look to hide to her room. Lily does.

Peggy Sue opens the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Quincy. Sorry about that. Was out back heading to the chicken coop. Had to turn around and come back in. How can I help you?

Quincy takes off his hat, notices her knife.

QUINCY

Was wondering if you'd seen Walsh?

PEGGY SUE

No, I haven't. Can't see over the Oleanders from here.

QUINCY

He missed poker last night. Never misses poker. Called him all night. Again this morning. Never picked up. Dropped by to make sure he was okay. His truck is out back, but he's not home. Know where he is?

PEGGY SUE

Why would I know that?

QUINCY

A man don't travel far without his truck. And if he was a better poker player, he'd still have his horse.

PEGGY SUE

I don't understand.

QUINCY

Well, you're neighbors. Neighbors can be friendly.

PEGGY SUE

You know he wasn't that type of neighbor.

Quincy glances back at her butcher knife.

QUINCY

Wasn't?

PEGGY SUE

You know what I mean.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

QUINCY

Well... I know he liked to visit
time to time.

PEGGY SUE

Why weren't you concerned then?

QUINCY

That's none of my business-

PEGGY SUE

But it is when you can't find him?

QUINCY

Mind if I look around?

Peggy Sue doesn't budge, then steps back, lets him in.
Quincy looks in the living room, notes the two chairs.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

How's Lily? She in her room?

PEGGY SUE

Yes, she is. And she's fine.
Very kind of you to ask.

Quincy steps on the area rug. The floor CREEKS under it.
He looks at his foot, presses a few times, checks the
strength of the floor.

QUINCY

You should have these floors
looked at. Sound like they could
give way any moment now.

The clock CHIMES. Quincy looks up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Quincy walks the hall, the floors SQUEAK. He notices the
cracked bannister, glances back at Peggy Sue.

INT. THE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Quincy inspects as Peggy Sue follows, knife in tow. He
sees Howard's old bloody clothes bundled tightly in the
tub, looks at Peggy Sue. He kneels down, slowly pulls
them open. Peggy Sue grips the knife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

I wear those when I need a chicken. Didn't have time to wash them.

QUINCY

Thought you were just heading out now?

PEGGY SUE

Wasn't planning on killing today. Was going to chop corn. Chickens love it.

Quincy inspects the clothes, then chuckles-

QUINCY

I bet 'Ol Walsh wished he could fit in this size.

(getting to his feet)
Need to keep better hold of your birds, though. This one covered you.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, he was a feisty one.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Her room is furnished with the bedroom set she gave birth in, even the same linens, aged but cared for.

Peggy Sue enters. Quincy stops at the door.

QUINCY

May, I?

She looks at him as if saying "no" would make a difference. He walks in, scans the room. Peggy Sue notices the butt of Walsh's rifle poking out under her bed.

The cat sits on the vanity, pulls Quincy's attention.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Hey, buddy. What you doing?

Quincy pets the cat as Peggy Sue sits on the bed, pushes the rifle out of sight with the back with her heel.

Quincy looks at her on the bed, still holding the knife.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINCY (CONT'D)
I'm not here for a visit like the
others, Peggy Sue.

She relaxes her grip.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Nice bedroom set. Very nice.
Someone paid a pretty penny.

PEGGY SUE
It was a wedding gift.

QUINCY
I obviously invited the wrong
people to my wedding.

PEGGY SUE
I gave birth to Lily in this bed.

QUINCY
Did you, now?

Quincy looks down the hall at Lily's room.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Well, let's just go on downstairs.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - A SHORT TIME LATER

Quincy saunters through as Peggy Sue trails behind. He
sees two teacups on the table. One empty. One full.

QUINCY
Someone's not drinking their tea.
Lily?

PEGGY SUE
Who else? Suddenly she says she
wants coffee.

He sees Howard's plate of flapjacks. Then the reserve
plate on the stove.

QUINCY
That's a lot of pancakes-

PEGGY SUE
Flapjacks.

QUINCY
What?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE
They're flapjacks. Not pancakes.

QUINCY
What's the difference?

PEGGY SUE
You tell me. I'm not the one
acting sleuth.

He thinks about it, doesn't know, can't answer.
Frustrated, he opens the door, mutters to himself-

QUINCY
Crazy as they say.

He glances back to the knife still in her hand.

QUINCY (CONT'D)
Do you mind?

PEGGY SUE
Might as well keep it. That's
where I was heading in the first
place.

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Quincy steps out, looks across her land as Peggy Sue
stands by.

QUINCY
You keep all this up on your own?

PEGGY SUE
Have to.

QUINCY
Why don't you hire some help?

PEGGY SUE
Where am I going to get money for
that?

QUINCY
Where you get money for anything?

He looks at her, suspect. A moment of silence. He
turns, sees the rusted bucket, the bloody stump. A
uneasy look of concern comes over his face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Yep. You need to keep hold of your chickens. I'm surprised I'm not gettin' calls from people seeing them run down the road with no head.

PEGGY SUE

Would you come, then?

Quincy turns to the Roses, avoids the comment.

QUINCY

Cherokee Rose. Makin' Georgia proud.

PEGGY SUE

Do my best.

Quincy notices the inconsistency of the soil under the bushes on the left of the house. Branches are broken, fallen flowers in front. The others do not.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Needed some extra fertilizing. Treat them well, they'll give you a second flowering.

QUINCY

That right?

PEGGY SUE

Just helping keep Georgia proud. Know the legend of the Cherokee Rose?

QUINCY

As a matter of fact, I do. Why? You want to tell me something like "these are all your tears?"

PEGGY SUE

Why, Heavens, no. If that was the case, you couldn't see my house.

Peggy Sue tightens her grip again. Quincy notices.

QUINCY

Careful.

He looks down, shakes his head, mutters again-

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Crazy, crazy, crazy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He flips the soil with his shoe, then looks into the bushes, deeper still. He reaches in, clears branches, CUTS the side of his hand, jerks it back.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Ouch, dammit! Mother-

He puts his hand in his mouth to stop the bleeding.

PEGGY SUE

Careful, Quincy. They're thorny little buggers. They'll cut you up you get too close.

QUINCY

No kidding. Son of a-

He sucks on his hand again.

PEGGY SUE

I'd offer you my gloves, but I'm sure they'd be too small.

QUINCY

If Walsh come by, let him know I'm looking for him.

PEGGY SUE

How about I let you know? It would be nice to see you respond.

He puts his hat back on.

QUINCY

Let you get back to your corn.

He leaves, pissed, but not through the house, marches around it instead.

Peggy Sue runs into the house and gets to-

INT. PEGGY SUE'S ENTRYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Peggy Sue peeks through a side window, watches as-

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Quincy gets into the police car, swings a U-turn, drives back to Walsh's house and speeds up his driveway.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue runs out to watch, ducks down not to be seen.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE

Quincy slams his breaks, skids to a stop. Dirt kicks up as he charges out of his car and up to Walsh's door. He POUNDS the door. POUNDS it again.

QUINCY

Walsh! Walsh! I don't know what kind of game you're playing, but you can't hide for long. I want my money and I want it now! You hear me? I want my money! I'll give ya two days, you son of a bitch. Then I'll be back.

He kicks the door, storms back to his car, drives off.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S PORCH - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue stays down as Lily runs out to her. Peggy Sue grabs her, holds her tight, not sure of her next move.

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - A SHORT TIME LATER

Lily sits on the back steps, watches Peggy Sue burn yard clippings in a barrel. She tosses in Howard's bloody clothes, throws dry twigs on top, watches as the flames FLARE.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A candle burns on the table, illuminating the Oleanders as Peggy Sue and Lily dine on flapjacks.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Peggy Sue sits in her chair. Lily sits in hers, her head rested against the radio console. Ella Fitzgerald sings "Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall" on the radio.

EXT. FARNSWORTH ESTATE - NIGHT - 1927

The rain hits hard as Sanders and Hattie FORCE Peggy Sue into the back of the 1927 Black Willys Sedan.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Don't make me go! I don't want to go!

Hattie cries, keeps her seated as Sanders jumps behind the wheel, starts the car.

HATTIE

You have to go, Missy Sue. He'd just as soon kill ya to take the shame off his family. You know how they are. Too proud for any blemish.

SANDERS

She's right, we need to go before he gets back.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

I want my baby! I want my baby!

HATTIE

Don't worry Missy Sue. I know what to do. I'll do right by you. I promise. Now go!

Hattie barely gets the door shut as Sanders takes off.

INT - THE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Sanders SPEEDS down the road, barely sees through the rain. The wipers can't keep up. The windshield a sporadic blur. The blades SWIPE, reveal-

Lily STANDS IN FRONT OF THEM ON THE ROAD as the car HITS-

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1945

PEGGY SUE'S EYES open as she calls out-

PEGGY SUE

Lily!

Clarence, the cat, sleeps on her stomach. Peggy Sue gently moves him off to her side, turns on her light. She gets out of bed, goes to her window, peeks out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She looks to the stars, they soothe her. She closes her eyes, says a prayer. Calmed, she rests her head against the sill, wipes away a tear.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S HALLWAY - MORNING

The Grandfather Clock CHIMES.

INT. LILY'S ROOM - MORNING

Unlike the rest of the house, in pristine condition, a room any girl would dream for. Pink embossed wallpaper. Nice collection of dolls and toys. Lily wakes in her white canopy bed as Peggy Sue enters enthusiastically, humming happily as she pulls open the pink frilly drapes.

PEGGY SUE

It's going to be a good day today,
Lily, a good day. Know why?
'Cause it's your birthday! Happy
birthday. Baby!

Peggy Sue claps, excited. Lily joins in.

EXT. THE BACKYARD - A SHORT TIME LATER

Peggy Sue, in her nightgown and garden hat, hangs several soft pink night gowns on the clothes line.

Then, Peggy Sue-

MONTAGE

Feeds the chickens.

Feeds the goats.

Fills her basket with eggs.

Milks the goats.

Stirs batter in a bowl, tastes it, approves.

Picks vegetables.

Waters the garden.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - A SHORT TIME LATER

Peggy Sue enters, takes off her hat, hangs it. She places the basket of vegetables on the table, opens the oven, checks inside.

INT. THE BATHROOM - LATER

The bath drawn, Cherokee Rose petals float in the water. Peggy Sue slips off her nightgown, doesn't wear anything underneath. She tosses it into the basket, steps into the tub, joining Lily. They splash each other, giggle.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

In her best dress, albeit faded and worn, Peggy Sue sits in front of the mirror, applies blush, even though the powder is long gone. She takes an empty perfume mister, spritzes herself.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Peggy Sue enters, finds Lily in her white dress, sitting in her chair next to the radio, her head rested against it, listening to Louis Jordan sing "Is You Is or Is You Ain't Ma' Baby."

PEGGY SUE

Oh, I just love that song. C'mon,
Lily, dance with me. Then we'll
have cake and open presents!

Peggy Sue turns up the radio, dances with Lily. They laugh, spin each other.

INT. THE KITCHEN - LATER

The vase filled with Cherokee Roses, Lily sits at the table in pure joy, as Peggy Sue sets a white frosted cake with a lit candle in front of her.

PEGGY SUE

Now close your eyes and make a
wish.

LILY

What should I wish for?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Anything you want.

Lily closes her eyes. As she starts to make her wish, Peggy Sue covers her ears, doesn't want to hear.

LILY

I wish we will always be together.

Lily opens her eyes, looks at the candle, a bit intimidated.

PEGGY SUE

Want to blow it out together?

Lily nods, appreciative. They lean in simultaneously, blow the candle out.

INT. THE KITCHEN - LATER

Alone, Peggy Sue dries the last dish, puts it away, satisfied. She turns, rests against the counter, smiles at the cake on the table, a nice piece missing, sighs-

PEGGY SUE

It was a good day, Lily. A good day.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Peggy Sue sits at her vanity, dressed for bed, brushes her hair in the vanity mirror. She looks at her face, how she's aged-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FARNSWORTH BEDROOM - DAY - 1926

Peggy Sue sits in a party dress, brushes her hair in the same vanity mirror. Hattie hurries in.

HATTIE

You still brushing that hair?

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

It needs to be perfect. I have a reputation to uphold and can't afford to embarrass my husband.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HATTIE

That's why he's rich, he affords
it plenty. Now you better get
down there. If you ain't sitting
and waiting there like a good girl
for his mama when she arrives,
it'll kill her.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Then I'll stay here and wait for
the good news.

They giggle as Hattie pulls her hair back, holds it with
a pink hair band.

HATTIE

Oh, Missy Sue! You always make me
laugh. Not like other white
girls. You do it on purpose.
(then)
I think I hear them. You better
get.

As Hattie tries to help Peggy Sue up, Peggy Sue grabs,
holds onto the dresser playfully.

HATTIE (CONT'D)

Oh, don't start with me Missy.

Hattie tries to pry Peggy Sue off the table as they laugh-

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

I don't wanna go! I don't wanna
go!

BACK TO PRESENT

Peggy Sue laughs holding the vanity.

PEGGY SUE

I don't wanna go! I don't wanna
go!

She catches herself in the mirror, slowly stops. Then-

BANG! Peggy Sue jumps, looks towards the door.
Someone's out back.

EXT. THE BACKYARD - SAME TIME

The chickens scatter.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The goats run.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue pulls the rifle out from under the bed.

UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Peggy Sue steps out of her room as Lily peeks out her door.

PEGGY SUE

Stay inside and lock your door.

Lily quickly closes her door, we hear it lock.

Peggy Sue cautiously descends the stairs, holds the rifle firm, ready to fire. She reaches the bottom step, hears another THUMP. She continues forward. Takes a step, TRIPS over the rug. STUMBLES against the Grandfather Clock. She catches her breath. Then looks down to the rug, the edge now flipped up, exposing the crack in the floor. She kicks it with her foot, flips it back into position.

INT. THE KITCHEN DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Peggy Sue peeks through the window, doesn't see anything.

PEGGY SUE

Who's out there?

(No response)

I said who's out there?

(No response)

I have a rifle. I have a rifle, now. You hear me? I have a rifle.

(No response)

Better not touch my goats. Stay away from my chickens as well. I got a rifle, I'm telling you.

No response. Peggy Sue checks the window again. All is clear. She unlocks the door, slowly opens it.

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue raises the rifle, steps out. She looks out to the chickens, they seem fine. Then to the goats, now settled. She takes a few steps into the yard, looks across her garden, then out to the old barn.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Something RUSTLES, she turns quickly towards the Cherokee Rose bushes near the corner of the house where Walsh lay. The bushes SHAKE. GROAN. Someone's coming FROM them.

Peggy Sue's eyes widen, terrified. Is Walsh alive?

PEGGY SUE

This can't be happening.

She AIMS, ready to finalize, finger on the TRIGGER. Howard STUMBLES out from the side of bushes, startling her. She SHOOTS, hits him, SCREAMS. He SPINS, HITS the ground on his back.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Howard!

(running to him)

Oh, God, no. Please, no!

She drops beside him, blood coming from his mouth.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

You came back. Why'd you come back? I told you not to come back. I told you not to.

HOWARD

I'm sorry. They took my money.
Money for my shoes.

Peggy Sue looks at his feet, discovers his old shoes. He turns his head towards her, reveals a black eye.

PEGGY SUE

You've been fighting.

HOWARD

I'm sorry. I didn't want to.

She checks for the gunshot wound, finds it on his arm. She throws her arms around him, holds him, relieved.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, thank God, my poor baby. I didn't kill you. I didn't kill you, my poor baby. You're alive. I didn't kill you.

She cries, holds him tight, rocks him.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

It'll be alright. It'll be alright. My poor baby.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - A SHORT TIME LATER

Howard sits at the table shirtless, holds ice wrapped in a towel on his eye, looks at the all-white cake as Peggy Sue wraps his upper arm with pink fabric.

PEGGY SUE

There, that ought to do it.

HOWARD

Never saw pink bandages before.

PEGGY SUE

Thank goodness I only grazed you, or you never would. They're strips from one of my old nightgowns.

She goes to the sink, pulls his shirt soaking, rings it, notices a rip. Howard looks at her red hat hanging.

HOWARD

That's a mighty fancy hat. Why do you wear it in the garden?

PEGGY SUE

So I don't turn the same color. My skin has never favored the sun. Besides, it's the only hat I have. Simple, really. The nightgowns are comfortable. Keeps me covered and I stay nice and cool underneath. Don't work up such a sweat. You can try one on if you like.

HOWARD

That's okay.

PEGGY SUE

Now how about a piece of this cake? And you can tell my why you were fighting.

HOWARD

I wasn't fighting. They were. I was just fighting back.

PEGGY SUE

With who?

She cuts the cake, plates it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

White boys, who else? I was walking, minding my own business. They come up, start punching, grab the money out my pocket. What was I to do? The police sure won't do anything about it.

PEGGY SUE

Why?

He sets his ice pack down.

HOWARD

Because I'm colored. You do know I'm colored, don't you?

PEGGY SUE

Don't get smart now.

She places the cake in front of him, gets a fork.

HOWARD

You know what I'm talking about, Peggy Sue. You don't see the color of my skin because you know what it's like to be colored. They looked at me the same way Mister Walsh looked at you. Expecting me to just lay there and take it. Well, I have news for them, those days are over. No more talking like a plantation slave to make *them* feel more comfortable. Mister Walsh finally got his and so will anybody else who tries the same. Because when I was digging that grave it felt good. Damn, good. Exhilarating even. Never tired once. So when those white boys started in on me, I got hold of one of them and gave him a fury he never knew existed. When Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," I know this was not his intention. But in that moment I felt blessed, yes blessed, having that white boy look at me like Walsh got off easy. And I have no regrets. Not a single one. And now I'm going to celebrate eating a nice slice of cake.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Because now I know every time that white boy looks at a colored boy, he's not just gonna think twice, he's gonna multiply it.

Peggy Sue stands frozen, then hands him the fork.

PEGGY SUE

Don't eat too fast. Don't want you to get sick.

She sits, quiet.

HOWARD

Sorry. Didn't mean to raise my voice.

(takes a bite of
cake)

Wow. Once again. Best ever. You should be selling this. Or do you already?

PEGGY SUE

I tried. Went door to door. For months. No one wanted them. Didn't want my cakes. My pies. Thought maybe it was a food thing. Didn't want to eat something from a stranger. Even though I'd introduce myself every time. Tell them where I lived. Still didn't want them. So I started bringing my homemade soaps made with Cherokee Rose. You tried it.

HOWARD

Knew it smelled familiar. That soap makes you feel like you're somebody, Peggy Sue, it really does. Bet you sold a lot of those?

She gets up, heads for the hallway.

PEGGY SUE

No. Not a single one. Couldn't even give away free samples.

HOWARD

Really? Why you think?

She stops at the doorway, looks back.

PEGGY SUE

Because you're right, Howard. I'm colored, too.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

She heads down the hall.

INT. THE BATHROOM - LATER

Music plays from the radio downstairs, the door cracked open to better hear. Howard washes in the tub, enjoys the soap.

HOWARD

I don't understand people. Can have something this nice handed to them and still don't want it.

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

It has healing powers, too. In the oils.

HOWARD

Sure does. Feel better already.

EXT. THE BATHROOM - SAME TIME - INTERCUT

Peggy Sue sits on the floor against the wall, sews Howard's shirt.

PEGGY SUE

I know its scent is better suited for a lady. Glad you like it anyway. I make another one with goats milk and oakmoss. Very nice for a man.

HOWARD

Have any of that?

PEGGY SUE

No. I gave it to Walsh as a favor to both of us. I should make some for you, though.

Howard stops, moved by the thought, then-

HOWARD

Peggy Sue?

PEGGY SUE

Yes?

HOWARD

You make that whole cake for yourself?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Oh, heavens no. It was for Lily.
It was her birthday today. When's
your birthday?

HOWARD

Actually... It's tomorrow.

PEGGY SUE

Tomorrow?

She pricks her finger with the needle.

HOWARD

Yeah... Tomorrow.

PEGGY SUE

How exciting! How old you
turning?

HOWARD

Eighteen.

PEGGY SUE

Eighteen! Why, you and Lily are
the same age. How about that.

HOWARD

How about that.

She finishes the shirt, inspects it.

The clock CHIMES.

PEGGY SUE

Oh my, perfect timing. It's
midnight. You know what that
means? Happy birthday, Howard!

HOWARD

Thank you.

She gets to her feet. Drapes the shirt over the
banister.

PEGGY SUE

I fixed your shirt. I'll leave it
here to finish drying. I put that
box of clothes from the attic in
your room as well, see if anything
else fits you.

HOWARD

My room?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEGGY SUE

Yeah. The one right here. Oh, I can't wait to celebrate your birthday. I'll make you a cake. Any flavor you want.

HOWARD

There's plenty of cake leftover.

She leans close to the door.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, no. It's your birthday. You need to have your own cake. When I was growing up I knew these girls, identical twins. Their parents were always throwing parties for them. Didn't matter the occasion. And every year on their birthday, they'd have a huge cake for the two of them. One finally confided in me, don't know which one, could never tell them apart. Told me she didn't want to share a cake no more. Wanted one of her own. Wanted to feel like there was just one moment, one moment that was just for her. That's what you're going to have. Just for you, Howard. Your very own moment. Just for you.

INT. THE BATHROOM - SAME TIME

Howard sits silent as a tear rolls down his face.

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

Howard?

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am. A moment. Just for me.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Peggy Sue turns off the radio. Heads back, stops in the hall. She looks at the area rug, then checks up the stairs. With Howard clear, she goes to the rug, slightly lifts it to find the crack in the floor. She presses the soft wood. A board raises a bit. She lifts it gently, looks inside.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Howard secretly watches.

INT. THE HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue lowers the board, presses it in place. Covers it with the rug. She looks back up the stairs.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Howard is gone.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The box of clothes from the attic sit just inside the door. A few pieces chosen, draped over the side. Howard sits in his underwear at the edge of the bed reading the letter. He hears FOOTSTEPS approaching, quickly grabs his pants, hides it in the back pocket.

The footsteps pass his door, continue to Lily's room.

INT. LILY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

The door slowly opens a bit, just enough for Peggy Sue to peak her head in. She finds Lily fast asleep, smiles, gently closes the door.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - SAME TIME

Howard listens closely as Peggy Sue's footsteps return to her room. He looks down at his worn shoes on the floor, sighs, disappointed. He almost had a new pair.

HOWARD

Just give it time... Give it time.

EXT. A DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT

A small house in an impoverished neighborhood is on fire. Neighbors fight to put it out. An OLD BLACK WOMAN is carried out by TWO LARGE MEN. They lay her on the ground. She is frail, chokes profusely, might not make it.

THROUGH SOMEONE'S POV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We run to her side, she looks up at us-

THE WOMAN

Hurry. Inside. A letter. I
can't lose it. My bedroom.
Inside my picture on the wall.
Hurry!

We run into the house as the FIRE BUILDS, make our way to the bedroom, SEE a FRAMED PHOTO of a YOUNG BLACK WOMAN on the wall. Something EXPLODES, SHAKES the house. The photo FALLS to the floor, BREAKS open, exposing HOWARD'S LETTER inside.

FIRE SHOOTS across the bedroom. The photo catches fire, her image BURNS as A LOUD CRACK is heard. As we look above us, the ceiling CRASHES DOWN IN FLAMES.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - NIGHT - 1945

Howard's eyes open.

EXT. SIDE OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

The guest room light turns on. Howard's silhouette comes to the window, looks out.

We FLOAT around the house, reach Peggy Sue's window, find her silhouette as well.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S HALLWAY - MORNING

The Grandfather Clock CHIMES.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Peggy Sue pulls biscuits from the oven.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - SAME TIME

Howard wears his shirt, checks the mending, slowly traces the previous tear with his finger, impressed. He stands up straight, takes a deep breath in, readies himself for another day.

INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

As Howard heads downstairs, he passes Peggy Sue's door, partially open. He stops, looks at it. Hearing Peggy Sue in the kitchen, he goes to her door, peeks in.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Howard quietly enters, looks around. He goes to her bed, touches the wood, admires the craftsmanship. He runs his hand across the bedspread, feels the softness. He sits, checks its comfort. Smiles, it's nice.

Howard looks up, catches himself in the vanity mirror. He goes to it, sits in front, looks over its contents. One by one, he quietly opens drawers, looks inside. As he looks up, he comes FACE TO FACE with Clarence, the cat, JUMPS, startled.

HOWARD

Damn, you. You're trying to be the death of me. But I know who you are. I know all about you.

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

Howard, you coming?

He bolts out, gets to the stairs before exclaiming-

HOWARD

Coming!

INT. THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Howard charges in.

HOWARD

Morning!

PEGGY SUE

Morning, birthday boy. Look at you, excited.

HOWARD

I should be. Smells great in here!

Peggy Sue scrambles eggs in a black iron skillet.

PEGGY SUE

Like scrambled eggs and biscuits?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He nods "yes."

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)
Of course, you do. Who doesn't
like scrambled eggs and biscuits?
Sit yourself down. Have I got a
treat for you.

Howard sits, his tea cup empty. Peggy Sue grabs the
kettle, pours him coffee.

HOWARD
Is that-

PEGGY SUE
Sure is. Happy Birthday.

Howard takes in the aroma, then sips.

HOWARD
Ooh, that's strong. Where'd you
get it?

PEGGY SUE
Walsh. Snuck over there this
morning. I know where he hides a
key. Sugar?

He passes as she adds biscuits to his plate, serves it.

HOWARD
Aren't you afraid they'll come
back again looking for him?

PEGGY SUE
Oh, they'll be back. I can
guarantee you that. In droves.

HOWARD
Aren't you worried?

PEGGY SUE
What are they going to do, lock me
up again? Marmalade? Homemade.
Peach. And if you say you've ever
had better I will ask you to leave
this house.

She sets it in front of him.

HOWARD
Lock you up again?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEGGY SUE

When Lily was born, my husband had us locked up in the looney bin for years. Thank God for Hattie. She finally convinced him to hide us here and leave us be. He only agreed because it was cheaper. When Walsh found out where I had been, he made sure everyone thought I was crazy. Ask anyone, they'll tell you I'm crazy.

HOWARD

Well, I don't think you're crazy. Not for one second. And if I'm the only one, then so be it. People used to think the world was flat. Only one person knew the truth, but over time the world came to understand. Now we all know.

PEGGY SUE

Aren't you my knight in shining armor?

HOWARD

I could be if you let me.

PEGGY SUE

Very kind of you, but no. A war is about to happen, Howard. And there's an army out there just waiting for the call. When they get it, they will strike. Make you pay for your sin against them. If they can't kill you they will imprison you. Just as long as they bring you down. You can't be here when that war starts. This is my war, Howard. You will not fall for my sins-

HOWARD

It was my sin, Peggy Sue, mine. If I have to take responsibility-

PEGGY SUE

I won't let them imprison you like they did me.

HOWARD

And I won't let them do it again to you. I won't! It isn't fair-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

PEGGY SUE

No-

HOWARD

Let me fight for you, Peggy Sue,
let me fight!

PEGGY SUE

No-

HOWARD

David slew Goliath and so can we-

PEGGY SUE

No-

HOWARD

Yes!

He POUNDS the table with his fist. His coffee spills, she runs, stops it with a towel. He sits back, quiet as she cleans. Silence fills the room as she resets his cup, refills it.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Sorry. Hope I didn't frighten
Lily.

PEGGY SUE

It's okay. She's already outside.

She returns the kettle, checks out back, sees Lily chasing a butterfly. She turns to Howard, looks at him to eat his breakfast. He does. She gets her mixing bowl.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

What kind of cake you want?

EXT. BACK OF PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - LATER

Peggy Sue exits the kitchen in her signature attire. Howard follows in a new set of hand-me-down clothes. Together, they-

MONTAGE

Feed the chickens.

Feed the goats.

Fill a basket with eggs.

Milk the goats.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Pick vegetables.

Water the garden. Peggy Sue splashes him. He splashes her back as they laugh.

INT. THE BATHROOM - LATER

Howard reclines in the tub, stares at the ceiling. He slowly slides down, immerses himself in the white soapy water.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

In her only best dress, Peggy Sue sits in front of the mirror, applies the missing blush. As she reaches for the perfume mister-

INT. WALSH'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The phone RINGS. And rings.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SUNSET

The Oleanders sway.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

The dinner over, Howard sits alone on the floor picnic style on a table cloth. Cherokee Rose's in a vase. The radio softly playing "My Dreams Are Getting Better All the Time." He takes the letter out of his back pocket, sets it against the vase for Peggy Sue to find. He hears her coming, changes his mind, quickly hides it in his front pocket.

Peggy Sue enters with a chocolate cake, a candle lit. Howard smiles ear to ear.

HOWARD

Wow...for me?

PEGGY SUE

Who else? Now close your eyes.
Make a wish.

Howard looks into Peggy Sue's eyes, vulnerable. As if to send her his wish telepathically. A soft smile comes over her face. He closes his eyes tight, makes his wish, a bit too long. He opens them, blows out the candle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peggy Sue grabs a knife, serves.

HOWARD

Wish you could've talked Lily into joining us.

PEGGY SUE

Don't mind her. She'll come around.

HOWARD

Peggy Sue, I need to tell you something.

PEGGY SUE

Better not be your wish or it won't come true.

HOWARD

Well, it kind of is.

PEGGY SUE

Then I won't listen. I want you to have your wish. Remember those identical twins I told you about? Had those huge birthday parties? Mabel and Betty? Well, they were the ugliest twins you ever laid eyes on.

HOWARD

Mabel and Betty? I thought your goats were named Mabel and Betty?

PEGGY SUE

(smirking)
See? My story has validity already.

She sets cake in front of him.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

That's why their parents threw such large parties. To get us to play with them. Their own father used to say he wished they had been fraternal, so at least one of them would've had a fighting chance. Well, one of them used to always tell me her wish.

HOWARD

The same one who didn't want to share her cake?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEGGY SUE

I have no idea. I'm telling you.
They were so ugly I couldn't look
at them long enough to find the
discrepancy.

HOWARD

What was her wish?

She sets her cake in front of her, then-

PEGGY SUE

She wanted to be pretty.

They pause, then burst into laughter.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

See? It never came true because
she couldn't keep her big ugly
mouth shut!

HOWARD

They get a lot of gifts?

PEGGY SUE

Yes, mostly make-up!

They roar, slowly calm down, pick up their forks. Then,
sincere-

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

So, don't tell me your wish,
Howard. I want all your dreams to
come true.

Howard gently smiles, still wants to tell her, but takes
a bite of cake instead.

The cat crosses the hall.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - LATER

Howard enters, pulls the letter from his pocket, looks
for a place to hide it. He tucks it under the mattress,
changes his mind, retrieves it.

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

Howard? Where'd you go?

He spots the box of clothes.

HOWARD

Be right down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He hides the letter deep inside the bottom of the box.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Howard comes out, finds Peggy Sue sitting on the top step with a box wrapped in pink nightgown fabric. He sits next to her as she hands it to him.

PEGGY SUE
Happy Birthday, Howard.

HOWARD
You got me a present?

PEGGY SUE
'Course, I did. What's a birthday
without presents?

Howard stays silent, touched.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)
Go on. Open it.

Howard opens it, pulls out a new pair of black shoes. He stares at them in awe, mesmerized.

HOWARD
I can't believe it. My size, too.

PEGGY SUE
I know.

HOWARD
Where did you get them?

PEGGY SUE
Walsh's. I remembered what you
said about being the same size.
Wasn't going all the way over
there for just coffee. Had a few
pair. But found these, brand new,
still in the box. What are you
waiting for? Try them on.

Howard puts them on, stands up, coos in comfort.

HOWARD
Ooooh...Lord have mercy it's like
walking on a cloud.

Peggy Sue jumps to her feet, excited.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Oh, I'm so glad you like them.

HOWARD

Thank you, Peggy Sue, thank you.

Howard moves in for a hug, she steps back, caught off-guard. He looks into her eyes, lets her know it's okay.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

May I thank you with a hug...

He smiles, nods-

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Peggy Sue?

Like a young girl, Peggy Sue blushes, nods "yes." Howard brings her in, hugs her tight, doesn't want to let go.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Thank you. Thank you, Peggy Sue.

DOWN THE ROAD

Quincy speeds towards them in his police car.

THE PORCH

They see Quincy coming. Peggy Sue pulls Howard behind the railing. They crouch down, watch.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE

Quincy speeds into Walsh's driveway, jumps out, leaves his headlights on. He races up to the door, bangs on it.

QUINCY

Walsh! Walsh!

PEGGY SUE'S PORCH

HOWARD

What's going on?

PEGGY SUE

It's the beginning of the war.

WALSH'S HOUSE

Quincy bangs on the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUINCY

Time's up, Walsh! Told you I'd be back. I want my money and I want it now. Don't think I won't break down this door 'cause I will.

He goes to the front window, looks in.

INT. WALSH'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

A half-eaten sandwich sits plated, overcome with flies.

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Quincy marches to the side of the house, tries another window.

QUINCY

Walsh. I know you're in there.
Your truck's still here.

He scurries back to the door. Bangs again.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Don't want any trouble, Walsh.
Just want my money.

A thought finally occurs. Quincy tries the door knob. The door CLICKS open. Quincy opens the door, leans in.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Walsh?

INT. WALSH'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Quincy scouts the room, looks to the kitchen. The swinging door shut.

QUINCY

Walsh? Door's unlocked, Walsh.
Tried to be respectful, but you're pushing my limit now.

He enters, goes to the phone, picks it up, listens for the tone, hears it, calls out-

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Okay, it's official. You're dodging my calls. Gettin' really pissed off here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He listens. No response. He goes to hang up, stops, notices the sandwich, the flies. Starts to think something might be wrong. He hangs up the phone, the receiver barely touches down as it RINGS, startles him. His reflex jerks back, receiver still in hand.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

Hello? Yeah, I'm here. Not yet.
I'm just standing here in the
living room.

Quincy looks at the closed kitchen door. A SHADOW passes from inside. He shakes his head, frustrated.

QUINCY (CONT'D)

He's in the kitchen being an
asshole. Let me get my money then
I'll be on my way. Shouldn't be
too long.

(hangs up)

I've had enough of this, Walsh.
Time to pay the piper.

He bolts to the kitchen, swings the door open.

INT. WALSH'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Howard stands waiting, Walsh's rifle trained on him. Quincy freezes.

QUINCY

What the hell you think you're
doing?

HOWARD

Fighting a war, sir.

Howard FIRES. BLOWS Quincy's HEAD OFF.

Howard REELS BACK from the force. KNOCKS a bag of Snow White flour onto the floor, sending it everywhere. He DROPS the rifle, in shock. He looks over, Peggy Sue stands at the back door, pulls KEYS off a hanger.

PEGGY SUE

Come on!

She takes off. Howard follows, leaves FOOTPRINTS in the flour.

THE DRIVEWAY

Peggy Sue and Howard rush for the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Can you drive?

HOWARD

A little... I think.

INT. WALSH'S TRUCK

Howard and Peggy Sue jump in. Howard fumbles with the keys, gets it into the ignition. He turns it, the engine doesn't start. He tries again. It won't turn over.

HOWARD

What are we going to do?

PEGGY SUE

Keep trying. He drives it all the time.

Howard TURNS the key, PUMPS the gas, it STARTS, blows smoke out the tailpipe. He backs up the truck, stops, BLOCKED by the police car; its headlights spotlighting them.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

(Jumping out)

Stay here.

EXT. THE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue runs to Quincy's car, opens the door, leans in, flips switches as assorted LIGHTS and SIRENS go on and off. She looks down the road, sees A CAR COMING.

PEGGY SUE

Someone's coming!

Panicked, she jumps in, flips switches until the headlights go OFF, shuts the door, and hides.

HOWARD

Turns off his headlights, ducks.

THE ROAD

The car approaches, slows, but continues on its way.

EXT. THE DRIVEWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue and Howard slowly poke their heads up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Howard turns his lights on, pulls forward a bit, then backs up around the police car's driver side into the yard. He opens his passenger door.

HOWARD

Get in.

INT. WALSH'S TRUCK - MOMENTS LATER

Howard drives as Peggy Sue looks back.

PEGGY SUE

Don't drive too fast.

She grabs Walsh's hat, hands it to him.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Here. Wear this.

Howard puts it on, angles the brim to hide his face from oncoming traffic.

EXT. THE WOODS - LATER THAT NIGHT

Howard drives slowly through the pitch black.

INT. WALSH'S TRUCK - SAME TIME

Howard squints, searches.

PEGGY SUE

You sure it's around here?

HOWARD

Saw it from the main road when I first arrived. Was sure it was this way.

PEGGY SUE

There it is!

EXT. A LAKE - A SHORT TIME LATER - NIGHT

Peggy Sue stands next to the truck parked on a STEEP INCLINE into the lake.

Howard sits behind the wheel, rolls down the window. He looks at Peggy Sue for confirmation. She gives it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He opens his door, RELEASES the BRAKE. The truck rolls down the embankment towards the water, picks up speed. Just before it collides Howard JUMPS out, HITS the ground, ROLLS in the grass.

PEGGY SUE

Howard!

She runs to him, drops to his side, helps him sit up.

The truck CRASHES into the lake, takes in water, lowers, then STOPS. It DOESN'T SINK.

The look at each other, puzzled. They get to their feet. Walk to the edge of the water.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

What now?

HOWARD

I'll see if I can push it.

PEGGY SUE

I'll help you.

HOWARD

No, you stay here.

Howard gets in the water, reaches the truck, PUSHES with all his strength. It doesn't budge. He PUSHES again. Nothing.

PEGGY SUE

Let me help you.

She gets ready to step in as they HEAR something in the distance. They look far out into the lake, faintly SEE a small boat with-

INT. THE BOAT - SAME TIME

TWO FISHERMAN. They look to the shore.

FISHERMAN

Came from over there. I can't see anything. Get the flashlight.

EXT. THE LAKE - SAME TIME

Howard looks back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Go! Go! Go!

Peggy Sue runs for cover, hides behind shrubs.

Howard looks to the boat, sees their FLASHLIGHT turn on. It POINTS his way, SEARCHES.

Howard feels a RUMBLE, hears a GURGLE. The truck starts to slowly SINK as the light searches closer. Just as the HOOD of the truck SUBMERGES, the light HITS, missing it.

The light zig-zags around Howard, he takes a deep breath, ducks underwater, escapes its path.

INT. THE BOAT - SAME TIME

The Fisherman zig-zags the light across the water.

FISHERMAN

Well, I don't see anything, do you?

FISHERMAN TWO

No. Whatever it was, just hope it didn't scare the fish.

He turns off the light.

EXT. THE LAKE - SAME TIME

Howard comes up for air. Heads for shore. Peggy Sue runs to him, helps him out.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, Howard, you were terrific. My heart was beating so fast. But you out-smarted them. I don't know if I would've thought that fast.

HOWARD

Wasn't much to think about. When something's aimed at your head. You duck.

PEGGY SUE

Tell that to Quincy.

Howard stops, shocked at her comment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

You were right, Howard. It does feel good. Damn good. Exhilarating, just like you said. And I have no regrets either. Now I'm going to go home and celebrate with a piece of cake myself. Because now I know, I know somewhere out there, there's another woman, just like me. Who's also tired of just laying there and taking it. And she, too, finally says "yes." "Yes... it's time to blow that mother fucker's head off."

(giggles, then)

Look at me, three celebrations in a row. Makes me feel young again.

(then)

Goodbye, Howard. Goodbye from the bottom of my heart.

HOWARD

Goodbye? No... No...

PEGGY SUE

What did you think? We'd become some kind of Bonnie and Clyde? We all know what happened to them.

HOWARD

I just thought-

PEGGY SUE

I saw you think, Howard. You ducked. But something's still aimed at your head. Both of ours. So, stay underwater, Howard. Stay underwater.

She kisses her hand, blows it to him, turns and walks into the darkness.

Howard looks at his new shoes, covered in mud.

EXT. THE DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT - 1927

The rain POUNDS as A BLACK MAN, early 40's, runs to the house, exhausted. He carries a potato sack carefully in both hands.

The same Black Woman we saw before, eighteen years younger, greets him at the door.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE MAN

Take this baby. Please, take it,
I beg you. They gonna kill it,
you hear me? Kill it and kill me
for saving it.

She takes it.

THE WOMAN

I take this baby, you better
listen. You run. You run as fast
and as far as you can. Tell no
one you were ever here, you hear
me?

He holds out a letter, HOWARD'S LETTER.

THE MAN

Here, send this to Peggy Sue.
Make sure she gets it. Let her
know what I done.

Lightening CRACKS-

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT

Howard wakes curled in a ball, shivering, frightened.

INT. THE HALLWAY - MORNING

The Grandfather clock CHIMES. It's 9:AM.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Someone KNOCKS. Then knocks again.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue sleeps soundly. The knocking wakes her. She
looks at her night stand clock.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, my.

She gets up, looks out the window, sees-

EXT. WALSH'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Several POLICE CARS and a CORONER'S VAN are out front. OFFICERS walk the property.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Peggy Sue pulls on a robe as she reaches the door, opens it. Two police officers; HANNIGAN and JIMMY, stand.

PEGGY SUE

Hannigan.

HANNIGAN

Peggy Sue. Took a little time getting to the door.

PEGGY SUE

Sorry. Overslept. Slept like a baby, in fact.

HANNIGAN

Out late?

PEGGY SUE

You know better than that.

Hannigan glances at Jimmy, forces himself into the entry way. Peggy Sue stumbles back, rests on the area rug.

HANNIGAN

This is not a pleasurable visit.

PEGGY SUE

It was never pleasurable with you. Quick, thank God. But never pleasurable.

HANNIGAN

Well, you're not gonna have to worry about that no more. At least with me. Now, get dressed. We're taking you in. No one gets away with murder in this town.

PEGGY SUE

Murder?

Hannigan stares her down.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HANNIGAN

You heard what I said. Now get dressed.

PEGGY SUE

But Lily-

HANNIGAN

Don't worry about her, she'll be just fine. We'll take good care of her for you.

Jimmy smirks. Peggy Sue composes herself, readies for the worse.

PEGGY SUE

I'll be just be a minute.

Suddenly weak, she starts up the stairs.

HANNIGAN

You hear anything last night?

She stops, turns back.

PEGGY SUE

Pardon, me?

HANNIGAN

Last night. Hear anything?

PEGGY SUE

No. Why?

HANNIGAN

Walsh and Quincy got into it bad. Been going at each other for weeks now. Walsh deep in poker debt to Quincy. None of us saw this coming. Ain't that right, Jimmy?

Jimmy shakes his head, agrees.

PEGGY SUE

Saw what?

HANNIGAN

Walsh went off the deep end. Talked to Quincy right before it happened.

PEGGY SUE

What happened?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

HANNIGAN

Walsh blew Quincy's head right off with his rifle. Know how he liked to point it at everyone. Then took off in his truck.

PEGGY SUE

Did you catch him?

HANNIGAN

No, but we will.

PEGGY SUE

Sure it was him?

HANNIGAN

Yep. Left shoe prints all over the scene. Not only his size, found another pair that matched them exactly. Like I said, "no one gets away with murder in this town." Sure you didn't hear anything?

PEGGY SUE

No. Told you. Was sleeping.

HANNIGAN

No need to come in then. Don't see what the point is. Would've just called but you don't have a phone. I'll let you get back.

He heads out, turns back.

HANNIGAN (CONT'D)

And just for the record. I'm a married man now.

He closes the door behind him.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Hannigan and Jimmy look over at Walsh's, shake their head in disbelief. They head down the steps. Suddenly hear Ben Bernie's jazz tune "SWEET GEORGIA BROWN" playing from Peggy Sue's radio inside.

JIMMY

You right. She crazy.

As they walk away, they HEAR her turn it up louder.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue's hand release the radio's volume knob. She dances, sways side to side. She holds her arms out, tilts her head back, giggles as she-

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. A 1925 ROLLS-ROYCE PHANTOM CONVERTIBLE - 1926

The backseat, giggling, arms out to her side, head tilted back. She enjoys the breeze blowing in her hair, the Jazz on the radio.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

I just love this music, don't you?

Her CHAUFFEUR, Black, early 40's, is the same man from Howard's dream. He looks in the rearview mirror.

CHAUFFEUR

Why, yes, Mrs. Farnsworth.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - SAME TIME

The car kicks up dust as it speeds along.

EXT. A FIELD - A SHORT TIME LATER

A picnic set, Peggy Sue and her Chauffeur sit out on a blanket, listen to jazz on a portable radio. Peggy Sue bites into an apple as the Chauffeur writes, practices his penmanship. He shows it to her.

CHAUFFEUR

How's this?

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

How's this? It's fantastic.
You've really been practicing.

CHAUFFEUR

Learned from the best.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Why, thank you. If you ever need paper, just let me know. It's my favorite and I always have plenty, anytime you want.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAUFFER

Now I can write my momma.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

She'll be so pleased. I love the way you write. So unique. Probably from being left-handed and all.

He smiles. She bites the apple, lays back-

INT. PEGGY SUE'S LIVING ROOM - BACK TO SCENE

On the floor. She smiles, wraps her arms around herself, coos with pleasure.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S FRONT PORCH - NIGHT

Peggy Sue and Lily sit on the top step eating cake, slices of both on their plates. They watch the officers still at Walsh's place, smiling.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER

Peggy Sue leaves Lily's room.

PEGGY SUE

Night, baby.

She closes the door, heads for her room, stops at the guest room.

INT. THE GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue enters, makes sure it's in order, sees the box of clothes on the floor, kneels beside it. She pulls out a long sleeve shirt, inspects it, wraps the arms around her waist like an apron, ponders.

She picks up another piece, then another. Looks deeper in the box, then tosses the clothes back in. She picks up the box, heads out.

EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue stops at the attic access door in the ceiling, sets the box down. The cat brushes against her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Hey, Clarence, how you doing?
Left you some goodies in the
kitchen. Did you find them?

Clarence runs off.

Peggy Sue PULLS the hatch rope. Dust falls as the stairs extend. She grabs the box, holds it above her as she heads up the stairs.

INT. THE ATTIC FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Virtually pitch black, the only light shines up from the from the door. The box emerges, plops down. Thick cobwebs blow across the floor. The box slides over, revealing Peggy Sue.

She peruses the attic, HEARS a soft SCAMPER. She turns. A RAT RUNS by, startles her, losing her grip of the stairs. She FALLS, PLUNGES downward-

EXT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - ATTIC STAIRS - CONTINUOUS

CAUGHT by Howard. She SCREAMS as he places his hand over her mouth, muffles it.

HOWARD

Shhh!

He holds her still, for a moment longer, then-

HOWARD (CONT'D)

It's me. Just me.

He uncovers her mouth, sets her down.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Sorry. There's police at Walsh's.
Was afraid they might hear.

PEGGY SUE

Of course there's police over there. Why are you here? They could've seen you. Don't you ever listen?

HOWARD

Was worried about you. And after seeing you fall like that I have good reason.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

What are you doing up there,
anyway? Could've killed yourself.

PEGGY SUE

I was just putting those clothes
back in the attic.

She closes the hatch. Howard stares at it.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Clarence usually does an
incredible job keeping the rats
out, but obviously one got by him.
Gave me a scare, that's all. I
found something interesting,
though.

He looks at her, alarmed.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Don't give me that look. I'm
sorry, Howard. Left you to sleep
in wet and muddy clothes out there
in the wilderness. I'm a monster,
just a monster.

HOWARD

No, you're not. Don't say that,
Peggy Sue, you are not a monster.

PEGGY SUE

Yes, I am. Let's get you cleaned
up. I know you like your baths.

She escorts him to the bathroom. Howard looks back at
the attic door.

INT. THE BATHROOM - LATER

Howard's in the tub. Peggy Sue sits on the floor, her
back against it, looking away as they talk.

HOWARD

"No one gets away with murder in
this town?"

PEGGY SUE

Even said it twice. Of course,
your fancy footwork sealed the
deal.

HOWARD

Never was good in the kitchen...
Until now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

They laugh, settle.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Does this mean the war is over?

PEGGY SUE

Hardly. North won the Civil War years ago. You feel a difference? If you still have to think about something, it's not over.

HOWARD

Peggy Sue... You ever have a colored friend?

PEGGY SUE

Oh, yes. Hattie was a good-

HOWARD

I meant male. A man. A colored man friend?

PEGGY SUE

Yes. I would have to say I did. He was our chauffeur. Very loyal. Been with my husband for years.

As she speaks, she gets FLASHES of the memories.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

I'd be cooped up in that house so much, he'd take me for long rides in the country to get out. We'd listen to jazz music. Sometimes bring a picnic. He was the only man who was ever really nice to me. Who didn't want something. Like you.

Enthused, she impulsively turns around to Howard.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

I taught him how to write.

She realizes what she's done, quickly turns away.

HOWARD

It's okay... You can look at me. I'd prefer it if you did.

Peggy Sue sits silent, then slowly turns around.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

You miss him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEGGY SUE

Yes. Everyday. After my husband sent me away. Hattie told me he quit. He had had enough. Like Hattie, he'd protect me from my husband, who had an awful temper. Whole family did. They were known for being the envy of town for generations. Still are. And hell-bent on keeping it that way.

HOWARD

When was the last time you saw him?

PEGGY SUE

My husband?

HOWARD

Your chauffeur.

PEGGY SUE

Day before Lily came. It was a difficult birth from beginning. I was bedridden for some time. He'd always sneak in, hold my hand, talk to me so I'd feel better. First, I didn't even know what was happening. I was so naive. Didn't even know what made a baby. No one ever told me. It was years later I even found out.

(chuckles, then)

People think I'm crazy for wanting Lily. But I'd never give up on my child. Never.

Howard looks at her, deeply moved.

HOWARD

Never?

PEGGY SUE

Never.

(then)

What about you? Ever have a white friend?

HOWARD

Oh, yeah. Same age as me. Was my best friend for a long time. His family even invited me to dinner. Several times. I remember sitting at the table. Me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Sitting at the table with nothing but white folks. Like I saw the future.

PEGGY SUE

Oh, that must've been nice. I once asked why Hattie couldn't sit at our table, and believe me, I never asked again.

HOWARD

Not surprised. Their neighbors didn't take too kindly to them hosting a Negro boy, either. One day they finally said I couldn't come 'round no more. Was costing them too many windows. Never saw any of them again.

Peggy Sue puts her hand on the tub, rests her head on it, her face showing her melancholy. He reaches for her hand. She hesitantly resists, then lets him hold it. She closes her eyes, enjoys the touch. She sits up, smiles, gets one from him. Hands still holding.

PEGGY SUE

You remind me of my chauffeur sometimes. Your smile, the way he'd look at me. With care.

HOWARD

He smiled at you because you're a beautiful woman.

PEGGY SUE

No, I'm not.

HOWARD

Yes, you are.

PEGGY SUE

No, no, I'm not. I was a little pretty once. But that's long gone. Now I'm old.

HOWARD

You're not old.

PEGGY SUE

Yes, I am. Almost forty. Who would want me now?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

HOWARD

Any man, Peggy Sue. Any man.
You're the most beautiful woman in
the world.

PEGGY SUE

Really think so?

HOWARD

Know so. The most beautiful ever.

She cups his face with her hand.

PEGGY SUE

Thank you. Thank you for saying
that.

She leans in, kisses him on the cheek. Their faces still
close, they look into each other's eyes. Peggy Sue
kisses him again, this time on the lips. She pulls him
in, kisses him passionately. Howard breaks free, caught
off guard. They stare, silent, uneasy.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Sorry. Forgive me.
(scrambles to her
feet.)
You have to go. You have to go
now.

She runs for her room.

HOWARD

No! No, wait!

Howard jumps out of the tub, runs after her.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They head for her room.

PEGGY SUE

You have to leave Howard. Leave
right now.

HOWARD

Please, no. Wait!

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peggy Sue slams the door shut behind her, continues to the window, looks out as the last Police car drives off from Walsh's. Howard races in behind her.

HOWARD

It's okay. It's okay. Don't make me leave. Please. It's okay.

PEGGY SUE

It's not okay, Howard. Now leave this house. Leave this house now!

Howard stands nude, frozen. He looks at her, desperate. He charges towards her, grabs her by the waist, pulls her in tight and kisses her long, passionately, as Peggy Sue gives into it.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME - NIGHT

We watch their silhouette in the window.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S HALLWAY - MORNING

The Grandfather Clock CHIMES.

INT. PEGGY SUE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Howard wakes in Peggy Sue's bed. He rolls over, finds her gone. He sits up, rubs his eyes. He looks around the room, a dark mood upon him. The cat JUMPS on the bed, sits, watches him. They stare at each other.

HOWARD

What are you looking at? Don't you judge me. Haven't you already done enough?

He kicks him off the bed. Peggy Sue enters, carries breakfast on a tray. A Cherokee Rose in a glass.

PEGGY SUE

Good morning. Thought you might like breakfast in bed. Got it all the time when I was pregnant. I like it, don't you?

She sets the tray across him, sits on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Never had it before.

PEGGY SUE

Really? You're going to love it.
A real treat. And you know the
eggs don't get any fresher round
here.

HOWARD

Thank you.

PEGGY SUE

You're very welcome. I enjoyed
making every bit of it. Coffee's
even better than last time.
Already getting the hang of it.
Just needed more water. Now you
enjoy your breakfast while I get
started on some chores around
here. Time I get this house in
order.

She kisses him, leaves.

Howard looks over, the cat still watches.

EXT. THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Peggy Sue reaches the bottom of the stairs. She stops,
looks at the area rug, puts her hands on her hips,
disgusted. She grabs it, drags it out back.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - A SHORT TIME LATER

Howard comes from the bedroom with his tray. He looks up
at the attic door, then goes downstairs.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME TIME

The rug hangs on the clothes line as Peggy Sue beats it.

INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Howard walks past the crack in the floor. He stops,
realizes the rug is missing. He turns, stares at it. He
looks around, makes sure he's alone. He gets closer,
leans down for a closer look. The Cherokee Rose tips
over, the water spills off his tray.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Damn.

He steadies the tray, HEARS Peggy enter the kitchen. He looks back at the water, it drains into the crack in the floor, virtually disappears.

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

Howard?

He turns, Peggy Sue stands in the doorway.

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Want me to take that for you?

HOWARD

No... No, I got it.

He goes to the kitchen.

INT. THE KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Howard looks out the window, sees the rug hanging. He sets the tray on the counter, Peggy Sue clears it, the food hardly touched.

PEGGY SUE

Didn't eat much. Something wrong?
You didn't like it?

HOWARD

No, it was fine. Just fine. Not
very hungry today, that's all.

She puts her hand on his forehead.

PEGGY SUE

You feel a little warm. Hope
you're not getting sick. I should
not have left you out there. I'm
a monster, just a monster.

HOWARD

You're not a monster... I am.

PEGGY SUE

What kind of talk is that?

HOWARD

(explodes)
I'm a monster, you hear me? A
monster! A monster!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He charges out, heads down the hall. Peggy Sue follows.

PEGGY SUE
Where are you going? What's
wrong?

INT. THE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The Grandfather clock rattles as Howard roars by, heavy on his feet.

HOWARD
I can't stay here no more. I
can't.

PEGGY SUE
Why?

He stops on the crack in the floor. The boards give, CRACK a bit under his weight. He turns to her.

HOWARD
I can't be with you! I can't!

He bolts up the stairs. Peggy Sue chases after.

PEGGY SUE
I understand, Howard. I
understand.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Howard goes for attic hatch.

HOWARD
No, you don't. You don't
understand. You don't understand
anything!

He GRABS the hatch, PULLS it down, extends the stairs.

PEGGY SUE
I understand perfectly Howard.
Perfectly. What are you doing?

He hurries up the stairs.

HOWARD
I should've never come here.
Never. I told Hattie I wouldn't,
but I lied. I lied so she'd tell
me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY SUE

Hattie? You talked to Hattie? My
Hattie? Why? When?

Howard grabs the box, realizes he's said too much, rushes
back down, confesses-

HOWARD

I'm just here for the money, Peggy
Sue. The money. Everyone knows
about the money.

PEGGY SUE

Money? What money, Howard? You
hear that from Walsh, too?

HOWARD

Don't lie to me. I know where you
hide it. I saw you. Under the
carpet. The crack in the floor.

PEGGY SUE

No, Howard, there's nothing under
there. Just a floorboard I can't
afford to fix. Everything I have
is in plain sight.

HOWARD

There's got to be money. Got to
be.

PEGGY SUE

No, Howard, no. I gave you
everything I had. The only thing
in this house is you, me, and
Lily. All broken just the same.

Howard slams the box down, the bottom breaks out, the
letter now visible.

HOWARD

There is no Lily!

PEGGY SUE

Howard, she'll hear you!

HOWARD

Hear what, Peggy Sue? Hear what?
The truth? She doesn't exist!

PEGGY SUE

Take that back! Take that back,
Howard!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PEGGY SUE (CONT'D)

Don't talk about my Lily like that! Don't ever talk about my Lily like that!

HOWARD

Then let's ask her. Let's ask Lily what she thinks!

Howard charges towards Lily's room.

PEGGY SUE

No, Howard, no! Leave my Lily alone! No!

Howard throws Lily's door open, reveals-

INT. LILY'S ROOM

Completely empty. Dark, tattered and torn like the others.

HOWARD

There! Can't you see? There is no Lily. There is no Lily!

Peggy Sue leans against the wall, cries as she slides to the floor next to the box.

PEGGY SUE

Don't take her away from me. My baby. Gimme back my baby. Give her back. My poor baby.

HOWARD

I'm sorry, Peggy Sue. I'm sorry.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

A car stops in front.

INSIDE THE CAR

Hattie turns it off, looks at her watch, then over to Walsh's place.

HATTIE

Good. Got Mister nose pants gone on schedule.

She opens her purse, takes out four five dollar bills, folds them together. Far down the road, a BICYCLIST approaches. Hattie crouches down not to be seen.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue notices the letter under the box, picks it up.

PEGGY SUE
(turning it over)
What's this? This yours, Howard?

HOWARD
Yes, it's mine. My letter.

THE LETTER

Addressed to MRS. MARGARET SUE FARNSWORTH.

PEGGY SUE
I don't think so. It's addressed
to me. It's mine. My letter.
Has it been in there all that
time? I don't remember ever
opening it.

HOWARD
Don't open that letter, Peggy Sue.
Please, please don't read it.

PEGGY SUE
It's so familiar. I used to have
paper like this. And the
penmanship... The penmanship,
there's something about it...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. A FIELD - 1926

Peggy Sue and her Chauffeur sit on a blanket, hidden by
the tall grasses. He shows her his penmanship.

CHAUFFER
Now I can write my momma.

YOUNG PEGGY SUE
She'll be so pleased. I love the
way you write. So unique.
Probably from being left-handed
and all.

He smiles. She bites the apple, lays back. He looks
around, then gently lays on top of her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHAUFFER

Oh, Peggy Sue. You the most beautiful girl in the whole wide world.

She smiles, wraps her arms around him, kisses him, coos-

YOUNG PEGGY SUE

Oh, Clarence.

INT. THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - BACK TO SCENE

PEGGY SUE

(remembering)

It's from Clarence. Clarence wrote me a letter. Clarence wrote me a letter!

HOWARD

No, Peggy Sue, no! Please, I beg you! Don't read it!

PEGGY SUE

Don't be silly, it's from Clarence!

Excited, she opens the letter, reads it.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

My sweet Peggy Sue. I'm writing to tell you we will never be able to see each other again. Because I did something very bad. Something you need to know.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. FARNSWORTH BEDROOM - 1927

Peggy Sue is giving birth.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

About the night you had your baby.

FARNSWORTH

Push Peggy Sue! Push!

The door CRACKED OPEN, Clarence secretly WATCHES from outside as PEGGY SUE gives her final push.

SANDERS

Here it comes! Here it comes!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hattie GASPS at its arrival, glances towards the door, knows Clarence is there, NODS, CONFIRMS the situation.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

The baby wasn't alive or right like they said. What happened next was unexpected.

FARNSWORTH

You give me this...this mongoloid child? You bring this shame into my family? My home?

The clock strikes midnight, CHIMES.

FARNSWORTH (CONT'D)

Give it to me.

Sanders wraps the baby's body in the bloodied sheets, hands it to Farnsworth.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Mr. Farnsworth's choice of words set into motion a series of lies.

HATTIE

(to Peggy Sue)
Just like you always wanted. A baby girl. And lily white just like you. Lily white.

INT. FARNSWORTH KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Farnsworth storms in, TOSSES the baby onto a butcher block, knives hovering above, RAGES out the back door.

EXT. FARNSWORTH ESTATE - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The rain POUNDS Farnsworth as he storms for the coach house, screaming-

FARNSWORTH

Clarence! Clarence! Where are you, Clarence?

INT. FARNSWORTH KITCHEN - SAME TIME

From a dark corner, Clarence emerges from the shadows. He steps out cautiously, looks at the clump of bloody fabric. He covers his mouth, grief-stricken. The clump MOVES, KICKS from inside. Clarence's eyes widen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CLARENCE (V.O.)

Then a miracle happened, the baby came to life. And I knew if I didn't do something, it wouldn't be alive for long.

He frantically searches, finds a potato sack in a bin.

CLARENCE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So I saved the child.

EXT. THE DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT - 1927

Clarence stands in the rain, holds the baby hidden in the potato sack.

CLARENCE (V.O.)

And left it with my mother, Florence.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - BACK TO SCENE - 1945

Peggy Sue looks up at Howard.

PEGGY SUE

Florence? Your Florence?

HOWARD

Yes, ma'am.

PEGGY SUE

(getting to her feet)

Lily. She has my Lily? Florence has my Lily? Take me to her! Take me to my Lily! I knew she was alive! I just knew it! Lily! Lily! Lily!

HOWARD

There is no Lily, Peggy Sue! Lily is not alive! Not alive, you hear me? Not alive!

PEGGY SUE

That's not true! Not true!

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Hattie gets out of the car in front of the long walkway.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. THE DILAPIDATED HOUSE - NIGHT - 1927

As Florence UNCOVERS the baby-

HOWARD (V.O.)

Yes it is, Peggy Sue. Because you didn't have a lily white baby girl that night.

We discover a BLACK BABY BOY-

HOWARD (V.O.) (CONT'D)

It was a boy, Peggy Sue. A colored baby boy.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - BACK TO SCENE - 1945

HOWARD

The only thing mongoloid about that child was the color of his skin. Hattie thought quick, real quick she did. She lied to you to protect you-

PEGGY SUE

That's not true-

HOWARD

Your husband was about to do to you what he did to Clarence.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. THE WOODS - NIGHT - 1927

Heavily beaten and noose around his neck, Clarence KICKS his feet as SIX MEN HANG him in a tree.

HOWARD (V.O.)

He had him strung up first chance he got. But Hattie convinced him you didn't know what you had done. So not even you could ever tell anyone to spoil his name.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - BACK TO SCENE - 1945

PEGGY SUE

It's not true-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

So he locked you up instead. Then hid you here for the rest of your days-

PEGGY SUE

It's not true, I tell you!

HOWARD

It is true, Peggy Sue. It's true! Because *I'm* that boy, Peggy Sue. I'm that colored baby boy. Me. Me, Howard. I'm your baby. Your Lily was born two minutes before midnight. I came alive minutes after.

Peggy Sue stands silent, paralyzed. The letter slips from her hand, drifts between the rails, and FLOATS to-

INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY FLOOR

And rests on the crack in the floor.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY

Howard chokes up, holds back his emotion.

HOWARD

I'm sorry. Sorry I didn't tell you. My grandmother never sent that letter because she knew it was too dangerous. She knew they'd come after us, too. So she hid it till the day she died. I just wanted to meet you. Wanted to know you. Thought like most the world you'd reject me. But you didn't.

He breaks, starts to cry.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Instead you gave me so much love. The love I've wanted from my mama all my life. Right when there was nobody left to love me. Nobody love me. Nobody. Except you. And you held me. That night you held me, held me tight and called me your baby. Called me your poor baby. I finally had it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD (CONT'D)

After all these years I had it.
That was the happiest moment of my
life. But I couldn't tell you
because of Lily. You loved Lily
so much I couldn't take her away
from you. Not with everything you
lost already. Then you kept
sending me away. I didn't know
what to do. Keep loving me,
please. Because I'm your baby.
Me.

Howard sobs uncontrollably.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Please call me your poor baby
again. Please. I'm sorry. Call
me your poor baby. Please.
Please love your poor baby, Peggy
Sue. Please, Peggy Sue, please.

Peggy Sue stands frozen, then-

PEGGY SUE

You my baby? You, Howard?

Howard smiles, filled with hope.

HOWARD

Yes, Peggy Sue... Yes.

A soft smile comes over Peggy Sue's face. Her child has
returned. Then, Peggy Sue realizes the sin they have
committed. It hits her hard. Her knees buckle as she
grabs the railing for strength. She holds her stomach in
gut-wrenching pain, looks at Howard, lets out a blood
curdling SCREAM.

PEGGY SUE

No!

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Hattie approaches, hears Peggy Sue, stops, stares at the
front door.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Peggy Sue purges violently-

PEGGY SUE

No! No! No!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HOWARD

Please, Peggy Sue. Forgive me.
 I'm sorry for what I did with you.
 So sorry. I just couldn't leave
 you hurt like that. I just wanted
 you to feel the love you deserve.
 And I knew, I knew after what I
 done I had to go. But, please,
 Peggy Sue, please! Forgive me. I
 beg you, please. Call me your
 poor baby again.

Howard moves towards her as the cat runs in front of him.
 He trips over the cat, loses his balance, SMASHES into
 the railing, BREAKS through it. PLUMMETS-

INT. THE DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Onto the crack in the floor, his body CRASHES through the
 floorboards, sends a JOLT through the entire house. The
 impact SHAKES the grandfather clock violently. It
 TOPPLES OVER, SMASHES into pieces.

PEGGY SUE

Howard!

Peggy Sue runs to him.

INT. UNDER THE HALLWAY FLOORBOARDS

Howard lays on his back under the house, IMPALED by a
 floorboard. He slowly manages to turn his head, looks
 around, the only thing hidden under the house is its
 rotting foundation. There is no money.

Peggy Sue climbs down next to Him, holds him tight.

HOWARD

I knew you weren't hiding money
 under here. I know you gave me
 all you had. I only said that-

PEGGY SUE

I know, Howard... I know.

THE FRONT DOOR

Hattie races in, stops frozen, shocked. The light from
 the open door floods brightly in behind her.

PEGGY SUE'S POV

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peggy Sue looks up, sees Lily standing, encircled by light. Lily smiles, waves goodbye, turns, and disappears into it.

PEGGY SUE

Looks back into Howard eyes.

PEGGY SUE

Howard... The only thing I ever had of any value... Was you. My baby. My poor, poor baby.

HOWARD

Am I?

PEGGY SUE

Yes, Howard, yes. You're my baby. My poor, poor baby.

She kisses him on the forehead. Howard manages a smile.

HOWARD

Mama...

A tear runs down his cheek as he exhales his last breath, passes in her arms. Peggy Sue rocks him.

PEGGY SUE

My poor baby. My poor baby.

A floodgate of tears escape her. They fall, hit the dirt beneath her.

EXT. PEGGY SUE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

From the street we see the house quiet. The door open. Hattie standing in the hall.

We PAN DOWN to the ground, discover growing in the grasses, a single CHEROKEE ROSE. Softly hear-

PEGGY SUE (O.S.)

My poor baby.

FADE OUT.

THE END