

War of the Grandmas

(act one)

written by

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A BLACK SCREEN

We hear an engine barely cranking: WAAAH... WAAAH... WAAAH.

Beat.

Then again: WAAAH... WAAAH... WAAAH.

FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES SUBURB - ORANGEVEILLE - DAY

A bedroom community sits at the foothills of the Los Angeles basin. Its 1960s decor looks dated, yet comfy.

ON THE MAIN STREET OF TOWN, a billboard reads -

"WELCOME TO ORANGEVILLE - PRIDE OF THE FOOTHILLS."

Beyond the billboard is a Community Center, a Ralph's, a Denny's, and a bus shelter. A large, handwritten sign is taped to the wall of the shelter:

"BIG SALE TODAY - Men's clothing, power tools, Ford Escort. Take bus 12 to Lambert Street."

We hear an engine barely cranking: WAAAH... WAAAH... WAAAH.

EXT. LAMBERT STREET - CUL DE SAC - DAY - ESTABLISHING

At the end of a narrow *cul de sac*, three 60s style houses circle the sidewalk and almost touch one another, like three peas in a circular pod. In the center house - Patty's house - garage sale items litter the driveway.

EXT. PATTY'S HOUSE - DAY

At the curb in front of the center house, sits an aging Ford Escort, hood open. A wiry, unadorned old broad - PATTY, 60s - watches as a Latino BOY, 8, studies the engine and waits.

INSERT:

THE ESCORT'S IGNITION

A callused hand turns the key: WAAAH... WAAAH... WAAAH. Stops for a second. Tries again: WAAAH... WAAAH... WAAAH.

BACK TO SCENE

The car door opens and out steps a Mexican GARDENER, 40s. He glances at a red sign on the window - \$2500 - hands Patty the keys.

She smiles politely.

GARDENER  
(Spanish, subtitled)  
How long has it been sitting here?

Patty looks at the Boy.

BOY  
My father wants to know how long  
since you've driven the car.

PATTY  
I've never driven it.

BOY  
(Spanish, subtitled)  
She doesn't drive, Papa.

GARDENER  
(Spanish, subtitled)  
Then her husband, how long since  
he's driven it?

BOY  
Does your husband drive?

PATTY  
No... my husband died last  
November.

BOY  
(Spanish, subtitled)  
He doesn't drive, either, Papa.

The Gardener debates, pulls out a wad of bills.

GARDENER  
(Spanish, subtitled)  
Twenty-four, fifty!

BOY  
He'll give you twenty-four fifty,  
and keep fifty for a new battery.

Patty's smile widens - we can see her teeth.

PATTY  
The price is twenty-five hundred.

BOY  
 (Spanish, subtitled)  
 She's a stubborn old mule, Papa,  
 and she says you should go suck  
 eggs. Let's leave.

INT. PATTY'S HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

At a table with a cash box, sits CANDY (21) folding shirts.  
 Dramatic in jeans and velvet, with rings on every finger.  
 Candy would be a real sweetie, if it weren't for her temper.

In the b.g. an ancient RADIO blares -

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 And if we don't get any rain soon,  
 the county of Los Angeles says  
 they'll have to start rationing our  
 water. So here's a little number -  
 to help bring on the rain!

A big band rendition of "SINGING IN THE RAIN" plays, as Candy  
 watches Patty stride up the driveway, into the garage.

CANDY  
 No sale, Grammy?

PATTY  
 Twenty-four fifty. Bah!

CANDY  
 But that's only --

PATTY  
 -- twenty-five loaves of bread,  
 fifty video rentals at the library,  
 or a hundred bus-trips to town.

Patty furiously folds clothes - obviously her husband's.

PATTY  
 I won't give Grampa's car away to  
 the first person who waves cash in  
 my face.

CANDY  
 Okay.

PATTY  
 He worked hard to provide a good  
 living for your mother and me. And  
 just because he's dead, I'm not  
 gonna start taking him for granted!

CANDY

Geez, Grammy - mellow out.

Patty pastes her polite smile onto her face, leers at Candy.

Candy starts to giggle, then frowns. She stands, disappears through the kitchen door, hand over her stomach.

Patty watches, as VOMITING NOISES come from the kitchen. Her look of concern slowly changes to a look of recognition.

EXT. LOS ANGELES - FRONTAGE ROAD - DAY

On a deserted two-lane highway just off the freeway, zooms a pink Mustang convertible, full of shopping bags.

EXT. ROSE'S MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE - DAY

The 1950's hit, "POISON IVY" blares out of the radio of his beat up old deathtrap. A nicely-preserved mantrap, ROSE - 60s, sexy, and single - sits behind the wheel and sings:

ROSE

"Bees'll make you bumpy, and  
mumps'll make you lumpy, and  
chicken pox'll make you jump an'  
twi-itch, uh!"

KABOOM! An explosion rips through the car. Rose guides the car to the side of the road.

ROSE

Ohhhhhh - don't do this to me, Pony  
Boy. Not again.

She gets out, props open the hood, and poses, shapely leg well displayed. A beat, then two cars whiz by.

ROSE

Well, thanks a lot.

She undoes three buttons on her blouse, poses again. A van with lettering - I'M PLUMB NUTS! - slows down and pulls over. Out steps a GRUBBY plumber, 35, in overalls. He ejaculates chewing tobacco onto the ground, waits.

Rose regards her rescuer - ugh - then turns on the charm.

ROSE

I don't know what's wrong. My  
trusty steed never lets me down.

GRUBBY

You need a ride, or somethin'?

ROSE

You're so kind.

She leans inside her car, hands Grubby three Macy's bags.

Then grabs some Penney's bags for herself.

ROSE

Never pass up a bargain!

She gets in at shotgun. Grubby tosses her bags in the back - on top of old toilets - winks at her, and guns his engine.

EXT. SPANISH-STYLE HOME - DAY

A modern house, with a Toyota pick-up in the driveway. The truck bed is full: suitcases, floral arrangements, a full-length mirror, a pink loveseat, and a mountain of clothes.

RUTH - 25, studious and mousy-looking - rounds the corner of the house, carrying negligees on hangers - definitely not her style. She hefts them on top of the clothes, plops a high-heeled boot on top, disappears back around the corner.

A tow truck pulls up at the curb, towing Rose's Mustang. Rose exits the tow truck, spies the pick-up and stares at it, while behind her, the OPERATOR (20s) unloads the Mustang.

Rose hands the Operator her credit card. Worried, she looks over at the house, where KIMBERLY (43) emerges and stands in the front doorway. She is strangely calm -

KIMBERLY

Hello Mother. You don't live here anymore.

Rose's jaw drops.

KIMBERLY

That doesn't mean I don't love you, because I do. But everyone has to grow up sometime, Mother, and now is your time.

ROSE

No! Kimberly please, I promise --

KIMBERLY

I found you a house, and I paid  
three months' rent to get you  
started. After that, you're on your  
own.

(smiles)

No more loans, and no more fights.

Ruth rounds the corner of the house, carrying a cat cage. She  
sees Rose, stops. A sheepish smile.

RUTH

Hello, Nana.

KIMBERLY

Ruth will help you move.

Rose stares at the Toyota pick-up, incredulous.

KIMBERLY

It's all in there.

ROSE

I'm your mother - you can't do this  
to me!

KIMBERLY

You'll thank me when you're older,  
Mother. Goodbye.

She opens the front door.

ROSE

Wait! My car broke down and I --

THUD! The door closes, the deadbolt SLAMS into place.

INT. RUTH'S TOYOTA PICK-UP - DAY

Ruth drives and Rose is at shotgun - a fluffy Himalayan cat  
in a pink cat cage, cradled on her lap. This is HONEYBUNS,  
the cat with an attitude. His look says it all: "Good grief,  
here we go again."

ROSE

I've never done anything to deserve  
this kind of treatment!

Ruth bites her tongue - ouch! And stops at a light.

ROSE

It was hard enough on me when Eddie  
- and Geoffrey - then Rudolph -  
Bruno, even Vladymir turned on me.  
(glares at Ruth)  
But my own flesh and blood!

RUTH

Look on the bright side, Nana.  
You'll have your own place, and no  
one to answer to, except yourself.

ROSE

I don't want to live alone!

INT. PATTY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Photos of Candy at all ages - many with Patty and GRAMPA -  
line the walls.

Patty sits in her dining nook, facing cigar boxes labelled  
MORTGAGE, UTILITIES, FOOD, MEDICAL, GIFTS, CLOTHES, SAVINGS,  
and MAD MONEY. The Mortgage lid is open.

Next to the cigar boxes, cash is stacked in piles - 50s, 20s,  
10s, etc. Patty collects bills from the stacks, counts -

PATTY

... two hundred, three hundred. And  
twenty, forty, sixty, seventy. And  
one, two, three, four, and...

She reaches into the garage-sale cash box and picks out -

PATTY

... seventy six cents.

Pleased, she deposits \$374.76 into her Mortgage Box and shuts  
the lid. Then opens the Utilities box and turns back to her  
money. A sound - RIBBIT? RIBBIT? - startles her.

PATTY

Godzelda!

She turns to an aquarium on top of a nearby stand. Inside is  
froggy heaven.

A huge green frog - GODZELDA - sits on a rock, gazes up at  
Patty. Gives her a "poor little me" look. RIBBIT? RIBBIT?

PATTY

I am so sorry, Godzelda.



She pops the lid, puts her hand in, and the frog hops aboard.

Patty carries Godzelda to the sink, deposits her in a huge plastic tub and mists her with water.

She takes TWO CRICKETS out of a plastic cage and drops them in the tub, then rolls plastic mesh over the top.

PATTY

There. That oughta make you happy.

Godzelda eyes a cricket and licks her lips. Yum!

Candy enters from the garage, hefting a large box.

PATTY

Candy! You shouldn't be lifting -  
not in your condition.

The truth is out - Candy bursts into tears.

INT. PATTY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

An outdated room, with that cozy, lived-in look. Candy sits in a worn recliner, mug of tea in hand, eyes red.

Opposite her is Patty - on the sofa, surrounded by newspapers and opened mail. Feet up on the coffee table, Patty sips her tea and listens:

CANDY

I'm going to keep my baby, and I'm  
going to give it a happy home.

PATTY

Course you are. And your  
boyfriend...?

CANDY

Rex doesn't know - he wouldn't even  
give a rip! His stupid band is more  
important to him than I am.

(tears up)

I don't even know where Rex is.

PATTY

Oh, not good. How will you --

CANDY

Pay for everything? I don't know!

PATTY

Oh, not good. But even if you find this "Rex guy" and get some child support, your baby's still going to need a father, Candy Cane.

CANDY

Oh, brother! What do you want me to do, stalk someone?

Candy cries. Patty carries over a box of tissues, pats Candy's head, sits on the sofa again. Candy blows her nose.

CANDY

Yow! What are these made out of - sandpaper? It's not like I can't get a better job. I can sing, I can cook, and I'm a really good seamstress.

PATTY

You don't need a better job, you need a husband!

She picks up the classified ads and scans the listings.

CANDY

What are you doing?

PATTY

Finding you a husband.

CANDY

It's finally happened, you've lost your mind.

PATTY

Betty Thompson answered an ad in the paper and landed a husband in three months, flat.

CANDY

(stands)

A woman does not need a man to make her happy.

PATTY

I wasn't thinking about you.

CANDY

I'm going home.

EXT. PATTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Candy exits the front door, Patty on her heels.

PATTY

A good mother always puts the needs  
of her child ahead of her own.

Candy looks to her left, at

THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR

and sees Ruth's Toyota pick-up parked at the curb. The cat  
cage sits on the ground, nearby.

In the driveway is a classic VW Bug with pink and white  
flowers.

Rose and Ruth circle the Bug, peer inside.

CANDY

Hello! That's my car!

Rose and Ruth look over at Candy.

CANDY

Are you moving in?

Four steps, and Ruth's in Patty's front yard.

RUTH

Not me - but my grandmother is.

Rose walks over to Patty, oozing charm.

ROSE

How do you do?

(frowns)

Say, do I know you?

Patty's smile fades. She stares at Rose for a beat, then  
slowly circles her and looks her up and down.

PATTY

My... God.

ROSE

(a nervous laugh)

I guess maybe I do know you.

PATTY

Of all the neighborhoods, in all the towns, in all the world - you move into mine!? I've waited a long time for this day - Rose Brown.

ROSE

Brown? I haven't heard that last name since... Oh my Lord! Ruthie, we're leaving!

She heads for the pick-up.

PATTY

Coward!

Rose freezes, marches back. Gets in Patty's face -

ROSE

I may be a lot of things, Patricia Thomas, but there's one thing I am not, and that's a coward!

PATTY

Maybe I should have said, "Slut."

ROSE

I'll take that as a compliment. Coming from a woman who couldn't keep a man, if he were hogtied to the bedpost!

PATTY

Take that back!

ROSE

Never!

OMG, it's a chick fight! Hair and high heels are flyin'!

Candy grabs Patty, and Ruth grabs Rose.

CANDY

Grammy!

RUTH

Nana!

CANDY

What's gotten into you?

Ruth stares up at Patty's front door, horror-struck.

RUTH

Bad kitty - no! Bad kitty - bad!

On Patty's front stoop, sits Honeybuns, with Godzelda clamped beneath his teeth. The frog's legs and arms wiggle pathetically, and she looks as if she's about to croak.

PATTY

Godzelda!

ROSE

Honeybuns! Stop that this instant!

PATTY

Honeybuns?? Honeybuns!! I might have known that would be your cat!

ROSE

Oh, shut up and help me rescue your dumb toad.

PATTY

She's not a toad, she's a frog!

ROSE

(to the others)  
Here, form a ring so he can't escape.

They advance toward Honeybuns, arms outstretched. He darts back into the house, with four women in hot pursuit.

INT. PATTY'S HOUSE - DAY

THE ENTRYWAY

Four women pile into the house, and Rose slams the front door. BANG! A pane of glass breaks. Patty points at Rose -

PATTY

Home-wrecker!

Honeybuns races into

THE LIVING ROOM

and darts behind the recliner. Ruth gives chase, trips over a throw rug. KABOOM! She slams into a curio cabinet. CRASH!

EXT. STERLING'S HOUSE - DAY

A Hummer wagon with Texas plates - TXS BBQ - pulls into the empty driveway on the other side of Patty's house.

It's loaded up with boxes, suitcases, and enough little-girl toys to open up a store. Two men and a young girl get out.

CRASH! The sound of breaking glass comes from Patty's house.

STERLING - 60s, silver-haired, and amiable - looks at Patty's house, then back at the Hummer's driver, LANCE - 30, studly, and Texan.

STERLING  
Patty's in trouble!

LANCE  
(to the young girl)  
Ya'all stay right here with Peepaw,  
honey. Daddy's gonna go help Miss  
Patty. Back in a minute, baby.

Lance reaches under the driver's seat, extracts an old-fashioned six-shooter, and hustles up to Patty's front door.

INT. PATTY'S HOUSE - DAY

Lance opens the front door and steals

INSIDE THE ENTRY WAY,

six-shooter cocked and ready. He follows RIOT NOISES

DOWN THE HALLWAY,

past wreckage from the chase, and throws open a bedroom door.

INSIDE PATTY'S BEDROOM

Four hysterical women stand on a double bed and reach up for Honeybuns, who perches out of reach on a high shelf and gazes calmly down at them - Godzelda in his mouth, wiggling.

LANCE  
What the devil...?

Rose SCREAMS and everybody panics -- till Lance shouts:

LANCE  
Quiet!

PATTY  
Lance!?

LANCE  
Nice to see you, Mrs. O'Connor.

He notices his six-shooter, tucks it into his belt.

LANCE

I thought... well, never mind what I thought.

ROSE

You thought she needed help, you wonderful man. I am very happy to meet you. Rose. Rose Poponovitch.

LANCE

Lance Rockman. The pleasure's mine.

Rose shoots her arm out and pulls Ruth over.

ROSE

This is my granddaughter, Ruthie.

RUTH

(correcting)  
Ruth.

Lance nods politely.

ROSE

Ruthie spends most of her time studying for the bar exam right now, but she'll be free soon.

Ruth would love to become invisible - but Patty's on the warpath.

PATTY

Lance - you remember Candy. It's been a few years since you two have seen each other.

LANCE

(interested)  
Howdy, Miss Candy.

CANDY

Howdy, Mr. Lance.

PATTY

She has a very gentle touch.

LANCE

Excuse me?

PATTY

If you can get that devil-cat down,  
I'm sure she can get Godzelda out  
of his mouth.

LANCE

Yes, ma'am. We'll try our best.

Patty herds Rose and Ruth out the door, and down to

THE LIVING ROOM

PATTY

(to Rose)

If Godzelda dies - you die!

ROSE

Get your filthy hands off me,  
Patricia Thomas.

PATTY

Make that O'Connor, please. I was  
married for forty-two years.

ROSE

Don't think I don't know what  
you're doing, Patty, because I do -  
and I saw him first!

PATTY

"I saw him first." Bah! That never  
stopped you from stealing someone  
else's man.

ROSE

I never stole... You lost Eddie,  
fair and square!

PATTY

You chased Eddie down and pounced  
on him like a man-eating tiger!

ROSE

I never chased a man in my life.

PATTY

Carnivore!

ROSE

It's not my fault if men are  
attracted to me.



RUTH

Nana, can we please go unload the truck? I really need to study tonight.

ROSE

And leave Honeybuns in this madhouse?

She heads back to the hallway, just as Lance and Candy emerge from the bedroom. Lance carries Honeybuns - dead cool - and Candy carries Godzelda - the queen of tragedy.

PATTY

Godzelda!

ROSE

Honeybuns!

The women scoop up their pets and cradle them like infants.

ROSE

Oh Lance, I can't thank you enough.

Sterling pokes his head in, from the front hallway.

STERLING

Is it safe?

PATTY

Come on in, Sterling - join the party.

Patty rinses Godzelda under the faucet, places her in her aquarium and the frog submerses herself underwater - safe. Patty sighs with relief.

Sterling enters, leading DOLLY, 4, by the hand. Dolly could be Shirley Temple's twin sister - the evil one.

DOLLY

Daddy! You said you'd be back in a minute, and you've been gone hours.

LANCE

Daddy's sorry, sweetheart. I was helping this nice lady with her kitty. But I'm leaving, now.

ROSE

Oh, but you haven't introduced us.

LANCE

Beg pardon, ma'am. My father, Sterling, and my little girl, Dolly.

Rose stoops down to Dolly.

ROSE  
Would you like to pet my kitty-cat?

DOLLY  
No.

ROSE  
But we're going to be neighbors.

DOLLY  
No we're not!

STERLING  
You'll be my neighbor, Missus, ah --

ROSE  
Rose... Miss Rose.

Rose stands, gives Sterling a 2,000 megawatt smile.

ROSE  
Would you like to pet my Honeybuns?

PATTY  
God, I may vomit.

Candy hustles down the hall to the bathroom and SLAMS the door, but it doesn't muffle the sound of Candy's VOMITING.

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DAY

Lance and Sterling carry the pink loveseat up Rose's walkway.

Rose stands in the front door, thinks aloud -

ROSE  
That's not gonna fit in my bedroom.

The men stop.

ROSE  
Maybe it should go in the garage.

The men turn around, head for the garage.

ROSE  
Wait! On second thought...

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The tiny room is in chaos. Ruth kneels by a box of PHOTOS of Rose and herself - at all ages, and with different men. She lifts a photo of a younger Rose, standing next to tanned RUDOLPH(45). He carries Ruthie, age 5, on his shoulders.

Rose enters, takes off her high-heel and uses it to pound in a nail, then hangs a photo.

RUTH

Nana, where's Rudolph these days?  
I always liked Rudolph.

ROSE

Let me think. France? Or was it San Francisco. Someplace like that.

RUTH

Well, France is in Europe and San Francisco is in America.

ROSE

Good! Looks like all that college is paying off, honey.

Lance, Sterling, and the loveseat enter. Rose steps aside, and the guys put it down - OOF!

STERLING

That's the last of the lot, Rose.

ROSE

Wonderful! Ruthie's going for Chinese. Won't you stay?

STERLING

Thanks, Rose, but Patty always cooks my dinner. And tonight she's cooking for Lance and Dolly, too.

ROSE

She is? She does?

STERLING

It's a good arrangement. She doesn't drive, and I don't cook.

(extends his hand)

Welcome to the neighborhood, Rose.

Rose forces a smile, starts to shake - laughs - shifts the high heel to her left hand, then grabs Sterling's hand.

ROSE

I just know we're going to be good friends.

INT. PATTY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Candy sets the table for dinner, while Sterling stands nearby and watches Patty wrap a hunk of meatloaf in tin foil. She's getting Sterling's dinner ready to send home with him.

STERLING

He says he came here to start Texas Barbecue in California, but I think he came out, lookin' for a wife.

Patty stops, turns to Sterling, all smiles.

PATTY

Why don't you and Lance eat here, tonight?

In the b.g., Candy rolls her eyes. Grammy!

LATER

Lance, Sterling, Candy, Patty, and Dolly finish eating dinner in the dining nook. Animated, Lance explains to Candy -

LANCE

The secret of good barbecue --

He checks out the window, under the table, then whispers -

LANCE

-- is to keep the fire real low, then smoke your meat all day long, to keep it nice and juicy.

CANDY

I'll make sure and remember that.

DOLLY (O.S.)

I hate meatloaf!

Lance turns to her, cajoles -

LANCE

Dolly, Mrs. O'Connor made this special, just for us.

Dolly makes a face - yuck! Lance turns to Patty.

LANCE  
 Could I trouble you for some jam?

Patty passes him the strawberry jam.

LANCE  
 Thank you kindly.

He spreads a spoonful on top of Dolly's meatloaf. Dolly looks up at Lance, narrows her eyes. Another spoonful... then she eats.

STERLING  
 That's my baby.

DOLLY  
 I'm not a baby. I'm four years old!

Laughter. Dolly scowls, throws her fork on the floor.

Candy makes a goofy face at Dolly.

Dolly stares at her, fascinated. Candy picks up the fork, puts it on the table.

PATTY  
 Lance, if barbecue is so easy, then why isn't everybody else as successful as you are?

LANCE  
 I did some research on that - choked down some of the worst barbecue in the state of Texas. Folks just won't take the time to make it all soft, and tender...

He smiles at Candy.

ROSE (O.S.)  
 Yoo hoo!

STERLING  
 Did you hear something?

Patty pulls a cord - the mini blinds fall with a CLUNK.

PATTY  
 Owls!

ROSE (O.S.)  
 Yoo hoo!

Rose peeks into the kitchen.

ROSE  
 I didn't want to disturb you-all,  
 so I just let myself in.  
 (to Patty)  
 I hope you don't mind.

PATTY  
 Why should I mind?

Rose carries in a boxed pie. Behind her comes Ruth, carrying a pot of coffee. She is mortified.

ROSE  
 I just couldn't let these men get  
 away, without thanking them for  
 their services. How's your toad?

PATTY  
 Frog.

ROSE  
 Good - who wants coffee?

Rose puts the pie down, takes the coffee from Ruth.

STERLING  
 I'm always ready for a good cuppa  
 Joe.

ROSE  
 My kinda man!

Patty looks at Rose, looks at Sterling. Then it dawns on her: Sterling is a man! And Rose is after him.

Suddenly casual, Patty turns to Rose -

PATTY  
 Rose, why don't you take the coffee  
 into the living room, and let me  
 serve the pie?

Patty gloms onto the pie box - a tug o war - then Patty wins.

ROSE  
 You are such a love.

Then everyone except Patty moves into

## THE LIVING ROOM

ROSE  
 (to Sterling)  
 You know, Patty and I go way back.

STERLING  
 Is that right?

ROSE  
 We've been friends, ever since we  
 were girls.

STERLING  
 I wonder why she never mentioned  
 you.

ROSE  
 Oh, you know how hard it is to stay  
 in touch, nowadays.

## IN THE KITCHEN

Patty takes the pie - a banana cream - over to a hidden  
 corner, then covers it liberally with SALT.

PATTY  
 Maybe this'll put you back in  
 touch, Rosie baby.

## IN THE LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patty brings in a tray full of pie servings, and Sterling's  
 face lights up. He takes a plate, hands one to Rose.

STERLING  
 Banana cream! My favorite.

ROSE  
 Now, how did I know that?

A run on the pie, then...

Sterling takes a bite - and GAGS.

Dolly spits hers on the floor.

DOLLY  
 Yucky!

Sterling gulps hot coffee - SPRAYS IT BACK OUT AGAIN.

ROSE

Oh my Lord, he's choking!

Dolly pulls up her dress, rubs her tongue on her skirt.

LANCE

Baby!

Ruth races to the kitchen.

Rose thumps Sterling on the back - but

Sterling shakes his head "No!" and

Rose thumps him even harder!

Lance carries Dolly, SCREAMING, to the kitchen - while

Ruth runs to Sterling with a glass of water.

Sterling shoves Rose aside - KABOOM - gulps the water down.

Candy holds her stomach and dashes to the bathroom.

Sterling gasps -

STERLING

More!

And Ruth runs back to the kitchen - where

Dolly kicks and screams -

DOLLY

I want my mommy!

And Ruth re-fills the water glass.

RUTH

Nana! This is for Sterling!

Rose grabs the glass, dashes back to Sterling.

Ruth clamps her hand over Dolly's mouth, gets in her face:

RUTH

Settle down, and stop screaming.

Their eyes lock, and DOLLY STOPS SCREAMING. Ruth gives her water - and Dolly gulps it down. Whew!

Patty sits and watches it all, enjoying the show.



PATTY

Rose, where did you get this pie?

Rose looks at Ruth.

RUTH

The coffee shop next to Ralph's.

PATTY

Was it their day-old sale? Whipped cream can go bad in a day.

RUTH

Gee, I don't know.

Sterling stands, barely manages to speak.

STERLING

Thank you, Ruthie, you saved my life. Good night Patty, Rose.

ROSE

Oh, don't go!

PATTY

Let the poor man go in peace. You nearly poisoned him, Rose. He looks positively ill.

Suddenly suspicious, Rose studies Patty's face: Pure innocence.

LANCE

Ladies, I'm gonna turn in, too. I'm fixin' to spend all day tomorrow, lookin' for a house.

ROSE

Oh, I love house-hunting!

LANCE

My wife did, too.

ROSE

Your wife... did?

LANCE

I lost my sweet Mary Lou, just last year.

ROSE

Oh, I'm so sorry. You know, you really ought to have a woman along with you tomorrow, to give you that unique, feminine perspective.

LANCE

Yes, ma'am. That's why I got myself a lady realtor.

He turns to Ruth - with new respect in his eyes.

LANCE

Good night, Ruthie. I don't know what we would've done without you.

Ruth blushes. As Patty looks on in dismay. What has she done?

EXT. PATTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Patty and Rose stand on the front stoop and wave, as the men go next door and disappear inside Sterling's house. Then Rose turns to Patty - with murder on her mind.

ROSE

You ruined my pie, you slithering saboteur!

PATTY

You ruined my neighborhood, you shameless hussy!

ROSE

How could I do that, I just moved in!

PATTY

Some people just have a knack!

Patty marches inside. One door pane is covered with cardboard. She SLAMS the door behind her - a second pane SHATTERS.

EXT. LAMBERT STREET - CUL DE SAC - LATE NIGHT

The familiar sound of CRICKETS choruses through the air.

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - LATE NIGHT

A candle-lit room. Rose luxuriates in a bubble bath. In the b.g., a radio plays a familiar SONG and Rose sings along -

ROSE

"Come on baby, light my fire. Come on baby, light my fire. Try to set the night on fire!"

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

THE DOORS' MUSIC continues to play, as we pull back from the warm glow of Rose's bathroom window and pan left, over to -

EXT. PATTY'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The stark light from Patty's kitchen. Through the window, we see her profile cross into view... then out... then back, again. She is pacing.

She stops. Peers out the window. Scans the area between Rose's house and Sterling's. Listens - then resumes pacing, back and forth, back and forth - lost in thought.

We pull back, pan further left, and move over to -

EXT. STERLING'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT

The still, dark visage of the Rockman home. The MUSIC STOPS, and all is silent for a beat.

CLOSE ON: two side windows. And we hear the RHYTHMIC SNORING of two adult males - snoozing away in blissful ignorance, while feuding females plot their doom.

INT./EXT. PATTY'S HOUSE - PATTY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Daylight enters through closed blinds, revealing more photos of Candy on the bureau. Nearby, Patty sleeps in her bed.

The BEEP BEEP BEEP of a truck backing up pierces the silence. Then a mechanical WHIRR, followed by a loud CLUNK.

ROSE (O.S.)

Oh, I just can't thank you enough!

Patty opens her eyes and stares at the ceiling:

PATTY

This isn't my life, this is a movie. It's "Nightmare on Lambert Street," and I'm about to kill somebody!

She rolls out of bed and peeks out the window at  
Rose's pink Mustang, in Rose's driveway, a few feet away.

INTERCUT:

EXT. ROSE'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY

A tow truck DRIVER (50s) undoes the chain that links the Mustang to his truck. Rose, in bathrobe and slippers, takes her credit card back from the Driver.

ROSE  
Where would we be without plastic!

PATTY  
(to herself)  
Out of debt, you moron.

RING-RING! Dolly drives up to Rose's driveway on a tricycle, followed by Lance in jogging clothes. They stop to let the tow truck back out of the driveway.

LANCE  
Morning, Miss Rose.

DOLLY  
Daddy, come on!

LANCE  
Just a minute, baby.

Dolly drives circles around Lance and Rose and rings her BELL, while Lance tries to talk to Rose.

Patty strains to hear, then tries to open her window. No go. She shoves - it opens with a BANG!

Rose and Lance look over, as Patty dives down to the carpet, out of view. Unsure, Rose eyes Patty's window.

ROSE  
Come inside for a minute, Lance,  
and I'll give it to you.

Down on the floor, Patty mouths the word, "Damn!"

END OF INTERCUT

EXT. PATTY'S BACK YARD - DAY

A landscaped area, with an open view to the neighbors.

In her PJs, Patty sneaks over to the low fence that separates her yard from Rose's. Then hops over the fence and advances, commando-style, up to...

EXT. ROSE'S BACK YARD - DAY

Rose's living room window. Patty peeks inside, sees -

Rose consult her personal phone book, write a number down, and hand it to Lance. He smiles his thanks, turns to go.

Patty ducks out of sight. A few commando manoeuvres, and she's in her own back yard, again.

PATTY

I don't like it. I don't like it!

INT. ROSE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room has a semblance of order, now. Rose lies on the loveseat and talks on the phone. She sighs:

ROSE

Your very first date ever, and he's so good looking! I told you your day would come. Tell me, darling - what are you going to wear?

INTERCUT:

INT. RUTH'S STUDIO APARTMENT - NIGHT

A student lair. Ruth sits, surrounded by brick-and-board shelves full of books, phone to her ear.

RUTH

I don't know - jeans, I guess.

ROSE

Good Lord, where did I go wrong?