

ANOTHER ROSE ON THE VINE

Written by

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ROSE WHITE (45)

Once overlooked, Rose emerges as grounded, perceptive, and quietly powerful. As long-buried truths surface, she claims her voice, her identity, and her future—on her own terms.

Archetype: The Hero

LILY WHITE (64)

Elegant, controlling, and deeply performative, Lily has long shaped the narrative of this family. The truth forces her to confront the cost of her blindness—and the daughter she failed to see.

Archetype: The Ruler

IRIS WHITE (47)

Charming, sharp, and cutting, Iris thrives on status and control. Her unraveling reveals insecurity beneath the polish, as identity and entitlement begin to fracture.

Archetype: The Shadow

PARKER SPENCER (40)

Confident and physical, Parker plays the room—until the room outgrows him. Beneath the charm is opportunism, and a man unprepared for emotional truth.

Archetype: The Trickster

RICK WILSON (64)

Measured, observant, and precise, Rick delivers truth without ornament. As executor of the past, he becomes the catalyst for the present.

Archetype: The Sage

ROTATING / SUPPORTING ROLES

TIM ("The Fish Guy") / CLERK

Doubling roles. Grounded, local, and real. These characters provide texture, humor, and contrast to the heightened emotional world of the family.

Archetype: The Everyman

The action takes place in Lily White's Cape Cod home.

The space is fluid: a living room that suggests a dining area, a kitchen beyond, and the garden just outside.

Transitions are achieved through light, sound, and movement rather than set changes.

STAGE LEFT

GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

The backyard garden of LILY WHITE, Dennis, MA.

A yellow rose.

A glove. A snip.

ROSE WHITE (40's) on a large brimmed garden hat, flannel shirt, jeans and a pair of CROCS.

Hands are covered with a pair of men's work gloves.

ROSE is humming the song "The Rose." She is clipping Yellow rose. SNIP SNIP. SNIP SNIP.

A basket gathers the long-stemmed beauties.

ROSE
Oh, make a wish.
Lady Bug, you're a sign of good
luck and positive energy!

She removes one glove - revealing not a gentle lady's hand, but a hand worn from years of labor.

Rough skin. Short, clean nails. The hand of someone who's worked - and served.

STAGE CENTER

KITCHEN - LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

Lily stands at the window, on the phone.

She watches Rose in the garden, smiling.

LILY
 (laughs, dry)
 No, Iris, I've never told her.
 Besides, if she knew... she'd leave.
 And then who would I have to play
 with? She is the perfect servant.

GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

She brings a rose to her nose. She sniffs

LILY
 (screeching)
 ROSE! ROSE!

A thorn draws blood. A single drop.

ROSE (42) sucks her finger

Rose looks at it.

LILY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 (shrill, relentless)
 ROSE! Are you deaf? Rose?

KITCHEN - LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

Lily watches Rose through the window. She sighs, still on the call.

LILY
 (laughing)
 Oh, Iris...
 You'd never know you two are
 sisters.
 You - full of life.
 The other one - just so full.
 It's going to be just like we
 planned. *Who's Afraid of Virginia
 Woolf weekend.* Bring your claws.

GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Rose sighs. She sucks on her finger once more.

Then quietly puts her glove back on.

LILY (O.S.)
 Rose, it's time. Right?

Rose stands.

She picks up her basket of yellow roses.

ROSE
(to no one)
Let's begin.

LILY
(shrill, offscreen)
Rose!

LILY WHITE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

LILY WHITE, 68, still styled like Lauren Bacall's final close-up. She snatches the bouquet from Rose's hands and begins trimming.

LILY
You always pick the best ones.

SNIP. A rose falls. SNIP. She slices off a bud she deems unworthy.

Rose turns on the radio and the song "The Rose" is played.

Rose smiles softly and hums.

Rose picks up the trimmed bud Lily discarded. She holds it.

Doesn't speak. Doesn't smile. Just... lets it be.

Lily sees this and snaps the radio off.

Rose drops the bud in the trash.

LILY (CONT'D)
Well—almost perfect.
(pause, smile)
And my favorite color, of course.

ROSE
(flat)
They're the only ones we have.

LILY AND ROSE
Yellow roses are my favorite!

They chuckle, performative.

LILY
(suddenly cool)
When did you stop calling me "Mom"?
I really wish you'd call me that
again. Or "Mumsy."

ROSE
You don't remember?

LILY
If I did, I wouldn't ask, would I?

ROSE
Of course. Wouldn't want to waste words.

LILY
(arches an eyebrow)
Don't be jealous. Just because—

LILY AND ROSE
I have a Pulitzer prize for writing
Lily freezes. Rose doesn't flinch.

LILY
Are you mocking me.

ROSE
No, Lily. I'm quoting you. Big difference.

Lily eyes her up and down.

LILY
Well then. Remind me—
When did you start calling me
"Lily"?

ROSE
The day you stopped treating me
like your child.

LILY
(scoffs)
And when was that, dear?

ROSE
When I was eight.

She leaves. Calm. Controlled. Humming again.

Lily watches her go.

LILY
(scoffing to herself)
Eight years old. What nonsense.

Lily trims the final rose.

SNIP.

She pricks her thumb – deliberately. RUBY-RED blood beads up.

She holds the vase aloft, checks the room – Rose is gone.
Then, with Broadway-level flair–

LILY

Ohhh!

She throws the vase. It shatters.

CRASH.

ROSE (ENTERING)

Lily, are you okay?

LILY

(panting)

The VAAAASE–it slipped.
All your beautiful flowers. Ruined!

Rose, skeptical, grabs the broom.

LILY (CONT'D)

And look–I cut myself!
This is your fault. You shouldn't
have left me with that heavy
VAAAASE. It was my mother's.

ROSE

Lily, it was from the Dollar Store.

LILY

That's where you came from, isn't
it?

(beat)

Bargain bin daughter. Bargain bin
life.

Rose freezes.

Lily steps–crunch–on two roses. Deliberate.

ROSE

Lily, you–

LILY

Oh, dear. Didn't see them.
Well. We'll just pick more.

Rose exhales. Deep.

LILY (CONT'D)
I heard that. Are you taking your
asthma meds?

No response.

Rose sweeps.

LILY (CONT'D)
Darling? You okay?

ROSE
Wouldn't want to waste words, Lily.
I'm perfect. I'll get more yellow
roses—your favorite.

Lily dons her pretty sunhat and dainty gloves.

LILY
Wonderful. I'll come with you.
We want the perfect ones.

Rose doesn't flinch.

ROSE
Of course we do.

Lily hums, sings:

LILY
♪ "I beg your pardon... I never
promised you a rose garden..."

They walk into the light.

GARDEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Sun low. Shadows long. Lily struts in heels. Rose follows,
basket in hand.

LILY
Not that one, sweetie.
This one's perfect.

Lily leans in delicately to snip a rose—her pristine floral
gloves untouched by effort. She's here for the performance.
Rose does the labor.

LILY (CONT'D)
We want the perfect ones, don't we?

ROSE
(sighs)
Yes, Lily. The perfect ones.

LILY
We haven't heard from your sister.

ROSE
(pauses)
Iris?

LILY
(beat)
Yes, Iris. Rose and Lily and Iris.
(she smiles wistfully)
A floral bouquet. Independent
flowers, each of us.

ROSE
(flat)
You never liked that word,
"Independent."

LILY
(snickering)
Oh but Iris adored it. Always the
free spirit.
(chuckles)
"Don't pick me, I'll wilt," she
said. So poetic. So dramatic.

ROSE
She always called us the greenhouse
girls.

LILY
She always thought herself wild.
Like a weed, if you ask me.

Rose cuts a particularly bright rose. Her hand trembles
slightly.

ROSE
Maybe she'll call.

LILY
Oh, she'll call when she needs
something. Said she was bringing a
friend— some sort of "life coach"
she met.

ROSE
 (chuckles, dry)
 Well, we know what that means.
 So... you have spoken to her.

Lily ignores the comment, as always. She turns, holding a yellow bloom to the light.

LILY
 Not like you, darling.
 You're the dependable one.

ROSE
 Because I stayed.

LILY
 Because you belong. I hope Iris
 calls.

ROSE
 I reminded her what day this is.

LILY
 (feigned surprise)
 What day is it?

ROSE
 Lily, today is your birthday.

LILY
 (feigned shock)
 Oh it is? I completely forgot.
 Will there be a party?

ROSE
 (beat, with a soft smile)
 Oh yes, Lily. There will be... a
 surprise.

She snips a rose. The stem falls to the dirt. Clean. Quiet.
 Final.

CUT TO BLACK.

CENTER STAGE

LIVING ROOM OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

6pm. Rose turns on the lights.

ROSE
 Lily are you going to change?

LILY
What should I wear? Who will be
here?

ROSE
Well, as you always said about
parties,

LILY AND ROSE

"Invite the world and half will
come."

They both laugh easily.

LILY
So, Iris is coming?

ROSE
I've not heard back yet.

LILY
The Dupont's, surely will be here.

ROSE
No, sadly they went in to Boston
for the weekend. Some event with
the Smith's.

LILY
(swooning)
Oh the Smith's have a

LILY AND ROSE
Marvelous yacht

LILY
And when I won the Pulitzer

ROSE
Yes, they took you out to
celebrate. You brought Iris and
left me at home.

LILY
Well you were so

ROSE
Plain looking. Average. You always
said "average"

LILY
Well, I never.

ROSE

I let go of that little bee sting
years ago.

LILY

Iris always did light up a room.

Rose hands Lily a Manhattan straight up.

ROSE

Here mother, it's time for our
beverage.

LILY

Oh you always take such good care
of me, Rose.

ROSE

Dependable, I belong here, right,
Lily?

Lily raises her glass.

LILY

To Rose!

ROSE

Ah, Lily, now this is your day, we
focus on you. Look at how grand
you look. Wait one moment.

Rose goes out to another room.

LILY

Oh Rose, what are you doing, no
surprises needed! No, no. Dear come
back. Let's have our cocktail and
talk of old times.

Rose returns with a showy white, feather boa. She puts it on
Lily. Behind on the mantle is a massive portrait of Lily
with Iris in the garden and Lily is wearing the same boa.
She puts the boa on Lily and then stand back. She makes one
adjustment.

ROSE

There, darling just perfect.
Perfect. Let me take a picture.

She steps back. Looks Lily up and down. One second too long.
The smile is pleasant. But the eyes? Empty

LILY
 Oh no need. Well, maybe just one.
 We can send it to Iris.

Rose takes a picture with her phone. She shows to Lily.

ROSE
 Beautiful as ever.

Lily looks and smiles.

LILY
 I always did have good lines. You

LILY AND ROSE
 Take after your father.

ROSE
 Iris always had your looks. You
 favored her. More.

LILY
 No. I loved—
 (pauses)
 —I love you both. Equally.

ROSE
 Mother, your Pulitzer winning
 novel, "Through Iris' Eyes"

LILY
 (scoff)
 Oh, you, always so sensitive. It's
 all fiction.

Rose goes to the bookshelf and picks up the novel. Opens it.

ROSE
 (she reads with no
 fanfare)
 "Her eyes saw so much. She knew
 she was different. Destined for
 greatness.

LILY
 (thoughtful and emotional)
 I long to see the world through
 Iris' eyes."

ROSE
 Oh dear. No need for maudlin
 emotions.

Rose dabs a tissue to Lily's cheek to wipe away the tears. Lily tenderly touches her hand and kisses it.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Let's get this party started, shall we?

LILY
(excited)
Yes let's! Did you make appetizers?

ROSE
Now my mother brought me up proper, of course, we have appetizers. Now dear you just snuggle up to your Manhattan. Let me put on some music and get the first course.

LILY
Oh wonderful!

Rose turns on Patsy Cline, "Crazy" She goes to the kitchen. Lily swoons in her chair. The feeling is light.

LIVING ROOM - 6:45PM

The golden hour light hits just right.

Lily stands in front of the mirror: white feather boa, red lipstick, a silk wrap that gleams like old Hollywood. She twirls. She purrs.

Rose enters carrying a tray. Still in the same flannel shirt, jeans, and Crocs. A dish towel tucked into her waistband.

The contrast is devastating.

LILY
Darling, I feel positively radiant. You don't think it's... too much?

ROSE
You always said, "Too much is just enough when you're Lily White."

LILY
(giggling)
Did I say that?

ROSE

You wrote it in the dedication of
your second novel. Under Iris'
name.

A beat. Rose sets the tray down. Deviled eggs. Radish roses.
All perfect.

LILY

But look at you, Rose. You haven't
changed. Still my little garden
gnome.

ROSE

Practical. Comfortable.

LILY

Plain.

A silence. Patsy Cline still hums faintly in the background.
Lily sips her Manhattan like it's her Oscar. Rose takes a
dish back to the kitchen.

LILY (CONT'D)

(cheerfully)

Maybe tomorrow we'll go shopping!
I'll buy you something with shape.
Something... pink!

ROSE

(over her shoulder)

I have shape, mother.
You just stopped looking.

Lily tries to recover.

LILY

(over zealous)

You were, well are such a smart
girl, 1st in your class in High
School. I don't know why you didn't
go into nursing.

ROSE

Lily, please you know why. The
sight of blood.

LILY

(demonstrative)

Oh blood is just blood, it cleans
up.

ROSE
It stains, lingers. It has smell.
You remember, right.

Lily is looking off. Ignoring.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Lily you do remember? There I was
with father coming out of the
movies, "Beauty and the Beast."

LILY
You so loved that movie. Just like
Belle, you love to read.

ROSE
And then out of nowhere a man comes
up and shouts, "Harry White you're
a dead man." Then he shoots and
father jumps in front. We fell
backwards. He fell on top of me.
The bullets came down like rain.
Then silence.

They talk over each other.

LILY
Must you dig this up.

ROSE
Then the blood was all over me. I
was soaked in Father's blood/

LILY
You always stir up the past/

ROSE
Then at the hospital for hours.
The police, the doctors, all at
me./

LILY
You couldn't just get by with less.

ROSE
And where were you. Where?

LILY
These deviled eggs are delicious.
You followed my recipe perfectly.
I do like a little paprika on for
color. That way they are just
perfect.

Rose goes to the kitchen and comes back with paprika and adds just a touch to the deviled egg in Lily's hand.

LILY (CONT'D)
See? Perfection.

ROSE
So, no mother, I did not want to be a nurse.

LILY
Yes, well, you've had options, you hesitate and they just all wither away like a rose on the vine.

Lily raises her empty glass.

ROSE
Yes, Lily let's freshen up your beverage. It is your birthday.

LILY
Oh I forgot!

Rose goes to the side and makes another drink. Lily gets up with her boa on and mirrors the image. She hums along with Patsy Cline.

DOORBELL RINGS.

LILY (CONT'D)
Oh, surprise guests. You sly fox, Rose. It must be the DuPont's. I am sure they've come to take me out. You'll have to eat alone.

Rose looks, deadpan, She's done this routine a hundred times with the same ending.

ROSE
(over excitement)
Well. Let's see! Of course. I can change my plans. No worries.

Rose goes to the door. Lily displays an over-the-top greeting. The door opens. Lily gasps.

No one there. Just a parcel on the doormat.

ROSE (CONT'D)
No, DuPont's, just a package.

Lily winces slightly at her disappointment. Rose brings the package over to Lily and hands it to her.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Happy birthday Lily!

LILY
From you? No, no need, no need.
What is it?

ROSE
Sweetheart, let's open it and find
out.

Lily is giddy with excitement. She opens the package and there is a smaller box, wrapped like the size of a ring or earrings.

LILY
Oh well, now as we know

LILY AND ROSE
Jewelry is never the wrong size.

Lily opens the box, displaying exaggerated excitement. Lily's eyes as they go from joy to emptiness.

Beat. Silence.

LILY
You got me wrinkle cream.
How..thoughtful of you.

ROSE
I know, Lily, you don't really need
it, yet, but always good to have on
hand.

Rose smiles. Lily gets up and hugs Rose. Too long. Too hard. The cold war drifts in.

LILY
Always dependable.

ROSE
Always.

Patsy Cline music swells as the feeling of bleak nostalgia settles in. The ladies toast the moment. The box of wrinkle cream is set aside.

Lily sips her drink. The Patsy Cline track softens in the background.

LILY
You know, I do love a good
celebration. Even a surprise.

(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)

(beat)

I thought you'd gone all quiet on me, Rose. I assumed you were planning something big. For me.

ROSE

(eyes locked, steady)

I'm not.

LIVING ROOM OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

The grandfather clock chimes 7. Each toll seems to stiffen the back and posture of the ladies.

ROSE

Shall we play SCRABBLE? RUMMY? Or, I invented a new game?

LILY

Oh you dear! I love your new games! Yes, Yes, new game, please! What is it?

Rose goes to the table and picks up a shoebox that has been covered with purple wrapping paper. There is a large cut out opening to pullout pieces of paper. Rose has written down questions.

ROSE

It's called, "Just Tell Me."

LILY

Just Tell Me? Sounds interesting. How do we play? Who is the winner?

ROSE

There are questions in the box and we take turns and share our answers.

LILY

OK, and how do I win? Or how do you win?

ROSE

There is no winner, we just learn about each other.

LILY

Well (scoff) no winner then what's the point.

ROSE
That is the point.

Rose shakes the box.

LILY
Okay, I'll give it a try.

She pulls a note with theatrical flair.

LILY (CONT'D)
(reading)
"What is it that you want to say
but don't to me."
(a beat)
Well that's silly. I tell you
everything.

ROSE
Do you?

A pause. Lily hesitates. Looks down. Then—

LILY
I want to tell you...
(pause)
I know I can be the center of
attention. More than I should. And
I'm aware of it. But I can't help
myself.

Rose offers a small smile.

ROSE
See? Wasn't that fun?

LILY
(smiling)
Your turn.

Rose reaches into the box. Pulls out a slip. Reads in her usual plain, steady tone.

ROSE
(reading)
"What did you always want to be?"

She exhales, eyes down.

LILY
Oh darling, I know that one—
A famous writer, just like me.

ROSE
No, Lily.

LILY
Oh, I love this game. Let's perform
it. Give us your answer, Gloria
Swanson.

ROSE
(flat, quiet)
I always wanted to be noticed by
you.

Silence.

It lands.

LILY doesn't move.

Doesn't respond.

Then—

DOORBELL RINGS.

LILY
(bright, immediate)
Ah!
That must be the DuPonts!

She rises—already performing.

The bell rings again.

Less patient.

ROSE doesn't move.

LILY (CONT'D)
(smiling, breathless)
Well—don't just stand there.

ROSE moves to the door.

Opens it.

A beat—

Then—

IRIS bursts in.

IRIS (44)

Thin. Beautiful. Vivacious. Everything Rose is not.

Sunlit in silk. A daring pink blouse. Heels sharp enough to stab.

Her Gucci bag swings like a trophy.

Without looking—

She hands it to Rose.

Like staff.

IRIS
(overly dramatic, musical)
Mooooooooother!

LILY rises like royalty. They kiss. Hug. Coo. Kiss again. Hug again. Performative. Rehearsed.

ROSE stands in the entryway. Still holding the Gucci bag. She gently sets it down.

No eye roll. No sigh. Just... silence.

Lily pulls Iris into a hug—tight, delighted.

She reaches for Rose—

LILY
Oh, Iris. My Greenhouse Girls—
back together again.

Rose steps in.

Just enough.

Then—gently—she slips out.

ROSE
I didn't know we'd fallen apart.

A beat.

IRIS
(scoffs, then theatrical)
Oh, my wilted little petal, Rose.

She laughs.

Lily joins her.

Iris steps in—plants a bold, red kiss on Rose's cheek.

ROSE doesn't move.

IRIS (CONT'D)

There.
Some color.
(looking her over)
Still wearing that grayscale chic,
I see.
(beat)
Very... mourning dove.

Lily settles into Iris's arm.

They turn toward Rose.

Smiling.

Waiting.

LILY

(laughs)
"Grayscale." Oh, Iris, you are
wicked.

IRIS

Mother, stop. It's just—

IRIS AND LILY

Natural talent!

They burst into girlish giggles. Rose doesn't flinch.

IRIS

Come—let's see the garden before
the sun disappears.

She takes Lily's arm.

They move toward the door—already leaving Rose behind.

IRIS (CONT'D)

(calling back)
Rosie! Tito's on the rocks—twist of
lime.

ROSE

(flat)
We don't have Tito's, just—

IRIS

(waves it off)
Whatever.
(beat, smiling to Lily)
(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)
You always make such a show of
everything.

Lily laughs.

They exit.

The door closes.

Silence.

ROSE stands there.

A beat.

Another.

She doesn't move.

Then— A soft throat clear.

She turns.

PARKER SPENCER (45)

Built like a sin you forget to confess. A faded tee hugs
every decision he ever made at the gym. Five o'clock shadow.
Eyes that see through silk.

He enters like he owns the room.

A slow, knowing smile.

He clocks Rose.

PARKER
(low, smooth)
You must be Rose.

ROSE
No.
(beat)
I'm the maid.

A flicker.

PARKER
(smiles)
No need for lies.
(beat)
I see you.

Rose shifts—just slightly.

ROSE
I wasn't lying.

Parker steps closer.

Not touching.

Not yet.

PARKER
So much deeper than Iris.
(beat)
Those eyes.

Silence.

Too close now.

ROSE
I was just trying to be funny—

PARKER
Don't.
(beat)
Don't be anything else but you.

A breath.

They hold.

ROSE
So... what's your story?

PARKER
(grins)
I run "wellness retreats."
Private clients. Weekend
transformations.
(leans in slightly)
Inner peace... outer results.

ROSE
"wellness."
(beat, amused)
Now that's interesting.

PARKER
Met Iris at one.
(beat)
She... captivated me.

ROSE
(slight edge)
Not sure if it was Iris... or her
credit limit.

PARKER
Is there a difference?

A beat.

He notices her glance—his arm.

He sees it.

Does nothing.

Lets it sit.

PARKER (CONT'D)
(quiet)
You want to be held by these.

Not a question.

ROSE breathes.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Because suddenly—
(beat)
I want to hold you.

Silence.

He leans in—

Almost—

ROSE
(soft, firm)
Wait.

A beat.

She steps back.

He lets her.

Smiles.

Doesn't chase.

PARKER
(quiet)
Yeah.
(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)
 (beat)
 You're not like your sister.

THE BACK DOOR FLIES OPEN

ROSE
 (stepping back, cool)
 Enjoy the show, Parker.

Then she leaves—and in crashes the cabaret queens.

PARKER
 (to himself, quiet)
 Yeah... she's not like the others.

Iris and Lily come in arm and arm singing

IRIS AND LILLY
 "I beg your pardon, I never
 promised you

Iris sees Parker. She runs to him.

IRIS
 PAAAAAAAAAAAAARKER, my love!

Lily steps right in. Rose is the last person into the story.

LILY
 Well, well, my, my. Iris does have
 an eye for the extraordinary. Where
 you hurt from the fall?

PARKER
 Mrs. White/

LILY
 My dear, dashing guest, call me,
 Lily.

Lily and Parker smile. He doesn't miss a beat.

PARKER
 My Fall?

IRIS
 From heaven when you were brought
 in by the angels!

LILY
 Exactly. (SINGS) "Why do birds
 suddenly appear..."

Lily, Iris, and Parker fold into a tight circle.

Rose re-enters.

IRIS
(from within the hug)
Rosie—how about a drinkie?

ROSE
Of course.
(beat)
Anyone else?

LILY
Oh, Rosie—yes.
(beat, light, dismissive)
Do think of the rest of us.
(then, brighter)
Drinks all around.

Rose dies a little death inside as they all hug without her.

INT. LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

THE CLOCK CHIMES 8pm

LILY
Oh, my lovelies—so glad to have you
home.
My Greenhouse girls.
(beat, glowing)
Just like old times.

IRIS
You used to braid my hair.
(soft, remembering)
So beautiful.
(beat, then—lightly)
Rosie's was more like Father's.
(beat)
All wires.
Short.

A flicker of a smile.

Lily laughs.

LILY
Just look at you, Iris.
(beat, admiring)
Forty-four... and you still pass for
thirty-four.

PARKER
 (smiling, low)
 And she has the energy of someone
 much younger.

A beat.

A small, suggestive growl.

Lily joins—playful, indulgent.

LILY
 Oh my, my—let's not get too spicy.

IRIS
 Rosie—what's for dinner?

LILY
 Rosie always prepares for ten when
 there's three.
 (beat, smiling)
 She's afraid someone might go
 hungry...
 (another beat)
 ...or leave.

ROSE
 Dear, I didn't know you were
 coming.

IRIS
 Mother and I spoke this afternoon.
 (beat)
 You were cutting the roses.

Rose looks to Lily.

LILY
 Oh yes—we did talk.
 (quick, dismissive)
 I forgot.

ROSE
 Yes.
 There will be plenty for all.

PARKER
 (winks)
 Even for a man of my... appetite?

Lily and Iris laugh.

IRIS
Oh, Mother, you should see his
size.

ROSE
(bored)
Yes.
Even enough for you.
And plenty to spare.

LILY
That's our Rosie—

LILY AND ROSE
Dependable.

They laugh.

Rose doesn't.

PARKER
(quiet, to Rose)
You're nothing like Iris.
(beat)
That's what makes you interesting.

A shift.

ROSE lowers her eyes.

IRIS
Now, Parker—
(steps in, smiling)
You are here with me.
(beat)
Or do you prefer... wilted petals?

LILY
Or, Iris—
(pleased, indulgent)
style.
My Iris has style in spades.

A beat.

ROSE
I'll check on dinner.

She turns.

IRIS
Are there appetizers?
(spotting them, delighted)
Oh, Mother—
(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)
Your deviled eggs.
And just the perfect amount of
paprika.

Rose pauses.

Turns.

Looks directly at Lily.

A beat.

LILY
Of course I did.
(holding Rose's gaze)
It's all about presentation.

A flicker.

Rose Exits.

Iris throws her arms around Lily.

IRIS
Oh, Mother—I am so glad to be back
in my house.

LILY
(smiling)
Darling, this house will always be
yours.

Iris, Lily, and Parker gather around a small, worn shoebox.

IRIS
(laughing)
What is this?
God, it looks like something from
confirmation class.

(beat)

Do you keep the Blessed Virgin in
here?

LILY
(laughing)
No.
(lower, conspiratorial)
Rosie made a little game.
"Just Tell Me."

Rose re-enters with a tray.

They don't notice her.

LILY (CONT'D)
You say whatever the other person
wants to hear—
(beat)
and then decide if they're lying.
Points if you fool them.
(beat, pleased with herself)
There's always a winner.

Rose sets the tray down.

CLANG.

They all turn.

A beat.

ROSE
(quiet)
That's not the game.

Silence.

LILY
(smiling, dismissive)
Oh?

ROSE
You just tell the truth.
(beat)
If you can.

A longer silence.

IRIS
(laughs it off)
Well that sounds dreadful.

LILY
(smiling again)
Then we'll play it my way.

Rose holds her gaze.

Then— She sets the final place.

Steps back.

ROSE
Let's all take our places.

IRIS
Mother, where should I sit?

LILY
On my right, of course.

IRIS
Perfect.

PARKER
Then Rosie—
(beat, smiling)
I'll sit beside you.
I'll keep my eye on you.

ROSE
Just Rose.

A flicker.

IRIS
(laughing)
Oh, Parker—that's always been
Rosie.
Quiet jealousy.

ROSE
Iris, you do know how to read me.

PARKER
(smiling)
Rose, you don't miss much.

LILY
Our Rosie is always a beat behind.
(beat, pleased)
And we love her predictable
behavior.

IRIS
Dependable.
(beat, looking her over)
Head to toe.

PARKER
And humble.

ROSE
Well—
(beat, dry)
You all speak about me as though
I'm dead.

A beat.

IRIS
Most of the time—
(smiling)
I forget you're even here.

Lily laughs.

LILY
Oh, Iris.
Such a wit.

A beat.

ROSE
(quiet)
Such a wit.

DINING ROOM — LATER

A low hum.

ROSE runs her finger along the rim of a wine glass.

The tone lingers.

Soft.

Repetitive.

Lily watches.

Still speaking to the others but her attention shifts.

She reaches out.

Gently.

Takes Rose's hand.

Stops the motion.

The sound dies.

A beat.

LILY
(soft, almost kind)
Not at the table.

LILY (CONT'D)
Now Iris—
(smiling)
(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)
Tell me you didn't spend a penny on
me.
Not one.

IRIS
Well, Mother—
(smiling right back)
The least I could do..
(beat)
considering you send me a check
full of love every month.

A beat.

Rose looks to Lily.

Lily feels it.

LILY
(quick, light)
Oh—hush.
(beat, smiling too
brightly)
We don't discuss gifts in front of
others.

PARKER
Well we brought Dessert.

LILY
(exclaims)
Oh dessert! White Cake my
favorite. I adore white cake. Hmm.

ROSE
Lily I made you a white cake.

LILY
Well of course you did.

IRIS
Of course you did.

LILY
But a white cake from Boston, Oh I
feel like Jackie Kennedy.

PARKER
I 'll be right back.

Parker goes out to the car.

IRIS

And I got you just a little
something as well, between us
girls.

Lily gets up and hugs Iris. Over-the top. Rose looks on.
Not a shred of emotion.

Parker return and sets the box down by Lily along with the
smaller box. He sits back next to Rose.

PARKER

(leans in, soft)
I see you.

He takes her hand.

Holds it.

Too long.

A thumb brushes her wrist.

A pulse point.

PARKER (CONT'D)

You don't let them see you sweat.

A beat.

He leans closer.

Almost touching her.

PARKER (CONT'D)

Good girl.

Lily sits back down.

LILY

Oh White Cake. My favorite. My
mother would make me the most
perfect White Cake.

Lily opens the cake. Lily's eyes, wide with delight then
they go cold with despair. PAUSE. BREATH by all.

Rose gets up to assist.

ROSE

Let me help you.

Rose takes out the cake. It is a triple layer all chocolate
cake with purple and yellow frosting.

I third of the cake has been clawed away, like a ravaged animal got after it. The writing on the cake "APPY RTHDAY TED"

Rose looks. Lily is maintaining composure. Dead calm.

Parker laughs and pounds the table.

PARKER

Don't you just love it!

Iris Laughs.

IRIS

Surprise it's not white cake!
Sometimes you have to change it up.

ROSE

Lily you detest chocolate cake.

LILY

Rose! Manners. No I actually prefer a chocolate cake. Enrich my palate.

Parker laughs again. He claps his hands.

PARKER

And we were driving and I got so hungry. So we stopped at a rest area and we each took a handful. Just scooped it right off, like wolves.

IRIS

And chocolate makes Parker...come alive.

ROSE

(bland)
And who is Ted?

IRIS

Oh Dead Petals, relax. Who cares?
Cake is cake. We are together and that's all that matters!

Lily squeeze Iris' hand in full view. Parker takes Rose's hand and squeezes it under the table.

LILY

Rose, Rosie, cut the cake for us and serve. Who wants coffee?

Rose exits with the cake.

A beat—

CRASH.

The sound of china shattering.

Silence.

All pause.

IRIS
(sharp, calling out)

ROSIE—
(beat)
That better not be Grandma Turner's
china.
(quick, possessive)
That set comes to me.
After she's gone.

A beat.

IRIS
(turning, casual)
Mother—how is Grandma Turner?

Rose re-enters.

Three plates.

Four coffees.

She sets them down.

One by one.

No plate for herself.

LILY
Oh—
(beat, light)
bearing up.
(another beat)
On her last leg.

ROSE
Her last leg?
(beat)
You went to the outlets yesterday.
(another beat)
She rode my bike to the beach.

A flicker.

IRIS
 You still ride a bike?
 (looking her over)
 Are you in shape for that?

ROSE
 Don't wait for me, sister.

IRIS
 (smiles)
 I never did.

A beat.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 Now, Mother—open your gift.

LILY
 Oh, I do love how you spoil me.

She opens it.

A beat—

Same box.

Same cream.

She plays delight.

IRIS
 Don't you love it?
 It's never too soon to keep what's
 ageless... beautiful.

LILY
 Yes.
 Marvelous.
 (beat, turning)
 Rosie—would you like to try it?

ROSE
 No.
 (beat)
 I don't have your lines.
 (another beat)
 I take after Father.
 (quiet)
 Wouldn't want to waste it on me.

A beat.

LILY
(smiling)
You're right.
(beat)
You can't polish old metal.

FADE OUT.

DINING ROOM - LATER

The room LAUGHS. Rose sits alone, still. The others rise. Lily waves a casual hand toward her like one might shoo a waiter.

LILY
(without turning)
Rosie, be a dear and clear, won't
you?

They drift off toward the living room, drinks in hand, still chuckling. Iris plucks the shoebox from the table.

IRIS
(shaking it)
Round two, darlings?

They pull slips, laughing - their voices fade into a cruel chorus.

DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rose doesn't move.

The grandfather clock begins to CHIME.

ELEVEN TOLLS.

With each one, Rose's finger taps the table - louder, harder - A perfect sync with the clock.

TAP.

TAP.

TAP.

Like a metronome building rage.

She's not just holding something back –
She's becoming something else.

FADE TO BLACK.

LIVING ROOM OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

The house is quiet now. She works on a counted cross stitch of a bunch of yellow roses, not in a vase tied with a white ribbon. A single drop of blood drips from a thorn.

FATHER (V.O.)
My darling girl. Come let your
father hug you.

Rose stitches

LILY (V.O.)
Iris's hair is so much easier to
braid...

Rose's stitching slows

The moon beams into the room. A light dances in the moonlight shadows. Rose breathes easy.

MIDNIGHT.

A clock chimes.

Twelve slow bells.

The lights shift.

The room softens.

Opens.

ROSE rises.

Crosses.

Steps into the garden.

A change in air.

Silence.

Then—

A low hum.

Soft.
Familiar.
She breathes in.
Deep.
For the first time tonight.
A warm wash of light.
Fireflies—suggested.
Small flickers.
She lifts her hand.
Watches.
Still.
She removes her flannel.
Not for display—
For relief.
She stands as she is.
Unhidden.
Unapologetic.
Her feet slip out of her shoes.
Touch the ground.
She feels it.
A beat.
Another.
She hums.
“The Rose.”
Eyes closed.
Stillness.
Finally—

peace.

PARKER ENTERS

The hum continues.

A second voice joins it.

Lower.

Parker.

He steps into the light.

Barefoot.

Present.

He doesn't speak.

He moves close.

Too close.

A breath between them.

Rose doesn't turn.

Doesn't move away.

A long beat.

He rests his forehead near her shoulder.

Not quite touching.

Then—

She leans back.

Just enough.

Contact.

Stillness.

Time stretches.

The hum shifts.

Becomes something else.

Shared.

Unspoken.

Lights soften.

The world disappears.

Black.

A beat.

Lights return—dim.

They are on the ground.

Separated.

Parker sits, undone.

Rose sits apart.

Contained.

PARKER

(quiet, raw)

That was... beautiful.

(beat)

You complete me.

ROSE

(distant)

How nice for you.

A long silence.

Parker rises.

Doesn't look back.

Exits.

A clock begins—

Three chimes.

Rose remains.

Still.

Then—

She wraps her arms around herself.

Not broken.

Not comforted.

Just... holding.

A beat.

She breathes.

Looks up.

ROSE (CONT'D)

(soft)

Thank you.

(beat)

For seeing me.

A pause.

She dresses.

Returns to herself.

Lights shift.

The night fades.

KITCHEN - MORNING

8:00 AM.

Bright light.

Windows open.

The table is set.

Abundant.

ROSE moves through it all- efficient, practiced.

She sings softly.

ROSE

"Some say love... it is a hunger..."

Parker enters.

Watching her.

PARKER

(smiling, self-assured)

So.

(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)
The lady sings, too. You are a deep
well.

ROSE
Ocean.
(beat)
A deep ocean.

PARKER
But I can't toss a coin in the
ocean...
(steps closer)
No wishes there.

ROSE
Wishes are free, Parker.
(beat)
They don't cost a thing.

She moves past him.

Keeps working.

He watches.

PARKER
I want to continue.

A beat.

ROSE
I thought we were finished.

Lily and Iris enter— arm in arm.

LILY
Well.
What do we have here?

PARKER
Nothing.

LILY
(not looking at him)
I wasn't speaking to you.
(then, to Rose)
What are you up to, my dear?

ROSE
I cooked.
(beat)
For everyone.

LILY
Guests?
(beat)
Are the DuPonts coming?

ROSE
No.
(beat)
My sister.
You.
Parker.

IRIS
(slight edge)
Sister—
this is my house.

ROSE
Our house.

A beat.

Lily steps between them.

Takes both their hands.

LILY
My little Greenhouse Girls—
(smiling)
This is our house.

Silence.

Held.

Parker claps—

breaking it.

PARKER
So.
What's the plan?

IRIS
(grinning)
Beach day.

ROSE
Yes.
I've made sandwiches.
(beat)
For the three of you.
The cooler's packed.

PARKER
You're not coming?

IRIS
She doesn't—

IRIS AND LILY
Take the sun very well.

They smile.

ROSE
I have our father's skin.
(beat)
Irish.
I burn.

IRIS
(laughing)
Remember that summer—
they had to take you to the
hospital?
(beat)
You swelled up like a tick.

ROSE
You said it was sunblock.
(beat)
It was baby oil.
(another beat)
You left me there.

IRIS
We were kids.
Who knew?

ROSE
You were sixteen.
I was fourteen.
(beat)
You took the car.

Silence.

A shift.

ROSE (CONT'D)
(firm)
Stop that.

Stillness.

IRIS
 (brushes it off)
 Oh, please— You looked like a pig.

ROSE
 (steadier)
 Stop.

A beat.

LILY
 (gently, stepping in)
 Oh, Rose—
 the past is over.
 (soft smile)
 Don't waste time on dust.
 (beat)
 Look up.
 Find the stardust.
 Make your wishes.

PARKER
 (smiling, easy)
 You know—
 wishes don't cost a cent.

A flicker.

Rose hears it.

LILY
 Oh, that's wonderful.
 (hand out)
 Rosie—my pad.
 I must write that down.
 (to Parker)
 May I steal that?
 Did it just come to you?

Parker glances at Rose.

A wink.

PARKER
 (smug)
 I'm feeling... very creative today.

IRIS
 (dry, without looking up)
 You weren't last night.

A beat.

All shift.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 I woke up—
 (then, light)
 and you were gone.

PAUSE. The room beats.

PARKER
 I was captured by the moon last
 night.
 (beat)
 I've never felt anything like it.

IRIS
 (smiling, dismissive)
 Careful.
 I prefer my men strong.
 (beat)
 A little... uncomplicated.

She takes his arm.

Feels it.

Admiring her own possession.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 Something solid.
 Something I can hold on to.

A beat.

She looks to Rose.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 Could you imagine?

ROSE
 (flat)
 I don't have to.

A flicker.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 I've had that.
 (beat)
 And better.

Silence.

Lily laughs—
 too quickly.

IRIS
(cutting, easy)
Oh, please.

Always so dramatic.

ROSE
Breakfast is served.

LILY
Oh, Rosie—you made biscuits.

IRIS
Of course she did.
(beat, looking her over)
She has to put her gifts to use
somehow.
(another beat)
And she clearly enjoys them.

A flicker.

Rose doesn't respond.

She steps back.

Pours herself coffee.

Stands.

Apart.

They sit.

Eat.

Laugh.

Conversation builds—

easy, flowing— never including her.

Rose sips. Watches. Unseen.

KITCHEN OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE - AN HOUR LATER

The clock strikes 9. As the chimes roll Iris and Lily enter with sunhats and bathing suits to accentuate their perfect Barbie-like figures.

ROSE
Ok you are all packed. I load the
car for you.

IRIS
What time is dinner tonight.

Lily looks to Rose. Rose pauses.

ROSE
7:30, how does that sound?

LILY
Oh Rosie that would be perfect,
Right Iris?

IRIS
Can we push to 8?

Beat.

ROSE
Of course sweetie. 8 would be just
perfect. That will give you time
to help me prepare dinner.

IRIS
Oh no I could do, well I don't want
to do that. This is my mini-
vacation.

LILY
Rose, Rosie you can handle the
prep. Just cook for 5 and not for
10!

IRIS
Mother will you be making your New-
England clam chowder?

ROSE
Yes I will make the clam chowder,
clam cakes, corn on the cob, corn
bread, lobsters and strawberry
shortcake.

LILY
Sounds perfect, Rosie.

IRIS
Rosie you do remember that I don't
do corn and I can't handle cracking
the lobsters. Also cornbread and
shortcake, perhaps you should cut
out one of the starches, sweetie?

Pause. Lily looks to Rose.

ROSE

Right got it. Iris you will have
sesame broccoli and Lobster
Newburgh. I'll make the corn bread
and if you don't want, don't eat
it.

IRIS

I was thinking of you, sister.

ROSE

Ohh, well, I am an adult, so if I
want it, I will have it.

Parker claps his hands.

PARKER

(energy back up)
So let's get you ladies going.

ROSE

The car is all packed. Dinner at
730, oh I am sorry, per Iris,
dinner at 8.

IRIS

Parker you are not going?

LILY

Parker you must see the beach,
besides who will we talk to?

PARKER

(laughs)
You two won't even miss me. I will
help Rose here, I love to cook.
Maybe I can teach her a few things.

LILY

Well let's not waste the day on
useless conversation. The sun, the
sand and sea awaits. And Rosie

ROSE

Of course mother, cocktails and
appetizers will be ready at 630.

LILY

Usually it's 6?

Rose starts to twist the dish towel in her hands as she
speaks.

ROSE

Of course, Mother. Cocktails and appetizers will be ready at 6:30.

(beat. twisting the towel)

You usually say 6?

(pause, quieter, but sharp)

Iris wanted dinner at 8.

(beat tension tightens)

So I thought for myself and moved the starters back. 30 minutes.

COLD PAUSE

IRIS

(snippy)

You don't have to make every decision a declaration of (mocking)

"So I thought for myself" Jesus lighten up, it's Saturday.

Rose smiles.

ROSE

Don't forget your sunscreen.

Wouldn't want you to get burned.

IRIS

Parker, keep an eye on Rosie. The plain Jane's always try to take what they can't keep. Mother, why is it that the ugly girls always think they are smart?

LILY

Oh, Iris, you are beautiful and smart!

Rose looks at Parker and he looks at her.

PARKER

Oh run along.

LILY and IRIS (laughing as they exit) Plain Jane... Plain Jane...

The door clicks shut. Silence returns.

PARKER (CONT'D)

(sighs, low)

Is this normal?

ROSE
(still, without blinking)
This is always.

FADE OUT.

KITCHEN - LATE MORNING

Quiet.

Sunlight.

ROSE works—precise, controlled.

PARKER appears in the doorway.

Watching.

PARKER
Smells like a holiday.

ROSE
It's Saturday.

PARKER
That your way of telling me not to
get comfortable?

She doesn't answer.

Moves.

Works.

PARKER (CONT'D)
You always this good at hiding in
plain sight?

ROSE
You always this good at showing up
where you're not invited?
(beat)
Pad. Over there.

He grabs it.

Plays along.

PARKER
You want help?

ROSE
I want a list.
Clam chowder. Clam cakes. Corn.
Cornbread. Lobster. Thermidor.
(beat)
Strawberries. Cream.
Tito's for Iris.
Bourbon for Lily.
(beat, finally)
What's your pleasure?

PARKER
(smiles)
Now you're speaking my language.

He steps closer.

Too close.

He leans in—

almost touches her neck.

Stops.

PARKER (CONT'D)
You've got a wall.
High.
Tight.

ROSE
Walls keep things safe.
(beat)
Write.

A pause.

He doesn't.

PARKER
I think you're waiting to be
noticed.

A long beat.

ROSE
Then stop pretending you're the
first man who has.

That lands.

He shifts.

PARKER
(quiet, impressed)
You've got teeth.

ROSE
You stopped writing.
(beat)
Or you're used to women who don't.

A flicker.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Tell me something true.

PARKER
What if I already did?

ROSE
Oh—
(beat, cool)
So that was you? Crying on my
shoulder last night?

He doesn't answer.

She clocks it.

ROSE (CONT'D)
That's what I thought.

The kettle whistles.

She turns it off.

Silence resets.

PARKER
Let's just say what we're thinking.

A beat.

She turns.

Faces him.

ROSE
You first.

PARKER
(quiet, intent)
I think you're wasting yourself in
here.
(beat)
(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)
And I'd like to see what happens
when you don't.

A beat.

ROSE
I'm already bored.
(beat)
We've got work to do.

She moves past him.

Exits.

He watches her go.

Smiles.

PARKER
(low and to himself)
Bored. I'll give you fucking bored.

He hits the kitchen lights and closes the door.

STREET TO THE MARKET

They walk.

PARKER
You know what you're doing?

ROSE
In what sense?

PARKER
To me.

ROSE
(chuckles)
That line usually work? Is that how
you keep Iris interested?

Parker kisses Rose.

PARKER
This is how I keep her interested.

Rose she steps back.

ROSE
Sad, really. The shallow grave you
dig for yourself.

Parker mutters—

PARKER
(under his breath)
Shallow grave. Fuck you.

ROSE
Did you say something?
(beat)
My father used to say: "Cowards
mumble. The brave speak up."
So which are you?

Parker smiles.

Off stage can be heard "At 17" plays.

*"I learned the truth at 17, that love was meant for beauty
queens."*

PARKER
(softly)
Always liked this one.

ROSE
Me too. What do you like about it?

PARKER
That voice. That ache.
The ugly duckling, finally singing.

ROSE
*We all play the game.
And when we dare— We cheat
ourselves at Solitaire.*

A long beat. Parker looks at her.

PARKER
So you cheat?

ROSE
Seems like you do.

The song plays on. Their silence says everything.

SHANNIGAN'S MEAT AND FISH

Parker is pushing the shopping cart. Rose is picking off items from her list. Parker adds things to the cart like a little kid would do, items not on the menu. At the cheese section they pause. He picks up a French cheese and looks at the price.

PARKER

And let's try these too. You can
make a blend.

ROSE

Fine.

He slides behind her. His body presses close. He growls—nods
at the bathroom sign.

A passing shopper scoffs.

ROSE (CONT'D)

Go ahead. I'm sure the mirror and
your reflection are all you need.

PARKER (LAUGHS, UNFAZED)

Touché.

GROCERY CLERK

Oh Rose! So good to see you. How
is your writing going, I loved your
short story collection.

ROSE

Connie you are so sweet. Thank
you. Yes I'm getting some new ideas
now.

GROCERY CLERK

As you said in our class last week,
"Pay attention, ideas and
inspiration is all around us."

ROSE

Did you get chapter 2 finished? I
would love to read it and if you
like, give you my perspective.

GROCERY CLERK

Oh Rose that will be wonderful. I
will email it to you.

The clerk moves along.

PARKER

(doubting)
You write?

ROSE

(playing along and using
his deep voice)
You flex?

They both laugh.

PARKER

(easy)
Rosie

ROSE

Just Rose.

PARKER

Your mother and Iris call you
"Rosie." Why don't you correct
them?

ROSE

Because it's not a nickname—it's a
weapon. They use it to remind me
where I rank. (beat) Parents should
love their children equally... if
they can. Lily never tried.

PARKER

What about your father?

ROSE

He was different. Educated. Kind.
And generous—even to Lily. He
believed in her writing, gave her
his contacts... (beat) The Simons.
From the Cape.

PARKER

That name rings a bell.

ROSE

It should. But don't get excited— I
don't trade in borrowed fame.

PARKER

That sounded... pointed.

ROSE

Just polished.

At the fish/meat counter.

FISH GUY

Miss Rose, so good to see you. My
wife asked if you stop over to look
at the paint swatches she picked
up. I have no eye for colors and
we just love your water color
works.

(MORE)

FISH GUY (CONT'D)
 She is using terms like "Mauve" and
 "Dusty Sand" and I am a red, green
 and blue guy.

They all laugh easily.

ROSE
 Sure thing, Tim. I'll stop over
 after the weekend.

FISH GUY
 Great, Peg will be thrilled. Now
 what can I get for you? And who is
 this strapping Tarzan?

ROSE
 (plainly)
 My sister, Iris' friend.

FISH GUY
 (with disdain)
 Oh, Iris back in town. God there
 must be a storm brewing.

ROSE
 (chuckles)
 Now Tim, let's not talk ill of
 someone.

FISH GUY
 Well I never liked how she treated
 you. My daughter Linda...Oh listen
 to me. Taking up your time while
 you have Tarzan in tow. What do
 you need?

ROSE
 Oh, Tim, that is fine. Fine. I
 need 7 X 1 1/2 pound lobsters. 2
 pounds of cod and 2 pounds of
 Snow's minced clams.

FISH GUY
 Ah making your famous chowder?

ROSE
 Well it is my mother's recipe.

FISH GUY
 Lily always makes it good, but
 yours is better.

FISH GUY gets busy with the order.

PARKER

Well don't you just get around.

ROSE

Surprised? Thought I was just a
withering flower, the quiet maid.
Life is about living.

PARKER

But at the house you are so/

ROSE

Quiet yes. I find I learn much
more from listening. Besides,
Lily, like you and Iris, you love
the sound of your own voice and
your own reflections.

DENNIS, MA TOWN BEACH

LILY AND IRIS do a selfie.

Lily and Iris are chatting like two long-time friends. Girl
talk, fashion. Walking towards the beach, they stop at a cafe
table outside to have a coffee.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

11am Saturday morning. The sun is
bright and it looks to be another
beautiful day here in Dennis, Ma.
Get out and enjoy this Saturday!

They sit. Waiter comes over, surfer-dude type.

WAITER

Ladies, what can I get you from the
bar that would be interesting?

IRIS

You on the rocks.

Lily rolls her eyes.

LILY

We will have two iced teas.

WAITER

Now we're talking! Long Island
Teas at 11. Want a plate of raw
oysters. Let's party down. I'm off
at 2 and show you ladies/

LILY

Young man. I have stocks older than you. Settle down, boy.

Waiter smiles a broad smile

SHANNIGAN'S MEAT AND FISH - continuous

PARKER SMILES like a wolf.

PARKER

We need meat for tonight.

ROSE

Aren't you enough for all of us?

PARKER

(smug)

You would like this (he flexes) again wouldn't you?

ROSE

I would like a lot of things. Tim, lets add on 5 NY stirp steaks.

PARKER

(Calling out)

Hey Timmy, hold on. Did I ever tell you I was a waiter?

ROSE

Now that's a surprise. Denny's or Chilis?

PARKER

Ha. Ha. So I had these two guys come in, gay.

ROSE

And thought you were gay as well right?

PARKER

What? No, wait let me tell my story.

ROSE

So, you are gay?

PARKER

For hire or course. I am a liberated man.

ROSE
Right, how did I miss that?

FISH GUY
Here are the lobsters and clams.
Now about the steaks.

ROSE
(laughs)
Well, listen in, Tim, Tarzan has a
story for us.

FISH GUY
Oh I love a good story.

DENNIS, MA TOWN BEACH

FOCUS ON THE WAITER'S BICEP

IRIS
But mother, he is so cute.

The waiter smiles that broad "I want to pick you up smile.

LILY
No.

The waiter leaves.

LILY (CONT'D)
And when you drink early, you have
loose lips.

Iris is going through her purse and takes out a shade of
lipstick. Lily snatches it and applies it. Iris takes out
another shade and winks and applies it to herself.

A strip photo falls out and feathers to the ground. Iris and
Rose as kids in a photo booth. 12 and 10. They both are
laughing

Lily spies it and picks it up. She looks fondly for a
moment. Iris snaps it back.

LILY (CONT'D)
(fondly)
You two looked happy there.

The sound of children laughing by the beach is heard.

IRIS

(dramatic)

I always *wanted to like her*
(changes), but I just didn't have
it in me. I made her think that I
was happy and that we were best
friends. Remember her crying that
night "where's my Pooh, where's my
Pooh-bear"?

Iris picks up the photo strip again.

Looks at it. The smile fades. She folds it in half, then in
half again. And places it inside her bra – close to the
heart, far from the truth.

LILY

Oh so long ago, but yes, the bear
just disappeared.

IRIS

I tossed that wretched thing in the
DuPont's trash.

Iris laughs. Lily looks at her with a new clarity.

LILY

Iris.

The water looks at Iris and winks. She winks back.

IRIS

(deadpan)

Oh, mother Rose has no idea right?

LILY

About what?

IRIS

Don't be coy. That she is the red-
headed step child. (she laughs)

LILY

I've never told her that she is not
my child and that you are my true
blood.

IRIS

You certainly married Father, well
Mr. Patrick White in a hurry. I
found those letters you wrote so
sad talking about the dead,
original Mrs. White.

(MORE)

IRIS (CONT'D)
To think that she died and let dead-
petal Rosie live.

LILY
(coolly)
She never had our lines

IRIS
Never. To think you were her
mother, my God, the low end of the
gene pool.

They laugh. The waiter brings back the regular iced tea.
They Toast Glasses

MASH CUT

SHANNIGAN'S MEAT AND FISH - CONTINUOUS

PARKER CLAPS his hands to start the story

PARKER
(Playing the room)
Ok so these two guys.

ROSE
Tim, the two guys are gay. Parker
were not sure of.

FISH GUY
Oh my son is gay, I am cool with
that and Tarzan is 100% gay. I can
spot em like I can imitation crab.

PARKER
(glares)
And so these two guys come in and
they want the NY Strip. Now Tim,
what is a better cut? The NY Strip
or the Filet?

FISH GUY
Well depends on what you like

PARKER
Right, you are no help. The filet
is better. So I says to the boys
(Parker shows his thick, muscled,
vein forearm) this (he slaps his
forearm, is the NY Strip. And this
(he flexes his well muscled bicep
and kisses it), this is the filet.

(MORE)

PARKER (CONT'D)
Which do you think the boys went
with?

FISH GUY
The chicken.

ROSE
The scrod.

PARKER
Smartasses both of you. Of course
they went with the filet.

MASH CUT

DENNIS, MA TOWN BEACH

They laugh. The waiter brings back the regular iced tea.

LILY
(a waive of the hand)
Junior don't even think of hanging
around.

They laugh again.

IRIS
So what about the house?

LILY
What about it?

IRIS
Well Parker and I want it, we need
a nest to roost in.

LILY
Well you can come back home!

IRIS
Not with Rosie Posie there. I never
liked her.

LILY
You leave that to me.

IRIS
(interested)
Mother what are you brewing?

LILY
Has Parker made his move yet?

IRIS
 (feigns chocking)
 Yes, oh god the things I do for
 money. Yes he went down on her

LILY
 Iris!

IRIS
 He went to her last night.

LILY
 And?

IRIS
 He said she wept like a baby. That
 she had never been with a man
 before. Mother do you think she
 is, well you know..

LILY
 Gay? Lesbian? Oh sweat Mother of
 God, I hope not. One more reason to
 get her unshapely bag of bones out
 of the house.

They laugh!

IRIS
 Unshapely!

LILY
 Bag of bones!

IRIS
 So let's make dinner tonight,
 interesting.

LILY
 What do you have in mind?

IRIS
 Poor dead petals has been cooking
 all day, I will toss some daggers
 at her about the food, sub par,
 bland, just to see her explode.
 Remember when I did that at her
 16th birthday.

LILY
 Oh that was nasty. You told the
 entire guest list not to show up
 and no one did. She sat for hours
 waiting.

IRIS

Then I said, "What no friends, Rosie? Maybe they had the wrong night?" Then she looked at me and knew I did it.

SHANNIGAN'S MEAT AND FISH - CONTINUOUS

FISH GUY

Is that all they got that night?

PARKER

(he leans in))

Well they did get a little something extra, they were from out of town, so I showed them a few of the monuments (he winks).

Fish Guy and Rose look at each other. No expression.

FISH GUY

So Rose, the filets?

ROSE

Sure thing, Tim. Thanks.

Parker looks triumphant. They head to the check out and Parker tosses more item not on the list into the cart. They talk easy.

DENNIS, MA TOWN BEACH

LILY

I had to drag her off you!

IRIS

Oh it was worth every bruise I got just to see her break. I'm gonna do it again tonight.

LILY

Just be careful. She is good with a knife.

IRIS

Cow. Her pudgy, mannish hands.

LILY

And why she insists on wearing flannel in August.

LILY AND ROSE
(beat and a look)
PRACTICAL!

They laugh.

MASH CUT

SHANNIGAN'S MEAT AND FISH CHECKOUT.

The checkout girl finishes as the bag boy is putting everything bagged into the cart.

CHECKOUT GIRL
Ok Rose that will \$458.24.

Parker looks away. Doesn't even budge for the wallet. Rose looks. She waits. She takes \$500 in cash out of her purse.

She gets her change back. Smiles.

BAG BOY
Rose can I help you put this in your car.

ROSE
No need, Mark, I have Tarzan here who can handle that.

Parker flexes, growls.

PARKER
I got this.

ROSE
Well at least you got something.

MASH CUT

DENNIS, MA TOWN BEACH

Iris takes out a \$1 dollar bill and folds it into a rose -
<https://www.tiktok.com/@valentinabalance/video/7333740657338780974?lang=en>

LILY
Oh Iris, you've always been so thoughtful.

IRIS
 (smiles, shrugs)
 Well, that's one rose no one will
 miss.

DINING ROOM OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

615 pm.

The table is set. Elegant. Party hats at each setting. Food is prepped, soup taurine is in place.

The WHITE CAKE sits on the side table, lit like a relic. An angelic glow.

Rose enters, changed.

A dark blue dress. White belt. Her reddish hair softly curled. Low heels replace Crocs.

Not showy. Not dramatic. Just... complete.

Above there are muffled voices, raised. She cannot here what is being said.

ROSE
 (to herself)
 Eavesdropping, along with name-
 dropping, is never a good quality.

The muffled voices get louder. She looks as if something must be wrong. She steps off stage. Listens in plain sight.

LIVING ROOM

The conversation is still muffled but audible. Rose off stage not visible to them.

IRIS
 Rosie has no idea.

LILY
 Keep your voice down.

PARKER
 She was so easy to take last night.

IRIS
 I can't believe you did it with
 her.

PARKER

She said I was the best she ever had.

IRIS

That cow. Who would want her?

Rose is embarrassed. She stops. Thinks. Then enters.

DINING ROOM CONTINUOUS

Rose looks around. She adjust the table settings.

ROSE

Perfect. Let's start this dinner.
Alexa play French Bistro Music

Rose pours herself a glass of white wine.

DINING ROOM CONTINUOUS

The clock chimes the half-hour. 6:30 PM

There are trays of appetizers: Crab bites, spinach dip in a pumpernickel loaf, shrimp cocktail, crostini with feta and tomato jam, rumaki, chicken wings, chex party mix. Pitchers of Manhattans, Cosmopolitans are ready. White and Red wine chilled. Bailey's with glasses ready for after dinner.

ROSE

(to herself in confidence)
It's going to be a lovely dinner.

Laughter is heard as Lily and Iris walk in arm-in-arm. Parker comes in and is stunned by Rose's simple understated elegance.

PARKER

Well, I see the duckling has become the swan. Bravo!

IRIS

(catty)
My God, Rosie, you look like a nun.
Are you performing "The Sound Of Music" later for us?

Lily and Iris laugh. Parker not sure yet where he is landing.

ROSE
 (warmly)
 Welcome – to our family dinner to
 celebrate the birthday of Lily
 White.

IRIS
 Rosie, I'll take a Tito's on the
 rocks with a twist.
 Oh wait – I bet you didn't remember
 that.

ROSE
 Oh, sweetie. And let you not have
 every little thing you want?

She crosses to Iris and plants a big red lipstick kiss on her
 cheek. A long, extended hug.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 (over the top)
 Oh, I love you, my big sissy!

All eyes turn to Rose. A beat.

PARKER
 Well, I'll have a Manhattan – and
 so will Lily.

ROSE
 Great choice!

A beat. No one moves. The room freezes like someone forgot
 their lines. All eyes still on Rose.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 (feigned surprise)
 Oh! I'm sorry – you were waiting
 for me to get that for you?

She waves a hand toward the bar and food trays for the
 STARTERS.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 Help yourselves!

LILY
 But, Rosie... today is my birthday.

ROSE
 Then have someone help you. Cheers!
 Dinner in one hour. Parlor games
 are on!

Lily, Iris and Parker all look like they don't know what to do. Rose always serves them.

Rose goes and takes Iris' hand gently.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 (warmly)
 Honey let me show you around YOUR HOUSE. See I put the drinks here. Now be a dear and *(she leans in)* *FUCKING* get it yourself, sweetie.

Rose smiles. She taps her wine glass.

CHING. CHING.

Lily, Iris and Parker head to get drinks. Parker pours himself a Manhattan. Lily is there with her hand extended. Parker heads straight to Rose.

Parker pulls Rose aside a bit forceful. She doesn't flinch.

PARKER
 (Low and controlled)
 What game are you playing? I see you clean up very well.

ROSE
 Well it certainly isn't for you crybaby. My God you were like a little boy who just found out that there is no Santa Clause.

Parker smiles wryly.

PARKER
 Oh but I am sure you will get your present tonight. I am ready for round two when you are.

ROSE
 Don't wait up.

Rose crosses with the starters.

Lily and Iris—mid-laugh.

LILY
 Rose, Rosie

ROSE
 Lily for the love of God, it's Rose. Just Rose.

(MORE)

ROSE (CONT'D)
 You call me "Rosie" again I will
 throw a drink in your face.
 You don't mean "Rosie" as a term of
 endearment, you mean it as a weapon
 of malice.

IRIS
 Oh Lady Macbeth has been learning
 her lines. Bravo.

ROSE
 You want to dance as well? My
 dance card is wide open, sweetie.

LILY
 (strongly)
 ROSIE, I don't like your tone.

Rose throws he full glass of wine in Lily's face.

ROSE
 I told you.

SILENCE.

Rose walks to the bar and pours another glass of wine.

Iris looks and then laughs out loud.

IRIS
 Oh that was wonderful. I have
 always wanted to do that but never
 did. One sec.

Iris takes her phone out and snaps a picture of the wet-faced
 Lily.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 I can't wait to re-tell this story!

IRIS (CONT'D)
 (stunned... then delighted)
 Oh.
 Oh, that was... magnificent.

She pulls out her phone.

Snaps a photo.

LILY-wet, still, composed.

IRIS (CONT'D)
 (grinning)
 I am absolutely telling this story.

LILY doesn't move.

Doesn't wipe her face.

A long beat.

Then—

LILY
(cold, precise)
How quickly she forgets her place.
(beat)
A single evening..
and she thinks she's transformed.
(eyes on Rose)
Glass slippers don't change the
girl.
They just delay the midnight.

Silence.

Lily glares at Rose and Parker talking.

LILY (CONT'D)
Iris hand me napkin. And why is
Parker so friendly with her?

IRIS
(laughs)
Oh mother, relax, you'll have a
heart attack, but then if you do
then I get the house, so fume away!

She hands Lily a napkin.

The party smolders.

Parker lights up a cigarette. Slow exhale of smoke.

KITCHEN OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE

STEAM RISING FROM THE LOBSTER POT.

Rose humming to herself

ROSE
*"I say love it is a flower and you
it's only seed."*

Rose looks around the kitchen. Checks the soup, the clam
cakes.

ROSE (CONT'D)
(she calls out)
Parker!

A moment passes and then he enters.

PARKER
(smooth like fox)
I knew you would come to your sense
and realize/

ROSE
That you should cook the filets

PARKER
Me? Well I'm all dressed.

ROSE
Funny so am I. Once I serve the
soup you will have about 20 minutes
to get the steaks done. Try not to
mess this up. The steaks were your
idea. I like my filet Medium Rare.

She turns to leave the kitchen.

PARKER
(slight panic)
What about everyone else?

ROSE
Well let's see. Why don't get a
set of balls, flex your biceps and
go ask people what they want.
How's that sound? Does that work
for you? Great. I need another
drink. I will get it myself. You
look like you could use a
refresher?

Rose comes back and kisses Parker, full and gentle. He
starts to lean in and take over. Rose gently backs up.

She tastes her lips. Pause.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Mmmmm. You taste like (beat)
regret. I better let you get your
own refill.

Rose heads to the living room. Parker just got his game back
on.

PARKER

Well you can't rape the willing. I don't care if she is willing or not, "taste like regret" (scoff) it's a full moon and this wolf is gonna howl.

He downs his drink and head back to the others.

DINING ROOM CONTINUOUS

Rose walks over to Iris and Lily.

LILY

(as in admiration)

You going to throw another drink in my face, throw food at me like some ape? I raised you to be better.

ROSE

Rule was "call me Rosie" and you get a drink in your face. You saw how that worked out for you. You want to step up the game and call me ape (Rose looks at Iris) or "Dead-Petals" and I am not sure what I would do.

LILY

Is that a threat?

IRIS

Are you mad?
(beat, sharp)
Or is this about Parker?

A flicker.

Silence shifts.

Parker enters mid-moment.

PARKER

(light, oblivious)

How are the starters?

No one answers.

ROSE

(quiet)

You all seem very interested..

(beat)

So let's not pretend.

Nobody knows that to say.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 So, let me be clear.
 (steady)
 He was... fine.
 (beat)
 I've had better.

Silence.

Parker stills.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 And when it was over—
 (beat)
 he needed comforting.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 (to Parker)
 Oh and Tim, the fish guy called me
 and his son wants to know if you'll
 be in town long.
 He saw you on GRINDR and is very
 interested in you.

IRIS
 Oh *ROSIE*.

Rose stops and slowly pivots. She moves with 6" of Iris.

ROSE
 (warmly)
 My pet, what is it that I can do
 for you?

IRIS
 (beat, then snippy)
 The crostini is stale.

ROSE
 And so is this conversation. And
 you're fat.

Rose heads to the kitchen.

IRIS
 Mother, I am not fat am I?

LILY
 Well, you do look like you are
 putting on a few pounds.

Parker laughs. Makes himself a drink. Lights a cigar.

PARKER
Shut you right down, Iris.
(laughing) that changed the room.

Rose enters with the tureen.

Sets it down.

A small bell—

RINGS.

ROSE
(with ease)
My lovelies—
dinner is served.
(beat)
Parker, enjoy the chowder.
Then you can handle the steaks.

IRIS
Parker—
you're cooking?

PARKER
(grinning, flexing)
A man should earn his keep.

LILY
Oh dear lord.

Rose lifts her glass.

They follow.

ROSE
To Lily White.
(beat)
Happy birthday.

They drink.

Parker tastes.

PARKER
Rose—
this is excellent.

Iris tastes.

A beat.

She sets the spoon down.

IRIS
(flat)
It's bland.

Rose rises.

No reaction.

Takes Iris's bowl.

Exits.

A beat—

CRASH.

Silence.

All freeze.

Rose returns.

Sits.

Composed.

IRIS
(scoffs)
No need to be dramatic. I was going
to have it.

Rose smiles.

Reaches over— lightly touches Iris's hand.

ROSE
My dear sister—
(soft)
If you don't enjoy something..
(beat)
don't have it.

A pause.

ROSE (CONT'D)
Life's too short to pretend.
(beat)
We've all done enough of that,
recently.

A flicker.

She sips.

Silence holds.

PARKER

Lily—
this is a beautiful recipe.

LILY

(a beat)
It was my husband's first wife's
recipe.

A crack.

Barely there.

She reaches for Rose's hand. Squeezes with kindness.

LILY (CONT'D)

(gentle)
Fine soup.

Rose nods.

PARKER

It tastes like... history.

Iris kicks him.

WHOMP.

Parker blinks. Grins. Keeps eating.

The French music swells. Iris downs her vodka in one gulp.

DINING ROOM — NIGHT

A bell.

A shift in light.

The evening unfolds in fragments—

—Parker enters with steaks.

Steam rising.

Sets them down.

—Rose crosses with lobsters.

Precise.

Effortless.

-Wine is poured.

-Plates are changed.

-Laughter.

-A toast.

Lights shift.

Slightly dimmer.

Time moves.

-Clam cakes passed.

-Hands reaching.

-Glasses refilled.

-Voices overlap.

Faster now.

-Parker carving.

-Rose clearing.

-Iris posing with her plate.

A flash of a smile.

-Lily watching.

Always watching.

Music begins-

low, smooth.

Something like jazz.

The rhythm continues.

Faster.

Looser.

-A laugh too loud.

-A glass nearly tips.

-A missed catch.

-A spill.

No one stops.

Time blurs.

The table grows smaller-

not literally-

but in feeling.

The space closes in.

The light lowers.

The music softens.

Then-

stillness.

The table remains.

The people remain.

But something has shifted.

DINING ROOM - LATER

They sit back.

Looser.

Spent.

Glasses low.

Plates half-cleared.

PARKER

(wiping his mouth)

Steaks were perfect.

IRIS

(slick, pleased)

I never doubted you.

LILY

(sipping, watching Rose)

I tried the Thermidor.

(MORE)

LILY (CONT'D)
(beat)
Rose—

A flicker.

She lets it land.

LILY (CONT'D)
You are... quite the cook.
(beat)
I don't believe I've ever said
that.

ROSE
Then it's good you said it now.

A small laugh.

Uncertain.

A breath—

KNOCK.

Sharp.

The room stills.

No one moves.

Another—

KNOCK.

Lily sits forward.

Alive.

LILY
(whisper, thrilled)
The DuPonts.
(beat)
I knew they wouldn't forget me.

IRIS
(squeals)
I love the DuPonts.

No one moves.

A beat.

ROSE
(smoothly)
I'll get the door.

She rises.

Crosses.

Heels on hardwood—

measured.

Deliberate.

The room watches her go.

She opens the door.

A pause—

Then—

RICK WILSON (69)The Attorney. Impeccable. Still.

Holding:

—an envelope

—a small wrapped box

—a flat parcel

He stands there like he's expected.

RICK
(smiling)
Miss Rose.
(beat)
Right on time.

He steps in.

They embrace—

familiar.

Easy.

Trusted.

ROSE
Mr. Wilson.
I'm so glad you're here.
(MORE)

ROSE (CONT'D)

(beat)
It's Lily's birthday.

Rick steps inside.

Looks into the room—

Iris.

A flicker.

Then—

Lily.

A pause.

They lock eyes.

History.

Unfinished.

RICK

(quiet, to Rose)
You look like your father.
(beat)
Same spine.
(sotto)
Let's make this clean.

Rose nods.

IRIS

(whispering)
Mother—who is that?

LILY

Rick Wilson.
(beat)
It's been a long time.

RICK

Thirty-four years.
(beat)
And I remembered the date.

LILY

(smiles, unsettled)
You always did.
(beat)
You were the best man.

RICK
And he was my friend.

A beat.

He turns- he sees Iris.

RICK (CONT'D)
You must be Iris.
Stand up.

She rises.

Performs charm.

IRIS
I don't believe we've met.

They shake.

RICK
You have your mother's... presence.
(beat)
Very striking.

A flicker.

He turns-

RICK (CONT'D)
And this-
(beat)
is Rose.
Forty-two.
(quiet, certain)
Exactly who she's meant to be.

ROSE
(smiles, contained)
Mr. Wilson-

He turns-

Parker.

Still.

Measured.

RICK
And you must be Parker.

They shake.

Firm.

PARKER
(hesitant)
You know me?

RICK
I've heard of you.
(beat)
Tim mentioned you.

A flicker.

RICK (CONT'D)
Said you and I have...
(beat)
shared sensibilities.

IRIS
(flat)
What does that mean?

Rick smiles.

Still looking at Parker.

RICK
It means...
(beat)
I notice things.

Silent pause. Breathe.

LILY
Rick, what brings you here this evening?
(laughs, thin)
I thought you were the DuPont's.

RICK WILSON
Jim and Francine? Old friends. I'm seeing them tomorrow on the Vineyard.
(turning to Rose)
But tonight's not about them.
Tonight's about you. All of you.

ROSE
Mr. Wilson, would like to join us for White Cake?

RICK WILSON
I would love to have a slice of your mother's famous White Cake.
(MORE)

RICK WILSON (CONT'D)
 You know it won the BAKE-OFF back
 in P-Town in 1980. First Place. Ah
 those were the days.

IRIS
 Mom you were in P-Town? You won a
 BAKE-OFF?

LILY
 Rick, do sit. Let's not tell old
 stories. Let's celebrate

RICK WILSON
 Well, it is your birthday. And
 Lily, I have two presents for you.

LILY
 Oh Rick, you shouldn't have.

RICK WILSON
 I didn't buy these gifts, Lily.
 (pauses)
 They've been waiting for you for 34
 years. Your husband gave them to
 me... the night before he died.

The jazz music swells.

Lily and Iris talk with Rick, they laugh, get to know each
 other. The feel is *almost* nostalgic, ALMOST.

Rose brings the glorious WHITE CAKE to the table and sets it
 in front of Lily.

There is a single candle on the cake.

Rose nods to Parker. He gets up to light the candle,
 effortlessly.

All smile.

Rose starts.

ROSE
 (calm and with peace)
 "Happy Birthday..."

ALL
 "to you..."

They sing the song, all look around as they sing not knowing
 exactly what to expect.

All applaud! Rose removes the cake to the side table to slice and serve. Parker gets up without hesitation to assist. He nods to Iris, twice, and she gets the hint to re-pour the coffee.

Cake is passed around all take their first bite and

SILENCE in the room.

IRIS
Mother this is your recipe?

All look.

LILY
(pause, then humble)
No dear.

IRIS
What?

PARKER
Rose?

All turn to look at Rose. She doesn't move just holds a serene look.

RICK
So, Lily. Two gifts tonight.

All look. Not sure what is coming next.

Rick hand the two presents to Lily. He holds on the sealed envelope.

LILY
Really, Rick this is from Mr.
White? From 34 years ago?

IRIS
(low whisper but everyone
hears)
MOTHER. WHAT IS GOING ON?

PARKER
(to Rose, low)
I feel the Libra Moon, alright.
(scans the room)
Something's about to snap.

Rose stays poised.

ROSE
(quiet power)
We're not dancing in the moonlight
anymore.

IRIS
Well, open it?

LILY
Rick, is there a protocol here?

RICK WILSON
Yes, open the small box first.

She opens the box and inside is smaller box. It looks very similar to the WRINKLE cream that Lily received from both Iris and Rose.

IRIS
Oh My God, more wrinkle cream? (she
laughs)

RICK WILSON
Hush child.

Lily opens the box. Her eyes go from delight to a faraway look and then tears well and slip slowly down.

PARKER
Lily are you ok?

Lily wipes the gentle tears. She takes out a fine gold chain with a simple key. A diamond is on the key and it glistens.

She clutches the key like it's still warm. Her reverence becomes the scene's emotional ground wire.

IRIS
(interrupting, confused)
What is going ON?

LILY
After all these years... he still
held love for me.
(turns to Rose)
And I've been selfish.
I'm sorry.

IRIS
MOTHER! What is going on?

RICK WILSON
Lily maybe open the other gift.

Lily's hands are shaking. This is not the same person we met 24 hours ago. Rose is gentle. She puts her hand on Lily's hand. Iris sees this and immediately puts her hand on Lily's other hand to demonstrate control. Lily releases Iris' grip. She nods to Rose and Rose let's go.

Lily opens the package.

LILY
(she openly cries)
No, no he didn't. He couldn't have.
Oh my dear Patrick.

Iris grabs the package, and as she does, a note falls out.

IRIS
(puzzled)
"The Secret Garden" What the hell
is this book for?

Lily is crying a stream of tears. Iris opens the book

IRIS (CONT'D)
It says, *"To my Lily: You have the
key to the Secret Garden of my
heart. Love my Rose in case I am
not there. I love you for loving
what was not yours but is now ours.
Love, Patrick."*

PARKER
What fell on the floor.

He gets up and hands it to Lily. She looks, Is puzzled. She looks at Rick.

RICK WILSON
You have a Penthouse in your name
on Newberry street.

IRIS
Oh I love Newberry street all the
shopping/

RICK WILSON
And it is in your name and upon
your death will transfer to your
daughter, Iris.

IRIS
(excited, oblivious)
So we have two house mothers!

RICK WILSON

No.

A silence flattens the room. Everyone looks around – and then, to Rose.

IRIS

(evil, unraveling)

What did you do?

I'm not even your sister. Well... half-sister. The better half. Same father. I hate you. I've **always** hated you. I told everyone NOT to come to your stupid 16th birthday, and I was—

Parker throws a glass of water in Iris's face.

Her mouth opens in stunned silence.

Rick looks down.

Lily looks away – ashamed.

Rose does not move. No emotion.

Rose calmly reaches across the table and offers a napkin.

Iris SLAPS her hand.

IRIS (CONT'D)

You filthy... hag.

A sudden, CRACKING SLAP from Lily across Iris's face. LOUD.

The room freezes. Iris starts to cry – shocked more than hurt.

LILY

Iris, for Christ's sake... shut up.

Parker leans in to Rose.

PARKER

Like I said...

This has been a very exciting evening.

Rick clears his throat. He holds up the envelope.

RICK WILSON

So you can see this envelope is sealed. I am the attorney of Patrick White.

(MORE)

RICK WILSON (CONT'D)
(he turns it over and reads) "Open
this on August 24, 2025 when Lily
White turns 68."

They all look. No one sure what is going on.

Rick opens the envelope.

Iris - squirming.

Lily - trying to compose.

Parker - calculating.

Then...

ROSE.

No blink. No breath.

RICK WILSON sits at the head of the table.

A legal folder rests before him.

He looks up.

The room holds its breath.

RICK
(beat)
We ready?

A breeze wafts in through the open windows.

The candle flames tremble. One flickers out.

A vase of yellow roses on the side table catches the wind. It
tips and crashes to the floor.

Shattered porcelain. Stems and petals splayed like bodies.

Silence.

ROSE starts to stand.

IRIS
(loudly)
Leave it, you blood-sucking tick.
Lawyer, read the will. I want
what's coming to me.

Rick opens the folder.

RICK
 (holding the envelope)
 This was to be opened today.
 (beat)
 On your birthday.

He opens it.

The room stills.

RICK (CONT'D)
 I, Patrick White, being of sound
 mind...
 (beat)
 appoint Rick Wilson executor of my
 estate.
 (beat)
 I appoint Lily White guardian of my
 daughter, Rose.

A flicker.

RICK (CONT'D)
 I bequeath the house at 1250 Beach
 Street—
 (beat)
 to my daughter,
 Rose White.

Silence.

RICK (CONT'D)
 The Boston townhouse—
 to my wife, Lily—
 with an annual stipend.
 (beat)
 Upon her death, that ends.

Lily shifts.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Lily is to vacate the Beach Street
 house within one week.

A sharp inhale somewhere.

RICK (CONT'D)
 To Iris—
 (beat)
 a yearly payment—
 until fifty.
 Then it ends.

Silence.

No one moves.

RICK (CONT'D)
 (closing the folder)
 That's the will.

ROSE — no blink. No breath. A single slow sip of wine. She already knew.

RICK (CONT'D)
 Lily. Iris. Here are your checks.
 (beat)
 I wish you both well.
 (turns to Rose)
 I'll see you next week.

ROSE
 (to Iris)
 Iris, I am sorry but some of
 Grandma Turner's china broke this
 evening. Just slipped through my
 fingers. I hope that won't ruin the
 set for you.

Rose reaches into her pocket.

She removes a shard of broken china.

Sets it gently on the table in front of Iris.

A thin line of blood.

She doesn't notice.

ROSE (CONT'D)
 (calm)
 Oh-careful. Memories can cut you.

A pause. No one moves. Not even Lily.

Farewells to Rick. Iris runs off to the bathroom.

Lily goes to Rose and hugs her. Rose accepts the hug.

LIVING ROOM — LILY WHITE'S HOUSE — LATER

The grandfather clock chimes midnight.

ROSE sits quietly in a high-backed chair, working on needlepoint.

She hums "The Rose."

The room is still. Like the air just after a storm.

PARKER drags a chair across the floor. It scrapes – loud in the silence.

ROSE sets her needlework down.

PARKER

Quite a party. Your family is... nuts.

ROSE

Well... they are my family.

PARKER

Fuck them. The two of them. Both self-centered –

ROSE

Parker, let's not talk ill of people.

A beat. He sips his drink. Looks at her. She meets his eyes. Calm. Cool.

He winks. A sly grin.

PARKER

So... go and visit that Libra Moon?

Rose looks at him.

PARKER (CONT'D (CONT'D)

I knew you wanted me.

Rose smiles. She taps her forearm – deliberate.

ROSE

Think I'll go for the NY STRIP.

Parker chuckles low.

PARKER

+1 for Rose.

Good night.

He heads upstairs. Rose puts a final touch on her needle point. WE DO NOT SEE IT. She sets on the table to wrap it. When she is done she turns off the lights. The half-finished WHITE CAKE seems to glisten in the light of the LIBRA MOON.

KITCHEN OF LILY WHITE'S HOUSE - SUNDAY MORNING

8 AM.

Muffled voices are heard upstairs. The sound of someone possible sick is faintly heard.

Rose has lunches packed for all. She has a suitcase packed for herself. The breakfast table is set. Rose delivers truth like she puts butter on toast.

The sunlight beams through and the windows and back door are open. The start of a glorious New England day.

Lily enters.

LILY
Is there coffee, ready?

ROSE
Sure is. Creamer on the table.

LILY
Thank you.

Parker enters. Lively. In a tight black tight shirt.

PARKER
Man I slept like a log. Something smells good. Rose, you need any help.

She smiles.

ROSE
No, we are all set.

Iris comes in, slowly.

PARKER
Iris you look like/

IRIS
Just don't. You were of no help last night. Jesus I was up and down in the bathroom. Didn't you hear me?

LILY
I certainly did.

IRIS
And you didn't come help me?

LILY
Coffee, Iris?

IRIS
Oh God, no.
I just need... a chair.

ROSE
How about some water?

IRIS
Why are you being nice to me?
After everything I've done - why?

Rose hands Lily the wrapped gift.

LILY
What is this?

ROSE
For your birthday.

Lily unwraps the gift

An 11 X 18 counted cross-stitch of a cluster of four yellow rose tied with a white bow. Not in a vase. On a thorn a drop of blood and on drop has fallen to the bottom of the work.

LILY
Rose this is exquisite. The attention to detail. The four roses. One for each of us? (Rose nods). This is so very special.

ROSE
That's the last one I shall ever do. It's the best I can do. It may not be perfect but it is goddamned exceptional.

Iris gets up and runs to the bathroom, we hear the muffled sound of stomach sickness.

PARKER
God I hope she's alright.

Rose and Lily look at each other. They know. They nod. Parker looks lost, he has no clue.

IRIS wretches off screen.

PARKER (CONT'D)
Oh god, what is wrong?

LILY
Parker, we will have a talk later.

Lily looks and sees that Rose has a suitcase packed by the door.

LILY (CONT'D)
What is going on.

ROSE
Lily, I hate to waste more words on you. You don't need me. You need an audience. I am off for a week. That will give you time to gather and move to your penthouse in Boston.

LILY
What?

ROSE
After last night I finally woke up. I have been the poor, sad, "dead-petal-Rosie" long enough. I'm just Rose.

LILY
(cold)
Well who knew?

ROSE
You would if you ever asked.

Rose turns. She stops.

LILY
I won't leave.

ROSE
Rick Wilson will be by tomorrow. He will have the police with him and the will help you leave.

Rose picks up her suitcase. Parker calls for her. She turns. Iris comes out of the bathroom looking worse than ever.

Rose exits.

Iris, Lily, and Parker talk. Argue.

LILY
..she's pregnant

IRIS
..how did this happen?

Iris runs off stage to throw up.

Wrenching sound is heard. Lily nods to Parker, he rolls his eyes and heads in that direction.

Lily sits in the kitchen letting the later afternoon sun highlight her hand-made-with-love yellow roses.

She opens the book "The Secret Garden" and fondly touches the hand written note from so long ago.

LILY
Oh, Patrick... you saw her. I never did.

"THE ROSE" plays.

Silence.

She looks around.

The house. Not hers. Not anymore.

She sits. Small. Still.

Lights fade.

THE HOUSE – 7 MONTHS LATER

Morning light.

Quiet.

ROSE sits at the table.

Still.

At peace.

A knock.

She doesn't rush.

Rick enters.

Sets the package down.

Leaves.

Rose opens it.

The book. *"Another Rose On The Vine."*

She looks at it.

Then out to the garden.

BLACK.

THE END

