WHERE THERE’S SMOKE

Screenplay by:

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based on the short story, Where There’s Smoke, by:

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FADE IN:

Over a BLACK SCREEN we hear a woman’s voice...

    JENNY (V.O.)
    When you live with someone who has
    a temper. A bad temper. A very
    very bad temper, you learn to play
    around that.

DISSOLVE TO

INT. CAR - DAY

We see JENNY in the passenger seat of a car, staring out the window. Behind her is a man, her boyfriend JOE, who is driving, upset. We don’t see him clearly, but can tell he’s angry and is yelling at her.

    JENNY (V.O. CONT'D)
    You learn, this time I'll play
    possum, or I'll be real nice, or
    I'll say yes to everything, or you
    make yourself scarce...

JENNY secretly reaches over and undoes her seatbelt.

    JENNY (V.O. CONT'D)
    ...or you run.

JOE'S foot hits the brake as the light turns from yellow to red. JENNY clasps a pack of cigarettes in her hand, flings open the door...

EXT. STREET - DAY

As Jenny runs from the car.

    JOE
    What are you doing! Get back in
    the car!

She's ignoring him, but slowed down a bit as she is barefoot, and it’s a hot summer day. She looks around this residential street. He is following her in the car.

    JOE
    How you getting home, Jenny? Aren’t
    you forgetting something?

A sly grin from JOE as we cut to her purse in the backseat of the car.
JENNY

Yeah, well, I've got the cigarettes, asshole!

She flashes them at him. Then she heads further away, through somebody's backyard, where she finds

A TOOL SHED

Hides behind it. She peers around and sees that he's gone around the block one more time.

JOE (O.S.)

Christ, You don't even have any shoes on. Stupid Bitch. Here!

And he throws her flip flops out the window and drives away, giving up the chase.

She wipes away tears and leans her head back against the shed, closing her eyes and exhaling.

We hear the steady, soothing sound of sprinklers from a neighbor's Yard (che che che che. Prililiillll, che che che che. Prililiillll). She smiles at the peace of it and heads back to the sidewalk.

SEES HER FLIP FLOPS

Picks them up. And puts them on with reluctant appreciation.

EXT. STREET – DAY (CONTINUOUS)

JENNY is sauntering down the sidewalk now. She takes a cigarette out of the pack she is still clutching and places it in her mouth.

Puts the pack in the pocket of her cut offs.

Starts to dig for a light.

Quickly her expression changes from peaceful to pissed.

JENNY

Shit!

She looks around but the street is dead. There's a distant sound of a dog. She takes the un-lit cigarette out of her mouth, she walks.
EXT. STREET - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

She turns onto a less-pretty street now, and into the back alley of some houses. She sees up ahead...

A FIGURE

JENNY stops, trying to assess if this is a threat.

As the person comes closer we see it's a woman, BECKY. BECKY has her hands in her face, she's crying. And then she sees JENNY and composes herself.

JENNY has started to walk again so as not to appear suspicious

And the women get closer to each other.

We can see BECKY has no shoes on, her makeup is smudged, and we see in JENNY's face that she has recognized the similarity.

And just as the women start to pass each other...

    BECKY
    Got a cigarette?

    JENNY
    Got a light?

    BECKY
    Damn I hope so!

    JENNY
    (laughs)
    A whole pack. But no matches.

Like JENNY, BECKY is wearing cut-offs. She digs into her cut offs in front, finds nothing.

Then she digs into the back. Nothing.

    BECKY (CONT'D)
    Naw, I'm sure I do. Wait...

And then she's checking her vest, which seems to have endless pockets, but it's looking bad, it's looking very bad, as she keeps checking and checking...

    BECKY (CONT'D)
    Shit...

She digs back in the front again, deep, deep... And she finally pulls out
A PACK OF MATCHES

BECKY
Yes!

She opens it. It’s clearly been through the laundry. And there's only one match inside.

THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER

JENNY
Oh, damn.

BECKY
(deep breath)
Yeah. Okay.

Now they have a mission. They plan to accomplish it successfully.

It takes on the feeling of a NASA project.

BECKY
OK, how we gonna do this?

JENNY
Here, over here.

EXT. GARAGE DRIVEWAY - DAY

They go to the side of a garage where there are two trash cans nearby with which JENNY creates a blockade.

JENNY
OK

BECKY
Yeah

JENNY
C'mon, let’s hunker down.

And all of this is shot very precisely with several clean camera angles, including an overhead and a POV of cigarette, with the music composition adding a playful mission-to-be-accomplished feel.

BECKY
Wait, let me check the wind direction.

She licks her finger and holds it up.