

CURL LING

TV PILOT

"That Girl Can Curl"

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TEASER

SLAM TO:

INT. CURLING SHEET - DAY

Quick cuts of curling teams in crazy outfits sliding curling stones down the ice sheet. Beer guts. Scraggly beards. Goofy characters. Men, women, old, young, some serious, some not.

CAROL (V.O.)

I love curling. I know it gets a bad rap. Folks think it's quirky. Is it really a sport? It seems slow. That kinda thing.

INT. OLYMPIC CURLING MATCH - DAY

The 2018 U.S. Men's Curling Team wins the gold medal match and celebrates. Wild enthusiasm on the ice and in the stands.

CAROL (V.O.)

But ever since the U.S. won the Olympic gold, curling's started to earn a little respect.

INT. CURLING SHEET - DAY

Fans yelling and applauding in the stands as players practice before a curling match begins.

CAROL (V.O.)

It's easy to see why. Curling is for everybody. And the rules are simple.

ON A FEMALE CURLER

She slides a curling stone down the ice. It approaches the target area--a blue, white and red circle called the house.

SUPER: THE HOUSE

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

To score, a player slides the stone into a target area called the house.

The stone continues to slide until it rests on the center red circle and stops spinning.

SUPER: BUTTON

CAROL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 But the home run of curling is when
 the stone lands in the small red
 circle called the button.

The female player throws a speeding stone down the ice sheet.
 It caroms off another stone sending it off the house. The
 stone the player threw spins and stays in the house.

CAROL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Curling is full of strategy. You
 can muscle the stone down the ice
 so it slams the opponents stone off
 the house.

The female player throws a stone that curls left to right and
 spins into the button for a score.

CAROL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Or you can finesse it with a
 spinning motion so the stone curls
 into the scoring zone.

INT. TODDLER'S ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Standing in her crib, CAROL LING (at three years old) tosses
 out a ball. It spins on the wooden floor, curls around a
 stuffed teddy bear and comes to rest on a red dot, part of a
 color recognition game for toddlers.

CAROL (V.O.)
 Curling's always come natural to
 me. Even as a toddler.

Watching from the hallway, her grandfather YÉYE LING (late
 50s) applauds. Carol giggles and joins in. Yéye retrieves the
 ball, hands it to Carol and motions for her to do it again.

She grins, and tosses the ball out of the crib. This time,
 the ball spins right to left, around a pink girl Power Ranger
 and stops--once again--on the same red dot.

This time Yéye doesn't applaud. He just stares at Carol in
 disbelief.

CAROL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 My grandfather Yéye saw my natural
 talent. Now, years later, I'm about
 to learn if that talent is real.
 (beat)
 Or not.

FLASHBACK ENDS

SLAM TO:

EXT. STATE ROUTE 30 - DAY

In her ancient VW bug, petite, delicate-featured CAROL LING (25) barrels down a bumpy country road covered with a light dusting of snow.

INSERT SIGN

MAPLETON, MN, CAPITAL OF CURLING, POP. 3,758"

RETURN TO SCENE

She blasts past another sign.

INSERT SIGN

SPEED LIMIT 30

BACK TO SCENE

A MAPLETON POLICE cruiser pulls out from a hidden row of cedar trees.

INT. CAROL'S VW - DAY

In her rearview, Carol sees flashing lights. She sighs, coasts onto the shoulder, and cranks down the window.

EXT. CAROL'S VW - DAY

NICK ERICKSSON (early 30s) a confident, statuesque cop with an edge exits his squad car and swaggers to Carol's driver-side window. Without looking up, she hands over her driver's license before he can ask.

NICK

You're from Phoenix. Long way.
Coming out for better weather, eh?

Carol looks up. She gazes at him until it becomes an all out stare. His mesmerizing blue eyes, friendly, handsome face and charismatic presence reel her in like a starlet on a first date with Leonardo DiCaprio. Nick hands back her license.

NICK (CONT'D)

Let you off this time. That speed
limit sign is a bit hard to see.

CAROL
 (surprised)
 Thank you Officer...

NICK
 Ericksson. Nick Ericksson. Be safe
 Ms. Ling.

CAROL
 Carol.

NICK
 Be safe, Carol.

She nods. Covers her mouth to hide a yawn. Resumes her grasp of the wheel and inches back onto the road. She glances at her rearview, gazing at Nick one last lust-filled time. Nick calls on his cell.

NICK (CONT'D)
 Ripley. Nick. Your new student
 Carol Ling is headed your way.

EXT. PARKING LOT - A BIT LATER

Carol turns into an empty lot, and passes a sign.

INSERT SIGN

A hand-painted caricature of a determined curling player throwing a curling stone with hand lettering: GAME OF STONES
CURLING CLUB.

RETURN TO SCENE

INT. CURLING CLUB - DAY

Carol walks by a crowded trophy case and banners featuring club team names--Curl Power, Baby Broomers, Curl Jam, The Outsliders. Nobody at the counter. She creeps to the rink.

The rink's divided into a hockey side on the left and curling sheets on the right. An electronic scoreboard blinks above. Bleachers flank both sides of the ice.

RIPLEY REYNOLDS (50s), a redheaded whirlwind with a potty-mouth, wheels in on her chair and uses a grabber-claw to retrieve smashed Schmidt beer cans and crumbled Lay's bags.

CAROL
 Ms. Reynolds? I'm Carol Ling.

RIPLEY

(looking up)

That you are. Recognize you from that CURLING NEWS cover shot. I seen *C. Ling* is back to top spot for virtual gaming at playcurling.com. You know I'm the *R. Reynolds* there, right?

CAROL

Yea. It's how I first heard about you. And that *U.S. Curling article*.

RIPLEY

So we're both stalkers. I called your Mountain Pacific instructor, Ron. Says you're a prodigy.

CAROL

Ron exaggerates.

RIPLEY

Well, let's just see.

Ripley shoves a curling stone to Carol. She prepares to throw. We see her calculations flashing across the screen...
SUPER: Velocity= $|\Delta x^3| + \text{Speed} = |\Delta y^{12}| \times \text{Distance} = |\Delta x^{i5}| = 11.25\text{kmx}$

She throws but forgets to curl the stone. Ripley wheels out of the way. The stone flies by, barely missing her.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

You on steroids? Don't rush!

Ripley slides another stone to Carol.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Ron said you see numbers before you throw. So concentrate on whatever that hokey pokey stuff is you see.

Carol smiles, nods. We see her calculations again.

SUPER: Velocity= $|\Delta x^{7.2}| + \text{Speed} = |\Delta y^{6.1}| \times \text{Distance} = |\Delta xy| = 6.15\text{kmx}$

This time, the stone stalls inside the red scoring circle known as *the button*. A perfect throw! Ripley shakes her head.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Consistency ain't your strong suit is it?

CAROL

I'm working on it.

RIPLEY

Right. So I can avoid large
hospital bills, I'll just stay off
the ice when you're *working on it*.

As Ripley wheels off the ice, she mumbles to herself--

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Craziest crap I ever seen. Freakin'
kid really just might be a prodigy.

END OF TEASER

ACT I

INT. CURLING CLUB - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Ripley and Carol enter a cramped room filled with cardboard boxes, curling gear, one of Ripley's wheelchairs and a cot with a pillow and blanket. A chalkboard hangs on the wall.

RIPLEY

You can camp out here 'til you get other digs. No rent if you can teach a coupla beginner classes and help me keep the club clean.

CAROL

Deal.

RIPLEY

Unload your stuff. Wanna introduce you to somebody who's gonna become real important to you.

CAROL

As important as you?

RIPLEY

Darlin', nobody's that important.

After Ripley leaves, Carol paces around the room, whispers...

CAROL

Storage room today, Olympic medals platform tomorrow. I hope.

Her drooping eyes linger on the cot and pillow. She yawns, exhausted from the long drive, picks up the pillow and presses it to her cheek. She sees an empty Chinese food takeout container in the trash can and reminisces...

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA (PHOENIX) - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

A jam-packed night at the restaurant. No open tables. Traditional bamboo flutes hum softly over the restaurant's sound system. It's all Mai Tai's with umbrellas, steaming Asian specialties and smiling customers.

SUPER: THREE YEARS EARLIER. PHOENIX.

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Carol's father, an animated, overwhelmed, scruffy TAO LING (late 50s), stirs fried rice on a smoking flattop.

Grasping an order ticket, a slightly younger 22-year-old Carol shuffles in. Despite the busy night, she's in no hurry.

Her grandfather YÉYE LING (70s), a jolly, white-haired senior who's seen it all, washes dishes in a sudsy steel sink. He points to a small mounted TV.

YÉYE

Sūnnü. Americans won! Calling it the Miracurl on Ice. Mira-curl.

CAROL

Nobody thought the Swedes could lose.

YÉYE

Especially the Swedes!

Carol smiles. She watches the scene unfold on TV.

Five U.S. Olympic curling athletes in winter white jump suits stand proudly on the awards platform. The camera pans each player's last name on the back of his jacket.

Carol imagines that "LING" is on one of the jackets. She is actually on that platform too! The lone female. And an ear to ear smile. She powers through the national anthem as a giant U.S. flag floats down from the indoor stadium's ceiling.

Hand over heart, she belts out her best Whitney Houston.

Carol sings with her eyes closed as the *real* ceremony continues on TV...

CAROL

And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air...

In a red silk hostess jacket, Carol's mother--WEI LING (50s)--explodes through the kitchen door in "bat out of hell" mode, her nostrils flared, ready to rumble.

Carol, crooning away, her eyes still closed, doesn't realize her mother is standing behind her, pissed, with arms crossed.

WEI

CAROL! You have a customer order in your hand and you're watching television?!

Startled, Carol flinches, opens her eyes, steps back and stops singing. She remembers the ticket and clips it to the ticket wheel.

Her mother sighs, snatches the remote and snaps off the TV.

WEI (CONT'D)
I should have named you *Curl* not
Carol.

Wei opens the door at warp speed.

WEI (CONT'D)
Get back out there!

YÉYE
(feigning anger)
Yeah, get back out there!

Carol giggles and heads back out the swinging door. In the background, Chinese flutes reach a crescendo and fade away.

LATER

The restaurant is closed. Yéye and Carol finish washing the dishes and cart them to a long stainless steel counter.

Carol notices a glass pitcher in the middle of the counter. She grins, grabs a clean coffee cup and mischievously slides it back and forth.

CAROL
Five bucks.

Carol tosses five crumpled dollar bills on the counter. Yéye slaps a fiver to match.

Yéye extends his palms.

Carol scans the counter.

We see the numbers, formulas, equations in Carol's head flashing across the screen...

SUPER: $Velocity = |\Delta x| + Speed = |\Delta y| \times Distance = |\Delta xi| = 3.75kmx$

She takes a breath and slides the cup. It moves swiftly and curls around the pitcher without touching. Three-quarters of the way down, still spinning, it slows but continues toward the edge. Yéye leans forward expecting the cup to...

...but it doesn't. The cup stops. It wobbles. And rests at the counter's edge. Exactly as Carol had calculated.

She beams. Yéye gives a respectful bow.

Carol snatches the five dollar bill and stashes it under her red, white and blue knit beanie.

EXT. EMPTY PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Carol and Yéye get out of her old VW and walk toward a warehouse where a giant neon ice skate blinks off.

INSERT SIGN

CACTUS HILLS ICE RINK. Below in smaller letters: Skating-Hockey-Curling.

BACK TO SCENE

CAROL

Why are we here Yéye? The rink closed a half hour ago.

YÉYE

Just follow me.

INT. CACTUS HILLS ICE RINK - LOBBY - NIGHT

At the entrance, B.J. (40s) the pudgy, disheveled rink owner lets them in. He tosses a set of keys to Yéye.

B.J.

Free spring rolls for life right?!

Yéye chuckles and nods.

INT. CACTUS HILLS ICE RINK - ON THE ICE - CONTINUOUS

Yéye flips on overhead lights that illuminate the ice like a Broadway spotlight over a stage. A large wooden crate with a red bow rests in the center.

YÉYE

Go ahead.

Eyebrows raised, Carol unwraps the box and peeks inside. She covers her mouth. Inside is a new, polished curling stone.

YÉYE (CONT'D)

Forty four pounds. Trefor granite. Meets Olympic specs. Time you stopped throwing the cheap crap and had your own, professional stone.

Carol throws her arms around him, wipes the happy tears from his eyes first and then from hers.

He slides the stone to her and points to the scoring zone.

Carol gets serious. She hovers, pushes off the hack, slides down the ice and releases the stone. It zooms down the ice well past the house and caroms off the opposite wall. Yéye rubs his chin. Carol gulps, embarrassed.

YÉYE (CONT'D)

You'll get it Sūnnū. Soon you'll be throwing that stone as well as you slide coffee cups on counters.

She shoots him a heartfelt smile.

YÉYE (CONT'D)

You remind me of me and the curling dreams I once had long ago. Before...

Yéye gazes at his right hand. Two fingers have been cut off. Carol reaches for that hand and squeezes it.

CAROL

I'll make you proud. I promise.

YÉYE

Too late. I've been proud of you since you were born.

They walk silently down the floor to retrieve the stone and try again.

INT. CACTUS HILLS ICE RINK - NIGHT

Carol practices. After many wild throws, she finds her groove. Every throw is now perfect! She's in the zone. The determination on her face yields to a broad smile.

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

At the playcurling.com website, Carol plays a virtual curling match. From her POV, we see the home page: "C. Ling" has most matches and most wins.

She smiles but shows concern about the second place name just five points and five games behind: "R. Reynolds."

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA - DINING ROOM - DAY

As she clears off a table, Carol squats to slide the salt shaker 'curling style' back beside the pepper. Wei sees it and points to other dirty tables. Carol plods back to work.

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA - KITCHEN - DAY

Yéye watches proudly as Carol adds a trophy to a dozen others resting on a wooden shelf.

INSERT NAME PLATE

CAROL LING, MOST VALUABLE PLAYER, CURLING, CACTUS HILLS ICE RINK.

RETURN TO SCENE

INT. CACTUS HILLS ICE RINK - LOBBY - DAY

B.J. pins a cover of CURLING NEWS to the cork bulletin board. It shows Carol in action throwing her stone. B.J. puts his arm around her as they both enjoy the headline.

INSERT HEADLINE

Phoenix Phenom Carol Ling Breaking Records in the Desert

RETURN TO SCENE

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

On her laptop, Carol reads an americancurling.com article.

INSERT HEADLINE AND ARTICLE

MAPLETON MINNESOTA'S RIPLEY REYNOLDS: AMERICA'S BEST INSTRUCTOR? The subject of the article, a redhead with a cherubic face, forces a smile for the staged photo.

RETURN TO SCENE

EXT. DESERT STAR PANDA - PARKING LOT - MORNING

Carol pulls her packed-to-the-hilt VW up to the backdoor of the restaurant. Yéye and Tao are outside waiting. She hugs them both. Wei is nowhere to be seen.

As she leaves, Yéye hands her a small box. He motions for her to open it. She withdraws a Gold and Black Obsidian Feng Shui Bracelet with a strange, dragon like charm called a Pi Xiu.

Carol leans in to her grandfather as he places the bracelet on her wrist.

YÉYE

For self-control and good luck.
You'll always know I'm there with
you helping you release all your
negative energy. Rooting for my
Sūnnǔ!

CAROL

I'll make you proud! Both of you!

YÉYE

We're already proud!

TAO

We're already proud!

CAROL

Tell mother, I lo--

TAO

I will daughter.

Carol hops behind the wheel, waves and drives off. Yéye tears up. As does Tao. They glance at each other, embarrassed, wipe their "unmanly" tears away and scurry back into the kitchen.

INT. CAROL'S VW - DAY

Carol glances at her cell's mapping app.

INSERT CELL PHONE SCREEN

It shows: Mapleton, MN--1,590 miles

RETURN TO SCENE

We see Carol's calculations.

SUPER: $1,590 \text{ miles} \div 65\text{mph} = 24.46153 \text{ hrs.} = +/- \text{ one day.}$

She sighs. Shoves on her sunglasses and grips the wheel tightly. She pops a NO-DOZ tablet into her mouth, smiles and turns up the volume on the tinny car radio. She smiles and sings along to *Willie Nelson's On the Road Again*.

BACK TO PRESENT

INT. CURLING CLUB - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Still holding the pillow to her cheek, Carol snaps out of it.

CAROL

Nope. Gotta keep going.

She tosses the pillow on the cot, grabs her keys and heads to her car to unload.

INT. CURLING CLUB - CURLING SHEETS - DAY

Carol finishes unloading her car and returns to the ice.

High school hockey players practice their stick handling skills on the left side of the rink. Brightly-outfitted seniors of all shapes and sizes curl on the right.

RIPLEY

(to Carol)

Meet your mixed doubles partner.

Nick Ericksson flashes Carol a world-winning smile. Her face turns red. No longer in his cop uniform, Nick is in tight-fitting jeans and a baggy Minnesota Wild hockey jersey.

NICK

The speed demon. Hi Carol.

Nick offers a welcome handshake. Overcome by lack of sleep, Carol yawns. Nick, surprised, withdraws his hand.

RIPLEY

Clearly losing your way with women, Nick.

CAROL

Oh no, I'm sorry. I...I'm just really sleepy from the drive.

NICK

Maybe you should take a nap.

RIPLEY

Nope. No time to waste. Regionals are in a month. Qualifying there's your path to the Olympic team.

Carol smiles at the words "Olympic team." Ripley slides a stone to her.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Get started practicing. You two need to start working together pronto. Show Nick that hokey pokey thingy you got.

Carol compares Nick's attire to her own black waitress pants and stinky sweatshirt she's worn for two days.

CAROL

I should go change first.

RIPLEY

This ain't the Miss Snowball pageant. Wear a flowered aloha shirt and grass skirt for all I care.

Ripley's ringtone--*Game of Thrones* theme--chimes from her cell. Pissed, she wheels off to handle the call.

Carol grabs the curling stone and prepares to throw. We see her calculations flashing across the screen...

SUPER: $Velocity = |\Delta x^3| + Speed = |\Delta y^{12}| \times Distance = |\Delta x^{i5}| = 11.25kmx$

The stone glides slowly down the ice. She moves in front of it with her broom to sweep but trips and crashes to the ice.

Nick runs over. Carol raises a hand. He stops in his tracks. She rises heroically to her feet and saunters toward a bench.

NICK

Carol?

Suddenly she closes her drooping eyes, falls into Nick's arms and begins to nod off before catching herself.

CAROL

I'm really sorry. All that driving.

NICK

Take a little nap while Ripley's gone. Our secret.

Nick winks, drapes Carol's arm over his shoulder and drags her to the bench. He places her on her back and lifts her legs up onto the bench.

He sits beside her, removes his hockey jersey and covers her with it. He places a towel behind her head. Carol looks up...

CAROL
You're a true gentleman, Officer
Ericksson.

...and closes her eyes. All is quiet except for an occasional
snort.

END ACT I

ACT II

INT. CURLING CLUB - CURLING SHEETS - DAY

Nick hovers above Carol holding a Styrofoam cup.

Carol bolts up. Smiling, Nick hands her the cup.

NICK

You were out a few minutes. Thought you could use some really old luke warm coffee.

CAROL

Guess I'm still tired from the drive.

NICK

Or from concentrating so hard before you throw. That the hokey pokey stuff Ripley mentioned?

CAROL

Yea.

NICK

What do you visualize anyway?

Carol flips her hair behind her ears, a nervous habit.

CAROL

Numbers mostly. Calculations for speed, friction, angles, distance. I've always been a math nerd.

NICK

Huh, I'm a ready, aim, fire guy myself.

Carol chuckles. She examines Nick's jersey covering her.

CAROL

You a hockey fan?

NICK

Yea. That's my jersey.

CAROL

I know.

NICK

No, my *NHL* jersey. Two years with the Minnesota Wild.

Nick points to his right knee.

NICK (CONT'D)
Tore my MCL...medial collateral
ligament. You've heard the shin
bone's connected to the thigh-bone,
that kid's song? That's the MCL.

Carol sips coffee, nods. She's starry eyed and all ears.

NICK (CONT'D)
When my hockey days ended, I got
back into curling. Sounds strange
but it requires a lot of the same
skills. With less blood loss.

CAROL
Beats my backstory. I was a
waitress at our Chinese restaurant.

INT. CURLING CLUB - OFFICE - DAY

Ripley, frowning, listens to her speakerphone.

INT. HAROLD BUTTS'S OFFICE - DAY

Banker HAROLD BUTTS (60s) a bald, stodgy guy in a wrinkled
dark suit and darker tie, breaks the bad news on his
speakerphone.

HAROLD
I'm sorry Ripley, since B of A
bought Mapleton Savings our loan
requirements are a lot stricter.

INT. CURLING CLUB - OFFICE - DAY

RIPLEY
For cripes' sake, Harry, can't you
give me some slack here?

Ripley scans an official letter. From her POV, we see a
sentence in ALL CAPS: YOU HAVE UNTIL THE END OF THE MONTH TO
BRING YOUR BUSINESS LOAN INTO COMPLIANCE WITH A MINIMUM
PAYMENT OF \$4,329.56.

INT. HAROLD BUTTS'S OFFICE - DAY

HAROLD
I'm really sorry. If it was just
me...

INT. CURLING CLUB - OFFICE - DAY

RIPLEY
You know I always paid my bills on
time until Rachel stiffed me.

INT. HAROLD BUTTS'S OFFICE - DAY

HAROLD
You might have to face the facts.
You're a better coach than you are
a business woman.

INT. CURLING CLUB - OFFICE - DAY

RIPLEY
That's rich Harold! Bankers. You're
right up there with lawyers,
morticians and used car salesmen.

Ripley jabs off the speakerphone, mumbles...

RIPLEY (CONT'D)
Who in their right mind would open
up a curling club in a Podunk town
like Mapleton anyway?

She glances out the window, sees a huge Winnebago pulling
into the parking lot, and sighs before wheeling out.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - CONTINUOUS

Ripley wheels back from the office.

RIPLEY
Newsflash boys and girls. The
Cooters just pulled into the
parking lot.

Carol carefully folds Nick's jersey and hands it to him.

CAROL

Thanks for this and the truly magnificent coffee. You sure you're okay with me being your teammate?

NICK

Guess we'll find out. The Cooter Clan is surely gonna want to check out 'the new kid in town.'

EXT. CURLING CLUB - PARKING LOT - DAY

In slow motion, DON AND DAWN COOTER (40s) descend the stairs of a "wrapped" Winnebago showcasing enormous closeups of their pasty white mugs. Gigantic block lettering cries out alliteratively: THE COOTERS: CURLING'S CUTEST COUPLE.

They're decked out in identical flame-red velour jumpsuits, white curling slide-sole shoes and blue caps embossed with "COOTER CURLING." Living American flags.

Don is an ogreish 6' 3" to Dawn's elfin 4'11". Both sport white perms--Don's a bad Howard Stern hairpiece, Dawn's an 80's bubble perm straight from a bottle.

CAROL (V.O.)

The Cooters?

RIPLEY (V.O.)

Don and Dawn Cooter, Game of Stones reigning mixed doubles champs. Don thinks his doo-doo don't stink and Dawn's his world-class enabler.

INT. CURLING CLUB - LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

The Cooters lug matching vicuña wool equipment bags and leopard skin monogrammed director chairs. They clang and bang their way to the ice sheet.

Don drops his gear with a thud, nods at Ripley and Nick, and extends his hand to 'new kid' Carol.

DON

Donald J. Cooter here and this is my bee-u-t-ful better half, Mrs. Donald J. Cooter.

DAWN

Otherwise known as Dawn Cooter.

In a power play, Don yanks Carol close, squeeze-shakes her hand, ogles her lecherously. She lets go and rubs her hand.

DON
And you are...?

RIPLEY
Nick's doubles partner Carol Ling.
They're gonna dethrone you.

Don frowns like an IBS victim in severe pain.

DON
Well then, Ms. Ling, that would
make you my sworn enemy.

DAWN
(wrinkle-nosed)
And mine.

DON
To paraphrase the late, great
Charlton Heston, you'll have to
take that trophy from my cold dead
hands.

NICK
No time like the present, Don-Dawn.
What say we get started on the
inevitable transfer of power with a
quick game of HORSE?

DON
Challenge accepted!

Carol's eyes widen. Ripley blasts a whistle twice and yells at the curling seniors and high school hockey players.

RIPLEY
Everybody out of the pool!

Murmuring profanities, the hockey teams and curlers slide off, clearly upset by their abbreviated time on the ice.

Bully that he is, Don can't help himself. He smirks, bends down and whispers to Carol so only she can hear--

DON
Hope you've done your curling
homework Ms. Lin. Most Asians
Dawnie and I play come well-
prepared. I'll give 'em that. We
still almost always win.

(MORE)

DON (CONT'D)
 Like when we kicked your ancestors'
 asses in World War II.

Don shifts his feet forward and backward and crosses his palms in an awkward martial arts move toward Carol.

DON (CONT'D)
 Bonzai!

Carol shakes her head.

NICK
 (whispers)
 What was that about?

CAROL
 He thinks my name is Lin. That I'm
 Japanese. And that my ancestors
 were responsible for Pearl Harbor.

Nick smiles and whispers into Carol's ear.

NICK
 With a name like Cooter would you
 expect anything less?

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - CONTINUOUS

The HORSE match begins. The club's clock says 12:00 noon.

The teams exchange the lead throughout the match. We see Ripley updating the score. It's back and forth.

The clock says 12:30.

Neither team can break away. Carol is especially impressive. Nick nods his approval. The Cooters play it smug, high-fiving and taunting their opponents.

The clock says 1:00.

The scoreboard shows the match is tied with each team having H-O-R-S. The hockey players and curlers have stuck around and now line the curling sheet, absorbed by the competitive play.

A blue-haired lady (70s) encased in pink polyester curling outfit with her team name "CURL POWER" on front and "MURIEL" on back, whispers into her teammate's hearing aid.

MURIEL
 I'd love to see those two whup
 those slimy-ass Cooters!

Don Cooter places his foot in the hack, and prepares to push off. Dawn lines him up. He releases and runs in front of the stone with his broom. As he brushes the ice, his broom touches the stone.

Nick sees the penalty--called *burning*--but waits for Don to self-call it. He doesn't. The stone starts to stall short of the scoring zone but Don's sweeping keeps it in motion.

Finally, the stone stops spinning and rests squarely in the center of *the scoring button*.

Pumping her arms, Dawn slides over to Don. They high five and start dancing and laughing, finger-taunting their opponents.

NICK

Don, have anything to say?

DON

Hmm, lemme see...that was a great goddamned throw?!

Don and Dawn guffaw. They plop into their director chairs still laughing and taunting. Nick slides over to Carol.

NICK

Put one on the button. Give us a tie. We'll win it in the extra end.

Clamoring for a better view, the hockey teams and curlers huddle in closer to the sheet.

Carol fidgets with her foot in the hack until it feels stable. Her forehead drips sweat. Her hands perspire so much she can't grip the stone handle. She closes her eyes, wobbles and removes her foot from the hack. Nick slides over.

NICK (CONT'D)

You okay?

Carol opens her eyes, recovers and nods.

CAROL

Probably first time HORSE jitters. Just give me a minute, will you?

NICK

Take your time.

Ripley shouts from the sideline...

RIPLEY

Carol?

NICK

She's okay.

He slides back to his spot down ice.

Carol gets back in the hack. From her POV, we see the mental calculations she is making, the numbers whizzing overhead for the right speed, distance, friction, spin rate, angles.

SUPER: $Speed = |\Delta x| + Distance = |\Delta y| \times Friction = |\Delta x| = 3.75 \text{ kmx}$

She nods at Nick, pushes off, and releases the stone. It glides down the ice and decelerates just shy of the button.

The Cooters throw their caps in the air. Don has to adjust his hairpiece.

The hockey/curling audience moans in unison, obviously not Cooter fans.

The blue haired lady turns to her teammate.

MURIEL

I knew Nick was good. But that girl can curl!

Carol hangs her head. Nick places a consoling arm on her shoulder. She looks him in the eyes.

CAROL

Sorry to let you down.

As the Cooters celebrate behind them, Carol and Nick make their way through the crowd. Unexpected applause breaks out. Carol looks up to see the hockey players nodding and the curling seniors patting her on the back as she walks past.

NICK

(whispering to Carol)
Appears there's a Carol Ling Fan Club starting.

She blushes, hides a smile and slides off the ice. Nick is close behind.

EXT. CURLING CLUB - BACK ENTRANCE - DAY

Carol heads for the dumpster at the rear of the now empty parking lot. She throws in two bags and turns to go back.

Two SKINNY BLOND TEENS run from the parking lot. One tosses a spray paint can that clangs to the blacktop.

On the brick back wall, Carol sees why the boys were running.

In three-foot-tall letters, spray painted in red, white and blue are four words: NEW GIRL GO HOME!!

Carol shakes her head. As she touches the back door handle, a flock of pigeons screeches above her. Something wet hits her head with a SPLAT.

She touches her hair, examines her fingers. A white glob of pigeon shit covers her hand.

She watches as the pigeons disappear into the sky and the two blonds turn, flip her the finger and disappear into the woods. She sighs, and whispers to herself...

CAROL

First week in my new home and
already making friends.

...and trudges back inside.

END ACT II

ACT III

EXT. THE DONUT HOLE - DAY

Across from the curling club, Ripley and Carol eat breakfast at a tiny food truck picnic table. Ripley wolfs down her second humongous sweet bear claw of the morning while Carol methodically chews her first and only plain mini-bagel.

RIPLEY

Finish up. I got somethin' for you.

Carol scarfs down her bagel, wipes her mouth and trots behind Ripley already wheeling down the concrete sidewalk.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE - DAY

They stop on the sidewalk. An ELDERLY WOMAN bounds out of the front screen door carrying an adorable, curly-haired brown puppy. Ripley tilts her head toward Carol and the woman hands the pup to her.

RIPLEY

You're pretty far from home.
Thought you could use a friend.

Carol lights up with an incandescent smile, all teeth. The puppy licks her face. Carol rubs the pup's belly which causes him to loll his tongue in delight.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Thanks Antonia.

ANTONIA

Always glad to see my pups get a
good home.

Ripley wiggles her fingers motioning for the pup.

RIPLEY

I'll get acquainted. You push us.

Carol hands the pup to Ripley and pushes the wheelchair down the sidewalk toward the club. The pup licks Ripley's face. Ripley withdraws a bear claw from a brown paper bag and tears off a piece. The pup devours it in one bite.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Whadya gonna name the 'lil guy?

CAROL

How 'bout Taidi?

RIPLEY

Teddy?

CAROL

Taidi. In Mandarin, it's
tài dí xióng for teddy bear.

Big-eyed, tongue drooling, TAIDI paws Ripley's chest and begs for more pastry. Ripley obliges. Taidi swallows the offering whole and circles back to lick the sugar off her fingers.

RIPLEY

Teddy it is then.

Carol smiles, not bothering to correct Ripley.

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA DINING ROOM - DAY

In a red hostess jacket, a frazzled Wei seats a party of four. A long line of impatient customers wait to be seated. Wei sighs and trudges back to the hostess station. She is the lone employee in the front of the restaurant.

WEI

(to the next customers)
Be right with you. Just need to
clean your table!

Wei busses the table and takes the dirty dishes into the kitchen. She slams them on the sink where Yéye is washing dishes. Tao and Yéye look up. Wei is crying. Wei never cries.

WEI (CONT'D)

Why did she leave us? For some
silly game!

Yéye throws down the dish rag, comes around and hugs Wei. Tao stops cooking, comes to join the group hug. For a few seconds, they all embrace.

Finally, Wei pushes them away and wipes the tears from her cheeks. She pulls a ticket from her jacket, jabs it on the ticket wheel.

WEI (CONT'D)

I need two orders of spring rolls.

As she nears the kitchen door, she shouts back--

WEI (CONT'D)

Stop moping and get cooking! We've
got a restaurant to run!

--and explodes through the revolving doors with a forced smile for all the customers to see.

EXT. KNIGHTS LAKE PARK - DAY

Straight from a vintage Currier & Ives postcard, bundled-up townspeople of all ages skate, sled and play hockey on and around the frozen, snow covered lake. It's "see your breath cold" but cozy and clear.

EXT. HILL - DAY

Beneath a towering white cedar, Ripley sits in her wheelchair, Taidi in her lap. She explains her training philosophy to Carol.

RIPLEY

To me, the best training technique is the 'Miyagi Method.'

Carol's puzzled. Ripley's offended.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

What?

CAROL

I get the 'wax on, wax off' tribute to unconventional conditioning. Just not sure how it helps me take my game to the next level.

Ripley rolls her wheelchair closer. Stops chomping gum.

RIPLEY

Well then, by all means, allow me to explain...

MONTAGE BEGINS

EXT. HILL - DAY

Carol struggles to shimmy up a rope dangling from the tree.

RIPLEY (V.O.)

Climbing using no legs strengthens the upper body.

EXT. SISYPHUS SLOPE - DAY

Carol pushes Ripley in her wheelchair up a steep hill as kids sled past on their way down.

RIPLEY (V.O.)
 Pushing a 'heavy object'--AKA yours
 truly--up Sisyphus Slope
 strengthens the lower body.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

Carol shadow boxes. Ripley cajoles her to keep punching.

RIPLEY (V.O.)
 Shadow boxing builds sweeping
 muscles.

EXT. ON THE FROZEN LAKE - DAY

Carol nudges a bowling ball so that it stops just in front of Ripley's boots as she sits in her wheelchair.

RIPLEY (V.O.)
 Nudging a bowling ball on ice
 mimics throwing a curling stone.

EXT. NEAR A TREE - DAY

Carol flips a Frisbee underhanded at a painted bullseye on a large pine tree.

RIPLEY (V.O.)
 Frisbee flips build hand-eye
 coordination and muscle memory.

EXT. LAKE SHORE - DAY

Ripley flips flashcards with numbers and icons at Carol as she runs back and forth between two pylons. As she runs, Carol never glances away from Ripley.

RIPLEY (V.O.)
 And flashcards improve call out
 guidance to sweepers.

MONTAGE ENDS

EXT. KNIGHTS LAKE PARK - DAY

RIPLEY

Anymore smart-ass questions Your Majesty?

CAROL

No ma'am.

RIPLEY

Good. Do them again. Only faster.

Ripley clutches a stop watch and clicks it to start. Carol sighs, grabs the rope and begins climbing. Again. A wayward sledder barely misses Ripley and blazes past.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Cheezit Crips kid! You got a license for that thing?

Carol smiles and just keeps climbing.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - DAY

Carol is surrounded by six fidgeting middle schoolers, three boys and three girls. She points to six orange cones next to the same number of curling stones.

CAROL

Who wants to show us how to throw a curling stone?

One hand goes up--a fit boy named TRAVIS (11) in a hockey jersey with jet black hair. He chews on a toothpick occasionally twirling it with James Dean brashness.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Your name is...?

TRAVIS

Travis.

CAROL

Why don't you show us how to do it.

Travis struts to the stone exuding confidence. He pushes off the hack, glides down the sheet and releases the stone. It spins down the ice, breaks right and stops on the button.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Not bad.

Travis ignores her, just keeps twirling and chewing. The other kids take turns throwing. Each has poor form and a quirky delivery. Carol catches Travis laughing.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Care to share the joke?

TRAVIS
These fools are the joke.

CAROL
How long you been curling?

Travis shrugs, makes a face. Chews. Twirls.

TRAVIS
Coupla years.

CAROL
Wait here a minute.

Carol leaves the ice. The kids look at each other with confused faces.

She returns pushing Ripley's spare wheelchair. She stops in front of Travis and points at the chair.

TRAVIS
What?

CAROL
Take a seat.

He frowns and reluctantly plunks into the wheelchair.

TRAVIS
This is dumb.

Carol grabs an extender cue off the wall and hands it to him.

CAROL
Now show us how good you are.

Carol posts herself behind him gripping the wheelchair handles so it won't slide. Travis fiddles with the cue before realizing it needs to hook into the stone handle.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Go ahead.

Travis clips the cue into the stone handle and shoves. The stone releases from the cue, spins wildly and zooms off the sheet. The kids make 'paybacks are hell' heckling sounds.

Travis bounds from the wheelchair, glares at Carol. He defiantly spits out his toothpick.

TRAVIS

I'm not handicapped so I'd never use a wheelchair anyway!

CAROL

But you're emotionally handicapped. These kids don't have your experience. A little empathy would go a long way.

TRAVIS

I'm just better than them. I'm athletic. Like my dad.

CAROL

Your dad's a curler?

TRAVIS

Yea. And an NHL hockey player. And a college football All American.

CAROL

Wait. A hockey player?

TRAVIS

Yea. And a football...

CAROL

Yea, I heard that. What's his name?

TRAVIS

Nick Ericksson.

Carol rubs her forehead, sighs and resumes teaching the kids.

END ACT III

ACT IV

INT. CURLING CLUB - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

The morning sun streams through the window awakening Carol. She grabs Taidi and lumbers over to close the drapes. From her POV, we see snow falling outside. Carol's eyes widen.

She places Taidi on the floor and grabs her light jacket.

CAROL

Come on boy!

EXT. CURLING CLUB - PARKING LOT - A BIT LATER

Carol and Taidi run through the snow. In her thin Phoenix-appropriate/Mapleton-not jacket, she shivers in the frigid morning air.

A few inches of newfallen snow cover the ground. Taidi looks up with his tongue out and catches snowflakes. Carol laughs, drops to the ground and makes a snow angel. Taidi spins around in circles beside her.

Suddenly a baseball-sized snowball falls from the sky just missing Carol. Another lands by Taidi. Carol jumps up.

CAROL

What's...?

Snowballs in hand, Ripley smirks from her wheelchair.

RIPLEY

What're you waitin' for? Gotta have a snowball fight on your first snowfall.

Ripley flings another snowball. Carol grins. She grabs a handful of snow, rolls it into a ball and fires it at Ripley. Ripley returns fire. Taidi seeks cover behind a fire hydrant after lifting his leg on it.

Carol's first snowball fight gets underway.

INT. CURLING CLUB - DAY

Carol and Ripley are at the front counter laughing about their romp in the snow when an excited, out of breath Nick storms in.

NICK
We got a rematch!

They look at Nick, then each other, then back to Nick. He waves his hands excitedly. Tries to catch his breath.

NICK (CONT'D)
With the Cooters.

CAROL
A *HORSE* rematch?

NICK
No. Real curling. I challenged them for the club championship. A week from today.

CAROL
Oh God!

RIPLEY
I think it's great. We need to get the word out. This town would love to see the Cooters lose the title.

CAROL
Or we could lose *twice* to them in two weeks!

RIPLEY
Carol, stop being a doggie downer. You got *talent*! Muhammed Ali said to be a great champion believe you're the best. If you're not, pretend you are.

CAROL
That's the problem.

RIPLEY
I know! You don't believe in yourself.

CAROL
No. I'm not Muhammed Ali.

EXT. CURLING CLUB - PARKING LOT - DAY

Muriel texts.

CHYRON: "Muriel: The Cooters versus Nick and the New Girl at 7 p.m. Tuesday. At the Game of Stones. Get the word out!"

"Mavis: Hell yea I will!"

EXT. MAPLETON DOWNTOWN - DAY

Shop owners close-up their stores and post signs: "Gone to the Match!"

EXT. MAPLETON'S LONE STOP LIGHT - DAY

Old cars and weathered trucks form what in Mapleton passes as a traffic jam. An orange-vested middle school patrol boy posts himself beneath the light directing honking drivers and impatient pedestrians.

CURLING CHARLIE (V.O. FROM RADIO)

Curling Charlie Cavendish here folks with an important K-U-R-L news flash. The day has finally arrived! Grab your misters and sisters, your mamas and papas, Mapleton's Match of the Millennium is sliding your way tonight right here on this locally-owned AM station.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - DAY

Atop a wheelchair-retrofitted mini-Zamboni, Ripley preps the ice. Tongue out, Taidi sits on her lap relishing the ride.

INT. CURLING CLUB - BLEACHERS - DAY

Curlers in colorful outfits hang banners with team names.

CURLING CHARLIE (V.O. FROM THE RADIO)

Sliding from where you ask? Why the famed Game of Stones Curling Club of course.

INT. COOTER'S BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

Don and Dawn Cooter try on outfits for the match: pant suits in bright colors, plaids, sequins, fur. They finally decide on matching patterns featuring walleyes, Minnesota's official state fish.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - DAY

Nick and Carol practice. Nick stands behind her and holds her arm as they throw the stone together in a synchronized curling ballet. Taidi sits atop the stone enjoying the ride as he slides down the ice.

INT. CURLING CLUB - STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Carol draws on the chalkboard. The title says: PATH TO THE OLYMPICS. Below is a long horizontal arrow.

On the far left, at the beginning of the arrow: PHOENIX: Junior Championship.

Next is: MAPLETON: Club Mixed Doubles Champs.

To the right of that is: ST. PAUL: Regional Qualifiers.

And finally, on the far right at the end of the arrow: DENVER: Olympic Qualifiers.

CURLING CHARLIE (V.O. FROM THE RADIO)
 Tonight Don and Dawn Cooter, our
 fair city's reigning mixed doubles
 champs take on the up-and-coming
 Nick Ericksson and the new kid in
 town Curl--oops, Carol Ling.

INT. KURL RADIO STATION - DAY

CURLING CHARLIE CAVENDISH (50s), slicked back hair, tacky floral shirt, reads from his script into a studio boom mike.

CURLING CHARLIE
 So don't think twice, be nice,
 listen to Curling Charlie from the
 ice! Live at 7 only on AM 640 K-U-
 R-L!

Curling Charlie sweeps a small whisk broom along his desk to mimic the sound of a curling broom on ice--SWISH--and rings a bell--RINGALING. He punches a button that plays a jingle...

RADIO SINGERS
 A-M Six Fourrrtee...K-U-R-L,
 Mapleton.

INT. CURLING CLUB - NIGHT

The club is packed. It's standing room only but fans still shuffle in. Loud and unruly, in a word--chaos. Atop the mini-Zamboni, Ripley taps her lavalier microphone.

RIPLEY

Quiet down. This ain't no political rally. Who wants to see some curling?

Cheers from the bleachers. Ripley raises her palm.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Then you've come to the right place!

Taidi jumps from her lap onto the ice and pees on the red, white and blue house. Carol snatches him in mid-pee and returns him to Ripley's lap.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

Looks like Carol's li'l pup Teddy is already house-broken!

Carol rolls her eyes at the corny play on words but THE CROWD loves it. Chants begin...

THE CROWD

TEDDY! TEDDY! TEDDY!

INT. CURLING CLUB - SNACK BAR - SAME TIME

It's so crowded there are no discernible lines, just a mass of humanity. Two snack bar workers hand out hot dogs, peanuts, red solo cups of draft beer. The club's old cash register rings like a Vegas slot machine after a Cher show.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - SAME TIME

Ripley deploys the palm again. The crowd quiets.

RIPLEY

I hear tonight's match is being touted as Mapleton's Match of the Millennium. Normally I'd say that's a bit much. But not tonight folks!

Applause. Cheers. The audience is eating it up.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

So grab a beer and your nuts--your
peanuts--sit back and enjoy. Take
your bio break now cuz once we
start, we ain't stoppin' 'til we
have a winner!

INT. CURLING CLUB - BENCH - A BIT LATER

Carol and Nick help Ripley off the Zamboni and into her regular wheelchair. She points to a small cardboard box.

They pull out two sky blue long sleeve jerseys with GAME OF STONES and the curling caricature guy logo on the front. On the back, in block white letters are ERICKSSON and LING.

Carol tears up; it's like her dream of being on the Olympic awards platform. They hug Ripley. Taidi licks Carol's face.

As they warm-up, we hear the music from each player's earbuds.

Nick rocks out to blaring hard rock.

Don swings to twangy classic country and western.

Dawn discos to retro dance hits.

Carol glides to soothing classical Chinese flutes.

The buzzer blasts for the match to begin.

Nick slides over to Carol.

NICK

Ready to throw rocks at houses?

Carol gives a thumbs up.

Nick and Don approach the center of the ice. They flip a coin. Nick wins the toss.

NICK (CONT'D)

We'll take the hammer. You throw first.

The four players shake hands, exchange the traditional--

ALL FOUR PLAYERS

Good Curling!

The match begins.

The lead changes back and forth throughout. We see each player throw. The crowd chants. Tension builds as the scoreboard shows a close match.

In the eighth and last 'end' ("round") Carol and Nick trail by one. Carol can win the game if she throws a perfect last shot--*the hammer*. Nick gazes at her and nods approval.

But as Carol begins her throw, she feels dizzy and wobbles to the team bench.

CAROL

Sorry, still getting used to the cold weather training, I guess. Just need a quick break.

Nick uses a one-minute time out. Carol lays down on the bench.

INT. CURLING CLUB - KURL REMOTE BOOTH - SAME TIME

Curling Charlie provides color commentary.

CURLING CHARLIE

If Carol Ling can will herself to return there are only two possible outcomes: She will make that perfect throw and win the game. Or she won't, and she and Nick will not win the club championship. Which means they can't go to the regionals. And, even worse, they can kiss their Olympic dreams goodbye!

END ACT IV

ACT V

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - NIGHT

Carol, eyes closed, lays prone on the team bench. In the bleachers, whispers and mumbling form an eerie soundtrack.

Nick kneels holding Carol's hand and rubbing her back. He waves off two EMTs who approach with a stretcher.

Ripley sits nearby with Taidi in her lap.

The Cooters hover like buzzards on a desert highway covered in road kill.

Don taps Nick on the shoulder. Carol faintly hears him say--

DON

Looks like a forfeit. She's not able to complete her last throw.

Nick rises from his knee, leans in close enough to Don's face to smell his Juicy Fruit breath and gives him a hockey enforcer's grim grin. He doesn't say a word; his venomous eyes do the talking.

Don backs away.

Ripley wheels over with Taidi. He jumps from Ripley's lap and licks Carol's face. She smiles. Ripley whispers to Nick.

RIPLEY

I been workin' her too hard. It's my fault. I was hopin' this rematch would bring in cash to help with the club's debt. I was just being selfish.

NICK

No Ripley. Carol wants it too. Just be patient.

As Taidi continues to lick and whimper, Carol hears her grandfather's soothing baritone in her head.

YÉYE (O.C.)

In matches, you must decide the rules, the stakes and *quitting* time. This is not *quitting* time, Sūnnū.

Inspired, Carol opens her eyes and blinks. Ripley retrieves Taidi. Nick leans closer to Carol.

The crowd stirs.

Taidi barks. Ripley pets Taidi, hugs him tight.

Suddenly, Carol sits up, spins around to face Nick and then glares at the Cooters. She calls out to them--

CAROL

The only way you two losers could ever beat us is by a forfeit. Or by cheating. You already did one. You're not gonna get the chance for both.

Helped by Nick, Carol rises, sways slightly then regains her composure.

As she walks to the curling stone, the fans applaud. She waves to the crowd in the bleachers and nods thank you.

Carol spots the two blonde teens who painted the club. One sees the recognition in her eyes. He stares back and uses both index fingers to slant his eyebrows while jutting out his teeth over his lips. The other teen sees him and laughs.

Carol turns away. Nick has seen the two boys mocking her too. He sees that she's anxious and strolls to her side.

CAROL (CONT'D)

No inspirational words?

NICK

None original. But whenever I faced a situation like this in hockey, I always channeled Herb Brooks.

CAROL

The U.S. coach who beat the Russians?

NICK

Right. That night, he told his players: 'You were born to be a player. You were meant to be here. This moment is yours.'

CAROL

Then it's time to make Herb proud.

Nick points to *the red scoring button*. The bleachers are "hear a pin drop" silent. All eyes on Carol.

She puts her right foot in the hack, left foot extended parallel to the ice.

CAROL (CONT'D)

Damn!

She withdraws her foot. The crowd moans. Everyone in the building watches silently as Carol slides to the bench. Nick and Ripley look at each other with an "Again?" look.

CURLING CHARLIE (O.C.)

Wait. Carol Ling has withdrawn her foot from the hack. She's heading to the bench

(beat)

Again!

Carol rifles through her equipment bag, finds what she wants.

CAROL

(whispers to herself)

Should've worn this all along.

She snaps the clasp of Yéye's bracelet onto her wrist, kisses it, and slides back to the hack.

CURLING CHARLIE (O.C.)

Well, she's back in the hack. Not sure what that was about. But she has a nearly impossible throw to make here.

ON THE SCORING ZONE-THE HOUSE

One yellow and two red stones are in the house scoring zone.

CURLING CHARLIE (O.C.) (CONT'D)

The Cooters have two red stones in the house. Carol and Nick have one yellow stone. Carol needs to curl this last stone--the hammer--slam it into the first red stone and make it hit the second red stone while her yellow stone lands inside the button. Good luck Carol Ling!

BACK ON CAROL

Nick slides to Carol.

NICK

Okay?

Carol displays her bracelet.

CAROL

Forgot to put on my good luck charm.

NICK

You'll need it. There's about a half inch playing peek-a-boo behind the guard rock. No margin for error.

CAROL

Plenty of room.

Nick whispers over to Ripley--

NICK

You ever seen anybody make that shot?

RIPLEY

Once. When Hackner beat Ryan at the Canadian Brier.

NICK

When was that?

RIPLEY

1985.

Nick closes his eyes and slides back toward the house to watch Carol's throw.

We see the calculations in Carol's head flashing across the screen...

SUPER: $Velocity = |\Delta x_{23}| + Speed = |\Delta y_{17}| \times Distance = |\Delta x_i| = 7.75 kmx$

She makes her forward press. The bleacher crowd leans forward right along with her.

She pushes off the hack and glides down the ice. Time stands still. At the release line, she gently spins the stone. Compensating for her adrenalin rush, she appears to have thrown it too slow.

CAROL

Light stone!

Quickly, she takes her place in front of it and begins to sweep. Nick picks up on her communication and relays his own directions based on the stone's speed.

NICK

Hurry hard!

Carol sweeps faster, hands thrashing like hummingbird wings.

The stone coasts down the ice, curving toward the breaking point and Nick standing in the house. Thanks to her sweeping, the stone has gained speed and heads for the first red stone.

It slams into the first red stone which spins back and hits the other red stone. Both shoot out of the scoring area. Meanwhile, Carol's yellow stone spins backward.

She stops sweeping and watches as the stone stays on course, continues to creep backward and abruptly stops spinning....

...for a perfect shot in the center of the red button!

The crowd goes wild.

INT. CURLING CLUB - KURL REMOTE BOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Curling Charlie rises up, screams into the microphone...

CURLING CHARLIE

She's done it!! Carol Ling has thrown a perfect stone. She's kiboshed the Cooters! Mapleton's new mixed doubles champions are Nick Ericksson and Carol Ling!

INT. CURLING CLUB - BLEACHERS - SAME TIME

The blonde teens boo and push their palms toward the ice as hundreds of fans scramble past them down the bleachers heading for the ice sheet.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - SAME TIME

It's swarming with fans. Ripley wheels through the ocean of humanity to congratulate Carol and Nick. Taidi quivers on her lap, afraid, wondering what all the excitement's about.

The Cooters don't bother to congratulate the winning team. They're too busy packing up their gear and huffing out.

Fans run past the Cooters hoping to share the moment with Carol and Nick.

Muriel forms an autograph line and pleads for other "hounds" behind her to behave.

MURIEL

Don't shove you bunch of heathens!

As Don and Dawn exit the ice, they spot Ripley. Don waves his finger in her face.

DON

There WILL be a rematch. And we want it before the regionals.

Ripley smirks, wiggles her fingers in a sarcastic goodbye and winds her way through the mob.

She puts on her lavalier mike, taps it twice and announces--

RIPLEY

What a match! I have the honor of presenting the mixed doubles' trophy to the NEW champs...Nick Ericksson and Carol Ling!

A wild wave of applause. Ripley is handed a trophy which she holds up in the air before passing it to Carol and Nick. They have their arms around each other flashing enormous smiles.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)

With this win, they've also qualified for the regionals in St. Paul one month from today!

Nick lifts Carol up and starts to kiss her. But he pulls back, smiles awkwardly and softly places her back on the ice.

Carol blushes and tries to avoid eye contact.

The serpentine autograph line behind Muriel now wraps around like the will call office at a Beyoncé concert. Carol and Nick sit down to sign autographs while admiring the trophy.

INT. CURLING CLUB - ON THE ICE - LATER

One last autograph seeker stands in line. Travis Ericksson, Nick's son, steps forward. He slides a blank piece of paper toward his father at the autograph table.

TRAVIS

Never got your autograph before Pop.

NICK

Hi son.

Nick turns to Carol.

NICK (CONT'D)

Carol, this is...

Carol's eyes are fixed on Travis. His eyes are on his dad.

CAROL

We've met.

Nick signs his autograph and slides it to Carol for hers. Travis snatches the paper.

TRAVIS

I don't need hers. Just wanted yours Dad.

Nick shrugs. Carol frowns. Grinning, Travis saunters away.

INT. CURLING CLUB - STORAGE ROOM - LATER

The club is closed. Carol prepares for bed. There's a knock on the door and Ripley wheels in.

Taidi sees her, and chases his tail in a circle. Ripley removes a rolled up towel from her lap.

RIPLEY

Gonna get below freezing tonight. Thought you could use this.

Carol takes the towel. Steps back.

CAROL

Woah! It's really warm.

RIPLEY

Trick for cold Minnesota nights. Heat a brick and roll it in a towel. Place it at the foot of your bed tonight and you'll sleep like a baby.

CAROL

Nice. An electric-less blanket.

She hands Carol a thick, down coat.

RIPLEY

And this is for outside. That flimsy jacket you got might work in the desert; it sure as heck won't keep you warm in this winter wonderland.

Carol holds the coat to her cheeks.

CAROL
So soft! Thank you Ripley.

Ripley shrugs off the thank you, changes the subject.

RIPLEY
Good match tonight. But we got
stuff to work on before St. Paul.
Practice starts at 6 a.m.

Carol grimaces.

CAROL
That early?

RIPLEY
Okay, sleep in.

Carol smiles. She places the heated brick towel at the foot of the cot and the new coat beside it.

RIPLEY (CONT'D)
An extra half hour. We'll start at
6:30.

Ripley wheels out. Carol frowns, picks up Taidi and climbs into bed. She records a selfie video on her cell.

CAROL
Yéye, I had a match tonight. Mixed
doubles with my partner Nick.

Taidi jumps onto Carol's lap, sniffs at the phone, wondering why she is talking to it. Carol chuckles.

CAROL (CONT'D)
And we won the club championship!

She dangles her bracelet in front of the cell's camera.

CAROL (CONT'D)
Your bracelet worked! I think I'm
on my way! Tell mother and daddy
I'm thinking of them. Night Yéye!

Carol waves, blows a kiss and turns off the camera. She sends the video to Yéye.

She touches Yéye's photo on the nightstand, snaps off the light and crawls into bed with Taidi snuggling in beside.

INT. DESERT STAR PANDA - KITCHEN - NIGHT

On his cell phone, Tao checks the restaurant credit card balance: \$17,563.22. He drops the phone into his pocket, sighs, mumbles...

TAO

Who in their right mind would open
up a Chinese restaurant in a cowboy
town like Phoenix anyway?

...and returns to the flattop.

Yéye stops washing dishes when he hears Carol's ringtone--the Olympics anthem. He watches the video she sent, tears in his eyes. Tao hears Carol's voice and comes over to watch along.

Now, they both are crying. Wei struts in.

WEI

What are you...?

Now all three are watching the video. And crying. Wei wipes her eyes so the men won't see. She trudges out the swinging kitchen door as she says...

WEI (CONT'D)

Get back to work you two old fools.

Tao and Yéye look at each other, laugh.

TAO

Show it again!

Yéye hits play. They smile when they hear Carol's voice again.

INT. CURLING CLUB - OFFICE - LATER

At her desk, Ripley finishes counting the night's take. She makes out a bank deposit slip for \$5,500 and a Game of Stones business check to HAROLD BUTTS C/O BOA for \$4,329.56. On the subject line she writes: *Not such a lousy business woman after all, am I Harold?*

INT. SUV IN CURLING CLUB PARKING LOT - LATER

An ATHLETIC WOMAN in a red sweat suit rasps into a cell phone. She wears a red cap bearing a Maple Leaf and talks with a Canadian accent.

ATHLETIC WOMAN

She's as good as we've heard.
Better actually. She's Hackner and
Ryan in a tiny girl's body. We've
got our work cut out for us.

The woman ends her call, tosses the phone on the front seat and exits the parking lot. The Game of Stones neon sign flashes off in the background.

INT. COUNTING STONES PUB AND GRILL - NIGHT

The blond identical twin spray painters--JOONA and JAKKO PETERSON (19)--slump in a corner booth, a dozen Schmidt "dead soldiers" scattered on the table. The bar is packed. Fans HANK and GUS chat about the "Match of the Millennium."

HANK

That Ling girl is gonna be a star.
Hopefully she'll bring some respect
to the great pastime of curling.

GUS

Don't you know it. Make those
hockey thugs think twice when they
badmouth us curlers!

Hearing the exchange and well past three sheets to the wind, the Petersons roll their respective eyes. Joona swigs from his beer bottle and pokes Jakko.

JOONA

C'mon baby brother, I ain't got
time for these China girl lovers.

Jakko takes a final pull of Schmidt and follows Joona. As they walk out, Joona purposely bumps Hank.

JOONA (CONT'D)

My bad.

Jakko, taking the lead from his brother, bumps Gus.

JAKKO

Huh, must be contagious.

GUS

What the f...?

Gus shoves Jakko. Jakko stumbles back, gathers himself, and lunges at Gus.

Joona punches Hank. Jakko punches Gus. Soon other bystanders join the action and a full-fledged bar brawl gets underway.

EXT. COOTER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Don Cooter wields the official COOTERS Winnebago into the driveway. He lugs the curling gear to the front door. Dawn fumbles for her keys and drops them on the steps.

DON

Come on Dawn, this shit's heavy!

Dawn swipes on her cell phone's flashlight, spots the keys and bends to pick them up. On the steps, next to the keys is a book. Left by one of their loyal *fans*?

The title reads CURLING FOR BEGINNERS with a handwritten sticky note on the cover: *Thought you might need this.*

INT. MAPLETON POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Now in his cop uniform, Nick sits at his computer. The screen shows the homepage for playcurling.com. Nick's face lights up. He pounds his palm on the desk and smiles.

On the website, the leaderboard lists the global top ten for virtual play.

INSERT COMPUTER SCREEN

C. Ling: 1st. R. Reynolds: 2nd. N. Ericksson: 3rd.

END SCENE

FADE OUT.

END ACT V

TAG

EXT. CURLING CLUB - BACK ENTRANCE - DAY

Standing at the back wall are two figures in pink polyester curling outfits, their names--MURIEL and MAVIS--printed on back.

Mavis uses a paint roller to cover up the Peterson's "NEW GIRL GO HOME!" graffiti.

The camera pans left to show what Muriel is replacing that sentiment with: "WELCOME TO MAPLETON CAROL LING!"

FADE OUT.

THE END