

MAGGIE'S PLAN

by

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Based on a story by Karen Rinaldi

1 EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE STREET - DAY 1

MAGGIE: We see the back of her blonde head. It's a beautiful winter day. Now we see her from across the street. We see her feet making determined strides. This is a young woman who knows where she is going.

Wide shot: A blind man is tentatively making ready to cross the street.

Among the handful of pedestrians about to cross, Maggie is the only one to notice, and helps the man across.

2 EXT. PRODUCE MARKET - DAY 2

TONY, Maggie's best friend, looks a little like Art Garfunkel as a young man: fluffy hair, glasses, dressed in a suit jacket and baggy chinos. He's pushing a stroller with a reading, fluffy-haired, bespectacled four year old boy in it, wearing a t-shirt with "IMAGINE THERE'S NO FRACKING" written on the front. This boy is too big to be in a stroller, and too young to be reading. Maggie rushes to them.

MAGGIE

Sorry! Sorry I'm late... Hi! Hi
Max!

She snuffles the little boy's neck.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You still have one little corner of
baby smell. Right (sniff) there.

Max giggles and pushes her away so he can get back to his reading. Maggie straightens up.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Ach, I need a baby!

She bites her fist.

TONY

You need a baby? You're such an
impatient little fuss-budget.

MAGGIE

I just don't see why I should wait.

TONY

For a father, perhaps?

MAGGIE

Let's face it. I've never been in a serious relationship that lasted longer than six months.

TONY

(paying)

We were together for two years.

They walk.

MAGGIE

In college. And we made each other miserable for the rest of the time.

TONY

I admit it. We were miserable. But we were also happy.

MAGGIE

Yeah.

They reach a stand of homemade jams. Tony picks one up.

TONY

Just so you know. I have little sperm tucked away in a facility uptown, if you're in a pinch.

MAGGIE

What?! Why? I thought Felicia didn't want any more kids.

TONY

Felicia does not want any more kids. I froze it in case I ever meet anybody nice.

MAGGIE

No, you didn't.

TONY

I didn't. But I might, you know, save it, like 'mad money'-style?

Maggie has something to tell Tony, and she wants to get it over with fast.

MAGGIE

(rushing this part)

Do you remember Guy Childers, from college?

(CONTINUED)

A moment as Tony searches for the name in his mind.

TONY

Wasn't he the Guy...he's a pickle salesman?

MAGGIE

He's a pickle entrepreneur. And-- he's agreed to make a donation, so I can inseminate myself.

TONY

But he has no sense of personal space!

MAGGIE

So what? He was a math major. Anyway, I'm not marrying him, I'm borrowing his genes.

TONY

But not his personality I hope. Guy Childers...?

MAGGIE

(shrugs)

Everybody has something a little wrong with them. You think everybody's honest who fills out those questionnaires at the sperm bank?

TONY

I can't believe you've been cooking this up all this time and you didn't even tell me.

MAGGIE

I knew that you'd yell at me.

TONY

I'm not yelling at you! Isn't this sort of thing for women who are like forty-nine and desperate?

MAGGIE

I don't want it to be a last resort, I want it to be a choice.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED: (3)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Because I'm ready be a mother, and I don't believe I'll find a man who I can stay in love with-- or who can stay in love with me-- for more than six months. I'm just facing the truth about myself.

Tony is morose at this news, but he accepts it.

TONY

So when's the insemination? Are we gonna have a party?

MAGGIE

In four months.

As they walk away from camera:

TONY

Do I have bad breath?

He breaths into the air near her mouth. She sniffs.

MAGGIE

No. Do I?

She breathes into his mouth.

TONY

No.

And they walk off. Good friends; unusual friends...

8 INT. GUY CHILDERS' BROOKLYN PICKLE FACTORY - DAY

8

Hipsters in hats and Mexican technicians are creating pickles in huge vats. GUY is walking Maggie through aisle after aisle of pickles. Guy is wearing a Peruvian hat with flaps, shorts, and clogs.

GUY

I started production in my apartment three years ago. Now I have twelve employees, and I just got an order from Whole Foods. If that works out we're taking off. But I'm still very hands on. Every pickle has my stamp of approval on it.

He withdraws a pickle from a vat.

(CONTINUED)

GUY (CONT'D)
Here, try this one.

MAGGIE
I love this!

GUY
That's the Bavarian. Classic.

MAGGIE
This is the best pickle I've ever
had.

Guy looks at her, beaming.

Jump cut:

INT. FRONT DESK - DAY

Guy and Maggie are at the front desk of Brooklyn Brine. Guy takes off his gloves as Maggie notices a pair of hockey skates hanging from a coat stand.

MAGGIE
You skate?

GUY
Every Sunday. I grew up on the ice.

MAGGIE
Oh right. You were on the ice
hockey team.

GUY
Yeah.

MAGGIE
I used to skate a lot when I was
little.

A moment of awkwardness.

GUY
So, regarding our plan. Here... is
my bill of health.

With an air of pride, he spreads his blood test results across the desk.

GUY (CONT'D)
Read it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
(scanning the results)
That's great.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Oh! I have for you:

Maggie takes an empty plastic specimen jar out of her purse.

GUY
Ah.

He takes it and looks into it, as if for an answer.

MAGGIE
You need to keep it warm, when
you...so just put it next to your
body underneath your shirt...and
you can come right over.

GUY
Okay...

Guy places the jar on the desk. They look at it together.

GUY (CONT'D)
So when do you want to do this?

MAGGIE
March...twenty third?

Guy thinks about his schedule. No conflicts come to mind.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I just want to build up some more
savings.

Guy pulls out a stool for Maggie solicitously, in
anticipation, perhaps, of her pregnancy.

GUY
That's smart.

MAGGIE
I have insurance and everything.
So, I guess the question is, how
much involvement do you want? I was
going to suggest none, but I'm open
to negotiation.

A beat as Guy digests this.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GUY

None is...so cool. It kind of takes
the pressure off, doesn't it?

He takes a seat and leans back against the refrigerator,
beside a large circulating fan.

GUY (CONT'D)

I can just relax, and build my
empire.

The fan blows Guy's STD bloodtest result paper across his
desk; they both move to stop it, and their fingers touch.

3 INT. MAGGIE'S BUILDING - DAY 3

Close up of a mailbox being opened with a key.

Maggie draws out two identical white envelopes. Puzzled, she
opens one, then the other.

A3 EXT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - DAY A3

Maggie walks outside.

4 INT./EXT. NEW SCHOOL - DAY 4

Maggie enters the big glass doors.

5 INT. NEW SCHOOL - BURSAR'S OFFICE - DAY 5

A large woman with close-cropped hair and a neck brace sits
behind the desk with the air of a sage.

MAGGIE

Hi Beverly. I got two checks this
month. Not that I'm complaining.

BEVERLY

You sure they're not for two
different payments?

MAGGIE

I would love to think that... but
they have the same date on them and
I was paid last month.

JOHN

Excuse me...

(CONTINUED)

The camera pans right to include a shambolic, sleep-deprived, edgy man.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I couldn't help but overhear this young woman got two checks. And I don't have any.

Beverly looks up at him, displeased at this complication.

BEVERLY

What's your name?

JOHN

John Harding.

MAGGIE

Oh well my name is Johanna Hardin, I mean my name is Maggie... but on the check it's Johanna Margaret Hardin. So maybe there was a mix-up.

Beverly is on the computer. She looks a little put out. She hates this kind of thing.

BEVERLY

Yep. And it's gonna take a minute to figure this out.

JOHN

It would be great if it could be resolved soon.

Beverly looks up at him with her final answer.

BEVERLY

We'll get back to you.

Maggie and John walk down the hallway.

JOHN

Damn. That woman could guard hell, if Cerberus ever needs to go to the vet.

MAGGIE

Everyone's scared of Beverly. What do you teach?

JOHN

Ficto-critical Perspectives in
Family Dynamics, and Masks in the
Modern Family, Victorian Times to
the present day.

MAGGIE

Psychology department?

JOHN

Anthropology.

MAGGIE

(scrutinizing him)

I don't know any anthropologists.

JOHN

What about you?

MAGGIE

I'm the Director of Business
Development and Outreach for the
art and design students.

JOHN

What's that?

MAGGIE

I help graduate students strategize
for success in the art and design
world. Sort of a bridge between art
and commerce. I help them sell
their souls. And eat.

JOHN

Are you old enough to do that job?

MAGGIE

I have a master's degree in arts
management.

They exit frame as the camera, with a will of its own, pans
down to look through the glass wall at the courtyard below,
and a round metal bench with a phallic center.

JOHN

(os)

Good to know. See you later.

MAGGIE

(os)

Good luck with getting paid!

Several days later, Maggie is in line with FELICIA, Tony's wife. Felicia is wearing a t-shirt with "What would Jesus Buy?" Written on it. She and Felicia are mid-conversation when John calls out. The camera pans over to him.

JOHN

Felicia -- when is that -- that Pike fellowship meeting?

FELICIA

Thursday at seven.

JOHN

(sighing)
Great, thanks.

The women sit.

MAGGIE

That's so funny that you know John Harding.

FELICIA

(eating her soup)
We're on a committee together. He's a real panty melter. Why?

MAGGIE

No, we just -- had a check mix-up recently -- because of our names-- Hardin/Harding.

FELICIA

He's one of the bad-boys of Fictocritical Anthropology. Apparently, he was a big deal in Chicago. And now he just does adjunct work here, but they're really salivating for him to teach full-time.

MAGGIE

Why won't he?

FELICIA

I don't know. I think it has something to do with his wife. She's some kind of monster apparently.

MAGGIE

Where did you hear this?

FELICIA

(shrugging)

Around. She's got tenure at Columbia. Georgette Nørgaard. The words 'Glacial' and 'Terrifying' have been bandied about. Then again I've heard myself described as a psychotic bitch, but I think I'm actually pretty nice, so... you can't believe everything you hear.

Maggie is distracted by John's voice.

JOHN

-if you say 'she was, like, terrified', it's nothing compared to saying 'she was terrified'.
"Like" is a language condom. Trust me.

Maggie looks back at John, now a far more mysterious character.

FELICIA

(searching in her salad)
Where the fuck is my chicken?

John is nursing a coffee, sitting on a bench, reading the paper, when he notices Maggie, who is circling the fountain with vigorous, calisthenic strides. He watches her circle a couple times. Calls out:

JOHN

Hey, Hardin?

MAGGIE

Oh, hi!

JOHN

What are you doing?

MAGGIE

I'm taking a little constitutional before my next meeting.

John gets up and walks over to her.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Did you get paid yet?

JOHN

No.

MAGGIE

You're kidding.

JOHN

Beverly tells me the check is
coming any day now.

Maggie and John walk past a man in a fancy suit kneeling to
scoop up his dog's turd.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I knew this Masai from Tanzania. He
was here to run in the Marathon. He
took everything in New York City in
complete stride. Nothing fazed him
until he saw a grown man following
his dog, picking up its shit. He
started laughing so hard, he wept.

MAGGIE

I guess that-- custom-- would be
strange, like, out of context.
Whoops!

JOHN

What?

MAGGIE

I overheard part of your
conversation. About 'like' being a -
- language prophylactic.

He's trying to remember saying that.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

What is ficto-critical
anthropology, anyway?

JOHN

It's a way of writing about
anthropology that blends
ethnographic observation, story
telling and, like, theory.

A beat. Two smiles.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do we have to walk in a circle, or
are we allowed walk around the
park?

MAGGIE

We're allowed.

They begin to meander.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(curious about him)

It's so hard to find a full-time
position.

JOHN

When my wife, Georgette, was
offered a tenured position at
Columbia, I decided to put off a
job search, just teach a few
classes and finally try to write
this novel I've had in my head for
years.

They pass two bomb squad-looking men sharing a joke.

MAGGIE

(intrigued)

So, are you getting a lot of work
done, on your novel?

JOHN

They say every relationship has a
gardener, and a rose. Georgette is
definitely the rose.

MAGGIE

And you're the gardener.

JOHN

And I don't have a green thumb.

MAGGIE

Maybe you're a rose in disguise.

JOHN

It would be a very good disguise.

They walk along for a moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

She's wonderful. It's just she's
kind of destroying my life.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (3)

11

Maggie isn't sure how to respond to this remark, dropped as a kind of aside as John ambles along.

MAGGIE

?

JOHN

No, no. It's just been a bad week.
(looking up at the sky) It's
turning into a beautiful day.

They come to a man performing Shakespearean soliloquies for donations.

ACTOR

Content with Hermia? No! I do
repent/The tedious minutes I with
her have spent. Not Hermia, but
Helena I love./Who would not change
a raven for a dove?

John gives him a dollar.

ACTOR (CONT'D)

Thanks, man.

13 EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - BENCH - MINUTES LATER

13

A few minutes later. They have cupcakes and are sitting on the same bench John was on earlier. They are mid-conversation.

JOHN

We have two of those. Best part of
my life. Who's your guy?

MAGGIE

No guy. Actually, the man I've
asked to be the father is *named*
Guy, coincidentally.

John tears a bite off.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(laughing)

You eat like Mr. Fox!

JOHN

...

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

There was a Roald Dahl book? And then it was a movie--

JOHN

Oh yeah. My kids loved that movie.

Maggie looks at her watch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I really like what you're doing, though--having a baby by yourself. Not that it won't be hard, because it's gonna be fucking hard. But, I admire your courage. And I love babies.

MAGGIE

I just don't like leaving my destiny...

JOHN

To destiny?

MAGGIE

Right.

The Shakespearean actor from the park walks by them, still in his ruff. He is with another man who is silent, furious.

ACTOR

(tearful)

But where will I go?

The other man shrugs. The Actor runs after his lover.

ACTOR (CONT'D)

You can't just kick me out of our house...

JOHN

(to Maggie)

I have a question for you.

MAGGIE

Yes?

JOHN

Would you consider reading a chapter of my novel?

MAGGIE

Sure.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

I know that's weird. I really want the first reader to be like...You know how you said you're a bridge between art and commerce? Well, I need a bridge.

MAGGIE

Perfect. Give it to me. I'll read it.

John reaches into his backpack and pulls out about fifty pages of a novel.

JOHN

You really will? I really would appreciate it.

Maggie takes it.

MAGGIE

I don't mind at all.

She looks at her watch.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I gotta go. Shoot.

John looks at his watch.

JOHN

(panicked)

Oh shit! Shit! Shit! I gotta go. I gotta go!

MAGGIE

Oh--

He grabs his bag and runs off.

JOHN

I'll see you later. Thank you!

MAGGIE

(baffled, calling after him)

Okay, Bye!

John rushes to the wings and into a big close up as he looks out at the stage with trepidation.

JOHN
 (under his breath)
 Fuck.

KLIEGLER
 (os)
 What do you make of the use of
 masks in the Occupy movement?

High shot: see John stride onto the stage. GEORGETTE, John's beautiful Danish wife, and a moderator, KLIEGLER, have started this panel on MASKS IN POLITICS without him. His seat is rudely empty. As John does his walk of shame across the stage, Georgette speaks in a clipped Danish accent.

GEORGETTE
 The masked revolutionary is a
 direct inversion of the face of the
 demagogue-- the essentially fascist
 ideal of the magnetic individual...

As John passes, Georgette gives him an extremely dirty look.

JOHN
 (into the mic)
 Sorry I'm late.

Laughter, because he's so damn charismatic. Georgette isn't laughing.

KLIEGLER
 (holding up John's book)
 John Harding, author of many books,
 most recently, "Rituals of
 Commodity Fetishism at the Tail End
 of the Empire".

Applause. He's popular.

KLIEGLER (CONT'D)
 So John, of course we have been
 discussing the Occupy movement--

GEORGETTE
 I can't help mentioning the irony
 that Warner Brothers owns the
 copyright on the V for Vendetta
 mask that became the face of the
 Occupy movement.

JOHN

Like it or not, in this country,
the most potent, totemic symbols
are cinematic or television-based;
so it only makes sense that a
radical, popular movement would try
to subvert them.

GEORGETTE

Nevertheless, the reality of Occupy
is to be found within the
capitalist narrative, as a kind of
subplot.

JOHN

This sweeping cynicism of yours--

GEORGETTE

If by sweeping cynicism you mean
not living in a dream, then shoot
me now.

KLIEGLER

Maybe the way we--

JOHN

Nobody ever thinks a revolution is
going to happen until three days
after it's happened. This was a
leaderless movement. It wasn't
going to happen on a schedule. This
was a genuine populist uprising.

Applause.

KLIEGLER

Yes! Because--

GEORGETTE

Absolutely. But to return to the
use of masks in politics. I am more
interested in the possibility of
anonymity and group affiliation --
the "I am Spartacus" maneuver --
which has been the primary tactical
explanation of the use of masks
among various 20th and 21st century
protest movements. Including the
Zapatistas, the black blocs of the
anti-globalization movement, and,
of course, Pussy Riot.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (3)

14

As her speech wears on, we see John wilting like a daisy in a sauna. He radiates resentment and defeat.

15 OMITTED

15

16 INT. JOHN AND GEORGETTE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

16

Close up of Georgette's manicured hand, texting. We go wide to reveal a family dinner. John is standing, serving Georgette pasta.

JOHN

You don't need to help, but could you please put that down?

GEORGETTE

(texting)

One moment.

She puts the phone down.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

Okay.

John sits. JUSTINE, 13, in a school uniform, sits beside her dreamy brother, PAUL, 7.

JUSTINE

I don't get why you say the same thing in the concluding paragraph as you do in the opening paragraph.

GEORGETTE

You're repeating your thesis but in a more developed form.

JUSTINE

What's the point of that?

GEORGETTE

By the time you get to the conclusion you've proven your thesis.

JUSTINE

So it's basically just gloating.

JOHN

(amused)

It is a form of gloating, yes.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGETTE

(To John:)

They have fleas in Paul's class again.

JOHN

They don't have fleas. They have lice.

GEORGETTE

Okay, lice.

JOHN

(to Paul)

Let me check your head.

Paul walks over to John. John checks his head.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You don't have lice.

Georgette catches Justine texting.

GEORGETTE

No texting at the table.

JOHN

I wonder where she gets it.

GEORGETTE

I use my phone for work.

JOHN

Sometimes I'd like to smash it with a hammer.

GEORGETTE

Ha-ha.

Georgette's phone rings. She is dying to answer. The kids both watch their mother restrain herself as John fumes. The phone rings out as Justine speaks.

JUSTINE

Way to go Mom.

GEORGETTE

Salad?

As Georgette serves, her phone pings: a text! She glances at the text and sucks in air, shocked.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

What is it?

GEORGETTE

(flushed with excitement)
They've asked me to chair the
department at Columbia!

JOHN

Congratulations. That's great.

GEORGETTE

It'd be a huge time commitment.

JOHN

Still, it's a high-class problem.

GEORGETTE

When will I ever get my writing
done? I've promised to deliver that
book by December.

Georgette checks her reddening breast bone.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

Come on. You'll get a big bump in
salary--

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

Look -- I'm already breaking out in
a rash!

JOHN

I've got an idea. Why don't you
call Caleb back and discuss it.

GEORGETTE

I have to.

JOHN

Justine, you want to text your
friend.

Justine nods, mystified by this change in policy.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Paul, you want to play Ninja
Revinja on your iPad? Go.

Paul jumps up to get the iPad. John pulls out a flip phone.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN (CONT'D)

I myself even have a minor text I would like to respond to. We can skip the pretence of having a close-knit family dinner. (looking down at his phone)
And we can return to the bullshit later.

Justine texts. Georgette is on the phone. Close on his text from Maggie: **"finished the first chapter!"**

GEORGETTE

(os)

What is it?

Close on John's manuscript.

MAGGIE

The tone is so unusual - sort of screwball-surreal. Is that right?

JOHN

That sounds right. Screwball-surreal. That's it exactly!

They are both freezing, huddled on their bench.

MAGGIE

And oh my God the characters! Martin Neems the colorless postal worker in 1950's Connecticut and he's married to this crazy Brazilian woman who keeps breaking out in rashes! It's hilarious.

JOHN

(drinking in her praise)
Really? Really?

MAGGIE

Oh, and the description of the musical collection!

JOHN

Oh, yeah, his records you mean?

MAGGIE

Yes. Oh, that is so great.

17 CONTINUED:

JOHN
It's funny, right?

MAGGIE
Oh, it's great. I'm sorry. I am
very, very cold. I feel like I'm
welded to the bench. Is it okay if
we go get some coffee?

The camera moves left, to a westward path, as if it knows
what's going to happen next.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(os)
Actually, my apartment is like
three blocks from here. I just need
to get another sweater. I'm deathly
cold.

They walk into shot and walk down the path through the frigid
wind.

JOHN
I cannot tell you how much I
appreciate you doing this.

MAGGIE
Oh it was so much fun to read.

JOHN
Really? Did you think the boil was
gross or funny?

18 OMITTED 18

19 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - AFTERNOON 19

Maggie and John enter, gasping with cold. The tiny living
room is absolutely crammed with books.

MAGGIE
I sublet from a poet.

John looks around him at this charming apartment.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
You want some tea? Or...I guess
that's his wine, or...I have
whiskey. It's a little early.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

JOHN

We could make a hot whiskey. Do you have some honey and lemon?

Maggie looks into the fridge.

MAGGIE

I have half a lemon. And... honey.

JOHN

I'll make it for you.

Maggie walks to her closet and puts away her coat.

MAGGIE

Okay, great.

JOHN

(os)

You're clearly a reader.

MAGGIE

Actually most of these books are his.

Maggie looks in the mirror for a moment.

TIME CUT

20 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - AFTERNOON

20

Close on a pair of glass mugs filled with hot whiskey.

JOHN

Hot whiskey.

MAGGIE

Oh, thank you.

She takes a sip.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Oh it's so good.

Medium wide: they sit in silence for a moment.

JOHN

So. Tell me. I'm curious about you.

Maggie looks up at him.

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

What about me? What aspect of me?

JOHN

Every aspect.

MAGGIE

I don't know where to start.

JOHN

How about the beginning?

He stands, takes off his jacket.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm hot.

MAGGIE

Oh, I know.

John sits down again.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(drinks)

Well, I had a... kind of unusual start.

JOHN

...?

MAGGIE

My parents were married fairly young and they never had kids. They were academics at the University of Wisconsin. Then eventually they got divorced, my Dad moved away... but then later, years later, they ran into each other at a party. And they... they got together that night. And that's how I was conceived. On the bed with all the coats. My mom always says that it's because I needed to be born.

JOHN

I love that idea. That our unborn children are the real gods, dictating the fates of us poor, clueless mortals. Did they...they got together after that?

MAGGIE

No. My mother raised me on her own in Madison. She was a professor of nineteenth century British poetry. She wasn't very practical. So I ended up doing all the day-to-day stuff. I was organizing the bills by the time I was twelve. She came from a Quaker family... so she used to take me to Quaker meetings with her. I still go, sometimes.

JOHN

A Quaker.

MAGGIE

We had a nice life. And then when I was sixteen, she died.

Saying it still shocks Maggie, and tears glimmer in her eyes.

JOHN

...

MAGGIE

(matter of fact)

So I moved in with my Dad in Philly.

Maggie is surprised to feel that she's crying.

JOHN

How was that?

MAGGIE

Um... cordial. And quiet.

JOHN

Sounds lonely.

MAGGIE

Yes.

He finds her so touching.

JOHN

I grew up in a house... where nobody ever stopped yelling at each other.

MAGGIE

(recovering, laughing)

Heaven!

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

...

MAGGIE

(trying to be positive)
My dad is a kind man. And he made
the best of it. We both did.

A moment. The atmosphere has changed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

So what about you? Tell me about
you. Background-wise.

JOHN

My father worked at a blackjack
table in Atlantic City. But it's a
really long story. And I have to
get back to my dysfunction.

He stands back up. Puts on his coat. Looks down at her
sitting on the couch.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I believe it.

MAGGIE

What?

JOHN

That you had to be born.

He rushes out the door. As it shuts, the 'reading, writing,
falling in love' montage (improvised dialogue) begins:

INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - DAY

Maggie reads John's book. This image is intercut with:

B22

INT. JOHN & GEORGETTE'S APARTMENT - DAY OR NIGHT

B22

John writing at his dining room table. (We hear his voice
over the montage.)

JOHN (V.O.)

Martin Neem dreamed the same thing
every night, but he could never
remember what it was. His wife,
Talia, slept like a stone. Talia
was a small woman.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

B22 CONTINUED:

JOHN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
A small, beautiful woman with hair
like a river of snakes and the
temper of an angry mink.

INT. NEW SCHOOL - BRIDGE HALLWAY - DAY

John is walking away from us; Maggie toward us. They meet in the middle of the hallway, greet each other, then John turns and goes off with Maggie, toward camera. He can't resist talking about the new chapter she just read.

EXT. SKATING RINK-DAY

Maggie skating.

22 EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - DAY 22

John and Maggie discuss his book on their bench in Washington Square Park, eating dosai.

A22 EXT. NEW SCHOOL - COURTYARD - DAY A22

New School courtyard (seen from above on the round bench we saw earlier): Maggie and John, still talking about the text:

JOHN
Do you think this is overwritten?

MAGGIE
(OS)
I think John's book is a novella.

C22 INT. FELICIA AND TONY'S APARTMENT - DAY C22

Maggie, looking a little tired, but lovely in a tweed skirt and sweater, is eating a carrot as Tony tries to assemble a piece of IKEA furniture.

MAGGIE
It's short and very strange. It might even be an allegory. I like everything I've read. He's asking me for suggestions.

TONY
Oh? What does his wife think about that?

(CONTINUED)

C22 CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

She doesn't know about it. To be honest, I don't think she pays much attention to what he does. She's very self-absorbed. She might even be a narcissist.

TONY

Of course she is.

MAGGIE

Why of course? He's basically a psychiatric nurse. He can't write his novel under those conditions -- I think their marriage fell apart after the second child was born. And now he's trapped in it.

TONY

That's what he's telling you.

MAGGIE

Why would he lie?

TONY

To get in your pants!

24 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - LATE AFTERNOON

24

It's March twenty-third. Guy is taking off his jacket. Maggie looks to see if the pockets are bulging. He reaches into a large pocket and produces a small, mashed bouquet.

MAGGIE

Oh! Thank you.

She puts the flowers in a glass, then turns expectantly.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Did you... bring it?

GUY

Oh! Fuck... I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

That's why I gave you the little... container?

GUY

Where's your bathroom?

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

Um...

Guy looks around the room.

GUY

So what do I deposit my genetic
gold mine into?

Maggie rushes over to her cupboard and takes out a little
plastic jar like the first one she gave him.

MAGGIE

(handing it to him)

It's sterile.

Guy holds it between his thumb and forefinger. He takes a
step to the bathroom, then turns back.

GUY

Listen. I feel it behooves me, to,
ah, offer to do this the old
fashioned way. Given the extreme
state of your beauty and my totally
free afternoon.

A moment as the absolute awkwardness of this offer sinks in.

MAGGIE

No...no thank you, Guy. I just
think that would be too
complicated.

GUY

No sweat, just being polite.

MAGGIE

Should I go out for a while?

GUY

Nah, just read something. I'll be
back in a jiff with the jizz.

He marches to the bathroom.

MAGGIE

Guy?

GUY

Hm?

MAGGIE

Why didn't you end up becoming a mathematician?

GUY

I liked math because it was beautiful, that's all. I never wanted to be a mathematician.

MAGGIE

(encouraged)

Really? You think math is beautiful?

GUY

I don't think. I know. Anyone who has touched even a hem of that garment knows it's beautiful. For me, the hem was enough. I couldn't have taken the frustration.

MAGGIE

What do you mean?

GUY

Of never seeing the whole thing. Of always just getting little glimpses of the whole picture. Spending my whole life hunting for scraps of truth.

Embarrassed by his own candor, Guy turns and shuts the door to the bathroom, leaving Maggie bemused and oddly charmed by this unique character. Hearing the water run in the bathroom, she turns some Ska music up high on the iPod as a sound buffer. She is so happy, she does a solitary dance. After a few beats, Guy appears with the plastic jar Maggie gave him, a little cloudy something at the bottom. He watches her dance for a moment. We can see how much he likes her. Seeing him, Maggie stops dancing, embarrassed.

MAGGIE

Wow. Swift.

She tries to take the jar, but Guy swoops it away from her and washes it off in the kitchen sink, then swaddles it in a tea towel like a newborn.

GUY

Of course when there's an actual lady involved, it's a different story. I made you extra...just in case you spill some.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (3)

He hands her the bundle gently, as if it were already a baby.

MAGGIE

Thank you, Guy. This is really great.

GUY

Super.

He just stands there. Now what? He fishes his phone out of his pocket and turns the lens on himself, Maggie, and the container, which he gets her to hold up. Maggie is embarrassed and confused.

GUY (CONT'D)

Selfie.

Click!

25 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - BATHROOM - NIGHT 25

Insert close up: Maggie, wearing blue surgical gloves, fills a plastic syringe with Guy's sperm.

CUT TO:

26 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - BATHROOM - LATER 26

Maggie has a thermometer in her mouth, syringe in one hand. She takes out the thermometer, reads her temperature, then punches the number into her phone. A voice calls out of the phone: **"you have a: seventy-one percent chance of being fertile right now"**. The phone rings. Maggie puts it on speaker phone.

27 INT. TONY AND FELICIA'S KITCHEN - INTERCUT 27

TONY

Did you do it yet?

MAGGIE

My apps are giving me contradictory information. Maybe I should wait.

TONY

I would wait. For like five years.

MAGGIE

Let me talk to Felicia.

(CONTINUED)

Felicia takes the phone.

FELICIA

Don't listen to him. He's losing his mind.

MAGGIE

(OS)

Yeah, he seems a little on edge.

FELICIA

You think so? He's driving me crazy with theories of mental illness in Guy Childers' family.

TONY

(in BG, grating parmesan)

I met his mother once. She had a face like a hatchet and she never stopped sighing. And she DRANK.

FELICIA

Tony just loves you too much. He wants to keep you for himself.

MAGGIE

What are you talking about? You know that's not true.

FELICIA

He doesn't want you to move on to the next step in your life because then he, too, might actually have to grow up.

TONY

(from back of the kitchen)

Will you shut the fuck up?

Felicia smiles, giving Tony a semi-jovial middle finger.

MAGGIE

(thermometer in her mouth)

How high does your temperature have to be?

FELICIA (O.S.)

I think just slightly elevated.

TONY (O.S.)

Are you talking about the temperature?

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

TONY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
(yelling) A hundred and one! It has
to be a hundred and one degrees!

FELICIA
(to Tony)
When was the last time you
ovulated?

TONY
I read about it.

Back at Maggie's apartment, the camera leaves Maggie, begins
to move through Maggie's living room, toward the buzzer, like
a curious animal with a will of its own.

FELICIA
(OS)
You know it doesn't usually work
the first time anyway... My girl
friend, Odette...

TONY
(OS)
Odette? That woman is nuts!

FELICIA
(OS)
You just hate her cause she's a
performance artist.

Close on the buzzer, which buzzes, LOUD.

MAGGIE
(OS)
Wait! Hold on. Wait!

The doorbell goes off again, for a really long time. Someone
wants in.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(to Felicia, OS)

Bye!

INT. TONY AND FELICIA'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

Tony is still grating parmesan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TONY

You had her speak at Max's class,
and she said the words "MY VAGINA"
three times.

28 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - NIGHT

28

Maggie is wiggling along the floor on her back, pelvis up wearing surgical gloves and her night gown. The buzzer rings again.

MAGGIE

I'm coming!

FELICIA

(OS)

Maggie have you done it yet?

TONY

(OS)

Have you done it?

Finally Maggie reaches the door, reaches up with one leg, and answers the buzzer with her toe.

MAGGIE

(yelling)

Hello!?

JOHN

(os)

It's John.

Reflexively, she jumps to her feet, looks down.

MAGGIE

Oh, shoot!

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Wait a minute! I just need a
minute!

Maggie runs into the bathroom.

29 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - BATHROOM - NIGHT

29

Jump Cut: Maggie takes a quick shower -- see her from outside the shower reaching for the soap with a surgical-gloved hand.

30 EXT. MAGGIE'S BUILDING - NIGHT 30

John waiting. He looks like a man about to go into the ring.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Maggie pulls on another nearly identical night gown, but this one has sleeves.

31 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - NIGHT 31

Maggie streaks into the kitchen holding the jar with the remains of the sperm in it, sticks it in the freezer. Back to the buzzer with paper towels and sterilizing spray, she mops up the mess. At last, having tidied up all evidence, she presses the buzzer.

MAGGIE

John? Are you still there?

JOHN

Yeah?

Maggie buzzes him in.

32 INT./EXT. MAGGIE'S BUILDING - VESTIBULE - NIGHT 32

John comes through the metal gate and approaches the front door.

33 INT. MAGGIE'S SUBLET - NIGHT 33

He comes in. He's very tense, seems upset. They talk in the doorway.

MAGGIE

Are you okay?

JOHN

I got locked out. Georgette is in Pennsylvania with the kids...

MAGGIE

Oh! Do you want to stay on the couch?

John looks at the couch.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

Not really.

He walks in. Sits on the couch. Maggie, thrown by his presence, starts making conversation.

MAGGIE

So I'm on chapter five. Now I think Mrs. Jeffries is my favorite character. She's so pallid and reliable but he finds her so attractive, in spite of her moustache. I just wonder...

JOHN

What?

MAGGIE

If maybe the wife's behavior is getting a little... large?

JOHN

You should come over to my house. That book is like a documentary. No, I'm sure you're right. I'm sure I'm exaggerating her behavior.

His face is filled with distress. He gets up and paces.

MAGGIE

No it's really funny! I don't want you to change it. Maybe it's more about, like how much of it you do. I--

JOHN

Ah, fuck it!

He suddenly falls to his knees at Maggie's feet and clings to the hem of her long night gown. Maggie is astonished. John looks up at her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm in love with you.

MAGGIE

...

JOHN

I'm genuinely locked out of my apartment. But I'm also in love with you.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

And I don't want to be married to
Georgette anymore. And please could
I stay in your bed?

She doesn't say anything, doesn't move. It is only now really hitting her how she feels about this man. She is finally admitting it to herself. He unbuttons the lowest button of her long night gown. She looks down at him, desire blooming. Another button. Another. All the way up, until we glimpse her naked breasts between the crack in the cloth. They are face to face. He whispers.

JOHN

I don't want you to have a baby
with the pickle man.

MAGGIE

...

JOHN

I want you to have a baby with
me...

She wants him terribly but she just has to be honest.

MAGGIE

I need to tell you something.
I...tried already.

JOHN

When?

MAGGIE

Recently...

JOHN

What happened?

MAGGIE

It didn't work! It didn't work. I
just had to tell you because...

JOHN

Because why?

MAGGIE

Because I love you. I'm in love
with you.

They look at one another, and they kiss. They move onto the bed. Maggie looks up at John with open, frank sexuality. She has never felt this way before. He leans down to kiss her.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (3)

There is a flare of light from the bedside lamp which obscures the image.

34 EXT. QUEENS - DAY

34

Buttery sunlight flares in the lens. Gradually through the flare we see Maggie from behind carrying her 2 1/2 year old daughter, Lily, on her hip. A long dolly shot: She walks to the mailbox at the end of the street and lets Lily mail a bill. Then they walk back and we see them from the front. Bliss.

EXT. QUEENS LOFT - DAY

Maggie carries Lily to their storefront loft, opens the big metal door...

35 INT. QUEENS LOFT - DAY

35

John types in his glassed-in office. "Dancing in the Dark" by Bruce Springsteen is blasting. Maggie walks in with Lily on her hip and turns down the music after a panicked moment of looking for the ipad. Lily stomps in and jumps up and down.

LILY

Daddy!

Lily goes off to play.

John comes out of his office.

JOHN

You turned down my song.

MAGGIE

It was very loud.

JOHN

That's the point.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry, shall I turn it up again?

JOHN

You really are from Wisconsin, aren't you?

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Yes I am.

They kiss.

36 INT. QUEENS LOFT - LATER

36

The three of them are eating soup. Happy.

MAGGIE

Can you watch her for an hour, I have a conference call.

JOHN

Ah-- I was going to keep writing, but sure.

Maggie stands and hands Lily over to John.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Come on, girl, let's make a big mess.

LILY

Can I bring Froggy?

JOHN

Sure. Bring Froggy.

Lily clutches a little plastic green frog as John carries her into the kitchen. They begin to play.

37 INT. QUEENS LOFT - MAGGIE'S WORK SPACE - DAY

37

Maggie is on her call.

MAGGIE

Yes. The last time we spoke you wanted to do something with skateboarding and architecture. Is that still what you're thinking?

HIGGS (O.S.)

Absolutely. I want to be a fragile little human, scaling some big architectural monolith -- asserting my value even as I glide along the surface of some priceless building...

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE
(dreamy, searching)
Right. Like... skateboarding down
the ramp of the Guggenheim...

A phone rings OS.

HIGGS (O.S.)
Yeah! Exactly! That's perfect.

MAGGIE
I didn't mean the actual
Guggenheim.

HIGGS (O.S.)
Why not?

From across the loft Maggie hears:

LILY (O.S.)
Mommy!!! Mommy!!!

MAGGIE
Excuse me a minute.
(hitting 'mute')
John?!

No answer. Maggie gets up and walks toward the bathroom.

LILY
Froggy is drowning!

MAGGIE
JOHN?!

LILY
Froggy is drowning, Mommeeee!!!!

John is on the phone. He looks toward the bathroom.

JOHN
(to Lily)
Hold on a second...

MAGGIE
(into phone)
Sorry about this but I have another
urgent call. I'll be right back on.

Maggie rushes to the bathroom.

38

INT. QUEENS LOFT - BATHROOM - DAY

38

Lily is screaming, looking into the toilet. Maggie walks in.

LILY
Froggy fell in, and then he was
hungry.

Maggie looks into the toilet. There is a box of Koala Crisps in the toilet, along with half the box of cereal.

MAGGIE
Wow, Lily. This is a big mess.

JOHN
(OS talking into the
phone)
I could send you the next couple
chapters...

MAGGIE
Where is Froggy?

LILY
Under there.

MAGGIE
Don't worry. We're gonna save him!

She retrieves the frog from the toilet and puts him in the sink.

LILY
Can I wash him, Mommy?

MAGGIE
Yeah, let's wash him. Don't touch
him yet...

LILY
I wanna wash him...

MAGGIE
See, we saved him!

Lily peers over the side of the sink as Maggie washes the frog in hot water. Her little cheeks are tear stained.

LILY
(whispering)
Sorry Froggy.

(CONTINUED)

Remembering her call, Maggie un-mutes the phone.

MAGGIE

Hello?

No one there. Great. John ends his call. He looks happy. They meet outside the bathroom.

INT. QUEENS LOFT KITCHEN - DAY

JOHN

Did you take care of Froggy?

MAGGIE

(keeping up her good
humor)

Yeah, but why didn't you?

JOHN

That guy from Parallel Press
called.

MAGGIE

Oh great, what did he say?

JOHN

He wants to meet me at four.

MAGGIE

But you were taking Lily this
afternoon because I have a meeting
with a student?

JOHN

Oh, shit. Sorry.

MAGGIE

Maybe I can push it.

John is hopeful.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But who is going to pick up Paul
and Justine?

JOHN

Oh, fuck. All right.

He starts for the phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

No--It's okay -- I'll reschedule my meeting.

JOHN

You don't mind?

MAGGIE

No.

JOHN

Really?

MAGGIE

Yes.

JOHN

Thanks.

She goes back into the bathroom. John makes for his study. The phone rings again. John turns and answers.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Hello...he what??... All right, hang on.

John turns to Maggie, who is still in her rubber gloves.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Paul twisted his ankle in eurythmics. You're gonna have to leave now.

Close on Maggie as she digests this.

41 EXT. DANISH-AMERICAN SCHOOL - DAY

41

This is a nice private school for Danes, nestled in a townhouse. Maggie, Lily on her hip, emerges from the school, opening the heavy door for Paul, who is now nine. He is on crutches and looks very sorry for himself.

PAUL

Where's Dad?

MAGGIE

He's in a meeting sweetie, but crutches! Wow. Does it hurt a lot?

Paul is upset.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

We have a while before Justine gets out.

Maggie helps the kids into the car, walks to the driver's side and loads in the crutches.

TIME CUT

42 INT. MINIVAN / DANISH-AMERICAN SCHOOL - DAY

42

Paul and Lily are laughing hysterically in the back seat. They are making a great deal of noise. Maggie has her eyes shut. The phone rings. Maggie has to answer this one.

MAGGIE

Hello? Oh thank you so much for calling me back. Excuse me--

Maggie puts her hand over the phone and talks to Paul in the back seat.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Paul can you check what's taking Justine so long?

Paul hurries out of the car. As he enters the school, Maggie notices that he has forgotten his crutches and is running on his hurt foot.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Thanks for holding. I was hoping to schedule a meeting, we have a grad student -- A student at the New School, Komiko Krauss, just patented a toy we'd love to have a chance to present --Yes. The doll. Yes. Oh great. Ten on Wednesday is fine. Thank you. Bye!

As Maggie talks we see Justine helping Paul walk out of the school. He has remembered his injury and is hopping on one leg. Justine Gets in.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hi!

JUSTINE

Hi.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
Got caught up in the locker room?

JUSTINE
(quiet)
I couldn't find my shoes.

MAGGIE
Well, we're all here now!

JUSTINE
What's for dinner?

MAGGIE
Good question. I'll pick something
up. Daddy's at a meeting.

JUSTINE
When's Mom coming home?

MAGGIE
I don't know. But I bet there's a
plan!

The van drives off.

43 OMITTED 43

44 INT. QUEENS LOFT - JOHN'S STUDY NIGHT 44

John is on the corded phone with Georgette.

JOHN
Georgette. The advance is only five
thousand more, so why would you not
go to the house with the better
editor? You keep talking in
circles. Munroe is the better
editor *for this book...* For all the
reasons we've been talking about!

Maggie raps on the glass of his office and cheerfully holds
up a bag of Take-Out. He waves at her, still immersed in his
conversation.

45

INT. QUEENS LOFT - LATER

45

Chinese food cartons going in the garbage. Maggie is cleaning up the remains of take-out as John flops onto the couch, seemingly exhausted. Maggie sits down at the end of the couch.

MAGGIE

So how was the meeting at Parallel Press?

JOHN

I had to push it to Thursday. Georgette was having one of her crises. I couldn't get her off the phone.

MAGGIE

What happened?

JOHN

She got offers from two different UK publishers for her new book and she couldn't decide.

MAGGIE

Wow. She doesn't have anyone else to talk to about something like this except her ex-husband? Especially since her new book is all about our affair and how it ruined her life?

JOHN

I'm sorry I messed up your day.

MAGGIE

Not just my day. Komiko -- my student. She's a fragile person... and I had a meeting set up to discuss her meeting with the toy company. But I had to cancel that meeting because *you* had a meeting. And then you don't even *go* to the meeting with the publisher because you were talking Georgette out of her tree! Why does nobody ever talk *me* out of *my* tree?!

JOHN

(with affection)

Because you're never up a tree.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOHN (CONT'D)

And if you were, you would find
your way back down all by yourself.

MAGGIE

Am I so, so capable that I don't
deserve any attention, is that it?
Like, the squeaky wheel gets the
grease, and the cactus never gets
watered?

Attempting to defuse her, John takes off one of Maggie's
socks and starts giving her a foot rub.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

You have to start thinking of
yourself as indispensable, John.

JOHN

(removing the other long
knee sock)

But I'm not. I'm totally
dispensable. On a practical level,
you'd be fine without me.

MAGGIE

Do you realize that Paul faked the
ankle thing today just so you would
pick him up from school, and then
you didn't even show.

JOHN

What do you mean?

MAGGIE

He ran on it when I asked him to go
check on Justine. He forgot.

JOHN

That's weird.

MAGGIE

No. It's not weird. You want to
know why? Because his mother is in
Reykjavik right now, studying the
maternal techniques of the
Icelandic. He needs his father's
attention. So do I.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

Let's go away for a couple days
when Georgette gets back. Just the
two of us.

Maggie sighs, looks at him. She doesn't really want to go
away just the two of them at this moment.

MAGGIE

I'm going to start pouting more.

JOHN

(relieved at this levity)
Georgette'll give you a tutorial.
She's good at that.

Close on Maggie. She smiles a sad, tired, alienated smile.

46 EXT- UNION SQUARE PRODUCE MARKET - DAY

46

Maggie walking beside Lily, who is pushing the stroller.

MAGGIE

Who did you sit with at snack?

LILY

Alison.

GUY

(OS)
Maggie?

Maggie turns as the camera pans to see Guy, the pickle
entrepreneur, near-father of her child, king of his booth.

MAGGIE

Oh hi! Hi, Guy! I haven't seen you
for so long...

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

(to Lily)
This is my friend Guy.

Guy comes out of his booth and kneels before Lily, gazing at
the little girl with something like reverence.

GUY

Is that...

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

(blank at first, then
copping on to his
assumption)

? ... Oh, no -- this is Lily. I got
married. I should have told you. I
met my husband around the same time
you gave me the...sample.

An awkward moment.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

How are you?

GUY

Intense. I just found out Whole
Foods is going to be carrying my
pickles nationally. We have to
expand production, post-haste!

MAGGIE

That's amazing.

GUY

I'm manning the stall to get away
from the chaos at the factory.

MAGGIE

(a sudden impulse)
Oh! Do you still have those
Bavarian pickles?

GUY

Sure do. Our most popular pickle.

MAGGIE

Can I buy a large jar please?

LILY

When are we gonna eat the pickles?

MAGGIE

(to Lily)
Let's go get some pickles.

GUY

One large Bavarian.

He goes back to the booth and hands Maggie a huge jar of
pickles.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED: (2)

MAGGIE

That's the biggest jar of pickles
I've ever seen. How much do I owe
you?

GUY

(glum)
Wedding present.

MAGGIE

Thank you. Bye!

Maggie picks up Lily and puts the jar of pickles in the
stroller. Guy watches them go. He and Lily wave to one
another. As Maggie and Lily walk off:

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

47 Oh, wiglet. I'm so glad you're you! 47

69 INT. QUEENS LOFT - KITCHEN- LATE AFTERNOON 69

Hear John's dot matrix printer OS. Maggie is at the kitchen
table, the huge jar of Guy's pickles before her. She reaches
in and takes out a pickle, chomps down. Yum. John walks in
and hands her the latest pages from his manuscript. She takes
them with an air of resignation.

MAGGIE

(touching the paper)
Wow. Still warm.

Maggie starts reading as John goes into the bedroom. He
speaks through the open hatch.

JOHN

Georgette cancelled her trip.

Maggie nods, reading.

JOHN (CONT'D)

So she's gonna want the kids next
week after all.

Maggie is still reading. She stops.

MAGGIE

I'm Mrs. Jeffries, aren't I?

JOHN

...?

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

I'm the colorless, efficient postal worker that you fell in love with because she makes your life so much easier.

JOHN

(put out)

I came up with Mrs. Jeffries before we even met.

MAGGIE

Yeah, well, you turned me into her then.

He makes a helpless, fed up gesture.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

At least I don't have a moustache -- yet.

INT. QUEENS LOFT BEDROOM - MORNING

Maggie and John read in bed. Maggie reads a newspaper; John reads the Paris Review. Maggie smiles at something in the paper.

MAGGIE

Do you want to hear your horoscope?

JOHN

(immersed)

No.

Close on Maggie as she looks at him, a terrible thought going through her head.

MAGGIE (O.S.)

I'm terrified that I'm falling out of love with him. Really out of love.

Wide shot: Maggie is walking Lily in the stroller. Beside her walks Tony, who pushes Max, now six. Max is reading a thick book by the light of a tiny clamp light.

TONY

Felicia and I fall in and out of love pretty much every week. You can't be so idealistic.

MAGGIE

I wanted to help him become a fiction writer... and now *all he does is write*. The novel is like five hundred pages long and I don't even think it's half done.

TONY

Have you read it all?

MAGGIE

Most of it.

TONY

Still like it?

MAGGIE

It's getting more and more... complicated. Is it possible to be too smart to be a novelist?

TONY

I haven't heard of that.

MAGGIE

Do you think I have something wrong with me?

TONY

Wrong with you?

MAGGIE

Yeah, like I have a condition. Where I always fall out of love.

TONY

Maybe.

Maggie stops, and whacks Tony in the arm.

MAGGIE

Shut up! Really?

TONY

Yes! No!

MAGGIE

You seriously think I have a
condition?!

TONY

No! I don't know. Maybe. No. No,
you don't. Maybe you haven't met
the right guy yet. Ask Felicia.
Don't ask me. I'm not the right
guy.

They keep walking. Maggie looks down at Max reading in his
stroller.

MAGGIE

Does he ever walk?

TONY

(as if this explains it)
He's gotta finish that book by
Friday. 'Does he ever walk'. He's
captain of the soccer team.

MAGGIE

What is it, stroller soccer?

TONY

You're hilarious.

EXT. LOWER FIFTH AVENUE - DAY

We see the arch of Washington Square Park, pedestrians
passing.

GEORGETTE

(OS)

I will be honest with you.

Georgette is reading from her book to a healthy crowd.

GEORGETTE

This book was born from pain. My
husband, whom I am not ashamed to
say I loved with all my heart,
though we had a difficult
relationship, had an affair with a
younger woman, left me, and started
a new family.

(CONTINUED)

As Georgette is baring her soul, Maggie and Felicia walk in at the back of the room. Hearing the text, Maggie immediately hides behind a book case and they both grab glasses of wine, peeking out to watch. Georgette has not noticed them.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

And what I gleaned from this exquisite torture are the thoughts which this act of betrayal to me as a woman provoked in me as an anthropologist. I must ask myself: is the contemporary obsession with exclusive possession ruining our chances of marital happiness?

TIME CUT

INT. BOOKSTORE - DAY

The reading is over. People mill about, talking. Georgette is at the bar getting a glass of champagne when she spots Maggie, who is talking to Felicia.

GEORGETTE

Maggie?

MAGGIE

Yes!

Felicia sidles off to the other side of the room.

GEORGETTE

I recognized you from a picture on Justine's phone.

MAGGIE

Oh. Yeah, I -- I wanted to hear your reading, it was really...

Maggie can't find a word to describe it. Georgette looks at her intently.

GEORGETTE

I want to thank you. For taking such good care of the children, while I have been gone. I know it's been a burden. I appreciate it.

MAGGIE

You're -- you're welcome. They're wonderful kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGETTE

We should get together some time. I feel I have been rather childish about this. I have to face the fact that we are raising them together... the three of us.

Georgette has an imperious seductiveness which is impossible to resist.

MAGGIE

Oh yes. Yes. I would love to.

GEORGETTE

Call me some time. It's easy to get my number!

Maggie is left standing there, besotted and shocked. She moves to the end of the signing line, beside Felicia, who has bought a copy of "Bring Back the Geisha".

MAGGIE

You bought a book?

FELICIA

I couldn't resist.

MAGGIE

Do we need to get it signed?

FELICIA

I think we do.

MAGGIE

Georgette is fascinating. She's vulnerable, and powerful, and warm, and charming all at once... Now I get why he was so obsessed with her.

FELICIA

I don't think 'easy to live with' is on that list, though.

MAGGIE

I like her. I actually like her! I'm such a blockhead. I always thought I was rescuing John from this monstrous egomaniac so he could finally write his book, and that I knew better how to run his life -- I was going to fix everything.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

But he's totally self-absorbed while I do every single practical thing *and* make the money. And on top of that, I... if it weren't for Lily I'd say I'd made a terrible mistake.

FELICIA

(joking--with a glance at Georgette, signing books)

Too bad you can't just give him back to his ex-wife.

Maggie looks over at Georgette with a laugh. But we move in closer and closer on her face until... she's not smiling anymore. She's thinking.

50

INT. QUEENS LOFT DINING AREA - NIGHT

50

John is sucking the grease off his fingers. Maggie stares at him, no longer charmed by his barbarous eating habits. The kids are speaking Danish.

JUSTINE

(in Danish)

I hate brussels sprouts.

PAUL

(in Danish)

They're a little hard.

Maggie looks over at the kids, totally alienated from her own life.

EXT. QUEENS QUAKER MEETING HOUSE - DAY

Maggie walks along a Korea Town street, and into the gate of the 17th century Quaker meeting house. A battered sign reads, "Quaker Meeting. All Welcome."

INT. QUEENS QUAKER MEETING HOUSE - DAY

High wide shot: the meeting house is empty, but for Maggie, who sits on a wooden bench. We move in closer as she waits for inspiration, some clue as to what to do about her existence. At the end of the push in, she looks up: she's got it.

51 EXT. GEORGETTE'S BUILDING - DAY

51

Maggie parks outside Georgette's elegant Harlem brownstone. Justine and Paul get out of the van, Justine lugging a stuffed duffel bag.

JUSTINE

So now it suits the captors for the little prisoners to be moved.

PAUL

Aren't you excited to see Mama?

JUSTINE

Of course I'm excited to see Mama. I'm just sick of never knowing which house any of my stuff is in. I can't wait to be a grown up, so I can have kids and push them around.

Maggie, not hearing this, stands on the street scrutinizing the parking sign. Paul and Justine watch her, speaking Danish, their secret language.

JUSTINE (CONT'D)

(in Danish w subtitles)

Sometimes I wonder if she is a little dim-witted. What is she doing?

PAUL

(in Danish)

She's nice.

JUSTINE

(in Danish)

You're like a dog. You love whoever feeds you.

PAUL

(in Danish)

No I don't!

JUSTINE

(in English, to Maggie)

Is there a problem?

MAGGIE

I just can't believe I actually found a legal parking space right outside your mom's building.

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

JUSTINE
You're coming inside?

MAGGIE
Just to say hi.

52 OMITTED 52

53 INT. GEORGETTE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY 53

Georgette opens her door.

GEORGETTE
Hi! Hi--oh, hello, Maggie.

MAGGIE
John had a meeting so he asked me
to--

GEORGETTE
Come in.

The kids remove their shoes and greet their mother with great affection. Maggie watches this as she removes her penny loafers. Justine is very tender with her mother. Another person.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)
(to the kids)
I made you a nice snack and you are
allowed to watch one single episode
of something ghastly while eating
it. But no fighting about what it
is, Paul. Justine gets to choose.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)
The snacks are already in the den.

They run up the stairs. Georgette turns to Maggie, who is standing in her socks. Her demeanor is chillier than it was at the book store.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)
I was about to make some coffee? Or
tea?

MAGGIE
Coffee would be great. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

Maggie follows Georgette toward the kitchen. The living room is a symphony in taupe. Large photographs of Geishas from the 1920's now dominate the walls.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Your place is really nice.

GEORGETTE

Columbia housing!

INT. GEORGETTE'S KITCHEN - DAY

Georgette puts brewed coffee in a blender and holds a stick of butter.

GEORGETTE

I put butter in mine. It nullifies
afternoon sugar cravings.

MAGGIE

Great.

Plop goes the butter. Georgette throws the blender into high gear as Maggie backs out.

INT. GEORGETTE'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

While Georgette blends the butter next door, Maggie walks through the room, drawn to a beautiful black and white image of a younger John holding Justine. Maggie doesn't notice Georgette coming up behind her.

GEORGETTE

That's a lovely photo, don't you
think?

MAGGIE

(startled by her)

Yes. Thanks.

She sips the buttered coffee --ack! Georgette sips hers while maintaining eye contact with Maggie. A sort of "O.K. Corral" moment.

MAGGIE(CONT'D)

It's good to finally meet you.

GEORGETTE

I won't pretend it doesn't cost me
something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Of course.

GEORGETTE

I'm not into fakery.

MAGGIE

Me neither.

GEORGETTE

I detest the role of the spurned wife, I won't play it--

MAGGIE

You're not.

GEORGETTE

Am I not?

MAGGIE

You still -- have such a deep connection to John.

Georgette invites Maggie to sit down.

GEORGETTE

We have managed to remain friends, it's true...

Georgette is looking at Maggie with surprise and a little suspicion.

MAGGIE

I mean, your phone calls...

GEORGETTE

Do you disapprove of them?

MAGGIE

No--

GEORGETTE

The marriage has dissolved, but we are still parenting together.

MAGGIE

Well, I mean, it's more than just parenting, you guys are on the phone several times a day. Don't get me wrong, I think it's great. So...I...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Georgette is looking at her carefully. Maggie's cheeks are going hot, her heart is speeding up.

GEORGETTE

Yes?

MAGGIE

Well, it's obvious you're still in love with him.

A moment of silence, of disbelief.

GEORGETTE

What the hell are you playing at?

Maggie decides to jump off the cliff.

MAGGIE

John and I are in trouble. And I don't think he realizes how badly in trouble we are. Or he doesn't want to know. And then, when I saw you at the reading...I realized-- that there might be an opportunity, an opening... somehow...to get the two of you... back together.

GEORGETTE

I see. I see...

Maggie nods hopefully.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

So you're tired of your little affair. You are all done with it. And now you want to make sure you don't feel guilty, so you're going to manipulate us all into some absurd happy ending!

Georgette stands, looking down at Maggie, who is shrinking by the second.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

I have met a lot of control freaks in my life, in fact I even thought I was one -- but you make me look like an amateur.

MAGGIE

I didn't mean to insult you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGETTE

Have the decency to leave him and face the fact that you poisoned my life, and my children's lives, and probably John's life with your own selfishness. That's your burden. You earned it.

MAGGIE

Excuse me. Wait a minute. If you had such a perfect marriage why was John miserable? You neglected him. You used him. You didn't respect his talent!

GEORGETTE

If I am so awful, what the hell are you doing here trying to get him back together with me?

MAGGIE

I just think that actually, even though I do think you were pretty self-absorbed and extremely needy, he needs it -- it actually kept John in balance. Taking care of you made him think about someone other than himself.

GEORGETTE

Leave. Leave. Leave.

MAGGIE

What?

GEORGETTE

Leave my apartment.

MAGGIE

Oh! You want me to leave. Okay. I'm leaving.

Maggie gets out as fast as she possibly can.

54

EXT. GEORGETTE'S BROWNSTONE- DAY

54

The door shuts behind Maggie. She's shaken, her shoes in her hand. Looks over at her van. There's a parking ticket wedged under the wiper.

57

INT. TONY & FELICIA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

57

It's already dark out. Maggie is lying on the couch as Tony shuttles in and out of the room cleaning up.

MAGGIE

I have never been so humiliated in my life. I'm in such deep oatmeal. What was I thinking?

TONY

Maybe you had a psychotic episode.

MAGGIE

But it's a really good idea!

Tony emerges from the hallway looking rumpled and disgruntled.

TONY

Life doesn't work that way, you dufus. You can't stuff what's already happened back in the box. God I really think you need help.

MAGGIE

Why are you being so hostile?

TONY

Because this pisses me off! The whole thing pisses me off.

MAGGIE

Why?

TONY

Why can't you just leave your husband, like any normal human being?

MAGGIE

Because it would be such a waste.

TONY

A waste! You're such a hall monitor. It's not a waste. He's not a paper product. Love is messy, okay? It's illogical and wasteful and it's messy. And it leaves these loose threads sticking out all over the place. But you! You like things neat and tidy and ethical.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

TONY (CONT'D)

But you messed that up the minute you got with a married man.

MAGGIE

You're not being my friend right now.

TONY

Oh yes I am. I am being your friend. This is being your friend. I'm being honest with you. Good intentions. You're all about good intentions. Little Miss Quaker Two Shoes is gonna do the right thing. But you always somehow screw it up.

MAGGIE

(actually wounded now)
Screw you.

TONY

Yeah, screw me. Fine.

She stands up and starts putting on her coat as Tony tidies up the living room, muttering to himself. She is on her way to the door when she stops, filled up with emotion. She cries, suddenly, hard, and sits down helplessly. Tony notices and kneels beside her.

TONY (CONT'D)

Hey. Maggie. Hey. I'm sorry.

Maggie sits, sobbing.

TONY (CONT'D)

(gently)
What about Lily, huh? Fathers are a good thing too.

He wipes away a tear from her cheek.

MAGGIE

(through her tears)
I know that, I know that. But... I'm just as afraid of her growing up inside a dead marriage as growing up without her dad in the same house. Kids can tell when people are pretending.

TONY

I don't know, Maggie. It's a tough one.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: (2)

57

She sits still for a long moment. That earnest little face. Trying to figure out the right thing to do again. Click. She's decided. She wipes her tears.

MAGGIE

Okay. Okay, okay, okay, okay.

58 INT. QUEENS LOFT - JOHN'S STUDY - NIGHT

58

Maggie is sitting in John's Central American hammock as he writes furiously. She looks at peace.

MAGGIE

Yes please.

JOHN

Yes please what.

MAGGIE

Yes please let's do something, just us. If the offer's still good.

He looks up at her, uncertain, but game.

JOHN

What do you have in mind?

MAGGIE

I don't know. Maybe a local adventure.

59 EXT. CHINATOWN - DAY

59

Traffic and lights strung up. A busy Chinatown street.

60 OMITTED

60

A61 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/HOTEL- DAY

A61

John walks in with Maggie. The restaurant is empty but for two waiters setting up tables. A young Chinese Woman looks at them quizzically from behind a high desk with a large CASH ONLY sign displayed.

He approaches the woman behind the counter. Maggie hangs back. He's speaking very low.

(CONTINUED)

A61 CONTINUED:

JOHN

Hi. My name is Johnny Harding. I was hoping to speak to Wang. Is he downstairs?

The young woman looks doubtful, but eventually she walks up to one of the waiters and whispers in his ear. Maggie makes a move to join John but John tells her to stay where she is. The waiter walks up to John with an impassive expression. John puts his hand on his chest.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Johnny Harding.

The waiter nods. John gestures to Maggie to follow. They both follow the man down a set of stairs.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT KITCHEN - DAY

Maggie and John follow the waiter through the kitchen. A cook is making dumplings with lightning speed. Maggie looks at him, totally confused.

62 INT. ILLEGAL GAMBLING DEN - DAY

62

Maggie and John emerge in a room furnished only with gambling tables and a TV on the wall playing a Chinese soap opera. Chinese men and a few women are playing Mahjong, poker, and blackjack. Everyone seems to be smoking. There are only a handful of non-Chinese players. The gamblers look up at these two new outsiders as they walk by.

JOHN

(to Maggie)

My dad used to take me to the owner's old place.

The waiter leads them to a black jack table where he confers briefly with an older man, and then turns. John hands the waiter a role of bills, enough to be in the game. John and Maggie sit down.

A hostess places two tea cups full of clear liquid on the blackjack table and the older man starts dealing.

Maggie takes a sip of the liquid in the teacup and does a double take.

MAGGIE

What's in this?

(CONTINUED)

JOHN
Just drink it, ok?

The dealer deals out the cards. John plays a hand.

JOHN (CONT'D)
This is for all the marbles.

Maggie, who doesn't know how to play, is watching the action, rapt. John wins. It takes her a second to realize it.

MAGGIE
We won! We won!

She kisses his cheek. She's gone through a few cups of the "tea" the hostess keeps pouring in everyone's cup, and she's getting tipsy. She and John are flirting, having fun. The scene becomes a montage of gamblers, cards, music, drinking. Maggie taps her card with a little swagger.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Is that good? Right?

JOHN
No.

MAGGIE
No?

Their chips are swept away.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
(laughing)
No! Please no. Where did they go?

They are having fun. She is served a beer, takes a slug.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Drown my sorrows.

JOHN
(laughing)
Slow down on that.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Maggie and John eat. John is telling a story. Maggie is having a great time. She pulls a swig of beer from the bottle.

63 INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/HOTEL - NIGHT

63

John and Maggie stagger up to the front desk.

JOHN

We'd like a room for the night.

MAGGIE

This is a hotel?

JOHN

It is a hotel if you know it's a hotel.

MAGGIE

Oh-ho!

JOHN

Thank you. What do I owe you? A hundred fifty dollars? I got a hundred fifty dollars.

Maggie is behind John. She shoves her hands in John's pocket and fishes out some bills.

64 INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

64

They fall into the room, laughing on the floor. John drags off Maggie's dress before he's even closed the door. She bounds onto the bed in her slip.

JOHN

Take off your clothes!

She miaows like a cat, hisses, paws up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Five! Four! Three! Two! One!

He leaps on her and drags off her tights as she screams with laughter.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Take off your fucking tights!

Close on her feet as she gives way to pleasure.

65 INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

65

The next morning. John is eating breakfast; Maggie is sitting in a pool of light on the bed.

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE
(exploring-- not
imploring)
Would you ever want another baby?

JOHN
(tossing it off)
I'll never finish the book if I
don't knuckle down and concentrate.
Four kids is a lot.

His reaction feels like a slap in the face.

MAGGIE
You wouldn't notice. It's just one
more kid for you to ignore.

John stops.

JOHN
What kind of thing is that to say?

MAGGIE
It's a true thing, John. You -- I --
I'm supporting you so you can write
and that's the deal and I accept it
but -- I feel like I'm your intern.
Or your nanny.

JOHN
For Christ's sake. You set all this
up! You took over, gave everybody a
job. My job is to write my novel so
that's what I'm doing.

MAGGIE
I know that's what you're doing.

JOHN
You can't get mad when we all play
our parts to perfection.

A moment. This stings her.

MAGGIE
Do you even like me anymore?

JOHN
What are you trying to get me to
tell you? Huh? Maybe I should be
asking you that question.

He walks out and leaves her there.

66 EXT. CHINATOWN- DAY 66

John and Maggie walk beside each other in total alienation.

67 OMITTED 67

EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE- DAY

The arch reminds us of happier times between John and Maggie.

EXT. NEW SCHOOL COURTYARD- DAY

The phallic bench reminds us of happier times between John and Maggie.

A70 EXT. NEW SCHOOL--DAY A70

Students and teachers flow in and out of the glass doors, creating liquid reflections on the glass.

71 INT. NEW SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY 71

Maggie is working on her computer.

GEORGETTE

May I sit down?

Maggie jumps.

MAGGIE

Sure.

Georgette looks around, as if for people she knows, then sits. A moment of silence. Maggie waits for the blow.

GEORGETTE

In December, I am attending a conference in Canada on Fictocritical Anthropology.

MAGGIE

...

GEORGETTE

Fictocritical Anthropology is John's field.

71 CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
I know, but -- You mean...

GEORGETTE
(cold)
I'm in.

MAGGIE
...Really?

GEORGETTE
I have no reason to trust you. On the other hand, I have absolutely nothing to lose. I could easily arrange to have John invited to give a paper at the conference.

MAGGIE
Do you think he would accept?

GEORGETTE
Zizek is speaking. He loves Zizek.

Maggie takes this in. She can't quite believe it's happening.

72 INT. QUEENS LOFT - NIGHT

72

Maggie is putting away dishes; John is fixing a lamp. He waits for a while to speak.

JOHN
I got invited to give a paper at a conference.

MAGGIE
Really? That's great.

JOHN
Yeah--except it's all the way up in Quebec. So I can't go.

MAGGIE
No-- You have to go.

JOHN
Why?

MAGGIE
Because you... you would probably like a break.

(CONTINUED)

72 CONTINUED:

JOHN
Yeah, but Georgette's out of town
that week, too. I can't leave you
alone with all the kids.

MAGGIE
Of course you can! I'll be fine.

JOHN
Zizek is speaking...

MAGGIE
Oh you love Zizek!

JOHN
(baffled)
How do you know?

MAGGIE
I--I think I heard you mention him.

73 EXT. SKY - DAY 73

A Canadian Airlines plane flies through a sunny sky.

74 EXT. Quebec HOTEL - DAY 74

A stone building, rustic in aspect. A large sign reads:

A WARM QUEBEC WELCOME TO THE ASSOCIATION OF FICTO-CRITICAL
ANTHROPOLOGISTS

John walks into the building. Snow has begun to fall.

A74 OMITTED A74

75 INT. QUEBEC HOTEL - DINING AREA - DAY 75

John walks into the dining area. A sprinkling of academics. A
young man in a baggy sweater comes up to him.

AL BENTWAITHE
Excuse me. John Harding?

JOHN
?

(CONTINUED)

AL BENTWAITHE
I--I'm reading "Rituals of
Commodity Fetishism at the Tail End
of the Empire".

JOHN
How are you making out?

AL BANTWAITHE
It's tremendous. We all came up
here just to hear you speak. And
Zizek, obviously.

JOHN
Obviously.

AL BENTWAITHE
This is a little fetish-y but--
Could you sign my book?

JOHN
Sure. What's your name?

AL BENTWAITHE
Al.

As John signs the book, he spies Georgette from behind.

AL BENTWAITHE (CONT'D)
Thanks!

JOHN
Take care

John makes his way across the room, toward Georgette.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Fancy meeting you here.

GEORGETTE
What are you doing here?

JOHN
I'm giving a paper.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Did you write me you were coming
here? I mean, I knew you'd be
away...

GEORGETTE

I don't know... I must have mentioned it. Are you sorry you came?

JOHN

Not at all. It's big enough for the both of us. Isn't it? You look really well.

GEORGETTE

I feel well. Beautiful here, ya?

JOHN

Yes. Great air... so far.

John looks at the empty seat beside her.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Do you mind? Or should we try not to co-mingle?

GEORGETTE

It's fine, why not? We are friends.
(introducing the woman next to her)
This is Debbie Wasserman. From Yale.

JOHN

Hi.

DEBBIE WASSERMAN

Nice to meet you.

After a brief, awkward smile that says she knows a lot about John and Georgette's divorce, Debbie turns to the dining partner on her left.

GEORGETTE

(to John)

Did Maggie tell you we met?

JOHN

Yes. She enjoyed meeting you.

GEORGETTE

She's an interesting person.

JOHN

You think so?

GEORGETTE

Yes, very surprising.

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

How did you have time to be surprised?

GEORGETTE

You know how it is, we all concoct ideas of what our rival will be like. But she's not my rival anymore.

JOHN

Good.

GEORGETTE

Paul told me Maggie taught him to do a figure eight when she took him ice skating the other day. He was very proud.

JOHN

She's great with him.

GEORGETTE

She seems like a very capable person.

JOHN

She's a natural mother.

Georgette looks like she's been sucker-punched.

GEORGETTE

She sounds like a wonderful partner for you. I -- I need to make a phone call. I promised...

JOHN

Aren't you going to eat?

GEORGETTE

I'm not really hungry. Oh and -- maybe you're right, it'll be a mistake if we co-mingle too much. We'll only end up getting on each other's nerves.

Georgette leaves, angry -- at herself, mostly. John looks after her, confused. The sound of the wind picks up.

INT. TOY COMPANY CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The next morning, Maggie is having a meeting with Komiko, the Japanese design graduate student, and some poker-faced toy executives. Komiko demonstrates her patented doll, unzipping it to reveal a string of cloth intestines.

MAGGIE

Komiko has designed the first patented doll with removable internal organs.

KOMIKO

(whispery)

Sixty percent of children have fears about death.

MAGGIE

Komiko's idea is, to relieve children's fears about the body by helping them see what's inside.

KOMIKO

(removing the intestine)

They can draw on the organs.

MAGGIE

But all the elements are completely washable. So...We think this would appeal to parents interested in marriage-based toys. I mean, knowledge. Knowledge-based toys.

76 EXT. QUEBEC HOTEL - DAY

76

Snow is falling on the landscape. Whirling. The wind is ferocious.

77 INT. QUEENS LOFT - KITCHEN - DAY

77

In New York, it's two hours later. Maggie is folding laundry with Justine.

JOHN

(os)

There's no heat. The fucking internet doesn't work.

78 INT. QUEBEC HOTEL - DINING AREA - DAY - INTERCUT WITH QUEENS LOFT 78

John, depressed, is on his phone in a corner of the bar at the end of the dining room. There is a kerosene lamp beside him. It's still snowing. Outside, all is white. Intercut with Maggie in the loft.

JOHN

The generator blew up. My batteries are about to die. And get this. Guess who's here. Georgette.

INT. QUEENS LOFT - DAY

Maggie is painting Justine's fingernails.

MAGGIE

Really? Wow. How is that?

JOHN

Her mood matches the weather.

MAGGIE

Oh. Sorry about that.

JOHN

How are you guys doing?

MAGGIE

Everyone's fine.

JOHN (O.S.)

I can't get any information about when the airport is opening up. So it looks like I'm stuck here! They're breaking out the snowshoes, which, to me, is ominous.

79 INT. QUEENS LOFT - BATHROOM - DAY 79

Maggie is having a bubble bath with Lily. They are having fun, blowing bubbles through a little plastic ring. Lily dips the ring into the bottle of bubble stuff, blows a big one and watches it float through the air.

MAGGIE

Oh that's a good one...

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I love you so much.

LILY

How much? Wait, I know, twenty-five
three hundred and sixty two!

MAGGIE

That's exactly right!

They continue to blow bubbles.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

I want to live inside a bubble.

LILY

(watching the bubble
float)

Me too.

MAGGIE

...

LILY

But I want my own bubble.

MAGGIE

Okay. We can each have a bubble.

LILY

And Daddy gets his own bubble too.

Maggie blows a huge bubble and looks inside it.

MAGGIE

I can see Daddy in his bubble.

Maggie looks inside the bubble. Slow dissolve into: A snowy
landscape/ John and Georgette and a few others are on
snowshoes...

Low wide shot: John and Georgette walk in a line of academics
on snowshoes. Georgette falls over, letting out a cry. John
turns but she waves him off and continues.

Closer frontal shot: Georgette falls again. John can't help
stopping to help her up. She dusts herself off grumpily. They
both look up the mountain to see the rest of the academics
have trudged off without them.

GEORGETTE

Typical.

JOHN

We can just follow their tracks
back.

They snowshoe together in silence. Time passes.

SOME TIME LATER

CLOSE UP OF THEIR SNOWSHOES CUTTING INTO A VIRGIN DRIFT.

JOHN

Nothing really looks familiar. Does
it?

MORE TIME PASSES

EXT. FORREST - DAY

They are trudging along, deep in conversation, totally lost.
We see them through the trees.

JOHN

You know that talk you gave
yesterday was just great. I didn't
even know you were working in that
direction.

GEORGETTE

I guess you haven't seen anything
I've written for a while.

JOHN

No, I miss that.

GEORGETTE

You do?

JOHN

I used to like that. You know, I
miss that, showing each other
stuff.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGETTE
 (encouraged, plunging in)
 Forget me -- that talk you gave
 yesterday was the hit of the
 conference.

JOHN
 It was just all the old ideas.

GEORGETTE
 You altered that passage on de
 Tocqueville.

JOHN
 Nothing gets by you!

GEORGETTE
 Your work feels so fresh... No one
 unpacks commodity fetishism like
 you do.

JOHN
 Aw, shucks.

A few exhausting steps through the snow, walking toward close
 up. Then:

GEORGETTE
 Are you still working on that
 novel?

JOHN
 Yeah.

GEORGETTE
 How's it coming?

JOHN
 (brusque)
 Fine.

He moves a little ahead. Doesn't want to talk about it.

GEORGETTE
 John.

JOHN
 ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGETTE

I don't mean to be insulting about your fiction. It's just that I am so proud of the academic work you've done. You see, here, how much people love it.

JOHN

I'm not abandoning anything. Come on. I don't want you to get too cold.

Something about that little protective statement makes Georgette sad. She loves him so much. He turns.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What's the matter?

GEORGETTE

I have something I want to tell you.

JOHN

What is it?

GEORGETTE

I'm sorry.

JOHN

For what?

GEORGETTE

For being so self-centered. For not listening to you, to what you needed, for not investing in your work--

JOHN

Hey, you don't have to--

GEORGETTE

I think I was just so, so tied up in succeeding, in making a name for myself, I stopped paying attention to us, to you, to our marriage. And now, I have success, and it's as if I've emerged from a tunnel. I hope... in the future, to be less self-absorbed. If I ever get another chance... at love.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN

Of course you'll get another chance.

GEORGETTE

You think so?

JOHN

I bet they're lining up.

Georgette's eyes fill with tears. This whole thing is too much for her. She sinks down into the snow and cries.

GEORGETTE

Are we going to die here?!

JOHN

No, God. (yelling) HELLO? HELLO?!

GEORGETTE

HELP!

JOHN

HEY, ALL YOU FRENCH CANADIAN PEOPLE! WE'RE FREEZING OUT HERE AND WE HAVE NO FUCKING IDEA WHERE WE ARE!!!

81 INT. QUEBEC HOTEL - DINING AREA - NIGHT

81

John and Georgette enter, covered in snow.

GEORGETTE

(to the waiter who opens the door)

We were lost.

They follow the waiter who holds a torch, walking toward raucous music. A Québécois acoustic duo, a man and a woman, is playing "Dancing in the Dark" by Bruce Springsteen on guitar and Harmonium on a makeshift stage. The male singer has a thick French Canadian accent. Georgette and John plop down on a couch, strip off their huge jackets, and take glasses of cognac offered to them. They sing along to "Dancing in the Dark", laughing. This is an old favorite of theirs, from early times. Debbie Wasserman dances wildly. Al Bentwaithe joins her. Something is happening between those two. Then, John can't help it, he wants to dance.

(CONTINUED)

81 CONTINUED:

81

He takes Georgette's hand and they dance along with all the other tipsy academics. Georgette is radiant. They seem so happy and free.

LATER

82 CHANGED / MOVED TO SCENE A84

82

83 INT. QUEBEC HOTEL - DINING AREA - NIGHT

83

John and Georgette are sitting together on the couch by the fire, drinking cognac. They are almost the only ones here. There is a striking intimacy between them.

JOHN

I've written myself so far up my own ass I can't see my way out. The whole story bores me to death.

GEORGETTE

So stop writing it.

JOHN

I feel like if I don't produce some kind of masterpiece, Maggie will give up on me. That book is a big part of what made her fall for me. But, Georgette. If I have learned one thing in the last three years...it's that I'm not a novelist!

GEORGETTE

If she truly loves you... she'll love you whether you are a novelist or a garbage collector.

A long pause as he looks at her.

JOHN

You did, didn't you. You loved me that way.

She says nothing. A moment between them. Then, a little Old World shrug from Georgette. He looks at her. Falling for her. The lights come on. They blink in the glare.

Al Benthwaite walks in at the far end of the room.

(CONTINUED)

83 CONTINUED:

AL BENTWAITHE(O.S.)
They've opened the airport! We can
go home tomorrow!

Debbie Wasserman hoots off-screen. John and Georgette sit,
saddened by the news.

GEORGETTE
I better go pack...

She leaves him to think.

84 INT. QUEBEC HOTEL - GEORGETTE'S ROOM - NIGHT

84

Georgette is packing. The lights are on. There is a knock.
It's John.

JOHN
I don't want to go back.

GEORGETTE
...

John looks up at her and it's clear that he loves her.

JOHN
I don't want to leave you.

GEORGETTE
(ushering him in)
John...

JOHN
I want you so badly. I can't think
about anything else. It's like it
never ended, like the past three
years never happened. Or that I'm
hallucinating.

GEORGETTE
But they did happen. It all
happened.

JOHN
I know. I know!

GEORGETTE
We have to stay real. The snow is
melting.

She is powerfully drawn to him -- and yet --

(CONTINUED)

84 CONTINUED:

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

John.

JOHN

?

GEORGETTE

There's something you should know.

JOHN

What is it?

Georgette pauses, uncertain if she should break the mood by spilling the beans about Maggie's offer. She sits beside him, looking at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

?

She comes closer and closer... and...they kiss and fall out of frame.

INT. QUEENS LOFT BEDROOM - DAY

Maggie waits, lying on the bed, wondering if the plan is working...

85 INT. QUEBEC HOTEL - DINING AREA - MORNING

85

Meanwhile, John is tearing into his eggs while reading a book by Mick Taussig called, "What Color is the Sacred?" Georgette joins him, looking fragrant in a crisp white shirt.

GEORGETTE

(to waiter with two pots)

Coffee please.

The waiter pouring the coffee is the same man that rocked Springsteen last night. John half notices this, then looks at his ex-wife.

JOHN

Now what.

GEORGETTE

You regret it?

JOHN

We belong to each other. That's it.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGETTE

Actually, for me, this was a one-night stand.

They are both so happy.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

But seriously. I've changed. I know I can live without you now. I just don't want to.

JOHN

Good.

GEORGETTE

I would like to read your novel now.

JOHN

Really?

GEORGETTE

I know you have a copy because I saw you marking one up.

John reaches into his backpack and pulls out a massive manuscript.

JOHN

Be careful what you wish for.

Maggie is sitting on her bed, waiting. Waiting.

She hears John's keys in the door. Fear in her belly.

MAGGIE

Hi.

JOHN

Hi.

He leans in and kisses her swiftly.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Where's Lily?

MAGGIE

Felicia wanted to take her to that dance class.

John sits on the bed.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
How did your talk go?

JOHN
Fine, I think. Well attended. I got
a few laughs.

MAGGIE
Was it okay with Georgette?

JOHN
She eventually defrosted.

MAGGIE
Good.

John can't bear the pressure of the lie.

JOHN
I should tell you something.

MAGGIE
Okay...

She sits waiting, her arms clamped around her legs. He sits
down on the bed again, crushed by guilt, barely able to get
the words out.

JOHN
You know we were snowed in?

MAGGIE
I know.

JOHN
So Georgette and I were thrown
together for two whole days. And
there was this... atmosphere of --
I don't know, it was very strange.
I found myself... unearthing
things... old stuff...

MAGGIE
Good stuff or bad stuff?

JOHN
I don't know. Emotional. Nostalgic -
The same stuff.

MAGGIE
The same as what?

JOHN

Yes. Fuck. I'm so sorry.

MAGGIE

What happened?

JOHN

Georgette and I slept together.

A long pause. This victory hurts.

John sits, his head drooping. Maggie begins to cry. Even if this was her idea, it hurts.

MAGGIE

Georgette was right.

JOHN

What do you mean?

MAGGIE

We should've just been an affair. You were having a rough spot in your marriage and I came along and...

JOHN

But then we wouldn't have had Lily.

MAGGIE

That's right.

JOHN

(genuinely torn)

It was real between us... all real. When I met you, I was lost. I was a fucking mess. I was so insecure and you...you saved me. You rescued me. I'm sorry. I don't know what to do.

MAGGIE

You know what to do.

JOHN

No I don't!

MAGGIE

You go back to Georgette. If you love her.

JOHN

You think?

(CONTINUED)

86 CONTINUED: (3)

Maggie nods. She's very sad, but she knows this is right.

John kisses her, then pulls away. He is, it seems, in love with two women at this moment.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Oh, shit. I don't know what to do.

They sit together.

87 OMITTED 87

A87 EXT. GEORGETTE'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON A87

Establishing shot.

88 INT. GEORGETTE'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 88

Georgette, John, Justine, and Paul have dinner. Paul is going on about something that happened at school. Justine is staring at John.

JUSTINE

(not hostile, just
curious)

What are you doing here?

JOHN

I accidentally ran into your mom at school cause we each thought it was our day to pick up Paul--

PAUL

Yeah, that was so funny!

JUSTINE

...

JOHN

And then your Mom graciously invited me over to dinner.

JUSTINE

You guys should learn to coordinate your schedules.

JOHN

There's no harm in spending time together as a family.

(CONTINUED)

88 CONTINUED:

JUSTINE

Except for -- isn't that the point
of a divorce? That you're not a
family anymore?

89 INT. GEORGETTE'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON 89

We hear John saying goodbye to the kids off-screen. Georgette enters the bedroom, drawing John in with her. They fall on the bed and start fooling around, impatient as teenagers. A knock on the locked door. They freeze.

PAUL (OS)

Mom?

GEORGETTE

(calling out)

What is it Paul darling?

PAUL (OS)

I'm hungry.

GEORGETTE

But you just ate!

PAUL (OS)

What can I have?

GEORGETTE

You can have a plate of saltines, a
cheese stick, and an apple.

Georgette starts frantically undoing John's belt buckle.

PAUL (OS)

Can you cut up the apple?

GEORGETTE

Ask Justine.

PAUL (OS)

She's busy. (pause) Mom?

John jumps off the bed.

JOHN

(whispering, cinching his
belt)

This is ridiculous. I have to go.

(CONTINUED)

89 CONTINUED:

GEORGETTE
Where will you stay?

JOHN
I don't know. I'll just call some
friends--try to avoid a hotel.
We've got to give them time to
adjust.

They kiss. She slips out the door. John waits till she is
gone a while, just stands there stock-still.

GEORGETTE
(os)
All right, Paul, here I come to cut
up your apple!

90 EXT. GEORGETTE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 90

John making calls, leaving a few messages with various
friends he could stay with for the night. Jump cuts as he
leaves messages. Then, finally:

JOHN
Felicia! Thank God you're
home...ah, not so good.

91 INT. TONY AND FELICIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 91

Felicia and John have been talking for a while. Felicia is
knitting.

JOHN
So she already told you guys? She
called you?

FELICIA
She called me. I don't know about
Tony, he's been out all day.

JOHN
What'd she say? Is she going to be
okay?

FELICIA
You know Maggie. She's been taking
care of herself all her life. I
mean, she's emotional--

JOHN
This whole thing feels so unreal.

(CONTINUED)

FELICIA

I know. I think it's better to be honest. When you can.

JOHN

I'm just so surprised!

FELICIA

I know. I mean, I can imagine.

A fumbling at the lock. Singing. It's Tony, in a rumpled suit. Three sheets to the wind.

TONY

John! Aren't you in Canada?

FELICIA

No. He's here.

Tony looks at Felicia. She glares at him to keep silent.

JOHN

So you won your case?

TONY

We trounced them.

JOHN

What was it about?

TONY

Tainted pudding.

JOHN

A lawsuit?

TONY

What else? Lawsuits keep my wife in post-modern choreography, and me in self-loathing. A good deal all round.

FELICIA

If you're going to be in that kind of mood you should just go to bed.

Tony is fumbling around in a kitchen cabinet.

TONY

I'm craving one little nip of that vanilla whiskey you so lovingly gave me for Christmas, Fi.

FELICIA

Looks like you've had enough of something.

Tony holds up a bottle. Talks to John.

TONY

This stuff is like liquid crack. Have some?

JOHN

Just a finger. Thanks.

Tony sits down and grimaces in pain.

TONY

Aargh.

FELICIA

What is it?

TONY

I sat on my balls.

FELICIA

I think you should have your balls hemmed. Like that actor -- what's his name?

JOHN

Are you serious?

FELICIA

Apparently it's just a few stitches, and -- boop! A ball lift.

TONY

(adjusting his seat)
So. John. Any news?

John looks at Felicia, wondering how much Tony knows.

JOHN

You haven't spoken to Maggie?

TONY

I've been knee-deep in pudding all day.

FELICIA

John and Maggie are...

(CONTINUED)

JOHN

We...

FELICIA

He and Georgette...

TONY

(unthinking, drunk)
You mean it worked?!

JOHN

What worked?

TONY

(a desperate attempt to
recover)
Who said that drinks are like tits -
- one is too few, three too many?

JOHN

What worked? What are you talking
about?

TONY

(looking sick, pushes his
drink away)
I'm not really much of a drinker.

FELICIA

No. You're not.

John sits immobile as the terrible logic accrues in him.

JOHN

So this is what Georgette kept
almost telling me. Oh, Jesus.

Tony and Felicia go into a frenzy of lame denial.

FELICIA

She might have been trying to tell
you--

JOHN

You guys set me up?

FELICIA

No!

TONY

No!

A91 EXT. QUEENS LOFT - DAWN A91

The elevated train snakes across the tracks above the store front.

92 INT. QUEENS LOFT - BEDROOM--DAWN 92

John walks into the room and turns on the light, starts taking his clothes out of the drawers. Maggie wakes up.

MAGGIE

John?

JOHN

Was it a test?

MAGGIE

...

JOHN

To see if I really was in love with Georgette, as you apparently suspected?

A pause. Maggie feels a little frightened.

JOHN (CONT'D)

You happy now?

MAGGIE

Happy isn't the right word.

JOHN

I don't even know what to say. I'm speechless.

MAGGIE

We were going to break up. I had a feeling you were still in love with Georgette. And you were, as it turns out.

JOHN

What about Lily? My daughter. Where does she fit into this plan of yours?

MAGGIE

If we're going to break up it's -- better to do it soon, for her sake. So that's all she remembers.

(CONTINUED)

John flips.

JOHN

But I didn't want to break up!
Because, among other things, I was
committed to you and we had a child
together.

MAGGIE

Not because you wanted to be with
me.

JOHN

(on a wave of his own
thoughts--packing all the
while)

So this is the fate you've picked
out for me -- to just ricochet
around the tri-state area, ruining
one family after another? I don't
accept that. I didn't choose this.
I can't believe I let you make me
feel so -- so guilty about
betraying you and wrecking our
marriage, when you masterminded
this whole thing, manipulated me
into falling for my ex-wife,
colluded with her to get me invited
to that conference, to make me into
some absurd patsy, a pawn in your
revolting little narrative. Well
guess what? Your puppet is cutting
his strings. You can both fuck
yourselves.

MAGGIE

You and Georgette never really
stopped being together the whole
time we were married.

JOHN

What?

MAGGIE

I mean, you thought it was over,
but it never really was. This is
the proof, isn't it. It's what you
wanted. Be honest.

JOHN

I think the question really is what
do you want? What do you want,
Maggie Hardin?

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

I want to live honestly.

JOHN

Well you're not off to a very good start.

MAGGIE

I don't want a marriage that's a lie. I don't want to tiptoe around our disconnection anymore. You deserve to be with someone who really -- gives herself over to you. I did what I thought was right.

JOHN

You're very ethical.

MAGGIE

You're the one who slept with someone else.

JOHN

(laughing in spite of himself)

Are you fucking kidding me?

John zips up his bag.

JOHN (CONT'D)

By the way, just out of curiosity -- did you ever love me?

MAGGIE

Of course I did.

JOHN

That's nice.

MAGGIE

Where are you going?

JOHN

I have no idea.

MAGGIE

What about the kids?

JOHN

You and Georgette seem to be such good teammates, strategize with her.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED: (3)

92

He leaves. Maggie stares at the door he's walked out of.

94 INT. LILY'S ROOM - DAY

94

Maggie walks Lily's room and lies on the bed. Lily stirs and looks over the railing of her bed.

LILY

What Mama?

MAGGIE

Oh wiglet. I did something really stupid. To fix something else I did that turned out wrong. And I thought it was going to end up wonderful. But I made a big mess.

LILY

(finally, something she
can relate to)

You made a mess?

Maggie recovers somewhat. Laughs through her tears.

MAGGIE

Yes. But I don't know how to clean it up.

LILY

(lying down again)

Use a sponge. Just forget about it.

Maggie can't help smiling.

95 EXT. MINIVAN / QUEENS STREETS - AFTERNOON

95

Maggie is driving with Lily in the back.

96 INT. GEORGETTE'S KITCHEN - DAY

96

Maggie walks in. Georgette is at the table.

MAGGIE

He found out.

GEORGETTE

How?

MAGGIE

Tony. My best friend. He was drunk.
It slipped out.

Georgette sits down and takes this in.

GEORGETTE

It was inevitable. I almost told
him myself several times.

MAGGIE

The tragic flaw in my plan.

GEORGETTE

Where is he?

MAGGIE

I don't know. I think he's just
really sick of both of us. Mostly
me.

A moment of silence.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Georgette. I don't know what to
say.

Georgette looks at her, deeply.

GEORGETTE

You're a funny person. There is
something very... pure about you
and -- a little bit stupid. Or, no,
it's... a kind of innocence. You're
so -- unconscious. Yet. I can't
help it, I like you. I don't blame
you. I just shouldn't have allowed
him back in my life. I had decided
against it, even in Canada. I
wasn't even going to let it happen.
It was the snow. It was the cozy,
cozy snow. Der *Wassa Huchlich*. We
just... fell for each other again.
I wanted my husband back.

MAGGIE

I don't think you have to lose him.

GEORGETTE

(with a flash of anger)
You know what? If he does call you,
tell him to screw off.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

Tell him from me. (Seeing Justine enter) Hello darling!

MAGGIE

How about if I take all the kids for a few days.

GEORGETTE

Stop it. Stop trying to take care of everybody.

MAGGIE

It's fine. They won't mind, they're used to me, right Justine?

JUSTINE

Could you please just tell me what's going on?

Both women look at the child. She stares back at them solemnly.

MAGGIE

Your Dad and I had a big fight and he's taking some time.

JUSTINE

(to Georgette)

Are you and him getting back together?

GEORGETTE

It's a complex situation.

Justine: a disturbing thought is forming.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

Are you sad?

JUSTINE

No.

MAGGIE

Angry?

Justine looks at the women for a beat.

JUSTINE

You guys really have no idea what you're doing, do you?

Maggie and Georgette stand unable to answer.

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: (3)

JUSTINE (CONT'D)
I mean, there is no plan, is there?

97 INT/EXT. MINIVAN / QUEENS STREETS - AFTERNOON 97

Maggie is driving Georgette, Justine, Paul, and Lily back to QUEENS. She looks dolefully at Georgette in the passenger seat. Georgette is staring, catatonic. Now Maggie will be taking care of her, too.

98 INT. QUEENS LOFT - JUSTINE'S ROOM / KITCHEN - NEXT DAY 98

School time! Maggie tiptoes down the hall and peeks into Justine's room and sees Georgette asleep on an air mattress clutching John's manuscript.

MAGGIE
(whispering)
Justine did you find your charger?

JUSTINE
(whispering)
Yes.

Justine exits her room as:

PAUL
(yelling from kitchen)
Where is my science book?!

MAGGIE
Sshshsh!

Maggie runs into kitchen, picks up Lily and puts her on her hip. Packing snacks, book bags, pencil cases, her own brief case, making oatmeal... the kitchen is a mess.

Georgette stalks into the room carrying John's manuscript.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Did you sleep?

GEORGETTE
Maybe two hours.

MAGGIE
Go back to bed.

GEORGETTE
I'll help, then go back later.

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

It's okay. Really.

GEORGETTE

I want to help.

Georgette, determined to help, squints to see the print on the dish washing liquid, then shrugs and puts some in the dishwasher, turns it on, then sits on the couch and starts reading again. She's almost done.

MAGGIE

(to Justine)

What about your basketball uniform?
I washed it--

JUSTINE

Oh no.

MAGGIE

It's okay, it's all folded, just --
here -- it's almost quarter after,
we're gonna be late if --

PAUL

I can't find any socks.

MAGGIE

Just take some out of the laundry
basket.

PAUL

(yelling from the other
room)

They're dirty!

MAGGIE

Wear them anyway, it's fine. (to
Justine) You have your pencil case?

Maggie grabs a canvas shopping bag and stuffs the gear into it.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Okay let's go!

Paul is looking at something.

PAUL

Maggie...?

(CONTINUED)

98 CONTINUED: (2)

98

Maggie turns. There are suds foaming out of the dishwasher. A lot of suds. Maggie runs toward the suds and dives in to save the day.

99 EXT. MINIVAN / QUEENS STREETS - DAY

99

Maggie, a few residual suds in her hair, shepherds everyone into the car and leaves. Lily shouts out numbers.

100 INT. QUEENS LOFT - DAY

100

Georgette finishes the book, closes it, contemplates it furiously. She then gets up, takes a metal trash can, puts it on the coffee table, and lights the first page of the manuscript. It goes up in flames.

EXT. QUEENS STREET - DAY

Maggie's van chugs along on the way in to Manhattan.

101 EXT. NEW SCHOOL - DAY

101

Maggie runs into the building.

INT. QUEENS LOFT - DAY

Georgette sets another page of John's manuscript alight. A merry fire leaps up. Georgette watches it burn.

102 EXT. NEW SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

102

Maggie runs out of work at the end of the day. Still late.

103 INT. QUEENS LOFT - AFTERNOON

103

Maggie walks in, breathless, overwrought, Lily on one hip, groceries on the other.

LILY

Twenny five - twenny seven! Fitty two!

Justine and Paul tumble in behind her. Georgette is showered and dressed. She seems more collected.

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

Hi!

Georgette takes the bag of groceries. Maggie puts Lily down and Lily runs to her corner to play.

Maggie sniffs.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Is something burning?

GEORGETTE

No.

MAGGIE

I'm thinking steamed carrots and pork chops.

GEORGETTE

I'll make apple sauce.

Georgette peels an apple.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

Thank God it's Friday.

MAGGIE

I think if we take them all skating tomorrow, then you go to the movie with Justine. It'll scare Paul.

PAUL

No it won't!

GEORGETTE

Yes it will.

JUSTINE

It's rated PG-13 Paul. You can only handle G.

PAUL

That's not fair.

JUSTINE

I'm not having you crawling in my bed for the next month.

MAGGIE

(to Paul)

I can take you and Lily to something else. Let's look at what's playing.

(CONTINUED)

PAUL

Is "Ice Maiden Adorable" still playing?

MAGGIE

You really want to see that again?

PAUL

Yes!

Justine makes a retching face as she gets a snack from the fridge.

GEORGETTE

We can't do that to Maggie. That's not fair.

MAGGIE

I don't care, I'll take a nap.

Maggie has started chopping carrots.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Ow!

Maggie's nicked her finger and sucks the tip.

GEORGETTE

Maggie. Sit down. Where are the band-aids?

Maggie points to a shelf, sits. Georgette gets her a band-aid and puts it on Maggie's trembling finger. Maggie is panicking.

MAGGIE

(to Georgette)

Have you heard from John?

JUSTINE

I did. He sold his car and bought a motorcycle. And he's taking us to the Giants on Sunday.

GEORGETTE

Oh for God's sake.

MAGGIE

Where is he living?

JUSTINE

I'll ask him when we're in the stands.

(CONTINUED)

Georgette turns to Maggie, who is on the verge of a panic attack. She can't breathe well and she's almost in tears.

GEORGETTE

Justine can you take Paul in to watch TV?

Justine and Paul go.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

What is it?

MAGGIE

I'm sure if you see each other--

GEORGETTE

No more matchmaking ideas. No more ideas, period. You've had your thinking license revoked.

MAGGIE

I'll never get involved with anyone else's fate again -- not even my own. I'll become a completely passive, non-interventional -- Buddhist. I just feel like you guys were so close to--

GEORGETTE

You have to let this go, Maggie. This story has its own momentum, apart from you. It always did.

MAGGIE

I'm so sorry. I thought I was going to do something really grand, like a coup... I'm so sick of being me.

GEORGETTE

You should really try the tapping.

MAGGIE

What tapping?

GEORGETTE

I went to a workshop on biofeedback. It's amazing. What you do is, you figure out the essential thing you want to change, and you make a sort of dictum. Like, for you, "I am not controlling," maybe. Or whatever you want to change.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (4)

MAGGIE

'I am not controlling' is good.

GEORGETTE

And you tap like this--

Georgette taps herself on the top of the head, between the eyebrows, under her nose, on her chin, her temple, behind the ear, and on the wrist, and Maggie imitates her, repeating after her, emotion building in her still and brimming over as she taps.

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

I am not controlling. (tap tap tap)

MAGGIE

I am not controlling. (tap tap tap)

GEORGETTE

(tapping)

I leave people to their own fate.

MAGGIE

(tapping)

I leave people to their own fate.

Etc...

EXT. QUEENS STREET - DAY

Georgette marches toward camera with great determination.

104 EXT. CAFE - DAY

104

Establishing shot.

105 INT. CAFE - DAY

105

Georgette waits, a coffee beside her. John sets his helmet on the table.

JOHN

So why did you want to see me?

He sits. They glare at each other.

GEORGETTE

I wanted to return your book.

(CONTINUED)

She takes a plastic baggie filled with ashes from her purse and puts it in front of him.

JOHN

Where shall I scatter these?

GEORGETTE

Anywhere is fine.

JOHN

I can't believe you burned my fucking book, on top of everything else.

GEORGETTE

I burned a copy of your book.

JOHN

You probably didn't even read it.

GEORGETTE

Of course I read it. That's why I burned it! You cannibalized our marriage to write that story.

JOHN

You didn't even bother to fictionalize us in yours.

GEORGETTE

I don't write fiction!

JOHN

You think you painted a precise portrait of us in "Bring Back the Geisha?" I can't believe you're making me feel bad about the sins of my unpublished novel -- are we just going to gloss over your actual lies and manipulation?

GEORGETTE

I'm not a liar! You know I never lie. I lied now... I manipulated... I debased myself morally -- because... I loved you so terribly much. Maybe you could be flattered.

This reaches him a little. He knows what it costs her.

JOHN

If you love me so much, why not
just -- tell me?

GEORGETTE

You were married.

JOHN

Oh, Georgette.

GEORGETTE

So you won't take any
responsibility for the state of
your life? You're just a victim of
our plot?

JOHN

I'm not a victim. I'm just a man
who has fucked his life up and is
now trying to find an airbnb to
live in.

GEORGETTE

There is nothing more to say in
that case.

She starts putting on her coat; he makes ready to go. It's
over. Then, she stops. She's making one more tactical
military maneuver to conquer him:

GEORGETTE (CONT'D)

The reason your novel doesn't work
is: You put too much weight on the
allegory. You're trying to use
fiction to prove a thesis. The text
is crying out for passages of pure
economic theory. Narrative blended
with theory is your specialty. Make
it into a John Harding book and it
could be a phenomenon.

JOHN

You really think so?

GEORGETTE

I know it John. You just have to
accept it'll probably be published
by Yale University Press, not
Scribner's. Mark my words: you'll
be shortlisted for a Bateson Prize.
You might even get one.

He stares at her.

(CONTINUED)

105 CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN
Fuck. You did it again.

GEORGETTE
What?

JOHN
You know me better than I know me.

GEORGETTE
Sometimes I wish I didn't.

He really sees her. The air is charged.

JOHN
You look very beautiful in that
light.

GEORGETTE
I'll seek out these lighting
conditions whenever possible in
that case.

JOHN
You do that.

He moves toward her. And then, they kiss, ravenously...

106 INT. QUEENS LOFT - BEDROOM - DAWN 106

Maggie wakes up from an unremembered dream, filled with a
glorious intuition. Lily sleeps beside her.

JUMP CUT TO:

107 INT. QUEENS LOFT - BEDROOM - DAY 107

Maggie is dressing Lily. They talk and laugh.

A107 EXT. PROSPECT PARK - ICE RINK A107

Maggie and Lily skate on the ice.

108 INT. QUEENS LOFT - BATHROOM - DAY 108

Lily and Maggie brush their teeth in their pyjamas.

109 INT. QUEENS LOFT - BEDROOM - DAY 109

Another day. Maggie and Lily play on the floor.

110 INT. QUEENS LOFT KITCHEN - DAY 110

Maggie and Lily eat their eggs. A sense of contentment. Absolute love.

111 EXT - PROSPECT PARK - ICE RINK - DAY 111

Three weeks later. One shot: Lily is skating between Maggie and John, each holding a little hand. She is wearing a pin that says "I'm Three!" on it. Maggie and John hand Lily to a skating instructor, flanked by Justine. The instructor escorts Lily to a clutch of little girls on skates.

LITTLE GIRLS
Happy Birthday, Lily!

This is Lily's third birthday party. It's a skating party. The skating instructor calls out cheerful commands. We follow John as he skates over to Georgette, who is holding onto the railing for dear life. She loses her balance. John catches her.

JOHN
Winter sports aren't really your strong suit.

GEORGETTE
It's not fair! On skates I'm not able to defend myself.

JOHN
I'm keeping you on ice for the rest of your life, in that case.

He pushes her on the ice as she screams in fear and joy. In the stands, Tony, Felicia, and Max watch this tender scene. Tony is lacing up Max's skates. Maggie skates up to them and leans on the barrier.

TONY
(referring to Georgette and John)
Has it ever occurred to you that this might have all happened anyway? Even if you hadn't played Titania and sprinkled fairy dust in everyone's eyes?

(CONTINUED)

MAGGIE

Of course it's occurred to me.

FELICIA

You'll never know if it was you, or
the Hand of Destiny.

MAGGIE

I've decided to embrace the mystery
of the universe and stop bossing
everyone around so much.

MAX

Good luck with that, bossy pants.

Max walks off, toward the ice. Maggie stares after him.

MAGGIE

He's been listening to us this
whole time?

Max is already walking to the skating rink.

TONY

One day he's going to write a book
about us all. And we are not going
to look good.

Max skates off--he's a demon skater. Felicia watches Lily
skate by in the gaggle of little girls.

LILY

(shouting, to Justine)
...fifty-two a hundred!, fifty-
three a hundred!, fifty-four...

FELICIA

What kind of three year old loves
numbers that much?

TONY

Was John good at math? Because you
certainly weren't.

MAGGIE

I'm not sure...

Something is dawning on Felicia, and then it dawns on Tony.

But Maggie is skating away already.

Maggie backs up on the ice, alone, happy. Stay with her a
moment. She's a good skater.

Then, she sees: walking over the crest of a hill, making his way toward the rink, skates slung over his broad shoulders, is Guy. The pickle entrepreneur. Who skates every Sunday. Glowing with idiosyncratic appeal. Backing up, Maggie stares at him in surprise, then thoughtfulness, then affection. She backs up till she hits the barrier of the rink. She can't back up anymore. Move closer and closer to her watching Guy, until she is in a huge close up, on the very edge of her next move.

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