

## **THE PROPOSAL**

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**FADE IN:**

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING**

The sun peeks over the horizon. There's a stunning view of Central Park from this apartment, but whoever lives here isn't watching. As we wander through expensive furniture, a steady THUMP, THUMP, THUMP echoes through the apartment. Eventually, we see MARGARET MILLS (37) running on a treadmill, watching "The O.C." on Tivo, and reading a manuscript. She sprints as the clock on her treadmill goes to zero. As she hits a button to stop the treadmill...

**INT. WOMAN'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING**

A hand knocks an alarm clock off a table to shut it up. RICHARD PAXTON (26) wakes up on pink sheets and looks around to figure out where he is. There are multiple framed pictures of the same model on the walls. Richard looks at the clock and gets up quickly when he sees it is 6:16 AM. Unfortunately for him, he is very hung over.

**RICHARD**

Where are my clothes?

A blob beneath the sheets next to him answers. SIMONE is the model on the walls and is really, really hot.

**SIMONE**

In the kitchen. I think. Can I make you some coffee?

**RICHARD**

Sorry, I gotta go. I'm late.

Richard hurries to the kitchen. Socks are on the butcher block next to an empty champagne bottle. Shoes in the sink. He finds his pants on the floor and puts them on.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Have you seen my belt?

Simone looks around and sees it tied to her headboard.

**SIMONE**

In here.

She unties the complicated knot. Richard comes back half dressed. He swallows a little throwup.

**RICHARD**

Baby, I just can't do this anymore.

2.

**INT. MARGARET'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING**

Margaret puts on a black suit jacket. Definitely not off the rack. She makes sure she looks perfect in the mirror, and moves off.

**INT. WOMAN'S APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING**

Reflected in the mirror above Simone's bed, Richard hurriedly gets dressed as he talks.

**RICHARD**

You're just too much for me. And I'm just another guy too wrapped up in his job.

**SIMONE**

Fine. Whatever. Just go.  
Richard sits down on the bed and locks eyes with Simone.

**RICHARD**

Let's not end it like that. It's been an amazing three and a half weeks. Thank you. And you should know that you have the nicest ass I've ever been with.

**SIMONE**

**(TOUCHED)**

You mean it?

**RICHARD**

I do. It's magnificent.

**SIMONE**

I work really hard on it.

**RICHARD**

I know you do.  
Simone smiles and begins to seductively pull the sheets off her naked body. Richard shakes his head "no" and smiles.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
I really gotta go.

**INT. MARGARET'S KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING**

CRUNCH. Margaret eats a bowl of Kashi and soy milk while standing and reading a manuscript. Her eyes remain glued to her reading as she rinses out her bowl and puts it in the dishwasher. Her apartment is very quiet.

**EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MORNING**

HONK! A cab blares its horn at Richard as he runs across the street. His suit is rumpled and he checks his watch.

3.

**INT. MARGARET'S LOBBY - MORNING**

DING! The elevator opens and Margaret strides towards the exit and the DOORMAN (60). Before Margaret gets to the door, her CELL PHONE RINGS. She checks the caller ID and excitedly points at her phone as she lets it ring.

**MARGARET**

(to phone)  
I knew you would call! Now come on, tell me what I want to hear. Give it to me.

**DOORMAN**

You have to put it by your mouth so people can hear you.

**MARGARET**

You should get paid extra for being so darn funny.

Margaret straightens her jacket, answers the phone, and walks out the door.

MARGARET (cont'd)

This is Margaret.

**INT. SKYSCRAPER LOBBY - MORNING**

Richard bursts into the skyscraper and runs into a Starbucks.

**INT. STARBUCKS - MORNING - CONTINUOUS**

Two coffees lie in wait for Richard. JILLIAN, a lovely Barista, smiles as he hurries to the counter.

**JILLIAN**

You're running late today.

**RICHARD**

Jillian, you are the best.

**JILLIAN**

If you think I'm good at this, you should use that coffee cup sometime.

As he runs out the door, Richard glances at his cup and smiles at Jillian's name and phone number written in Sharpie.

**RICHARD**

See ya tomorrow.

**INT. SKYSCRAPER LOBBY - MORNING - CONTINUOUS**

The elevator doors ahead of Richard begin to close.

**RICHARD**

**4.**

Mercifully, a hand reaches out and stops the doors. Inside the packed elevator, Richard's CO-WORKERS look sleepy. One particularly frustrated co-worker confronts Richard.

**CO-WORKER #1**

How long is she gonna make us come in by seven?

**RICHARD**

She doesn't exactly consult with me on these things.

**CO-WORKER #1**

Well this sucks ass.

**RICHARD**

Welcome to my nightmare.  
The doors close as...

**EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MORNING**

Margaret crosses the street and talks on the phone.

**MARGARET**

You've been thinking about our talk because I'm right. Everyone does publicity. Roth, McCourt, Russo. Hell, Chabon practically whores himself. Know what they have in common? A Pulitzer.

(off answer)

Yes, I know you haven't done it in twenty years, but that's how long it's been since

you've written a book this good.

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - MORNING**

Richard bursts out of the elevator and passes a clock reading 6:56 and a sign that announces "Royce Publishing." He hauls ass through a sea of cubicles. Along the way, grumpy employees begrudgingly nod their good mornings. At his desk, he pulls a tie out of a drawer and puts it on without looking in the mirror. Noticing his wrinkled suit, he pulls out a SPRAY BOTTLE out of the same drawer, sprays it all over his body, and then on his head to help mat down a tricky cowlick. Satisfied, he hurries into a nearby corner office.

**INT. SKYSCRAPER LOBBY - MORNING**

Margaret walks into the lobby and continues talking. Employees avoid her and pile into the elevator.

5.

**MARGARET**

I'm not pushing so you'll sell more books,  
I'm pushing because it'll be a crime if the  
world doesn't hear that you wrote a genius  
piece of literature. Do the publicity.  
Margaret waits for an answer and smiles when she hears "yes."  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
You're making the right decision! Great  
news. Going into an elevator, think I'm  
going to lose you...  
Margaret hangs up. Never give them a chance to change their  
mind.

**INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Richard races to Margaret's computer and turns it on. He picks up papers strewn about the room. He goes back to the computer, and opens computer programs.

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - RECEPTION - MORNING**

Margaret exits the elevator and receives an enthusiastic...

**RECEPTIONIST**

Good morning!  
Margaret quickly walks by and gives only the slightest nod.

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - MORNING**

Margaret walks through the cubicles and nods hello to her staff, who all look busy on the phone. When she turns the corner, they stop their "conversations" in mid sentence and hang up.

**INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - MORNING**

Richard stares at the printer as a sheet of paper comes out. A clock above the door reads 7:00 AM. The paper clears the printer and Richard grabs it quickly.

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - MORNING**

Margaret opens the door to her office, and finds Richard standing at attention with papers in one hand and coffee in the other. Her office looks perfect.

**RICHARD**

You've got a conference call in thirty, a  
staff meeting at nine, and your immigration  
lawyer sent some papers for you to sign.

**MARGARET**

Cancel the call, move the meeting to eight,

**(MORE)**

**6.**

**MARGARET** (cont'd)

(big news)

I got Frank to do publicity.

**RICHARD**

Nice job.

**MARGARET**

When I want your praise, I'll ask for it.

Is Bob here?

**RICHARD**

I'm sure. You want him on the phone?

**MARGARET**

We're going to his office. Grab your pad.

Richard calmly backs out of the office...

**INT. RICHARD'S DESK - CONTINUOUS**

... but once he's out of Margaret's sight he runs to his computer and sends an instant message to the office "The Banshee is headed to Bob's office."

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - MORNING**

As the message pops up on computers, the quiet office jumps to life as everyone in a cubicle picks up their phone and resumes their imaginary conversations.

**INT. RICHARD'S DESK - MORNING**

Margaret comes out to Richard's desk. She notices his coffee cup with Jillian's number on it. She takes special notice of the hearts that dot the "I's" in Jillian.

**MARGARET**

That's cute. You gonna call her today?

**RICHARD**

What?

Richard doesn't know what Margaret is talking about, until she nods at the cup. He's embarrassed.

**MARGARET**

Are you bored here? Do you need little distractions like that to get you through the day?

**RICHARD**

Uh...

**MARGARET**

You have another late night out?

**RICHARD**

7.

Margaret starts walking. Richard quickly catches up, worried because he doesn't know where she's going with this.

**MARGARET**

I'm firing on all cylinders and you've got hearts on your coffee cup, wicked bed head, and a wrinkled suit that you wore yesterday.

**RICHARD**

Oh. Well, it won't be wrinkled for long.

**MARGARET**

You'll magically unwrinkle?

**RICHARD**

Yes.

**MARGARET**

You have magic pants?

**RICHARD**

No. I've sprayed them with stuff that will take care of the wrinkles.

**MARGARET**

Does this work on more than just your pants?

**RICHARD**

Anything that's wrinkled.

**MARGARET**

Buy me some.

**RICHARD**

Will do.

Richard makes a note. Margaret stops to make her point.

**MARGARET**

I don't care what or who you do on your own time, but when you walk through that door you represent me, and I will not have your personal life affect you at work. If you want me to think of promoting you to editor, I need you sharp, focused and professional. Got it?

**RICHARD**

Got it.

**MARGARET**

Great. Now you're just a prop in here, so don't say a word.

8.

**INT. BOB'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

Margaret and Richard enter Bob's office, which is decorated with beautiful antiques and first edition books. But unlike Margaret's office, this one isn't in the corner. Margaret nods at Richard to shut the door. BOB (42) wears a prim bow tie, circular tortoise shell glasses, and the air of superiority.

**MARGARET**

Hey, Bob.

**BOB**

Ah. Our fearless leader and her liege. Margaret smiles.

**MARGARET**

I'm lettin' you go, Bob.

**BOB**

Pardon?

**MARGARET**

You're fired.

**BOB**

What? What are you talking about?

**MARGARET**

This isn't working out.

**BOB**

You can't...

**MARGARET**

I asked you repeatedly to get Frank to do publicity. You said it was impossible.

**BOB**

It is. He doesn't do publicity.

**MARGARET**

I just talked to him. He's in.

**BOB**

But...

**MARGARET**

No more buts, Bob. I've been chief for a month and a half, and this is the third time you've dropped the ball. You didn't even call to ask him.

**BOB**

9.

**MARGARET**

All you had to do to was pick up the phone. That's it. Now I'll give you two months to find a new job, and then you can say you resigned. I won't tell a soul, my lips are sealed. Margaret nods at Richard and he opens the door.

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - CONTINUOUS**

Margaret and Richard walk a few steps. Margaret looks straight ahead and whispers to Richard.

**MARGARET**

What's he doing?  
Richard turns around and takes a peek. Bob gets out of his chair and comes to his door.

**RICHARD**

He's up and about to pop.

**MARGARET**

Oh Bob, don't do it...

**BOB**

**YOU POISONOUS BITCH! YOU CAN'T FIRE ME!**

The office stops. This is going to be good. Margaret turns around with a disappointed look on her face. She's deadly calm.

**MARGARET**

What are you doing? I gave you a civilized way out of this.

**BOB**

This is because I'm your competition. Because I threaten you!

**MARGARET**

Oh, Bob. You could never threaten me. I'm firing you because you're lazy, entitled and incompetent. I'm firing you because you don't work hard. So if you know what's good for you, you'll shut up, take off that ridiculous bow tie, find a bar and get drunk. Because if you say one more word, Richard here is going to call security and have you thrown out on your ass. Are we perfectly clear?

Bob nods.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Good. Now I've got work to do, so if you'll

**10.**

Margaret and Richard walk away and speak in hushed tones.

MARGARET (cont'd)

We need to call his authors and explain what happened. And get Frank's publicity schedule figured out pronto.

**RICHARD**

No problem. I'll just cancel my trip this weekend.

**MARGARET**

I gave you the weekend off?

**RICHARD**

It was my Grandma's ninetieth birthday. But no big deal. You were right before, I need to stay focused. Professional.

**INT. RICHARD'S DESK - DAY**

Richard is on the phone with his mom explaining why he can't come home this weekend. He sounds like an annoyed teenager.

**RICHARD**

Well tell gammy that I'm sorry.

(waiting to speak)

Mom, she's making me work this weekend.

It's not like I volunteered.

(waiting to speak)

I'm sure dad is pissed.

Margaret comes to Richard's desk. He tries to wrap it up.

RICHARD (cont'd)

I have to go. Yeah. No, I'm not going to do that! No. Sorta. Mom! No. Bye.

Richard hangs up the phone.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Sorry about that. Damage control.

**MARGARET**

She tell you to quit?

**RICHARD**

No. No.

(off Margaret's look)

Um. Yes? But as I've explained to them, after three years together, you're the only person on the planet who can make me editor,

so that's the way it is.  
Richard's phone rings and he picks it up.

**11.**

**RICHARD** (cont'd)  
Your 10:55 is here. Mr. Gilbertson?

**MARGARET**  
Who is this guy?

**RICHARD**  
He said you knew each other. You weren't sure so you told me to set a meeting. We rescheduled on him four times.

**MARGARET**  
Go get him. But he's out of here in five minutes, we've got work to do.  
Margaret leaves and goes into her office.

**RICHARD**  
(to himself)  
I'll charge up the cattle prod.

**INT. MARGARET'S OFFICE - DAY**

Margaret reads as MR. GILBERTSON (48) sits down. He's an intense man in a bad suit. He sits in silence until Margaret looks up.

**MR. GILBERTSON**  
Margaret. Good to see you. I know how busy you are. Congrats on the promotion. Read about it in P-W.

**MARGARET**  
Yeah. Well, those announcements are silly, aren't they? Like everyone who needs to know doesn't know already.  
Margaret has been trying to figure out how she knows this man, but now gives up.  
**MARGARET** (cont'd)  
Have to admit, I can't place where we know each other from.  
Gilbertson smiles. He didn't expect her to remember.

**MR. GILBERTSON**  
Three years ago? We worked together.

**MARGARET**  
Don't have it...

**MR. GILBERTSON**  
Remember "Dandelion's Desire?"  
Margaret gets excited.

**12.**

**MARGARET**  
Oh my God, you read that manuscript with me? That book is legend. Without a doubt the worst ever written.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You think?

**MARGARET**

It was a fever dream!  
pointless pages, with like 30 characters,  
who all had some weird disability. The  
paraplegic pornographer, and the stuttering  
scientist? Oh! And there was the asthmatic  
alien chapter -- written entirely in his  
alien language.

900 offensive and

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I believe there was a glossary...  
Margaret laughs, caught up in the memory.

**MARGARET**

Did you see the pass letter I wrote him?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

**(QUOTING)**

"Your grammar is impeccable, but please do  
not confuse superior form with writing  
ability. Save your skills for the office  
newsletter, you sir, are no writer."  
A beat. Margaret says matter of fact...

**MARGARET**

You wrote the book.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I did.

**MARGARET**

You're Dante Dickens?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

One of my nom de plumes.  
Gilbertson paces. Margaret stays seated, at a loss.

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry if I hurt your feelings. You  
obviously were spending a lot of time  
writing, I just thought you should channel  
all that passion into something else.  
Gilbertson smiles as he pulls a BADGE from his coat pocket.

13.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Ms. Mills, I'm with U.S. Citizenship and  
Immigration Services, and I'm deporting you  
to Canada.

**MARGARET**

Excuse me? What? This is a mistake. I've  
lived here since 1981. I'm applying for  
citizenship.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You need citizenship now? After the big  
promotion?

**MARGARET**

Yes. And all the papers are in.  
Gilbertson pulls out a stack of papers and throws them down.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Well, my office is going to reject your  
paperwork on Monday, while we investigate  
whether your behavior is well disposed to

the good order and happiness of the United States. We must protect our sovereignty.

**MARGARET**

I'm a threat to the sovereignty of the United States?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Yes, and unfortunately my investigation will take awhile, so you'll be deported while your case winds through the system.

(as if he doesn't know)

Will it affect you at work if you aren't allowed to enter the U.S. for the next two to three years?

**MARGARET**

"Affect me at work?" I'll lose my job!

**MR. GILBERTSON**

(mock sympathy)

Ahhhh. That's a shame. Too bad we can't work something out.

Margaret stops looking at her file. It all becomes clear.

**MARGARET**

Oh, no. No, no, no. I won't do it.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Do what, Ms. Mills?

**MARGARET**

14.

Gilbertson smiles. She's quick.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I've edited it down. It's better.

**MARGARET**

Well then, get it published at another house.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

They all just don't get me.

**MARGARET**

All?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Well not all. Two hundred fifty, two hundred sixty-one. Ish.

**MARGARET**

I'll be fired and laughed out of the industry if I publish that book.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I'm at the end of my rope, Ms. Mills. I'm an author. Not some bureaucrat who brings a lunchable to work everyday and lives in his brother's garage. You're the last stop, and I'm desperate.

**MARGARET**

I will never publish your book. Ever.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

There's no need to make this difficult. I don't turn in your file until Monday...

**MARGARET**

This is blackmail. I'll go to your boss.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I've spent two years preparing for this day.

Don't you think I've thought of that?

Now Margaret is pacing, while Gilbertson happily looks on.

Suddenly, the door opens and Richard bursts in, acting like there is an "emergency" so Margaret can end the meeting.

**RICHARD**

Excuse me, Ms. Mills, risk management needs you right away.

The sight of Richard inspires Margaret. She turns to Gilbertson with a wicked grin on her face.

15.

**MARGARET**

Know what, Dante? I'm not going anywhere!

We're getting married!

Richard has no idea what Margaret is talking about.

**RICHARD**

Who's getting married?

**MARGARET**

We are!

**RICHARD**

You and him?

**MARGARET**

Stop playing around, honey.

Margaret is all smiles. Richard is very confused.

**MARGARET** (cont'd)

Mr. Gilbertson is from the INS. I told him about us. About us getting married.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You are marrying your male secretary?

**RICHARD**

Assistant.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You are marrying your male assistant?

**MARGARET**

(matter of fact)

We're in love. We tried to fight it. When it's right, it's right.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

And this has nothing to do with my visit here today?

**MARGARET**

Nope. True love. Got it bad.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

(to Richard)

You. Is this true? Are you marrying this... woman?

Margaret comes over to Richard and holds his hand.

**MARGARET**

Of course we are.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

16.

Painfully long beat where Richard doesn't answer. Margaret squeezes Richard's hand hard.

**RICHARD**

Uh-huh.

Margaret smiles and snuggles up to Richard so he can put his arm around her. Richard is truly afraid.

**RICHARD (cont'd)**

(more of a question)

I'm, uh, marrying my boss?

Margaret turns and puckers her lips to let Richard know that she's ready for a kiss. The two slowly begin to come together. Just as their dry lips are about to touch, Richard chickens out and kisses the hair on the top of her head.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Five years in prison and a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar fine.

**MARGARET**

What?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

If I prove you're lying, you go to federal prison for five years.

Gilbertson takes out a pad and takes notes.

**MR. GILBERTSON (cont'd)**

(to Richard)

You. Do you know what you're getting yourself into? We're going to put you in a room and ask you every detail that a real couple would know about each other. Do you even know her favorite color?

Richard doesn't answer. Margaret encourages him on with a thinly veiled threat.

**MARGARET**

C'mon. Answer. You don't have a choice. Richard doesn't want to do this, but relents.

**RICHARD**

Plum.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You mean purple?

**RICHARD**

No. Plum is "smokier" than purple.

17.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Favorite flower?

**RICHARD**

Tulips. But only when they're in season.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Childhood pet name?

**RICHARD**

Miss Mittens.

**MARGARET**

Are we done here?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Who knows you're getting married?  
Margaret interrupts.

**MARGARET**

No one. With us working together we decided it would be too much of a scandal if anyone knew.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Have you at least told your family?

**MARGARET**

**(EXCITED)**

My parents are dead!

**MR. GILBERTSON**

How convenient. So you're not telling anyone that you are getting married?

**RICHARD**

Nope.  
Gilbertson smiles and puts down his pad.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Pathetic. Four questions and I've got enough to send you to prison...

**MARGARET**

We're telling his family this weekend.

**RICHARD**

We are?

**MARGARET**

Yes. We are. We're surprising them...  
(trying to remember)  
...at his Grandma's 90th birthday party.

18.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

And where's that going to be?

**MARGARET**

(no idea)  
At Richard's parent's house.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

And where's that located?

**MARGARET**

(still no idea)  
In his hometown.

**RICHARD**

Sitka.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Is that on Long Island?  
Only Richard has the answer. Margaret tries to cover.

**MARGARET**

Why don't you tell him?

**RICHARD**

Alaska.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You're going to Alaska this weekend?

**MARGARET**

(Alaska???)

Yes. Of course we're going to Alaska.

That's where Richard is from.

Gilbertson begins to walk around. He's getting worked up.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You think you can beat me with this B-S story? Forcing your secretary...

**RICHARD**

Assistant.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

...assistant to marry you and then conveniently telling his family for the first time this weekend?

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry, Dante. Did you not prepare for that?

Margaret puts her arm around Richard and waits in silence.

**19.**

Enraged, but with no recourse for now, Gilbertson checks his appointment book and writes down some information.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

The INS will see you both in ten days for your official interview. Your stories better match up on every account.

Mr. Gilbertson gets right up in Margaret's face as he gives her the piece of paper.

**MR. GILBERTSON (cont'd)**

Cross all your T's and dot your I's with this ruse, Ms. Mills.

**MARGARET**

There are no "T's" or "I's" in "Love" Mr. Gilbertson.

Gilbertson leaves and shuts the door hard. Margaret goes back to her desk like this is all in a days work.

**MARGARET (cont'd)**

Why are you from Alaska? Sweet Jesus, that's inconvenient. So here's what's going to happen. We'll play boyfriend and girlfriend this weekend for your parents and that should be enough for this INS interview.

Richard doesn't react. Margaret doesn't notice.

**MARGARET (cont'd)**

So you need to figure out the travel, schedule a justice of the peace for next week, and get my lawyer on the phone.

Margaret takes a sip of her coffee and makes a face.

**MARGARET (cont'd)**

But first, run down and get me another coffee from your girlfriend, this is cold.

Margaret holds out her coffee cup. Richard doesn't move.

**MARGARET (cont'd)**

Hello? Richard? Richard!

Richard says his first words since Gilbertson left.

**RICHARD**

I quit.

Richard leaves Margaret's office. She still has her coffee cup

outstretched in her hand.

20.

**INT. ROYCE PUBLISHING - CONTINUOUS**

Richard powers through the office. Co-workers take notice that Margaret is following him.

**MARGARET**

Richard, come back here.

Margaret tries not to make a scene.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Richard. Richard.

Richard pushes the elevator button in front of reception.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Come back to the office!

Richard can't take it. He gets up in Margaret's face.

**RICHARD**

You shut up. You just lost your "I get to tell Richard what to do" privileges.

**MARGARET**

Well, we need to talk.

**RICHARD**

You want to talk with me? Fine. Grab your broom and let's go.

Margaret is dumbstruck. The receptionist is shocked. The elevator arrives and Richard gets in. Margaret follows. As the doors close, Richard shouts out to the receptionist.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Watch my phones!

**EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY**

Richard and Margaret walk in silence through the park. Richard finally speaks.

**RICHARD**

Your plan is psychotic.

**MARGARET**

Well I'd rather poke my eyes out than play pretend girlfriend, but this is the big time. Sometimes you need to sack up.

**RICHARD**

Aren't Canadians supposed to be nice?

**MARGARET**

You wanna be an editor? You need to make

21.

**RICHARD**

OK. Fine. Then if we "make this happen"? You're promoting me to editor.

**MARGARET**

I'm doing what?

**RICHARD**

We go to Alaska and lie to my family? I risk going to jail? Well, you're making me editor for that. I mean, did you think I'd do this out of the kindness of my heart?

**MARGARET**

You work for me!

**RICHARD**

You know, during my employee orientation, the HR rep didn't mention anything about me marrying you.

**MARGARET**

Look, I came to this town alone and with nothing. I've worked my ass off for fifteen years and this guy wants to ruin me because he wrote the shittiest book of all time? No way.

**RICHARD**

Nice story Little Orphan Annie, but that sounds like your problem. Not mine. Margaret is stuck. Richard really does have the upper hand.

**MARGARET**

Fine. You take me to Alaska this weekend, and I'll make you editor. Deal?  
Margaret puts out her hand to shake, Richard takes it.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
And I'm not sleeping on your parent's hide-a-bed, we're staying in a hotel. Do they even have hotels in Alaska?

**RICHARD**

No. But they have huts. Teepees really. And you have to poop in a bucket. But otherwise, just like the Four Seasons. But with bears.

**EXT. PLANE TO SEATTLE - DAY**

A commercial jet TAKES OFF and leaves New York City behind.

22.

**INT. PLANE TO SEATTLE - DAY**

Richard and Margaret sit in First Class and work on their lap tops. Richard looks up.

**RICHARD**

Um. Shouldn't we talk about what we're going to say to my parents?  
Margaret doesn't look up, annoyed with the question.

**MARGARET**

Are you done with the press release?

**RICHARD**

Almost.

**MARGARET**

**(PATRONIZING)**

Well let's finish big people business before mommy and daddy talk. Okay?  
Dejected, Richard goes back to work.

**INT. SEATTLE AIRPORT - DAY**

As they change planes in Seattle, Margaret walks quickly and talks on the phone. Still the assistant, Richard lags behind, weighed down by both their bags. Up ahead at the gate, a GATE ATTENDANT (Female, 50's) ANNOUNCES final boarding to Sitka. Margaret gets off her phone.

**MARGARET**

So what do I need to know up there? Bullet points.

**RICHARD**

I told 'em we've been dating for six months. We've kept it a secret from everyone... (under his breath) ...and that you're a naughty minx in the sack. Richard and Margaret make it to the attendant at the gate. Margaret is not amused by Richard's attempt at humor.

**MARGARET**

**(VENOMOUS)**

Don't make me hate you. Margaret hands her boarding pass to the attendant and breezes through. The attendant gives Richard a look.

**RICHARD**

Bringing her home to meet my folks. She's

**23.**

Tangled in the bags, Richard struggles to find his boarding pass. The impatient attendant is getting frustrated.

**RICHARD (cont'd)**

I've got it here. Sorry. Guess I'm a little flustered too. Haven't been home for awhile, hope they like her! The gate attendant smiles.

**GATE ATTENDANT**

(heard it all)  
I don't care, sir.  
Richard finds his boarding pass and hands it over.

**RICHARD**

OK then. You're a sweet lady. Thanks.  
Richard hustles to the plane as they shut the doors.

**INT. PLANE TO ALASKA - DAY**

Margaret takes her seat and sits next to a well dressed HANDSOME MAN who is READING A BOOK. She notices the title and he catches her stare. Margaret explains.

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry, I hate it when people stare at what I'm reading. It's just... I worked on that book.

**HANDSOME MAN**

You wrote it?

**MARGARET**

Edited it. It was one of my favorites.

**HANDSOME MAN**

Well you did a good job. It's great.

**MARGARET**

You don't see many guys with that book. You, uh, read a lot of love stories about

Roman concubines?

**HANDSOME MAN**

My ex-girlfriend gave it to me. I travel a lot for work. I'll read anything...

**MARGARET**

**(SUSPICIOUS)**

Ex-girlfriend, huh?

24.

**HANDSOME MAN**

(smiling, embarrassed)

OK, you got me. I'm a closet romantic. But let's keep that between us.

Margaret smiles and makes the "my lips are sealed" motion. Just then, Richard lumbers onto the plane with the bags.

**MARGARET**

There you are. Give me my lap top.

Richard untangles the bags and gives Margaret her computer bag.

**RICHARD**

(re: book)

Hey, he's reading...

**MARGARET**

I know, Richard.

Richard turns around and puts the bags in the overhead compartment. The Handsome Man turns to Margaret.

**HANDSOME MAN**

Did you two want to sit together?

**MARGARET**

Sit together with who?

The Handsome man nods at Richard.

**HANDSOME MAN**

Your boyfriend?

Margaret points to Richard indignantly.

**MARGARET**

You mean him?

The Handsome man nods. Margaret tries to set the record straight.

**MARGARET (cont'd)**

No. No. No. He's my assistant.

**HANDSOME MAN**

You're bringing your assistant all the way to Alaska?

Richard smiles, happy that Margaret has to answer.

**RICHARD**

Oh, you can tell him the truth.

**MARGARET**

Well, he's... indispensable.

25.

The Handsome man isn't buying it.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
And gay. Takes care of me everywhere I go.  
Call him my queen mother. Aren't you my  
indispensable gay queen mother?  
Margaret shoots Richard a nasty look. He has to go along.

**RICHARD**

That's me.  
Richard turns to close the overhead compartment.

**HANDSOME MAN**

You're awfully nice to fly him first class.  
Margaret nods her head and agrees. It sucks to be Richard.

**EXT. AERIAL OF SITKA - DAY**

We see the natural beauty of South Eastern Alaska. Sitka is an island the size of Maui. Only an eight mile stretch of coast is inhabited, the rest is complete wilderness. At the center of the island is a mountain with smaller hills around it. The coast is dotted with fishing boats. Gorgeous.

**INT. JETWAY - DAY**

Margaret and the Handsome Man chat like old friends while they walk off the plane. Richard follows with all the bags. As they all walk out of the jetway they see...

**INT. AIRPORT - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

A big banner that reads: CONGRATULATIONS RICHARD AND MARGARET!!! with wedding bells and a graphic showing the journey from New York to Sitka. The banner is being held up by a group of 30 PEOPLE with excited looks on their faces. Richard's mom DEBBIE (60) is front and center. She's a sweet lady who cooked Richard a hot breakfast every morning until he left the house. GRANDMA ANNIE (89) also waits. She's lived a long time and doesn't have a lot of time to screw around. When they see Richard, they SCREAM. Margaret's face drops.

**ALL**

There he is!!! Where's Margaret?  
Richard blanches white. Margaret looks back with eyes that say "What the hell is going on?"

26.

**HANDSOME MAN**

(noting banner)  
That's sweet.  
Richard goes over to the group. Margaret keeps walking.

**RICHARD**

What are you guys doing here? What's with the sign?

**DEBBIE**

So you're "just dating," huh? I can't believe you didn't tell us!

**RICHARD**

Didn't tell you what?

**ANNIE**

We're not saying anything until you let us meet Margaret. Now, where's our girl?  
Richard looks around. Margaret keeps her head down and tries to avoid eye contact.

**RICHARD**

Uh. Margaret? You need to come over here.  
Like now. Honey.  
The Handsome Man sees Richard with the banner people, calling for  
Margaret to come over. Margaret winces.

**MARGARET**

I have to go now.

**HANDSOME MAN**

(putting it together)  
What kind of sick shit is this?  
Margaret nods. This would be a tough one to explain.

**MARGARET**

Have a great life.  
Margaret walks toward the group. Richard puts out his hand and  
silently pleads for Margaret to hold it. At the last second, she  
takes it.

**RICHARD**

Everyone, this is Margaret.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

It's nice to meet you. Now, do you prefer  
being called Margaret, or the Dragon Lady?  
We've heard it both ways.  
Everyone laughs.

27.

**DEBBIE**

Annie!

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

It's not like he hasn't told her that he  
used to call her the Dragon Lady. They're  
getting married.

**RICHARD**

(real "casual")  
Now, ah, where did you hear that? The whole  
"getting married" thing?

**DEBBIE**

Oh, that man from the government. Gilber-  
something. Said he was checking up on you  
two. Said it was technicality, because  
Margaret was from Canada.

**RICHARD**

What, ah, did you tell him?

**DEBBIE**

Well for one thing, that you were in a lot  
of trouble for not telling us that you two  
were getting married!

**RICHARD**

No. Really. What did you say?

**DEBBIE**

Just that you were coming up here this  
weekend. That we hadn't seen you in a  
while, and that we'd heard about Margaret  
for years, but that we'd never met her.  
Debbie turns to Margaret and takes both of her hands.  
DEBBIE (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
The way that Richard talked about you? I'll  
admit, I didn't see this coming.

**MARGARET**

Me neither.

Debbie picks up some of the bags and starts walking toward the exit. Everyone else follows her lead.

**ON THE MOVE**

**DEBBIE**

So why all the silly secrecy?

**RICHARD**

It wasn't a secret. We didn't tell anyone.

28.

**DEBBIE**

Well, is your family just anyone?

**RICHARD**

No, I didn't mean...

**DEBBIE**

I should be mad at you two. But, but... I'm just so excited!

**MARGARET**

(re: group)

Uh, is everyone coming to our hotel?

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Oh, we cancelled your reservation. You're part of the family now. Family doesn't stay at a hotel. Also, we've got another little surprise for you two.

**MARGARET**

Surprise? Another surprise?

**RICHARD**

She's not good with surprises.

**MARGARET**

I'm really not good with surprises.

**EXT. SITKA AIRPORT - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Debbie stops. Sitka Airport is very small, so they are already outside by all the cars parked in the loading zone. Debbie and Annie excitedly look at each other.

**DEBBIE**

Well you two...

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

...you're getting married this weekend!

**MARGARET**

What?

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

The whole kit and caboodle.

Margaret gives both these women a look that says "what are you talking about?"

**DEBBIE**

When Gilber-something told us you were getting married...

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

**RICHARD**

What?

29.

**DEBBIE**

...God rest their souls...

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

...or friends...

**DEBBIE**

...we decided to give you a wedding.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Engagement party tonight...

**DEBBIE**

...and the wedding tomorrow at midnight.  
Debbie and Annie wait to see what Margaret thinks.

**MARGARET**

Are you witches?

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Just quaint. During the solstice it's good  
luck. It's an Alaskan thing.

**DEBBIE**

We've planned everything.  
Margaret isn't sold, so Grandma Annie goes for the clincher.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

I'm old, Margaret. I don't have much time  
left. Richard lives so far away, and I  
never see him. Now I find out he's getting  
married, and I have a chance to see my one  
grandchild's wedding day. It's a dream come  
true for me. A dream come true. Please let  
me see Richard get married before I die.  
Please.  
Long beat. Richard doesn't know what Margaret is going to say.  
Margaret doesn't know what Margaret is going to say. Finally,  
she goes to speak, but can only get out... two big thumbs up.  
The crowd cheers.

**EXT. SITKA - DAY**

A procession of cars makes its way through town.

**INT. PICKUP - DAY**

Debbie and Grandma sit in the front of the truck, all smiles.  
Margaret and Richard sit as far away from each other as possible  
in the backseat of the extended cab.

30.

Margaret tries to get Richard's attention, but he's looking out  
the window. Finally she pinches him and Richard jumps. He gives  
Margaret a "what did you do that for" look.

**MARGARET**

**(MOUTHING)**

The Dragon Lady!?  
Richard shrugs.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

To tell you the truth, we had a lot of the plans made already for my birthday. Just a few changes here and there, and we made this weekend a wedding.  
Margaret stares at Richard.

**MARGARET**

I'm a lucky woman.  
Margaret does her best to smile.

**EXT. DOCK - DAY**

The cars park in a lot in the middle of nowhere, near a small dock. Everyone gets out of the cars and starts walking to the ocean. Margaret is confused.

**MARGARET**

I'm not getting out of this car until you tell me where we're going.

**RICHARD**

Come on, it'll be OK. I promise.  
Richard points to a small island about a mile away.

**EXT. YACHT - DAY**

Everyone rides on a 75 foot yacht. Lots of polished wood and chrome. Someone passes out beers on board, and the mood is festive. Margaret takes a look around at the surreal scene.

**MARGARET**

Who are you people?  
Richard lets Margaret wonder.

**EXT. PAXTON DOCK - DAY**

The ship docks and we get our first glimpse of the Paxton Estate. It sits above the rest of the wooded island and is as tasteful as a 15 bedroom Alaskan mansion can be.  
Richard's father, GEOFFREY (60) waits on the dock. He is a bear

31.

**GEOFFREY**

So you must be Margaret. We've heard a lot about you. All of it bad.  
Margaret tentatively walks off the yacht in her none to practical sling backs.  
GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
I mean, I almost shit myself when I heard he was marrying the devil woman.

**MARGARET**

I thought it was the dragon lady?

**GEOFFREY**

Either way.

**RICHARD**

Hey dad.  
Richard shakes his father's hand. It's a little stiff.

**GEOFFREY**

Welcome home. Good to see 'ya.

**RICHARD**

You too.

**GEOFFREY**

Been a while.

**RICHARD**

Yeah. You'd think you could make it to the airport to mark the occasion. Grandma Annie interrupts.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Help him with the bags Geoffrey.  
(to Richard and Margaret)  
Let's get you two settled.  
As Richard and Margaret move towards the house, Annie shoots Geoffrey a look that says "be nice".

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

The house is decked out in sheik Alaskan decor. Somehow, it makes bear heads and deer antlers look good. Everything is first class. Margaret is a little awe struck.

**DEBBIE**

We'll show you around later.

**MARGARET**

Uh huh.

**32.**

Out of nowhere, a small HUSKY PUPPY startles Margaret and jumps on her.

**DEBBIE**

Balzac! Down! No!  
Debbie pulls the dog off of Margaret and pushes him toward the kitchen. Margaret tries to take it in stride and make small talk.

**MARGARET**

What a great name. Balzac's "Lost Illusions" is one of my favorite novels.

**DEBBIE**

Oh. Well, this Balzac's got epididymitis. Debbie makes two big circles with her pointer fingers to illustrate how Balzac really got his name. Not understanding, Margaret looks over at Balzac as he walks away. Off her shocked reaction, we understand right away that this puppy Husky is an anatomic marvel.  
DEBBIE (cont'd)  
No one on the island wanted him when he was born. We figured he deserved a home.

**GEOFFREY**

And don't let him outside, or the eagles will snatch him.

**RICHARD**

C'mon dad...

**GEOFFREY**

I mean it. They come out of that rehabilitation center mean. And hungry.

**RICHARD**

Don't listen to him, Margaret.

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE UPSTAIRS - DAY**

Debbie opens a door for Richard and Margaret.

**DEBBIE**

You'll be sleeping here.

**INT. MARGARET'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

The room is beautiful, right out of Architectural Digest.

**DEBBIE**

Bathroom is there, all the towels are in the armoire by the bed. Just let me know if you

33.

**MARGARET**

Thank you. Where's Richard's room?

**DEBBIE**

Oh, we took down his "shrine" years ago. And don't worry, I'm under no illusion that you two haven't slept in the same bed before. Richard can sleep here too.

**MARGARET**

Oh, let's not upset Grandma Annie.

**DEBBIE**

It was her idea. Anything to help get her a great grandchild. Richard shrugs his shoulders behind his mother.

**MARGARET**

Great. You know, I've gotten used to his breathing at night.

**DEBBIE**

I thought so dear. Debbie leaves and shuts the door. Margaret reverts back to her old self.

**MARGARET**

I'm about 15 seconds from bitch.

**RICHARD**

Calm down.

**MARGARET**

What is going on here?

**RICHARD**

Hell if I know.

**MARGARET**

You had no idea they knew about us getting married?

**RICHARD**

You think I'd bring you here if I did?

**MARGARET**

Well, we just gotta tell 'em.

**RICHARD**

Tell 'em what?

**MARGARET**

Tell 'em the truth. About us.

34.

**RICHARD**

Wrong answer. No way.

**MARGARET**

What do you mean no way? This is crazy.

**RICHARD**

No, crazy was lying to the federal officer.

**MARGARET**

Well I don't like this.

**RICHARD**

Well I'm not making my Gammy an accomplice to a Class C felony! For one second could you not be so selfish?

**MARGARET**

Selfish?

**RICHARD**

Yeah, you know, that thing you do where you only worry about yourself every second of every day?

**MARGARET**

How is it selfish to tell the truth?

**RICHARD**

Look. We're awful, awful people. In the last forty eight hours, we've lied to... everyone. We need to protect the people downstairs. We can't ask these good, decent, not awful people to lie for us. Let's keep the darkside to ourselves. Margaret takes a second to make up her mind.

**MARGARET**

Fine. But if we do this, you need to stop lying to me.

**RICHARD**

What've I lied to you about?

**MARGARET**

Why did you tell me that you were poor?

**RICHARD**

I never said that.

**MARGARET**

Well, you never told me you were rich.

**RICHARD**

When does that come up?

35.

**MARGARET**

I don't know, how about, "Hi, my name is Richard, I'm an Alaskan titan of industry."

**RICHARD**

Well, maybe I didn't tell you because you would have fired me if you knew.

**MARGARET**

No I wouldn't.

**RICHARD**

Come on! You're always yammering on about your scrappy childhood, and how you fought for those soccer scholarships, and how the rich kids made fun of you in prep school for working in the kitchen. You're totally anti-rich.

**MARGARET**

I'm not anti-rich.

**RICHARD**

Oh yes you are! And you know what makes it worse? You have money!

**MARGARET**

I earned...

**RICHARD**

...every penny I have. Blah, blah, blah. You need new material.

**MARGARET**

Hey. Watch it. You're still my assistant.

**RICHARD**

You were going to promote me anyway.

**MARGARET**

Sure of that?

**RICHARD**

Nope. Not at all. Margaret takes a look at herself in the mirror.

**MARGARET**

Well, come on. If we're going to do this, we might as well put on a show.

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

Downstairs, the engagement party is in full swing. The starched wait staff stands out in the crowd, because the raucous partygoers are all dressed in flannel, T-shirts and baseball hats.

**36.**

Ponytails rule for the women, and almost all the men have shaggy hair and beards. No dress code here. Like the house, the party is first class. Ice sculptures melt, champagne is served on silver trays, and the buffet overflows with salmon and king crab. Margaret works the crowd like a pro and holds court with some WELL WISHERS, Richard's parents, and Balzac.

**MARGARET**

I went to Union college in upstate New York. It's a small liberal arts school that no one has ever heard of. Richard comes to the group and hands Margaret a drink. MARGARET (cont'd)  
(looks at glass)  
Lime?

**RICHARD**

Be right back. Richard leaves to fetch lime wedges. Geoffrey elbows Debbie in the side, "What was that?"

**WELL WISHER #1**

How long have you been with your company?

**MARGARET**

Since I graduated college.  
Richard comes back with the lime. Margaret takes it and doesn't  
say thank you.

**RICHARD**

She's been there since she was nineteen.

**GEOFFREY**

Nineteen? Wow. That's how long?

**MARGARET**

Oh, who's counting...  
Geoffrey could let it go, but wants to push her.

**GEOFFREY**

No. How many years is that? Exactly.  
Margaret gives Geoffrey the slightest look.

**MARGARET**

Well, let me see. That would be sixteen or  
seventeen years. Exactly.

37.

**GEOFFREY**

I was never good with big numbers. That  
makes you... thirty six now?

**MARGARET**

Just turned thirty seven. Born on May 20th.  
I'm a Taurus.  
Geoffrey and Margaret give each other a smile.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
(to Richard)  
I need some protein.

**RICHARD**

There's some salmon.  
Margaret shakes her head no.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Crab?  
Margaret nods yes. Richard steps away to find a waiter.  
Geoffrey watches his son do Margaret's bidding.

**GEOFFREY**

Keep him on a short leash, huh? Does he  
roll over when you whistle?  
Debbie hits Geoffrey.

**DEBBIE**

He's just being a good host.  
Richard comes right back with a waiter in tow. For Geoffrey's  
benefit, Margaret makes a point to thank Richard.

**MARGARET**

Thank you, honey. You're being so sweet.  
Richard is surprised, but remembers they're a couple.

**RICHARD**

Uh, sure. Honey.

**WELL WISHER #2**

So you just got some big promotion?

**MARGARET**

I'm editor in chief, now.  
Richard tenderly puts his arm around Margaret.

**RICHARD**

**(BEAMING)**

I'm so proud of my girl.

**38.**

From behind them, a melodic, ethereal VOICE interrupts.

**VOICE (O.S.)**

Editor in chief? You're marrying up,  
Richard.

Everyone turns around to find GERTRUDE THURMAN (26). She is  
Grace Kelly in Patagonia and Timberland. Adding insult to  
injury, she doesn't have eyeliner on.

**RICHARD**

Gert!?

Richard snaps his arm back, hitting Margaret in the head, and  
spilling her tonic water on her shirt. He doesn't notice what  
he's done, and leaves Margaret. She's peeved.

RICHARD (cont'd)

**(FLUSTERED)**

What are you? What are you doing here?

**GERTRUDE**

Your dad made me come.

**RICHARD**

From Chicago?

Gertrude laughs. The group watches these two see each for the  
first time in years. There is instant chemistry, and Richard has  
forgotten about Margaret completely.

**GERTRUDE**

No. I live here now.

**RICHARD**

You what?

**GERTRUDE**

I moved back about six months ago. I'm  
teaching second grade. At Baranof.

**RICHARD**

Did your husband move up here too?

**GERTRUDE**

Uh, no. I, ah, got divorced.

**RICHARD**

Oh my God. I'm sorry.

**GERTRUDE**

Me too. But hey, we're being rude, I wanna  
meet the bride.

Gertrude leaves Richard and goes to Margaret.

**39.**

GERTRUDE (cont'd)

Hi, I'm Gertrude. But call me Gert.

**MARGARET**

You're a Gertrude?

**GERTRUDE**

A family name from hell.

**MARGARET**

I'm sure it's been a curse.

**GEOFFREY**

Gert and Richard were quite the item in high school.  
Gertrude instantly dismisses Geoffrey's reminiscence.

**GERTRUDE**

Oh Please. Ancient history.

**GEOFFREY**

Feels like yesterday to me.

**GERTRUDE**

(ignoring Geoffrey)  
So tell me everything. I hear it wasn't exactly love at first sight?

**MARGARET**

Not exactly...

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Now Richard, what I want to know is how you proposed.  
This grabs the group's full attention. Everyone loves to hear a story like this.

**RICHARD**

Well...  
Richard hasn't recovered from seeing Gertrude.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Uh, uh, um, I...

**GEOFFREY**

Yeah. How did you pop the question?  
Richard is a deer in the headlights. This is getting ugly.  
Margaret sees that Richard is going to crumble, and steps in.

**MARGARET**

Can I tell this one, honey?

40.

**RICHARD**

Uh. Sure.

**MARGARET**

I'm an early, early riser and go for a run everyday. Well, it was our six month anniversary and I was out for my normal jog in the park, when who do I see in a horse drawn carriage, wearing a tux, and waiting for me halfway through my run? Richard! So I ran up to the carriage and asked him what was going on, and he put his finger to his lips and says, "shhhh." So there I am in my jogging clothes, next to the most handsome mute in the world - have you seen him in a tux? - riding like a sweaty princess and smiling ear to ear. Couple minutes later, we arrive at Tavern on the Green. Best part, we're the only people in the place because Richard got them to open up early. Well, we go to our table, sit down, and just as the sun starts to peek above the trees, this beautiful man gets down on one knee, and says "I didn't want one more sunrise to

go by without you knowing that you are the light of my life, and that I would be the luckiest man in the world if you would be my wife. Margaret Mary Mills, will you marry me?"

The group is silent, waiting for the clincher.

MARGARET (cont'd)

I said yes.

The group gives a collective "ahh". Grandma Annie takes both Margaret and Richard by the hand.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

You are a good boy Richard, and you make me very proud. I love you Richy.

**RICHARD**

I love you too, Grandma.

Grandma hugs the couple. Everyone smiles except Geoffrey and Gertrude.

**GEOFFREY**

So did this happen before or after the INS agent came sniffing around?

**DEBBIE**

What is wrong with you? I'm sorry Margaret. Margaret doesn't miss a beat.

41.

**MARGARET**

Oh please. I'd wonder too. Honestly, my lawyers have been dealing with all of this. When you told us at the airport it was the first time I'd heard about it. I'm so embarrassed.

**DEBBIE**

Don't be, dear. Geoffrey's just an ass. While Debbie apologizes, Margaret gives Richard a little wink that says "I've got this under control". The moment is interrupted when Richard pulls out a RINGING CELL PHONE. He takes a step back and answers quietly so no one can hear.

**RICHARD**

Margaret Mill's phone.

(off answer)

One second please.

Richard comes back to the group and hands Margaret the phone.

RICHARD (cont'd)

It's our friend, Frank.

Richard's tone let's Margaret know there's a problem.

**MARGARET**

Excuse me, I'll just be a second.

Margaret takes the phone and exits out French glass doors that lead to the backyard. She leaves the door open, and doesn't notice Balzac follow her outside.

**EXT. PAXTON BACKYARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Margaret goes far from the house so no one can hear. Balzac follows her all the way, but Margaret doesn't see him.

**MARGARET**

Don't be a cliché, Frank. Don't be the wishy washy writer who changes his mind every two seconds.

Margaret notices Balzac, but ignores him. The dog starts YAPPING to get attention. She walks away, but Balzac continues barking. Annoyed, she gets down face to face with the puppy and puts the

phone against her chest so Frank doesn't hear.

MARGARET (cont'd)

(to Balzac)

Sit and be quiet!

Balzac sits and pouts. Margaret walks away and puts the phone back to her ear.

**42.**

MARGARET (cont'd)

I fired Bob because he didn't have your best interest in mind. Our job is to help you succeed. He wasn't doing that.

Margaret continues to listen to her writer whine, when she notices an EAGLE soaring in circles above her and Balzac. Not sure what to think, she looks back at Balzac and sees him peacefully sit in the grass.

She then looks up and sees that the eagle is gone. Margaret shakes her head, looks back at Balzac when --

WHOOSH! The eagle snatches Balzac by the scruff of the neck, and takes off. Margaret jumps.

There is no one to help, so she chases after the dog and eagle. She stays calm on the phone.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Could you hold on just a second?

With no other option, Margaret throws her cell phone and hits the eagle suspended 20 feet above her. The eagle drops Balzac and Margaret catches him. Balzac looks frightened.

Tucking Balzac away like a furry football, she runs to her phone and picks it up.

MARGARET (cont'd)

**(NONCHALANT)**

Sorry, dropped my phone.

Margaret looks up and sees that the eagle has resumed flying in circles above her. She decides to wrap up the call quick and get back to the house.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Frank, I don't want to sell you on anything.

But know this. This book is your legacy...

Margaret looks up and sees the eagle dive towards her and Balzac again. She runs.

MARGARET (cont'd)

... and-I-think-you-should-be-the-one-to introduce-your-legacy-to-the-world. Call me-tomorrow-with-your-decision. My-phone is-always-on. Talk-to-you-soon.

The eagle bears down on them with talons out. Just as the eagle is about to strike, Margaret sticks out her hand with the phone to fend back the eagle. To her surprise, the eagle grabs

Margaret's phone and flies off. Margaret freaks.

MARGARET (cont'd)

**43.**

Panicked, she takes Balzac in both hands and puts him up to the eagle as an offering.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Take the dog! Take the dog!

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE**

Inside, the elegant party carries on.

**DEBBIE**

Where's Margaret? We need to go.

**RICHARD**

Go where?

**DEBBIE**

It's a surprise. Girls are going into town.  
And the boys stay here. I told you, we've  
planned everything.

**RICHARD**

Um. She's outside.  
Debbie and Richard turn around and look out a picture window.  
They see Margaret running with Balzac above her head.

**DEBBIE**

Oh that's sweet, she's playing with my  
Balzac.

**EXT. PAXTON BACKYARD - DAY**

The eagle is long gone, but Margaret is still running with the  
dog trying to bait it back.

**MARGARET**

This is a delicious dog, Mr. Eagle. C'mon,  
bring back the phone.  
Richard calls out from the house.

**RICHARD**

What are you doing?

**MARGARET**

The eagle took my phone!

**RICHARD**

Are you drunk?

**MARGARET**

Your dad was right! The eagle tried to take  
the dog, so I saved it, then it came back  
and took my phone.

44.

**RICHARD**

Did the dingo eat your baby, too?

**MARGARET**

Frank's going to call me on that phone. I  
need it!

**RICHARD**

Relax. I've got your information backed up  
on the laptop. I'll just get you a new  
phone and switch the number. No problem.

**MARGARET**

Oh.

**RICHARD**

Now come on. You're going somewhere with my  
mom and the girls.

**MARGARET**

I'm not going anywhere.

**RICHARD**

You want a new phone? You're going.

**EXT. PIONEER BAR - DAY**

The Pioneer bar is a classic Alaskan bar, decorated with pictures of every fishing vessel that has made Sitka its home. But tonight estrogen rules, as all the patrons are women CHEERING for an oiled, toned, and BEARDED MAN in a tiny thong who gyrates to the beat of Prince's "Sexy Motherfucker." On stage with the dancer, Margaret tries to not look miserable in her NOVELTY

**BACHELORETTE PARTY WEDDING VEIL WITH DEVIL HORNS.**

**DEBBIE**

Work it Hank!

**GERTRUDE**

Is that a salmon down your pants?  
The room laughs as Hank works his crotch millimeters away from Margaret's face. Margaret remains straight faced.

**MARGARET**

Definitely not a salmon.  
The women encourage Hank on as he moves Margaret's hands to his wiggling ass and gives her a feel. She can't help but give an embarrassed smile. Finally, the song ends and Hank goes into the splits. Thrilled, the room gives him a standing ovation. Margaret plays along and gives Hank a kiss on the cheek. She begins to get off the stage, but Hank takes her by the hand.

45.

**HANK**

Ah, ah, ah. I was just the warm up.  
Hank sits Margaret down, and blindfolds her with a scarf.

**MARGARET**

What's going on?

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Just sit there dear.

**MC**

Don't be shy ladies, tip well and often,  
show Hank how much you appreciate his  
assets! And now... Ramone!  
The room goes silent as a middle aged RAMONE comes on to the stage. He has a pot belly, threadbare thong and a thin mustache. Ramone's dance has a Latin theme to it, and he's very good at it. Margaret is oblivious.

**MARGARET**

What's that smell?  
Margaret finally takes off her blindfold, and finds Ramone about an inch away from her face.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
(belly laugh)  
Ahhh!!!  
Margaret falls out of her chair and her scream frightens Ramone. After the initial scare he composes himself and wags his finger at her naughty behavior.

**RAMONE**

You are a naughty devil.  
Ramone goes to work another part of the stage, and when he turns, Margaret jumps off the stage and joins the ladies.

**MARGARET**

Good lord.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Ramone was the only male dancer on the island for years. No one has the heart to tell him to hang it up.

**MARGARET**

Want me to do it?

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Thank you dear, but let's keep it our secret.

46.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - SHORELINE - DAY**

Snow capped mountains watch 20 MEN in short sleeves hit golf balls into the ocean. Green pontoon rafts bob in the water, made up to look like golf greens. Golf balls are stacked in pyramid formations at every hitting area. Richard comes down from the house to join the group. Geoffrey jokes with MR. MAGUIRE (60's, good natured) as they hit balls.

**GEOFFREY**

...yeah, Debbie found these eco-balls that dissolve in the water.

**MAGUIRE**

How does she come up with this shit?

**GEOFFREY**

She just does. I stopped trying to figure out how. Geoffrey and Mr. Maguire see Richard coming their way. Mr. Maguire yells at Richard like the old family friend he is.

**MAGUIRE**

**(JOKING)**

I'm mad at you, son!

**RICHARD**

Why's that, Mr. Maguire?

**MAGUIRE**

You fly up here and don't call me?

**RICHARD**

Sorry 'bout that.

**MAGUIRE**

What good is me owning an airline if I can't give you free tickets?

**RICHARD**

You're right. Don't know what I was thinking...

**MAGUIRE**

Damn, straight. Don't let it happen again!  
(hands Richard a golf club)  
Here, you take over. This game is for pussies, I'm getting a drink.  
Mr. Maguire leaves, and Richard and Geoffrey are left alone with one another for the first time. Things are awkward between father and son, and Richard begins hitting balls to avoid conversation. Geoffrey finally makes small talk.

47.

**GEOFFREY**

Maguire's stepping down in January. He's, uh, handing things over to Matty. Richard gives his dad a look. He knows where this is going.

**RICHARD**

That's great for them.

**GEOFFREY**

So. How's work with you?

**RICHARD**

Good. Busy. You know.

**GEOFFREY**

I do. I do. Hey, did I tell you that we're opening a little office in Japan?

**RICHARD**

Congratulations.

**GEOFFREY**

We're not just a mom and pop operation anymore. We're going global.

**RICHARD**

Uh-huh. Geoffrey stops hitting golf balls for a second. He's been thinking about this moment for a long time.

**GEOFFREY**

I could really use your help.

**RICHARD**

Dad. Please. I'm in New York. Margaret's in New York. We have jobs.

**GEOFFREY**

I know. I know. It's just...

**RICHARD**

**(CHALLENGING)**

It's just what?

**GEOFFREY**

You're only a secretary. This pisses Richard off immediately.

**RICHARD**

Again with the secretary thing! I've told you, I'm an assistant!

48.

**GEOFFREY**

Just because you call yourself an "assistant" doesn't mean you're not really just a secretary.

**RICHARD**

Well if I'm "just a secretary", why would you want me up here anyway? Sounds like you're doing great without me.

**GEOFFREY**

It's not like that and you know it.

**RICHARD**

Then how is it? Explain it to me.  
Geoffrey looks around to see if anyone is listening.

**GEOFFREY**

Last week, a man stuck his finger up my  
butt...

**RICHARD**

This man was a doctor?

**GEOFFREY**

...and it got me thinking about you.

**RICHARD**

I'm not sure this is coming out right.

**GEOFFREY**

Just shut up for a second, okay? I want you  
to have what I built. But I'm running out  
of time to show you things.

**RICHARD**

Stop being so dramatic.

**GEOFFREY**

I'm not being...  
(takes a hard line)  
I need you to stop dicking around down there  
and get serious.

**RICHARD**

So this is all about what you want?

**GEOFFREY**

That's not what I said.

**RICHARD**

And me in New York with Margaret? That  
isn't serious?

49.

**GEOFFREY**

One day the woman is the Antichrist, and the  
next day she's the love of your life? How  
is that serious?

**RICHARD**

Things change, dad.

**GEOFFREY**

**(INDIGNANT)**

Things change?

**RICHARD**

Things change.

**GEOFFREY**

Things change?

**RICHARD**

Yes. Things change.

**GEOFFREY**

Things change. That's your explanation?  
Know what I think? I think you banged your  
boss and fell in love, that's what I think.  
Some sorta mommy complex.

**RICHARD**

Nice, dad. We gotta have these Cosby moments more often. This is great. Richard drops his club and walks back to the house.

**EXT. PIONEER BAR - DAY**

Margaret steps outside to have a moment to herself. She's on a patio overlooking the ocean. It is late, but the sun is hanging just over the horizon.

**GERTRUDE**

They can be a little overwhelming, but they're great people.

**MARGARET**

What? I'm just working on my tan.  
(off Gertrude's look)  
It's been a long day.  
Margaret looks inside and sees that the party is still raging.

**GERTRUDE**

Around the solstice they don't watch the clock. Pretty much party 'til they fall over.

**MARGARET**

50.

**GERTRUDE**

I actually missed it when I was in the states.

**MARGARET**

Chicago, right?

**GERTRUDE**

Yeah. Since college.

**MARGARET**

And now you're back?

**GERTRUDE**

Six months now. Call me crazy, but I love it. Think I'm back for good.

**MARGARET**

Really? I don't know. Don't you miss...

**GERTRUDE**

Neimans? Starbucks? Escalators?  
Margaret laughs. She likes this woman.  
GERTRUDE (cont'd)  
Yeah. I miss it. Believe me, growing up I never thought I'd end up divorced and back here teaching at my old elementary school. That was always Richard's plan.

**MARGARET**

For you to get divorced?

**GERTRUDE**

(smiles, remembering)  
No. I was going to teach, he was going to run his dad's business. He was like a little old man. Had it all worked out.

**MARGARET**

Are we talking about the same guy?

**GERTRUDE**

What do you mean?

**MARGARET**

Well, Richard's such a player.

Gertrude looks confused.

**MARGARET** (cont'd)

I mean he was a total player. Before we started dating. Six months ago.

**GERTRUDE**

51.

**MARGARET**

That surprises you?

**GERTRUDE**

Did he ever tell you why we broke up?

**MARGARET**

We don't really talk much about stuff like that.

**GERTRUDE**

Oh. Well I should shut up...

**MARGARET**

No, no. Please. I mean, we are getting married. I want to know these things. Gertrude looks down a little embarrassed.

**GERTRUDE**

He proposed to me. When we were seniors. Margaret laughs.

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry. I didn't mean to... He proposed to you in high school?

**GERTRUDE**

He bought this sweet little ring, and got down on his knee. It was so cute.

**MARGARET**

You must have...

**GERTRUDE**

... freaked out? Oh you bet. I broke up with him on the spot.

**MARGARET**

I would hope so.

**GERTRUDE**

After getting rejected the first time, I can't imagine how hard it was for him to get up the courage to ask you.

Margaret just smiles, feeling guilty about lying when Gertrude is being so honest with her.

**GERTRUDE** (cont'd)

Anyway. The idea that my little old man could be a player... It's just not the Richard I knew. Good thing you're making an honest man of him again.

52.

Gertrude toasts Margaret and knocks back the rest of her beer in one swig. She has a hard time finishing it off.

GERTRUDE (cont'd)

Well I'm empty. I'm going to go get another. I think I hear Ramone wrapping up, let's get back to the girls.

**MARGARET**

I'll be right in.

Margaret smiles and turns to the ocean. Gertrude goes inside.

Then, to herself, Margaret silently whispers.

MARGARET (cont'd)

We are awful people.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

THWACK! An axe slams down and splits a log in two. Hands quickly place another log down and THWACK! We pull back to find Richard playing the role of executioner. He's still mad after talking to his dad, and is taking it out on the firewood. Rage Against the Machine plays on his iPod and he's in his own world. Behind him, the girls return to the island on the family yacht. Their mood is light, and they chat amongst themselves. Debbie's mood deflates when she sees Richard.

**DEBBIE**

**(SHOUTING)**

Richard! Honey! Is everything OK?

With his back to the girls and the iPod on, Richard doesn't hear or see the girls.

Annie shakes her head. Something is up.

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE FAMILY ROOM - DAY**

Geoffrey pets Balzac as he watches SportsCenter on a sixty inch plasma television. The ladies arrive and Annie and Debbie step in front of the TV, blocking his view. Margaret watches from the door, not sure what is going on.

**GEOFFREY**

Excuse me? I'm watching that.

**ANNIE**

Why is Richard chopping wood?

**DEBBIE**

And don't play dumb. What did you do?

Geoffrey is uncomfortable answering in front of Margaret.

53.

**GEOFFREY**

Nothing. I didn't do anything... will you please move.

The showdown intensifies. Margaret excuses herself.

**MARGARET**

I am so tired.

Balzac GROWLS when he hears Margaret's voice. He's still mad.

Margaret just smiles.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Think I'm going to take a shower and clean off Ramone's bubble gum body oil. Thanks for a great night.

Annie and Debbie smile graciously and wish her good night. Once she's gone, they turn their death stare back to Geoffrey. He

looks genuinely unnerved.

**GEOFFREY**

Stop looking at me like that!

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

Richard continues to listen to his iPod, and has worked up quite a sweat. He stacks the last log, takes off his soaked through shirt, and gets a whiff of himself. Ew. He stinks.

**INT. MARGARET'S ROOM - DAY**

Margaret walks into the private bathroom attached to her room and shuts the door. We hear her turn on the shower.

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE FAMILY ROOM - DAY**

Geoffrey defends himself to Debbie and Annie with great conviction. Richard walks right by the fighting trio, but doesn't notice anyone. He continues to listen to his iPod and his attention is focused on the controls, as he looks for the playlist "Songs I Shouldn't Like" and Charlene's hit "I've Been to Paradise, But I Haven't Been to Me."

**INT. MARGARET'S ROOM - DAY**

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Margaret turns off the shower, pulls back the curtain and reaches for a towel. All she finds is a miniature unabsorbent decorative hand towel. Shit.

**IN THE BEDROOM**

Richard enters the room smiling as Charlene sings "...I've been undressed by kings and I've seen some things that a woman ain't

54.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Margaret's ears perk up. The bathroom is a disaster because she has dripped water everywhere looking for a towel.

**MARGARET**

Richard, is that you?

**IN THE BEDROOM**

Richard opens the armoire next to the bed and pulls out an incredibly absorbent Egyptian cotton towel.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Margaret cracks the door open to see what the sound was. Richard isn't there, but she sees the armoire open and the towels waiting for her. How did she miss that?

**MARGARET**

Richard, are you...  
Then out of nowhere, Balzac (he followed Richard in) startles Margaret.

**BALZAC**

Yap, yap, yap, yap, yap!  
Margaret slips on the wet floor and falls on her ass. Her foot kicks the door open as she retreats from the vengeful puppy.

**ON THE BEDROOM'S DECK**

Richard is oblivious as he hangs his wet clothes over a rail on the deck attached to the room. He makes sure that no one is in the yard, pulls down his shorts, and hangs them up as well.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Naked, wet, and starting to get a little pissed off, Margaret manages to pull herself up by the toilet. She wants a towel badly, but Balzac guards the doorway. She tries reason.

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry bout the eagle. But I saved you. Balzac won't listen to reason and barks angrily. Margaret grabs the ceramic top of the toilet tank to protect herself.

**ON THE BEDROOM DECK**

Richard calmly turns around and sees that the bathroom door is open. That's weird.

55.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Margaret holds the top of the toilet tank like a baseball bat, ready to strike. Balzac will not be intimidated, and continues to growl and not let her out of the bathroom. Margaret knows that she can't hit a dog, and looks for another way out. Then she spots the bathroom mat.

**IN THE BEDROOM**

Richard saunters towards the bathroom, wearing only his iPod.

**IN THE BATHROOM**

Balzac puts a paw onto the bath mat. Margaret slowly puts back the toilet top. Balzac gets to the center of the bath mat, and Margaret pulls hard, sliding the bath mat and Balzac to the back of the bathroom. With Balzac out of the way, she runs out, closes the door behind her and...

**IN THE BEDROOM**

WHAM! Margaret crashes into Richard and they fall to the floor. It takes a second for them to realize that they are holding each other buck naked.

**MARGARET**

Aaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Aaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The two quickly separate and spastically try to cover up. A rapid fire back and forth ensues.

**RICHARD**

**MARGARET**

Why are you naked?

**RICHARD**

Why are you wet?

**MARGARET**

Don't look at me!

**RICHARD**

You tackled me!

**MARGARET**

It was the dog!

dog again?

**RICHARD**

You're blaming the

**MARGARET**

Will you just hand me a towel!

Richard looks for a towel, but forgets he's naked. When he looks under the bed, Margaret shrieks and covers her eyes..

MARGARET (cont'd)

You're flashing brain!

Richard quickly changes positions. Out of desperation, he pulls the entire comforter off the bed. He throws it Margaret's way, and she wraps herself in it.

56.

MARGARET (cont'd)

You can cover up any time!

Richard cups the beans and franks and backs up to his clothes by the window.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Explain yourself!

**RICHARD**

I didn't know you were home! I was outside chopping wood!

**MARGARET**

You didn't hear me?

**RICHARD**

I had my iPod on!

**(CONFUSED)**

Why did you jump me?

Richard reaches his clothes and pulls on his shorts.

**MARGARET**

I didn't jump you.

(off Richard's look)

I didn't mean to jump you. I didn't know you were here.

**RICHARD**

You didn't see me?

**MARGARET**

I was running from the dog!

Richard looks at Margaret suspiciously.

**RICHARD**

Wait. Were you tryin' to seduce me?

**MARGARET**

Oh please! Don't flatter yourself.

**RICHARD**

Mmm-Hmmm.

**MARGARET**

Go take a shower. You stink.

**RICHARD**

Fine. But don't come sneaking in there.

You're still my boss. That'd be sexual harassment.

57.

Richard goes to the bathroom and shuts the door. Margaret takes a breath, but is startled when the door suddenly opens back up again. Richard has Balzac cradled in his arms and scratches his neck. He gently puts him outside their room.

RICHARD (cont'd)

There you go, buddy. Go on and play before she makes a coat out of you.

Richard shuts the door and goes into the bathroom. Without looking back, Richard gets the final shot.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Puppy hater.

**LATER**

Richard grabs all the pillows, cushions and blankets he can find to create himself makeshift bed on the floor.

Margaret turns out the lights, leaving the room still bright with the sun still shining outside. She gets into her bed.

**MARGARET**

I'm never gonna to get to sleep.  
Richard pushes a button and motorized metal blinds come down outside the window. The sunlight is instantly blocked out and the room is pitch black.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
Oh. Well. Thanks.  
Richard settles into his pathetic excuse for a bed. The two silently lie awake and stare at the dark ceiling.

**RICHARD**

It was kinda weird seeing you naked.

**MARGARET**

Can we not talk about this?

**RICHARD**

I'm just saying. It was weird.

**MARGARET**

It wasn't weird.

**RICHARD**

How was that not weird?

**MARGARET**

Because we're... like teammates.

**RICHARD**

We're like teammates?

58.

**MARGARET**

We are teammates. And teammates see each other naked in the locker room. All the time. It's not a big deal.

**RICHARD**

Well, if we're teammates can I sleep in the bed?

**MARGARET**

Good night, Richard.  
The two lay awake in silence for another beat.

**RICHARD**

Margaret?

**MARGARET**

Yes?

**RICHARD**

Don't take this the wrong way.

**MARGARET**

Okay...

**RICHARD**

You're a very beautiful woman.  
Margaret smiles with her head turned away from Richard.

**MARGARET**

Get some sleep Richard, big day tomorrow.

**INT. PAXTON ESTATE - OFFICE - DAY**

Not a creature is stirring, except for Geoffrey who creeps into his office. He shuts the door softly and goes to his gigantic oak desk. He finds a phone number with a New York City area code on a piece of paper. He dials.

**GEOFFREY**

Yes. Mr. Gilbertson? My name is Geoffrey Paxton...  
Only the animal trophies that adorn Geoffrey's office hear the rest of the conversation.

**INT. MARGARET'S ROOM - DAY**

Margaret wakes up. She looks over to Richard asleep on the floor with a blanket and a pillow. She stares maybe a beat too long, before there is a KNOCK on the door.

**MARGARET**

Who is it?

59.

**DEBBIE (O.S.)**

It's me dear. I made you two breakfast in bed. Can I come in?

**MARGARET**

**(STALLING)**

Uh, sure. Just a second.  
Margaret can't yell at Richard, so she throws a model wooden sailboat to wake him up. She hits him in the head.

**RICHARD**

What the...

**MARGARET**

**(MOUTHING)**

Your mother.  
Richard jumps up and replaces cushions and hides signs of his makeshift bed. He finishes quickly, hops in the bed, and puts his arm around Margaret.

**RICHARD**

Come on in mom!  
Debbie enters with a tray of pastries, fruit and coffee.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Ah mom, you made your cinnamon rolls.

**DEBBIE**

Well, it's your special day.  
Debbie smiles, puts down the tray on a bedside table and sits on the edge of the bed. She is buzzing with excitement.  
DEBBIE (cont'd)  
You two need your energy, so eat up. We've got your dress fitting, have to get the house ready, and then your wedding.

**RICHARD**

I gotta run into town to get Margaret a new phone.

**DEBBIE**

Will you pick up some champagne while you're there?

**RICHARD**

No problem.

**DEBBIE**

And don't be gone for too long. Lots of work to be done!

60.

**MARGARET**

You don't have to go to all this trouble.  
Really.  
Debbie sweetly looks back at Margaret.

**DEBBIE**

Don't be silly. This is the biggest day of  
your life. You are coming into this family,  
and when it's family, it's no trouble. If  
your parents were with us, they would do the  
exact same.  
Debbie leaves and Margaret smiles as the door closes. Richard  
jumps out of bed and goes to the food.

**MARGARET**

**(TOUCHED)**

Your mom is just so sweet. I haven't had  
someone make me breakfast in bed since I was  
a little kid.  
Richard takes a huge bite of cinnamon roll.

**RICHARD**

(mouth full)  
I wish she hadn't. I mean she almost caught  
us. Damn, that was close.  
Like a pig in shit, Richard continues to dig in and doesn't pay  
attention to Margaret.

**MARGARET**

You just take all this for granted? Your  
family, this house...  
Richard takes another big bite and turns to Margaret.

**RICHARD**

(mouth full)  
I'm sorry, what? You gotta try these.  
Margaret looks at Richard with disgust.

**MARGARET**

Why are you doing this to them?

**RICHARD**

Huh?

**MARGARET**

Why am I here? You didn't have to bring me  
here.

**RICHARD**

You made me bring you here! You told me I

61.

**MARGARET**

I didn't make you do anything. You could of  
said no.

**RICHARD**

And what? Start over at the bottom again?  
No way.

**MARGARET**

I get why a not rich person would do this.  
But you've got everything. It doesn't make  
any sense.

**RICHARD**

Know what? This is none of your business.

**MARGARET**

I wish it wasn't my business. But  
unfortunately, it has become my business,  
because I made a deal with someone I thought  
I could trust.  
Richard stares at Margaret for a beat. He's exasperated.

**RICHARD**

You wanna know why you're here? I'll show  
you why you're here.

**MARGARET**

Fine.

**RICHARD**

We leave in a half hour.

**MARGARET**

I'll be ready in 20 minutes.  
Margaret angrily takes a bite of a cinnamon roll and slams it  
down on the plate. She goes to her suitcase and looks for  
clothes. A beat passes, and she comes back to the rolls.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
These are really good.  
She takes a cinnamon roll and leaves.

**EXT. PAXTON DOCK - DAY**

Richard and Margaret board the yacht. They wear athletic clothes  
and running shoes.

**EXT. BOAT - DAY**

Richard drives the yacht and Margaret sits by herself.

62.

**EXT. PAXTON SEAFOODS PIER - DAY**

Richard docks the boat at the Paxton Seafood pier. Located in  
the town's harbor, the packing plant consists of three large  
warehouses, and buzzes with activity. Fishing boats line the  
pier, unload their fish, and forklifts take the fish to be  
processed. Everything is clean and organized.  
Richard and Margaret walk down the pier. He points to the SEALS  
that swim everywhere and eat fish scraps. Damn, they're cute.  
Richard waves hello to WORKERS. An elderly Phillipino man, BEK  
BEK, yells at them as he walks into a warehouse.

**BEK BEK**

Hey, Richard! That the lucky lady?

**RICHARD**

Yes sir, it is!

**BEK BEK**

(to Margaret)  
You look much younger than everyone says.

**MARGARET**

That's great to hear.

**RICHARD**

See ya on the line, Bek Bek.

**INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

Richard opens a locker and points. We don't see at what.

**RICHARD**

Put this on. I'll meet you outside.

**MARGARET**

But I don't...

**RICHARD**

Ah. Put it on.

**EXT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

Margaret opens the door with a sour look on her face. She's wearing large green hip waders with suspenders, rubber fishing boots, and gloves.

**MARGARET**

Is this really necessary?

**RICHARD**

You'll thank me later.

Richard walks towards the warehouse. Margaret follows in her

63.

**INT. SLIME LINE - DAY**

Inside one of the brightly lit warehouses, workers at different stations process the fish that come off the boats. At the top of the line, Bek Bek is HANDCUFFED to the head decapitator machine. He happily feeds whole salmon into a guillotine, where the heads are chopped off. He awkwardly waves when he sees Margaret and Richard.

**MARGARET**

Why is he handcuffed to the machine?

**RICHARD**

So his hands don't go too far. So he doesn't...

Richard makes a chopping motion. Margaret winces.

**MARGARET**

Nice.

From the decapitator, fish are fed into the gut puller, where their bellies are slit and the intestines are pulled out.

MARGARET (cont'd)

You know, I shouldn't be here. I was a vegetarian for six months in college.

Richard leads Margaret to the end of slime line, where a long line of 20 workers give the fish a final cleaning before they are frozen. With great speed, they take the fish from the gut puller line and clean out all the left over intestines.

**WORKER**

There he is! Big city boy come to show us how its done.

**RICHARD**

Ah, it's been a while.

**WORKER**

C'mon. Show her how we do it.

**RICHARD**

Okay, okay.

Richard and Margaret go to the end of the line. Richard expertly demonstrates with a knife.

RICHARD (cont'd)

You grab a fish, but be gentle, cause you don't want to bruise it. Open her up, tilt the knife, and then pull with the grain of the fish. Two quick stokes to clear the organs attached to the spine.

**64.**

Margaret looks nauseous. Richard enjoys her discomfort.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Then use the tip of the knife to squeeze the blood out of the vein. Then send her down the line.

Richard guts another fish with precision and speed before offering a knife to Margaret.

RICHARD (cont'd)

Wanna try it?

Margaret doesn't say anything. All the other workers watch.

RICHARD (cont'd)

If it's too gross for you...

**MARGARET**

Gimme that.

Up to the challenge, she takes the knife and grabs a fish.

Margaret puts the knife in and keeps as much distance as possible between her and the salmon.

**RICHARD**

I did this for five summers. Dad wanted me to earn my stripes before I took over.

**MARGARET**

Is that why you're still pissed at him?

**RICHARD**

Nah, I loved it here.

**MARGARET**

(re: fish guts)

You loved this?

**RICHARD**

The slime line? Hell no. Nobody loves the slime line. I loved this place. The people. Growing up, running this place was all I wanted.

Margaret scrapes a huge glop of guts out of a fish.

**MARGARET**

**(DISGUSTED)**

You wanted this?

**RICHARD**

I wanted to run this place. It was comfortable here. It was what I knew.

(re: fish)

Don't forget the spine.

**65.**

**MARGARET**

I wasn't gonna forget.  
Margaret squeezes the blood out of the vein, sends the fish on its way, and grabs another fish with more confidence.

**RICHARD**

But then things changed. And it wasn't so comfortable anymore.

**MARGARET**

What kind of things changed?

**RICHARD**

Stuff.

**MARGARET**

(as if she didn't know)  
You mean, like, Gertrude?

**RICHARD**

Yeah...  
Richard stops, he can tell Margaret knows something.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Oh my god. She told you didn't she?

**MARGARET**

**(INNOCENT)**

Told me what?  
Richard is embarrassed. He turns away.

**RICHARD**

About the... you know.

**MARGARET**

The creepy teenage proposal?

**RICHARD**

Ah, shit!

**MARGARET**

You were a freak by the way.

**RICHARD**

OK, get it all out.

**MARGARET**

And she was right to break up with you.

**RICHARD**

You done?  
Margaret nods yes.

**66.**

RICHARD (cont'd)  
I know now that it was the right thing, but it screwed me up for a little while.

**MARGARET**

For a little while? Don't sell yourself short.

**RICHARD**

When Gert crushed my heart into little pieces, a life up here didn't seem so great anymore.

**MARGARET**

So you moved to the open arms of New York City?

**RICHARD**

At first it was about getting as far away from this place as possible, but then I fell in love with it.

**MARGARET**

With scheduling my pilates?

**RICHARD**

With editing. See, as an only kid I'd always read a lot, but until I worked for you I didn't love it. I mean, when I realized that we could find the next Cuckoo's Nest, or Catch 22, or...

**MARGARET**

(with reverence)  
...To Kill a Mockingbird. It's all about To Kill a Mockingbird.

**RICHARD**

Exactly! We could find the next To Kill a Mockingbird. God damn, how great is that? Margaret smiles. She never knew that Richard had this kind of passion for the job.

RICHARD (cont'd)  
So when I tell my folks that I want to spend my life finding books? My dad goes ape shit.

your family...

you'll come crawling back to us... you're nothing without our help." I left that night and we didn't talk for a year. Haven't been back here since.

"How dare you forsake

**MARGARET**

So we're "getting married" so you can give daddy the finger?

67.

**RICHARD**

No.  
Margaret gives Richard a disbelieving look.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Sorta. OK, Yes. Coming back here with you... I get the promotion and I get to show off. You're editor in chief. You make a good prop.

**MARGARET**

(SMILING)

I guess that's a compliment.

**RICHARD**

So now you know I'm a petty asshole. Am I trustworthy again?

**MARGARET**

Oh yeah, we're good. By the way, you're more screwed up than I am, Paxton.

**RICHARD**

Yeah. Thanks.

**MARGARET**

One more question...

**RICHARD**

Yes, everyone at work thinks you're a

lesbian.

**MARGARET**

That wasn't my question.

**RICHARD**

I know. Just lashing out.  
Margaret smiles.

**MARGARET**

Can we stop gutting fish? I need my phone.

**INT. SITKA GENERAL STORE - DAY**

Richard and Margaret enter the well appointed general store, filled with food, booze and electronics. A mini Wal Mart.

**RICHARD**

Hey Ramone.

**RAMONE**

Hey Richard. Hola mi amo.  
Margaret recognizes Ramone, the male dancer from last night.

68.

**MARGARET**

**(EMBARRASSED)**

Hey.  
They walk a few steps, and before Margaret can say a word.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
You know him?

**RICHARD**

He was my shop teacher.

**MARGARET**

Of course he was. How many people are on  
this island?  
They start to fill their cart with cases of champagne.

**RICHARD**

Like eight thousand? Depends on the time of  
the year.

**MARGARET**

Feels smaller.  
With the cart full they head to the checkout.

**RICHARD**

(to Ramone)  
You got the phone I called about?

**RAMONE**

Charged up, ready to go, number changed.  
Ramone throws Richard a phone.

**RICHARD**

Thanks, Ramone.

**RAMONE**

No problem.  
Ramone gives Margaret a flirty wave. She awkwardly waves back.  
Richard pushes the cart out the front door and does not pay.  
Margaret is confused.

**EXT. SITKA GENERAL STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

Richard keeps pushing the cart, Margaret catches up.

**MARGARET**

Why's Ramone letting you steal his stuff?

**RICHARD**

It's our stuff.

**69.**

Richard points to the "Paxton General Store" sign.

**MARGARET**

That must have been handy in High School.

**RICHARD**

You have no idea.

**MARGARET**

Should you leave the cart?

**RICHARD**

It's our cart. I didn't know you were such a prude.

**MARGARET**

I've come to realize that being my assistant gave you more access to my life than I ever imagined, but there are a few things you don't know about me.

**RICHARD**

I doubt it. When I started, you were still wearing those Ugg boot things.

**MARGARET**

(deadly serious)  
I told you never to talk about that.

**RICHARD**

I'm just saying it's been a long time. I know it all.  
Margaret turns on her new phone. It searches for a signal.

**MARGARET**

(up to the challenge)  
Did you know I took disco lessons in the sixth grade?

**RICHARD**

Where?

**MARGARET**

The Y.

**RICHARD**

Margaret 1, Richard 0.

**MARGARET**

Uh, my first concert was Kool and the Gang.

**RICHARD**

At Woodstock?

**70.**

**MARGARET**

I won tickets on the radio and saw them at the fair.

**RICHARD**

What'd they sing again?

**MARGARET**

You know.

**(SINGING)**

Cherish the love we have, we should cherish the life we live...

Richard shakes his head.

MARGARET (cont'd)

Well they were good.

**RICHARD**

You had a lot of soul there, Canada.

**MARGARET**

I really like "The O.C.". Not fake, ha, ha isn't it funny I like this trash. I really like it.

**RICHARD**

Wow. I'm getting shut out here.

**MARGARET**

Allergic to pine nuts.

**RICHARD**

Knew that.

**MARGARET**

Afraid of penguins.

**RICHARD**

Huh.

**MARGARET**

Haven't slept with a man in a year and a half.

**RICHARD**

Holy shit! You are a lesbian!

A MOTHER walking by with her 7 year old gives Richard a nasty look.

RICHARD (cont'd)

(to mother)

My bad.

The mother walks on. Margaret is mortified and walks faster.

71.

**MARGARET**

Kool and the Gang gets nothing, but that gets a Holy shit? I've been busy!

**RICHARD**

That's a really long time.

**MARGARET**

That hurts coming from Mr. Magic Pants.

**RICHARD**

I knew it had been slow going, but I figured there was a booty call in there somewhere.

**MARGARET**

Yeah, well, I'm not good at that.

**RICHARD**

I find that hard to believe.

**MARGARET**

No, not that. I'm great at that. Aces.  
Top notch.

**RICHARD**

I'll have to take your word for it.

**MARGARET**

Yes. You will.

**RICHARD**

How, exactly, do you define top notch?  
Margaret is smiling as she listens to a message on her phone. In  
an instant, she's all business.

**MARGARET**

I need a computer and the internet. Now.

**INT. FISHERMAN'S NET INTERNET CAFE - DAY**

Designed to attract tourists, the Fisherman's Net is awash in bad  
nautical props and fishing gear. A bored TEENAGE CLERK in a  
PIRATE OUTFIT greets Margaret and Richard.

**PIRATE**

Aye lassie, welcome to the cyber seas. Our  
T-1 line is faster than a clipper ship in a  
hurricane, but for now ye be needing to  
scrawl your mark on this sign up sheet.  
Margaret looks and sees that all the computers are taken.

72.

**MARGARET**

No, no, no. I need on now. I've got a  
Booker prize winning author demanding I send  
him an e-mail in the next forty five minutes  
explaining why he should stay with a  
publishing house that "makes" him do  
publicity.  
The Pirate looks at Margaret like she's speaking Chinese.

**PIRATE**

Arrgh...

**MARGARET**

Listen to me asshole...  
The Pirate looks around to make sure his boss can't hear.

**PIRATE**

Look lady. You gonna put your name down on  
the list or not?  
Margaret is about to throttle the Pirate, when Richard pulls her  
back.

**RICHARD**

C'mon. I got an idea.  
Richard leads Margaret to the door. As they are leaving Margaret  
shouts out.

**MARGARET**

I didn't know there were a lot of pirates in  
Alaska!

**INT. BARANOFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY**

Margaret sits at a computer, furiously opening her e-mail.

Richard has brought her to his elementary school, where he and his old principal, MRS. WHITING, stand over Margaret.

**MRS. WHITING**

I'm so excited about the wedding!

**RICHARD**

Thanks for letting us use your computer.

**MRS. WHITING**

No problem.

(to Margaret)

So what flowers are you going with?

Margaret turns around annoyed, but manages to keep her cool.

**MARGARET**

I'm sorry, but could I have a minute alone

73.

**MRS. WHITING**

Oh. Sure.

**RICHARD**

Show me around will you Mrs. Whiting? It's been years.

**INT. BARANOFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALL - DAY**

Richard and Mrs. Whiting walk around the elementary school.

**MRS. WHITING**

Do you think she'll be long? I've got work to do.

**RICHARD**

She'll be out of there in two shakes.

Out of the corner of his eye, Richard catches Gertrude teaching a class of second graders. He stops transfixed.

**MRS. WHITING**

(re: Gertrude)

We are so lucky to have her. Mr. Megher really left us shorthanded when he ran off in the middle of the school year. He's living out in the forest now with his wolves. Full time.

Richard hasn't heard anything that Mrs. Whiting has said. He's hypnotized by Gertrude. She looks happy teaching these kids, and they hang on her every word.

**MRS. WHITING (cont'd)**

Will you excuse me? The bell is about to ring, I need to get ready for recess.

**RICHARD**

(not paying attention)

Uh, sure.

Mrs. Whiting leaves. Richard goes to the door and Gertrude sees him. Good lord can that woman smile. She waves him in.

**INSIDE THE CLASSROOM**

The kids all turn to see Richard when he opens the door.

**GERTRUDE**

Class, this is my old friend Richard.

**CLASS**

(all together)

Hi Richard!

74.

**GERTRUDE**

Richard and I used to be in this very same classroom together. We even had your old teacher, Mr. Megher.

**CHILD #1**

Mr. Megher smelled like farty eggs!  
The class giggles.

**GERTRUDE**

That's not a nice thing to say, Patrick.  
The BELL RINGS. One girl gets up. Gertrude eyeballs her.  
GERTRUDE (cont'd)  
Marcia?

**CHILD #2**

Sorry.  
The child sits back down. Gertrude waits a beat.

**GERTRUDE**

OK, everyone is excused for recess.  
All the kids pop up and head to the door. Mrs. Whiting directs traffic outside. Richard makes his way to Gertrude.

**RICHARD**

Patrick's right. He did smell like eggs.

**GERTRUDE**

It's still not a nice thing to say. And actually, Mr. Megher smelled like wet dog and...  
(makes smoking pot motion)  
...Matanuska Thunderfuck. But let's keep that between us.

**INT. BARANOFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - OFFICE - DAY**

Margaret reads over her e-mail to Frank.

**MARGARET**

**(READING)**

I give you my word as an editor and a friend...  
The door opens suddenly, and Margaret SHOUTS.  
MARGARET (cont'd)

**(STERN)**

Five more minutes! Please!

75.

Margaret turns to find a PIG TAILED GIRL in the doorway. Terrified. She SHRIEKS and runs off. Margaret wants to apologize, but needs to keep working.  
MARGARET (cont'd)

**(WEAKLY)**

Sorry.

**INT. BARANOFF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY**

Gertrude and Richard wipe down the chalk boards together. They

are very comfortable together and have an easy rapport.

**RICHARD**

Remember when Mr. Megher made us do this after school for a week?

**GERTRUDE**

That was your fault.

**RICHARD**

Was not!

**GERTRUDE**

You tried to kiss me. A girl has to defend herself.

**RICHARD**

C'mon!

(Tom Cruise ala Top Gun)

I had the shot. I took it.

Gertrude rolls her eyes. She's heard this a hundred times.

**GERTRUDE**

No Top Gun. Please.

**RICHARD**

What? You loved my Top Gun.

**GERTRUDE**

No. You loved your Top Gun. I just smiled and laughed like a good girlfriend.

**RICHARD**

That's right. Ice... man. I am dangerous.

Richard clicks his teeth together, trying to mimic Tom Cruise.

Gertrude is not impressed.

**GERTRUDE**

**(LAUGHING)**

Really. Stop.

**RICHARD**

That cuts deep. I'll have you know that

**76.**

Talk of Margaret immediately shuts Gertrude down.

**RICHARD (cont'd)**

(noticing her change in mood)

Uh, is something wrong?

**GERTRUDE**

No. Nothing's wrong.

**RICHARD**

It's been awhile, but I can still tell when something's wrong with you.

Gertrude doesn't want to say anything.

**RICHARD (cont'd)**

What is it? You know I hate it when you get all quiet.

**GERTRUDE**

I wish there was a better way to say this.

**RICHARD**

Better way to say what?

**GERTRUDE**

I made a huge mistake. With you. Breaking up with you. I'm sorry.

**RICHARD**

Are you apologizing for high school?

**GERTRUDE**

Yes.

**RICHARD**

Oh, thank God. I thought this was like, something big.

**GERTRUDE**

This is something big.

**RICHARD**

I coulda used this about five years ago, but I'm all good now, promise. Thank you for saying that, though. Gertrude sees that Richard isn't getting her point. She pulls herself together.

**GERTRUDE**

I think...  
(looking down)  
I want you back.

**RICHARD**

77.

**GERTRUDE**

(more to herself)  
Oh God, he's making me say it again.  
(looking at Richard)  
I want you back. Like... we should be together. All the time.

**RICHARD**

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Rewind.

**GERTRUDE**

I know this isn't the best time to bring this up.

**RICHARD**

**(RHETORICAL)**

My wedding day isn't the best time for you to bring up the idea of us dating? Richard's reaction stings, and Gertrude begins to well up. Bringing this up is very hard for her.

**GERTRUDE**

I'm not talking about dating! You should move back here. We can have the life you always talked about in High School. I'm ready for that now.

**RICHARD**

Why are you doing this?

**GERTRUDE**

I know that the timing here sucks. But we are meant to be together. I know it. I think you know it too...

**RICHARD**

No, I don't. I don't know it. Richard begins to pace. Not sure what to say. Every time he opens his mouth, he can't find the words. Then, from the door, an interruption.

**MARGARET**

Hey guys.  
Holy shit. Did Margaret hear anything? Her face gives nothing away. Gertrude and Richard act like nothing just happened, but look guilty as hell.

**GERTRUDE**

Oh. Hey Margaret.

**RICHARD**

Uh, you all done?

**78.**

**MARGARET**

Yeah. We'll see what he says.

**RICHARD**

Great. Great.

**MARGARET**

You ready to get back to the house?

**RICHARD**

Uh. Yeah. Uh-huh.

**MARGARET**

Well let's go. See you at the wedding,  
Gertrude.  
Gertrude just smiles.

**GERTRUDE**

Yeah. See you at the wedding.

**EXT. PAXTON DOCK - DAY**

Richard and Margaret unload champagne. Richard is still thinking about Gertrude and wanting to be alone.

**MARGARET**

So, what did you and Gertrude talk about?  
Richard lies.

**RICHARD**

Nothing. About her school. The kids and stuff. Apparently my second grade teacher was a pot head.

**MARGARET**

That was it? I was gone for awhile...

**RICHARD**

(cuts her off)  
Yeah. That was it. You know, I can do this. You should really go try on the dress for my mom.

**MARGARET**

I was going to go for a run first, it's been three days since I got out, I'm feeling crazy.

**RICHARD**

(could care less)  
Whatever.  
Margaret isn't accustomed to Richard talking to her this way, but doesn't push it.

79.

**EXT. PAXTON TRAIL - DAY**

Margaret runs at a fast pace deep in the woods. She's running hard, muttering to herself, and working out the aggression she's accumulated over the last thirty six hours. She's lost in her own world, until she sees smoke, and slows to a stop.

**MARGARET**

What now?

Margaret follows the smoke, and hears a mysterious DRUMBEAT. She soon discovers a tremendous bonfire by the water, and a SHAMAN dancing around it. He is dressed in a loin cloth, and wears a carved bear's head mask and tribal make up. His belly shakes as he spastically moves around the fire. The Shaman sings a song that sounds centuries old.

**SHAMAN**

Yai...takuju magaluam Ut uksu lingm ik  
pifiksailiriju m lk tuakjuk qangani  
takujumagaluam Ut qangalan uarm.

Margaret hides behind a tree and stares at this man in a trance. He begins to yell at the fire and scream at the top of his lungs. Exhausted, he stops and catches his breath. He yells out again.

SHAMAN (cont'd)

Margaret, welcome!

She looks around. Maybe another Margaret is in the vicinity.

SHAMAN (cont'd)

Come to me, Margaret of New York.

Nope, that's her. She carefully steps out into the clearing.

SHAMAN (cont'd)

It is I, father Paxton.

Sure enough, Geoffrey is beneath all the make-up.

**MARGARET**

What, ah, are you doing?

**GEOFFREY**

My shaman Kevin told me to get out here and clear my head. As you know, things have been a little crazy around here. You should join me.

**MARGARET**

Ya know, I've got to get back.

**GEOFFREY**

You closed minded southerners amuse me.  
Never willing to leave the nest and try

80.

**MARGARET**

I'm a big fan of the nest.

Geoffrey throws sand into the fire and it blazes higher.

**GEOFFREY**

Dance with me! You besmirch my ways if you deny my circle.

Worried she's going to really piss him off, Margaret relents.

**MARGARET**

OK, OK. I "accept your circle."

Geoffrey smiles and throws more sand into the fire.

**GEOFFREY**

Clear your mind and follow me.  
Geoffrey begins dancing slowly, contorting his body. Margaret follows, always a half step behind, and can't get into it. After a few moments, Margaret stops.

**MARGARET**

I'm gonna head back.

**GEOFFREY**

We're not done.

**MARGARET**

I think I am.  
Margaret begins to leave. Geoffrey calls after her.

**GEOFFREY**

Margaret?  
Margaret stops and turns around.  
GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
I'm sorry we got off on the wrong foot. But  
I'm making an effort here. Don't leave now.  
Much to her chagrin, Margaret stays. Geoffrey is pleased.  
GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
Thank you.  
(switching gears)  
Yai...takuju magaluum Ut uksu lingm ik  
pifiksailiriju m lk...  
Geoffrey throws more sand on the fire to make it go higher and speeds up the dance. Margaret is getting better, but it is still painfully awkward.

**81.**

GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
...tuakjuk qangani takujumagaluum Ut  
qangan uarm.  
Geoffrey speeds up the dance.  
GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
Now you.

**MARGARET**

Me what?

**GEOFFREY**

Chant.

**MARGARET**

Chant what?

**GEOFFREY**

Whatever comes out, just chant. It is the way. You'll feel better.

**MARGARET**

I can't...

**GEOFFREY**

Close your eyes. Chant.  
Margaret and Geoffrey keep dancing. Margaret closes her eyes, but can't figure out what to say.  
GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
Chant!

**MARGARET**

I don't know any chants!

**GEOFFREY**

Chant!

**MARGARET**

**(GUTTERAL)**

Tooo...  
Looking at Margaret, it's surprising she can make such a low  
noise.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
...ooo...

**GEOFFREY**

Chant!  
The drum beat continues.

**MARGARET**

**82.**

They continue to dance, Margaret is getting into it.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
...to the wall...  
More sand. More fire.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
...to sweat drop down my balls...  
Geoffrey stops dancing. What did she say?  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
...to all these bitches crawl...  
Margaret's eyes are closed, she doesn't realize that she's broken  
out into a 'Lil John song. She continues to dance.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
...To all skee skee motherfucker...  
Geoffrey takes the bear head mask off.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
...all skee skee got damn...  
From the trees, the moment is broken when Debbie shouts out.

**DEBBIE**

Geoffrey!  
Margaret stops chanting 'Lil John.

**GEOFFREY**

Oh Debbie, I didn't do anything.  
Margaret sees Debbie and Grandma Annie in the clearing.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Is she singing about balls?

**MARGARET**

He told me I had to chant!

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Oh, you poor dear. Geoffrey, you can't do  
this!  
(to Margaret)  
He's an eighth Tlingit, dear.

**DEBBIE**

He does this to keep in touch with "his  
people".

**83.**

**GEOFFREY**

Don't make fun of my heritage! And it was  
helping. Don't you feel better? I feel  
better.

**DEBBIE**

Come on sweetie, we need to get you cleaned up. You've got a dress to try on. And Geoffrey, put that fire out and come in and help us with this wedding. Geoffrey turns off the boom box that was hidden in the trees and the drum beat stops.

**GEOFFREY**

Fine.  
With a fire extinguisher, the bonfire comes to an end.

**INT. PAXTON MASTER BEDROOM - DAY**

Debbie and Annie wait outside a bathroom door in a massive master bedroom. They talk to Margaret through the door.

**DEBBIE**

I am so excited. Aren't you excited?

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

This was my dress from 1929. My mother made it by hand. Amazing how things come back into style. How does it fit?  
Margaret speaks through the door.

**MARGARET (O.S.)**

Just buttoning up here.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Drum roll!  
Grandma and Debbie enthusiastically make drum roll sounds. Margaret opens the door and smiles. She's unsure of herself, but looks fantastic. The dress fits great, except...  
GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)  
Your boobs are bigger than mine ever were.

**MARGARET**

Yeah, it's a little snug.

**DEBBIE**

Come over here.  
Debbie leads Margaret to a mirror. Grandma Annie follows.

84.

**MARGARET**

**(ADMITTING)**

It's a lovely dress.  
Debbie looks at Margaret, and spontaneously begins crying.

**DEBBIE**

(through the tears)  
You're so beautiful, and such a great match for my Richard. I know I've just met you, but a mother can tell. When he looks at you, I can tell he's in love. I'm so happy I get to share your day.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Debbie, please. We've got work to do.

**DEBBIE**

You're right.  
Debbie collects herself, then starts crying again.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

You go work downstairs, I'll finish this.  
Debbie tries to calm down, but can't.  
GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

Go!

Debbie nods in agreement. Smiling from ear to ear, she leaves in tears. Margaret and Annie watch her go.

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

Had to get rid of her before I gave you this. Don't think she woulda recovered.

Grandma Annie comes from behind and puts her arms around Margaret's neck. When she is done, a stunning blue necklace lays on Margaret's neck.

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

You needed something blue. It's silly, but I didn't want to take any chances.

**MARGARET**

It's beautiful.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

It's hematite. Alaska diamonds. The blue ones like this are very rare. My great grandfather gave it to my great grandmother when they were married. They were quite a scandal, you know. He was Russian and she was Tlingit.

**(MORE)**

85.

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

Back then, you had to get approval from every person in the tribe before you got married. It almost broke them up.

**MARGARET**

How'd they stay together?

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Don't know. But I'm sure happy they did, none of us would be here if they hadn't. Grandma and Margaret admire the necklace in the mirror.

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

I want you to have it.

This is awful news for Margaret. She might as well be stealing from Annie.

**MARGARET**

No, no, no. I can't. Really.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

I don't want to hear it. It's yours. Grandmothers like to give their stuff away to their grandchildren. Makes us feel like we'll always be a part of your life, even after we're gone. Take it. Margaret puts her hand to the necklace, and for the first time feels like a complete and total fraud.

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

Are you feeling all right, dear?

Margaret doesn't speak. Annie patiently waits for her reply.

**MARGARET**

Well. Thing is...

Margaret deliberates spilling her guts to Annie, but can't.

MARGARET (cont'd)

...the dress is just a little tight.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Oh, don't worry about that. We've got these seams by the arm, this'll be easy.

Annie marks up the dress with tailor's chalk.

GRANDMA ANNIE (cont'd)

We can fix this no problem.

Margaret smiles, but knows that Annie couldn't be more wrong.

86.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

Richard helps WORKERS build a stage for the band. He's still in a foul mood when Margaret interrupts in a panic.

**MARGARET**  
We need to talk.

**RICHARD**  
I'm a little busy.

**MARGARET**  
Well I'm freaking out. I need to get away from here. From everyone. Now.

**RICHARD**  
Go for another run.

**MARGARET**  
No! I did that. It did not help.

**RICHARD**  
I'm a little tired of you making demands and me just jumping...

**MARGARET**  
(re: wedding stuff)  
We're not going to need any of this if I don't get out of here.

**RICHARD**  
OK, high maintenance. Let's go.

**EXT. PAXTON SPEED BOAT - DAY**

Unlike the bulky yacht, this boat is built for speed and maneuverability. Richard starts her up.

**MARGARET**  
Move over, I'm driving.  
Margaret cuts in front of Richard and grabs the wheel.

**RICHARD**  
You don't know where we're going.  
Margaret opens up the throttle and they are off.

**MARGARET**  
It doesn't matter.

**ON THE OPEN OCEAN**

Margaret and Richard leave everyone behind and take off for the horizon.

87.

As they jet up the coast away from civilization, the green trees, blue water and wildlife (bears, puffins, moose) that inhabit the coastline have a calming effect on both of them. In Alaska, it doesn't take long to leave humanity behind. Eventually, the boat travels through a channel with steep

mountain walls on either side. Although it is still warm out, an icy beach can be seen straight ahead.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
Where are we?

**RICHARD**

The north pole. Congratulations, we made it.  
(off Margaret's look)  
It's a glacier. Tracy's Arm. You better let me take it from here.

**MARGARET**

I'm fine.

**RICHARD**

Oh. OK. So like me, you've navigated a lot of glacier fields? And not died?  
Margaret reluctantly moves aside and lets Richard steer.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Lady, you've got issues.

**MARGARET**

Yeah. I'm a control freak. Fine.

**RICHARD**

It doesn't stop there.

**MARGARET**

This coming from the sociopath.

**RICHARD**

Oh, please.

**MARGARET**

I'd never bring me here.

**RICHARD**

You drove!

**MARGARET**

I mean to Alaska.

**RICHARD**

Are you kidding me?  
Richard pulls next to the glacier and turns off the engine.

88.

**MARGARET**

You're sick. Doing this to them.

**RICHARD**

I explained to you...

**MARGARET**

They love you. Do you get that?

**RICHARD**

Of course.

**MARGARET**

And you're still willing to lie to them?

**RICHARD**

Like you didn't know.

**MARGARET**

Didn't know what?

**RICHARD**

That we were going to lie to them.

**MARGARET**  
I didn't know!

**RICHARD**  
Well that makes you either stupid, or ignorant.

**MARGARET**  
You think I'm stupid?

**RICHARD**  
No, but what's behind door number two...

**MARGARET**  
  
(SCREAMS)  
I forgot! OK? I forgot!

**RICHARD**  
Forgot what?

**MARGARET**  
What it was like!

**RICHARD**  
What what was like?

**MARGARET**  
To have a family! I forgot what it was like to have a family. I've been on my own since I was thirteen, and I'd forgot what it was like to have people that love you, and make you breakfast, and give you necklaces...

**89.**  
Suddenly, Margaret has a hard time speaking and is short of breath. She goes to the side of the speed boat.  
**MARGARET** (cont'd)  
I'm going to take a walk.

**RICHARD**  
We need to head back...

**MARGARET**  
Alone. I need alone time.

**RICHARD**  
What?  
Margaret looks at Richard with a scared and confused look.

**MARGARET**  
I'm, uh, about to lose my shit. Big time.  
I need a second.

**RICHARD**  
But...

**MARGARET**  
  
(PANICKED)  
Stop right there!  
Richard puts up his hands in surrender and stays put.  
**MARGARET** (cont'd)  
I'm going to be over there. Away from you.  
Just sit down, turn around, and act like you're not here.  
Richard goes to speak, but Margaret motions for him to sit down and turn around. He does. Margaret gets off the boat and walks away from him on the glacier.

**ON THE GLACIER**

Margaret tries diaphragmatic breathing to calm down.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
(manic, to herself)  
You can do this. Couple more hours, and  
then you'll never see these people again.  
Eventually you'll write a letter.  
Apologize. Send the necklace back.

**RICHARD**

(from the boat)  
Margaret!

**MARGARET**

No talking!

90.

**RICHARD**

(from the boat)  
Watch your step, OK? It can be dangerous.

**MARGARET**

Again, you're not supposed to be...  
Margaret doesn't finish her sentence.

**ON THE BOAT**

Richard sits with his back turned to Margaret, waiting for her  
reply. He doesn't hear anything. That's weird.

**RICHARD**

(back still turned)  
Margaret?  
Richard turns around and looks for Margaret. He doesn't see her.  
He gets out of the boat and goes onto the glacier, walking in the  
direction he last saw Margaret.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
Margaret? I know I'm breaking "the rules"  
here, but where are you?  
He takes one more step before he hears...

**MARGARET (O.S.)**

**(YELLING)**

Richard!!!!!!! Help!!!!!!!  
Richard still can't see her, but runs in the direction of her  
voice. He soon rounds a mound of ice and sees that --  
Margaret's been swallowed by the ice. Her upper torso sticks out  
of the glacier, held up by her arms. Her eyes are wide, and  
she's almost hyperventilating. It's a bizarre sight.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
Oh, thank God!  
Richard tries to control himself, but BURSTS OUT LAUGHING.  
Margaret is really scared.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
Wh-, wh-, why are you laughing?

**RICHARD**

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Just relax. I'll  
get you out of there. You've broken through  
an ice bridge. It happens all the time. No  
biggie.

**MARGARET**

Don't do that.

91.

**RICHARD**

Don't do what?

**MARGARET**

The thing that doctors do in E.R. when they tell the gunshot victim who is bleeding to death that they're going to be OK. Don't do that!

**RICHARD**

It's not like that. Really. We do need to be careful here though, I don't want us both to fall in. Stay still, OK?

**MARGARET**

Uh-huh.  
Richard is ten feet away from Margaret now. He's checking the ice to see if it is stable. He slowly walks her way.

**RICHARD**

So, I'm going to walk up to you and very slowly pull you out. OK?

**MARGARET**

I'm really cold.

**RICHARD**

Yeah, that's normal when you're surrounded by ice.

**MARGARET**

(makes sense)

**OK.**

Richard stands over a stuck Margaret, whose head just comes up to his knee. He calmly looks down on her.

**RICHARD**

So I'm going to pull you up by your armpits. I'm probably going to touch boob. But don't freak out.  
Margaret shakes her head yes. Richard reaches down and slowly lifts her out of the ice. Margaret doesn't say a word.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
When I get you all the way out, I need you to hold onto me. I'm going to carry you over there.  
Margaret nods yes as she puts her arms around Richard. He's strong, so it isn't difficult for him to slowly carry her "over the threshold" style, away from the hole in the ice. He speaks once they're safe.

92.

**RICHARD (cont'd)**

I've, uh, never done that before.

**MARGARET**

You said it was "no biggie".

**RICHARD**

Yeah. Well. You OK?

**MARGARET**

Yeah. I'm fine.  
Richard smiles. Margaret smiles back.

Richard walks very comfortably with her in his arms. She fits just right. Margaret looks up to Richard gratefully.  
MARGARET (cont'd)

**(SMILING)**

You shouldn't of laughed at me.

**RICHARD**

You woulda laughed at me.

**MARGARET**

Yeah. While I was getting my camera. The two stare at each other for a beat. There's a real spark. They might kiss.

**RICHARD**

Gertrude wants me back. Whoah. Not what she was expecting. She looks down.

**MARGARET**

And?

**RICHARD**

Well. It seemed like you were having... second thoughts.

**MARGARET**

Yeah. I was.

**RICHARD**

Maybe we should do it. Come clean.

**MARGARET**

Put me down. Richard puts Margaret down near the boat. She tries to regain her composure.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
You wanna call it off?

93.

**RICHARD**

If you do.

**MARGARET**

Fine. It's over. We'll tell them when we get back.

**ON THE BOAT**

Margaret sits hunched over with a blanket wrapped around her. Richard drives the boat. They don't talk.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

Richard and Margaret walk towards the house, which looms above them as they prepare to deliver the news that they aren't getting married. The front door opens, and Geoffrey comes outside in a hurry. He's clearly been waiting.

**GEOFFREY**

Come with me.

**RICHARD**

Where's mom, dad? We all need to talk.

**GEOFFREY**

Not now. C'mon. Richard and Margaret look at each other, not sure what to do. Geoffrey storms off and they follow.

**EXT. PAXTON GUESTHOUSE - DAY**

Richard, Margaret and Geoffrey arrive at the door to the guesthouse. Geoffrey stops before they go in.

**GEOFFREY**

(to Richard)  
I haven't told your mother about any of this, and I don't plan to.  
(to Margaret)  
I was really beginning to like you. Sorry about this.  
Geoffrey opens the door and goes inside.

**INSIDE THE GUESTHOUSE**

The guesthouse has been converted into a squash court. In the middle of the court, a man patiently sits on a metal folding chair. It's Gilbertson. He smiles.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Hey there kids. Good to see ya!

94.

**RICHARD**

(to Dad)  
What did you do?  
Geoffrey doesn't answer. He's not proud of himself.  
RICHARD (cont'd)  
(getting angry)  
What did you do, dad?!

**GEOFFREY**

I called him yesterday. He told me that you were lying, and that he was going to catch you. That he was going to send you to prison.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

(to Richard)  
We made a deal and dad here flew me up. Now you tell the truth, and get off scott free. It's like it never happened for you.

**RICHARD**

You made a deal with him? On my behalf?

**GEOFFREY**

You were making a mistake...

**RICHARD**

That's none of your business.

**MARGARET**

It's fine.

**RICHARD**

The hell it is. It is not fine!

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Oh quack, quack, quack. Just tell me what really happened, and I'll be on my way. No one gets hurt, we all get what we want. Margaret takes Richard's hand.

**MARGARET**

It's OK. Tell him.

**RICHARD**

(to Geoffrey)  
You do not get to make this decision. This is my decision.

(to Gilbertson)  
The truth is... I've been working for Margaret for three years. Six months ago we started dating. I recently asked her to marry me, and she said yes. See you both at

95.

**GEOFFREY**  
What are you doing, Richard?

**RICHARD**  
(grabs Margaret's hand)  
Come on, we gotta get ready.  
Margaret and Richard storm out of the squash court.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

The couple walks briskly to the house.

**RICHARD**  
What was I thinking? They act like they're nice, but really, they're evil.

**MARGARET**  
He's only doing it because he loves you.

**RICHARD**  
Are you defending him? Are you defending the king dick?

**MARGARET**  
Just stop. Think about this.

**RICHARD**  
Oh, I've thought about it. And know what I think? I think you saved my life. Thank you, Margaret. Getting married to you is the best thing that's ever happened to me. Without this, I might've ended up back here. Up at the house, Debbie opens the door.

**DEBBIE**  
There you are! You two almost gave me a heart attack. C'mon, get dressed!

**RICHARD**  
Coming mom!  
(to Margaret)  
Time to sack up.  
Richard winks and goes inside. Margaret follows, not sure.

**THE WEDDING MONTAGE**

-- Chairs are set up outside.  
-- Guests arrive via boat.  
-- Richard stands on the deck, wearing his tuxedo. Gertrude arrives for the wedding, and they lock eyes. Richard waves hello and mouths "Sorry." He goes back inside.

96.

-- Geoffrey sits in his bedroom and watches TV. He's not dressed for the wedding yet. Debbie shakes her head at him in the mirror as she puts on her ear rings.

-- Gilbertson eats every hors d'oeuvre that's offered to him.

**INT. MARGARET'S ROOM - DAY**

Grandma knocks on the door and comes inside. We see Margaret from head to toe. The dress, veil and flowers look amazing.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

If I were one to brag, I'd say that dress is perfect.

**MARGARET**

Matches the shoes.  
Margaret pulls up the dress to reveal running sneakers.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Those'll be your best friend. Wedding shoes stink. You ready?

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

With the ocean in the background, 200 GUESTS sit in white chairs. Richard stands under a gazebo, and smiles at his mother in the front row. He ignores Geoffrey. Gertrude sits nearby, next to Gilbertson. From the gazebo, Richard nods at a GROUP OF CELLO PLAYERS, who begin playing from downloaded sheet music that reads "Kool and the Gang, Cherish". Heads turn with the start of the music, to see Annie walk Margaret down the aisle. When Margaret recognizes the song, she smiles.

**MARGARET**

(mouthing to Richard)  
Nice song.  
Richard shrugs his shoulders.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

Is that your song, dear?

**MARGARET**

I guess so.  
Margaret and Annie stop at the end of the aisle. Looking up, Margaret sees the justice of the peace, Ramone. (Yes, the same guy from the liquor store and the strip club.)

**RAMONE**

97.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

It's me, Ramone.  
Margaret gives Annie a kiss, and then turns to Richard. They whisper while they walk up to Ramone.

**RICHARD**

You look gorgeous.

**MARGARET**

(SMILING)

You look disgusting.

**RICHARD**

So, is this what you dreamed of when you were a little girl?

**MARGARET**

Oh, you bet.  
They make it to the Gazebo, where Ramone awaits.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
Ramone.

**RAMONE**

**(QUIETLY)**

Mi amo.

(To the crowd)

We are gathered here today to celebrate one of life's greatest moments. To give recognition to the beauty, honesty, and unselfish ways...

Margaret looks at Richard on the word "unselfish," but he's looking straight ahead, determined to get through this.

RAMONE (cont'd)

...of Richard and Margaret's true love...

"True Love" gets Margaret as well, although no one in the audience notices.

RAMONE (cont'd)

...before their family and friends.

"Family and Friends" gets a reaction out of Gertrude and Geoffrey. She purses her lips. He holds on to his chair in order to keep himself seated.

RAMONE (cont'd)

For it is family and friends who taught Richard and Margaret to love, so it is only right that family and friends all celebrate that love here today.

**98.**

RAMONE (cont'd)

And if there is anyone who has cause why this couple should not be united in marriage and love, they must speak now or forever hold their peace.

Gilbertson stays quiet. Geoffrey takes a tug from a flask.

Ramone is about to continue, but something gets his attention.

He's not sure what to do.

RAMONE (cont'd)

Mi amo, do you have a question?

We reveal that Margaret has her hand halfway up, eyes squinted shut like the new kid in class not sure of herself.

**MARGARET**

No.

**RAMONE**

Then why is your hand up?

**MARGARET**

I have something to say. It's not a question though.

**RAMONE**

Can it wait 'til after?

**MARGARET**

Uh. Um. No.

**RICHARD**

What are you doing?

Margaret gathers herself and turns around to the crowd. They stare back, unsure what to make of this foreigner.

**MARGARET**

Hey there, folks. Thanks for coming out. I've got a little announcement to make about the "wedding."

**RICHARD**

Don't do this.

Margaret smiles and squeezes Richard's hand.

**MARGARET**

Not sure the best way to tell you all this.  
But, uh... I made Richard marry me. This is  
all a sham.  
Gilbertson victoriously pumps his fist in the air.

**99.**

**MARGARET** (cont'd)  
I was going to get kicked out of the country  
-- so I told Richard that I would destroy  
his career if he didn't marry me.

**RICHARD**

Now wait...

**MARGARET**

Richard. Please. Let me finish.  
(to the Paxton family)  
Richard wanted to stop this when we got off  
the plane, but I wouldn't let him. Don't  
blame him. This is all my fault.  
(to Ramone)  
Could you get the band started? And give  
these people something to drink.  
(to Gilbertson)  
And you. Meet me at your dingy in ten,  
you're taking me to the airport.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

You got it!  
Margaret nods, hands Richard the bouquet, and confidently walks  
back up the aisle with all eyes on her. She stops when she gets  
to Gertrude and leans down.

**MARGARET**

Take care of him.

**GERTRUDE**

Promise.  
Margaret walks back into the house. Alone.

**INT. MARGARET'S ROOM - DAY**

Margaret's wedding dress is laid out on the bed. Her bag is  
packed. Richard knocks and comes in. Margaret is on the phone.

**MARGARET**

(unenthusiastically to phone)  
Uh-huh. Yeah. That's great Frank. Good  
news. Talk to you on Monday.  
Margaret hangs up.

**RICHARD**

So Frank's back in?  
Margaret nods distractedly. Getting Frank to do the publicity  
tour doesn't mean much right now.

**MARGARET**

Yup. He's in. For now.

**100.**

**RICHARD**

Maybe this'll be your Mockingbird?

**MARGARET**

Yeah. Right.  
Margaret starts collecting her bags.

**RICHARD**

Great exit back there.

**MARGARET**

Thanks. Fun weekend.

**RICHARD**

Same old, same old, around here.

**MARGARET**

Wasn't sure if your mom would want me to strip the sheets, so I just left them.

**RICHARD**

I'll let her know.

**(BEAT)**

Why did you tell them all that?

**MARGARET**

It was getting too messy. We weren't going to be able to keep it up.

**RICHARD**

Don't start lying to me now.  
Margaret stops for a moment.

**MARGARET**

I heard you and Gertrude at the school. I think she meant what she said. She's a great girl, you should stay. It's the right thing. You're perfect for each other.

**RICHARD**

But... but what about you? What are you gonna do?  
Margaret wants to keep the conversation short.

**MARGARET**

Don't worry about me. I'll survive.

**RICHARD**

So what? This is it?

**MARGARET**

Yup. This is it.

**101.**

Margaret walks to the door, but stops. She turns to Richard. Despite her best effort to act cold, she can't help herself.  
MARGARET (cont'd)

**(SINCERE)**

Have an amazing life, OK? You're a good person. You deserve it.  
She puts out her hand, and Richard shakes it. It's electric, but Margaret denies it.  
MARGARET (cont'd)  
Goodbye, Richard.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

Margaret walks down to the dock carrying her suitcase. She can hear that the party is in full swing and smiles.

**EXT. BOAT - DAY**

Gilbertson drives his little speedboat and Margaret holds her suitcase tight. It's choppy, and the outboard motor is loud. The two have to yell to talk.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I want you to say the words.

**MARGARET**

I'm not doing great in the dignity department, can we not do this right now?

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Say it.

Margaret closes her eyes. Hating that it's come to this.

**MARGARET**

I'll publish your book.  
Gilbertson smiles.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Now was that so hard?

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

Richard sits by himself and finishes a beer by the shore. Gertrude walks up to him, looking fabulous, with two more beers.

**GERTRUDE**

So here's the deal. I'm going to have a million questions for you tomorrow...  
Gertrude sits down next to Richard.

**102.**

**GERTRUDE** (cont'd)

...but for now I thought we'd just sit here and drink beer. OK?

Richard nods. Gertrude hands him a beer.

**RICHARD**

Thanks.

Richard thanks her with a kiss on the cheek. Then, realizing where and who he is with, he puts his beer down. He turns to Gertrude again with a determined look, gives her a kiss on the lips, then follows it up with an even bigger kiss. When they finish, Gertrude is grinning, eyes closed. Richard looks worried. Something is wrong.

**GERTRUDE**

You have been practicing.

**RICHARD**

Waddya mean?

**GERTRUDE**

Well. Margaret told me that you, uh, turned into bit of a man whore down there.

Richard looks down. A bit ashamed. Gertrude makes light.

**GERTRUDE** (cont'd)

You're gonna have to put that in check if you move back. Cause me and Beth Cable are the only two real options up here... and I'll kick that bitch's ass.

Richard gives her a polite smile. He's not really in the mood to joke. Gertrude notices.

**GERTRUDE** (cont'd)

So no jokes yet? Too soon?

**RICHARD**

I'm sorry. I'm just a little... confused.

**GERTRUDE**

That kiss didn't seem "confused."  
Richard takes a beat to collect himself.

**RICHARD**

You're amazing, Gert. And I've thought about being with you for a long time. A long time. When you said those things at the school? I've dreamed about hearing you say those things.

**(MORE)**

**103.**

**RICHARD**

(cont'd)

But as crazy as this seems. I know now... that we're just not meant to be. Gertrude pulls back like she's been punched. **RICHARD** (cont'd)  
Thing is... when I said goodbye to Margaret? I felt sick. For the three years we worked together, I wanted to be as far away from her as possible. But now that she's gone? I'm just really... sad. I want her with me. What is that?  
The question hangs in the air.

**GERTRUDE**

I don't know.

**RICHARD**

I think I have to find out.

**GERTRUDE**

Find out what?

**RICHARD**

If she feels the same way.  
Gertrude begins to tear up, but won't let herself cry.

**GERTRUDE**

Well. OK then. What's a girl gonna do?  
(voice cracking)  
I guess you want who you want.  
Gertrude gives a melancholy smile.

**RICHARD**

I'm so sorry.

**(BEAT)**

But, I gotta go.

**GERTRUDE**

Uh-huh.  
Richard gets up.

**RICHARD**

Are you OK?

**GERTRUDE**

I'm fine. Really. Go.  
Gertrude nods her approval and Richard runs off to the party.

**104.**

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - PARTY - DAY**

Debbie, Geoffrey and Annie sit at a table next to the bar, dumbstruck looks on their faces. Ramone mixes drinks and flips bottles. Richard runs up to them all, looking excited.

**GEOFFREY**

What are you so God damn happy about?

**RICHARD**

What? Oh. Well, I'm, uh, going to see Margaret.

**GEOFFREY**

What?!

**DEBBIE**

She violated you. We should report her.

**RICHARD**

Who you gonna report her to, mom?

**DEBBIE**

Oh my God. He's got the Stockholm syndrome.

**RICHARD**

I don't have the Stockholm syndrome. And she didn't violate me.

**DEBBIE**

What is going on, Richard?  
Richard slows down and explains to his mom.

**RICHARD**

I'm sorry I lied to you. That was an awful thing to do. But it took this weekend for me to see how funny, and screwed up and perfect Margaret is for me. I think she's... the one.

**DEBBIE**

But you already thought she was the one.

**RICHARD**

No, I didn't. Not until she left.

**DEBBIE**

Really? Does she think that too?

**RICHARD**

I don't know. I've got to get to the airport to find out.  
Debbie doesn't say anything, then breaks into a smile.

105.

**DEBBIE**

(so romantic)  
He's going to stop her from leaving! At the airport!

**RICHARD**

But I gotta hurry. Her plane leaves any second. I might not make it.

**DEBBIE**

(so romantic)  
He's not sure he's going to make it!

**GEOFFREY**

Are you buying this horse shit?

**DEBBIE**

Oh, Geoffrey!

**RICHARD**

I don't have time to explain this to you.

**GEOFFREY**

Well then make some god-damn time. Cause I won't let you throw your life away for some woman.

**RICHARD**

I don't care.

**GEOFFREY**

Excuse me?

**RICHARD**

I don't care. I love you and want you to understand. But I'm not asking your permission here. I'm doing this.

**GEOFFREY**

Oh, really?

From behind them, Annie stands up and shouts.

**ANNIE**

Boys! Stop it! Stop it! Stop it!  
But suddenly, a look of panic flashes across Annie's face. She grabs the table to steady herself, but pulls the table cloth, causing a loud crash. Geoffrey and Richard run over.

**GEOFFREY**

Mom, are you OK?

**ANNIE**

I'm having a... I need to go to the hospital. Fast.

106.

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

Margaret and Gilbertson board the jet together. Margaret finds her seat in first class and discovers the Handsome Man from the flight before sitting nearby.

**HANDSOME MAN**

(re: Gilbertson)

Is this another gay assistant?

Margaret doesn't say anything and takes her seat.

**EXT. PAXTON ESTATE - DAY**

TWO COAST GUARDSMAN carry Annie on a gurney to their waiting helicopter. Geoffrey, Richard, and Debbie follow behind. They all pile into a large chopper and fly off.

**INT. COAST GUARD HELICOPTER - DAY - CONTINUOUS**

An oxygen mask covers Annie's face. Geoffrey holds her hand. Annie motions for Geoffrey to come closer and he leans down. Geoffrey sits up and shouts over the helicopter noise.

**GEOFFREY**

Richard! She has something she wants to say to us!

Richard leans down, and joins Geoffrey and Annie. Their three heads are very close together. Annie speaks to them both through

the oxygen mask.

**ANNIE**

Listen to me. You two need to stop fighting. You'll never see eye to eye, but you're family. If this doesn't stop, one day you'll regret it.

(to Geoffrey)

Promise me you'll stand by Richard, even if you don't agree with him.

**GEOFFREY**

I... I promise.

**ANNIE**

And Richard. Promise you'll work harder to be a part of this family.

**RICHARD**

I promise, Grandma.

**ANNIE**

OK, then.

Annie closes her eyes. She looks peaceful. A moment passes.

**107.**

Then suddenly Annie takes off her mask, sits up, and yells to the pilot.

ANNIE (cont'd)

(as if nothing happened)

I'm feeling much better. I don't need to go to the hospital. Take us to the airport, please.

Richard and Geoffrey are confused. Stunned even.

**GEOFFREY**

What... what is going on?

(so the Coast Guard can't hear)

Did you fake a heart attack?

**ANNIE**

We didn't have time for your squabbling, and I knew a helicopter would be the quickest way to the airport. It seemed like the best way.

**RICHARD**

The best way?

**ANNIE**

And remember, you two promised me that you're going get along. I wasn't kidding about that.

**COAST GUARD PILOT**

Ma'am, I'm not authorized to take you to the airport...

**ANNIE**

(to pilot)

Larry Ferris! Don't make me call your mother!

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

Gilbertson talks non-stop. Margaret is in hell.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

...I want my book launch to be special. I'm thinking we throw a soiree at the Nevsky Monastery. In St. Petersburg?

Margaret stares at him blankly.  
MR. GILBERTSON (cont'd)  
(as if she should know)  
Where Dostoyevsky is buried? Hello? I  
thought you were a professional...  
Margaret closes her eyes to numb the pain.

108.

**EXT. SITKA AIRPORT - DAY**

The helicopter lands, and Richard jumps out. His family follows as they run to the control tower.

**INT. AIRPORT TOWER - DAY**

CHUCK has an easy job. Jets fly into Sitka, but there are only about six flights a day. He is half awake as he radios Margaret's flight. Reggae music plays in the background.

**CHUCK**

Flight 1601, you're clear for takeoff.

**PILOT (O.S.)**

Roger that, Chuck.  
The PHONE RINGS in the tower. Chuck picks up. Intercut as necessary, with Richard running on a cell phone.

**CHUCK**

Tower. Talk to me.

**RICHARD**

Hey Chuck, it's Richard.

**CHUCK**

Hey man. Heard about your lady bailing.  
How often does this happen to you?

**RICHARD**

Need you to do me a solid, brother. I gotta see my girl and she's on that flight. Could you stop it for me?

**CHUCK**

No can do brohan. Need a good reason for the FAA holes. Lose my jobby job if I delivered that favor.

**RICHARD**

Oh, c'mon Chuck!

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

The plane rattles as it gains speed for takeoff. Margaret studies the safety pamphlet, trying to ignore Gilbertson.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

...so next topic. Celebrities. Let's invite the Bill Clinton's and leave out the Paris Hilton's, OK?  
Gilbertson smiles as he looks out the window and sees the plane leave Sitka.

109.

**EXT. TOWER - DAY**

Richard and his family stand outside the tower and watch Margaret's plane take off.

**RICHARD**

Well. That's it. Once she gets back to New York, it'll be like this never happened. Richard looks defeated. Geoffrey sees how sad his son is, and takes a deep breath.

**GEOFFREY**

So, you know I think you shouldn't be with Margaret, right?

**RICHARD**

You've made that crystal clear.

**GEOFFREY**

Good.  
(looks at Annie)  
Well, consider this me keeping my promise. Geoffrey pulls out his cell phone and hits a button. He waits for an answer.  
GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
(to phone)  
Hey! Maguire! Yeah, yeah, yeah, her running out was something. But that's what I'm calling about. I've got a favor to ask you, 'bout one of your planes...

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

Gilbertson continues to talk. Margaret is in a stupor.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

...you know those two hundred pages I took out? I'm going to put them back...  
A flight attendant comes to Margaret and interrupts.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

Ms. Mills? Would you come with me?  
Margaret is excited to get away from Gilbertson.

**MARGARET**

Yes, of course.  
She unbuckles her seat belt, about to get out of her seat.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

What's this about?

110.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

(never done this before)  
There's someone on the radio for you.  
The flight attendant points to the Flight Attendant CB located at the front of the plane, outside the cockpit.  
FLIGHT ATTENDANT (cont'd)  
Uh, a Richard Paxton?  
Margaret shakes her head and re-buckles her seat belt.

**MARGARET**

Tell him I'm not here.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TOWER - DAY**

Richard and his family are huddled around the radio in the tower.  
Chuck sits nearby.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)**

(from radio)  
I'm sorry. She won't come talk to you.

**RICHARD**

Shit! She's never going to pick up...

**CHUCK**

(to Richard)  
Know what, home slice? Cut this chica  
loose. You remember Beth Cable? She'd  
totally be into you...  
Suddenly, Richard has an idea. He picks up the hand mic.

**RICHARD**

Excuse me Miss Flight Attendant, could you  
ask the captain to do me one more favor...

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

DING! The captain comes on over the loudspeaker.

**CAPTAIN**

(over plane loudspeaker)  
Welcome to flight 1601 to Seattle, this is  
your captain. We've reached our cruising  
altitude of 30,000 feet. Flight time'll be  
three hours and thirty minutes. And  
Margaret? Richard has something he'd like  
to say to you.

111.

**RICHARD (O.S.)**

(over loudspeaker)  
Uh, hey Margaret. And cause I'm on the  
loudspeaker, hey everyone on the plane.  
The other passengers look around to try and figure out who's  
Margaret. Meanwhile, Margaret looks down and acts like she  
doesn't know either.

**RICHARD (O.S.) (cont'd)**

(over loudspeaker)  
This certainly isn't how I wanted to do  
this. I mean, I'm not really into the whole  
baring your soul in front of strangers  
thing, but I figure it's now or never. So  
here goes.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TOWER - DAY**

Richard puts down the hand mic for a second to gain composure.  
His family encourages him on.

**CHUCK**

You're doing great, man.  
Richard pushes the button down on the hand mike.

**RICHARD**

I know you're used to being on your own.  
And that you're comfortable with your life  
the way it is. And that in a million years  
you wouldn't have thought that we should be  
together. I know, because I felt the exact  
same way.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. PLANE - DAY**

Every passenger is enraptured by the words coming out of the loudspeaker. The flight attendants, the Handsome Man, everyone.

**RICHARD (O.S.)**

(over loudspeaker)  
And you know what else I know? I know that I'm tired of being alone. And I think you're tired of being alone too. So come on. Talk to me. Please.  
The Handsome Man turns to Margaret.

**HANDSOME MAN**

(with genuine concern)  
Do you really feel like you're alone?

112.

**MARGARET**

Oh, good lord.

**CUT TO:**

**INT. TOWER - DAY**

Richard and his family stare at the radio, waiting to see if there is going to be an answer. Chuck crosses his fingers.

**MARGARET (O.S.)**

(from radio)  
What the hell are you doing?  
Everyone in the tower smiles. They're making progress.

**RICHARD**

We need to talk.  
(Intercut as necessary. Margaret stands at the front of the plane with the passengers watching.)

**MARGARET**

About what?

**RICHARD**

Have you ever thought there might be a reason we've been together for the last three years?

**MARGARET**

As boss and assistant.

**RICHARD**

Things change, Margaret.

**MARGARET**

**(INCREDULOUS)**

Things change?

**RICHARD**

Yeah, things change.

**MARGARET**

Is that the best you got?  
Geoffrey hits Richard, as if to say "see, that's what I said."  
Richard composes himself.

**RICHARD**

Now, tell me the truth. When you left, were

you relieved or sad that we didn't have an  
excuse to be together anymore?  
Geoffrey gives Richard the thumbs up. That was a good one.

113.

**MARGARET**

What's your point?

**RICHARD**

Because I am sick that you left. And if you  
feel sick too, then why shouldn't we just be  
together?

Margaret goes to answer, but stops. Richard is right. She wants  
to go back. Even the passengers on the plane can see it.  
Gilbertson panics.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Are you thinking about going back to him?  
Margaret doesn't answer.

MR. GILBERTSON (cont'd)

We have a deal! You can't back out now!

The flight attendant steps in, annoyed that Gilbertson is trying  
to break up Richard and Margaret.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

Sir, you need to sit down.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

I will do no such thing.

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

Sir, I'm ordering you to return to your  
seat.

Other passengers yell "sit down asshole" at Gilbertson.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Who said that?

**FLIGHT ATTENDANT**

Sir, this is your third and final warning!

**MR. GILBERTSON**

Listen sweetheart...

(he pokes the flight attendant)

I'm a federal officer, so why don't you get  
me another cocktail and mind your own...

BUZZ! ZAP!

electricity surge through

Gilbertson. He twitches violently and crashes to the floor.  
Behind him, The Handsome Man holds a stun gun and a badge.

**HANDSOME MAN**

Well, I'm a federal Air Marshall. And  
you're under arrest for disobeying a crew  
member, assault, and possible intoxication.

400,000 Volts of

114.

The Handsome Man pulls out flex cuffs, zips them around  
Gilbertson's wrists, and throws him in the bathroom. He then  
takes the CB from Margaret and speaks to the passengers.

HANDSOME MAN (cont'd)

Sorry everybody, but protocol says we need

to get this unruly passenger off the plane ASAP. Sitka's the closest airport, so if it's OK with you, I'm gonna have the captain turn this bird around. There are wild cheers from the passengers. Margaret blushes. HANDSOME MAN (cont'd) (winks at Margaret) Told you I was a romantic.

**EXT. SITKA AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY**

Flight 1601 glides to a safe landing. Richard and his family wait on the tarmac, and the plane taxis to them. A truck drives stairs to the front door of the plane and the door opens. Margaret steps out. Richard walks up the steps.

**MARGARET**

This wasn't supposed to happen. Richard looks Margaret in the eye.

**RICHARD**

But it did. Margaret looks down. A little embarrassed.

**MARGARET**

I'm not the kind of girl who gets saved. Richard smiles, and without warning, Margaret grabs him, and plants a long, deep, and wet kiss on him. The long kiss is interrupted by the Handsome Man and Gilbertson.

**HANDSOME MAN**

Uh, sorry, but excuse us. The Handsome Man leads a handcuffed and still dazed Gilbertson down the steps.

**MARGARET**

(to Gilbertson)  
Hey! Do you think getting arrested might affect you at work?  
Gilbertson has no retort.

115.

MARGARET (cont'd)  
Oh, and I'm not going to be able to publish your book after all.

**MR. GILBERTSON**

So you are getting married this weekend?

**MARGARET**

**(SMILING)**

Absolutely not. But who knows?  
(looking at Richard)  
We might by the time you get out of jail. Gilbertson makes a "go to hell" face and shuffles off. Margaret turns back to Richard. All smiles. MARGARET (cont'd) I've got some explaining to do. Margaret and Richard walk down the steps and stand in front of Richard's family. MARGARET (cont'd) (to Debbie) Hi. I'm Margaret. I've known your son for years, but we've just recently begun to see each other romantically. (to Geoffrey) I want to get to know you all, and spend some real time up here in Alaska. (to Annie) I'm not sure when you are going to see him

get married, but I promise as long as I'm  
with him, he'll be happy.  
Passengers cram up to the plane windows to see what will happen.

**GRANDMA ANNIE**

That's all we ever wanted.  
Grandma Annie gives Margaret and Richard a big hug. Debbie joins  
in. Then Geoffrey. Passengers cheer.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT. PAXTON ISLAND - DANCEFLOOR - DAY**

The party is in full swing.  
Balzac chases his balls.  
Ramone slides onstage and SINGS with the band. He has a  
beautiful voice.  
Debbie and Geoffrey cut a rug. They've done this before.

**116.**

Gertrude and Annie chat and laugh at a nearby table. The  
Handsome Man brings Gertrude a drink. Grandma Annie winks and  
leaves these two alone.  
Margaret and Richard dance. All smiles, even though they aren't  
very good.  
And as everyone dances, we track up the tallest tree on the  
island, to an eagle's nest at the very top. Inside the nest,  
three eaglets chirp along to the music, snuggled up to Margaret's  
phone.

**THE END**