

The Proposal

By

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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.

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 ruffled and he checks his watch.

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

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.

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)

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

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 un wrinkle?

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.

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

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

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.

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.

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! 900 offensive and 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.

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.

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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

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?

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.

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?"

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.

DEBBIE

Annnie!

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.



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.

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

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.

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

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.

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?

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 party-goers are all dressed in flannel, T-shirts and baseball hats.

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.

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.

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.

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?

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.

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 lets 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.

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)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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!

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?

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

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

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.

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.

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

## 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.

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	RICHARD
Aaaaahhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!	Aaaaahhhhhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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

MARGARET	RICHARD
Why are you naked?	Why are you wet?

MARGARET	RICHARD
Don't look at me!	You tackled me!

MARGARET	RICHARD
It was the dog!	You're blaming the dog again?

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.

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.

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?

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?

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!

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

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

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. "How dare you forsake 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.

MARGARET

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

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.

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.

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?

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.

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.

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

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!

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!

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

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

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?

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.

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  
takujumagaluum 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

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 magaluam 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.

GEOFFREY (cont'd)  
...tuakjuk qangani takujumagalum Ut  
qangalan 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  
(guttural)  
Tooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...

Looking at Margaret, it's surprising she can make such a low  
noise.

MARGARET (cont'd)  
...ooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo...

GEOFFREY  
Chant!

The drum beat continues.

MARGARET

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".

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.

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)

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.

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.

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.

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...

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!

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.

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.

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?

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!

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

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.

-- 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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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)

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 to 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.

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.

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?

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.

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?

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.

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!** 400,000 Volts of 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.

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.

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.

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.

FADE OUT.