

**GREASEMONKEY**

**By Miranda Jonte**

*Takes place in Northern California over the course of a year*

Cast Of Characters:

-MARA... 30's, mechanic

-SCOTT...30's, married to LEANN

-LEANN...30's, married to Scott, known Mara since childhood

-PATRICK...late 20's, almost-professor

-DANIEL...mid-30's, ecologic mover and shaker, Mara's ex

-DON... 55-70, Mara's boss and her late dad's best friend

-STEVE... any age, Mara's coworker

BARTENDER & CLERK can be played by actor who plays STEVE

***Based on and inclusive of modern day love poetry. All permissions granted.***

*\*Note: This play can be done as minimally as possible. For example, work table is: the chassis of the car Mara works on throughout, the bar she stands on with Patrick, the bed she shares with Patrick, then Daniel, the table for the dinner party. Likewise, one set of industrial shelves can be the library shelves, as well as where the actors keep their props, and the shelves in the shop where Mara works. Be inventive!*

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*Act I*

*\*Sc. 1*

***The inside of a vintage auto body shop. It is a warm, inviting place: pictures and certificates on the walls, file cabinets and bookshelves full of manuals and how-tos, etc. A chassis sits SL. A man enters. As he speaks, MARA slides under the chassis and begins to work.***

DANIEL

Officially the heart is oblong, muscular, and filled with longing. But anyone who has painted the heart knows that it is also spiked like a star and sometimes bedraggled like a stray dog at night and sometimes powerful like an archangel's drum.

It is true there is love that is decided upon and love that spreads like a stain of ink in absorbent cloth there is love that makes sense of your life and love that makes you senseless about life.

Anyone who has painted the heart knows that first he had to discard his spectacles, throw away his pencil and paper and for a long while walk outside. *(He exits. As lights go up, STEVE and DON stand above MARA as she wrenches on the car. MARA is not supposed to be here. This should be akin to guns drawn in a comical saloon standoff)*

DON

You're early.

MARA

Shit!

DON/STEVE/MARA

*(All at once)* What are you doing here?

MARA

What am I-? *(To STEVE)* What are you doing here?

STEVE

I work here.

DON

*(To MARA)* What are you doing here?

MARA

*(To STEVE)* Yeah, you work for me now.

DON

And you work for me.

MARA

That's why I'm here!

DON

You're early.

STEVE

You're busted.

MARA

*(To STEVE)* You're lame. *(Looks at clock on wall)* It's 10. We open at 9.

DON

It's Thursday. We said next Monday.

MARA

I'm ten years early.

STEVE

*(To Don)* You are so molded. *(MARA and DON both look at him. STEVE shuts up)*

MARA

So.

DON

So.

STEVE

*(Pause)* So.

DON

*(Caves)* Whaddya got?

MARA

Guy in Santa Rosa wants us to look at his 66 ½ Mustang.

DON

What's he wanna do with it?

MARA

Wants me to put in power brakes. Says it won't stop for shit.

DON/ STEVE

*(Most obvious thing in the world)* It's a '60's Mustang.

DON

*(Shakes his head)* What else?

MARA

The guys are working on the Biturbo, God it's a shitbox, and...the roadster.

DON

Yeah, she's pretty.

MARA

And John Aaronson called me. On my cell. At 1am.

DON

Good grief. What now?

MARA

*(The following story is told with no pauses. MARA and STEVE are on the same page, and have each other's backs. The story should flow)* He and his brother-

STEVE

-the village idiot-

MARA

-want us to soup up a car for Laguna Seca.

STEVE

They did this last year.

MARA

They brought us a-

STEVE

-'62 AC Cobra-

MARA

-for engine refresh and race prep. They begged us to do it in a week-

STEVE

-So we did –

MARA

-And did they finish the race?

STEVE

No they did not.

MARA

And why?

STEVE

Because of the wall.

MARA

Because of the wall, Don. (*STEVE makes an explosion sound*) They killed it. Broke my heart. So no. No way.

DON

They also paid us double.

MARA

Driving lessons first..

DON

Why? What do they want now?

MARA

Want to swap out a 289 for a 427 side oiler. The headers won't fit, the motormounts are in the wrong location, the exhaust needs to be fabricated, should I keep going?

DON

When do they want it?

MARA

Two days. It's insulting. They're San Rafael morons with too much money and absolutely no business being behind the wheel of a car of that caliber. I'm not putting my guys through that bullshit.

STEVE

Aw, I'm your guy?

MARA

Go fix the Biturbo.

STEVE

*(As he exits)* It's such a shitty car.

DON

They *are* your guys now. So why don't you go home and come back Monday? *(She refuses to budge)* We said next week is all.

MARA

I've got to go to Tiburon, see about a Bentley. '38.

DON

*(Nods, quiet for a moment, searches for the right words)* Everyone, uh- the guys and I – we're really glad you're not leaving. We... it's good you're here. I... *(She eases his awkwardness)*

MARA

Did you know that Tiburon means 'shark?'

DON

Well, SHIT, kiddo. Knock if you need anything. *(He starts to leave, does a 180)* Oh! Since you're here, could you-

MARA

Fuel pump.

DON

Jim said-

MARA

Fuel pump. *(STEVE reenters. STEVE is carrying a thick cushion. He places it on Mara's too-large chair and pats it)* You drive a Pacer.

STEVE

You drive a Dart. *(To Don)* Jim thinks-

DON

Fuel pump.

STEVE

Jim owes me \$50!

MARA

Jim needs to be told to un-asshole his parking job. *(She and STEVE freeze)*

STEVE/MARA

NOT 'IT!' *(STEVE is one beat behind. She wins)*

DON

Welcome back. *(Leaves)*

STEVE

The guys were wondering if we could take you out tonight. Darts. Beer.

MARA

I can't.

STEVE

Oh you can, I've seen you drink. *(She shakes her head)* There's a little something in your bottom drawer. From the guys. *(She opens the drawer and pauses as she sees their gift. It is a bottle of Southern Comfort and a tumbler. She nods)* Your dad was awesome, Mar.

MARA

I'll see you tomorrow.

STEVE

You got it, boss lady. *(He gently socks her on the shoulder, leaves. Pops his head back in with one last jab)* You got some big-ass shoes to fill. *(Ducks out. MARA sits with 'boss lady' for a moment. Makes decision. MARA stands, leaves for library)*

### ***Lights Change***

#### ***\*Sc. 2***

***Library stacks of a university library. MARA enters consulting a list in hand, pulling books. PATRICK is sitting on the floor, reading. She is shy one book. He is completely blocking her way, occasionally glancing at her. She cannot find her last book.***

PATRICK

Which one do you need?

MARA

“Women and Sexuality in the Workplace.”

PATRICK

What's the call number?

MARA

HQ673.1 (*He reaches behind him to the books he's blocking, finds it, and hands it to her.*)

MARA

Thanks.

PATRICK

Don't mention it. (*She leaves, comes back*) 673.1. Hi. (*Goes back to reading*)

MARA

Hi. I got it (*She fails*) Do you know where 'American Chrome' is? HQ693.86.

PATRICK

A classic. You just missed it. Guy came by about an hour ago and grabbed it.

MARA

Great.

PATRICK

(*Seeing her book in hand*) Alcott?

MARA

Mmhmm.

PATRICK

It's a good one.

MARA

I know, I read it every Fall.

PATRICK

Let's see...you're not a Beth. Definitely not an Amy.

MARA

I'm a Jo. (*Explains*) She was a writer which was a no-go- (*Pulls back*) I'm a Jo.

PATRICK

You could leave your list with me. I'll be your moat. (*She notices his food on the ground*)

MARA

Are you eating?

PATRICK

It's lunchtime.

MARA

You're eating in a library.

PATRICK

Best of both worlds. *(Completely sincere)* Want some? ***(Put off, she leaves. He calls after her, referring to her shirt)*** Hey, Gurney-ville. That's Russian River, right?

MARA

Yes. But it's Guerneville. *(Pronounced guren-vill)*

PATRICK

Are you sure?

MARA

I've spent every 4<sup>th</sup> of July there since I was six.

PATRICK

*(Earnestly)* That's a lot of 4<sup>th</sup> of Julys. *(She looks at him askance)* No! I meant - that would make you an expert. *(Utterly sincere, trying to fix it, and fumbling)* How old are you? *(Trying again)* Wine's from there, Russian River Valley? *(She just looks at him floundering)* Do you have another book I could look for?

MARA

I'm good. *(In good humor: She picks up his food and dumps it in the trash)* This is not a frat house. ***(She leaves)***

PATRICK

*(Impressed and intrigued)* Wow.

### ***Lights Change***

#### ***\*Sc. 2.5***

***Library, the following week, same stacks. PATRICK sits, reading, in the same spot. MARA enters with list, sees him.***

MARA

Are you serious?

PATRICK

Sometimes.

MARA

Are you waiting for me?

PATRICK

Someone's a little big for her britches.

MARA

Don't you have class? Don't you work?

PATRICK

Reverse. *(She looks blank)* Ever play Uno? Reverse? Back to you?

MARA

I build cars. *(He weighs this)*

PATRICK

*(Slow smile)* You are a Jo.

MARA

Do you work?

PATRICK

I do.

MARA

What kind of job lets you play librarian in the middle of the afternoon? You're a librarian.

PATRICK

I sling alcohol.

MARA

Bartenders can read?

PATRICK

Who do you think writes the drink specials on those chalkboards?

MARA

So you're a professional enabler?

PATRICK

*(Points)* Reference section over there. Webster's definition of bartender's rather different than yours.

MARA

A semi-literate bartender with a library card. Congratulations. *(She leaves, he laughs. Five seconds later she re-enters. He looks up, waits)*

PATRICK

*(He sees she needs a book on the top shelf)* Do you need some help? *(She does not answer. He makes the step stool gesture with his hands)* You need a boost?

MARA

Would you-*(He hands her the book he's reading. He towers over her)*

PATRICK

Which one? This one?

MARA

Yep. *(He sees title, grins. Hands it to her)*

MARA

Thank you. *(She turns to go)*

PATRICK

May I have my book back, please?

MARA

*(Looking down at it)* 'Twenty Love Poems and a Song of Despair?'

PATRICK

*(Catches her look)* We do read other things besides 'Men's Health' and 'The Economist.'

MARA

You're a *bartender*?

PATRICK

There's that word again. I teach in the Anthropology department. This is my porn *(Indicates book)*

MARA

Don't you have class...?

PATRICK

I'm done at two, my shift starts at five, you're in my break room.

MARA

Do you work at The Reef?

PATRICK

No, at Wilke's across the street.

MARA

Why are you double-fisting?

PATRICK

I'm a post doc, doing a fellowship. Everything's paid for, but there's not a lot extra. I'll be a full time professor in six months, and making a peanut or two more in ten years, tenure if I don't fuck it up.

MARA

Where did you do your PhD?

PATRICK

Here.

MARA

And you've been asked on here?

PATRICK

Yep.

MARA

Huh.

PATRICK

Yep.

MARA

Don't you have an office?

PATRICK

I prefer the floor. Let me see your list. *(She doesn't)* Could I please see your list? *(She hands it to him. He reads it with growing amusement that he's unable to contain. She snatches the list back)*

MARA

You have no idea why I'm reading these.

Patrick

You've gotten trampled on by some jerks, or that's your story, and you're cementing your position by reading militant but intelligent writers who posit how women have been victimized by men, society, and the world. *(He is very relaxed, and unattached to being right. She doesn't like it one bit.)* It's been done. And the car book's probably for your dad. *(He is deliberately poking at her with this last statement)*

MARA

Wow. Have fun serving drunk bros and sloppy co-eds who can't spell.

PATRICK

Here. (*He gives her his own book*) Let's agree on Neruda. Now if you'll excuse me, I do have drunks to serve. (*Heads out*)

*Lights Change*

*\*Sc. 3*

*MARA is babysitting for SCOTT and LEANN. She's reading on the couch as they come through the front door furiously making out. MARA watches a moment, then coughs loudly.*

SCOTT

Sorry. (*Kisses LEANN one more time*) Date night.

MARA

*Why?*

LEANN

Married sex is hot. (*MARA makes a retching sound. SCOTT laughs, exits with their leftovers*)

LEANN

Are you kidding? It only gets better. I mean, I thought we were hot at first, but after ten years, it's amazing.

MARA

(*Stops her*) Okay. Did you have a good time?

LEANN

It was so nice. Movie was good, then we went to the place on Solano with the gorgeous blue tile? I had two sidecars, I'm pretty happy. How's my little pumpkinface?

MARA

She's great. I put her down about two hours ago.

LEANN

Did **you** have fun?

MARA

Yeah, I taught her how to clean a carburetor.

LEANN

You are not turning my daughter into a greasemonkey.

MARA

Okay, one, she's six months old, and two, you think I'm a greasemonkey? (*SCOTT reenters with a plate of pastries*)

LEANN

You're... a tomboy.

SCOTT

Oh yeah, you're a tomboy. It's totally hot. (*He begins feeding LEANN*)

LEANN

Scott, you cannot keep feeding me bread. I get wide. I already had the baby.

SCOTT

You're gorgeous.

LEANN

(*Gestures to her post-baby body*) I'm the Bay Bridge.

SCOTT

New Bay Bridge or old Bay Bridge? Baby. Bread makes you happy. Be happy. (*MARA watches, and makes a sick sound*)

LEANN

So, tomboy, when was the last time you wore heels?

MARA

Two nights ago.

LEANN

Where'd you go?

MARA

Who said we went out?

LEANN

(*Gets the implication*) Dress and heels. In public.

MARA

Funeral.

LEANN

Doesn't count.

Really. (*LEANN backs off*)

MARA

How're things going with the guy?

SCOTT

Which one?

MARA

...Rob?

SCOTT

It's over. They're all over.

LEANN

Why?

SCOTT

Because she can't sit still for more than a minute.

LEANN

Not everyone trips over their soulmate at twenty-two. Let alone one who extols the virtues of bread.

MARA

No, seriously, don't get married.

LEANN

Excuse me?

SCOTT

Honey, no, I love being married to you – (*To MARA*) but you will end up eating cheetos in bed every night and get a fat ass.

LEANN

You love eating cheetos with me.

SCOTT

I do. (*To MARA*) Every night. (*Assesses her*) See you, no kids...you could drink a bottle of wine every night in bed. God that sounds divine.

LEANN

MARA

You're warped. I'm going to go have a beer. At a bar. With people.

LEANN

See? Freedom! So much freedom. (*MARA leaves*)

SCOTT

(*Approaching her*) You're going to pay for that. (*The following is mock indignant*)

LEANN

New Bay Bridge or old Bay Bridge?

SCOTT

More cushion for the pushin'?

LEANN

I'm going to punch you in the throat.

SCOTT

(*The truth*) You're perfect. I love you.

LEANN

You're an asshole. I love you too. (*They proceed to make out*)

### ***Lights Change***

#### ***\*Sc. 4***

***Wilke's Bar. MARA sits alone at the bar. A moment later, PATRICK appears. They drink throughout the scene.***

PATRICK

Hey! The library cop is at my bar! (*She glances at the speaker, goes back to her beer*) I'm not following you. (*She ignores him*) I said I'm not following you.

MARA

Hello.

PATRICK

Hi. Not a stalker.

MARA

The fact that you've said this three times without being asked is slightly alarming.

PATRICK

Library closed early. Holiday. Washington's Bar Mitzvah. Something. (*He sits down next to her*) So, you work at a gas station?

MARA

I'm a restoration expert.

PATRICK

So you clean gas stations? *(She doesn't answer)* Expert. Wow. Like according to your dad?

MARA

Like, according to Popular Mechanics, MotorTrend, and my dad, I'm the best restoration engine specialist in the country. But you can say gas station if that's too many syllables for you.

PATRICK

Let's do shots. *(Noticing the bartender is nowhere to be found, he goes behind the bar to serve them)*

MARA

Why?

PATRICK

C'mon. You get a free drink, and it's nice for me to be served alcohol instead of being covered in it.

MARA

*(She changes the subject)* But you're not on shift tonight?

PATRICK

The co-eds are crushed. *(Introduces himself)* Patrick.

MARA

Mara.

PATRICK

Don't worry. Me buying you a drink does not negate the contents of your library haul. *(She looks askance at him)* Woman. Roar.

MARA

Bess Appleby is a fantastic writer.

PATRICK

*(Knowledgeably)* I know. She's just over in Marin, too. So, you still use the library even though you're not a student anymore?

MARA

Uh-huh.

PATRICK

How old are you?

MARA

You are a Philistine. *(He says nothing)* I'm 32.

PATRICK

*(Nods)* You seem worried about it.

MARA

*(Confiding)* I had a boyfriend who told me a woman's shelf life depreciated in her early thirties. As a fertile and attractive mate. He was in finance.

PATRICK

Some asshole tried to date-stamp you, and you believed him?

MARA

I was in love with him. *(Confessing)* I turn 36 next week.

PATRICK

Entering your late 30's can be a bit scary for women. This society has really got it backwards.

MARA

*(Sets record straight)* 36 is not late 30's. It's the end of your mid 30's. 37 is the start of your late 30's. I'm 35 until next week. I'm still in the middle of my mid 30's.

PATRICK

I'll be twenty-nine in three months.

MARA

Fuck me. You're twenty-eight and doing your post doc? Did you skip a grade?

PATRICK

Yep. So how is it you can still use the library?

MARA

My mom was kind of a big deal here.

PATRICK

A professor?

MARA

Yeah.

PATRICK

What'd she do?

MARA

She taught poetry.

PATRICK

She write it too? (*MARA nods*) Would I know her? What's her name?

MARA

Ginny Temple.

PATRICK

Virginia Temple? Your mom was Virginia Temple? As in the library?

MARA

She liked Ginny.

PATRICK

(*Excited*) I know her, I've read her work. She was young- wasn't she in her 40's when she-

MARA

(*Not unkindly*) What does your mom do?

PATRICK

She was a kindergarten teacher then she became a full-time mom when my brother and I came along. So why'd you dump the finance guy if you were in love with him?

MARA

I didn't. Wow you're like a boomerang.

PATRICK

So what happened?

MARA

I came home drunk one night and picked a fight. Woke up at 7am with the worst hangover in my life, and he said it was over.

PATRICK

You moved out?

MARA

Actually, he took everything of mine and put it into garbage bags, then put them on the street. Down to my last bobby pin. Literally. He erased me in front of my eyes.

PATRICK

Jesus Christ. And that was it?

MARA

That was it. We'd been together a year. I never saw him again.

PATRICK

Good riddance. *(They clink glasses)*

MARA

Ohmigod! I'm so sorry!

PATRICK

Why?

MARA

I don't hate men! It's the beer. I tend to jabber when I drink. I-I just, I have a big mouth.

PATRICK

You have a nice mouth. I don't think you hate men. You're just a little bitter. *(They each down a shot)*

MARA

*(Decisively)* I don't want to talk about my ex-boyfriends.

PATRICK

Okay then. *(They notice bartender is gone. He hops onto the other side of the bar, and gets them another beer)* I have never left a woman the way you, apparently, have been left.

MARA

*Good. (Beat)* You think I'm bitter?

PATRICK

I think you're too young to be so pessimistic.

MARA

Pess-I'm *pragmatic*. You think I'm young? The concept of true, happy, incandescent and *mutual* love is hooey.

PATRICK

Did you just say 'hooey?'

MARA

Hooey.

PATRICK

You're funny when you're tipsy.

MARA

You're cute when I'm tipsy.

PATRICK

*(Making a case)* Ok, what about Robert and Elizabeth Browning?

MARA

They never *saw* each other. They *wrote*. Total avoidance of intimacy.

PATRICK

Hepburn and Tracy? They were truly, madly, deeply in love with each other for decades.

MARA

He was married. She was his mistress for decades.

PATRICK

Touche. What about that guy who built the Taj Mahal for his wife?

MARA

It was her mausoleum. She was not enjoying it.

PATRICK

Richard Burton and Liz Taylor.

MARA

They beat each other.

PATRICK

Well, yeah, but if any love was incandescent, theirs was.

MARA

I think you're confusing incandescent with inflammatory.

PATRICK

*(A discovery)* You don't think you'll get married.

MARA

I read once that 'women don't marry the man they love, but they love the man they marry.'

PATRICK

*(Lets this sink in)* That is really depressing. Okay. So what you're saying is, all your true loves have come and gone, there are no more, no mas, you missed your chance, only halvesies from here on out.

MARA

Yeah.

PATRICK

No such thing as love? *(He is baiting her)* Great, gooey hooley?

MARA

Nope.

PATRICK

You'd declare this publicly?

MARA

Yep.

PATRICK

Okay *(He has his answer. **He cuts the music, and jumps on top of the bar**)* My faithful regulars, -Hey John! I have with me a visitor from – the library - who says 'Down With Love!'

MARA

*(Frozen)* Are you insane? *What* are you doing?

PATRICK

Introducing you. It is her birthday, and she is going to entertain us with why love is a flaming crock of shite.

MARA

You want me to *lecture*? In a *bar*?

PATRICK

*On a bar.* Oh, don't be such a scaredy cat. People have done worse things on this bar. C'mon Miss Havisham. *(She is outraged)* You heard me. *(**He extends his hand. She accepts it, and his challenge, climbs onto the bar.** A few whistles from the crowd. **He hops down, pours her a shot**)* Psst! For courage. *(She kneels to take the shot. She turns to crowd, blinks. **Someone calls out 'Show us your tits!'**)* Giddy up. *(Smacks her ass. As her oration goes on, her certainty and voice gain strength)*

MARA

'True love. Is it normal, is it serious, is it useful-what does the world get out of two people who don't see the world? Placed on the same pedestal for no good reason, drawn randomly from millions but convinced it had to be thus-as reward for what? Nothing; Does this offend justice? Yes. Hear how they laugh-offensively. True love. Is it necessary? Perfectly healthy babies are born without its assistance. Never, never could it populate the earth, given its rare occurrence. Let people who haven't known true love insist it's nowhere to be found. With such faith it'll be easier for them to live and die.' *(She has turned it into a sermon, the crowd laughing, getting behind her. Finished, she curtsies, and now downs the shot. She moves to get down.)*

PATRICK

You're not going anywhere. *(**He easily hops on the bar, now next to her. The crowd cheers in expectation.**)* Traitors! *(**Crowd: Speech! Defense, defense, defense! And then, Show us your tits!**)* Thanks, Sam. I'll see you in class.

MARA

Are you going to rebut?

PATRICK

Would you like me to rebut you? *(A sexy taunt)*

NERVES. ‘The modern malady of love is nerves. Love, once a simple madness, now observes the stages of his passionate disease, and is twice sorrowful because he sees, inch by inch entering, the fatal knife. O health of simple minds, give me your life, and let me, for one midnight, cease to hear the clock for ever ticking in my ear, the clock that tells the minutes in my brain. It is not love, nor love’s despair, this pain that shoots a witless, keener pang across the simple agony of love and loss. Nerves, Nerves! O folly of a child who dreams of heaven, and, waking in the darkness, screams.’ *(He finishes, knowing he has won. He caps his victory by pulls her into a swift, passionate kiss, dipping her. The crowd explodes. He breaks it) See ya around, Jo March. (He exits, leaving her there, bewildered)*

*Lights Change*

*\*Sc. 5*

*Outside. SCOTT and LEANN, and MARA are coming from opposite directions. Something’s up.*

MARA

Hey.

SCOTT

Hey. Thought you were pulling a Boo Radley at the library. *(MARA stares at him)* I have read books, you know.

MARA

*(To LEANN)* Your timing belt sucked. I changed it.

LEANN

My what?

SCOTT

You grabbing a beer?

MARA

No.

SCOTT

You look thirsty.

MARA

Okay. *(They continue on their ways)*

SCOTT

You should go to Wilke's. *(She doubles back and stares at him)* Oh, it's all over town.

LEANN

Heard it was hot.

SCOTT

Heard it knocked you on your ass.

MARA

*(They eyeball each other)* Fuuuuck.

LEANN

Do we like this boy?

MARA

Now that's an apt description.

LEANN

Don't be a dick. When's the last time a guy knocked you on your ass? *(Specifies)* Like in a **good** way. *(LEANN grins)*

MARA

I hate you both. *(It has registered, and she goes)*

SCOTT

*(Calling after her)* Don't put out on the first date.

***Lights Change***

***\*Ten minutes later, Wilke's bar. PATRICK is behind the bar. MARA walks in, and hops over the bar and stands in front of him.***

MARA

Okay, let me try this again. What's the difference between archaeology and anthropology?

PATRICK

*(He bemusedly gives her a once over)* Hi.

MARA

Hi. *(They kiss)*

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 6***

***MARA's office. She is on the phone. A knock. PATRICK pokes his head in.***

MARA

Hi.

PATRICK

Hi.

MARA

Hang on a sec. *(Into phone)* We're customizing everything right now- if you want to come by and take a look, yeah, Tuesday noon is fine. *(She hangs up, rises, kissing him in greeting)* We're frenching a Chevy- don't ask. Hi! What are you doing here?

PATRICK

I thought I'd take you to lunch. I ran into Don on the way in – literally, I ran into him. He introduced himself, and asked me who I was-*(STEVE enters)*

STEVE

We finished! It's the coolest one I've ever done- *(Sees PATRICK, stops)*

MARA

*(Explaining)* We put Porsche 924 running gear into a '32 Ford Vic. It's kinda cool. Patrick this is Steve. He's our engine specialist.

STEVE

Jeanine's still pissed at me.

MARA

Why? *(To PATRICK)* Steve and his wife just had their first baby.

STEVE

Why do you think? She's stuck at home with the baby all day. She's climbing the walls and I get to go play. Do I bring her flowers?

MARA

. Yes. And pizza. And booze. Steve this is Patrick. *(STEVE looks to MARA for clarification)*

PATRICK

*(What he told DON)* Her boyfriend.

STEVE

Ohhh...*(Being a huge dick)* Well, isn't that lavender and rabbits. *(Challenging him)* What kind of car do you drive? *(Backs off)* Nice to meet you, Patrick. Hey Mar, you got some grease on your face. *(Leaves. A loud catcall whistle comes from the hallway)*

MARA

Since when are you my boyfriend?

PATRICK

Since spending three nights a week together for the past month? I'd say 'boyfriend' applies.

MARA

Yeah well, don't you know assumption is the mother of all fuck ups? (*PATRICK is shocked and stung. He looks at her, lets out a sound of disbelief. DON comes in, eager to share*)

DON

Did you know she played Little League? (*Points to photo on wall*). She couldn't hit for shit, but she'd steal a base if you blinked. (*PATRICK plays along for DON, and is friendly*) Yeah, we sponsor a team every year. Her dad coached. Every Spring we bring 'em in and Mara gives 'em a tour of the shop. Oh, here's me and her dad with one of his Packards. What kind of car do you drive?

PATRICK

An old Saab, I've had it since college. You guys are young here.

DON

Oh yeah, younger and lighter, more hair. Packards were his thing. This one was his baby, wasn't it, Mar? A twin six.

PATRICK

Twin six?

MARA

(*Condescending*) Twelve cylinder. A '32 twin six Phaeton.

DON

Hey – you play ball as a kid?

PATRICK

No, my brother Nick played – college ball.

DON

Where'd you grow up?

PATRICK

Michigan, near Elk Lake.

DON

You ever go back?

PATRICK

Oh yeah, every summer my family has a huge barbecue on the lake. We have a big softball game. Everyone comes and everyone plays.

DON

Well, (*Referring to MARA*) put her at second base. You put her in the outfield and she'll go off into la-la land. Used to drive her coaches nuts. Hey, am I'm holding you up? (***MARA'S phone rings***)

MARA

Hey Latrice. Sure, put 'em through. This is Mara. Uh-huh. What? You want me to install fuel injectors into your 1971 Hemi Cuda. (*DON balks*) You do know that Dodge was still using carburetors in their Hemis at this point- No, my breasts are not confusing me, STEVE, you ASSHOLE. (*Hangs up*)

DON

(*Shaking his head*) I'm running a daycare. You two headed to lunch? (***Offstage, STEVE yells: You drive like a girl!***)

PATRICK

I actually brought lunch and thought we'd eat here since I know you guys are slammed. And then I'll drive away in my old Saab. (*Pointed; he has missed nothing*)

DON

Okay. Tell Jim the tuck and roll on the Chevelle needs to be done by Tuesday. Actually, help him on that. She's training an intern we've got from the high school. Good kid. Needs help. (*DON waits till PATRICK can't see him. He who quietly gives her a big, obnoxious thumbs up and leaves. PATRICK is seething.*)

PATRICK

You know, you can be ambivalent, but do *not* diminish me, or downplay what we've been doing. It's cheap, and we both know better. (***He leaves.***)

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 7***

***Outside. Morning. The following week. MARA waits for PATRICK on campus, two coffees in hand.***

MARA

Hi.

PATRICK

Morning.

MARA

It's nice to see you

PATRICK

It's nice to see you too.

MARA

How are you? *(Notices his clothes)* You look really nice.

PATRICK

*(Looks down at his clothes)* Oh. Thanks.

MARA

Something special?

PATRICK

I had a date last night. *(Big beat. The implication hangs there)*

MARA

I don't want you to date anyone else.

PATRICK

Then act like it.

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 8***

***MARA'S kitchen. Evening. PATRICK is cooking a large meal. DON has arrived first, he's keeping PATRICK company and drinking wine.***

DON

The kid was a freakin' prodigy. She was rebuilding engines at 12 by herself.

PATRICK

The other guys don't mind? That she got her dad's job?

DON

You kidding me? The guys love her. She grew up in that shop. It was practically her birthright. ***(Doorbell rings. PATRICK opens it. On the porch are SCOTT and LEANN)***

PATRICK

You're all here! Great. Come on in. *(They chat and greet each other, entering, speaking over each other)* Nice to see you again, Leann. Scott. *(Shakes his hand)*

LEANN

You too. ***(She hands him a bottle of wine)***

PATRICK

Oh, this will be great with dinner. Thank you.

SCOTT

Don, where is your lovely wife?

DON

It's her Bunco night.

SCOTT

Well tell her we said hello. Something smells good.

LEANN

Ohmigosh. What is that?

PATRICK

Osso Buco, and saffron risotto. I've got some wine open already if you'd like. Hey Scott – beer?

SCOTT

Sure man, whatever you've got.

PATRICK

Humboldt Brown?

SCOTT

Sounds good.

DON

*(Proudly with glass)* Merlot.

LEANN

Where's Mar?

PATRICK

She's showering. She went for a run before dinner.

SCOTT

Right, a run. Wait. You cooked?

PATRICK

I did.

LEANN

Mara let you cook?

PATRICK

I kicked her out of the kitchen.

LEANN

She's a control freak about dinner parties.

PATRICK

I'm bigger.

SCOTT

Awesome. *(By now they've migrated to the kitchen, usually the heart of a house)*

LEANN

Damn, that smells good.

PATRICK

20 minutes or so. *(There are appetizers out and everyone munches, wine and beer in hand)*

DON

So Scott, what's new?

SCOTT

Not much. Work's good. Le and I are talking about going to Italy this fall.

DON

Oh, where? Jill and I might go for our anniversary. Spent our honeymoon camping in Santa Cruz. Good thing about getting older is you can afford to travel.

SCOTT

Tuscany, and the Cinque Terre. I've never been and Le was an exchange student in high school and really wants to go back.

LEANN

I was outside Florence. It was only a summer but I loved it

DON

You guys could rent a farmhouse for a week or two. Jill and I did that one year in France. *(MARA joins them in a dress. They eyeball her)*

MARA

What? *(PATRICK notices their gawking)*

PATRICK

You look lovely. *(Lights dim, then come up again; it is now **One hour later and everyone sits at the table, the decimated meal in front of them.** Several wine bottles are now on the table and a*

*lively conversation is taking place)*

MARA

They put him in a mass market car! He's the coolest spy in the world. You don't put James Bond in a Beemer! You put him in his Aston! C'mon! Is he an icon or is he an architect?

SCOTT

I drive a Beemer.

LEANN

What do you do?

SCOTT

I'm an architect. Oh.

DON

*(Laughing)* So anyway, Mara would run around and tell everyone her dad was building tankards  
*(Explains to all)* It was a Packard.

LEANN

Awww, you little munchkin malaprop, you. *(Holding up a very full glass of wine)* Hey Mar?  
*This* is a tankard.

DON

He never corrected you. He loved it. *(To PATRICK)* He was her stepdad, married her mom when she was four. She stuck to him like glue, straight off.

PATRICK

Why didn't you tell me that? You call him dad-

MARA

He was my dad. I took his name when I was fifteen. Was the least I could do.

DON

When this one was fifteen *(points to MARA)*, she went with a boy from her high school to the NATC- National Auto Tech Competition- all boys, she was the only girl there, and they won. My buddy teaches auto shop here at the high school, tells me a couple a girls have been poking around, asking questions, so I get Mara here to go talk to them, to the whole class. Two weeks later this guy calls me and says he's got a group of teenage girls who want to train for it! Now, her dad trained her and this other kid when they went. We're gonna train and sponsor the first girls-only team to go to this competition. Not this year, but in two years? And Wonder Woman here is gonna make it happen. Isn't that something? *(To PATRICK)* He would have loved you.

PATRICK

Was he very tough?

LEANN

No, Mara just has crap taste in men.

MARA

He liked some of my boyfriends.

SCOTT

Few. But you- you'd have been in like Flynn.

LEANN

And you cook.

PATRICK

Did Gene cook?

SCOTT

Oh yeah, he'd have us over when we were in college, like once a month. He was a great cook. Wouldn't let you near his grill, though.

LEANN

Have you had Mara's ADM?

PATRICK

Her ass-destroying meatloaf? Yes.

MARA

My meatloaf is fantastic.

LEANN

It is. It also clears a room the next day.

MARA

*(Picks up her knife)* Hey. You want another episiotomy?

LEANN

Yes?!

DON

He was an excellent cook. Lousy fisherman.

LEANN

*(The following is not sad, it is joyous and reflective)* I miss your dad.

DON

He'd have to stop at the store every time we came back from the Bay 'cause he never caught anything. Ever.

LEANN

Know what I miss? I'd stay over almost every weekend since we were like 10, and after dinner her dad would always go into the garage and work on his cars. Summertime, he'd have the garage door open at night, blast the lights for us, we'd be playing down the street and you could hear him just tinkering away. I loved that. I grew up with that. (*A moment, then, to PATRICK*) Did she ever tell you the period story?

MARA

LEANN LENORA SULLIVAN!

LEANN

It's Romero now.

SCOTT

YEAH IT IS.

PATRICK

I haven't heard the period story.

SCOTT

Do I need more wine for this?

LEANN

You watched me give birth to your daughter. Man up. (*To MARA*) It's a great story. Tell him.

MARA

So, my mom's just died, I'm thirteen, Gene and I are zombies, we'd just had the funeral like three days before and I get my period for the first time. I don't have anything, my mom only had tampons under her sink, so Gene goes into battle mode, shouting 'Stay here, don't go anywhere! I'll be right back!' He literally runs to the store. We're not thinking straight anyway and now he's got this motherless pubescent girl on his hands. He's back in twenty minutes. He's breathing hard, he's red-faced, and he's got a plastic bag and he gives it to me like he's a lion who's defended his flock. And it's a bag full of Depends.

LEANN

I love that story.

DON

He was terrified.

PATRICK

That's great.

LEANN

Lions don't have flocks.

MARA

Flock you. *(To PATRICK)* He would have liked you.

PATRICK

Well, I'm pretty spectacular.

LEANN

It's been my experience that if someone goes out of their way to tell you they're a nice guy, they're usually not. *(To MARA)* Remember the Christian guy?

MARA

Oh my God! No pun intended!

SCOTT

The Christian guy?

MARA

I dated this Christian guy a few years ago. Devout- church every Sunday, bible study, youth group. He told you and everyone else he was a nice Christian boy, but, and oh my G – *(Stops herself)*

DON

Yeah, your dad didn't like that guy. Said he was 'slick.' *(Explaining)* Your dad gabbed like a girl. *(Continuing)* He hated the finance guy.

SCOTT

*(Recognition)* The prick! *(Imitating: suavely)* 'Hi, I'm Collins. It's plural. 'Cause I'm a douche.'

LEANN

*(Continuing the game)* 'Sleep on the floor! You're disrupting my biorhythms!'

MARA

He *hated* women.

PATRICK

*(Baffled)* Mara. Did you actually do that?

MARA

Look, he was distractingly good-looking, and he was reliable. And when your only living relative whom you adore more than anything in the world starts to die on you, we'll see how hot *your* judgment is.

LEANN

What did we learn from that one?

MARA

No more Canadians.

SCOTT

*(Tipsily reflective- to everyone's amusement)* So many men, not enough freezer space.

LEANN

God I am glad you did not marry him.

PATRICK

I think everyone's dodged an 'oh thank God I didn't marry *that* one,' bullet.

MARA

*(Surprised)* You want to get married?

PATRICK

Why, are you asking?

MARA

No! *(He laughs)* I'm just surprised, is all.

PATRICK

Why? I think marriage can be a wonderful institution. One day, absolutely yes.

MARA

*(Meant as a compliment)* I thought you were a liberal anthropologist.

PATRICK

And sometimes you talk like a narrow - minded mechanic, but you're not. *(MARA concedes his point, backs off. To table)* My parents have a great marriage: respect, love, sex, fun, admiration. *(Proof)* Thirty one years.

LEANN

Mara's not getting married! She's our Rosie the Riveter! *(Stands MARA up, has her do the pose)*

PATRICK

Says who?

LEANN

All her married friends. She's not allowed on the mommy team!

PATRICK

People should get married because they love each other and want to form an army of two. *How* they go about it is case by case.

LEANN

Can you picture Mara in a white dress?

SCOTT

I don't think it'd be white.

DON

She'd get grease all over it.

MARA

You all suck.

LEANN

Your mom's a homemaker, right? Dad has his own business? *(Giving MARA away)* Oh, she totally talks about you.

SCOTT

*(To MARA, somewhat drunkenly)* Is your biological clock ticking? *(LEANN hangs her head in her hands. The following exchange is not angry)*

MARA

Not that I'm aware of.

SCOTT

I think it might be. Or soon at least.

MARA

Why?

LEANN

Careful there.

SCOTT

*(Oblivious)* You're thirty-six you know. Your clock's ticking. Might not be blaring but, you know, it's probably like on vibrate. *(She opts to let himself dig a hole. By now the table is ducking for cover and shaking with barely – contained laughter)* Yeah. Vibrate. Like- *(He demonstrates)* Yeah! Like- you're not married, and, you know, no kids- aren't you worried about being a fifty year old girlfriend?

LEANN

*(Claiming him)* That's my husband.

MARA

Scott. I like possibilities. I might want to get a dog, so I'm staying in my nice big house. I *might* want kids, so I'm not tying my tubes- yet. I'm not ruling anything out.

SCOTT/ PATRICK

Okay/ Good to know. *(MARA shoots PATRICK a look)*

DON

Please don't knock up my best mechanic.

SCOTT

She wouldn't fit under the car!

PATRICK

Is anyone ready for dessert?

DON

I've got to pick Jill up, they've been at it since 7.

LEANN

I would love dessert but I have to take my bull-in-a-china-shop husband home and pay off the babysitter.

MARA

Take some home. It's pie.

LEANN

Oh God, I'll be stuffing my face in an hour. Thank you for tonight. *(Quieter)* I like him.

MARA

*(Pleased)* He's likeable.

SCOTT

*(Drunk)* I'm likeable!

LEANN

*(To MARA, softening)* Maybe there are enough Rosie Riveters in the world. *(MARA hugs LEANN goodbye)*

MARA

Leann, I don't know that I'd be a very good mom.

DON

*(Shakes PATRICK'S hand)* Thanks Patrick. See you later, kiddo. *(He leaves)*

PATRICK

*(He has overheard her)* You'd be good at a lot of things.

MARA

You hate my meatloaf.

PATRICK

I love it. But it is harmful to digestive systems everywhere.

MARA

It's not that bad.

PATRICK

One needs a drop cloth the next day.

MARA

Come here.

PATRICK

*(Warily backs up, shaking his head)* You're going to give me an episiotomy, aren't you?

MARA

Come here- *(He does, they kiss, then exit)*

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 9***

***Night, campus, outside. She waits for him, wearing red lipstick and sleek overcoat. PATRICK enters.***

MARA

Hi. How did it go?

PATRICK

Hello! You're waiting for me?

MARA

*(A vamp)* I wanted to congratulate you on your first lecture as a real professor.

PATRICK

What a nice surprise. It was great-it was fantastic.

MARA

So they liked it?

PATRICK

Only one person fell asleep. You look beautiful.

MARA

Thank you. So do you.

PATRICK

Are you all dressed up for me?

MARA

I'm not dressed up.

PATRICK

What's under the coat?

MARA

Mmm. I don't remember

PATRICK

Didn't you just come from home?

MARA

Yes. But after I showered, all I recall putting on is my coat.

PATRICK

Are you serious?

MARA

Sometimes.

PATRICK

You walked to campus wearing only a coat?

MARA

Are we counting heels?

PATRICK

Stockings? *(She just watches him)* Thigh highs? *(She coyly shrugs. **His hand climbs her leg, and he finds his answer**)* Commando.

MARA

So, tell me about the lecture.

PATRICK

*No.*

MARA

Were you nervous?

PATRICK

You are a blast.

MARA

Did your mouth go dry?

PATRICK

You drive me crazy.

MARA

Did your palms sweat?

PATRICK

I love that you did this.

MARA

Did your nipples get hard? My nipples get hard when I'm nervous.

PATRICK

You make my heart skip.

MARA

Would you like a nurse?

PATRICK

I am completely in love with you. *(A first)*

MARA

*(Takes a step back)* No you're not.

PATRICK

Yes. I have been. I love you. *(Dismissing him, she turns and starts to walk home. He catches her and holds her, facing her, calling her on her bullshit)* 'Why paint your mouth that pillarbox red if you don't want my letters popped in- only mail can be expressed with any degree of certitude as to its delivery to another but I tell you I love you don't you understand I'm crazy about the way you lick stamps' In love. With you. Got it?

MARA

*(She's been bested)* I got it. *(They walk home)*

### ***Lights Change***

#### ***\*Sc. 10***

***Same evening. LEANN'S porch. MARA has shown up unannounced. LEANN leans against open door frame, a giant, has a full glass of wine in her hand. While this scene is occurring, PATRICK is dimly lit, stage right, making the bed for himself and MARA.***

MARA

He loves me.

LEANN

Yes he does.

SCOTT

*(Calling from inside the house) Yeah he does!*

MARA

No. I don't want him to.

SCOTT

*(From inside) Yeah ya do!*

LEANN

*(Unmoved) Yes you do. Really? Is it that bad? You gonna be sick?*

SCOTT

*(From inside) Do not throw up on the porch!*

LEANN

*He'd totally clean it up. (SCOTT, having overheard, appears and looks at both women. Kisses LEANN hard. Goes inside)*

MARA

He loves me.

LEANN

*Now- (Takes big drink) and I'm just spitballin' here- How 'bout you let him? (She looks at her friend, goes inside, closes the door, and turns porch light off. MARA turns, PATRICK is waiting for her, bed ready)**Lights Change as she walks over, they take off their clothes, crawl into bed, and sleep.**\*Sc. 11**Later that night, in bed. PATRICK sleeps, chest bare, in pajama bottoms. She watches him. Sensing her, he wakes, rolls onto his back and looks at her.*

PATRICK

What is going on in that massive, sexy brain of yours?

MARA

Roll cages.

PATRICK

You're this wound up over roll cages?

MARA

They keep the car from collapsing in a collision.

PATRICK

*(Chuckles)* I know what a roll cage is.

MARA

How do you know what a roll cage is?

PATRICK

I'm a boy. What's up, kitten? *(Mara loses her nerve, begins to seduce him, reaching for him. He stops her, tilts her chin up to look at her, encouraging. She ignores this and continues. He now stops her by grasping her wrists)* Mara.

MARA

I can't do this.

PATRICK

Okay. Do what?

MARA

No. I'm- I'm not falling in love with you. So there's that-

PATRICK

*(Teasing, but true)* Oh, that ship has sailed. *(His knowing propels her away from him but he won't let go of her. A stillness, then)* I wish you would.

MARA

'I don't know when the boys began to walk away with parts of me in their sticky hands-'

PATRICK

No. *(Lets her go)* Tell me yourself.

MARA

*(As she stands & states her case, he just watches her from the bed, patient)* Look- I have way too much on my plate right now and this really isn't serious anyway, and there are a million girls on campus-

PATRICK

*(Amused)* I like women.

MARA

*(Plowing ahead)* I've got a team of guys to run and our intern, Jim, was going to spray paint a car last week! Spray paint it! And then I've got a '63 Sting Ray coming in- split window- which I

freaking adore- and- oh my God I am so in love with you.

PATRICK

I know. (*Amused but kind*) Are you done?

MARA

YES!.

PATRICK

Mara. (*PATRICK now approaches her, and kisses her*) Open your eyes. (*She now kisses him with her eyes open. It is like falling into the deepest ocean*)

MARA

I love you.

PATRICK

I love you too. (*They begin to make love*)

*Lights Change*

*\*Sc. 12*

*MARA's place, the next morning.*

PATRICK

Call me when you get to Seattle?

MARA

Of course.

PATRICK

I have something for you.

MARA

Oh God, please tell me it's not brake cleaner.

PATRICK

It's not brake cleaner. (*She frisks him, ending up with her hand between his legs.*) That is DEFINITELY yours, but that's not it. (*She searches the foot of the bed*) You're lukewarm-ish. Tepid. (*She gets up, goes to shelves and begins poking around*) No. Cold. Way cold. Come back. (*He reaches into a pillowcase, pulls out a ring box*) I picked this up yesterday while you were at work. Don't panic.

MARA

What is it?

PATRICK

It's a Claddagh ring. It's an Irish wedding ring.

MARA

A wedding ring? *(He chuckles)*

PATRICK

It's a traditional thing. You've noticed mine? *(She nods)* My mother gave me this ring when I turned 21. You see how the heart is pointed toward me? This means I'm taken, I'm in a relationship, my heart is yours. If the heart points away from me, I'm available.

MARA

How long has the heart been pointed toward you?

PATRICK

I turned it around six months ago.

MARA

We've been dating for seven. *(He smiles at her)* Oh. Wow. Can I wear it as a necklace?

PATRICK

*(Good-humored)* It's 'yes' or 'no,' but no halvesies. *(She says nothing)* Alright, I know you get cranky when you feel cornered, so I'm going to the bathroom. If you want to try it on while I'm gone, great. If not, that's also completely fine. I guessed on the size. *(Kisses her head, goes off. He exits. She opens ring box, pulls it out and slides it onto her left ring finger. He comes back on. She sits on her hands. He sees the empty box. He reaches for her right hand, which is devoid of the ring. Laughing)* Did you throw it away? *(She displays her left, ringed hand. He laughs again, takes both her hands in his)* May I? I should have explained. *(He slides the ring from her left to right hand)* Heart toward you on the left hand means you're married. Heart upside down on your left hand means you're engaged. Easy tiger. *(Gently)* Do you like it? *(She nods)* Do you want to wear it?

MARA

Yes.

PATRICK

Awesome. *(A lovely, quiet moment. Something big has happened. Then:)* And before you know it you'll be knocked up. *(Huge shift)*

MARA

SONOFABITCH! *(She flies away from him, but he is having a ball and refuses to let go)*

PATRICK

You like that?

MARA

Kiss my FUCKING ASS!

PATRICK

Pick a spot. That's a lot of ballast.

MARA

You are an awful man!

PATRICK

Honey, I love your fat ass.

MARA

I gave you sex!

PATRICK

You **gave** me sex? (*He is having a lot of fun*) Are you going to show me all the other mechanics your tools when you get to Seattle? (**He pins her down**) C'mon baby, tell me you love me.

MARA

GODDAMMIT!...Do you have a hard-on? (*Imperious*) Well. You'd fucking well better.

PATRICK

That's quite a mouth on you.

MARA

So I've been told.

PATRICK

You're so well-bred. (**Pinning her arms over her head with one hand, he slips the other into her pants, letting it rest between her legs. Gleeefully:**) Mine. (*Beat*) I can feel your heartbeat.

MARA

You can? (*Puts her hand on her chest*)

PATRICK

No. (*Indicates between her legs*) Here.

MARA

You can?

PATRICK

Yeah. *(He watches with a mix of knowing, curiosity and amusement)* Don't be shy. *(She shrugs. PATRICK, sinking to floor, gently pulls up her shirt to expose her naked torso)* You're gorgeous. You are. *(He looks, touches her)* I love your hands. They're strong. Strong little hands.

MARA

They're not little.

PATRICK

Everything on you is little. Except your ego.

MARA

*Everything* on you is little.

PATRICK

*(Smirks)* No it's not. *(Continues)* The way your hip fits perfectly in my palm.

MARA

Yours fits in mine too.

PATRICK

I know. Your strong legs. Your little belly. *(She starts to protest this, he stops her)* It's beautiful. The things is, *(He pins her hands with one arm, the other hand still between her legs)* I think you'd be really sexy with a big belly. *(A moment passes, as they gaze at each other and it sinks in. Then, unable to contain himself)* You would be so sexy pregnant.

MARA

Well, I'm not having kids.

PATRICK

But then you met me.

MARA

And suddenly, sterilization seemed reasonable.

PATRICK

Just a big belly sticking out, and your little stick arms. You'd be adorable. *(She seems horrified)*

MARA

Well, if it ever happens, I'll send you a picture.

PATRICK

*(Grinning)* You wouldn't *have* to send me a picture. *(Teasing)* Don't you want me to plant a little baby inside you? *(He is serious)* A beautiful, bossy, brainy little baby? *(She pushes him away)*

*from her*) What's really interesting is how wet you got when I started talking about getting you pregnant.

MARA

Fuck off.

PATRICK

*(Crowing)* You loooooove me. You think I'm awwweesome. I can't wait.

MARA

*(Flatly)* Wait for what? *(He just smiles)*

PATRICK

*(In good humor)* Hey, do you like lighthouses?

MARA

*(Begrudging)* Maybe

PATRICK

Good. I'd like to take you to Point Reyes when you get back. Bed and Breakfast, lighthouse.

MARA

What for?

PATRICK

It's a surprise. *(Notices her confusion)* That's just the backdrop.

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 13***

***Several hours later. A hotel lobby, Seattle. MARA enters, walks to reservation desk. A man is there, on his cell, on hold. He notices her.***

CLERK

Hello, how may I help you?

MARA

Hello. I have a reservation.

CLERK

Last name?

MARA

Frasier. *(She hands the clerk her credit card)*

CLERK

Here you are. Two nights. Is that like the boxer, Joe Frazier?

MARA

No, it's a different spelling.

CLERK

Are you and Joe Frazier related?

MARA

No...

CLERK

Is he your dad? You can tell me.

DANIEL

I don't know...the resemblance is uncanny. *(MARA appreciates this. The voice is familiar. She looks, freezes)*

DANIEL

Mara. *(He approaches her, glad to see her)*

MARA

*(She is blindsided)* Daniel.

DANIEL

Mara. *(A moment, then before she can stop herself, MARA slaps him hard across the face. She gathers her luggage, does a 180 and begins to leave)*

CLERK

Miss? Reservation through Sunday?

MARA

No. Cancel it. *(She rushes out of hotel)*

CLERK

Miss! Your card! You left your card!

DANIEL

Give it to me.

CLERK

I have to charge it, there's a 24-hour cancellation policy.

DANIEL

*(He thrusts his card at the clerk)* Use mine! Just give it to me. *(Calling after her, following her)*  
Mara! *(She is gone. He re-enters, takes his card from the clerk. Thinks)*

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 14***

***Two hours later, a hotel room in a different hotel. MARA sits on the edge of the bed, still in her coat. She is still, and stunned. After a few moments, She picks up the phone and makes a call. PATRICK appears upstage of her, and answers his phone.***

PATRICK

Mara? Hey-where are you?

MARA

Hi.

PATRICK

Are you okay?

MARA

I'm okay. Yeah, I'm fine.

PATRICK

Where are you? Your phone's off. I called your hotel, but they said you cancelled your reservation.

MARA

Yeah, I did. I wanted a hotel with a pool. Where are you?

PATRICK

Picked up a shift at the bar. Are you sure you're alright? I know your mom's birthday is tomorrow. Is that it?

MARA

No, no. You remembered.

PATRICK

Of course.

MARA

Patrick- *(she stops, unsure what to say. Blurts out)* What if you're at the bar this weekend and you get hit on by someone?

PATRICK

I'll punch her lights out.

MARA

I'm serious. What if one of your nubile young students throws herself at you?

PATRICK

*(He is enjoying himself)* I'd throw her back.

MARA

Or what if one of your glamorous, foreign exes appears? And wants you back?

PATRICK

*(Crows)* You miss me.

MARA

I miss you.

PATRICK

And you want to keep me! You have excellent taste, you really do. Everyone says so.

MARA

Patrick-

PATRICK

Okay, all seriousness aside-first, I wouldn't be in the bar because I've returned to my apartment, which is in appallingly bad shape since I've spent every night with *you* for the last several months. And until I can find my couch, I'm sequestering myself here. Second, all my exes, British and Minnesotan, cannot hold a candle to you. Third, most of my students...well, most of them *are* female, but are much more interested in beer pong than alternative political practices. Which will never do.

MARA

But IF you ran into one-

PATRICK

I would say, 'No, I'm not the least bit interested to hear the lowdown on your Florida holiday.' *(She giggles)* Or, 'No, I don't want to drop over for a meal on my way home from work.' Your turn.

MARA

'No, I haven't the slightest curiosity about seeing how your attic conversion turned out.'

PATRICK

See? Easy. Which hotel are you in?

MARA

The Albertine.

PATRICK

Okay, great. Sleep well, enjoy the pool, and let me know how the meeting goes. I can't wait to go away with you. Love you.

MARA

Me too. See you Sunday.

PATRICK

Sunday. Check your suitcase. I left you something. *(He exits and she, strengthened, removes her coat and puts her suitcase on the bed. She finds an envelope with a note in her suitcase. The room phone rings. She smiles and picks up)*

MARA

'No, I'd much prefer you didn't feel obliged to honor me by staying overnight.' Daniel? *(Shaken, she hangs up and stares at the phone. It rings again. After two rings, She picks it up) What? Just leave it with the front-what? The hotel bar? (Pulls phone away, breathes, collects herself) I'll see you in fifteen minutes. (Replaces receiver, puts her coat back on. She looks at herself in the mirror. She takes off her ring.)*

*Lights Down*

**END OF ACT I**

**ACT II**

**\*Sc. 15**

*Fifteen minutes later, the hotel bar, DANIEL is standing, waiting. She enters. They take each other in.*

MARA

You have my-

DANIEL

I ordered us drinks. Gin gimlet with extra lime juice, no lime. *(She says nothing)* I called every hotel starting with 'A.' I got lucky.

MARA

And if I'd refused to come down?

DANIEL

I'd have knocked on every door till I found you. All 415 of them.

MARA

What Daniel wants, Daniel gets. You'd have gotten lucky again. I'm on the second floor.

DANIEL

Will you sit? *(She does, taking her drink, noticing his, identifying it)*

MARA

Macallan, neat.

DANIEL

*(He raises his glass to her, but she begins without him)* You look well. You look great.

MARA

You look the same.

DANIEL

The long hair suits you. *(She says nothing)* Are you still in Berkeley?

MARA

Yes.

DANIEL

You must have gotten your PhD by now. Are you teaching? Post Doc?

MARA

No. *(She will not make this easy)*

DANIEL

*(Trying)* What are you doing in Seattle?

MARA

I have a meeting.

DANIEL

For?

MARA

Business.

DANIEL

*(Friendly)* I'm here on business too, I'm with GreenForce. *(She offers him a blank, disinterested stare. He'll have to work for it)* We're new; I founded it two years ago. I'm based here, in Seattle.

MARA

You ended up in Seattle, then.

DANIEL

Yes.

MARA

Not Togo?

DANIEL

Not Togo. Mara-

MARA

What do you want from me?

DANIEL

Nothing. I don't want anything from you.

MARA

Then why are we here? May I just have my card please?

DANIEL

I want- I want to tell you I'm sorry.

MARA

For what, Daniel? For joining the circus?

DANIEL

Peace Corps.

MARA

I know it was the goddamn Peace Corps.

DANIEL

I'm sorry I didn't tell you.

MARA

You told everyone but me.

DANIEL

I know.

MARA

You told me when you got to the goddamn airport.

DANIEL

I know.

MARA

I would have gone with you.

DANIEL

Really? You would have left your studies and your work and come? Right.

MARA

I would have followed you anywhere.

DANIEL

How could I have known that? You spent more time in the library than with me.

MARA

You ask me! Your girlfriend of two years, whom you were living with. You know, I'm just glad you weren't saving the world all by your lonesome. Jessalyn, right? Jessalyn. She was so smart. Are you still together?

DANIEL

No. She left me a month into the trip. *(She laughs)*

MARA

For a tall tribesman with a spear and integrity?

DANIEL

No. She left me for a strapping Texan with a ten gallon hat...

MARA

And a ten gallon ding dong? *(She is laughing at the irony)*

DANIEL

*(Seeing the humor in it)* Yes.

MARA

Well, I heard she had ten gallons of room.

DANIEL

*(He smiles. He deserved that)* Mara, how have you been? Since I saw you last?

MARA

Really? Are we going to reconnect now?

DANIEL

I just want to know. *(She sits in silence, drinking)* I heard about Gene. My mom told me when I visited her. Mara, I am so sorry. He was a really wonderful man.

MARA

Yes he was. *(Softening)* I took over for him at the shop. I manage it.

DANIEL

Mara, that's wonderful! No more poetry?

MARA

No. I began working for him full time when you left, and that was that. He worked until he couldn't. Stubborn.

DANIEL

*(Pleased for, and proud of, her)* You run the place.

MARA

Yeah.

DANIEL

You should be very proud of yourself. *(Circling back around)* When was he diagnosed?

MARA

Eight years ago.

DANIEL

Eight years ago? I left for Togo eight years ago. When?

MARA

Spring.

DANIEL

*When?*

MARA

May 1<sup>st</sup>.

DANIEL

I left the last week in April. This happened the week after I left? Christ, Mara, why didn't you tell me?

MARA

Why would I?

DANIEL

Why wouldn't you?

MARA

I wanted to punish you. Even if you didn't know it.

DANIEL

I didn't know.

MARA

I know.

DANIEL

You hated me. *(Beat)* Do you still hate me?

MARA

You're not even on my radar anymore.

DANIEL

*(Noticing her bare left hand)* You're not married.

MARA

*(Holding up left hand)* Nope.

DANIEL

Why not?

MARA

*(Facetious, but not unkind)* Because I've been sitting and pining for you.

DANIEL

Mara-

MARA

Waiting for you to return from the jungle and rescue me.

DANIEL

*(Looks at her)* I'm not married.

MARA

Well goody gumdrops for you.

DANIEL

For fuck's sake! (*This is tentative and genuine*) Do you remember the first time I met your dad? You brought me home for a Saturday dinner. Gene's infamous barbecue chicken nights. He shook my hand and said, 'Here you are.' Then he led me out to the backyard to his massive grill.

MARA

He loved that grill.

DANIEL

It was huge! I thought it was a car. And he handed me tongs and the barbecue brush, and said 'OK. Let's see what you've got.' I was terrified. I was sure I was going to wreck everything, rendering his precious wings and thighs into cement, getting myself expelled as your boyfriend.

MARA

I could see you sweating from the kitchen window.

DANIEL

You should have brought me a beer. I was trying not to wet my pants.

MARA

I didn't know whose side to be on. My dad just wanted to protect his little girl. I was touched.

DANIEL

You loved it. And the chicken, thank you, came out great.

MARA

Yes it did. He practically adopted you after that.

DANIEL

Did he know we'd broken up? (*She looks at him*) Did you tell him I'd left you?

MARA

Not at first. I told him about a month later.

DANIEL

(*Quietly*) He was angry, wasn't he?

MARA

He said 'I'm going to cut off his dick and make him eat it.' But you were in Africa, so... lucky. (*Kind*) He loved you. You broke his heart.

DANIEL

Who did you think was calling when I phoned your room?

MARA

*(Standing)* Goodnight Daniel.

DANIEL

It is lovely to see you again, Mara. *(They make no move to go)*

MARA

Thank you for the drink. *(She leaves. He finishes his drink, realizes he still has her credit card. Leaves after her. This movement into the next scene should be continuous)* **Lights change**

*\*Sc. 15.5*

*The door to her empty, darkened hotel room opens. It is MARA returning from the bar. DANIEL'S voice calls to her from down the hallway.*

DANIEL

Mara! *(She turns to see him approaching. He now fills the doorway with her)* I forgot to give you your card!

MARA

Thank you. I don't suppose you got a receipt? Company card.

DANIEL

The hotel didn't charge you for the room.

MARA

They didn't? Why not?

DANIEL

Because they didn't.

MARA

Well, thank you for returning it.

DANIEL

This is a bit surreal, isn't it?

MARA

Yes.

DANIEL

Mara-

MARA

Did you really think my studies were more important to me than you were? Did I give you that impression?

DANIEL

Yes. I thought so.

MARA

What a catastrophic miscommunication.

DANIEL

Yes. Would an embrace be too intimate after 8 years?

MARA

Couldn't tell you. (*DANIEL steps in and wraps his arms around her. She does the same. Several moments pass. They part, he kisses her cheek, goes to leave. As she closes the door behind him, he stops it*)

DANIEL

I made a huge fucking mistake.

MARA

I slept on Leann's couch for a year. (*They pull each other close and kiss*)

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 16***

***Sunday morning. They lounge in bed.***

DANIEL

Café Max.

MARA

It was on Salem. Mochas and fat free muffins, every Sunday.

DANIEL

They weren't fat free.

MARA

Jack's Diner. Home of the skyscraper burger.

DANIEL

Perfect for two a.m. drunk munchies. You'd get the surf n turf, and I'd get the meatloaf and mashed potatoes.

MARA

They knew us by name. Remember trivial pursuit nights?

DANIEL

It was strip trivial pursuit.

MARA

That was your idea.

DANIEL

You were compliant. Remember 'Spontaneous Combustion?'

MARA

'Spontaneous Combustion!' Oh my God! I'd forgotten we used to play 'Spontaneous Combustion!' How did we come up with that?

DANIEL

Cabin fever. Boredom. General nuttiness.

MARA

Do you remember how it went?

DANIEL

We'd have a drink, then you'd stand in front of Fred.

MARA

We named the map 'Fred!' Why did we name the map?

DANIEL

I have no idea. You would stand in front of it with your eyes closed and point.

MARA

That's how we got to Santa Barbara, and the Winchester Mystery House.

DANIEL

The last trip we took-

MARA

It was August. Labor Day.

DANIEL

I was praying you'd land on Clear Lake. Mount Shasta. Lake Berryessa. Somewhere near water. Reno. God.

MARA

We left at noon. It was so hot.

DANIEL

You made me stop for chocolate. I remember you sitting in the front seat trying to eat a chocolate bar as it was melting.

MARA

You kept licking the chocolate from my fingers as you drove.

DANIEL

Do you remember that couple in the car next to us?

MARA

Yes, I certainly do.

DANIEL

He was very happy.

MARA

She was leaning over him, you could see her arm just pumping away. Their faces were so flushed.

DANIEL

It was hot.

MARA

Mmhmm.

DANIEL

Do you remember what *you* did after we saw them?

MARA

My memory's fine, I'm not the one who passed out.

DANIEL

Most amazing orgasm of my life. Ever.

MARA

I really enjoyed that.

DANIEL

I was worried the truck drivers would be able to look down and see what you were doing.

MARA

You weren't that worried.

DANIEL

No.

MARA

You were so mellow the rest of the drive. Reno. For the longest time I thought I didn't like lobster.

DANIEL

You had your first lobster at Circus Circus for .99 cents. What did you expect?

MARA

You won that blue flamingo at darts.

DANIEL

And then five grand at the slots.

MARA

What did we spend that on again?

DANIEL

The clawfoot tub for our bathroom.

MARA

I loved that tub. We both fit in that tub.

DANIEL

Stay. Take a Monday flight.

MARA

I can't.

DANIEL

You can. See, planes fly throughout the week, every day, every hour.

MARA

My projects.

DANIEL

Yes, your projects. I don't know if you're aware, but we also have automobiles in Seattle.

MARA

Yes, I'm aware.

DANIEL

What if I asked you to stay in Seattle with me?

MARA

When? Now?

DANIEL

Now. Yesterday. Five years ago.

MARA

For the week?

DANIEL

No. Forever.

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 17***

***Monday noon, hotel room. MARA'S finishing packing. She checks under the bed, spots the forgotten note from PATRICK. She opens it. PATRICK appears onstage, and voices what he has written her)***

PATRICK

'The nearness of you is broken summer grasses; The touch of you the seeding of the air And our sneezes making cornflowers pollinate. A whole kitchen is in your smell. It secretes its ingredients in small places; Busies itself in the clutter of my tongue and hands. Your belly is a steamed august pear warming the soothed out cup of my palm, Giving up the creased hub of its stem to a fingertip. Your nipples are blueberries ripening in my mouth. My cheek coasts the raw plantain of your sides; I play my teeth in the freshly turned hay of your ribcage. The neat walnut halves of your buttocks and the small open fruit of the small of your back, are cultivating suggestions in the coarse grass of my groin.' (*MARA sits for a minute, then runs to garbage can and throws up. The enormity of what she's done hits her, and she vomits again*)

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 18***

***Monday evening, MARA'S living room. It is dark. MARA enters with bag. PATRICK is there, waiting. She is not expecting him.***

PATRICK

Hi.

MARA

*(Startled)* Hi. What are you doing here?

PATRICK

I've been here since yesterday afternoon.

MARA

Oh. God. I'm sorry.

PATRICK

Do you know what it was like to have you not show up at the airport? I was going to *drive* to Seattle.

MARA

I'm so sorry.

PATRICK

*No.* I have been frantic.

MARA

I'm fine.

PATRICK

I had the hotel check your room, the bar, I even had them check the pool. Except they don't have a pool. *(She says nothing. Beat)* I left you voicemails.

MARA

Oh. *(She pulls out her phone)*

PATRICK

Are you fucking kidding me? *What* is going on?

MARA

Nothing.

PATRICK

Nothing? You were missing for 30 fucking hours. *(She says nothing)* I called Don, I called Leann, I called-

MARA

You called Don?

PATRICK

You scared the shit out of me.

MARA

I'm sorry. I did not mean to scare you. I was thinking.

PATRICK

What were you thinking about, Mar? *(He is trying to ground them, and takes her hands in his. Waits. He notices her hand is bare)* Mara. Where's your ring?

MARA

What? *(He gestures at her bare hand)* I left it in the hotel room.

PATRICK

Why did you take it off? *(She will not look him in the eye. He's no one's fool)* I knew something was up when you called me Friday begging for reassurance. *(He assesses her)* Who did you meet in Seattle?

MARA

What?

PATRICK

You heard me.

MARA

I didn't.

PATRICK

Who did you meet in Seattle?

MARA

No one. *(But he knows her, and sees through her, and she knows this)*

PATRICK

Mara.

MARA

It was Daniel. I met Daniel.

PATRICK

*(He is not expecting this)* Peace Corps Daniel?

MARA

Yes.

PATRICK

You planned a tryst with Daniel?

MARA

No.

PATRICK

This is not twenty fucking questions.

MARA

I ran into him at the first hotel. It was a total fluke. I got out of there, I left- I went to the Albertine.

PATRICK

And...he followed you?

MARA

Yes. He asked me to meet for a drink.

PATRICK

And you did.

MARA

I did.

PATRICK

You're having second thoughts because you met your ex for a drink? *(Her silence tells him everything)* I see. *(Beat)* When did you take off your ring?

MARA

What?

PATRICK

When did you take off your ring?

MARA

I took it off before anything happened-before I even went down to meet him. *(They both realize how bad this admission is)*

PATRICK

That is the most misguided consolation in the history of the world.

MARA

I didn't want him to know anything about me.

PATRICK

Does he even know I exist? *(She tries to explain it, false-starting, stumbling, until he can't take it)*

MARA

I just wanted to protect myself.

PATRICK

No. You took off your ring because you wanted there to be a possibility. Mara.

MARA

He was the love of my life!

PATRICK

Was. *(Again, less certain)* Was. *(Beat)* Mara. You are the love of my life. What is happening?

MARA

You're 29!

PATRICK

What the fuck does that mean? *(Silence, then the awful realization)* You're leaving me.

MARA

He's asked me to come to Seattle.

PATRICK

He actually invited you this time. What's he offering? Adventure? True love? Travel? *(Again, she does not answer. He is disgusted)* Who is he? Not who was he?

MARA

He lives in Seattle. He has his own company. His mom is still alive-*(She is losing steam)*

PATRICK

So's my mom. So's my dad. So are Leann's. So what? You're not going to replace your parents Mara. Cut the cord.

MARA

How dare you!

PATRICK

How dare *you!* You're going to leave me for a guy who broke your heart eight years ago by traipsing off to Africa and didn't even have the guts to tell you?! What the *fuck* are you *doing?*

MARA

He wants what I want.

PATRICK

*(Carefully)* I hope to God you are not serious. Mara. Do you love me?

MARA

Yes I love you.

PATRICK

But I'm on the marriage and baby bandwagon.

MARA

It's just not for me.

PATRICK

You are so full of shit.

MARA

Excuse me?

PATRICK

Does anyone else know how full of shit you are, Mara? What a charade. You want to get married and you want to have babies.

MARA

*I* want to get married?

PATRICK

I've seen you look at your married friends, at your goddaughter, I've seen how you bolt when I bring it up. You're so afraid of *not* getting it that you root for the opposition.

MARA

Oh, because I'm a female I must want to settle down and have kids and get fat because every woman's life isn't complete without that. Even Leann would laugh at that one.

PATRICK

Leann, who's made you her mascot for feminism? *(She has no reply. He's going to prove it)* Daniel doesn't want kids or marriage? Okay. I choose that too. *(He watches her. She says nothing)* No, if being with you means not having a family with you, or marrying you, I can do

that. You are enough for me. Honey, if you want to get your tubes tied, I will take you and hold your hand, if that's what you want. *(She flinches. He ups the ante)* If you want me to get a vasectomy, I will do it. I want *you*.

MARA

We're done here.

PATRICK

You're having this conversation

MARA

I'm exhausted.

PATRICK

Oh, I'm sure you're tapped out. *(She turns the tables, and grabs her purse and keys to leave. He is furious. He grabs her)* I love you! I am in love with you! And I know you feel the same way about me and it scares the shit out of you. Do you think I like that you slept with someone else? You're out of your fucking mind. I want to throw up *(Standoff)* Then you deserve exactly as much as you think you do.

MARA

You pushed me into this relationship. *(He gets very quiet)*

PATRICK

I'm 29. I know what I want. You're a fucking mess at 36. *(He leaves, MARA stays still for a moment, then crawls onto the couch)*

### ***Lights Change***

#### ***\*Sc. 19***

***Morning. Mara is asleep in the same position she curled up in. Mild chaos ensues: An unfriendly knocking at door leads her to an angry Leann on her doorstep)***

LEANN

I saw Patrick this morning. *(She knows the situation, and is furious with her friend)* Are you out of your fucking mind?

MARA

*(She is flustered and outed. MARA'S phone is now buzzing, incoming call, looks for and finds her phone)* Hi.

LEANN

*(She knows who the caller is)* Who is that?

MARA

*(Into phone, ignoring LEANN)* Me too. Yes.

LEANN

Hey Daniel!

MARA

*(Shoots her a furious look)* This weekend? I'm going to the cemetery this weekend. Irises? Yes, irises. I will. Next weekend? *(Looks at Leann, who hears everything)* I'll hop a flight late morning. I can't wait to see you either. Me too. Bye. *(Hangs up)*

LEANN

Are you serious? *(MARA gets ready for work)* You're really just going to throw him away? *(Trying to save her from herself)* You are going to end up with nothing. Mara.

MARA

This is not my first rodeo.

LEANN

It gets a lot harder to find someone as you get older.

MARA

How the hell would you know?

LEANN

It gets harder as you get older.

MARA

You have been married to the same guy since you were practically a child, and you have the temerity to lecture me on dating?

LEANN

*(Beat)* I don't know what temerity means! I don't think you know what you're doing.

MARA

Because I broke up with my boyfriend? Do you how patronizing that is? Then you marry him! Then you can have two perfect husbands and two perfect marriages and your perfect baby, and be on your fucking perch with your fucking fairy tale. Not everyone gets to have that

LEANN

Are you out of your mind?

MARA

Why does everyone keep asking me that?

LEANN

I want to leave my family by the side of the road, just open the door and 'get out.' I have a folder on my desktop that says 'chores' because I know he will never look in there. Bus tickets, train tickets, plane tickets, one-way. One-way. Unused, but it makes me feel better to buy them.

Perfect? Scott cried last week- I made him cry. I took off my ring and I threw it at him. The look on his face- And he starts crawling around, looking for it on his hands and knees. It was an excellent throw. I don't even know what we were fighting about. But I would never leave him, and he would never hurt me the way Daniel hurt you.. And I want you to have the same thing. *(This ridiculousness is not lost on them. Then:)* What're you doin', Mar? *(They look at each other. She makes decision)* I will support you whatever you do.

MARA

*(The storm has passed)* He cried?

LEANN

Oh man. It was bad. It was a great throw.

MARA

Leann. *(The truth)* everything still fits. He still smells the same.

LEANN

*(With great understanding)* Well, fuck.

### ***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 20***

***DANIEL'S living room in Seattle. He is explaining his work to MARA.***

DANIEL

So Marshall and I figured, what an untapped market this is, and off we went.

MARA

It's ALL military?

DANIEL

Any veteran- marines, navy, army- anything. And we feed them back into the community agriculturally. The bulk of our troops come from these communities anyway,

MARA

-Why?

DANIEL

That's...just the value system of these societies. You grow up, you're taught serve your country, you come back. But coming back- I mean, post-9-11, veterans have such a hard time find employment. I don't know why, but employers don't always consider service skills comparable to civilian skills. Even if you've been a medic. People have this bizarre fear that veterans are going to crack, go crazy, you know, 'PTSD -shoot up the place.' It's bullshit. Now they're lucky to get a

minimum wage job in a potato chip factory. So there are higher unemployment rates, more vets without insurance- it's- it's fucking unconscionable.  
So this, what we're doing-

MARA

It's a perfect circle.

DANIEL

*(Pleased)* Yeah. And now there are strong, young, able-bodied people working in farming instead of the average 57yr old farmer who's nearing retirement age.

MARA

What about the vets who aren't as able bodied?

DANIEL

We train them too. For managing, bookkeeping, purchasing. Everyone.

MARA

That's...kind of great.

DANIEL

Haiti is Marshall's brainchild. He's been working on it for a month and here we are. We're planting, building nurseries, grain storage-

MARA

Nurseries?

DANIEL

Mango, coconut, avocado, bamboo-

MARA

You're amazing.

DANIEL

This one was all Marshall. I'm just going down as a laborer this time.

MARA

I want to go with you.

DANIEL

What?

MARA

I want to go with you.

DANIEL

We leave Monday-

MARA

I know. I'll call work. Don wants me to take a break anyway.

DANIEL

Don't you have an interview?

MARA

The Chronicle piece-

DANIEL

*(Pointing out its significance)* By Bess Appleby-

MARA

She does profiles like this every month. It's no big deal, it's another 'Woman Doing a Man's Job' piece. I'm already on her radar and I'll reschedule. *(Convincing him)* She's just over in Marin.

DANIEL

Are you sure?

MARA

Yes. I want to go with you.

DANIEL

My very own tool time gal?

MARA

Sticky tent groping.

DANIEL

I would love for you to come.

MARA

I'm going to be swimming in your work shirts.

DANIEL

That'll be adorable. *(Thinks)* That's really hot. I think you should put on my Mariners shirt right now.

MARA

So yes?

DANIEL

Let's defile your passport, Miss Frasier.

*Lights Change*

*\*Sc. 21*

*PATRICK, bare stage*

PATRICK

'After you left me I had a bloodhound sniff at my chest and belly. Let it fill its nostrils and set out to find you. I hope it will find you and rip your lover's balls to shreds and bite off his cock- or at least bring me one of your stockings between its teeth.'

*Lights Change*

*\*Sc. 22*

*One month later, DANIEL'S apartment, Seattle. Stage right, STEVE sits on a bucket, wet sanding car body parts. He is on the phone with MARA, who is getting ready to go out. The following action overlaps.*

STEVE

You know, I've rebuilt plenty of Holley carbs, but that four barrel I put on the 351 Cleveland for that '69 Pony? THAT was hard as balls, man. *(The doorbell rings, MARA goes to get it, DANIEL comes in, kisses her on way to door)*

DANIEL

I got it. *(He opens door. It is SCOTT and LEANN are there)*

MARA

*(To STEVE)* Can you send me a photo?

DANIEL

*(He is glad to see them)* Leann. *(He kisses her cheek)* You look wonderful. Scott. *(Shakes his hand)* Good to see you man. Thanks for coming.

STEVE

Yeah I just did.

LEANN

*(With begrudging affection)* God, you look the same.

MARA

*(Looks at her phone)* Oh my god, that's amazing. ***(DON enters, takes phone from STEVE. As they speak on the phone, DANIEL gets drinks for SCOTT and LEANN, and he shows them the views of the water, and MARA gets dressed)***

DON

Hey kiddo. How's it up north? Got enough rain for ya? *(He laughs)* You will be happy to know that John Aaronson and his idiot brother have been banned from the shop.

STEVE

*(Calling from his perch)* Because they're twats.

MARA

What? Why? What did they do?

DON

They asked for lambo doors *(He is drawing it out)* on their Jag 'E' type. *(This is sacrilege)*

STEVE

Twats. I offered to puke on it for free.

MARA

You are making this up. ***(LEANN enters, and zips MARA's dress)***

DON

Mar, I couldn't even think to *think* to make that up. Okay kid, gotta go, I'll talk to you soon.

MARA

Tell everyone I said 'hi.' And good luck at Autorama! *(Hangs up. To LEANN)* Thanks.

LEANN

This place is amazing.

MARA

Thank you for coming.

LEANN

Of course. We've never been to Seattle. Nice change of scenery. *(She knows MARA is waiting)*  
It's actually good to see him. It's like the old gang again. I get it. Scott asked me if he should punch him, on the drive over from the hotel. But Daniel gave him like 80 yr. old scotch, so- *(A gift)* I get it. **DANIEL knocks, then enters)**

DANIEL

Hi. *(Sees MARA in the dress. To LEANN)* Isn't she gorgeous? *(He kisses MARA)* Ready to go?

***Lights Change as everyone exits.***

***\*Sc. 23***

***DANIEL and MARA enter his living room, returning from dinner.***

MARA

I can barely stand up straight, I ate so much.

DANIEL

I'm going to call you 'Hoover.'

MARA

After the president, of course.

DANIEL

Yes, of course.

MARA

Lobster bisque-I didn't know if I wanted to swim in it or marry it.

DANIEL

Stick with me, toots.

MARA

And I'll be 300lbs.

DANIEL

You'd be beautiful at 400lbs.

MARA

Good answer. Were you given a manual?

DANIEL

I've been around.

MARA

Uh-huh.

DANIEL

I've got a few miles on you.

MARA

A few years.

DANIEL

That too.

MARA

You wear it well, Mr. Cooley.

DANIEL

How gracious of you to say, Mrs. Cooley.

MARA

What?

DANIEL

How gracious-

MARA

No-the other part.

DANIEL

Mrs. Cooley?

MARA

That part.

DANIEL

Has a nice ring to it, no pun intended. Mara Cooley.

MARA

Pun?

DANIEL

Ring? (*Excited*) I originally wanted to wait, to do this in Prague, but you looked so pretty and so happy slurping your bisque-who taught you to eat soup?-I couldn't wait. (*He gets down on one knee*) Mara Mara quite contrara, I like to think I'm older and wiser. (*Pulls out a ring*) Will you marry me?

MARA

(*Still playing catch-up*) Prague?

DANIEL

Is that a yes?

MARA

I'm shocked. I don't know what to say.

DANIEL

Say yes. God, let's get married. (*She is dumbfounded. He slides the ring onto her finger. It fits perfectly. He stands, and kisses her*) I'll be right back.

MARA

(*Looking at ring*) Holy shit. (*She goes to make herself a drink. She sees two airline tickets on counter. Daniel comes back in, beaming*)

DANIEL

(*He has a photo*) I found this last week. It's us in front of our house on Euclid, the day we moved in. (*He picks her up and spins her around*) My beautiful fiancé. Let's go have engaged sex. (*He throws her over his shoulder and heads for bedroom*)

MARA

Daniel! (*Smacks him on the butt*)

DANIEL

Don't worry, it'll still be hot.

MARA

Daniel! (*She smacks him on the butt again till he stops, and shifts her so she is upright in his arms*) Prague?

DANIEL

Have you been? You'll love it, it's gorgeous. The beer is cheap, the architecture is amazing-

MARA

You planned an engagement trip, before you proposed?

DANIEL

No, no no no. I have a meeting with the guy who coordinates getting the machinery to the farms in Eastern Europe. I figured you would love to come, and see Prague with me. And I thought it would be the perfect setting to get engaged.

MARA

How long?

DANIEL

We can be engaged forever however short or long you like.

MARA

No-how long is the Prague trip?

DANIEL

It's only five days, but from there, you can come to Serbia with me. We launched two dairy farms there last year, and we've gotten more updated equipment-

MARA

Serbia.

DANIEL

Oh, I'm going to take you to Montenegro. It's called the Pearl of the Mediterranean.

MARA

*(Holding ticket)* This leaves in seventy two hours. I don't-

DANIEL

I'll take you shopping tomorrow. I know I didn't give you fair warning.

MARA

You didn't ask me.

DANIEL

Would you like to come to Prague? 'Yes.'

MARA

This is incredibly generous and sweet, the gesture is-Daniel, I have commitments. I have to tie things up back home, and I have interviews here.

DANIEL

I know, I know, you can push them back. This'll be a great trip, it's three weeks, and you'll have plenty of time when we get back.

MARA

I can't push them back. The guys expect me to be around for another month.

DANIEL

Flight's on Friday.

MARA

I still have to pick my replacement.

DANIEL

That's really Don's job

MARA

I still have to find a job here-

DANIEL

Don't worry so much. You'd knock anyone's socks off.

MARA

No, I- I really can't- do that-

DANIEL

You can't or you won't? I need you with me, Mara.

MARA

You need me with you? Why?

DANIEL

What do you mean, why? Because I love you. Because married couples travel together.  
*(Sheepishly, earnestly)* How else am I going to save the world?

MARA

*(Deep breath. Forging ahead, pragmatic)* Okay. After Prague and Beijing, and the Trans-Siberian Express-

DANIEL

Wait- hey Mar? Why don't we get married in Serbia? I have a friend who can marry us. And we can take the train from Slovenia to Italy. Venice. It could be our honeymoon. And if we have time, in Italy, we can enjoy all that food.

MARA

Do you remember, in Seattle, you said, 'come to Seattle, they have cars in Seattle?'

DANIEL

Yes.

MARA

You're never *in* Seattle.

DANIEL

But you'll be with me.

MARA

When does it end?

DANIEL

When does what end?

MARA

The traveling, globe-trotting-

DANIEL

*(Puzzled)* There are always going to be wars, there will always be vets, and there'll always be communities to sustain. It doesn't end.

MARA

When will you be done?

DANIEL

*(Puzzled)* ...I won't be.

MARA

*(Working very hard to be amenable)* When will it be enough for you to work on projects here-only here? *(More pointedly)* When will you be content to come home on a Tuesday night and have dinner on the patio?

DANIEL

*(Thoroughly confused)* You want to barbecue? *(Trying his hand at this)* Mara, I want us to build irrigation systems together. I want to explore the world with you.

MARA

But it's *your* work, and *your* world.

DANIEL

Mara.

MARA

I'm jeopardizing *my* opportunities.

DANIEL

It was one interview. You helped me stabilize a community!

MARA

*(It dawns)* You expected me to drop everything and follow you.

DANIEL

*(He is getting angry)* You were pissed at me eight years ago because I didn't ask you to go to Africa with me, and now you're pissed because I **automatically** included you?

MARA

Turn my back on my life and my work and follow you like a little puppy dog.

DANIEL

Well, you dropped everything pretty fucking fast to go build grain silos with me. You set the precedent.

MARA

Okay. That's fair. But I can't just tag along to keep you warm.

DANIEL

You seemed pretty happy keeping me warm in that tent.

MARA

I went to Haiti to show you that I love you and support you and I think what you do is amazing.

DANIEL

Do you love me?

MARA

I have been in love with you for 10 fucking years.

DANIEL

*(Appealing to her, convincing her)* Babe, then why build a car when you can build a better world with me?

MARA

*(Incredulous)* Babe. That is the worst greeting card pig slop I've ever heard.

DANIEL

*(Diffusing where this is going)* Alright. Let's not make a mountain out of a molehill.

MARA

*(Chastising herself)* You never said ‘my home is in Seattle,’ you said, ‘I’m based in Seattle.’ I should have listened harder.

DANIEL

You really want to wrench on cars in a dingy garage like a little monkey?

MARA

*(She’s reached her limit)* I am good at what I do. I can do a frame off restoration of any car on the planet. I can take any car and bring it back to life- and it’ll be better. I am good at what I do. I’m continuing the legacy of one of the best men I have ever known. What I do may be smaller than what you do, but it is not less. *(She realizes the precariousness, and the reality of their situation. The truth, kindly)* I’m not what you need. *(The following is loving and kind)*

DANIEL

*(Sensing he’s lost her)* You’re what I want. You’re the one I- *(Falters, then simply)* you’re the one.

MARA

*(Shaking her head, then, knowingly)* There’ll be other girls after me. Lots of girls.

DANIEL

You never said yes to marrying me.

MARA

You never let me answer. *(She takes off ring, hands it to him. He doesn’t take it. She places it on table)*

DANIEL

Keep it.

MARA

I can’t.

DANIEL

I will buy you your very own garage.

MARA

Daniel. You are a very good man.

DANIEL

Please don’t go.

MARA

*(She backs away)* I'm going to stay with Scott and Leann tonight, and catch a flight home in the morning.

DANIEL

Would you at least stay with me tonight?

MARA

*(Shakes her head)* Stay away from the phone book.

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 24***

***PATRICK, alone onstage. He holds a book, in which is a poem he reads***

PATRICK

'I phoned from time to time, to see if she's changed the music on her answerphone. "Tell me in two words," goes the recording, what you were going to tell in a thousand.' I peer into that thought, like peering out to sea at night, hearing the sound of waves breaking on rocks, knowing she is there, listening, waiting for me to speak. Once in a while she'll pick up the phone and her voice sings to me out of the past. The hair on the back of my neck stands up as I catch her smell for a second.'

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 25***

***MARA'S living room, the next night. A knock at her front door. She answers, it is DANIEL.***

DANIEL

Don't panic. I'm not going to throw myself at you and hold on till you take me back. Unless you want me to.

MARA

Dan-

DANIEL

Don't say anything either-I called Bess Appleby this morning and told her you did me a huge favor, stepping in when one of my colleagues fell through, helping with the Haiti project. I told her I commissioned you as my old friend and feminist example, that the grain mill you were literally constructing with your bare hands, will enable the women of the community to mill their corn and millet close by, rather than traveling long distances on foot, and that's why you missed the appointment with her last month. *(Explaining)* Haiti's a matriarchal society, so... she'll be calling you to reschedule the interview. *(She is speechless)* Oh, and you also stepped in as my translator. I hope you know French. And Spanish. I told her you'd helped me before in Ecuador.

MARA

You just made a call?

DANIEL

And I donated an obscene amount to an anti-FGM group she champions.

MARA

Why?

DANIEL

Because I love you, I'm going to love you till I die, and I want you to be doing what *you* love, like I am. Okay! Okay, now just point me in the direction of a stiff drink, or five, and then I have to fly to Prague tomorrow night.

MARA

There's Wilk-no. Not Wilke's. Don't go to Wilke's. The Reef, corner of Brever and Feldman. It's a dive bar.

DANIEL

Kick ass, Frasier. *(They share a look, a last look, he leaves)*

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 26***

***The Reef. PATRICK is there, drinking with the bartender. DANIEL joins them. The bartender pours him a shot without being asked. They drink heavily throughout the scene.***

DANIEL

Ah, Jesus. Do I look that bad? *(BARTENDER just smiles knowingly. He slugs the shot)*

PATRICK

'Forgetting someone,' *(He is getting drunk)* 'is like forgetting to turn off the light in the backyard so it stays lit all the next day. But then it is the light that makes you remember.' ***(Bartender has poured another shot for each; they down them)***

DANIEL

*(Guessing correctly)* A woman.

PATRICK

A woman.

DANIEL

*(Solidarity)* A woman. *(They drink again. Lights change, indicating passing of time. An hour later. They are now both drunk)* She was like, ‘You looked for a flower and found a fruit. You looked for a well and found a sea. You looked for a woman and found a soul-you are disappointed.’

PATRICK

*(The mood is contagious)* ‘My Bed? I like to leave it rumpled, pillows strewn, sheets tossed from one side to the other, the duvet dripping on the floor, looking steamy, even though you haven’t touched me for a week.’ I haven’t seen her in two months.

DANIEL

That’s a long time! Do you remember what she looks like?

PATRICK

I remember everything.

DANIEL

She left you?

PATRICK

She left me.

DANIEL

So did mine.

PATRICK

Oh man, that sucks. You’re awesome.

DANIEL

I’m a jerk.

PATRICK

She said that?

DANIEL

No. I did.

PATRICK

Mine left me for someone else. He’s a hot shot in ecology. Calligraphy. Telepathy. Whatever. Goddammit.

DANIEL

I *hate* calligraphy.

PATRICK

But me, I'm an anfra – ansrop- I'm Indiana Jones, man. We're like the same guy. I don't have a whip. (*Becomes urgent; the answer to all his problems*) I don't have a whip.

DANIEL

I know where we can buy a whip. Shit, that's in Thailand. (*Bad movie-Nazi accent*) Soo, Dokta Jonez, ver iz zeh stat-you?

PATRICK

(*In an equally bad accent*) Vith your girl spy I just made zeh sex vith. Oh, no, Indy's not German.

DANIEL

Their faces melted. I do adventure stuff too. I fly bi-planes. I water people. I jump over snakes.

PATRICK

Have you ever been shot at?

DANIEL

I had a kid throw a rock at me in Guatemala.

PATRICK

The thing is Danny- can I call you Danny? The thing is I'm not pissed anymore. I mean I'm pissed (*Refers to drink*) but I'm not mad. I just-if I was to run into that guy, the one she left me for, I wouldn't dropkick him in the chest. No, I just miss her. I want her to be happy.

DANIEL

You're a good guy. You should come to Prague with me. Drink beer, hang out. Prague's got some great bars and discos, and we should go. You should come. Forget the girl, leave tomorrow.

PATRICK

Tomorrow? I'm going to Michigan tomorrow. Dude, I would so go.

DANIEL

You're going to Detroit? Why would you go to Detroit?

PATRICK

No, not Detroit.

DANIEL

No, Michigan's in Detroit.

PATRICK

No it's not. I'm going home for a week. My folks are having their big summer barbecue. It's on a lake.

DANIEL

That's good, in case there's a fire.

PATRICK

Stop drop and roll.

DANIEL

Like a roly poly.

PATRICK

I used to step on those when I was a kid. I still feel bad about it.

DANIEL

When I was a kid, I used to wonder if I was retarded and everyone knew it but me.

PATRICK

You wanna come with me? I was gonna ask my girlfriend to go but she dumped me before I could ask her.

DANIEL

What a loser. Nah, man, I have to uh...I uh...oh man I fucked up. *(The men are starting to fade)*

PATRICK

I'm fucked up too.

DANIEL

You're fine, man, you're clear as a bell.

PATRICK

I think - *(They all have one more drink and the lights begin to dim)* – your girl is a mormon-*(corrects himself)* -moron. You wanna play darts?

*(The men, already woozy, fall asleep, heads on the bar)*

### ***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 27***

***Door to PATRICK'S place. MARA, outside, knocks. After a moment, PATRICK opens the door, hungover. He is not expecting her, but gives nothing away.***

MARA

Hi. *(He says nothing)* I brought your shirt, the one I- it's clean. *(She hands it to him, he does not take it)*

PATRICK

Did he dump you?

MARA

*(Hurt but understanding)* No, he didn't dump me. No. He proposed.

PATRICK

*(He is not going to make this easy for her)* Did you lose that ring, too?

MARA

I said 'no.' It's over.

PATRICK

But it was your chance with the love of your life.

MARA

It was *a* chance, not *the* chance.

PATRICK

Too bad. From your description, he seemed like a catch.

MARA

He is. Just not for me.

PATRICK

Maybe *I'll* call him.

MARA

Good luck. He's in Prague by now. *(PATRICK recalls his night in the bar with DANNY, makes a connection, and realizes the man she left him for is actually decent)* How are you?

PATRICK

Great.

MARA

And teaching?

PATRICK

It's great, too. I gave a lecture last night on Collective Cultural Responses to Disaster.

MARA

I know. I caught it.

PATRICK

You were there?

MARA

I figured I could lie low with 250 students. I really enjoyed it. You were...terrific.

PATRICK

I mixed up two images.

MARA

You were electric.

PATRICK

Why did you come?

MARA

I wanted to see *you*. Doing what you're good at-and you're so good at it. See you doing what you're passionate about. You make it interesting.

PATRICK

Disaster?

MARA

Everything.

PATRICK

Thank you. I actually meant why did you come here?

MARA

You were right. I bolted. Even if Daniel hadn't come along, I would have fled. Intimacy scares the hell out of me- and you knew it. But Daniel was convenient and recapturing what Daniel and I had was less threatening than being who you let me be.

PATRICK

Threatening? You felt threatened?

MARA

It was an imaginary threat.

PATRICK

Got it.

MARA

With you, 'the terror is, all promises are kept.'

PATRICK

Sounds like you figured out what you want.

MARA

I always knew. I finally admitted it. The sky's still intact. *(She waits for him to ask what it is she wants. He does not)* I want a family.

PATRICK

I know. I think the work you've done is commendable. Good. I hope you take this honesty into your next relationship. Take care of yourself, Mara. *(He closes the door. She stands there a moment, disbelieving. She begins to walk away and stops. She is eviscerated)*

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 28***

***Thursday morning, a few weeks later. MARA and STEVE are in her office. She looks awful.***

MARA

So the TDI Cup-

STEVE

Pitchford Volkswagen, pick up the Jettas on Monday.

MARA

You got it. *(He goes to leave)* Oh, and Steve, stop telling Latrice to order a drum of brake light fluid.

STEVE

*(Devilish)* Was she mad?

MARA

*(Reading from post-it)* 'I will cut you another asshole, asshole.' *(He laughs)*

STEVE

Hey. You need anything? *(He waits)*

MARA

Nope. Tell Jeanine I said 'hi.' *(He exits. MARA pours herself a tumbler of Southern Comfort, and works. DON comes in.)* Hey, what're you doing here?

DON

What are you doing here? Heard you let the guys off early.

MARA

Yeah, thought they might like a longer weekend. Some of that *(Gestures to the shop)* I can take care of myself.

DON

Couldn't *you* use a break?

MARA

Nah. You need me too much.

DON

*(DON watches her, decides to say what's been on his mind for a while)* Mara. What happened? *(MARA shakes her head, keeps working. She's not playing dumb, she's closed as a clam)* Know when you came to me a little while back, told me you were going to Seattle? It was like a record scratching. This past year you have- you've laughed so much more. And then boom. Seattle. For this other guy? The one you were destroyed over before? *(By way of explanation)* Your dad was worried sick about you, he gabbed like a girl. This didn't make sense. Mara, why would you walk away from everything? From your family? From Patrick? *(MARA looks at him)* We're your family, like it or not. I know you thought you wanted Seattle, you wanted that guy, but I gotta tell you, you nearly gave me a heart attack. And I'm sorry you're sad but... Jesus, it's like your dad died all over again. What happened to Patrick? I liked him. *(Smiles)* You two had this crazy monkey passion thing goin' on. I thought you were gonna *marry* that guy. Have a couple of kids.

MARA

*(Pointed, pained)* I wouldn't be fit under the car.

DON

I was hoping we'd have more munchkins running around here again. Mara, We want you to be happy. We'll make fun of you for getting fat, don't worry, but nobody here would be disappointed. We'd be thrilled. Doesn't mean you couldn't do your job.

MARA

*(Confessing)* I went to his house and I said I was sorry, and I told him why I did what I did.

DON

And?

MARA

He's done.

DON

You broke his heart, kiddo.

MARA

Yes I did.

DON

You really broke his heart.

MARA

I don't know what to do.

DON

Did you tell him that? (*MARA looks at him*) Jill and I are huge football fans. When we first married, she worked at the phone company and her boss, Sheila, invited us over to her place for this swanky dinner party. Some of Jill's co-workers were there, some of her boss' friends. We were young, 24, 25. After dinner we're outside around the pool having drinks and I hear on the TV that the Cowboys—my team--had won. Jill hated the Cowboys, always gave me shit for it, so I picked her up and tossed her in the pool.

MARA

(*MARA pours DON a drink*) Oh god, you didn't.

DON

Yep. I wasn't even drunk, I just thought it would be funny.

MARA

That's not funny.

DON

No. I tried to help her out of the pool, but no. Sheila went upstairs with her to give her dry clothes, and Jill took the car, left me there. Wouldn't talk to me for a week; I was sleeping at my brother's. I apologized, begged her to forgive me. When she finally did speak to me she said she didn't trust me, and wondered if she'd made a mistake in marrying me. I was shocked. (*The answer*) Thank God for my sister-in-law. I'd undermined and humiliated my wife. That made me sick. I told Jill I understood why she felt the way she did. She listened this time, but, it took a while for her to trust me again. She needed proof I wouldn't ever do anything so careless to hurt her again. At least, not on a regular basis. I stopped apologizing for myself; I took care of her. She did the same. Our 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary is next month. (*Beat*) Look at how he was affected by what you did, not just what you learned from it.

MARA

Who are you?

DON

Not bad for an old fat guy, huh?

MARA

You are not old.

DON

What are your plans this weekend?

MARA

I don't have any. *(DON looks at her)* Yes I do.

*Lights Change*

**\*Sc. 29**

***Saturday morning. MARA approaches PATRICK'S front door. Hesitates, then She knocks. A moment passes then Patrick answers the door, a coffee mug in his hand.***

PATRICK

*(Flatly, and with finality)* I forgive you.

MARA

That's not why I'm here. It finally occurred to me how much pain and heartache I caused you. I'm so sorry. You would never have treated me with so little care. I really hope this won't sour you on future romantic endeavors. *(She begins to back off)* Go, drink your coffee. Thank you for listening. *(Awkwardly, she turns, finds the right direction, and walks off)*

PATRICK

What was it? *(She stops, turns)* I dropped you off at the airport, and you changed your mind.

MARA

You asked me to go away with you and were cryptic – because you wanted to surprise me. The ring, talk of babies; I thought you were going to propose which is actually not so terrifying and judging by your expression, not what you were going to ask me.

PATRICK

Did you think I was so blinded by you I lost my faculties? A week in Michigan. Barbecue and softball. My parents. That doesn't seem very scary.

MARA

I can't throw. I hope you had a good time.

PATRICK

I was miserable.

MARA

I'm sorry.

PATRICK

Hang on. *(He disappears into house. She is unsure whether to follow him so she waits. He reappears with a second mug and hands it to her)*

MARA

Thank you.

PATRICK

*(Thinks)* I knew you were skittish. I thought I knew what you wanted, and what was best for you, but...that's pretty patronizing. You weren't open to it yet. I should have backed off.

MARA

*(Sips her coffee. Surprised)* Is this- sweetener? You hate sweetener- why do you- *(He doesn't answer)* It's perfect. *(Takes another drink)* Anyway, I'm going to let you get on with your day. Thank you for the coffee. *(She steps closer and offers him the mug. He doesn't look at her)*

PATRICK

Have you ever missed someone so profoundly, you physically ached?

MARA

Yes.

PATRICK

Good. *(She takes this as a dismissal, and turns to leave)* 'Since that day, I have not moved the pieces on the board.'

MARA

What? *(She stops, stunned)* You've been waiting?

PATRICK

I don't know what the fuck I've been doing but it's been awful.

MARA

I'm so sorry.

PATRICK

*(Seriously)* You have one of the biggest egos I have ever encountered. It's not good.

MARA

*(Genuinely)* I know.

PATRICK

*(Looks at her)* Mara. Kiss me. *(She does)*

Would you- PATRICK

Yes. MARA

What about- PATRICK

Yes. MARA

But you don't- PATRICK

Yes. MARA

Are you serious? PATRICK

Sometimes. (They stare at each other. She kisses him again) MARA

***Lights Change***

***\*Sc. 30***

***PATRICK's front porch. He sits on the ground outside, reading a car book. MARA enters from inside his house with an envelope in hand. She wears the Claddagh ring on her left hand. She sits next to Patrick, hands him the envelope***

It's from Daniel. PATRICK

I know. MARA

(He opens it) PATRICK

'You came last season and made penny candies with your thumbs  
I stole you and ate you  
And my feet crushed your wrappers in a thousand streets  
You hurt my teeth You put pimples on my face you were never anything for health  
You were never too vitamin You dirtied hands

And since you were stickier than glue  
And never washed away  
You stained something awful.'

*(He hands it to her. She gazes at it, makes choice. Slowly tears it in two, places it on ground)*

Yes, you did. *(She leans into him)*

***Lights Down***

***\*The End\****

*\*Playwright's note: for curtain call, the actors playing PATRICK and MARA should enter to take their bow together from opposing wings. Mara will be in a short white dress with the Claddagh ring on her left hand, heart pointed inward. They will meet center stage, embrace, then come downstage for their bow. 'Japanese Art' by Theresa Andersson will be used for the curtain call.*