

GOING SOLO

A stage play by

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FADE IN:

EXT. DEBBIE HAMMEL'S HOUSE SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - MORNING

A 'Hammel's Happy Home Realty' sign on a manicured front lawn has a subtitle on the sign that says 'Buy One Get One Free'.

An alarm clock SOUND interrupts the early morning traffic SOUNDS of cars passing by.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A converted living room has 3 desks each with a PC.

Family photos hang on the wall along with NYC wall maps. Wall cabinets finish the realty office look.

The alarm sounds for a few seconds, then ceases.

EXT. PORCH AND FRONT YARD AREA - CONTINUOUS

DAN TARENTINO, 50s, wearing an ill-fitting company uniform, steps out of the van with a bouquet of roses. He steps to the porch, and places the roses on the settee bench.

After he combs his hair with his fingers and produces a floral aerosol can, he sprays the flowers with two quick hits, then both his underarms with a quick spurt. He looks in the window, hesitates, then leaves.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

DEBBIE HAMMEL, 50s, and dressed in business casual, enters the office and turns on the PCs. She then hits the message machine on the telephone and a message plays.

TAPED MESSAGES (V.O.)

Debbie, the two-family on Front St.
is now in contract. We gotta talk.

DEBBIE

You can't afford it, Jeremy.

KITCHEN

A mini CD player, CDs, a headset, sun-glasses and a beach hat lie on the kitchen table when Debbie enters, flips through her CDs and selects the one that reads WENDY'S 2011 AUDITION TAPE: BOSTON PHILHARMONIC.

She inserts the CD as we spot a photo of a woman and an unknown woman pinned on the fridge. She WASHES the dishes.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. AN APARTMENT SOMEWHERE IN BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

WENDY HAMMEL, mid-twenties, WASHES the last dish, and her hands, while listening to the radio.

RADIO (V.O.)

If the Yankees didn't beat the Red Sox two days ago, Ortiz had a good shot at most RBIs in post season. Now it's who do we root for in the World Series? Yankees or the Angels?

Wendy shuts the radio off then latches her suitcase before heading out the door. As she leaves she looks at the same photo on her fridge that her mother just looked at.

WENDY

Here I come, Mom, ready or not.

INT. DEBBIE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Finished with the dishes, Debbie hurriedly dries her hands.

She dons her sun glasses and beach hat, then heads outdoors.

EXT. DEBBIE'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Debbie exits the house, spots the flowers on the bench, and reads the card. She then takes the flowers inside the house.

A BUS passes by (establishing shot for a later scene.) Debbie comes back out, sits on the settee bench and waits.

INT. LOGAN AIRPORT - BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

Wendy rushes through a crowd of travelers while rolling her traveling case behind her. She almost knocks someone over.

EXT. DEBBIE'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

The postal van pulls up, and the uniformed mailman, RALPH, 50s, hits the horn then gets out and puts the mail in Debbie's mailbox. He walks up to Debbie who stands.

RALPH

Good morning, Mrs. Hammel.

DEBBIE

Good Morning, Ralph. What do you have for me today?

RALPH

Well, let's go see.

Ralph helps her slowly step off the porch. As they approach cracks enroute to the mailbox, Debbie hesitates.

RALPH

I know. Don't step on the cracks or else you'll break your mother's back. We got this, Mrs. Hammel.

DEBBIE

Mrs. Aldrich isn't looking, is she?

Ralph pretends not to see Mrs. Aldrich staring from a window in a house nearby.

RALPH

No. Not today, Mrs. Hammel.

DEBBIE

Good.

As they approach the crack in their path--

RALPH

Three breaths now. One. Two. Three.

They hop over a crack and continue their trek to the mailbox.

INT. PLANE AT LOGAN AIRPORT - BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

Wendy looks out the window and watches airport PERSONNEL wearing RED SOX hats as they hustle baggage into the plane.

A middle-aged woman, sits next to Wendy.

A MALE ATTENDANT approaches Wendy and the Woman.

MALE ATTENDANT

Would you like a pillow?

The Woman takes one and Wendy shakes her head. Seconds later a FEMALE ATTENDANT walks by. Wendy stops her.

WENDY

May I have pillow, please?

EXT. MAILBOX BY DEBBIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Ralph and Debbie reach the mailbox.

RALPH

Okay. Let's see what we got?

Ralph pulls out the mail and flips through it.

RALPH

Bills. Bills. Oo! What's this? From
your daughter! Overnight mail. Wow!

Debbie takes the mail except for the envelope from Wendy.

DEBBIE

Would you open it for me, Ralph?

After handing Debbie the other mail, Ralph opens the envelope, pulls out the letter and a photo falls out. Debbie picks it up and shows it to Ralph.

RALPH

Wearing a Yankee hat while playing
the cello. Wow! Interesting.

DEBBIE

Would you read the letter, please?

RALPH

(reading)

Hi, Mom. I'll be performing a solo
with the Boston Philharmonic concert
this Friday night at Carnegie Hall.
I'll be home Thursday. I have three
complimentary tickets for you. Don't
be upset with me for not calling. I
know we have not spoken in a while
but let's put our grievances aside.
We'll talk this weekend. Wendy.

Debbie appears stoic, undiscerning.

RALPH

Are you OK, Mrs. Hammel?

DEBBIE

Yes. Yes. I'm fine.

RALPH

Are you ready to go back?

DEBBIE

I'll manage, Ralph. Thank you. See you tomorrow.

Ralph leaves. Debbie stares at the photo, pockets the it as she gets up. She moves back to the porch herself.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Debbie walks in and slams the letter on her desk. She reaches in the drawer for her portable tape player, and turns it on.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

The deep breathing exercises you learned in Part-One help counteract irrational thoughts that sometimes provoke feelings of panic and helplessness in our daily lives...

She deep breathes, then turns the recorder off.

EXT. THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR - CONTINUOUS

Loud, muffled voices - arguing - introduce unseen characters. The back door displays a "VA" emblem with an American flag.

PATRICIA O'NEIL, middle aged, pirited and casually dressed, bursts through her back door carrying a briefcase.

PAT

Tenure in 2 years, Trevor. Two more freaking' years. You'd throw that away on this half-assed idea that one more man with a gun is going to make a difference in this world. I know I raised you with more smarts than that! And now I'm late, dammit!

TREVOR'S VOICE (O.S.)

I told you, it's just an interview
for a desk job. Besides, you only
work next door, Mom. So, chill out.

Pat storms of the house then stops. She forgot something.

TREVOR O'NEIL (20's) appears in boxer shorts and a muscle T-shirt, holding a mug. He takes a sip and makes a face as if to say, "Tastes awful." He hands her the mug.

PAT

This, coming from a grown man who
still drinks kool-aid at lunch.

She grabs the mug and leaves to Debbie's house next door.

A bus passes by. She looks at her watch and enters the house.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pat enters the office, sees the roses sitting on her desk,
and hides them inside the wall closet.

Pat sees KAT DEVINE, also pushing the limits of middle age,
through the window coming from the bus stop.

Pat looks up at the wall clock and adjusts it from 9:03 to
9:10 just as Kate enters the house.

Pat hits a button on he phone.

TELEPHONE MESSAGE

Hello. I'm calling for Pat O'Neil.
We met at the VFW cake sale last
week. I'm selling my house. I need
to know one thing right off: are you
Republican? I only do business with
conservatives. I'll call back later.

The machine clicks off and --

PAT

I remember you. I can't get that
raspberry frosting out of my dress.

Pat pretends to work as Kate explodes into the Realty room.

KATE

Oh, Pat, what a morning. Samantha
... Whew... catch my breath...
Samantha was in labor... I had to--

PAT

I don't want to hear it, Kate. It's
always something with you and the
damn cats. Get rid of them?

KATE

I will not. They are all soulmates
from a previous life.

PAT

If you had a life you wouldn't need
the cats. You're ten minutes late.

Kate looks up at the clock and--

KATE

Dear Dorothy, give me patience
(sniffing)
I smell flowers.

PAT

It's all in your head.

KATE

Don't forget that go-see at eleven.

PAT

He cancelled. His dog died.

KATE

How sad. When Celine passed on...

PAT

Enough with your cats already. Now go check the MLS listings.

KATE

Alright, alright. But I just have to ask you now if I could leave a little early today? The new kittens need a warming pad, and I...

FOYER

Debbie sneaks down the stairs and quietly exits the house wearing a hat, shades and a head set--

PAT (O.S.)

Shit, Kate. This is a business, not the ASPCA.

KATE (O.S.)

Hey. Cats are people, too.

PAT (O.S.)

Unless they buy a house or pay rent, they are not an item of interest in this office. Go check the damn listings. Now. Chop, chop.

IN THE OFFICE

Kate reads the letter lying on Debbie's desk.

KATE

Oh, my God! Look at this. Wendy is playing at Carnegie Hall tomorrow.

Pat rushes to her side and reads the letter.

PAT

With the Boston Philharmonic!
(Yelling)
Debbie! We're here. Where are you?

Undetected, Debbie can be seen through the window carefully measuring her steps down the driveway to the street.

KATE

Carnegie Hall! Imagine! I'll need something formal to wear.

PAT

Why don't you do a séance and summon Vera Wang to help you find a dress?

KATE

Psychics don't do seances. Why are you being so difficult?

PAT

Look! Debbie hasn't seen Wendy in two years. The letter must've freaked her out. Where is she?

EXT. STREET BY DEBBIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Debbie hesitates. An ambulance is some distance down the road, but its siren is getting louder causing Debbie anxiety.

Interlacing her present-day experience with her FLASHBACK--

EXT. A ROAD SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

An ambulance siren blares as it speeds down a dark street. A car behind it swerves because of the torrential rain and raging winds. Lighting bolts stab at the darkness.

A falling tree just misses the speeding car and a GUTTURAL NOISE inside the car seems unrelated to the present danger.

The unseen driver swerves to miss a windblown garbage can. In the car a GROAN turns into a GROWL which turns into a SCREAM.

BACK TO PRESENT-DAY

Debbie steps off the curb. The siren gets louder.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT - CONTINUING THE FLASHBACK

Ambulances are lined up and block the EMERGENCY ENTRANCE.

HARRY HAMMEL, 38, frazzled, parks the car on the lawn, gets out and struggles to get a pregnant Debbie out of the car.

BACK TO PRESENT-DAY

Debbie crosses the street; the ambulance bears down on her.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT - CONTINUING THE FLASHBACK

Harold maneuvers Debbie inside where medics, doctors and nurses are yelling orders at each other. The power goes out and the hospital lights sputter and fail.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY -- END OF FLASHBACK

INT. STREET BY DEBBIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The ambulance comes to a SCREECHING halt just as Debbie falls curbside into several garbage cans. The ambulance DRIVER bolts out of his car and runs over to Debbie.

DRIVER

Lady, I almost hit you. Are you OK?

In the background Pat and Kate are running out of the house, down the walkway and across the street. As they reach Debbie--

DRIVER

I'm sorry. She came out of nowhere.

PAT

We saw the whole thing. It's not your fault. Go. We got this.

The driver hesitantly leaves, and Pat and Kate look on with disgust in their faces because a garbage can has upended on top of her and has spewed its contents on Debbie's lap.

Coffee grinds and smashed tomatoes stain her clothes.

DEBBIE

Too fast. Things move too fast.

KATE

Oh, Dorothy. Help us.

Pat helps her up and puts the hat and glasses on her.

DEBBIE

Is Mrs. Aldrich looking?

PAT

Really. That's what's worrying you? What were you trying to do?

DEBBIE

I was going to the Deli to get the paper. It's just down the street. Pat...You don't understand. She's...

PAT

God. You haven't gotten past the mailbox in umpteen years, Debbie.

DEBBIE

I had to see if I could make it. But I can't. It's too hard.

KATE

You must be so proud of her.

Pat grabs Kate and pulls her aside.

PAT

I'm sure you mean well, but Debbie's embarrassed having you see her this way. I'll handle this. Go inside.

KATE

I want to help. I know I'm only here two weeks, but...

PAT

If you want to help, get hot tea ready for Debbie.

Kate leaves. Debbie retrieves the photo from her pocket and hands it to Pat.

DEBBIE

The photo came with the letter.

PAT

It'll be great to see her.

DEBBIE

(takes the photo back)

Ha. You know how many times I've seen her since she left for Boston. Zip. Zero. Goose egg. We never talk.

PAT

How about a little gratitude? Be happy she wants you at her concert. By the way, are you going?

DEBBIE

I thought if I could go to the deli and get the paper then, maybe.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

How difficult could that be if I can go thirty steps up and thirty steps back to get the mail.

Debbie brushes the loose garbage off her blouse.

PAT

Wendy will understand.

DEBBIE

No, she won't, damn it. She's never forgiven me for all the MIAs at the school PTAs and her past recitals. I missed too much of her growing up.

PAT

I'll talk to her. I'll find out why she dumped Trevor while I'm at it.

DEBBIE

Her silence has been a two year payoff. Pat ... I know she thinks I blame her for my condition.

PAT

Why would she think that?

Debbie shivers at a rumble of distant thunder. She stands.

DEBBIE

Help me across the street.

Pat steadies Debbie. They start to cross the street. Car lights pierce the darkness. Car horns blare at them.

PAT

Hold on. Almost there.

Debbie slips from Pat's grasp, falls in the street and cuts her knee. A car screeches to a halt and the driver yells. Pat tries to pull Debbie up. She sees her bloody leg.

PAT

You have to help me, Sweetie. Push
yourself up. Push up, Debbie. Push!

A blast of lightning frightens Debbie, and provides the
impetus for her to push herself up.

Blood travels down Debbie's leg as they struggle across the
street and towards the porch.

FLASHBACK BEGINS

The hospital's flickering emergency lights and nurses
screaming commands, provide a backdrop while Debbie gives
birth on a gurney.

DOCTOR

Push ... PUSH

Blood travels down Debbie's leg.

DEBBIE

Help me. My baby is bleeding. Are
you my doctor?

PAT (O.S.)

No. I'm Pat. You're here with me.

DEBBIE

All these people screaming. Help me.

FLASHBACK ENDS

As they approach the porch--

PAT

Look! It's me. You're safe with me.

DEBBIE

The lights. Flickering. Stabbing my
eyes. Where's my baby?

They collapse at the bottom step of the porch. Kate runs out with a blanket and Debbie holds it tight to her chest.

KATE

You know, we all have something we're fighting. Pat has cat-a-phobia, I have claustrophobia, and you have agoraphobia. No big deal.

PAT

Good grief, Kate. Go get some tea.

Kate goes back into the house.

DEBBIE

They shoot horses, don't they?

PAT

You're fine. Open your eyes.
Good. What just happened, Deb?

DEBBIE

I was back in the hospital, giving birth to Wendy. It was stormy and dark that night. I was very afraid someone would steal her if I passed out. Then I did. Pass out, I mean.

PAT

Oh, sweetie.

DEBBIE

First time I held Wendy was the day I left the hospital. I had been delusional for three days and the doctors wouldn't let me have her. The whole ride home I wasn't sure she was mine. Now... crowds... flashing lights, speeding cars... it all comes back. I get disoriented, nauseous, lose my balance.

Kate come out on the porch and Hands Debbie tea.

DEBBIE

Oh, bless you, Katerine.

KATE

A beautiful shot of your daughter in the paper. She looks just like you.

DEBBIE

Thank you.

Katexx leaves and comes right back with the paper.

PAT

That's all, Kate. See you inside.

KATE

(to Pat)

Wendy knows Trevor?

DEBBIE

She called? And didn't want to ...

KATE

No. She didn't call.

Kate opens the paper and points to Wendy's photo.

KATE

We just connected.

PAT

Oh! It's that psychic thing, Debbie. She doesn't really know anything.

KATE

I know that she wants to reach out. I look at this picture and feel Wendy's frustration. She's lost...

PAT

You can't tell that from a picture!

KATE

You know that photo of Trevor that sits on your desk? I asked where he got those beautiful blue eyes.

PAT

Yes. OK. So what?

KATE

You said, from his father, Joey, who passed away. Why would you say that?

Silence. Pat looks away.

DEBBIE

Pat? What is she saying?

PAT

(to Debbie)

We agreed a long time ago not to ask questions. Not to go to places the other wanted off limits.

DEBBIE

Yes. So?

PAT

So, Joey was off the radar, for Trevor's sake. And you never wanted to talk about your 'condition', for Wendy's sake. And now you just did. Things have changed because of her.

(scowling at Kate)

Look, what's done is done. My relationship with Joey is none of anybody's business.

Kate starts back into the office.

DEBBIE

Thanks again for the tea.

KATE

I couldn't find the sugar.

(looking at Pat)

We're short on anything sweet around here, I guess.

DEBBIE

How did you like your roses?

PAT

Oh, good grief.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate enters, closes her eyes like a clairvoyant detective, then moves to the closet, retrieves the flowers, and deliberately places them Pat's desk. The phone rings.

BACK TO THE PORCH

DEBBIE

Why are you so tough on her?

PAT

Because she smells like kitty litter all the time, and the office smells like flowers all the time. I feel like I'm working in a pet cemetery.

DEBBIE

I'm sitting here stinking of garbage so you can't expect me to criticize Kate for animal odors.

(pause)

What does she know about Joey that I don't?

PAT

(changing the subject)

Tell me why Wendy dumped Trevor.

DEBBIE

I honestly don't know. We stopped talking to each other when I missed her graduation.

(as Pat stands--)

Doesn't get easier as we get older.

(as she tries to get up--)

Harry should have stuck around a little longer. I need that man now.

PAT

He'd be proud how well you've done. Wendy got off to college. She's a big time cello player with the Boston Philharmonic. Your business is doing great. What's not to like?

DEBBIE

Well, that's thanks to you. I was a wreck when Harry died. You stepped in and kept the business running.

PAT

We got closer, didn't we? Both single parents.

A difficult pause.

DEBBIE

You didn't answer me, Pat. What does Kate know about Joey?

PAT

We need to get back inside.

Pat goes to enter the house, but Debbie grabs her and swings her around. They sit.

PAT

Ok! Ok! Joey isn't dead. He's out there somewhere, God knows where.

DEBBIE

Joey's alive. And you never told me?

PAT

If you saw him, when he came back to the VA hospital years ago, you'd understand. I did what I thought was best for Trevor, too. Now let it go!

Pat and Debbie stand and move towards the house entrance.

PAT

It's too quiet in there. Let's go.

INT. DEBBIE'S HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

As Pat and Debbie enter the house--

DEBBIE

I'll be upstairs taking a shower.

Debbie disappears upstairs as Pat enters the office.

REALTY OFFICE OF DEBBIE'S HOUSE -- DAY -- CONTINUOUS

Katie is on the phone.

KATE

No, a house next to a sump cannot be listed as waterfront property. Would you want your kids to swim in that filth. Goodbye, sir.

(hits a button and--)

Francine, save the placenta! It's nutrient-rich and great for my cactus.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Keep the kittens together and put them in the empty diaper box that's on the porch. Oh, got another call. Hold on. Hello! Hammel's Happy Homes. Buy one, get one free.

PAT

Kate!

KATE

(Into the phone.)

Come in and see what we have. Can you hold? I have another call. Hello, Hammel's Happy--you better watch your tongue, young man. Leaky pipes are your problem, not ours.

Pat sees the flowers, picks them up from her desk and plops them down on Kate's desk.

KATE

(into the phone)

That's disgusting. If I could do that to myself I'd have my own reality show. Good bye!

PAT

KATE!

Kate holds up one finger and hits another line.

KATE

Hey, Fran, I'm sorry, I have to go. I'm being paged.

Kate hangs up and--

KATE

Marty from the VA called. He wanted to know if he could sublet his sublease. Can she do that?

PAT

No, he can't.

KATE

Good. That's what I told him.

PAT

I believe these are yours.

Pat points to the flowers and then rubs her temples.

PAT

I believe these flowers add such a fragrance in this office. Don't you think so, my dear?

KATE

Yes, I do. Since when do you care?

PAT

Oh, but I do care, and I would care even more if you keep your personal business separate from this realty business. That means any information regarding Samantha's breeding habits or birthing rituals, or Leroy's urination problems, be kept out of the fucking office.

KATE

Oh, that reminds me. Gotta be home by four to get Samantha neutered.

PAT

Goddamn it, Kate. Go ... go see if there are any "for-sale" signs on Hoover Street.

KATE

My job is to answer phones, remember?

PAT

Then answer the phones. And find
some leads. And get rid of those--

Pat points to the flowers.

KATE

You're just jealous because I'm
getting romantic attention from
someone and you're not.

PAT

You really think I'm jealous over
some nut job with a flower mania?

The doorbell rings.

HALLWAY

Pat enters, opens the front door and finds Dan holding a
bouquet of flowers.

PAT

We were just talking about you,
Danny-boy. What is it, fourth time
this week? Twice today!

DAN

Roses this morning. Now, it's mums.

PAT

Yeah, yeah! She's inside.

REALTY OFFICE

Pat leads Dan into the office.

KATE

Dan. What a surprise!

PAT

Yes. Isn't this a surprise? Let me give you my oozing-with-joy look.

KATE

Shush. What do you have now, Dan?

DAN

Chilean white and Peruvian yellow chrysanthemums in a lavender-scented bowl with white and yellow striped ribbon and baby's breath throughout. A big seller, and still signed, "A secret admirer."

PAT

You have no idea, Katherine?

KATE

No. I'm totally blocked. It's driving nuts that I don't know.

DAN

Doesn't surprise me you're getting flowers, Ms. Devine. You're an attractive woman, if I may say so.

KATE

You can say it all day long.

DAN

You're a very attractive woman--

PAT

Enough, cowboy. She was just being rhetorical.

KATE

Don't listen to her, Dan. She's very crotchety this morning. Can you investigate this? It's important.

DAN

Sure. But maybe the sender just wants to stay anonymous.

PAT

Is there something you're not telling us, Danny-boy?

DAN

No, no. Nothing. Look, I gotta go. Enjoy the flowers. Bye!

Dan exits. Pat inspects the flowers.

PAT

If I'm the teeniest bit jealous you have an anonymous admirer, it's not because I don't have my pick of men.

KATE

If you mean your friends at the VA? I've never quite understood that arrangement.

PAT

You can't find men more loyal--

KATE

And unavailable!

(somber silence)

I'm sorry. Truth is I'm a frustrated spinster whose libido was crushed years ago by some school jerk who called me thunder thighs.

PAT

(pauses)

I'm sorry for being so bitchy. I had a hard morning with Trevor. So, tell me. Why can't you get a psychic reading on this mystery flower guy?

Kate fusses with the flowers while talking.

KATE

It's rare I'm at a loss like this, but it's happened before. Like when I'm sexually aroused, I lose my psychic introspection. But It comes back to me after I'm in a relationship for a while. Still, in the beginning, I'm blocked somehow.

PAT

You're sexually challenged then. I knew it.

KATE

You're a very hard person to like.

PAT

So I'm told.

The phone rings as Debbie enters fiddling with her bracelet.

KATE

That's Mr. Smolich, your go-see guy.

PAT

(into the phone)

Mr. Smolich, what a surprise.

DEBBIE

Be a dear and help me with this, Katherine. I'm a little shaky.

As Kate helps Debbie--

DEBBIE

I've been meaning to ask you, how do you know who's on the phone and things like that?

KATE

A gift from my grandmother, I guess.
She had the same intuition. She
thought it was a curse, actually.

Pat hangs up and--

PAT

Are you feeling better?

DEBBIE

Much.

EXT. DEBBIE'S HOUSE - PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Wendy, wearing a NY Yankee's cap, gets out of a Taxi.

WENDY

I won't be too long. I'll pay for
your wait.

The TAXI DRIVER nods as Wendy walks to the porch.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate finishes fastening the bracelet.

KATE

Nice bracelet. Where did you get it?

DEBBIE

From my Harry. A gift on our
twentieth.

(looking up)

Thanks, Harry.

KATE

Is that your dead husband?

PAT

Oh, that's just ducky. Now you two have something in common. You both talk to dead people.

KATE

I don't talk to dead people. I feel their presence. There's a difference.

Wendy appears at the door and Pat runs to her for an embrace.

PAT

So good to see you, Wendy. It's been way too long.

WENDY

Good to see you too, Pat.

PAT

Come in. Come in. This is Kate. A new team member. She's a cat-lover, so pardon the smell, and she's a bit on the clairvoyant side, so watch what you think.

KATE

Nice to meet you, Wendy. I heard so much about you. A Yankee fan living in Boston! Isn't that dangerous?

WENDY

People are nice in Beantown, but it's a tough place to be a Yankee fan, especially since they beat the Red Sox for the pennant this year.

Wendy faces Debbie, and falls silent.

Both are reluctant to make the first move.

DEBBIE

Dear, why didn't you tell me earlier you were coming? I have to read about your concert in the paper?

WENDY

Glad to see you too, Mom!

DEBBIE

Are you, really?

WENDY

Ok. Let's Try this.

(pulls tickets from her
purse)

Here. For tomorrow night. We have a rehearsal and the taxi's waiting outside, so I don't have much time.

PAT

Oh, you can't visit?

WENDY

I'll be back later on. Early evening, perhaps. I just wanted to drop off the tickets now and later I wanted to explain why I've been incognito for so long.

(pause)

Have a problem with that, Mom?

DEBBIE

No. No. I just didn't know that's what you called hiding out three States away. Incognito!

PAT

Stop it, you two. Listen, Wendy, Trevor will be so happy you're home. You should call him and--

WENDY

Yes. Yes. I will. We haven't talked in a while. I'm looking forward to seeing him. I ...

PAT

Do you need his number?

WENDY

Unless he changed it. I have it, Pat. I'll call.

KATE

Imagine! Carnegie Hall! Isn't this exciting.

PAT

Yes. Very exciting.

Trevor bursts through the office door with a box in his hand.

TREVOR

Mom, I brought over ...

(Notices Wendy)

Wendy ...

(pause)

Did you lose your cellphone?

WENDY

I'm sorry. We'll do this later.

She exits and Debbie collapses in a chair.

PAT

What the hell was that? 'Did you lose your cellphone?' Really? That's the first thing you ask after not hearing from her all this time?

TREVOR

It just came out. Leave me alone.

DEBBIE

You see the way she looked at me?

KATE

I felt it too. Bad vibes all around.

PAT

Everyone shut up. There was no vibe.

DEBBIE

Her eyes were judging me. Her voice.
Didn't you hear it?

KATE

Most definitely. Her voice was so
tense and--

PAT

SHUT UP. Everyone just shut up.

DEBBIE

I'm going to the porch to sit down.
I need to think.

Debbie exits outside to the porch.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

She maneuvers her way to the bench.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

A awkward silence is interrupted by--

PAT

I should go buy a lottery ticket. My
luck has got to turn.

(To Trevor)

I'm sorry. Are you OK?

TREVOR

I'm fine.

Pat nods at the box.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

I wanted to drop this off before I went out for a jog.

Trevor hands the box to Pat.

TREVOR (CONT'D)

A peace offering for this morning. Made it myself. Fudge. Some for you, Kate. And Debbie if she wants it.

KATE

Men bearing gifts. Cool. But ... why aren't you at work?

TREVOR

I have an appointment with the Army recruiter, so I called in sick.

PAT

Kate, some tea would go well with this, if you please.

(stares hard at Kate)

Water is already hot on the stove.

Kate grabs a piece of fudge and eats it.

KATE

Trevor, this is delicious.

Kate exits but stands close to the door to eavesdrop.

PAT

I know you're upset, Dear, but is it so hard to understand I don't want you in the military?

TREVOR

But I told you it's just an interview. I'm not signing anything. What are you so afraid of?

PAT

I'm afraid of you lying dead in a ditch somewhere in Afghanistan or some other God-forsaken place.

TREVOR

I know there are risks, but why aren't you proud of me? Is patriotism an out-of-date ideal?

PAT

My God, if you don't sound just like your father.

TREVOR

Not such a bad thing. I think he'd be proud of me if he were alive.

PAT

God, this is deja vu all over again.

Kate steps in.

KATE

Did you want milk and sugar with that, Trevor?

TREVOR

I'm not staying. Maybe next time.

(To Pat)

What did Wendy want?

PAT

She's in town with the philharmonic for a concert tomorrow. She just came by to drop off these tickets.

TREVOR

Is there a ticket in there for me?

An awkward silence if followed by Trevor's exit.

PAT

(To Kate)

That went well, don't you think?

(pause)

Gotta prepare for that go-see. Help me find the comparative listings.

KATE

You said his dog died.

PAT

He just called. He bought a goldfish and he's feeling much better.

KATE

Ooo! I don't trust animals without eyelids. Creepy.

PAT

Yeah. Right. Creepy. I'll need the plot assessment as well. Come on. Let's go. Chop, chop.

KATE

I'm not moving until you tell me why you never told Trevor that his father is alive.

PAT

I swear, Kate. Keep your nose out of my business.

KATE

He needs to know his father's alive.

PAT

What gives you the right to tell me what to do? Being a surrogate to a houseful of cats may make you an expert on fur balls, but you know nothing about how to raise a son.

KATE

I agree, but I feel how much you're aching inside to find Joey. I can help. I'm good at finding people.

PAT

The only man in your life is an anonymous flower freak, so get away from me with that psychic crap.

Pat sits and buries her face in her hands.

KATE

You might not believe this, but I was in love once.

Pat looks up. She appears curious.

KATE (CONT'D)

Really. To a part-time dance instructor. We met on a conga-line at an Animal League benefit.

PAT

Joey was a wonderful dancer.

KATE

Really! Tell me more.

(Pat growls)

Come on. Loosen up. Talk to me.

PAT

It was a long time ago. I was 23. We met at a church social.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

I saw how well he moved, so I went over and introduced myself. So few men can dance well, you know?

KATE

Tell me about it. Frank and I spent our first night together on a blanket on a beach in Red Hook. It was spectacular!

PAT

How long were you two together?

KATE

For one orgasm.

PAT

That was it? One orgasm.

KATE

Don't start. This conversation is going nicely so far.

(pause)

It's your turn. Did you see any action your first night with Joey?

Pat bites her lip.

KATE

Loosen up, for crying out loud. You'd think I'm taking your blood.

PAT

Ah, what the heck. That first night led to one long, hot, passionate summer. Right out of a Harlequin novel. We screwed like gerbils. By the end of August we had marriage on our agendas. Then Grenada happened.

KATE

That sounds like a vacation resort.
What the hell happened in Granada?

PAT

It was no vacation. There were 19 US
casualties and 116 more troops were
wounded. One of them was Joey.

KATE

Is that how you lost touch?

PAT

This is why I didn't want to start
this conversation. Now I have to
tell you everything.

KATE

Why is this so hard?

PAT

Because I wanted to get married
before he shipped out and we didn't.

Kate sits back, folds her arms and waits for more.

PAT

We argued over it and he left
without even saying goodbye. If he
loved me, he could've given me a
ring. Or some kind of hope.

KATE

Why not wait until he got back?

PAT

I just couldn't do that.

KATE

Why the hell not?

PAT
BECAUSE I WAS PREGNANT.

Pat takes a single rose from the bouquet; snaps it in half.

PAT
The last thing I told him was marry
me or leave. God, Kate, I wish I
could take those words back.

KATE
You didn't tell him you were
pregnant?

PAT
He was gone before I could.

KATE
That was the last time you saw him?

Pat unlocks a desk drawer, takes out a photo and holds it to
her breast. She walks slowly over to Kate.

PAT
I started volunteering at the VA
Hospital in Manhattan after he left.
A year later he shows up as a
patient. His convoy was caught in a
fire fight. His face was mangled by
a grenade. He couldn't even talk.

She hands the photo to Kate. Tears come easy for Pat.

PAT
The doctor hoped he might be able to
speak as he healed. But his mind,
the man I remembered, wasn't there.

KATE
You and Joey look happy together.

PAT

He was so irrational it was
pointless to pursue a relationship
at that time.

Pat takes the photo from Kate and locks it back in the desk.

PAT

That's enough. No more. Now let me
ask you something. Who's Dorothy?

Kate bends down and picks up the broken rose. She tries
unsuccessfully to piece it back together.

KATE

Some things can't be fixed.

Pat takes the comparative listings and puts them into the
case, starts to leave, then turns back.

PAT

By the way, I won't complain if you
want to look for Joey, but this is
just between you and me, okay? I
appreciate you listening.

(as she leaves)

We had a moment there, Kate, but
this hasn't changed the fact that
you're still a pain in my ass.

KATE

Naturally.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Pat appears and as she sits next to Debbie--

PAT

Knock, knock.

DEBBIE

Go away.

PAT

Do you feel like talking?

DEBBIE

Was that two-minute, "Hi-mom-I'm-home-gotta go", visit appropriate for a daughter who hasn't spoken to her mother in two years?

PAT

She didn't want to confront Trevor. She would've talked to you if ...

DEBBIE

Oh, come on. Give me a break, Pat. Talking to her is like talking to a robot. We're both programmed to say the same things over and over.

PAT

Are you okay out here alone?

DEBBIE

This is the only safe place I can go outside without freaking out. That swing set we had out back, remember?

PAT

How could I forget? Trevor almost broke his neck trying to jump onto your roof.

DEBBIE

I remember her eighth birthday. We counted each swing. We must have counted to 500. I get so angry because no one, including me, remembers the good times.

(MORE)

DEBBIE (CONT'D)

There's a wall between us, Pat. She blames me for everything.

PAT

Wendy can't accept your limitations right now.

DEBBIE

She won't accept shit anytime. The world revolves around her. She won't tell me anything.

PAT

Talk to her anyway. She might surprise you.

(A contemplative pause)

Come to the "go-see" with me.

DEBBIE

Cars and me don't get along very well, Patricia. I'll get a panic attack. By the way, did I ever tell you the first time I got a panic attack?

PAT

Is this going to be long or painful?

DEBBIE

It was for me. I drove through a car wash with my mother. As soon as the machines began sweeping the car, I couldn't breathe. I thought I was dying. That's when I realized something was wrong with me. So, I developed a fail-safe routine anytime I was in a car.

PAT

And what is that?

DEBBIE

I'd distract myself by playing with the radio and windows. On, off. Up ... down. I'd do it over and over. Drove my mother crazy.

(Laughing)

Why is it that children love to drive their parents crazy.

PAT

I don't know. It's in their DNA, I guess. So, what do you say? Come to the "go-see" with me. I'll be fun.

DEBBIE

I'll come if you talk to Trevor about Joey.

PAT

I'll think about it.

DEBBIE

Fair enough.

PAT

So, you're coming?

DEBBIE

To the go-see. I'll need some things first, like a bottle of Pepto...

PAT

And a quart of tequila. I'll get the listings. You get ready.

Debbie and Pat enter the house together.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pat enters and walks to her desk and Debbie heads upstairs.

PAT

Debbie's coming to the go-see.

KATE

How did you convince her to go?

PAT

I can sell sand in the Sahara. Now you're in charge. No phone calls.

KATE

Absolutely.

PAT

If Debbie makes this, she just might make it to the concert. Who knows?

Pat heads out the front door. Kate grabs the phone.

KATE

Francine? You still there? Good.
Here's my list of names for
Samantha's litter. Lorenzo, Samson,
Ferdie, and Sweetness for the kitten
with the different color eyes ...

EXT./INT. PAT'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Pat drives up Debbie's driveway. Debbie exits the house with a gym bag. Pat gets out to fetch her.

DEBBIE

Pat, I'm not sure about this, so go easy on me, all right?

PAT

Have I ever steered you wrong? Trust me? OK. Checklist: bottled water.

Debbie opens her gym bag.

DEBBIE

Got it.

PAT

Cold compress? Tissues? Towels"

DEBBIE

Check. Check and check.

PAT

How about blindfolds?

Debbie pulls out a few blindfolds from her purse. She puts one on her forehead as she and Pat get into the car.

PAT

All right. Now, Smolich has been to two agencies before us. He's very particular. And very rich.

DEBBIE

Why does Smolich sound so familiar?

PAT

Plumbing. The name's on your toilet bowl. By the way, his dog just died.

DEBBIE

That's not a good omen. What's he looking for?

PAT

Gonna rent it out. Or flip it.

DEBBIE

We could snag get a commission on both ends then.

PAT

I like the way you think. Don't mention the dead dog, okay.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

We're off to see the wizard. Pull your blindfold over your eyes.

Debbie does as asked as Pat starts down the driveway.

DEBBIE

Oh, God! Slow down.

PAT

Ease up girl. Haven't gone ten feet.

Debbie peeks over her blindfold, then resets it.

DEBBIE

I don't think I can do this, Pat.

PAT

You can, and you will. If all goes well, maybe tomorrow...

DEBBIE

First things first. Now, slow down for crying out loud.

PAT

Let me make this traffic light.

She guns it and Debbie yelps.

DEBBIE

Why am I being punished like this?

Pat jams on the brake and pulls Debbie's blindfold up.

PAT

Look at me, dammit! Look at me.

Debbie looks at her and Pat slaps her in the face.

DEBBIE

Ow. What the hell was that for?

PAT

A slap in the face is punishment for being a pain in my ass. Your phobia is not punishment. God has not given you this affliction. What the hell do you think you've done to deserve this? What?

DEBBIE

Oh, sweet mother of God.

Pat slaps her harder than before. Debbie wails.

DEBBIE

Have you lost your mind?

PAT

Now you have someone to blame for being hurt. Not yourself, not Wendy, not God. Blame me. See if that helps. Now put your blindfold back on. We don't want to be late.

She slips the blindfold back on as Pat continues driving. Debbie sings Jingle Bells (improvise).

PAT

Debbie, will you please stop?

Debbie gropes for the radio and turns it on. She changes the station repeatedly until Polka music plays. Pat reaches over and turns the radio off.

After a beat, Debbie turns it back on and finds country western music. Debbie shrieks out the lyrics and Pat quickly turns it off. As Debbie reaches for the radio again--

PAT

I swear if you touch that button one more time I'll beat you silly.

Now Debbie flips the window up and down with the controls.

PAT

Stop it!

Debbie ignores her and Pat reaches over to smack her hand and loses control of the car. SCREECHING sounds.

PAT

OH, MY GOD!

IMPACT sounds. Metal, glass.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

Danny stands in front of Kate holding a bouquet of flowers.

DAN

Notice the red carnations are shorter-stemmed than the white. The note was specific about that. I think he's saying his feelings for you are nothing compared to the warmth of your smile.

KATE

How do you interpret that from just the grouping, Dan?

DAN

I'm getting to know this guy pretty well. We think alike - in the arrangement of the flowers, I mean.

KATE

Well, it's all very flattering, but--

DAN

I can tell, this person has deep feelings for you.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

The careful pruning of the leaves.
Five leaves to a stem - no more, no
less. They represent all his senses
which take delight in the person
for whom this bouquet is intended,
which is you!

KATE

That poetic sentiment was in the
note as well?

(responding to Dan's nod)

Could I see it? The note.

DAN

Well, ah ... I'm afraid I lost it.

KATE

Keep the next one for me. OK?

DAN

OK. This guy has lousy handwriting.

KATE

Sometimes I can get a reading from
a person's handwriting.

Dan hands her a rose from the bouquet. As he leaves-

DAN

That's a very attractive dress.

EXT. SIDE OF A ROAD SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - CONTINUOUS

Pat holds a tissue to Debbie's head as they sit roadside.

DEBBIE

It was your fault. You were driving.

PAT

I was distracted by idiotic behavior.

DEBBIE

Oh, so now I'm an idiot?

PAT

You prefer 'whack-o'? Why don't you take meds and fight your phobia?

DEBBIE

My cousin takes the same meds for her vertigo and all it does is give her black teeth and skin blotches.

PAT

The way your head bounced off the dash, black teeth is the least of your worries. Look at my car. Where the hell is my bumper?

DEBBIE

I put it in the back seat.

PAT

It belongs on the front, damn it.

DEBBIE

Trevor can attach it in 5 minutes. Don't be so dramatic.

PAT

Look who's calling who dramatic. Stop bleeding on my car and get in.

Debbie pulls a bandage from her gym bag and Pat applies it to Debbie's forehead. They get into the car and Pat drives away.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Wendy walks in from the foyer and hears Kate on the phone. Kate waves her in while talking into the phone--

KATE

Well, thank you. Your voice is sort of Cary Grantish, if I may say so ... Yes, I'm always here ... Maybe we will. Thanks for calling.

Kate hangs up. Her thoughts provoke a smile.

WENDY

What did he say? You're blushing.

KATE

He said I had a bedroom voice.

WENDY

You did sound flirtatious. You do that when you're selling homes?

KATE

I don't have a license yet.

WENDY

Maybe you should get one. When is my mom due back? I promised the harpsichordist I'd have her car back by six.

KATE

I don't know if she'll be back by then. She'll be disappointed.

WENDY

Me too. To be honest, I'm a little nervous about it.

KATE

Yes. I sense that. Confused might be a better word.

WENDY

I haven't told you the news yet.

KATE

I sense it's deep. It's bigger than just apologies.

WENDY

That's scary. You are weird.

Debbie and Pat walk into the office and--

KATE

Oh, my God. Debbie, what happened to you? What's with the bandage?

PAT

She's ok, but my car isn't. I sideswiped a huge tree while I was trying to deal with this crazy lady.

(pointing)

She was playing with the radio and windows, you nutcase. We naturally didn't make it to the go-see.

KATE

Well then, there's no reason for me to stay. Let me take my leave. My furry friends need to be fed.

Kate exits to an awkward silence.

DEBBIE

I'm glad you stopped back, Wendy.

WENDY

Are you, Mother? I don't think so. If the accident becomes an excuse to miss my solo, you'll be pleased to know that PBS will be broadcasting the concert live.

(response to silence)

Well, are you going to make it to the city tomorrow?

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

(no response)

I didn't think so. I thought you might be pleasantly surprised that you can hunker down here and watch it on TV with a bowl of popcorn and a box of juicy fruits. Aren't you happy about that?

DEBBIE

Why can't you be a little more ...

WENDY

...Compassionate?

DEBBIE

No. Optimistic.

WENDY

Optimistic!? Hmm. Let's rewind the clock and replay my softball championship when I was very optimistic you'd be there.

DEBBIE

You have no idea what I've done so you could have a good education.

WENDY

Oh, God. Here we go again. Don't start Mother or...

DEBBIE

Or what? Leave for another two years? You have no gratitude. That's your problem. This is your senior class recital all over again.

WENDY

You've gotta be kidding me.

DEBBIE

You never told me about that performance either.

PAT

Oh, boy. I think I better go.

WENDY

Stay, Pat. She may need emotional support after I'm finished.

PAT

My day just isn't getting any better.

WENDY

Let me tell you what it was like in high school with everyone talking behind my back.

DEBBIE

You were a musical savant, for chrissakes. They were talking behind your back because twenty colleges gave scholarships. Five orchestras were offering you a full time position before you even graduated. 'Oh, poor me, people are talking about me because I'm so wonderful.'

WENDY

Really, Mother. How did you get so enlightened being a recluse? You never came to a single Parent-Teachers meeting because of your condition. Not one recital in four years because of your condition. Not one softball game because of your condition. Not even graduation. You were the talk of the town.

PAT

Wendy, all this is a bit unfair,
don't you think?

WENDY

Is it fair my own mother blames me
for her ... condition?

DEBBIE

I told you your birth was difficult.
I don't blame you--

WENDY

Not even two years of therapy has
convinced me of that.

DEBBIE

Therapy? Why would you need therapy?

WENDY

Oh, my shrink warned me I might not
be ready for this.

DEBBIE

Ready for what? To tell your mother
the truth. After all I've done for
you ... you spoiled brat.

WENDY

Truth, Mother? I'll tell you the
truth. Here comes the whole nine
yards. Let me tell you about one of
those many performances you missed.

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

A younger Wendy leaves the high school alone. PEOPLE are
getting into their cars. A half moon provides a little light.

Wendy shuffles past some people, hustling across a lawn to a shadowy street, and down an alley.

WENDY (V.O.)

Remember the Centennial Concert when no one showed up to give me a ride home? Actuallyh, I was too embarrassed to let people know I didn't have a ride, so I snuck away. I figured the walk home was only a mile because I knew which yard to cut through and which dark alleys to avoid. Maybe you remember that night, Mom? My pants were torn and I had black and blues on my legs.

DEBBIE (V.O.)

You said you fell off a fence.

WENDY (V.O.)

I was in a hurry to get home to finish my book report. So, I cut through Simpson Street, past the Silver Dollar Lounge.

She hears noises and hesitates. A white cat crosses her path. She comes to a street sign marked, "Simpson Street".

As she walks past the "Silver Dollar Lounge", the neon sign hums, sputters and offers little light. She ignores the rowdy noise and quickly walks past the bar. A SHADOW follows her. Her pace quickens, and the shadow stays with her.

WENDY (V.O.)

A man from the bar followed me.

A picket fence ahead provides little hope for an escape, but some missing slats provide hope. Behind it is a busy street. She runs to it but just as she gets one leg through the fence, the shadow reaches her and pulls her back.

She's yanked to the ground and lays on her back. From her POV she watches a cloud drift in front of the moon.

He shoves a knotted rope in her mouth, then punches her twice in the stomach, and in a gravelly, horrifying voice--

SHADOW

I'll kill you if you scream.

As he rubs the hard knots on her cheek with one hand, he unbuckles his filthy jeans with his other.

She inhales quickly as if to yell but nothing comes out. She inhales quickly again ... and again ... and again, until we realize these are the convulsions of a woman being raped.

Then he finishes with a sickly whimper. And he lays on top of her for a few seconds, enjoying his conquest. He finally gets up and buckles his pants, and walks away, whistling.

END OF FLASHBACK

Debbie deep-breathes and waves her arms as if she doesn't want to hear anything more. She covers her ears, but Wendy crosses to Debbie and removes her hands so she can hear.

WENDY

Wherever I go, I smell the stink of
cigarettes and beer.

Debbie yelps and then a stunned silence fills the room.

WENDY

Nothing to say, Mom?

DEBBIE

I told you to never go on Simpson...

WENDY

That's what you want to say.

DEBBIE
WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO SAY?

Debbie tries to speak through her sobs. Finally--

DEBBIE (CONT'D)PP
Why didn't you tell me, Wendy?
That's what I want to say. Why
didn't you tell me?

WENDY
I was scared if I whispered a word
of it to anyone he might come back
and do it again. Or something worse.

No one speaks for a moment, then Pat stands and--

PAT
Is this the news you wanted to share
with us, Wendy?

WENDY
Partly. Yes.

PAT
What else, then?

WENDY
I was pregnant. The Maestro, instead
of firing me, took me in his home. I
got an abortion. It was a boy.

DEBBIE
You killed my grandson? Oh, my God.
This is all my fault.

Debbie stands, waves her hands as if there's nothing else to
say. She faces the wall and sobs.

WENDY
Cat got your tongue, Mother?

DEBBIE

Who's the... Who's... Who's...

WENDY

The father? That's a good question.
Could be Trevor's, I guess, or...
(gets in Debbie's face)
...the rapist's.

Pat clears her throat. Finally--

PAT

Does Trevor know about all this?

WENDY

Not about the pregnancy. That's why
I didn't write or call. I was
ashamed. I felt guilty. I know I
should've told Trevor. I know I
should've gotten a DNA test...

PAT

Wendy, I'm very sorry about what
happened to you...

Wendy shrugs, then crosses to the window and peers out.

PAT

I could've been a grandmother, I
guess. That would've been nice, but
... I think you did the right thing
under the circumstance.

WENDY

I haven't worked everything out yet.
My doctor assures me one step at a
time is the way to go.
(as she starts to leave--)
One thing hasn't changed, Mom. I can
still leave the house knowing you
won't follow me.

DEBBIE

But I love you, Wendy. I want us to have a relationship. I want us to be close. I feel so lost without you.

WENDY

Yeah, me too. You can change all that if I see you in the audience tomorrow night, then I'll know we can have a relationship. Until then-

She exits.

INT. TREVOR'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Trevor sits at a small desk next to his bed correcting students' papers. Pat appears at the door and enters.

She sits on his bed, and folds her hands on her lap.

PAT

We have to talk.

EXT. NYC SUBWAY EXIT - MORNING

As Trevor exits, he's greeted by a poster on a building wall advertising the Boston Philharmonic playing at Carnegie Hall.

INT. CARNEGIE HALL REHEARSAL STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

Wendy sits alone in the basement studio playing her cello and wearing her Yankee baseball cap. She hesitates several times, having difficulty with a particular piece.

Trevor enters, unnoticed. Wendy, frustrated, flings the bow across the room.

TREVOR

Temper. Temper.

WENDY

Trevor, my God! You scared me!

TREVOR

Hello, Wendy.

They meet in an awkward embrace.

WENDY

How did you find me?

TREVOR

A guy at the desk said you were rehearsing downstairs. I followed the cello music and here I am.

WENDY

The maestro wants a tempo change and I'm trying to improvise a little.

TREVOR

Ah, yes. The maestro. Heard he's one hell of a great guy.

As Wendy returns to her seat--

WENDY

Don't make this any more difficult than it is.

TREVOR

Wouldn't think of it. Why would I do that? Haven't heard from you in two years, except for yesterday. All my phone calls? Ignored. No reason for me to be upset, right? Shit, Wendy, you couldn't let me know you were pregnant?

WENDY

This isn't the time, Trevor.

TREVOR

You're right. Two years ago would've been better.

(pause - raises his voice)

I could've been the father, Wendy.

WENDY

Don't yell at me!

TREVOR

I came home late yesterday and my mother bombards me with a thousand questions. She asks me if I got you pregnant. I'm in the twilight zone wondering what universe I'm in. So, excuse me if I seem upset.

WENDY

You'd better go!

TREVOR

Sorry. I just thought I would handle this better.

Trevor turns to leave.

WENDY

Wait. Don't go. Not yet.

Wendy pats the seat next to her and he sits.

WENDY

Trevor, I don't know if you were the father. Is that the only reason you came here?

TREVOR

No. I wanted to return this.

He takes a toy figure from his pocket.

WENDY

Peter Pan! My prom gift to you?

TREVOR

Yes. That night we had a marathon talk, remember? Six kids and a pumpkin patch in the back yard.

WENDY

I don't want that back, Trevor.

TREVOR

Take it. You're lucky it's still in one piece. I almost ripped it apart, but then I thought how childish that was. Peter Pan never grew up but I had to. I had to let you go.

WENDY

Better to find someone else at this point.

TREVOR

I gave it a try, actually. Heather was a fashion designer. Loved to window shop with her. This one evening a dress caught her eye as we passed by. She raved about the cut and the fabric. She was so alive at that moment, I thought she was you. I grabbed her and kissed her right there, and when I opened my eyes I saw she wasn't you. There was nothing in that kiss. No excitement. We sort of just rubbed lips. In fact, she smiled in the middle of it, like I was doing her a favor.

WENDY

When things end badly, you move on.

TREVOR

It didn't end badly for her. She bought the dress.

(pause)

If we didn't bump into each other yesterday, were you going to see me before you went back to Boston?

WENDY

Had to see my mom first, then maybe.

TREVOR

Do you feel anything for me at all, Wendy? How did I go from the love of your life to a 'maybe' kind-of-guy?

WENDY

No one in the world would have cared for me the way you did after what happened. I'll never forget that.

Trevor has a Zippo lighter in his hand and flips the cover open and closed, as if he's nervous.

TREVOR

So, I'm just a fond memory?

WENDY

You shouldn't expect me to be the same person, Trevor.

TREVOR

All I expect are some answers.

WENDY

Were you willing to be a dad regardless of who the father was?

TREVOR

Don't know. But you had no right to make that decision without my input.

WENDY

What about my rights? You can't understand the darkness that hides in my soul, even now. Sometimes, when I'm in the subway or a crowded elevator, I smell his sweat and my stomach turns. I feel his weight pressing into me and I can't breathe. That horror won't leave. Until it does--

TREVOR

So, the lesson about moving on applies just to me?

WENDY

(Awkward beat)

After the abortion I felt all alone in Boston. And thank God the Maestro took me in. No strings attached. His interest was only in my music. And all I could think about was what if you were the father. How long would we last if that was the case and you decided to stay with me. So, I dealt with it by having the abortion. Later, I felt like I didn't have a life. I had no one. Not even you.

As Trevor paces, he fiddles with the Zippo lighter.

TREVOR

I would've been there for you. Didn't I prove that before you left for college?

WENDY

And thank you for that. But would you have married me if I told you I was pregnant? Out of pity, perhaps?

(MORE)

WENDY (CONT'D)

I didn't want to spend thirty years only to find out you harbored resentment if the child wasn't yours. Besides, I was broken two years ago, Trevor. I didn't have a direction that I have now.

TREVOR

I haven't spent the time that you've had to dwell on this. I don't know if I could've been a father to someone else's child, a rapist, no less. I do need more time.

WENDY

Not asking you to decide anything now. I thought you got that point.

Static on the LOUDSPEAKER, then--

VOICE (O.S.)

Five minute call. Musicians back on stage in five minutes.

WENDY

Rehearsal's starting. I have to go.

TREVOR

Wendy, for God's sake, don't leave me like this. What do I do?

WENDY

I don't have the right to tell you what to do. Two years of silence saw to that, and I will apologize properly for that, but not right now. No apologies today!

Wendy begins to collect her things: music sheets, back pack, water bottle, jacket, etc. and as she picks up her bow that she threw across the room--

WENDY

I'm not asking for forgiveness, Trevor. I worked too hard to get here to start feeling sorry now. I concentrate on my music and I move forward. I suggest you do what's best for yourself, same as I did.

TREVOR

This isn't fair.

WENDY

Fair? Ha. My rape isn't fair. My mother's agoraphobia isn't fair. My solo isn't fair to the flutist who wants one as well. And so it goes.

TREVOR

So that's it? It's over between us?

WENDY

I didn't say that.

TREVOR

Well, don't you worry about me, Wendy. I'll get through this. Being alone is something I've gotten good at. But before I leave, I need to tell you something.

WENDY

Make it quick. I have to go.

TREVOR

Last night, after my mom demanded to know if I was a father to *your* ... baby, she told me my father wasn't dead. Can you believe that? Yes, he got injured in the Granada conflict, but he didn't die.

(MORE)

TREVOR (CONT'D)

He's alive somewhere and obviously never wanted a son in his life. So, you run back to Boston after your solo and go feel sorry for yourself. You're not the only one in this world who rejected a son.

Trevor places the Peter-Pan figure on a music stand and leaves without looking back.

Wendy turns and begins to sob. She is unaware of his exit.

WENDY

I'm so sorry, Trevor. I never meant to push you away. I was just scared I'd lose you forever if the baby wasn't yours. But what if it was yours and you said ...

(turning to an empty room)

... no?

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate and Pat enter with shopping bags and separate the office supplies and the groceries. Kate is noisy as she does this.

PAT

Will you be quiet, for crying out loud. Debbie's sleeping.

KATE

Sorry. I don't want to wake Debbie, what with all she's been through.

PAT

She took a sleeping pill. She'll be up soon. When she comes down let's not talk about Wendy or the abortion. Let's be upbeat today. Ok?

KATE

Let's talk about that gorgeous hunk who came in a week ago. Remember? The guy who was looking to rent by Yankee Stadium so he could watch the World Series from his window.

PAT

How could I forget? He was a younger Sean Connery with bushy red hair. You stammered like a school girl. Got all flushed and mumbly.

KATE

At least I wasn't drooling all over myself like a puppy-dog.

PAT

I was not. But did you notice his big hands? And you know what they say about men with big hands?
(responding to silence)
You see? This is why we don't have sex talks. Your sex life is like you owning a dachshund.

KATE

I don't own a dachshund.

PAT

Exactly.

Pat takes a sip from her tea cup.

PAT

Ew! This tea is not doing anything for me. Follow me.

Kate grabs her purse and follows Pat outside.

EXT. BACKYARD SWING SET - CONTINUOUS

Pat walks to the fence post, takes off the top, reaches down deep and pulls out a bottle of booze and walks to the table.

KATE

How long has that been there?

PAT

Since the Yankees won the pennant
two years ago. Want some?

Pat fills her cup, takes a swig and passes the cup to Kate.
Kate takes a sip then pulls out a joint from her purse.

PAT

Is that what I think it is?

KATE

My next door neighbor grows his own.
I don't do this very often.

Kate lights it up, takes a 'hit' and hands the roach to Pat.
They exchange roach and cup.

KATE

May I ask you something without you
getting upset?

PAT

Go for it.

KATE

How can you stay attached to a man
you've only seen once in 30 years?

PAT

Memories make me feel good, I guess.

(moans--takes a toke)

Oh, who am I kidding.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

I never came to closure with him emotionally. I haven't allowed myself to feel for a man since Joey. I wanted us to marry, Kate. So much.

KATE

He probably didn't want to make you a widow if he never came back.

They continue to smoke and drink.

PAT

I would've taken that risk. I don't know why he couldn't.

KATE

I bet if you had told him you were pregnant, he would've married you.

PAT

You could be right, Kate. I messed up, didn't I? Screwed it all up. Let's not talk about him.

Pat pours a drink and raises the cup for a toast.

PAT

To Dan-the-Man. Your secret admirer.

Kate refuses the cup.

PAT

You must know. Just go for it.

KATE

I don't know how to just go for it.

PAT

I think Danny-boy's ready to come out. With a bit of encouragement he might be ready for the fourth move.

(MORE)

PAT (CONT'D)

(resp. to Kate's silence)

Okay. The first move is tongue in the mouth. Second move is take off your bra. Third move is Clinton sex. You know, Cunnilingus.

KATE

Oh, my cousin works for Aer Lingus.

(Laughs)

I'm just not good with men, Pat.

(both take a swig)

Every damn time I feel something, it never works out. I can't seem to survive the courtship. At first I lose my power, but when it eventually returns it just seems to get in the way. Like the time I was being courted by Tim, the lawyer.

PAT

A lawyer. Impressive. What happened?

KATE

We dated for a while, and once my estrogen levels were normal, my abilities returned. I sensed he was overcharging a client, and when I called him on it, he split.

PAT

I don't think you'll have to worry about that with Danny-boy. Just Relax and be yourself. You're a good-looking woman, although you should dress better. Accent your assets.

KATE

Oh, that's a shit-sandwich.

PAT

What's that supposed to mean?

KATE

You compliment me a couple of times
and stick shit in the middle.

PAT

'Shit?' I don't think I've ever
heard you use that word. You're
usually very lady-like.

KATE

'Oh, Kate, you're so good-looking -
you dress like crap - you're very
lady-like.' Shit sandwich.

PAT

I didn't say you were 'sooo' good
looking. I said you were good
looking. If you were 'sooo' good
looking men would be tripping over
themselves to get to you.

A noise from the house startles Pat.

PAT

I hear Debbie coming. Get rid of
this stuff.

Pat runs to the fence post and jams the bottle back in. Kate
tosses the roach, fans the air, and runs to catch up to Pat.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Pat and Kate enter the office just as Debbie does.

DEBBIE

Good morning, ladies.

PAT AND KATE

Good morning.

DEBBIE

Okay. I've cried half the night, so I have no more tears left. But I'm better this morning. You don't have to tip-toe around me. Understood?

(To Pat)

I assume you told Kate everything.

(responding to Pat's nod)

Good. Now I have something to say. I want to see Wendy's performance.

Pat laughs in disbelief. Debbie wait for Pat's response.

PAT

The only way I will drive you to Carnegie Hall in my car is if I tie your hands and feet to the armrest, and put duct tape over your mouth.

DEBBIE

I promise I won't touch anything. I'll just sing and hum. And you can wear earplugs.

PAT

I can't do another day like yesterday.

DEBBIE

And neither can I.

Pat flicks her fingers off her temple indicating a bomb is exploding.

DEBBIE

Good. Nothing left to say right now, so let's try and ...

Debbie searches for the right word.

KATE

Make merry!

PAT

'Make merry?' What are we, in 18th
Century England?

DEBBIE

OK? Yes, let's 'make merry.' Let's
keep things low on the Richter Scale
today.

(pause)

What's that smell? Patricia, you
look like you've been drinking.

PAT

Maybe. Just a tiny bit.

Pat points to Kate and giggles with exaggeration--

PAT

She's been smoking pot too.

KATE

Hey. So has she.

Debbie throws both hands to her face in disbelief.

PAT

You should join us.

DEBBIE

Just sober up. Both of you. This is
a business, not Woodstock.

KATE

I've decided I want to sell houses.
I want to get my realty license.

The room falls silent to that incredulous statement.

PAT

People are not going to buy homes
from someone who smells like kitty-
poop all the time?

KATE

Don't start, Patricia.

PAT

Then stick to what you do best.
Answer phones.

DEBBIE

Ladies, please stop your bickering.

The doorbell rings. After a brief pause--

DEBBIE

Is someone going to get the door?

The doorbell rings again. Pat and Kate stare at each other.

PAT

You're the office flunkie, so answer
the door. Ooo. You don't know who it
is? That can mean only one thing.

DEBBIE

I'm counting to three. If somebody
isn't hauling ass to the front door,
you'll both lose a day's pay, I
swear. One--

PAT

One-and-a-half--

The doorbell rings again.

KATE

I'm looking for a day off anyway.

DEBBIE

Two ...

PAT

Better get it, Kate, or I swear,
I'll sneak in your basement and
sterilize your cats.

KATE

You do that and I'll tell your
gynecologist that you're thinking of
leaving her because her chin hairs
are driving you crazy.

DEBBIE

Three ...

KATE

Excuse me. I have to get the door.

INT. FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Kate enters and opens the front door and sees Dan carrying yet another magnificent display of flowers.

DAN

These will need water right away.

KATE

They're heavenly. The colors are
dazzling. Is it your arrangement?

DAN

Yes, but the choice of flowers is per
instructions of your admirer. He has
a fine sense of floral compatibility.

KATE

Tell me who is he, Dan. You must know by now.

DAN

He swore me to secrecy.

KATE

Then you'll just have to return the bouquet. I can't keep accepting these gifts without knowing who to thank. It's embarrassing. Is there a card enclosed this time?

Dan nods and checks his pockets but is slow in the search.

KATE

Let's put these down for a sec. There. You must be tired doing deliveries all day long. Sit.

DAN

No thanks. Actually, it's harder than most people think. Some of these weigh over 20 pounds, like the cacti ... That's cactus ... plural.

KATE

You seem quite intelligent.

DAN

Well, I do have my degree in botanical science. Ohio U.

KATE

Very impressive. What else should I know about you, Dan?

DAN

Had a couple of stories published in the Mystery Writers magazine.

KATE

Who's your favorite author?

DAN

Agatha Christie. No one matches her intrigue and suspense in a story.

KATE

Yes, I agree.

Dan finds the card and hands it to Kate.

DAN

It came off when I loaded the van.

KATE

"Beauty begets beauty. Flowers will fade, but your beauty never could." What a splendid compliment. And the hand writing, quite a flourish. Very unique if I may say so.

DAN

Ms. Devine, tell me something about yourself.

KATE

Not much to tell. Have a stable of cats. A few more since yesterday. Love to read plays. I collect autographs of writers. Have a Thornton Wilder, a John Steinbeck.

DAN

What's your favorite play?

KATE

Cyrano de Bergerac! The romance and noble sentiment in that play always give me chills. Now, if I had that playwright's autograph. Hmm.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

Maybe you'd oblige me with your signature now that I know you're an author? Here, sign your name on this. I'll add it to my collection.

Kate hands Dan the card and he signs it and hands it back.

KATE

I'd very much like to meet the man who fancies me as his Roxanne. I'd say to my secret Cyrano, should I ever meet him, that the poetry he bestows on me with his beautiful flowers are like fragrant words that deserve to be spoken face-to-face.

DAN

The best mysteries are solved only after the suspense is savored.

KATE

Exactly. But at my age I have a habit of reading the last pages of a book first, so I don't waste time with an ending I don't like.

(pause)

Tell me, Dan. Has handwriting analysis ever been a technique you've employed in any of your stories to solve a mystery?

DAN

Of course.

KATE

And if I turn this card over and compare the hand writing, do you think I might finally solve the mystery of who my admirer is?

DAN

That depends if you could ever imagine me as your Cyrano. Could you care for someone who hides himself in roses and daffodils to conceal his own unattractiveness?

KATE

No mystery there. Anyone who sends such loveliness could never be less than beautiful.

While Dan gives Kate a Rhett Butler kind of kiss, Kate notices Pat by the door. Dan starts nibbling on her neck.

KATE

Dan, stop it.
(to Pat)
He's so romantic, isn't he?

PAT

Romantic my ass. He's gnawing at your neck like it's a hot dog. A little advice, Kate. Install handrails around your bed and practice safe sex with this guy.
(beat)
Where did you hide the reports?

DAN

Well, I better go.

INT. DEBBIE'S REALTY OFFICE - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Patricia, in a dress, fusses with the day's paper work. Debbie walks in half-dressed and hair in rollers.

DEBBIE

I'm so nervous. Do I look okay?

PAT

I must finish this paper work and then we'll go. You'll look a little funny with the rollers on. I'd advise you to take them off.

The doorbell rings.

DEBBIE

I hope that's not business. We've got to go soon. Pat, I'm scared.

Debbie scampers upstairs as the doorbell rings again.

PAT

The door's open. Come on in.

Pat doesn't recognize JOEY, 50s, because he tries to hide his his disfigured face in the shadow of his hat.

PAT

Come in. I'm about to lock up. Got a few seconds, I guess.

Joey sits and Pat stares hard at him.

PAT

Have we met before?

JOEY

I haven't heard that pick-up line in thirty years.

PAT

Hmm. Cute. What brings you by?

JOEY

I'm selling my family home. Over on Conklin. I'm selling because my mother recently died.

Joey hands Pat the photo. She doesn't look at it right away.

JOEY

My dad bought it new. I'm selling because my mom recently died. I just said that, didn't I?

PAT

That's okay. So, a single owner?

JOEY

And no mortgages or liens, either.

PAT

Give me a couple of days. I'll put together a comparative listing of homes in the neighborhood.

JOEY

You have to see it. It has an oversized plot ... a backyard pool.

PAT

I'm in a bit of a rush. Going to Carnegie Hall. In fact, we were about to close when you rang the door bell.

JOEY

We've had a for-sale sign up for a long time. We thought of selling it by ourselves, but ... you know. We need a realtor. Someone like you. Think you could give me a ball-park figure so I could start to plan... start to plan... plan... Sorry. Sometimes I lose track.

PAT

This move must be difficult for you.

JOEY

I haven't lived there in years. Live in a rooming house in the city. I'm a patient at the VA facility for Post-Traumatic Stress. Kind of hard to shake. Got the Purple Heart.

PAT

I volunteer at the VA in Manhattan sometimes. I never saw you there.

JOEY

I'm only in there an hour a week. Maybe two.

Pat studies Joey with increasing alarm. Looks at the photo.

PAT

Do I know you from the neighborhood?

JOEY

What's your name?

PAT

Patricia O'Neil.

Shocked, Joey stands and begins backing away.

JOEY

No. This is impossible. I'm not ready for this. Forget I came.

PAT

I know this house. I've been there. The address is 145 Conklin, right?

JOEY

I told you, I don't live there.

PAT

But you grew up there.

JOEY

I ... I ... I ... gotta go.

PAT

You just can't drop into my life
like this and then leave! Again!

Joey starts to exit, as if he's going to run.

PAT

Wait! I need to tell you ... You're
a father, Joey. You have a son.

Joey hesitates on his exit.

JOEY

No. That's impossible. I didn't hear
that. I can't do this.

He bolts from the office just as Debbie enters. He almost
knocks her over as he exits.

Pat runs after him but runs into Debbie.

DEBBIE

Whatever did you say to that man?

PAT

Debbie! That was Joey.

DEBBIE

As in 'your' Joey. Trevor's father?

DEBBIE

(sound of a car engine)

Well, what are you waiting for?
Jump in your car and go after him.

PAT

But what about you. I'm supposed to
take you to the concert.

DEBBIE

Don't worry about me. I'll call Kate on her cell or take a cab. Now, go before you lose him again. Just go!

PAT

Don't forget to bring Wendy's pocketbook. She left it yesterday.

Debbie nods and Pat kisses her and leaves. Debbie runs to her desk, picks up the phone and dials.

DEBBIE

Hello, I need a taxi. Quick ...

(listens)

World Series, my ass. I can't wait that long. Never mind.

Debbie hangs up, reaches over to the recorder. Turns it on.

TAPE VOICE (V.O.)

Disease and illness are preventable afflictions when your primary response to a stressful situation are stress and anxiety. You need to relax physically and mentally...

She dials another number and turns down the recorder.

DEBBIE

Damn you, Kate. Voice mail?

(hangs up)

Dear God, not the bus.

She stands and starts to pace. She doesn't see Wendy enter.

DEBBIE

What am I going to tell Wendy? No ... No. I gotta go to Carnegie. I'll take the bus if I have to.

Debbie turns quickly and sees Wendy with her hand over her mouth ready to cry.

DEBBIE

I wanted it to be a surprise.

WENDY

I don't know what to say, Mom. After thirty years ...

DEBBIE

Now don't make a big deal of it.

Wendy spots her pocketbook on the desk and grabs it.

WENDY

I left my pocketbook. That's why I'm here. Come. Come on. My taxi is outside. We'll take it together.

DEBBIE

No. Taxi's too close to the ground. Things speed by too fast. The bus is better. Less claustrophobic.

WENDY

Don't have time to argue, Mom. I'm going to miss first call. The taxi's right outside. Let's go.

Debbie runs into the vestibule area, retrieves her SHAWL and an UMBRELLA, and opens the front door just as a car whizzes by. A kaleidoscope of images cause her to falter (SPFX).

She slams the door shut, then opens the door again and everything appears normal. She walks to the porch.

EXT. DEBBIE'S FRONT PORCH - EARLY EVENING

Wendy escorts a moaning Debbie all the way to the taxi.

Debbie slides in the back seat and Wendy slides in next to her and slams the door.

WENDY

(to the driver)

Please hurry.

The SPFX shows Debbie's full range of agoraphobia as she reacts to the onslaught of the outside visual and audio stimuli. After a brief period of traveling in the taxi--

DEBBIE

I can't ride in the taxi. Bus ...
bus is better.

She grabs her shawl and umbrella before bolting out of the taxi. She doesn't know where she's going, but finally she sees a church and she runs up the steps to the front door.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

The door swings open and Debbie runs in and heads right for the confessional booth.

EXT. BY THE TAXI -- CONTINUOUS

Wendy hands the driver money and sends him on his way.

INT. CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

The front doors swings open and Wendy walks into the church.

WENDY

I haven't got time for this, Mother.
Okay, you win. We'll take the bus.

Wendy hears sobbing coming from the confessional booth and sees the umbrella leaning against the booth.

Wendy turns the knob to the side booth. It's locked, so she ducks into center chamber.

WENDY (O.S.)

Mom ... stop.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

(through her sobs)

I'm sorry, Sweetheart. I can't help this. I know you don't believe me, but I really can't help it.

WENDY (O.S.)

Can we get focused so we can go to the bus stop? Please.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

See. You don't care, do you? I told you, no bus!

WENDY (O.S.)

I don't have time for this circular crap, Mother.

(deep sigh)

You want absolution. Okay. I absolve you from your sins. Say three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys. Now let's go.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

What are you doing?

WENDY (O.S.)

I'm giving you absolution.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

But you're not even Catholic.

WENDY (O.S.)

Forgiveness is a human trait, not a religious one.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Then tell me to drink arsenic. But
don't tell me to say the rosary.

(responding to a sigh)

You don't sound too forgiving.

WENDY (O.S.)

What do you want me to say, Mom?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Tell me you love me ...

Debbie starts sobbing again, and the echo of Wendy's SCREAM
is followed by total silence.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Why did you do that?

WENDY (O.S.)

Why is the sky blue, Mommy? Why is
there evil in the world, Mommy? Why
does God allow bad things to happen
to good people? I suppose you wish I
were more grateful, don't you?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Yes, I do.

WENDY (O.S.)

Well, I've tried to get close to
you, Mother. And when I try, your
issues seem to get in the way, and I
can't stifle this thing that happens
inside me...like someone's stoking
coals in my soul. A chemical pumps
through my body and I can't look at
you without wanting to scream.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Yeah, well ... I'm sorry you feel
that way.

WENDY (O.S.)

I bare my soul, and that's all you want to say, some psycho-crap your doctor tells you to say.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

You act as if I'm responsible for what someone else did to you. Well, I'm sorry, Wendy. You're not the only one who has hardships.

(silence.)

Okay. I'm ready, now.

Debbie bolts from the confessional and out of the church. Wendy comes out of the confessional.

WENDY

I bet Norman Bates' mother was never like this.

Wendy grabs the umbrella and calmly leaves.

EXT. CHURCH STEPS - CONTINUOUS

Debbie bolts out of the church and down the steps. She stops short to tighten the shawl around her shoulders, then turns and sees Wendy heading towards her.

Debbie runs down the street. The SPFX shows what is going through in her mind. All the movements, all the sounds and lights, hit her at once.

As Wendy approaches her--

WENDY

Close your eyes.

Debbie closes her eyes. The car passes and the SOUND starts out loud but ends in a normal tone. Debbie's panic subsides.

WENDY

Okay. Car's gone. Now look both ways. Anything coming?

DEBBIE

No.

WENDY

Let's cross the street.

DEBBIE

Dear God, you get me through this and I'll never use another four-letter word again. I promise.

WENDY

Don't make promises you can't keep.

DEBBIE

It's getting dark.

WENDY

It's okay. They're just shadows, Mom. The bus stop is only a couple of blocks down the street.

DEBBIE

What am I going to do when the bus moves and things go flying by the window? I'll get dizzy. I'll faint.

WENDY

You'll close your eyes and take deep breaths is what you'll do.

Debbie approaches a corner and hears people talking. The SPFX shows the scenery as if it's right out of a Hitchcock movie.

To Debbie, the voices get stronger, more menacing, just around the corner, maybe.

The sounds, incoherent, seem to be coming from everywhere. Maybe they are voices of muggers or thieves in the night.

Debbie grabs the umbrella from Wendy and readies herself, as if it were a weapon.

DEBBIE

(Whispering)

Wendy.

WENDY

What?

DEBBIE

I hear voices.

WENDY

What are they saying to you?

DEBBIE

They're not in my head. They're real. Don't you hear them?

The voices get louder as they get closer to the corner. The voices sound wicked. At the edge of the corner the voices sound piercing, and Debbie jumps ahead and looks.

WENDY

No, I don't hear them. And see? No one is there.

Still, Debbie screams, drops her umbrella, throws her shawl over her face and runs across the side street.

Wendy picks up the umbrella then runs after her mother who slows down and continues walking with the shawl on her head.

Wendy catches up to her and takes the shawl off her head.

DEBBIE

This is so ... hard.

WENDY

Let's just focus. It's getting late.
I don't want to miss my solo.

Wendy hands the umbrella to Debbie and they continue walking. The SOUND of someone traveling down the street in a motor scooter unnerves Debbie. To her it sounds like a jet engine.

She looks up and we see a plane 30,000 feet up in the sky. But Debbie sees a jet flying overhead 100 feet and it roars by her, and as the scooter passes, she falls -- a full fledged anxiety attack.

Debbie gets up screaming. She runs into a BAG LADY and they both go flying. She quickly gets up and points the umbrella at the Bag Lady, as if it were a sword.

BAG LADY

Hey, watch where you're walkin'.

DEBBIE

One false move and you're dead.

Debbie reacts to the SOUNDS of cars zooming by as if they are cannons being shot on a battle field. In response to the noise, Debbie throws the shawl over her head and hugs the Bag Lady who tries to free herself from Debbie's grip.

DEBBIE

Wendy. Wendy. Where are you?

Wendy peels Debbie off the Bag Lady and stands between them.

WENDY

Right here, Mom. I know this is difficult, but it's only a block to the bus stop. You're almost there.

BAG LADY

Hey. This is my territory. Go find your own street.

Wendy holds her mother's arm and they gingerly continue forward with the shawl still over Debbie's head. She peeks out to see where she is.

The Bag Lady follows them.

DEBBIE

I can't see ... I can't see.

WENDY

That's because you have the shawl over your head. Take it off. People will think you're a nutcake.

DEBBIE

Too fast. Things...moving too fast.

WENDY

Then walk slower.

Debbie removes the shawl from her head and walks slower. The SPFX stops and her vision returns to normal.

WENDY

We're at the bus stop. We made it.

Wendy pulls Debbie down to sit with her. The Bag Lady stops a few feet away.

WENDY

You did real good, Mom. I'm proud of you. So, now we wait for the bus.

Debbie drops her umbrella and the Bag Lady picks it up.

DEBBIE

Give it to me.

BAG LADY

Finders, keepers.

Wendy rises from the bench and faces the Bag Lady who points the umbrella at her. Debbie rises as well.

BAG LADY

(to Debbie)

What's the matter with you?

DEBBIE

I could ask the same thing of you.

The Bag Lady points the umbrella at Debbie as a car ZOOMS by.

DEBBIE

Too fast. Things move too fast.
Everything's discombobulated.

BAG LADY

Dis-coom-boob-ulated. Oo! Aren't we
the grown-up person using big words
that twist the tongue.

DEBBIE

Give me my umbrella back.

BAG LADY

You want it? Come and get it.

WENDY

Mom, it's not going to rain tonight.
I'll get you another umbrella.

Debbie sits and throws the shawl over her head.

BAG LADY

What's her problem?

WENDY

She doesn't get out very often?
What's your problem, lady?

The Bag Lady pokes Debbie in the arm with the umbrella.

BAG LADY

Hey, dis-cooom-boob-ulated lady?
 (She pokes Debbie again.)
 You sick in the head, or something?

She pokes Debbie again, and again, and with each stab--

BAG LADY

What's the matter with you? What's
 the matter with you...

Debbie starts pounding her fists into her lap; hysteria.

As the Bag Lady goes to poke Debbie again, Wendy intercepts the umbrella and a tug-of-war begins. Wendy yanks the umbrella out of the Bag Lady's hand and whacks her with it.

Meanwhile, while Debbie tries to get up, the Bag Lady pushes her back down with her foot.

Wendy grabs the Bag Lady by her collar and shouts--

WENDY

Pipe down, lady. You sit here and be
 a good little girl, or I'll take
 your eyeballs out with a corkscrew
 and stuff them up your butt.

The Bag Lady sits, and few seconds later the bus arrives.

INC. NYC BUS DEPOT WOMAN'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Wendy is waiting in the woman's room in front of a stall. She talks to her mother from behind the door.

WENDY

Mom, are you going to come out?

DEBBIE (O.S.)

No.

WENDY

Well, I called Kate on her cell.
She's coming here and will take you
to Carnegie.

DEBBIE (O.S.)

Good. I hope you make it in time.

Kate enters the Woman's room.

WENDY

Thank God you're here.

(pointing)

She's in there. I have to go. I
don't know you well, but ... Thanks.

KATE

Go. Go! We'll have plenty of time to
connect. You'll make the second half
if you hurry.

Wendy exits while Kate sits in the chair next to the stall.
She fumbles with her jacket and pulls out a flask.

KATE

Wendy left. You want a swig. It's
whiskey. Let's take a cab.

After a short pause Debbie slowly comes out and without
hesitation grabs the flask and takes a healthy drink. She
hands the flask back to Kate who also takes a healthy swig.

DEBBIE

Thanks. I can't go. I'm too scared.

KATE

I'm taking a cab to Carnegie. Bye.

As Kate starts to leave, Debbie pulls her back, grabs the
flask and takes a swig and hands the flask back to Kate who
also takes a swig. Debbie then slams the door shut.

DEBBIE

Open doors scare the shit out of me.

KATE

Me too. Let's face our fears
together. To our daughters...

Kate takes another swig from the flake. Hands it to Debbie.

DEBBIE

What? You have a daughter?

KATE

And today's her birthday. To Wendy
and Dorothy. Come on. Take a swig.

DEBBIE

(toasting)

I'd like to meet her.

KATE

One reunion at a time. Wendy's
waiting. Let's go.

DEBBIE

What? You and Dorothy aren't close?

KATE

She's with me all the time in fact.

They take swigs again as they slow-step their way out of the
woman's room and work their way to the street and taxi cabs.

KATE

You look confused. Let me explain.
My little girl, Dorothy, she had a
sparkle in her eyes that told you
she was going to be someone special
when she grew up: a writer, perhaps,
or a doctor, a philosopher, someone
worth knowing.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

She was so inquisitive, a thousand questions about the simplest things. I saw her once gently pick up an ant between her fingers. She put it real close to her face and said in this gravelly voice--

(using a gravelly voice)

Wow!

(back to her normal voice)

And she stared at it for minutes on end. When she finally put it down, it scurried away, better off for its encounter. She was that intense sometimes. She'd look into my eyes and see straight into my heart and I'd be forced to go--

(in a gravelly voice)

Wow.

(back to her normal voice)

I would feel worthy by the simple stare that caught me off-guard. I wondered who or what this child was who could see so far into my soul. A smile from her gave me the confidence that God lived. When she started talking, there was no end to her questions. Her adventure became my adventure. She'd look in wonderment at the birds in the tree branches and demand to know their names. "Wutsdat" ... "Wutsdat", she would always ask. About everything. Sticks, leaves, birds, cement, cars. The wind against her face. She'd wander off after anything that caught her eye. Those precious eyes that saw such a fascinating world we all take for granted. A butterfly. A floating feather.

(slight pause)

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

One day I was sitting on the couch, exhausted from trying to keep pace with her as she darted from room to room wearing a pair of pink sneakers with pale blue laces. They were so worn from all the miles she ran in them. Anyway, unless the laces were tied, Dorothy would sit on the floor until they were fastened. That day I found myself falling asleep just as she tugged on my sleeve to tie up the lace on her left sneaker that had become undone. The room was barricaded and I was so sleepy. I tied the lace, watched her turn on the TV, and I fell asleep. But the child-gate was loose. And the kitchen door was unlocked. And the street was ... busy. And my child with her inquisitive mind and voice calling out 'Wutsdat ... Wutsdat' to a slumbering mother, found her way into the unknown. That's the day God died for me.

(slight pause)

For years, I thought about the shoelace I tied and the gate I left loose. Drove myself insane with grief and blame.

DEBBIE

Wendy won't forgive me.

KATE

Forgiveness? You can't forgive anyone unless you change something inside. After Dorothy was gone I saw no one. Dorothy's father died before she was born, so no help there.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

One morning an alley cat crept into my kitchen. She was starving. I had to do something, so I got some milk and when I got back from the store the cat had curled up asleep between Dorothy's pink sneakers. And I knew it was time to move on.

DEBBIE

You think Dorothy forgave you?

KATE

It's not about forgiveness, Debbie. It's about acceptance. Accept your daughter for who she is and you for who you are. Do that and then you'll have the heart to forgive.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE BUS DEPOT ON 8TH AVENUE - CONTINUOUS

They reach the line of cabs facing north on 8th Avenue.

DEBBIE

Wait, you're the psychic. Tell me if I make it in one piece.

KATE

Yes. You make it in one piece. But you have to take a cab to do it.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF CARNEGIE HALL - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Trevor stands alone outside of Carnegie Hall just as Joey meanders slowly towards him.

Then Wendy burst on the scene and almost runs Joey over. She stops as she sees Trevor.

WENDY

How much have I missed.

TREVOR

It's intermission.

They hesitate for a brief second then Trevor grabs her hand.

TREVOR

Go in. We'll talk later.

Wendy nods, then enters Carnegie Hall.

JOEY

Excuse me. Did you say intermission
just started.

TREVOR

Yes.

Joey twirls an unlit cigarette between his fingers

JOEY

Good. Then I have time for this. Got
a light?

Trevor lights the cigarette with his Zippo.

JOEY

Much obliged. I know ... I see it in
your eyes. I'm trying to quit.
Haven't seen an old Zippo like that
in a long ... time.

TREVOR

Keepsake. Belonged to my father.

JOEY

I had one ... I had one. I know I
had ... I'm sorry I get lost ...
Sometimes I can't ... My mind gets
jumbled... How's the concert going?

TREVOR

Amazing. The woman you just saw has a solo performance in the second half that should be outstanding.

JOEY

I'll keep that in mind.

TREVOR

Where are you sitting?

JOEY

I don't actually have a ticket. I know it's a sold out house, but standing room is fine.

TREVOR

This must be your lucky day. The guy sitting next to me is a doctor and he got called out on an emergency.

JOEY

Well ... Thank you.

(pause)

I have a friend inside as well. We met today after a very long time apart. I didn't handle it very well I'm afraid. She followed me in her car. Caught up with me at a stop light. Motioned for me to pull over, but I didn't. She yelled at me to come here tonight then I sped away. I was afraid, I guess. I'm here to apologize and ... and ... change all that if I can ... if I can. She's in the audience somewhere. Somewhere. I thought I'd surprise her.

TREVOR

It's that kind of a night. My soloist friend was surprised her mother showed up. Long story. You from around here?

JOEY

Born and raised in Brooklyn. I'm looking to sell the family home, though. My mother recently passed and all I need is an apartment.

TREVOR

My mom works in a realty office.
(frisking himself)
I'm sure I have her card somewhere.

JOEY

The soloist. She's a close friend?

TREVOR

Were engaged once. Been trying to get our relationship back on track. I'm sorry. Shouldn't be so personal.

JOEY

No, no. That's okay. It's okay. I came here to settle a piece of the past as well. I let a relationship die a long time ago because I felt ... Unworthy, I guess.

TREVOR

Oh, here's the card.

JOEY

Thanks.
(Doesn't look at it)
So, what... what do you do?

TREVOR

I'm a teacher. High school drama.

JOEY

Bet you're good at it. You seem very personable. A friendly guy. Your folks raised you right... right.

TREVOR

My mom is a single parent. I never knew my dad.

JOEY

Yet you carry his lighter?
Interesting! Let me see it.

TREVOR

What makes you feel 'unworthy', if you don't mind me asking?

Joey takes a cursory look at the Zippo.

JOEY

Did you ever go somewhere and suddenly realize you don't know where the hell you are or how you got there? Happens a lot to me. Doctor... Doctor... Doctor says I get lost physically cause I feel lost emotionally. Hard to explain, but it makes me keep to myself... myself.

TREVOR

(thumbing the theater)
So the person you know inside understands this?

JOEY

It's my fault she doesn't. I don't stick around to talk things out. My MO, I guess.

TREVOR

Just the opposite with me. She's the one who leaves and gets lost. If I told you what I found out--

JOEY

Tell me. You got nothing to lose.

TREVOR

She might've been pregnant with my child two years ago and got an abortion and never told me...

JOEY

This is way too weird. I just found out I have a kid. Wow. So, you might've been the father, huh?

TREVOR

Not sure.

JOEY

I know it's none of my business, but something tells me you'd be a good father if you ever got the chance.

Trevor looks at Joey as if he is beginning to realize that he is speaking to his father.

JOEY

This son I've suddenly got is a second chance at being part of something that truly matters - a family. Don't walk away from her.

Joey looks at Trevor beginning to realize that he is speaking to his son.

Joey inspects the lighter more carefully.

TREVOR

Do you feel you're ready to be a father?

JOEY

That's why I came, to tell her just that. Hey, this lighter. The initials on the backside.

Joey inspects the card in more detail as the lights flash indicating intermission is over.

JOEY

Same as mine. And this card... It says Pat O'Neil...

Pat enters just as the bus pulls up.

PAT

Trevor. Time to get inside before...
Joey? You came.

ON KATE AND DEBBIE

Trevor and Joey enter the Hall just as Kate and Debbie step off the bus.

KATE

I can tell you more stories. Got a slew of them, like why Samantha needs to be neutered and how she only nurses on the yoga mat. And, you'll love this, how my precious Dandelion cornered a squirrel in the laundry room last year and actually backed it into a bucket of bleach.

(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)

And then there was Missy. She caught a mouse with her back paws. And then there the cutest calico kitten under the driver's seat on the M44 to Astoria. Do you know what I did?

DEBBIE

Oh God, I can't go in. You go. I'll follow soon.

Kate hesitates, but nods and goes in.

Debbie listens to the music by the doorway as the orchestra plays *The William Tell's Overture*.

The music stops and there's tapping sounds of the baton against the music stand which indicates an unseen Maestro is bringing the orchestra to attention.

Debbie listens to--

MAESTRO (O.S.)

Ladies and Gentlemen. Please put your hands together for a wonderful Cellist doing her very first solo. Please welcome Wendy Hammel who will play her rendition of *Amazing Grace* in G minor.

Debbie leans against the wall and listens. She gets very emotional, then takes a deep breath and vanishes into the hall.

THE END