

UNTITLED VANESSA TAYLOR

Screenplay by Vanessa Taylor

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FADE IN:

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The room is decorated in that overly precious way, china blue accents, frilly pillow shams, a ceramic cat.

MAEVE SOAMES, 52 -- real 52, not Hollywood 52 -- is awake and has been. She has bobbed blonde hair and a face like Doris Day. At 52. She has aged the way perky and cute inevitably do: pretty for years then one day invisible.

Maeve stares up at the ceiling from her twin bed, wishes she were somewhere else.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

This, believe it or not, is where Maeve wishes she were: the bedroom of her husband, the sleeping ARNOLD SOAMES. Arnold, 56, never handsome, has lived with that disappointment all his life. He retains wisps of dark hair which he sometimes bothers to comb over but for the most part vanity is outside his purview.

His ALARM SOUNDS, the old fashioned kind, BLEEP BLEEP BLEEP. Arnold slaps it off, swings his legs to the side of the bed, resigned. Today will be as colorless as all the days before.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Maeve gets dressed. She wears a "cute" patterned sweater and "slacks." She looks like one of those "real" people in the health care commercials: sweet and sexless.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Arnold puts on his daily uniform: a low-end suit and tasteless cuff links. He pulls a tie from a rack of ties which all look the same.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Maeve is at the stove when Arnold enters. Arnold sits at the kitchen table and opens the waiting paper. Maeve places a strip of bacon and two eggs sunnyside up onto his plate.

ARNOLD

Thanks.

MAEVE

Mmm hmm.

Reading the business section, he begins to eat.

Back at the stove, Maeve watches him.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Maeve cleans up from breakfast. Arnold comes back through with his briefcase, on his way to the garage.

MAEVE  
Six tonight?

ARNOLD  
Should be.

MAEVE  
I thought I'd do pot roast.

ARNOLD  
Mmm.

MAEVE  
Would you prefer something else?

ARNOLD  
No, that's fine.

He kisses her on the cheek -- so fast it's like a drive-by.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Alright, see you tonight.

MAEVE  
Bye.

He leaves. Maeve stands there in the wake of the kiss and all that it was and wasn't.

INT. TALBOTS STORE - DAY

Talbots: home to the plaid cropped jacket, the floral print blouse and every headband ever made. This is where Maeve works and buys her clothes.

She stands behind the counter as a younger woman SHOPPER approaches with a dress.

MAEVE  
(taking the dress)  
Will this be all for you?

SHOPPER  
All for today, my credit card is worn out.

MAEVE

I know what you mean.

(then)

This is one of my favorites though.

SHOPPER

Do you have it?

MAEVE

Me, oh, no, it wouldn't look right on me, but it's lovely.

Maeve takes the woman's credit card.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Do you have an occasion?

SHOPPER

My husband's got a work party.

Maeve glances up at the woman, envying her slightly nervous smile, the dress, the thought that your husband could want to show you off.

MAEVE

Well. This will be perfect.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Maeve shops. As she reaches the

CHECKOUT AISLE

She gets in line. She glances over at the magazines: People, US, Vogue, all are covered in aliens -- thin, beaming aliens. She goes over, looks at Cosmopolitan, "26 Ways To Drive Your Man Wild." Considers. Reaches for the House & Garden.

She thumbs to the article on "Garden Gnome: Retro Chic or Relic?" As she begins to read she glances back at the Cosmo.

The girl on the cover taunts her with a lascivious smile.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maeve and Arnold eat. The room has a stillness, as if very little ever moves from behind the glass doors of the armoire or inside the room itself. Frozen in Brady Bunch land.

ARNOLD

Jon Ross came in today.

MAEVE

Mmm.

ARNOLD

You'd think this was the first year  
he'd heard April fifteen was the  
deadline for taxes.

MAEVE

Uh huh.

ARNOLD

As if it was a totally new concept.  
We have the same conversation every  
year. Every goddamn year, for  
seventeen years -- can you imagine  
that?

Maeve can imagine that.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Arnold has fallen asleep while reading in his reclining  
chair. Maeve watches television. An Oprah-style show  
features an expert talking about "tricks" to add zest to your  
sex life.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve is once again in bed, in her nightgown. She hugs a  
pillow to her as if it were a man. She looks down, realizes  
what she's doing, pushes the pillow away, feels its absence.

INT. BORDERS BOOKSTORE - DAY

Maeve peruses the self-help section, self-conscious. She  
moves through "Addiction," "How to be more organized," "How  
to do more," "How to be happy doing less,"...

She arrives at the marriage and relationship section. An  
avalanche of topics: how to pick a great partner, communicate  
better, have better sex, love more, hate less, get along with  
in-laws. She's having trouble identifying exactly what her  
problem is.

Then she sees it. "Endless Passion: How to Breathe Life Back  
Into Your Marriage and Sex life." Furtively she reaches for  
the book.

She reads the back: "Your marriage isn't dead, just hibernating...you're using old patterns of behavior that don't fit anymore...you and your partner feel as distant as you've ever been...but every marriage has within it the essential marriage that it was and more importantly the exciting marriage that it can be."

MAEVE  
(quietly)  
"Every marriage."

She stands there holding the book. Does she believe that? Every marriage? Even hers? A tear slides down her cheek. She does believe it. And the belief is nearly as painful as doubt would have been.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Engrossed, Maeve reads, drinking her tea without looking up.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner time again. Arnold vents about his day but the sound is muted as Maeve looks at him, sizing him up, wondering.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve wears a more revealing nightie -- still white, still with flower accents, very innocent, but this one sleeveless. She looks at herself in the mirror, adjusts her hair, pulling a few strands out for a "sexier" look, doesn't know if she's succeeded. She takes a deep breath.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arnold is reading in bed. KNOCK. He looks up. This never happens. KNOCK KNOCK.

ARNOLD  
Come in?

Maeve opens the door.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
What --

She closes the door behind her, stands against it. For the first time we see her eyes glow with something like hope. She looks younger. She's barely breathing, nervous, excited.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

MAEVE  
I was thinking...

This would be a good time for him to help her. He does not.

MAEVE (CONT'D)  
I was thinking...I could sleep in  
here tonight.

ARNOLD  
In here? Why? Is something wrong  
with your room?

She shakes her head.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Is the furnace out again?

MAEVE  
No.

ARNOLD  
Then what --

MAEVE  
I just...wanted to sleep in here.

With a thunk Arnold gets it. And it scares him shitless.

ARNOLD  
I don't -- I'm not feeling -- I had  
pork today at lunch -- it's  
probably best if --

The light in her eyes goes out.

MAEVE  
I'll...I'll just go back.

She leaves. We stay with Arnold. Now he can hardly breathe.

EXT. SALAD BAR RESTAURANT - DAY

Maeve eats with EILEEN, a tougher, more blue-collar version  
of herself: Maeve if she'd grown up with the mob.

EILEEN  
I could have killed Jerry this  
morning. Just killed him. And  
it's not like I haven't told him.  
I've told him a hundred times.  
Sometimes I think he does things I  
beg him not to just to, to --

MAEVE

What?

EILEEN

I don't know, he likes the...friction. If he stopped doing it, I'd stop telling him not to and that part of our marriage would be over. It's like a tradition. A very bad tradition. It's the thing that if he dropped dead tomorrow I'd say, you know I never thought I'd miss that about him but I miss it.

(beat)

I could have killed him.

They eat in silence a moment.

MAEVE

Do you think you can change your marriage?

EILEEN

Me? What am I telling you, I talk, I talk, it's like I'm mute.

MAEVE

No, I mean...anyone.

EILEEN

Change your marriage?

(then)

I don't know, you mean like, you mostly eat in on Friday nights and then you eat out? Or you're at each other's throats and then you're Cinderella and Prince Charming? How big a change are we talking about?

MAEVE

The second one.

EILEEN

No. You married who you married, you are who you are, why would it change?

MAEVE

If you wanted it to.



EILEEN

No.

(then)

For that to happen it would have to be so bad someone's willing to risk it all to shake things up. But then it may not come down your way. Change is very hard. People don't like change. And unless someone's beating you in the face or sleeping with every woman in town it's never bad enough that people are willing to risk the only thing they have. Marriages don't change.

Maeve picks at her salad.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

What are you making tonight? The kids still coming over?

MAEVE

Mmm hmm.

EILEEN

You should borrow that new blazer -- with the embossed flowers? That would be great on you.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maeve wears the embossed blazer. Its brightly-colored appliqué design drowns her a little.

On her left side sits their daughter, MOLLY, 31, an expansive person, handsome, athletic, with husband MARK. On her right sits their son, HANK, 29, sweet-faced, thoughtful. Arnold is at the other end carving something.

HANK

Doing all right there, Dad?

ARNOLD

I'm fine, it's just...tough.

Maeve tries to ignore the slight.

MARK

Would you like some help with that?

ARNOLD

I'm fine, thank you.

MOLLY

Oh, you -- the last time I had Mark carve something it flew off the table.

MARK

It almost flew off the table.

MOLLY

It was four seconds from contact with the floor.

MARK

But I caught it.

HANK

You're good.

MARK

Hand-eye. It's because I used to play baseball.

MOLLY

It's because you knew I would kill you after I spent five hours cooking that --

He laughs, ever so subtly puts his hand on her arm. Maeve watches it all.

ARNOLD

Aw, hell, I'll have to get the electric one.

He gets up, heads into the kitchen.

MOLLY

Mark hates those electric carvers.

MARK

I don't hate them, I just --

MOLLY

That's what it was, remember, because your dad was there --

MARK

Oh, now why --

MOLLY

And he was standing behind you and you started it up and he --

But she's laughing so hard she can't finish the story.

MARK  
All right Red Buttons, enough,  
let's tell some good ones about  
you. Let's talk about the time you  
put Woolite in the washer and it  
flooded.

Maeve smiles, trying to join in. Hank notices.

HANK  
(softly)  
Hey, Mom.

She smiles at him.

HANK (CONT'D)  
You all right?

MAEVE  
Fine.

HANK  
Be happy.

She smiles again, gives his arm a squeeze then as the conversation continues she gets up. She nearly crashes into Arnold and his electric carver as he heads back in.

ARNOLD  
Where are you going?

MAEVE  
Just to check on the -- I'll be  
right back.

She makes it out, just barely, to the

GUEST BATHROOM

Inside (flowered wallpaper, pot pourri) she looks at herself in the mirror, crying silently. Be happy? How?

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dead of night now, that creepy otherworldly silence. Maeve sits on the window seat in her room, looking through old photo albums, back to when the kids were young, back to before there were kids, a Europe trip, she a smiling newlywed, Arnold for a moment confident because he won the pretty girl.

She stares hard at those people: where did they go? Are they still here?

She picks up her book "Endless Passion," reads the back, about the author. "Doctor Bernard Feld runs the Center for Intensive Couples Counseling in Shuttle Creek, Wyoming."

She puts the book down, thinks.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Maeve puts one piece of bacon and two eggs on a plate as Arnold enters, sits, opens the paper. Like clockwork. Only today, Maeve sits. Arnold doesn't notice for a moment.

He looks up, something's weird.

ARNOLD

What are you -- are you eating?

MAEVE

No. I ate.

ARNOLD

What, you're just going to sit there? What are you --

Maeve slides a brochure across the table.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

What's -- what is this?

MAEVE

I want to go.

ARNOLD

"Doctor Bernard Feld, Intensive Couples Counseling -- "

He looks up, agog.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

You want to go to couples counseling?

MAEVE

In Wyoming.

ARNOLD

In Wyoming??

MAEVE

It's only a week --

ARNOLD

A week?

MAEVE

Only half the day. The rest of the day you can...read or see the town.

He looks down at the brochure.

ARNOLD

"Four thousand dollars?" Is that -- for...five sessions?

MAEVE

It's intensive.

ARNOLD

It'd have to be gold plated for --

MAEVE

I'll pay for it.

ARNOLD

You? You're going to pay for it. Four thousand dollars.

MAEVE

I'll use my CD.

ARNOLD

This is insane.

MAEVE

I made a reservation.

ARNOLD

What? Cancel it.

MAEVE

I want to go.

Arnold can't believe she's serious but is starting to get the unpleasant feeling she is.

ARNOLD

What is wrong with you? Are you -- is this -- have you been to Doctor Lesser? Maybe this is related to the hormone --

MAEVE

I am not crazy, Arnold.

ARNOLD

Well. Then I don't know what to say to you. In all our years together, never have I --

MAEVE

Heard me ask for anything?

ARNOLD

I beg your pardon? Did we not just get a new water heater because you -

MAEVE

That's not what I mean.

An impasse. He knows what she means. But doesn't want to.

ARNOLD

Well, you're a free woman, you can go anywhere you want, but I'm not going, so, if you want to go to couples counseling by yourself --

MAEVE

Maybe I will.

ARNOLD

Then I guess I'll see you when you get back.

She takes the brochure, leaves. Stay with Arnold, eighty percent sure she'd never do it, twenty percent very uncomfortable.

INT. DIEBLER BAUMGARTEN AND SOAMES - DAY

Arnold is with a client, in his office surrounded by files.

ARNOLD

...next time I'll need all of your receipts, for the stuff we talked about -- the vacation and your home office.

CLIENT

I was thinking about taking a write-off for my mother-in-law's car, too, because --

ARNOLD

I wouldn't.

CLIENT  
Really? It's just --

ARNOLD  
It's a red flag.

CLIENT  
Right, I hear you. Worth a try.  
Thanks Arnold.

ARNOLD  
See you next month.

Client leaves. Arnold stacks client's papers, pushes the files aside, looks at his watch. A still moment.

Arnold gets up, goes into the

MENS ROOM

He's at a urinal when fellow CPA, VINCE, late 40's, big, enters, unzips.

VINCE  
Soames.

ARNOLD  
Yeah.

Vince glances over. Already this makes Arnold uncomfortable.

VINCE  
You all right there, buddy, you're sweating a little.

ARNOLD  
Huh, oh --

He wipes his brow.

VINCE  
You feeling all right?

ARNOLD  
Yeah, fine.

VINCE  
You got an issue?

ARNOLD  
What?

VINCE  
Prostate.

ARNOLD  
No.

VINCE  
I watch mine like a hawk. Most  
people get prostate cancer they die  
with it not of it but God forbid  
you got to have the surgery you're  
lucky if the thing still works.  
(beat)  
You could tell me, you know that.

ARNOLD  
I'm fine.

He zips up, washes his hands.

VINCE  
What do you say we grab lunch, talk  
about --

ARNOLD  
No, I'm fine, it's fine.

Vince isn't buying it.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
My wife's acting kind of...off,  
that's all.

VINCE  
"Off" how?

ARNOLD  
(shrugs)  
Threatening me.

VINCE  
What -- oh, she wants you to buy  
her a car or a vacation or  
something --

ARNOLD  
Yeah, a vacation.

VINCE  
And what, she's telling you if you  
don't do it she'll what, she'll --



ARNOLD

I don't know. I think she said she would leave.

VINCE

Leave? Over a vacation?

ARNOLD

Well, no, not --

VINCE

Little minx plays a mean game of brinkmanship.

Now Vince zips up, comes to the sinks.

VINCE (CONT'D)

She's not gonna leave. But I'll tell you when Susan threatens me, well I used to do what we all want to do, you know, head out to Yankee Doodle's, not call, come back way too late, piss drunk, big screw you. But I tell you it always came back to bite me on the ass. Now first sign of that I'm on it with flowers, a card, maybe dinner or a necklace. I kill that thing dead, I'm like the Orkin man. You can call it spineless or you can call it smart.

He claps Arnold on the back before leaving. Arnold considers. Before he knows it he has to grab a towel, wipe his forehead, he's sweating again.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Maeve is finishing dinner when Arnold comes in through the garage. He puts a bouquet of pink roses down on the counter next to where she's chopping the heads off broccoli. She looks up.

ARNOLD

I got you this, too.

He awkwardly hands her a box. She dries her hands, opens it. It's a pair of starfish-shaped earrings, silver, from a department store.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

The girl liked these best. I told her what you look like...

Maeve examines them a moment before slowly putting them down. She looks at him, walks over to the table, picks up an envelope.

MAEVE  
These are your tickets.

ARNOLD  
Oh, come on --

MAEVE  
The flight leaves at 10:02.

She heads into the dining room. He follows.

ARNOLD  
What is wrong with you? What are you trying to do to us?

She looks up, betrayed. She's trying to save them.

MAEVE  
I want a real marriage again, Arnold.

ARNOLD  
A real -- what does that mean? This isn't real? This isn't real for thirty-two years?

MAEVE  
When is the last time you touched me --

He starts to object.

MAEVE (CONT'D)  
-- that wasn't for a picture? When was the last time you kissed me?

ARNOLD  
I kiss you every day.

She looks at him: a real kiss.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
We're not twenty-two anymore, things change.  
(then)  
I can be more -- I can --  
(frustrated)  
This is insane.

MAEVE

The flight leaves at 10:02  
tomorrow. I'm going to be on it.

She gets out one plate, one glass, hands them to him.

ARNOLD

What are you, aren't you --

Then she walks out of the room.

Arnold stands there. His whole world is this, her, this room, and his whole world has just come to a grinding halt.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arnold sits, trying to eat. Distracted, confused, in shock.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arnold gets ready for bed. Puts antifungal cream on his toothbrush before smelling and noticing, annoyed at himself.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arnold lies in bed sleepless, wired, freaked out.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve sleeps peacefully, the hint of a smile on her face.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Arnold wakes up, for a moment life is as it was. Then he remembers. Fear grips him. Then anger.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Maeve's already made breakfast and is fixing snacks for the plane. Arnold enters loaded for bear.

ARNOLD

I am not going to any bloated money-grubbing self-help guru to hear what is wrong with my marriage.

Maeve looks up, resigned.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Our marriage is fine. Our marriage is good. We have two grown children, a house, everything we could ever need.

(MORE)

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

And if you feel it's necessary  
to...to crap all over that because  
you had a hormonal...mood, well,  
that's your problem.

He sits authoritatively. She puts his breakfast in front of him. He opens his paper.

Maeve finishes making snacks, puts his airplane tickets down on the table, leaves.

He looks up.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Arnold is still there, still reading the paper, business as usual, as Maeve wheels her (flowered) airporter bag through the kitchen and out the garage.

Arnold says nothing. He hears the CAB idling outside.

CAB DRIVER (O.S.)

Morning, ma'am.

MAEVE (O.S.)

Good morning.

Arnold: heart pounding. She wouldn't leave. She wouldn't leave without even saying goodbye?

CAB DRIVER (O.S.)

Let me take this for you. Where  
are we going?

MAEVE (O.S.)

The airport.

The SOUND of the TRUNK shutting, a DOOR shutting, then a second DOOR. The SOUND of the CAB pulling away.

Arnold looks around. Stillness. He's alone.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Arnold wanders through the house. Silence is everywhere. He hears sounds he doesn't usually notice: a CLOCK, the HEAT coming on, the HUM of the refrigerator.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DEN - DAY

Arnold sits on the couch where Maeve usually sits, still in shock. What has happened? Where is everyone? Where is he?

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - DAY

Arnold puts on his cufflinks, picks up his briefcase. Catch him in the mirror white as a sheet.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Maeve glances at the seat next to her as passengers continue to board. Get the feeling she's holding onto her resolve just barely. The moment the plane takes off it'll be waterworks -- if it takes off with her on it at all. Then

Arnold's there, pissed as hell, shoving his bag overhead, crowding in past her with his briefcase. Maeve tries not to cry.

BEAT.

ARNOLD

I hope you're happy.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

The plane lands on a snow-covered runway. Out the window a world coated in white. Arnold looks at Maeve.

MAEVE

They've had some weather.

INT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Maeve and Arnold silently wait in a long line for car rental. There is one person at the desk and he appears to be "slow."

RENTAL WORKER

Do you know who you spoke to?

CAR RENTER

No, it was the 800 number but --

RENTAL WORKER

(pained)

Oh, it wasn't here.

CAR RENTER

(handing it over)

No, but I have my confirmation number --

RENTAL WORKER

(no clue)

So...you don't remember who you spoke to?

Arnold's face is pinched. Maeve suffers in silence.

EXT. AIRPORT - NIGHT

Maeve and Arnold walk outside with their bags. A blast of cold air hits them. It's horrible. The wind feels malevolent. There are no signs anywhere for anything.

ARNOLD

I don't know -- where do we even --

He scans the horizon, frustrated, angry.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I don't know where to go. Where do we go?

Maeve looks out helplessly.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Arnold drives, Maeve in the passenger seat. What can be seen outside is coated in ice and snow.

ARNOLD

This is not an SUV.

MAEVE

He said "compact" SUV.

ARNOLD

A compact SUV is a car!

(then)

Well I don't know what the elevation is at this place but if it gets much higher...

Maeve looks at him, wishing he didn't hate her.

MAEVE

I'm really glad you came, Arnold.

ARNOLD

Yeah, tell me that when we're trapped in four feet of snow without chains.

They drive on in silence.

INT. CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

They enter the town and immediately see "Captain Jack's Bed & Breakfast" -- a lovely old Victorian, white with forest green trim, candles in the windows, quaint, romantic.

ARNOLD

There's a hotel, is that it?

MAEVE

No. We're at the "Good Nite Inn."

Maeve looks longingly at the bed & breakfast as they pass.

EXT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

The opposite of Captain Jack's, a motel in a box. While Arnold pulls the luggage out, Maeve looks up, dubious. Could their lost romance really be hiding...here?

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

Strictly functional. One of those uncomfortable foam couches, a kitchenette, fluorescent lights, some waxy fruit.

The bedroom is no frills, haunted by ghosts of smokers past. The bathroom is too dim and too bright at the same time.

Maeve unpacks in two drawers leaving the others for Arnold. He comes out of the bathroom, waits for her to finish.

MAEVE

Oh, sorry.

She hurriedly shoves her things in and moves to the side. He begins to unpack. Feeling awkward she sits on the bed.

ARNOLD

What time's this thing start tomorrow?

MAEVE

Ten thirty.

ARNOLD

Might as well get there on time, get our money's worth...

He's done unpacking. He looks at her, she looks at him. Moment of truth: bedtime. She feels like he can hear her heart thudding out loud.

MAEVE  
I'll set the alarm.

She does.

ARNOLD  
Wouldn't give us a lot of extra  
time, not sure you even could get  
lost in a town this size.

MAEVE  
Mmm.

She can barely focus on what he's saying. She's waiting,  
waiting endlessly for him to say --

ARNOLD  
Well.

Not that. Timidly she offers --

MAEVE  
If you want to --

But he's not listening. He's grabbing his magazine and  
earplugs, on his way out.

ARNOLD  
I'll go see how the pull-out works.

Maeve flushes with disappointment, embarrassed to have hoped  
he would sleep with her.

MAEVE  
All right.

He goes into the living room/kitchen area with his magazine,  
begins wrangling the pull-out couch. Maeve sits on the bed,  
alone.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - MORNING

Maeve awakens, listens to Arnold lightly snoring in the next  
room, wonders for the millionth time if this was just stupid.

INT. TOWN - MORNING

Maeve and Arnold trudge the snow-covered Main Street  
sidewalk. It's your typical small town, storefront shops  
frozen in time, awnings cracking with age and weather.

ARNOLD  
Not what I'd call charming.



Maeve looks around, spots a diner.

MAEVE

That little place looks cute.

ARNOLD

I can guarantee you they don't  
serve anything you could call  
"healthy." Even the oatmeal will  
be dripping in grease.

MAEVE

We're only here for a week, Arnold,  
we might as well try to --

ARNOLD

A week. God. By then I'll have  
heart disease.

Maeve sighs as they enter

INT. HALLIE'S COMET DINER - CONTINUOUS

Maeve and Arnold sit down at the counter. A sour waitress,  
with a nametag reading "CORA," takes her time with the menus.

CORA

Coffee to start?

ARNOLD

Please.

Maeve and Arnold open the menus.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

"Biscuits and gravy with eggs and  
cheese." What'd I say? They might  
as well just dip it in lard...

MAEVE

It's comfort food.

ARNOLD

Yeah, who's it comforting?

Cora returns.

CORA

What'll it be?

ARNOLD

Is the oatmeal fresh?

MAEVE

Arnold.

ARNOLD

What? I just want to know is my oatmeal going to be made of oats and water or some kind of congealed, day-old --

CORA

I harvested the oats myself. You want a bowl?

ARNOLD

Guess I'll try it.

CORA

Congratulations. And for you?

MAEVE

I'll just have the fruit and cottage cheese. Nervous stomach.

(then)

Oh, and we're in a little bit of a -

CORA

You got the 10:30? We'll get you there.

She moves off. Maeve's a little taken aback -- looks around -  
- do all these people know?

ARNOLD

Told you. There's nothing in this town but that extortionist quack and his tourism.

(then)

He says one thing about "repressed memories" I'm leaving.

INT. DOCTOR FELD'S OFFICE - DAY

Arnold and Maeve sit uncomfortably in the cozy office of Doctor Feld. It is warm and beige upscale-resort looking. Designed to soothe it is, at this moment, failing.

DOCTOR BERNIE FELD himself is 47, with a thick shag of graying hair and a beard. His enthusiasm is almost off-putting.

DOCTOR FELD

Maeve and Arnold, I'm so glad you're here.

ARNOLD  
That makes one of us.

Doctor Feld laughs.

DOCTOR FELD  
(to Arnold)  
I take it intensive therapy was not  
your idea.

ARNOLD  
No.

DOCTOR FELD  
(to Maeve)  
So you wanted to come.

MAEVE  
Yes.

DOCTOR FELD  
All right, and Arnold, you...?

ARNOLD  
I thought she was nuts. We're not  
in the same tax bracket as your  
other patients, --

DOCTOR FELD  
Oh, you'd be surprised, but...

ARNOLD  
-- even if we were, all due  
respect, I really don't see the  
point.

DOCTOR FELD  
You think there's nothing wrong  
with your marriage.

ARNOLD  
Well.

He looks over at Maeve.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
We've been married thirty-two  
years, it's not perfect.

DOCTOR FELD  
But in your opinion it works well  
enough.

Arnold shrugs.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

(to Maeve)

But you wanted to come, you  
persuaded Arnold to --

MAEVE

No.

(then)

I mean, I paid for it. With my own  
money, from savings.

DOCTOR FELD

(sensitive)

All right. So this was really  
important to you. Tell me why.

Maeve hesitates, glances at Arnold who gives her a look like,  
you got us into this, go ahead.

MAEVE

(slowly)

I wanted to...have a marriage  
again.

Arnold erupts.

ARNOLD

Again? Again? If we don't have a  
marriage I don't know who does --

DOCTOR FELD

Please, Arnold, let Maeve talk.  
You can respond after.

ARNOLD

Fine.

(then)

"Again."

BEAT.

MAEVE

Arnold used to touch me.

ARNOLD

Oh, God.

She looks over at him, he nods: sorry.

MAEVE

Not just...you know, but he'd touch  
my arm or my shoulder or...just to,  
I don't know -- because he wanted  
to.

DOCTOR FELD

And now he doesn't.

Doctor Feld's sympathy routine is giving Arnold an ulcer.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

And that bothers you.

(then)

Do you touch him?

MAEVE

Not really.

(then)

He doesn't like it.

DOCTOR FELD

Is she right, Arnold? Do you like  
it when she touches you?

ARNOLD

I don't know.

DOCTOR FELD

You don't know?

ARNOLD

I don't think about it.

DOCTOR FELD

All right.

BEAT.

Feld is the only one comfortable in the silence.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

What else, Maeve?

MAEVE

I feel like we live in the house  
together like two...like two  
workers who bunk in the same room --  
except we're not even in the same  
room. It's like there's nothing  
holding us together but the house  
itself, like we're stuck.

ARNOLD  
Oh, that is -- nothing holding us  
together like thirty-two years of -

DOCTOR FELD  
Of what, Arnold?

ARNOLD  
Marriage.

DOCTOR FELD  
What does that word mean to you?

ARNOLD  
(glowering)  
It means we have a marriage license  
and I pay all the bills. Not to  
mention our two grown children --

Arnold turns back to Maeve.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
You really have lost your mind.

DOCTOR FELD  
Let's try to keep our conversation  
descriptive and positive.

Arnold rolls his eyes.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Maeve, please continue.

MAEVE  
We don't...we don't talk about  
anything.

ARNOLD  
What? What is there I don't know  
about you? About Eileen and  
what...slacks she bought or if she  
returned the necklace with the tiki  
symbols on it, Jesus --

Maeve acknowledges his point with a look, continues.

MAEVE  
(to Feld)  
What I mean is, I don't tell Arnold  
how I feel about anything. And I  
don't know how he feels about  
anything either.

ARNOLD

Well let me tell you how I feel  
about this. I hate it.

DOCTOR FELD

All right. This is good.

ARNOLD

This is good? Right. This is good  
for you. The more we tear each  
other apart the more we have to pay  
you to put it back together. God,  
you people are worse than lawyers.

DOCTOR FELD

I understand how you feel.

Feld's knowing smile is really annoying.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

The first step in rebuilding a  
marriage is tearing down some of  
the scar tissue we've built up over  
the years and it can be painful.  
But it's worth it.

Maeve looks at him. Can she trust him? Does he really know  
more than they do about their marriage? Can he fix it?

ARNOLD (PRELAP)

Charlatan!

EXT. DOCTOR FELD'S OFFICE.- DAY

Maeve and Arnold bundle up as they cross the street.

ARNOLD

He's worse than a charlatan, he's  
like some kind of... Says he's  
"perfected his method," -- Jesus.  
What he's perfected is the method  
of making sure if you walk in  
without a marriage-destroying  
problem you won't leave without  
one.

Maeve just listens.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

He's like the eye drops that make  
your eyes dry.

(then)

(MORE)

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I can't believe you spent four thousand dollars on this. That could have been a new roof. I really, I can't believe it. If I had researched this guy...

They're stopped on the corner. Maeve stares straight ahead.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I guess it's back to the diner since it's pretty much the only restaurant in the entire town...

INT. HALLIE'S COMET DINER - DAY

They sit now, with menus out. Arnold continues his tirade.

ARNOLD

I thought you had more sense. I'm a CPA for crying out loud. Did you look at a brochure or even -- God. Unbelievable. I'd like to see the guy's tax returns.

Maeve doesn't respond. When he finally turns he sees she's about to cry.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Oh, God. Don't -- just --

MAEVE

You have to stop yelling at me.

ARNOLD

I'm not yelling. Who's yelling?

She says nothing, struggles to regain composure.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Fine. See. I'm not saying anything. See?

She nods, brushing her tears away as the waitress, Cora, approaches.

CORA

You're back.

Already Arnold doesn't like her. Already she doesn't like Arnold.

ARNOLD

I'll have a tuna melt and an Arnold Palmer.



CORA

Sure you're ready to commit?

Arnold glares at her. Cora's impervious.

CORA (CONT'D)

(to Maeve)

And for you?

MAEVE

Chicken salad and the soup.

Cora leaves.

BEAT.

ARNOLD

Disgusting.

He looks around.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Do they even have a health  
department rating?

(then)

I saw a grocery store behind the  
motel, we can pick up cold cuts  
tonight, eat in the room.

Maeve nods, miserable. None of this is going as she planned.  
It's like her regular life but worse.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

Arnold and Maeve cruise the deli aisle. Arnold pulls out  
packages of meats.

ARNOLD

If I had ever so much as said an  
unkind word --

(holding up package)

You want hard salami or this kind?

Maeve points. Arnold continues down the aisle.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I mean, my brother Ralph, if Angela  
brought him to some -- but you...

(then)

I just hope you remember this next  
year when you want to tell me that  
I never help and I never --

(picking it up)

(MORE)

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I'm getting the goat cheese, you don't have to eat it.

(continues with cart)

I can tell you one thing, we are going to Florida to see my mother next year for the full two weeks. You have forfeited your right to complain.

Maeve just stares at the meats, harbinger of her future.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CHECKOUT AISLE - DAY

They pull up to the sole check-out line where a CHECKER, a big, friendly bear of a guy checks out a TRUCKER type. Arnold grumbles to Maeve under his breath throughout.

ARNOLD

Great, one line?

TRUCKER

Hey, Charlie.

CHECKER

Will. How ya been?

ARNOLD

(sotto, to Maeve)

You'd think it was a reunion.

CHECKER

Hauling tomatoes this year?

TRUCKER

Artichokes.

CHECKER

Artichokes...

CHECKER (CONT'D)

You like 'em better?

ARNOLD

(sotto to Maeve)

These two should get a room.

(to checker)

We're in just a little bit of a hurry so --

MAEVE

Arnold.

CHECKER

Of course, sir, we're just about done here.

(to trucker)

That it, Will? You need any smokes?

TRUCKER

I don't -- well, go ahead and -- no, I'm trying to quit.

CHECKER

Good for you.

TRUCKER

(shrug)

Really Mary who's --

CHECKER

She's trying to quit on your behalf.

TRUCKER

Now you got it. See you Charlie.

CHECKER

Good luck with it, Will.

The trucker leaves. The checker turns to Arnold and Maeve.

CHECKER (CONT'D)

All right. You folks are in a big hurry, we'll try to get you out of here.

But he's not moving any faster.

CHECKER (CONT'D)

So. You in town for the seminar? That Bernie's really something...

Arnold looks at Maeve in silent displeasure.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

Arnold and Maeve sit at the table, cold cuts in open packages, bread out, mustard, minimal eating. No talking.

In the background, a sitcom on TV. The laugh track laughs, they don't.

INT. DOCTOR FELD'S OFFICE - DAY

Maeve and Arnold sit opposite the ever-smiling Feld.

DOCTOR FELD

So.

They both just look at him: why is this man so happy?

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Today I'd like to get further into  
the roles you each play in your  
relationship --

ARNOLD

Oh, brother.

Feld smiles at Arnold like he finds this charming.

DOCTOR FELD

-- and begin to talk about your  
sex.

Arnold shakes his head. He just keeps drifting down, as if  
through layers of rock, closer and closer to the core of his  
own personal hell.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

We discussed yesterday the way in  
which you, Maeve, took the lead in  
bringing the two of you here.  
Would you say that you play a  
dominant role in the relationship?

MAEVE

Me? No...

DOCTOR FELD

Is Arnold dominant?

MAEVE

Dominant? I don't know.

(then)

He...makes the decisions and  
I...we're pretty traditional I  
guess.

DOCTOR FELD

Do you resent that?

MAEVE

No. I like knowing Arnold knows  
what to do.

DOCTOR FELD  
What about you, Arnold? Do you  
mind calling the shots?

ARNOLD  
Of course not.

DOCTOR FELD  
What about in the bedroom?

ARNOLD  
Oh, God.

DOCTOR FELD  
Stay with me here. When was the  
last time you had sex?

ARNOLD  
I have no idea.

DOCTOR FELD  
Well let's try to think about it.

They do. It's taking a long time. Get the feeling Arnold's  
really having trouble recalling, Maeve's holding her tongue.

BEAT.

MAEVE  
It was six years ago.

Arnold looks at her, what'd she do, mark the calendar?

MAEVE (CONT'D)  
When Hank moved out.

He's starting to remember.

MAEVE (CONT'D)  
After graduation. His room was so  
empty. I was in there when Arnold  
came home. I was so sad. And he  
came in and just...

ARNOLD  
Yeah, yeah, we get the idea.

DOCTOR FELD  
It makes you uncomfortable  
discussing this, doesn't it,  
Arnold?

ARNOLD

Well sue me, I don't want to talk about sex with my wife with a total stranger.

DOCTOR FELD

Do you want to talk about it at all?

He lets this one lie there.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Tell me what you remember about that day, Maeve.

MAEVE

Arnold was very...tender.

This is killing the "tender" Arnold.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

We got into Hank's bed -- that was strange I guess.

DOCTOR FELD

How did you make love?

MAEVE

How -- ?

DOCTOR FELD

In the missionary position? Was Arnold on top?

MAEVE

Um, yes.

DOCTOR FELD

Was it always missionary style?

ARNOLD

Please --

MAEVE

Mostly.

DOCTOR FELD

Did you have things you particularly liked to do?

MAEVE

It was mostly just...the same.

DOCTOR FELD  
Was your sex life satisfying to  
you?

Maeve has to think about that one. She doesn't know.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
How about for you, Arnold?

ARNOLD  
It was fine.

DOCTOR FELD  
Fine?

ARNOLD  
It was...we've been married thirty-  
two years --

DOCTOR FELD  
Then it was only twenty-six years.  
What about at one year? What was  
your sex like then?

They both think.

BEAT.

ARNOLD  
It was fine.

ON Maeve and Arnold, no expression, felled by their own  
boring sex life.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD  
All right.

He smiles at them like they're winners.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
I want to assign you your first  
exercise.

Arnold's guard is instantly up.

ARNOLD  
What kind of --

DOCTOR FELD

Tonight I want you to spend a period of time, before bed, with your arms around one another.

ARNOLD

What's the -- why --

DOCTOR FELD

Because I want you to remember what it's like to touch one another. Do you think you can do that?

Arnold seems to be having trouble with the idea.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Arnold?

ARNOLD

I -- I just don't see what the point of the --

To the extent Maeve ever outwardly shows her annoyance, she's beginning to look a little frayed.

DOCTOR FELD

It's an intimacy exercise.

ARNOLD

Yeah, well, maybe that's what I'm -- I mean, forced intimacy, is that even --

DOCTOR FELD

It's not forced intimacy, --

ARNOLD

That's what it sounds like.

MAEVE

Arnold.

ARNOLD

What, I -- I thought we were supposed to tell the truth here --

DOCTOR FELD

You are.



ARNOLD

Well, I'm saying I don't think the "exercise" or whatever you want to call it sounds like something -- I mean if I do that just because someone tells me to -- what is the point?

Maeve shifts on the couch, her jaw starting to tighten.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

And I don't think I like the idea of someone telling me how to -- I just, this is just ridiculous to me, I am not a trained pony.

That's it. He's pushed too far. Maeve looks like she swallowed a rocket.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

What?

MAEVE

You...are a bully.

This is as close as Maeve gets to swearing.

ARNOLD

Come on now.

MAEVE

All you've done is complain since we got here, all you've done is make me feel terrible.

ARNOLD

Maeve.

MAEVE

Well I've...had it.

Hard to tell who's more shocked by this, Arnold or Maeve herself. Feld is of course not shocked but pleased.

ARNOLD

Maeve --

But she's up, getting her coat and walking out.

BEAT.

Doctor Feld leans forward, "relating" to Arnold, sensitive.

DOCTOR FELD  
It can be very painful sometimes.

ARNOLD  
(glowering)  
What can?

DOCTOR FELD  
Growth.

Arnold rankles.

EXT. OFFICE OF DOCTOR FELD - DAY

Arnold catches up.

ARNOLD  
Maeve.  
  
She ignores him.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Come on. This is infantile.

MAEVE  
I think you're infantile.

She starts across the street. He follows.

ARNOLD  
Maeve -- where are you going?  
(then)  
You know this is insane.

MAEVE  
No it isn't.

He stands there, at a loss, watching her go.

ARNOLD  
(calling after)  
Where are you going?

He looks around, suddenly aware people may have seen him yelling at his retreating wife.

Giving up, he turns the other way, starts to walk.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Maeve's so intent she hasn't noticed she has no idea where she's going. She stops, looks around, spots a tavern across the street.

## INT. LUCKY'S TAVERN - DAY

Maeve enters. It's a dive. Two regulars are glued to their stools, otherwise dark and empty save KAREN the bartender, 43, toughly attractive with roots and a gravelly voice.

Maeve hesitates, still time to back out the door until

KAREN

Come on in. We don't bite.

Maeve considers.

## EXT. SHUTTLE CREEK MUSEUM - DAY

Completely put out, walking without direction, Arnold comes upon the miniscule "museum." It's unimpressive. But looks heated. And where else does he have to go? He enters.

## INT. SHUTTLE CREEK MUSEUM - DAY

It's basically one room. Arnold checks out the "artifacts" from the town's founding -- a rusty train spike, photos, a room in a traditional shuttle creek miner's house from the period. A DOCENT sits behind a desk.

DOCENT

There's an audio tour. It's four  
ninety five.

Arnold just looks at him.

## INT. LUCKY'S TAVERN - DAY

Maeve sits at the bar, a long way from the pickled regulars.

KAREN

What can I get you?

MAEVE

Um, would you recommend the white  
wine or the red?

KAREN

Depends if you like red or white.

MAEVE

I guess I'll have white.

Maeve looks around while Karen goes to get her drink. Accidentally meeting eyes with one of the regulars she quickly turns back, focuses on the bar in front of her.

Karen brings her a white wine on a little napkin.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

Thank you.

She sips it, tries to act natural, feels like an escaped convict at a Quaker convention: loudly out of place. Karen's looking at her. Is she doing it wrong?

KAREN

So.

(then)

What's wrong with your marriage?

EXT. SHUTTLE CREEK "MUSEUM" - DAY

Arnold leaves the museum, checks his watch: where to go?

INT. LUCKY'S TAVERN - DAY

Maeve struggles to articulate.

MAEVE

And so um, I, um, thought maybe we could, um...

She downs the last of her tiny glass of wine.

KAREN

Right, you want to get the magic back. Did you ever have it?

BEAT.

MAEVE

(re: wine)

I think I'll have another.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - DAY

Arnold watches TV. It's Oprah. He's restless. Can't believe Maeve's not there.

INT. LUCKY'S TAVERN - DAY

Maeve works on her second glass of wine. It goes down easier than her first.

MAEVE

The thing is, we really don't...have sex, mostly. At all.

She feels like she's announced the silo codes, silently waits for the blast.

KAREN

That's it? Join the club, honey.

(to the bar)

Who in here's not having sex?

The two regulars and Karen all raise their hands.

KAREN (CONT'D)

(to Maeve)

This one's on the house.

Maeve smiles, oddly buoyed by the solidarity.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

Arnold, sitting in (the foldout) bed, looks at the clock: it's after nine. He shakes his head, annoyed.

A moment later, hearing the DOOR, he picks up a magazine, appears nonchalant as Maeve enters.

MAEVE

I'm back.

ARNOLD

I see that.

She takes off her things. He wants to ignore her. Can't.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I went to the museum.

MAEVE

How was it?

ARNOLD

Extremely interesting.

She heads into the BEDROOM.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

If you want to go you'll have to do it on your own.

Silence. It's killing him that she's not volunteering any information. He holds out as long as he can.

She comes out again, now in her nightgown, heading for the kitchen.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Where did you go?

MAEVE  
Just...around.

BEAT.

It's the first time she's ever intentionally made him worried or jealous. She can barely stand it. But she does.

MAEVE (CONT'D)  
I'm going to get ready for bed.

It's like she's won something -- a cold shoulder contest. Something in her that was open to him is closed. It really gets to him that he can't get a rise out of her.

ARNOLD  
I thought you wanted to do that thing, but...

She stops.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
...if you don't want to, I certainly don't care.

She's stunned. A little afraid.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
All right, well --

MAEVE  
I want to do it.

She's called his bluff. He can't back down now.

ARNOLD  
Okay.  
(then)  
I guess we should do it in there.

They look toward the bedroom.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Now both in their night clothes they look down at the bed: Goliath to their puny David.

ARNOLD  
I'll get in.

He does. She starts to climb in next to him.

Now they are both under the covers, facing each other. They're pretty freaked out.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Maybe this is enough.

She nods. He reaches for the light but before he can turn it off, surprising them both, she reaches over for him. He stops for a minute, stock still, comes back.

With her eyes down, almost closed, she puts an arm around him. He puts an arm around her.

We go out on them like this, the most uncomfortable possible.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - MORNING

Arnold and Maeve sleep spooning. They look peaceful. Maeve awakens, happy. She did it, she really did it. She's so grateful she could cry.

INT. OFFICE OF DOCTOR FELD - DAY

Feld listens. Maeve seems lighter, more joyful, almost a little giddy. Even Arnold seems slightly thawed.

MAEVE

And then we did the exercise, and when we woke up --

ARNOLD

Yeah, that was...

MAEVE

We were in the same bed and it was...comfortable.

ARNOLD

Yeah, it was...yeah.

DOCTOR FELD

This is very good.

Maeve smiles. Arnold tries not to look pleased.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

By taking some time to yourselves  
you managed to get back a little to  
who you are separately which is a  
large part of what we're trying to  
do in here, and you both did it  
without even trying.

ARNOLD

She wanted to spend time apart --

MAEVE

I was so mad!

ARNOLD

Mad as a wet cat...

MAEVE

But it was nice to be --

ARNOLD

To do something on your own, yeah.

You get the feeling they could revel in self congratulation  
all day long. They don't get much of it. Arnold holds onto  
his crusty exterior but barely.

DOCTOR FELD

This is great, you two, really  
great.

They try not to look as proud as they feel, especially  
Arnold.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

I'm thrilled with the progress  
you've made. I think it will make  
it that much easier for you to  
proceed to the next step.

ARNOLD

Next step, okay, let's get to it.

(off Maeve and Feld)

We're doing so well, maybe we can  
get out of here early.

Maeve can't help but smile at his shameless attempt. The  
thought of early parole has him almost jolly.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

So what is it, Doc, write a poem,  
hold hands in public, maybe do a  
serenade?



DOCTOR FELD

Sex.

It lands like a mallet.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

We're going to talk extensively about your sexual history -- when it started, what it was, what it included and didn't include, who did what and how --

Maeve and Arnold's faces begin to fall.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

If --

(to Maeve)

You had orgasms, vaginally or otherwise, if --

(to Arnold)

You had issues around sexuality or performance, if you talked about sex or during it, what your fantasies were and are, if you've ever shared fantasies, acted them out, brought toys or sex games into the bedroom or brought sex out of the bedroom. Then once we've explored all that I'll give you your first sexual exercise.

Maeve and Arnold sit in stunned silence.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

All right, let's get started.

THUNK.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Arnold, would you like to begin?

Arnold looks at him. Just like that he's supposed to lay his secret soul open for this shlemiel he hates and his wife who he hasn't confided in in years.

He turns to Maeve.

ARNOLD

Do you --

He stops.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I think we should stop this now,  
before we --

(then)

I think we should just...get our  
stuff and go.

She looks at Feld. Knows how much Arnold is going to hate  
this. Knows he'll hate her. Also knows it's their last  
chance.

She shakes her head. Arnold is predictably pissed.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Fine. Terrific.

MAEVE

I'll go first.

ARNOLD

Damn straight you will...

DOCTOR FELD

All right, so, Maeve, let's talk  
about what you liked, sexually.

MAEVE

Um, you mean...

DOCTOR FELD

Was intercourse pleasurable for  
you?

MAEVE

Sometimes.

DOCTOR FELD

Did you have orgasms?

MAEVE

Sometimes.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD

Do you masturbate?

MAEVE

Not...not anymore.

Arnold looks up, surprised to learn she ever did at all.

DOCTOR FELD

Why not?

MAEVE

I think I just...after a while I didn't want to think about it, about sex, about Arnold, it made me sad. It made me think of what I missed.

Hearing this makes Arnold sad.

DOCTOR FELD

What about your fantasy life?

MAEVE

My --

DOCTOR FELD

When you have fantasies...

MAEVE

Fantasies like...?

DOCTOR FELD

Imagine sexual scenarios. Like having sex on a -- mountaintop or dressed all in leather...

MAEVE

I mainly just used to think about Arnold and things we had done. Just imagine him being there.

DOCTOR FELD

You don't have any fantasies about things you haven't done, at all?

MAEVE

No, not really. No.

Arnold and Feld both understand that this is unusual and not good. Maeve is unaware.

DOCTOR FELD

All right, Arnold, let's talk about you.

Arnold shrugs, resigned.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

What do you enjoy sexually?

ARNOLD  
(shrugs)  
Sex.

DOCTOR FELD  
I'm going to ask you to get more  
specific.

ARNOLD  
Fine.

DOCTOR FELD  
So, you enjoyed the actual sexual  
act -- intercourse.

Arnold shrugs: who doesn't?

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Did you prefer that to say...oral  
sex?

ARNOLD  
I guess so.

Doctor Feld isn't fooled.

DOCTOR FELD  
Was oral sex an option? Is that  
something you would do regularly?

ARNOLD  
I don't know. No.

DOCTOR FELD  
Why not?

Arnold hesitates.

MAEVE  
I didn't...I wasn't comfortable  
with it.

DOCTOR FELD  
Okay, so you, Arnold would have  
been open to that?

ARNOLD  
What does it matter? She just said  
it wasn't an option.

DOCTOR FELD  
What about manual stimulation?  
(then)  
Did Maeve touch you with her hands?

ARNOLD  
Not...recently.

DOCTOR FELD  
Recently meaning --

ARNOLD  
After college.

DOCTOR FELD  
Did you wish she would?

ARNOLD  
Not really...can do that fine  
myself...

DOCTOR FELD  
Fair enough. So what would you say  
was working in your sex life, when  
you were sexual together?

Arnold wouldn't know how to answer this even if he wanted to  
which he doesn't. Feld prompts.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
For instance, would you climax?

Despite his annoyance Arnold's relieved he knows one.

ARNOLD  
Yes.

DOCTOR FELD  
Were there things you wanted to do  
but didn't?

ARNOLD  
Are you kidding me?

DOCTOR FELD  
Well --

ARNOLD  
That's just -- Who says no to  
that, Hugh Hefner?

DOCTOR FELD  
Okay, then, go ahead.

ARNOLD  
What, you want a whole list?

DOCTOR FELD  
Sure.

ARNOLD  
Fine.

BEAT.

Arnold thinks. Sort of.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
I'm not really coming up with  
anything.

Doctor Feld looks at him. Resistance is not new to Bernie Feld.

DOCTOR FELD  
There are no right answers here.

Arnold was hoping there could be no answer at all but Maeve and Feld both look at him, intently waiting.

ARNOLD  
(frustrated)  
I don't know, pour whipped cream on  
sorority girls.  
(then)  
You know, your sex life is your sex  
life, it's not some teenaged boy's  
fantasy... At some point you have  
to get real, you didn't marry  
Pamela Anderson.

DOCTOR FELD  
Well, but let's -- we're now in the  
realm of fantasy but also trying to  
reframe it in the realm of the  
possible. If you could have  
anything you wanted in your sex  
life with Maeve, what would you  
have?

Maeve becomes embarrassed. Maybe he doesn't want anything from her. Her worst fear. Arnold on the other hand would rather die than admit what he does want from her.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
 What did you fantasize about? Were there things you fantasized about but didn't feel comfortable telling her?

ARNOLD  
 Of course.

Feld nods, go ahead.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 (reluctant)  
 I don't know, I guess I...used to think about...Maeve giving me a -- giving me oral sex. At work, or...you know, in a public place.

Maeve tries not to appear shocked.

DOCTOR FELD  
 Okay, good. Good.

Arnold shrugs, relieved to have this line of questioning behind him. Then, unbelievably,

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
 What else?

Arnold: are you kidding me? He's not.

ARNOLD  
 (quieter)  
 Her on top.

DOCTOR FELD  
 Okay, great, and...

Unbelievable. He's taking everything Arnold's got.

ARNOLD  
 (almost inaudible)  
 A...threesome.

DOCTOR FELD  
 With?

ARNOLD  
 (reluctant)  
 Our neighbor.

MAEVE  
 Ellen?

ARNOLD  
(chagrined)  
Carol.

Maeve's head is about to fly off.

DOCTOR FELD  
All right, Arnold. Both of you,  
that's very good. Tonight I'm  
going to ask you to do another  
exercise...

He smiles at the underwhelmed couple, two runners at the  
twenty-five-and-a-half mile mark who've just been told a  
marathon is twenty-eight miles.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve sits on the side of the bed, Arnold beside her.

ARNOLD  
You think we should be sitting for  
this, or --

MAEVE  
Maybe lying down.

He sighs like she's said "holding a ten-ton anvil."

He takes his shoes off, lies down, she lies next to him.

BEAT.

ARNOLD  
Do you want to start?

MAEVE  
Do you want me to?

ARNOLD  
Six of one.

She turns, looks at him: where to begin. She reaches out and  
tentatively starts to stroke his arm.

MAEVE  
Is this all right?

ARNOLD  
It's fine.

BEAT.



MAEVE

Does it feel good?

ARNOLD

It feels like you're petting a dog.

Slightly discouraged, Maeve continues, moves on to his chest.

As she gets around his nipples --

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Don't -- that tickles, don't go there.

She moves on. She looks down his body: where now?

Spying her salvation, she goes down to his calves, starts working up his lower legs.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

You know I really don't see the point of -- I mean do you think this Doctor Feld, does he have other legitimate doctors who agree with him or is he some sort of a...renegade...

While Arnold muses, Maeve works her way above his knees.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I mean, us, the average person, you could be being treated by someone who's psychotic, did you ever think of that? Or just someone who's a very --

Maeve has made her way up to his thighs.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

-- average or even below-average practitioner who --

As she goes even higher he stops with a sudden inhalation.

She's starting to turn him on. He's surprised, confused, doesn't know what to do.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

-- who, uh...

Maeve for her part watches his erection with stunned awe.

Neither wants to breathe.

She tries to continue as if she hasn't noticed.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 (trying to pick up where  
 he left off)  
 He, uh, to me he just sounds like  
 he --

As she moves up to his abdomen, he gives up.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 Um, I um...I think we better stop.

Her hand stops, she stops, hovers, waits.

MAEVE  
 Are you sure?

ARNOLD  
 Don't you think?

BEAT.

She doesn't answer, he rolls over to the side, tucking himself back down.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
 I uh...I'm going to...go to bed.

He gets up, leaves. She continues sitting.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

Maeve lies in her bed wide awake, thinking. Slowly, she closes her eyes, imagining. As she does she reaches down, runs her hand over her breast.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

In the outer room, Arnold, too, is awake, scared, off balance. He looks toward her door.

INT. DOCTOR FELD'S OFFICE - DAY

Arnold and Maeve sit in front of Feld, both embarrassed.

DOCTOR FELD  
 So. Last night you had the  
 touching exercise.  
 (then)  
 How did it go?  
 (then)  
 How was it for you?

They shrug, fine.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Well, let's talk about it.

But they don't.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Arnold?  
(then)  
How was it having Maeve touch you?

ARNOLD  
Fine, I guess.

DOCTOR FELD  
It's been a long time since you've  
touched each other that way.  
(then)  
Was it strange?

ARNOLD  
A little.

DOCTOR FELD  
What else? What did it feel like?  
Did it feel good?

ARNOLD  
I don't know.

Feld is no idiot.

DOCTOR FELD  
Did you get aroused?

Arnold shrugs.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
How did that make you feel?

ARNOLD  
Aroused.

Feld ignores the sarcasm.

DOCTOR FELD  
What about you, Maeve? How did it  
make you feel?

MAEVE  
Um, I felt...aroused, too.

She's incredibly embarrassed to admit this. Arnold is beyond surprised.

DOCTOR FELD  
Did you know that, Arnold?

ARNOLD  
I -- how could I know what she's thinking?

Feld tries another tack.

DOCTOR FELD  
What happened next?

ARNOLD  
Nothing.

DOCTOR FELD  
Nothing? Did you --

ARNOLD  
We stopped.

DOCTOR FELD  
Why?

Arnold shrugs, Maeve doesn't know.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Did you talk about it? Whose idea was it to --

ARNOLD  
It was mine, okay? I just...wanted to stop. I didn't want to do it anymore.

DOCTOR FELD  
Okay, but let's try to go deeper.

ARNOLD  
Oh God, look --

DOCTOR FELD  
Stay with me, Arnold. What were you feeling when you --

ARNOLD  
I just stopped, I just wanted to -- not do it anymore, all right?

Arnold looks more and more like a cornered animal.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD

I know how hard this is for you and I respect you for coming. I also respect you enough to tell you the truth, it's not enough just to show up. You have to try.

ARNOLD

Try? I'm not trying?

DOCTOR FELD

I didn't say you weren't trying.

ARNOLD

You said "you have to -- "

DOCTOR FELD

I'm simply pointing out where I see resistance --

ARNOLD

I'm resistant to this whole goddamned thing but that --

DOCTOR FELD

Okay, well, that's what I'm --

ARNOLD

-- didn't stop me from flying nine hundred miles through a blizzard --

DOCTOR FELD

Saying you're trying is not trying.

ARNOLD

(glowering)

I'm trying.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD

Well let's go deeper then, really figure this out. Why did you want Maeve to stop?

ARNOLD

I already told you --

DOCTOR FELD

You said you wanted her to stop but you didn't say why.

ARNOLD  
I wanted her to stop because --  
because --

Arnold's getting flustered. Feld doesn't let up.

DOCTOR FELD  
Were you afraid?

ARNOLD  
No! What would I be afraid of?

DOCTOR FELD  
Reengaging can be frightening --  
intimacy can be frightening --

ARNOLD  
I am not frightened of my wife.

DOCTOR FELD  
It's all right to feel fear, fear  
is important --

ARNOLD  
I didn't have fear!

DOCTOR FELD  
Then why did you stop Maeve from  
touching you?

Now he's truly cornered. He's on a depressurized plane and the oxygen masks aren't falling, he has to get out.

ARNOLD  
You know what, I'm done with this  
for today, I'm just...done, okay?  
(to Maeve as he gets up)  
I'll...see you back at the room.

Maeve looks at Doctor Feld.

INT. TAVERN - DAY

Arnold, seated next to the TRUCKER type from the grocery. A BASKETBALL GAME plays on the TV in front of them. The trucker nurses a beer, Arnold drinks scotch.

They both grimace at a particularly bad shot.

TRUCKER  
God.

ARNOLD  
Unbelievable.

TRUCKER  
Hasn't made a free throw this  
season.

ARNOLD  
Guy used to be able to play.

TRUCKER  
Got married.

ARNOLD  
That it?

TRUCKER  
(nodding)  
Victoria's Secret model.

Arnold shrugs, that'd do it.

ARNOLD  
What a waste.

TRUCKER  
Maybe they'll get divorced.

They grimace again.

ARNOLD  
This thing's over.

TRUCKER  
Couldn't afford that foul.

The trucker takes a drink, summons the bartender for another.

TRUCKER (CONT'D)  
You need a --

ARNOLD  
(surprised)  
Yeah, thanks.

The trucker nods to the bartender.

TRUCKER  
Will.

ARNOLD  
Arnold.

TRUCKER  
You here for the --

ARNOLD  
Yeah.

TRUCKER  
What'd --

ARNOLD  
My wife's idea.

TRUCKER  
You cheat or -- ?

ARNOLD  
What? No.  
(then)  
Not that I haven't, you know,  
thought about...

TRUCKER  
Who hasn't?  
(then)  
Mine thought I cheated on her once.

ARNOLD  
Did you?

TRUCKER  
Should have.

ARNOLD  
Amen to that.

They laugh, enjoying being bad without actually being bad.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

Arnold returns to the room, full of beer and self  
righteousness. The outer room's oddly lifeless.

ARNOLD  
Maeve?

He goes to the doorway to the  
BEDROOM

Maeve silently packs.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
I'm back.



Understanding slowly seeps past the alcoholic haze.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?

MAEVE  
Doctor Feld said he'd give us a  
refund.

ARNOLD  
Oh.

Arnold sits on the bed.

Maeve continues packing.

BEAT.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
What percent?

MAEVE  
What?

ARNOLD  
Did he say he'd give back the whole  
payment or --

MAEVE  
Half.

BEAT.

ARNOLD  
If it's just half maybe we  
should...

She doesn't respond.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
I mean, if he was going to give the  
whole thing back I'd say...  
(then)  
But if we're already out the two it  
might make more sense to just...

Again no response, just the steady packing.

BEAT.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
I'm not trying to screw this up for  
you, Maeve.

Finished packing, she gets out his suitcase, begins putting his things in.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

It's just... What did you think would happen? There's no magic -- you know, like Jack and the Magic --

(then)

It's ridiculous, you come here for four days and you're supposed to, what, have a new marriage? It's a gimmick, a set up. That's what it is, you're set up to fail. Then you feel bad about failing. You get that, right? You can't win.

(frustrated )

Why did you...bring us here?

She stops, thinks.

MAEVE

(slowly)

You know how you always think you're heading towards something? Something better is just around the corner? When you're a kid, you think, when I'm in high school, or when I get married, there's always something you're looking forward to.

(then)

One day I thought, we're not going towards anything anymore -- we're on the other side, heading down. I guess I just wasn't ready to let go of things getting better yet.

(then)

Could you bring me your shaver from the bathroom please?

Arnold just looks at her.

DOCTOR FELD (PRELAP)

You're back.

INT. DOCTOR FELD'S OFFICE - DAY

Arnold and Maeve with Feld.

DOCTOR FELD

Let's talk about that.

Arnold shrugs.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
(to Arnold)  
You got what you wanted, or what  
you said you wanted. You could  
have gone home. But now you're  
here. How do you explain that?

BEAT.

ARNOLD  
It was only a partial refund.

Feld has to smile at Arnold's consistency.

DOCTOR FELD  
How did you feel after yesterday's  
session?

ARNOLD  
Fine.

DOCTOR FELD  
And when Maeve told you you could  
go home?

ARNOLD  
Great.

DOCTOR FELD  
But you --

ARNOLD  
Well, I mean... I felt great but  
then I could see Maeve didn't feel  
great. She looked...disappointed.

DOCTOR FELD  
And that bothered you. Did you  
feel guilty?

Arnold nods.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
What else?

ARNOLD  
What do you mean what else, what  
else is there to --

DOCTOR FELD  
You can't do this for Maeve, out of  
guilt.

(MORE)

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Your commitment has to be a direct  
result of your own desire to change  
your marriage. Otherwise we're  
wasting our time and your money.

BEAT.

Arnold thinks.

ARNOLD  
I don't know, I...it's probably  
not...

DOCTOR FELD  
What?

ARNOLD  
When Maeve was packing...

DOCTOR FELD  
Go on.

BEAT.

ARNOLD  
When she was packing, I felt like, -  
- like --

He searches for the words.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Like we lost.

DOCTOR FELD  
Lost what?

ARNOLD  
Like a...game or a -- not a game,  
but --

DOCTOR FELD  
It felt like a defeat.

Arnold nods.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
So what do you think you'd lost?

Arnold shrugs.

ARNOLD  
I don't know.

DOCTOR FELD  
Well what do you think you --

ARNOLD  
I don't know!

DOCTOR FELD  
What do you want, Arnold? Do you  
want to have an intimate  
relationship with your wife?

Maeve's practically holding her breath.

ARNOLD  
I -- you're gonna put me on the --  
I don't know -- I don't even know  
what that means, "intimate  
relationship," I mean, we're  
married, we're -- yeah, I want to,  
I want it to be more like it was, I  
guess. I don't -- I don't know  
anything about therapy or marriage  
or --  
(to Maeve)  
Just don't expect...anything.

She nods, again almost in tears, this time the good kind.

INT. HALLIE'S COMET DINER - DAY

Maeve and Arnold eat, Cora approaches.

CORA  
So, Romeo, can I freshen up your --  
She picked the wrong day to rattle Arnold's cage.

ARNOLD  
You know, "Cora," I may have been  
condemned to spending an entire  
week in this godforsaken town using  
up valuable vacation days way too  
close to tax season being abused by  
some quack about everything I've  
done wrong in my entire life but  
that does not mean I have to listen  
to your rude obnoxious comments.  
So unless it you just happen to  
have the answer to keeping true  
love alive forever under that  
apron, I'd like to ask you to just  
shut your big, wide trap. Are we  
clear?

Speechless, Cora leaves.

BEAT.

Arnold takes a bite out of his reuben.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
I think the food here's getting better.

Maeve just looks at him.

DOCTOR FELD (PRELAP)  
Let's talk about why the sex stopped.

INT. OFFICE OF DOCTOR FELD - DAY

Maeve and Arnold respond with blank looks: if they knew that would they be here?

DOCTOR FELD  
Maeve? What do you think?

Maeve thinks.

MAEVE  
Um, I don't really... I don't know. Exactly.

DOCTOR FELD  
Well, what do you think?

MAEVE  
(considering)  
It didn't so much stop as it would go longer between, until...

DOCTOR FELD  
It effectively stopped. All right. But something precipitates the longer in between, even if it's just fatigue or ill health or a childbirth or... Arnold?

ARNOLD  
Probably started with the kids. After Molly was a few weeks old I'd try to... I didn't want to force myself on anyone.

DOCTOR FELD  
Okay. Then what?

Arnold shrugs.

MAEVE

Hank came pretty soon after.

DOCTOR FELD

And did you ever get back to what you would call a regular pattern of lovemaking before Hank came?

MOLLY

Not, not really.

DOCTOR FELD

Okay, so after Hank, was it the same thing?

Arnold nods.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

All right. This is very common. Happens to so many couples we should get a warning at the hospital. Some couples are able to recover as time goes on. As the kids got older did things change?

ARNOLD

Just didn't seem like she ever wanted to...

MAEVE

After they were a little older I tried to...you know, start things...

DOCTOR FELD

You initiated sexual contact.

MAEVE

Sort of.

Arnold gives her a look: you did?

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I wasn't...good at it. I felt embarrassed.

DOCTOR FELD

Why?

MAEVE

I didn't know how to -- to -- what to do. And it didn't seem like he wanted it anyway.

DOCTOR FELD

Did you ever try to talk to Arnold about what was going on? What you wanted?

She shakes her head.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Why do you think that is?

MAEVE

I don't know. I was afraid.

DOCTOR FELD

Of what?

MAEVE

I was afraid...he wasn't attracted to me anymore.

DOCTOR FELD

Was that the case Arnold?

BEAT.

Arnold is not unaware of what's at stake in this answer.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Arnold?

ARNOLD

No.

(then)

Of course not.

DOCTOR FELD

It's not really "of course not." People change, emotionally, physically. Our desires change over time. Sometimes when a connection is lost we forget how to want one another. It's not automatic that we are attracted to someone because we once were.

Arnold realizes a further affirmation is expected. And he's in this far. Feld pushes a little.



DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Do you still fantasize about Maeve?

ARNOLD  
Do I -- you mean...now?

Feld nods. Maeve is embarrassed, sure she knows the answer.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Sure.

DOCTOR FELD  
When was your last one?

ARNOLD  
My last --

DOCTOR FELD  
When was the last time you  
fantasized about sex with Maeve?

ARNOLD  
I don't -- I mean...

Maeve is in agony.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
(making a decision)  
Night before last.

DOCTOR FELD  
Why don't you tell us about it.

ARNOLD  
Tell you...

DOCTOR FELD  
Share your fantasy with us.

ARNOLD  
I don't think so.

DOCTOR FELD  
Why not?

ARNOLD  
It's private.

DOCTOR FELD  
Sharing private thoughts is a way  
of reconnecting, that's what I'm  
trying to get you to do here.  
(MORE)

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

As long as the attraction is still there all that's needed is to reconnect, circuits that have been broken or weakened.

(to Arnold)

Go ahead and try.

(then)

Tell us a story, the way you'd tell Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Arnold thinks. Having told the first lie doesn't make embellishing it any easier. He's not a liar by nature, it makes him uncomfortable.

ARNOLD

We were...having sex.

DOCTOR FELD

Where?

ARNOLD

On my desk.

DOCTOR FELD

How?

ARNOLD

You know, the normal way.

DOCTOR FELD

Missionary. Did you ejaculate?

ARNOLD

In the --

DOCTOR FELD

After you fantasized.

ARNOLD

I don't remember.

(then)

Yes.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD

That's good, this is good. This kind of sharing is the beginning of the reconnection I'm talking about. We get out of the habit of seeing one another as sexual beings and we need to click back in.

(then, to Maeve)

(MORE)

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
Maeve I know you haven't had  
fantasies in the past but why don't  
you tell us --

MAEVE  
I had one.

DOCTOR FELD  
When?

MAEVE  
After we did the exercise.

DOCTOR FELD  
It was you and Arnold engaged in a  
new sexual --

MAEVE  
(nodding)  
Like you said.

DOCTOR FELD  
All right, well in that case why  
don't you --

He pauses, looks at them, considers.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
You know, I had a patient once  
describe his impression of a  
relationship. It was a bridge,  
where you put out the first step  
and then the person walks on it and  
they put out the next, and you have  
to just keep trusting that that  
step will hold and keep putting out  
more steps and... I liked the  
description. And I think he was  
right that you are always having to  
risk to get to that next step.  
(then)  
If you're willing to take a leap  
with me, I'd like to try something  
different.

Arnold shrugs, Maeve nods.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
I'm really excited about this.

At least one of them is.

INT. THEATER - NIGHT

Maeve sits in the theater as Arnold enters with popcorn and cokes. The theater's nearly empty and they are toward the back.

ARNOLD

(sitting)

Of course there was some problem with the popcorn popper.

(then)

Do you think it's actually inbreeding? I notice a delay. That supermarket guy was the same way.

(then)

I don't see why you can't just tell me what you're --

MAEVE

Doctor Feld said it was fine this way.

ARNOLD

Doctor Feld doesn't have to be here.

MAEVE

Neither do you.

ARNOLD

Ha!

(then)

It just makes me uncomfortable. Not knowing what's going to happen...what I'm going to be required to do.

Maeve doesn't say anything.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

All right, it's your ballgame, fine.

The lights start to go down.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

You would never have gotten me to a movie starring a dog if we were at home.

Maeve watches as the trailers start, more than a little anxious.

INT. THEATER - LATER

Arnold's having a great old time, eating popcorn, laughing at the dog movie.

ARNOLD

This is actually pretty good.

He's completely forgotten there was an exercise to do.

Maeve hasn't. She's waiting. Anxious.

The laughter subsides from the latest joke. It's now or never.

Maeve reaches over, puts her hand on Arnold's thigh.

He reacts instantly.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Oh.

She's totally embarrassed but plays through. He tries to relax as she runs her hand up his thigh. His eyes widen.

He holds his popcorn completely still, off balance.

She takes a break, furtively checks the coast is clear before getting down onto the floor. She tries to look sexy, or at least comfortable. Or at least not petrified.

Arnold looks around to make sure no one's watching.

As Maeve angles herself into the space between the seats in front of her, she knocks his popcorn and some of it spills.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Hey, what are you --

MAEVE

I'm just --

ARNOLD

I gotta put the popcorn --

He tries to perch it on the next seat while she angles in front of him and unzips his pants. Again he's just incredibly surprised.

We watch his face as she continues getting access.

Then we're on her, terrified, as she's about to begin.

Back on him for --

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Ow. Hey. Hey, what are you --  
Ouch!

MAEVE

I'm --

ARNOLD

Watch it with the --

MAEVE

I didn't --

ARNOLD

You can hurt someone you know.

She knows.

MAEVE

I didn't mean to --

ARNOLD

It's fine just watch it.

What little confidence she had cobbled together is gone.

She gets up awkwardly.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Hey, where are you -- I said it's  
fine --

But she's already hurrying out, like she's running from  
something. Which she is.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Maeve.

He sits there for a minute, feeling like a total jerk before  
he gets up, follows her.

EXT. THEATER - NIGHT

Maeve walks quickly, visibly upset, Arnold tries to calm her.

ARNOLD

Look, it's not --

MAEVE

I shouldn't have --

ARNOLD  
-- a big deal.

MAEVE  
I'm not good at anything, I don't --  
know how to do anything.

ARNOLD  
There's nothing to know how to do,  
it's just you can't --

MAEVE  
I'm so clumsy.

Now Arnold feels terrible.

ARNOLD  
You're not clumsy.

She looks at him.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
What? You're just maybe a  
little...you haven't had the  
experience with certain things.

Maeve crumples.

Arnold rolls his eyes, great he made it worse.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - NIGHT

Arnold's in the outer room reading. He looks through the  
bedroom to her closed bathroom door. He puts his magazine  
aside, gets up and heads into the

BEDROOM

He lightly KNOCKS on the bathroom door.

ARNOLD  
Maeve.

BEAT.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Come on, it's not a big deal.

BEAT.

MAEVE (O.S.)  
Not to you.

He gives up, goes back into the main room.

INT. GOOD NITE INN - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Once it's safe, Maeve comes out. She wishes she could take the day back.

INT. OFFICE OF DOCTOR FELD - DAY

Maeve sits alone in front of Feld.

DOCTOR FELD

So.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

You had a difficult night.

MAEVE

Mmm hmm.

INT. OFFICE OF DOCTOR FELD - DAY

Arnold sits alone in front of Feld.

ARNOLD

Can say that again.

INTERCUT AS NEEDED

DOCTOR FELD

Let me first commend you on your bravery.

Maeve sort of laughs. She doesn't feel brave.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

You were brave to come here, and to be here and to stick with it. It will serve your marriage well.

ARNOLD

I don't know about that, but...

DOCTOR FELD

Let's talk about what happened last night.



MAEVE

I'm just...I never really felt like  
I was...good at anything or...like  
I ever knew what I was doing, you  
know?

She looks up, he nods.

ARNOLD

...I didn't mean to make her upset  
or -- I just -- you know, I -- it  
was a safety issue.

He looks up for Feld's understanding.

MAEVE

I just...always felt a little like  
someone was going to come and tell  
me I was doing things...wrong.

ARNOLD

I don't know what more I'm supposed  
to do --

MAEVE

Arnold and I really just mostly had  
sex, --

DOCTOR FELD

Intercourse.

MAEVE

(nodding)

So all I had to do was just...be  
there. Then last night...

(then)

I tried to...

Now she's crying.

DOCTOR FELD

It's all right.

(softly)

You tried. That is very, very  
important.

ARNOLD

Damn straight I tried. You said  
risk reward, where's the reward? I  
feel like an idiot...

DOCTOR FELD

Nine times out of ten you don't  
look anywhere near as awkward as  
you feel.

Maeve believes she's the tenth.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

But just for the sake of argument,  
let's look at the worst-case  
scenario.

ARNOLD

I think we're already there.

DOCTOR FELD

You're clumsy. You're an oaf.  
You couldn't pass the field  
sobriety test stone cold sober...

Maeve laughs.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Is that a permanent state? Maybe  
you lack know how, more likely you  
simply lack confidence which you  
can gain --

MAEVE

Can I?

ARNOLD

I told her I found her attractive,  
what am I supposed to do, get an  
affidavit, prove it to her? I  
can't.

DOCTOR FELD

I think you can.

ARNOLD

How?

MAEVE

How?

INT. WHALE OF A TALE BOOKSTORE - DAY

Maeve enters the microscopically small bookstore. A TEEN-  
AGED SNOWBOARD PUNK mans the register.

SNOWBOARD PUNK

Hey.

MAEVE

Hello.

SNOWBOARD PUNK  
We got a discount on trade  
paperbacks in front.

MAEVE  
All right.

SNOWBOARD PUNK  
You looking for anything?

MAEVE  
Not...really.

SNOWBOARD PUNK  
Lemme know.

Maeve tries to navigate the tiny store and its hand-printed barely-legible signs.

At the self-help section, she cocks her head to try and get the "health and sexuality" books in her peripherals. She allows her eyes to dart briefly across.

SNOWBOARD PUNK (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
You got a title?

Startled, Maeve turns.

MAEVE  
Um, no, I...I'm really just  
looking.

She hesitates, ready to let herself off the hook. Too hard today, too hard.

SNOWBOARD PUNK  
If you have a title I can look it  
up, we're short on shelf space,  
gotta lot of stuff in back.

Maeve stops. The universe is giving her a second chance. She steels herself, approaches the register, takes a deep breath.

MAEVE  
Actually, I'm looking for --  
(reading from paper)  
"Sex Tips For Straight Women From A  
Gay Man."

BEAT.

Snowboard punk fleetingly wonders if he's stoned, recovers.

SNOWBOARD PUNK  
Great, cool, lemme check...

EXT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - DAY

Arnold stares up at the inn, skeptical.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

In the produce aisle, Maeve tries to be inconspicuous as she consults her book. She picks up a bunch of bananas, checks them for size.

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - LOBBY - DAY

Arnold waits for someone to appear, embarrassed to be there. He checks out the lobby: what women like about the place is a mystery. It reminds him of his dead grandmother's house.

MIKE (O.S.)  
Can I help you?

Arnold turns to see a burly looking guy, MIKE, more military than one would think for a B&B owner approaching the counter.

ARNOLD  
You Jack?

MIKE  
No Jack. I'm Mike.

ARNOLD  
All right, well, Mike, I'd like to make a reservation. For dinner.

MIKE  
For when?

ARNOLD  
Tonight.

Mike frowns as he looks over his book.

MIKE  
Yeah, that might be tough...

Arnold looks around, the place is empty.

INT. GROCERY STORE - REFRIGERATOR AISLE - DAY

Maeve examines several types of cookie dough. She reaches out, feels the peanut butter roll, then feels the chocolate chip, kind of grossed out by what she's doing.

She feels again, perplexed, what thickness and resiliency does she want? At a loss, she throws the peanut butter into her basket.

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - LOBBY - DAY

Mike continues perusing his "book." It looks to Arnold like he's at about next year.

ARNOLD

Okay, well, I'm -- I should have called ahead but...

MIKE

I've got a nine-fifteen open next Thursday, you want that?

ARNOLD

No, I -- I'm not from -- look, you really can't -- there's nothing you can do for us?

MIKE

Sorry.

ARNOLD

All right, fine. Where else in town should we go?

MIKE

For dinner? There's really nowhere else for -- well, you know, there is a Pea Soup Andersen's down on Route --

ARNOLD

No, that won't -- there has to be somewhere else in town.

MIKE

Afraid you're out of luck.

Arnold sighs. Begging some ex-Marine for mercy is not his idea of a good time.

ARNOLD

Look, I need a reservation, this is kind of a... just, can you --

Marine Mike's not budging.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I -- my -- my wife...

Mike looks him over. Smells the desperation.

MIKE  
You one of Bernie's?

Arnold nods.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Most of Bernie's stay with us.

ARNOLD  
Yeah, well...

MIKE  
Where are you staying -- over in --

ARNOLD  
We're at the Good Nite --

MIKE  
The Good Nite? Jesus.

His look says it all: you are circling the drain, pal.

MIKE (CONT'D)  
Lemme see what I can do...

INT. GOOD NITE INN - DAY

In the bathroom, Maeve is already dressed for dinner. On the toilet she's got her book open and is massaging the cookie dough roll while reading "instructions" on pressure.

Satisfied she's "mastered" their technique she flips a few pages and takes the bunch of bananas from under the cabinet.

She pulls one banana off, looks at the book, looks at the banana, daunted. She begins licking at it, per the book's instructions. She grimaces, it tastes dirty. She washes it off, continues. She starts to stick it in her mouth, in awe of its girth, when it occurs to her. She smiles, PEELS the banana, continues. She's nearly got it in her mouth when

ARNOLD (O.S.)  
Are you ready?

Maeve starts, pulls the banana out.

MAEVE  
Almost.

She shoves the banana, dough and book under the sink, stands, looks at herself in the mirror.

She can't suppress a tiny smile. For the cookie dough, the book and the banana and the courageous woman who bought them.

Maeve heads out into the

OUTER ROOM

Where Arnold, nicely dressed, is already anxious.

ARNOLD

Are you ready? I don't want to be late.

Maeve's too nervous herself to care that Arnold's failed to compliment her dress or notice her appearance at all.

They set out.

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT

They walk toward the Inn, wordless.

BEAT.

ARNOLD

(blowing on his hands)  
Cold out.  
(then)  
You cold?

She nods. He reaches for his jacket, but instead of offering it zips it up further. They walk on.

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - LOBBY - NIGHT

They're half frozen by the time they get in there. Arnold goes to the desk, Maeve looks around. She's enchanted. It's all she hoped this trip would be.

Mike comes up, a little cat-that-swallowed-the-canary.

MIKE

All ready for you, Sir.

ARNOLD

Great.

MIKE

And how about you, little lady?  
Ready for a night of romance?

Maeve smiles but his joke brings it all back -- to both of them -- the pressure. They fight to rise above the swelling panic.

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A lovely quiet dining room, pink table cloth, rose in crystal vase, candle, fireplace. Maeve is in heaven. Or would be if she weren't already distracted by what's supposed to happen after dinner.

ARNOLD  
Do you like it?

MAEVE  
I love it.

Her sincere appreciation makes him uncomfortable.

ARNOLD  
Let's -- you want to get some wine -  
- let's get someone over here.

He looks around, motions for service.

Maeve sighs. She could use a little liquid courage right about now.

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Dinner on the table, wine bottle half empty.

MAEVE  
I just can't get over --

ARNOLD  
The veal is very good.

MAEVE  
This is exactly...

ARNOLD  
You like it.  
(then)  
A little different than the Good  
Nite.

MAEVE  
Completely different.  
(then)  
I guess I should have --

ARNOLD  
What?

MAEVE  
Well, that place...it's not very...



ARNOLD

No.

BEAT.

MAEVE

You know that first night...

She looks up, hesitating. Should she share?

ARNOLD

What, the sirens? You hear those, too?

MAEVE

I was disappointed...

ARNOLD

With the room?

MAEVE

(shaking her head)

I thought you might...stay in the room with me.

This is not where Arnold thought she was going. This has never occurred to him.

ARNOLD

Oh.

MAEVE

Not that, I had no reason to think you'd --

ARNOLD

I didn't --

MAEVE

No, of course not.

BEAT.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

I just...hoped.

She's not reproaching him and he knows it. He likes that she wanted him there.

BEAT.

ARNOLD

I, uh...I...you know I --

Whatever it is he's trying to say he can't quite get it out.  
He's starting to look a little peaked.

MAEVE  
Are you all right?

ARNOLD  
(nodding )  
This veal is very good.

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Maeve and Arnold are halfway through dessert, now really enjoying themselves. A passing waiter pours the last drops of wine and heads off.

ARNOLD  
What I don't get is how he  
remembers to talk like that --

MAEVE  
I know, it would be so hard.

ARNOLD  
I mean probably sometimes you just  
want to strangle your patient and  
you still have to sound like --

MAEVE  
I know.

ARNOLD  
(doing Feld)  
"What do you think it means that  
you have dreams about killing your  
husband?"

Maeve laughs.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Think he talks that way to his own  
wife?

MAEVE  
That would be funny.

ARNOLD  
"Mildred, I find it interesting  
that you're naked..."

Arnold enjoys making Maeve laugh.

The WAITER approaches.

WAITER

Can I bring you anything else?

They look at one another.

ARNOLD

Do you --

MAEVE

I'm all right.

(then)

Unless you --

ARNOLD

(to waiter)

Just the check please.

He goes off.

BEAT.

MAEVE

It's going to be cold on the way  
back.

Arnold, once more looking nervous, bites the bullet.

ARNOLD

The thing is, uh -- and I don't  
know how you'll, um, -- well, I...

(out with it)

...got us a room.

(then)

Here.

He looks up to see how she's taking it.

She's melting.

MAEVE

You did?

ARNOLD

I just thought maybe you'd like,  
you know, for a night to, um...

MAEVE

(teary)

Thank you.

ARNOLD

Sure, so, after this we can just...

He gestures "go up."

BEAT.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

The gift shop has toothbrushes. I asked.

A little awkward. Both nervous. Now there's pressure. Like there wasn't before.

BEAT..

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Are you sure you don't want some tea?

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Outside the door Maeve waits as Arnold searches his pockets for the key.

Maeve's nervous as her moment approaches. Arnold's nervous, he's way out on a limb now. No pretending you don't care when you're springing for the honeymoon suite.

ARNOLD

Here it is...

He opens the door to

INT. CAPTAIN JACK'S BED & BREAKFAST - HONEYMOON SUITE - NIGHT

The romantic suite literally takes Maeve's breath away. If she had designed it herself it couldn't be more perfect -- flowered everything: wallpaper, curtains, quilt...

MAEVE

Oh, Arnold...

ARNOLD

You like it?

She nods, speechless.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Great, well, there's strawberries. You had to get'em, so...

(then)

You want some?

MAEVE

Hmm?

ARNOLD  
Strawberries?

MAEVE  
I'm kind of full.

ARNOLD  
Me, too. They knew that, rip off  
really the --

He's got a rant in there ready to come out and fill the empty space. But Maeve knows it. She cuts him off at the pass.

MAEVE  
I think I will have some.

ARNOLD  
You will?

She nods, he goes over and prepares a little plate. Maeve takes a look around.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Do you want to sit at the table or -  
She's still looking, mesmerized by the details.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
(shyly)  
We could eat them in front of the  
fire, if you --

She nods.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Yeah?

MAEVE  
Yes.

He goes to get the strawberries while she positions herself in front of the fire. She'd be enjoying this more if she didn't feel like she was about to throw up from nerves.

At the table, he's off his game, too, trying to be casual, shoveling the strawberries onto a little plate.

He awkwardly arranges himself on the floor next to her, then offers her a strawberry.

Aiming for chivalry, he goes to put it in her hand, she thinks he's putting it in her mouth, then tries to take it in her hand while he tries to put it in her mouth, ultimately takes it, eats it herself. They are both exceedingly nervous.

MAEVE (CONT'D)

It's good.

ARNOLD

Is it?

MAEVE

Fresh.

ARNOLD

Good.

BEAT.

The fire, the romantic setting, the strawberries...there's really no denying what's supposed to be going on here.

They sit. The silence is awkward, very very pronounced.

BEAT.

MAEVE

I like the --

ARNOLD

There's champagne, too --

MAEVE

Oh, is there?

ARNOLD

Sorry, I --

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

You go ahead.

MAEVE

No, I...

She shakes her head, it's gone.

BEAT.

Another interminable moment.

We are ON MAEVE as she struggles. She knows what she wants to do, what she has to do, but it's so hard to just...do it.

She steels herself. Wills herself. This is why she came here, now or never. Reserves of strength.

For his part, Arnold, feeling like it's his job to make the move, is starting to sweat.

ARNOLD  
Maybe, would you --

But Maeve's already out of the gate.

MAEVE  
Could I have some champagne please?

Thrilled for a task, Arnold gets up, pours her a glass.

MAEVE (CONT'D)  
You could bring the bottle over.

ARNOLD  
You -- okay.

He brings it, her glass, the extra glass.

She takes her glass, drinks it down.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Do you want some more?

MAEVE  
(offering glass)  
Yes.

ARNOLD  
(pouring)  
Are you comfortable because I saw  
some more pillows in the --

He's just mid-sentence when she turns and very purposefully starts to undo his belt.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Oh -- oh.

He sits there, glass of champagne in hand, while she undoes his pants.

She takes the glass of champagne, downs it, pushes his back onto the floor.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Guess you have something in mind  
there.

She puts the glass down, works her way down him.

She undoes his belt, pulls his pants down, doing her best confident person/porn star impression.

She's believable, at least to Arnold who suddenly feels like a librarian at a bondage convention, outmanned and outgunned.

This is not the Maeve he knows. This Maeve knows what she wants, is taking it, is sexy. And scary.

Now we're ON MAEVE as she looks down at Arnold's personal areas. She's terrified but goes for it.

Once he starts to let himself be in it Arnold really enjoys it. He's surprised, pleased. Maeve doesn't LOOK nervous so he can relax. He gets into it.

Then

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Wait, stop.

MAEVE

(alarmed)

Did I --

ARNOLD

No, just, I don't want to --

MAEVE

(surprised)

Oh.

(then)

Oh.

She's thrilled. She did it. In this moment, she loves herself.

ARNOLD

Do you think we should --?

MAEVE

Should --?

(getting it: sex)

Oh.

(then)

Oh. Okay.

ARNOLD

Do you want to be --

MAEVE

Me? No. I mean, if you want --

ARNOLD

No, I can be --

He starts to rearrange so he's on top.



He kisses her, starts caressing her, pulling things off.

She's liking it, enjoying herself, almost relaxed. As the moment approaches Arnold, on the other hand, is really starting to feel some anxiety.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Are you --

MAEVE  
Yes.

ARNOLD  
Okay, I'm going to --

MAEVE  
Okay.

ARNOLD  
Are you sure you want me to --

MAEVE  
Uh huh.

ARNOLD  
Okay.

He starts feeling around down there and then their eyes meet. She's nervous but excited, expectant. But what she's expecting to happen doesn't happen.

MAEVE  
Are you --

ARNOLD  
Just a --

MAEVE  
I want to.

ARNOLD  
I know, I --

MAEVE  
Do you want me to --

She starts to reach down.

ARNOLD  
No!

He doesn't want to say what just happened, but in an instant she knows.

He rolls off her.

They both sit for a moment in the ruin.

MAEVE

You lied.

ARNOLD

What?

MAEVE

When Doctor Feld asked --

ARNOLD

No I didn't.

(then)

It's like he said, you get out of a habit and it's hard to go back to, jeez, don't --

MAEVE

It was when you looked at me.

ARNOLD

What?

MAEVE

You looked at my face and that's when --

ARNOLD

That had nothing to do with it.

She turns and looks at him, at that last desperate place where even a terrible truth is better than the not knowing.

MAEVE

Then tell me.

ARNOLD

Tell you what?

MAEVE

That you still --

ARNOLD

Oh, come on, don't be...is this really necessary?

MAEVE

Tell me.

He rolls his eyes, starts to do as she asks.

ARNOLD

I still --

But she can tell he's lying. She gets up.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Maeve.

(then)

We fell in love when we were twenty years old for crying out loud! If you had told me then I was marrying a fifty-two year old woman --

(to Maeve)

If you had known I would be bald and old and --

MAEVE

I would still have loved you.

ARNOLD

I love you, you know that --

MAEVE

I would still have wanted you.

Arnold looks at the ground, ashamed.

INT. DOCTOR FELD'S OFFICE - DAY

They sit in front of Doctor Feld, defeated.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD

Well.

BEAT.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Clearly you're both feeling bad about last night. Let me assure you setbacks are a natural part of this process.

If they are hearing him at all they seem utterly unreassured

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)

Unfortunately we are running out of time. But I think you're ready now to follow up with a therapist at home and I can give you a referral to someone really good.

No response.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
I know you're disappointed the  
treatment didn't yield more in the  
way of short-term results but I  
think real progress has been made.

He leans in, intimately, sensing they're not buying it.

DOCTOR FELD (CONT'D)  
This is by no means an  
insurmountable problem. I believe  
in you. You just have to keep  
believing, too.

They stare back at him blankly, utterly defeated.

INT. PLANE - MOVING - DAY

Maeve and Arnold sit, silently absorbed in their own  
thoughts.

ARNOLD  
You get a car, from the airport?

MAEVE  
Hmm? No.

ARNOLD  
Shouldn't be too hard to find a cab  
this time of day.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

They enter with their luggage. The house feels dead its best  
years behind it.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

They eat, silent. The old routine now aches with defeat.

INT. DIEBLER BAUMGARTEN AND SOAMES - MEN'S ROOM - DAY

Vince and Arnold stand next to one another at the urinals.

VINCE  
How was that vacation?

ARNOLD  
Mmm?

VINCE  
Vacation you took? To -- where was  
it? Skiing, wasn't it? Wyoming?

ARNOLD  
Oh, yeah.

VINCE  
How was that? You guys enjoy it?

ARNOLD  
It was fine.

VINCE  
Yeah? Would you go back?

ARNOLD  
Probably not.  
(then)  
Little overpriced.

Vince washes his hands.

VINCE  
If it keeps the missus happy  
another year I say it's money well  
spent.

Vince claps him on the shoulder and leaves. Arnold considers  
how "happy" the missus is.

INT. TALBOTS STORE - DAY

Maeve and Eileen sort out some inventory behind the counter.

EILEEN  
Here, this is where I'm putting  
those extra tags, okay, underneath?  
When I'm out next week I don't want  
to get a million calls asking where  
the extra tags are.  
(then)  
God, I need this vacation. I'm so  
exhausted I'm practically asleep on  
my feet.

MAEVE  
I know what you mean.

EILEEN  
You? You just had a vacation.

Before Maeve can think what to say Eileen continues.

EILEEN (CONT'D)

Kind that leaves you needing a vacation from the vacation, huh? That's what it was like when Jerry took me to Mazatlan. I gave up drinking for eight months after that. So you two had fun, huh? Must be tough to go back to the old routine.

MAEVE

Yeah.

Eileen finally notices Maeve's demeanor.

EILEEN

What is it? You look like you could cry.

MAEVE

No, I...

EILEEN

Tough to let it go isn't it?

MAEVE

Hmm?

EILEEN

Vacation. It's how life should be.

She puts an arm around the infinitely uncomfortable Maeve.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Maeve enters the kitchen, looks around. She opens the fridge, gets out broccoli, some chicken, a half-used can of broth. She puts them on the counter, puts on an apron, stops.

She looks around again, as if seeing the kitchen through new eyes, as she indeed is. Through these eyes it looks...impossible.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arnold and Maeve eat. It's got the monotonous feel of prison life, stretching out endlessly into the future.

ARNOLD

Got a new client.

MAEVE

Mmm.

ARNOLD

Wilt Stieffel -- you know him?

MAEVE

I don't think so.

ARNOLD

His wife is Marge.

BEAT.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Saw that TV movie's on tonight, the western.

(then)

The one we missed last summer, remember?

MAEVE

Mmm.

BEAT.

ARNOLD

So you want to watch?

MAEVE

I don't think so. I'll just go up get ready for bed.

ARNOLD

Maeve. You been moping around since we got back.

MAEVE

I'm just a little tired.

ARNOLD

We talked about this. It's just expectations. It's like a makeover you know, you look different for a minute but then you're back to yourself, right?

(then)

Right?

She wipes a tear away.

MAEVE

I don't know if I can.

ARNOLD  
Can what?

MAEVE  
Go back.

ARNOLD  
Well, I don't know what choice we have, unless... What's that mean you can't go back?

MAEVE  
I didn't say I couldn't, I said I didn't know.

ARNOLD  
Well if you're not going back just where are you going?

MAEVE  
I don't know.  
(then)  
I don't have any life but you.

She begins to cry.

ARNOLD  
Is it really all that bad, Maeve?  
(then)  
We've been doing this for twenty years, remember?  
(then)  
Maeve?

He looks at her, newly alarmed.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve is packing a small suitcase when Arnold walks by.

ARNOLD  
What are you --

MAEVE  
I'm going to spend a couple days at Eileen's. Figure out what I'm going to do.

ARNOLD  
What you're -- what is there to --  
No, no. This is not even an --

But she keeps packing.



Arnold's a bit in shock. Why is his nightmare continuing? He was hardly equipped for the first round, now he's completely out of his league.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Maeve.

(then)

What am I going to eat?

She doesn't even look up.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Arnold drinks with Vince. With equal enthusiasm Vince consumes an entire bowl of bar nuts and proffers his opinion.

VINCE

It's like anything right, parts wear out, systems fail, and there's no warranty. You wouldn't keep a car for thirty-two years right? And a lot of people, you know, you love that old car but you trade it in and hey, this Oldsmobile's not so bad. Week later you're wondering why you didn't do it sooner.

Arnold is not comforted. He only knows how to drive one car.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arnold stands at the doorway.

He turns on the light, enters, looks around. He really doesn't know this room.

He looks at some of the things she has on the dresser, tiny cat figurines, a jewelry box, a porcelain box. He looks at the dresser. Feels like an intruder. Opens a drawer. It's empty.

His shock is visceral. The empty drawer socks him in the gut.

He sits on her bed, lost.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Arnold, home from work, enters from the garage to find Maeve there, as usual, fixing dinner. He stops, unsure what to say.

ARNOLD  
Did you...did you and Eileen...have  
a good time?

She doesn't look up.

MAEVE  
It was fine.

He could ask what she's decided but he's not sure he wants  
to. She's here, that's the best-case scenario so he lets it  
go.

ARNOLD  
I'm going to go change.

She still doesn't look up as he crosses through.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

They eat dinner.

ARNOLD  
So, what did you guys do?

MAEVE  
Hmm?

ARNOLD  
You and Eileen?

She shrugs.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
(hopefully)  
Watch movies?

MAEVE  
Talked, mainly.

Ugh. Fear in his heart.

ARNOLD  
What did you --

She looks up, waits for him to finish.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)  
Never mind.

BEAT.

MAEVE  
Eileen said...

ARNOLD  
What?

MAEVE  
(quietly)  
There's nothing left for me here.

BEAT.

Arnold puts his fork down, appetite gone.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Arnold sits in front of the TV unseeing.

He HEARS Maeve going through the house, turning out lights, getting a glass of water. The hair stands up on the back of his neck, like a ghost is passing. He can feel her.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Arnold can see through the half-open door into Maeve's room. She has a nightgown on, is folding clothes. He says nothing.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Now in bed, trying to read, Arnold hears the WATER start to run in the bathroom. He puts his magazine down.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve changes from her robe into her nightgown, gets into bed.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Outside Maeve's closed door, Arnold can see the light is on. He leans toward the door, almost touches it. He just can't do it.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - ARNOLD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Arnold lies in the dark, sleepless.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve lies in the dark, sleepless.

A long beat, the anguish on her face, she's trapped, what can she do?

A KNOCK. She jumps, heart racing.

MAEVE

Who is it?

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Arnold almost wishes he could take it back.

ARNOLD

It's...me.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve is sitting up, breathless.

MAEVE

Do you -- is everything all right?

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Outside Arnold weighs the cost/benefit of jumping ship.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maeve waits for his response.

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Arnold plants himself, reaches for the door.

ARNOLD

Can I come in?

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - MAEVE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

She's sitting up as he enters in the half-dark. She says nothing as he makes his way stumblingly to the bed. He sits next to her.

ARNOLD

I -- I just --

He turns and looks at her. He just can't get it out.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Maeve.

Gently, he kisses her. Then, still looking at her -- her face, he reaches for her breast, touches it softly.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

Please.

She pulls him back into the bed with her, tearful, grateful.  
Someone gave her her life back.

FADE TO:

INT. SOAMES HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Arnold and Maeve sit at the table eating dinner. Looks like  
we're back to the same old same old.

ARNOLD

That joker Fierstein came in today.

MAEVE

Mmm.

ARNOLD

Wanted to know could he have  
another extension.

MAEVE

What'd you tell him?

ARNOLD

I told him next time ask for it  
before the deadline passed.

MAEVE

What else did you tell him?

ARNOLD

What else?

BEAT.

Then, like a shock, their eyes meet. Maeve smiles.

Move down to FIND Maeve's foot in Arnold's crotch.

ARNOLD (CONT'D)

I told him it was all...good,  
really...good. Really, really  
good.

Now they're both smiling.

FADE OUT.

THE END