

HOW TO BE GOOD

Screenplay
by
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Based on the book
by
Nick Hornby

EXT. LOS ANGELES, 405 FREEWAY - DAY

A CAR RADIO PLAYS as we open on a typical Southern California day: sunshine, big blue sky and bumper-to-bumper, beyond-explanation-because-it's-not-even-rush-hour traffic.

KATIE (V.O.)
Sometimes a marriage is like a car in traffic. You can't move forward. You can't move back. You start to wonder what would happen if you just left...

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - DAY

CLOSE ON a woman's hand turning off the ignition. The radio stops. The digital clock, which reads 3:46pm, goes black.

KATIE (V.O.)
...Just turned off the engine, opened the door and got out. Let the damn car be someone else's problem for a while.

EXT. 405 SOUTH - DAY

KATIE CARR, 38, beautiful (though not told so often enough), emerges in SLO-MO like a modern-day messiah and walks gracefully between cars and onto the shoulder of the 405. HEADS TURN to watch her as she passes. Her dress and hair blow in the wind. She looks content and enviably free.

KATIE (V.O.)
You'd have new problems, sure, like how to get home from El Segundo, where home is, what home is. These are the kinds of thoughts that keep you in the car... in the marriage. Usually.

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - DAY

ANGLE ON Katie, still in her car. She never left. The radio is still playing. The clock still reads 3:46.

KATIE (V.O.)
I am on the 405 when I tell my husband I don't want to be married to him anymore.

Katie looks toward the passenger seat where we might hope to see her husband, but in fact, she's on her cell phone.

KATIE (CONT'D)
(out loud)
How is this out of the blue? You mean because we've been so blissfully happy?

As she listens to his response, her V.O. continues:

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I only called to remind him to write a
note for Molly's teacher. The other part
just sort of... slipped out.

A CAR HONKS behind Katie and startles her. She looks in her rearview, annoyed, and glimpses her backseat: her son's Legos, her daughter's books, juice boxes, guilt. She pulls forward one car length and is stuck in traffic again.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Even though I am, apparently, the kind of
person who tells her husband she doesn't
want to be married anymore, I didn't
think I was the kind to say so in a
traffic jam, on a cell phone...

INT. SAN DIEGO HOTEL ROOM - THAT NIGHT

Katie, now unable to sleep because of what she seems to have put in motion, lies in bed, bare shoulders exposed, in the kind of nice but generic hotel where conventions are held.

KATIE (V.O.)
But for most people, marriage-ending
conversations happen only once, if at
all. If you choose to conduct yours on a
cell phone on the 405, you can't really
claim that's unrepresentative, just as
John Wilkes Booth couldn't claim that
shooting presidents wasn't like him at
all. Sometimes, you have to be judged by
your one-offs.

She pulls the covers up around her, which puts her eye-level with her wedding ring.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I try to remember how we got from Molly's
note to the end of a marriage in three
minutes.

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - DAY

Katie is on her cell phone as before, but the clock on her dash shows it's three minutes earlier: 3:43pm.

KATIE
Hi.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - SAME TIME (INTERCUT)

A typical day in the Carr household in Santa Monica. DAVID CARR, 41, clearly handsome in his prime, now with a little paunch, dishevelled, unshaven, in sweats and a t-shirt, is supporting his chronic bad back and surveying the contents of a plastic trick-or-treating pumpkin. (It's one of two kept on top of the fridge, the last of the kids' Halloween candy.)

DAVID

Hey. How's it going?

KATIE

Fine. Kids all right?

DAVID

Yeah. Molly's watching TV. Tom's over at Blake's.

KATIE

I just called to say you have to write a note for Molly to take to school tomorrow. About the dermatologist's?
(after a long lack of response)
What?

DAVID

Forget it.

KATIE

How can I forget what I never heard?

DAVID

What you said. About just calling to remind me about Molly's note.

KATIE

What's wrong with that?

DAVID

It might be nice, especially when you're off to San Diego for two days, if you'd, you know, call for some other reason. To say hello. To see how your husband and kids are.

KATIE

That was the first thing I asked: "How are the kids?"

DAVID

Yes. Not "How are you?"

Katie looks out of her car window, weary of this. Her view is of car dealerships and one of those flailing, long-armed balloon people, which pretty much mirrors her exasperation.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Do you care how I am?

KATIE

I can hear how you are: upset, probably due to your back, which you refuse to do anything about, or maybe something new.

DAVID

What makes you think I'm upset?

KATIE

You're the definition of upset. You make your living being upset.

INT. DAVID'S HOME OFFICE/RADIO STUDIO - DAWN

A very rudimentary home radio studio. David, in t-shirt, boxers and headphones, lies on the floor (his solution to his bad back problem) and rants into a mic.

KATIE (V.O.)

This is true, partly. Every morning David does a radio segment from our house called The Angriest Man in Santa Monica.

DAVID

Paper, plastic or pissing me off? Today I'd like to discuss the small but annoying contingent who have taken to bringing their own burlap sacks to the grocery store because it's the loudest possible way to say, "I care about the planet more than you do!" You want to make the world a better place? Start by wiping that smug smile off your organically moisturized face.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - DAY

David is now eating a "fun-size" candy bar. He seems to enjoy this verbal sparring. Katie, not so much.

DAVID

I'm surprised you noticed since you never tune in, because you don't give a shit.

KATIE
(re: his language)
Where's Molly?

DAVID
Watching TV in the other room.
(with gusto, just to annoy her)
Shit shit shit damn.

KATIE
Very mature. And I don't tune in because
I have to wake the children and get to my
job, one that requires me to shower,
dress and leave the house.

DAVID
And that makes your work more important?

KATIE
No, sarcasm is much more important than
medicine. How would the planet survive?
How would we know who and what to disdain
without your daily diatribes? That's...
quite a contribution.

DAVID
What's the point of all this?

KATIE
(honestly not sure)
I don't know. You got mad I didn't ask
how you were.

DAVID
Yeah.

KATIE
How are you.

DAVID
Go to hell.

KATIE
I'm so tired of this, David.

DAVID
Of what?

KATIE
This. Fighting all the time. The
silences. Do you really want to live the
rest of your life like this?

DAVID

I'd rather be starting shortstop for the New York Yankees, but-- Why? Are you suggesting an alternative?

KATIE

I suppose I am.

DAVID

Care to tell me what it is?

KATIE

You know what it is.

DAVID

Of course I do, but I want you to be the first one to say it.

KATIE

(difficult to say aloud)
Do you want a divorce?

DAVID

I want it on record that I wasn't the one who asked.

KATIE

Fine.

DAVID

You, not me.

KATIE

David, I'm trying to talk about a sad, grown-up thing and you're keeping score?

DAVID

So I can tell everyone you asked for a divorce out of the blue.

KATIE

How is this out of the blue? You mean, because we've been so blissfully happy?

SFX: DING! like an egg timer. The car clock reads 3:46.

STEPHEN (V.O.)

Everything okay there?

INT. SAN DIEGO HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

REVEAL that Katie was asked this question by the handsome man in bed next to her, STEPHEN, 50, groggy, muscular and naked.

KATIE

What? Oh, yeah. Just a little restless.

(a beat)

I'm gonna get some ice.

STEPHEN

Hurry back.

Stephen kisses her neck. Katie, frozen in place, waits for him to finish kissing her, then gets up.

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gently closing the door behind her, Katie emerges in a hotel robe carrying the ice bucket along with her purse, heels and dress from earlier, and her rolling bag.

KATIE (V.O.)

This is not looking good for me, I know.

She tosses the ice bucket, but is coming undone, literally, and has to hold her robe closed as she hurries down the hall.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But you have to understand, in ten years of marriage -- many of which, not so happy -- I never once cheated on David. I mean... until now.

Finally at the elevator, Katie presses the button, then catches her reflection in the doors. She's a mess. She presses the button again repeatedly.

KATIE (CONT'D)

(to herself, echoing David)

Shit shit shit damn.

INT. HOTEL ELEVATOR - NIGHT

As the elevator doors close she pulls on her underwear, then:

KATIE

(looking through her things)

Bra... bra... I don't have my bra.

She shimmies out of her robe; throws her dress over her head, but it's sleeveless and her arm is where her head should be.

KATIE (CONT'D)

(to herself, re: dress)

This can't be right.

The doors open, exposing her to the late-night DESK CLERK, who tries to look away, but she's too much of a train wreck.

EXT. 405 NORTH - PRE-DAWN

Katie's Prius zooms past, heading back to Los Angeles. There's no traffic since it's 4:30am. Her CELL PHONE RINGS.

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - CONTINUOUS

She looks at her phone, doesn't recognize the number.

KATIE

Hello?

INT. SAN DIEGO HOTEL ROOM - SAME TIME (INTERCUT)

It's Stephen on the hotel phone, still in bed. His tone is calm and flirtatious.

STEPHEN

Where did you go for ice? Iceland?

KATIE

I'm going home.

STEPHEN

You've got nothing to feel badly about.

KATIE

(yelling at him)

I'm a married woman who slept with someone at a medical convention!

STEPHEN

You told your husband you wanted a divorce.

KATIE

Yes, and then I gave him grounds for one. I never should have talked to you about that. I barely talked to David about it.

(unraveling)

What am I doing?!

(starting to cry)

This is completely unlike me. I'm a good person. I'm a doctor.

STEPHEN

I know. I trained you.

KATIE

That's the other thing! You were my mentor. I'm pretty sure you're not supposed to sleep with your mentor.

STEPHEN

That was a lifetime ago. Now we're just colleagues.

KATIE

...who had sex in a San Diego hotel room.

(formulating her defense)

Whatever. It happened. I had one too many mojitos at the welcome cocktail hour, and I was vulnerable since my marriage was breaking up.

(then)

Or rather, since I was breaking up my marriage. Uch.

STEPHEN

I've never met the guy, but I bet you deserve better.

KATIE

That was a safer bet when I knew where my bra was.

She hangs up, disgusted with herself.

EXT. CARR HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

Katie pulls up in front of her modest but nice two-story house in the less pretentious part of Santa Monica. The lights are out except in David's home/office.

KATIE (V.O.)

The thing nobody tells you about sex with someone who's not your husband...

INT. SAN DIEGO HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Katie and Stephen are in the throes of heated sex: lots of positions, lots of heavy breathing.

KATIE (V.O.)

...it's all very exploratory and exciting, but it's not so efficient.

Katie is twisted into a position that's not really working for her.

KATIE (V.O) (CONT'D)

A husband, even a bitter, angry one,
knows what works for you. He knows if he
presses a certain button, the elevator
will go to the right floor. There's
something to be said for that.

EXT. CARR HOUSE - EARLY MORNING - BACK TO PRESENT

KATIE (V.O.)

But this is probably not the time to say
it.

She puts the car in park and sits a moment. She looks down;
sees she's still wearing her name tag: "Dr. Katie Carr, Los
Angeles People's Community Clinic," and quickly takes it off.

INT. DAVID'S HOME OFFICE/RADIO STUDIO - MINUTES LATER

David is doing his morning rant, lying on his back.

DAVID

Angelina Jolie is back at the U.N. today.

INT. HALLWAY/MOLLY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Katie (holding her heels in her hand so as not to wake the
children) can hear David downstairs as she quietly opens a
door and looks in on her angelic, sleeping 8-year-old, MOLLY.
She's suddenly very aware of what she stands to disrupt --
this home and family, the security of her children.

DAVID (O.S.)

Apparently if you've been nominated for
an Oscar or a Grammy, in the gift basket,
you get an ambassadorship to a third
world country.

As David continues, we follow Katie into another bedroom...

INT. TOM'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

...where her adorable 6-year-old son, TOM, sleeps. Katie is
almost overcome with worry now, and curls up next to him,
gently kissing the back of his head. She lies there, holding
her son tightly, listening to her husband:

DAVID (O.S.)

Don't get me wrong, I thank God -- or
George Clooney -- every day that I live
in a celebritocracy... where you're
allowed to question and pressure the
government... as long as you're famous.

Katie cracks the tiniest of smiles at this. Every so often she still finds David amusing, although she's reluctant to show it. And now she feels like she already misses him, too. Katie closes her eyes...

INT. TOM'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

...and wakes to see David standing over her, arms folded.

DAVID

I thought you were gone until Wednesday.
And there was something else... what was
it? What... oh, yeah. You wanted to
leave me.

KATIE

(covering Tom's ears)
Can we please--

Tom stirs, rubbing his eyes, then opening them.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Morning, sweetie.

TOM

Why are you here?

KATIE

I live here.

TOM

But you went to a convent.

MOLLY

(correcting him)
Convention.

Molly, in her pajamas, enters and hugs her dad's leg.

KATIE

And I missed you guys too much.

DAVID

Okay, people. Time to get dressed for
school.

KATIE

Especially if anybody wants pancakes...

MOLLY/TOM

Yay!/I want chocolate chips in mine!

The kids race off to get dressed. David looks at Katie.

DAVID

Last week I was giving them too much sugar, now you're making pancake cookies? You don't care what happens to any of us anymore, do you?

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

David follows Katie downstairs.

KATIE

Are you going to be glib about this?

DAVID

I haven't decided how I'm going to be. It's still kinda new.

Katie notices David supporting his bad back.

KATIE

I'm calling Dan Silverman today.

DAVID

Who's that? Your lawyer?

KATIE

The osteopath you refuse to see.

DAVID

Aw. You do still care.

KATIE

(quietly because of the kids)
David, I'm sorry. This is so upsetting to even contemplate, and that was definitely not the way to have that discussion, and this isn't either, but...
(trying to keep her resolve)
I guess it's a discussion we need to have. At some point. I'm not proud of how I said what I said, but--

DAVID

(torturing her a little)
What did you say again?

KATIE

(aware he's torturing her)
That I wanted a divorce.

DAVID

Gosh. That's not a very nice thing for a wife to say to her husband.

KATIE

David, please don't do this.

DAVID

What do you want me to do?

KATIE

Talk to me. Like a person.

DAVID

Okay. You want a divorce. I don't. So unless you can prove that I've been cruel or neglectful, or that I've been sleeping with someone else, you should be the one to move out. And even then, I probably wouldn't divorce you because of the--

KATIE

--children?

DAVID

--paperwork.

Katie considers whether to go on; decides she should try.

KATIE

What about if I... you know.

DAVID

No, I don't know.

KATIE

Adultery.

DAVID

(laughs, then)

First you'd have to stop being Katie Carr, doctor, do-gooder, mother of two and then... Who would you sleep with? The gardener? I don't see it happening.

Katie is torn between being relieved and insulted.

KATIE

So you're just going to ignore what I said yesterday?

DAVID

Yep. Unless it's advantageous to bring up in an argument, which I imagine it will be. Thank you for that.

He follows her into the kitchen...

INT. CARR KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

It's a mess, dirty dishes from last night, the recycling in with the regular trash. Katie moves some bottles into the proper receptacle, then starts gathering ingredients for pancakes. David takes an INVITATION off the counter.

DAVID

Hey, given that you want to divorce me,
do I still have to go to this dinner?

ANGLE ON the invitation, which says: "Southern California Medical Women's Association honors Woman of the Year, Dr. Katie Carr." Katie stops what she's doing. She looks sick.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(genuinely amused)

What? You forgot about the dinner?

She doesn't say anything. She did forget. Katie CRACKS AN EGG into a bowl, and the SHELL BREAKS into tiny pieces.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I guess since you're being honored, I
should be there. To give a rebuttal.

(swigs milk from the carton)

I think I'll go get my car washed.

KATIE

What about the kids?

DAVID

I figured you'd want to drive them.
You're always complaining about the life
of a working mother, the price you have
to pay, the things you're missing, the
everyday pleasures like taking your
children to school...

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - LATER THAT MORNING

In the back seat: utter chaos. Molly and Tom are fighting.

MOLLY

Tom farted!

TOM

Because Molly punched me!

KATIE

No farting, no punching, no YELLING!!!

Katie's miserable, just as David knew she would be.

INT/EXT. CAR WASH - SAME TIME

Meanwhile, in BLISSFUL SILENCE, David takes some free cookies and walks down a wood-paneled tunnel with windows along one side, following his gas-guzzling SUV as it's being washed.

He passes a FATHER who lifts his YOUNG SON to see their car -- something David, with his bad back, could never do.

He glances at a bulletin board of notices that amuse or annoy him -- "Lose your accent!" "Swim lessons at your home!" and then: "Bad back? Bad attitude? Bad karma? See healer DJ GoodNews." There are little rip-off phone numbers hanging down which nobody has taken (as opposed to the "lose your accent" numbers, which are all gone). David looks at it for a moment, then RIPS ONE OFF and puts it in his pocket.

EXT. LOS ANGELES PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CLINIC - DAY

Eager to be somewhere where she is appreciated and in control, Katie approaches her place of work, a welcoming community clinic where, according to signs in English, Spanish and Russian, "No patient is turned away."

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Katie crosses the family-friendly waiting room, a melting pot, mostly IMMIGRANTS and WORKING POOR, many with CHILDREN in tow, waiting patiently for attention. Katie is like a celebrity there; patients and staff are pleased to see her.

KATIE

(to a WOMAN with a TODDLER)

Oh, my gosh. Look how big he's getting!

(to MRS. CORTEZ, an older

Guatemalan woman in all black)

Are the knees any better, Mrs. Cortez?

Mrs. Cortez shakes her head no. Katie frowns, sympathetic, then DAWN, the African-American receptionist, greets her.

DAWN

Couldn't stay away, huh?

KATIE

I love my job. Is that such a terrible thing?

DAWN

There are many worse things you could do.

Katie nods, worried she's done them all in the past 24 hours.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - LATER

Katie, in her doctor's coat, has just removed a leg cast for MR. KATSEL, a non-English speaking middle-aged Russian man.

KATIE
(to Mr. Katsel)
Looks perfect.

The nurse, Katie's friend BECCA MARTIN, 35 and single but tirelessly looking, is cleaning Mr. Katsel's leg.

BECCA
So why didn't you stay?

KATIE
You know... conventions... boring.

BECCA
Well, I had a date last night. A guy I met online...

KATIE
Good for you.

BECCA
It wasn't, really. He was four-foot-nine. Neglected to mention that in his profile. Be so glad you're married.

Katie wishes her biggest problem was someone's height.

KATIE
(checking movement in his foot)
Want to put some weight on it, Mr. Katsel? Stand?

He doesn't understand, so Katie helps him to his feet. He leans on her as they walk. He looks pleased.

KATIE (CONT'D)
That should feel better, huh?

MR. KATSEL
Yes. Spasiba.

KATIE
You're welcome. But no more ladders for a while, okay?
(pantomimes "no" and "ladder")
No more ladders?

He gets it, nods and laughs. She pats him on the back.

KATIE (CONT'D)
Okay. Do svidaniya.

MR. KATSEL
(happy she's using Russian)
Very good! Do svidaniya!

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Katie writes in Mr. Katsel's chart as she and Becca walk toward Katie's office.

BECCA
A ladder is what my date needed. He was an okay guy... when we were sitting down. We went to that cemetery where they show classic movies.

KATIE
(nostalgic)
I used to do things like that.

BECCA
I just kept thinking: Here lies my love life.

INT. KATIE'S OFFICE AT THE CLINIC - CONTINUOUS

As they enter Katie's small, cluttered office, Katie breaks:

KATIE
Becca, there was a man... a doctor... at that medical convention, and I--

BECCA
You gave him my number?

KATIE
What? No.

BECCA
But you thought of me?

KATIE
No. I knew him, from my residency, and--

BECCA
What about your brother? He's single, right?

KATIE
My brother is a semi-employed depressive.

BECCA

Is that a genetic thing, the depression? Because if so, that would be a risk. Not for a while though. You don't see many depressed kids. It's more of a late-onset deal. And I'm so old already, I won't be around when our kids become depressed adults. So I'm game if he is.

KATIE

To meet for coffee or have his children?

BECCA

Either. Oh! Is this from Halloween?

Becca takes a framed photo off of Katie's desk. ANGLE ON THE PHOTO of David, Katie, Tom (dressed as Spider-Man, no mask) and Molly (a princess) looking like a perfect, happy family.

KATIE

We used the self-timer. That's why it's a little cockeyed.

BECCA

I want this.

KATIE

I'll make you a copy.

BECCA

Not the photo, the family...

As Katie considers what you do and don't see in a snapshot...

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Katie, dressed for the big event, sits between her kids on the couch as they watch a TV show about dinosaurs. She's more aware than ever that she's lucky to have these kids and this life, and she's grateful for these moments. Until David, in his suit, starts stretching his back and groaning.

DAVID

Oh. Owwww. That hurts.

KATIE

Maybe then... don't do it?

DAVID

Where's the sitter?

KATIE

I told you, she's on her way.

BRITISH NARRATOR (V.O.)

Three weeks later, the male tyrannosaurus returns for another attempt at mating.

DAVID

(loudly, to the narrator)

Are you sure it wasn't four weeks later?
It was a hundred million years ago.
Could you be off by one or two days?

TOM

Dad...

DAVID

What?

KATIE

The kids are trying to enjoy the program.

DAVID

They can enjoy and still question.

KATIE

Not if you're asking all the questions.

DAVID

It's important for them to learn that
saying something in a British accent does
not make it true.

KATIE

Neither does saying something loudly.

MOLLY

Mom, we're trying to enjoy the program!

David looks pleased. Katie looks annoyed.

INT. HOTEL FOYER - NIGHT

Cocktail hour at the "gala" (chicken dinner) where Katie is being honored. Katie greets COLLEAGUES. David, slightly bored, is relieved to see their friends AVA and RON. Ava is stylish; Ron, a magazine writer, shares David's sardonic wit.

AVA

Katie! Congratulations!

KATIE

Thank you, Ava. You look amazing.

AVA
(kisses both of Katie's cheeks)
It's the herbs. You have to see my guy
in Chinatown.

DAVID
Your "guy in Chinatown?"

RON
She has a guy for everything.

AVA
(laughs; kisses David's cheeks)
Hello, darling.

DAVID
And what's with the kiss-kiss? You're
from Ohio.

AVA
Is this all going in your radio show?

DAVID
It's not even going in my food diary.

AVA
I keep a food diary!

DAVID
Of course you do, darling!

Ron and Ava laugh.

AVA
Aren't you proud of our girl? Woman of
the Year?

DAVID
Eh.

Ron and Ava laugh even harder as Katie watches.

KATIE (V.O.)
It's fascinating to realize that other
people still see your spouse the way you
used to see your spouse.

As Ron and David begin their favorite pastime, discussing
people they consider less talented, Katie moves on.

RON
Did you see the review of Posternak's new
restaurant?

DAVID
See it? I laminated it!

RON
What a bloodbath!

DAVID
The poor egotistical bastard.

AVA
I thought you two were friends with him.

DAVID
Friends. Not fans.

Ron and David laugh heartily at this.

INT. HOTEL FOYER - SILENT AUCTION AREA - A LITTLE LATER

Becca looks over silent auction items as Katie approaches.

KATIE
Hey, Becca--

BECCA
(looking at a bidding sheet)
Some asshole keeps bidding one dollar
more than me.

KATIE
Well, it's all for a good cause. Our
clinic? Anyhow, this is my brother Mark.

Reveal Katie is with her brother MARK KELLOGG, 36. Mark is
uncomfortable at these things, doesn't wear a suit much.

MARK
(extending his hand to shake)
Mark Kellogg. Hi.

Becca looks up at Mark. Katie smiles encouragingly.

BECCA
You're the asshole!

MARK
Wow. Usually takes women months to
figure that out.

Katie, blindsided by this exchange, is unable to stop it.

BECCA
Why do you want a full fashion makeover?!

MARK

I thought it might be fun? Are you this agro to all the men you meet, because maybe that's why you're still single.

BECCA

I'm still single because most men are assholes who call me things like "agro" after we've only known each other two minutes!

KATIE

Okay, hey! We're all sitting together, so... save some hostility for dinner.

Katie leaves them and runs into David, who's enjoying his second martini.

KATIE (CONT'D)

That was a total disaster.

DAVID

I thought we weren't talking about our marriage tonight.

KATIE

I introduced Becca to my brother.

DAVID

Why? So they could have what we have?

KATIE

I think they do have what we have.

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - LATER

DR. TALIA BOOTH, President of the Association, presents Katie's award as everyone watches a SLIDE SHOW with pictures of the clinic, smiling patients, Katie, Becca and staff...

TALIA

The Los Angeles People's Community Clinic opened its doors five years ago because Dr. Katie Carr, a successful private physician at the time, saw a flawed system that was turning away more people than it was serving.

ANGLE ON Katie at her table. Despite everything happening in her personal life, she is touched by this tribute, and looks around at the people who are there to support her:

Her parents, FRED AND BURT KELLOGG, are beaming.

Becca is happy to be associated with the clinic, and not so happy to be associated with Mark, who's seated next to her.

Ron puts his arm around Ava. They're proud of their friend.

David eats the spun-sugar garnish off his dessert. Katie, trying not to let David ruin her night, looks back at the slide show, where she sees more pictures of the clinic...

TALIA (CONT'D)

Katie still works at the clinic five days a week, rarely if ever taking time off.
Not only is she a devoted wife--

...then a picture of Katie NAKED, Stephen pressing her up against a wall in the San Diego hotel room. Katie panics and looks around, but nobody else saw it. It was in her head.

TALIA (CONT'D)

--and mother, she's a completely devoted doctor. We all talk about trying to be good, but here is a woman who is good.

(as Katie grimaces)

That's why the Los Angeles Medical Women's Association is proud to name Dr. Katie Carr "Woman of the Year!"

Talia holds up the award, which Katie steps up to accept as everyone (even David) CLAPS.

KATIE

(into the mic)

I'm not that good. Really, it's just such a pleasure to do what you want.

(horrified)

I mean what you want! What you love. That's, of course, its own reward. But it's nice to get validation... for something other than your parking.

(off their laughter)

My husband gave me that line. Anyhow, thank you. Thank you so much.

Everyone LAUGHS and CLAPS and congratulates Katie (especially at her table) as she takes her seat. David smiles at her.

DAVID

It got laughs.

KATIE

Yes. Congratulations on your joke.

She sets her award down. The EVENT CHAIRMAN takes the mic.

EVENT CHAIRMAN

And now, one last item of business. The raffle winner who gets a Romantic Getaway to the Big Island Resort in Hawaii!

FREDA

Markus! Your tie!

Mark looks down and sees that his tie is in his sorbet.

MARK

(to Becca)

This is why I need a full fashion makeover.

Freda tries to get the attention of a passing WAITER.

FREDA

Can we get a club soda, please? Sir?

(to Burt)

He just ignored me.

BURT

Because he's not a waiter. Please just--

The "waiter" (he is dressed like one) sits at a nearby table.

FREDA

Our son's tie is in his sorbet!

MARK

While their daughter is being honored.
Welcome to my childhood in a nutshell.

David laughs loudly; he understands how Mark feels. Becca softens a little toward Mark.

EVENT CHAIRMAN

And the winner... Talia, would you do us the honor?

Talia pulls a stub from a glass fishbowl.

TALIA

Oh, this is funny. It's our honoree's husband, David!

Katie and David look up. People CLAP and LAUGH.

KATIE

No, no, no! We don't need a romantic getaway.

DAVID
Speak for yourself!

TALIA
This woman refuses to take a vacation!

LAUGHS from the crowd. David stands to collect his prize.

KATIE
(grabbing his hand; to crowd)
No, really. We can't accept this. I've
been given enough tonight.

DAVID
You don't have to go! Ron? Hawaii?

RON
Mai tais on me!

As the crowd LAUGHS some more, Katie lets go of David's hand.

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

David, slightly drunk, is sitting on the bed looking through
his goodie bag as Katie gets undressed.

DAVID
Why do they always give you self-bronzer
at these charity events? It must have
something to do with white guilt. "We're
not white. We're bronze."

He starts putting bronzer on his face as Katie looks at the
hotel brochure and gift certificate they won.

KATIE
Remember our honeymoon?

DAVID
You're nostalgic now?

KATIE
We were backpacking, and I got that bug?

DAVID
A bug is putting it mildly. I waited
outside every bathroom in South America.
Good times!

KATIE
I remember thinking that was the test of
a marriage. If we could get through
that...

DAVID

Yeah. We had no clue the crap we'd have to deal with.

Katie tucks the brochure away in her jewelry box, then looks at her husband, who now has a bronze face.

KATIE

David, are you happy?

DAVID

What's that got to do with anything?

KATIE

I said what I said the other day because I wasn't happy. And I don't think you are either.

DAVID

Of course I'm not.

KATIE

Okay, why not?

DAVID

Well, for starters, my wife just asked me for a divorce.

KATIE

The purpose of my question was to help you understand why your wife asked you for a divorce.

DAVID

You want a divorce because I'm not happy?

KATIE

That was part of it.

DAVID

How very magnanimous of you.

KATIE

I'm not trying to be magnanimous. I hate living with someone who's so unhappy.

DAVID

I went to couple's therapy. What else do you want from me?

KATIE

You went for a month.

DAVID

But I got a year's worth of material!

KATIE

See, this is the problem. It's all funny to you. Even the fighting. I feel like you somehow enjoy this. I don't.

DAVID

Katie... do whatever you want.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Katie and Becca are surveying the many options on the coffee machine. It's one of those that makes hot chocolate, espresso, cafe latte, etc. using little packets...

KATIE

I don't even know what I want to drink.

BECCA

Which button do you press for vodka? Seriously, last night, everyone was a couple. And I went home to my empty apartment, no messages, not even from four-foot-nine. I read my book and fell asleep. It's so depressing.

KATIE

(wistful)

Tell me again about the empty apartment.

Dawn leans in holding the sign-in clipboard.

DAWN

Dr. Carr, there's a new patient, and he won't fill out the paperwork. I told him we don't see anybody without paperwork, but he says he knows you: Stephen Garner?

KATIE

(off balance)

Stephen Garner. Is here.

DAWN

Uh huh.

Katie puts her cup down and walks toward reception...

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - RECEPTION - DAY

...where she spots Stephen with his arm in a homemade sling. He's smiling as if this will be a fun surprise for her.

STEPHEN
Hi ya, doc.

KATIE
(strictly business)
Can I help you?

STEPHEN
Yeah. It's about your bedside manner.

KATIE
Okay, um, this is not the place--

STEPHEN
(playfully)
What's the deal? You use me, hang up on me, then don't return my calls? I got charged for a robe, by the way.

KATIE
I really can't see you now. Here.

STEPHEN
The sign says nobody is turned away from the People's Community Clinic.

KATIE
That's our general policy, but--

STEPHEN
'Cause something's wrong with my arm.

She sees that his sling is clearly homemade.

KATIE
I see that.

STEPHEN
I think it might be broken. In several places. Can you take a look? Over a drink?

KATIE
I really can't, Stephen. I'm sorry. You need to go.

She starts to usher him out.

STEPHEN
So Casa del Mar? 7pm?

KATIE
No, now please...
(loudly)
Take two aspirin. Every four hours.

STEPHEN
I'll be waiting.

He smiles and goes. Katie turns and runs into Becca, who was watching this exchange and is now intrigued and concerned.

BECCA
(whispering)
Are you having an affair?!

KATIE
What?! No.

BECCA
You are! That's what you were trying to tell me the other day.
(impressed, but also worried)
He's hot.

KATIE
I have patients, so--

BECCA
What about David? And the kids? And your brother? Has Mark asked about me?
(focusing)
Doesn't matter. How long has this been going on?

KATIE
Look, it was a one-time thing. A mistake. I'm not going to see him again.

INT. CASA DEL MAR BAR - SUNSET

Katie sits across from Stephen, hating herself.

KATIE
It was a one-time thing. A mistake.

STEPHEN
There are no mistakes.

KATIE
Why do people say that? There are definitely mistakes. I had a haircut all through college that was a mistake.

STEPHEN

And she's funny, ladies and gentlemen.
Too good to be true.

KATIE

Stephen, seriously, where do you see this
going?

STEPHEN

Upstairs, hopefully. I got a room.

KATIE

I can't do that. Again.

STEPHEN

You said David doesn't make you feel
loved.

KATIE

That's the last time I drink at a
professional function.

STEPHEN

(takes her hands in his)
I can make you feel loved.

She looks at him, unsure what to do.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

Look, we can do whatever you want. We
can ravage each other, we can just have
dinner, you can go home to your loveless
marriage... What do you want, Katie?

There's that question again. Katie thinks long and hard.

KATIE

I don't want David to be David anymore.

STEPHEN

Who do you want him to be?

KATIE

Someone different, someone more positive,
who cares, and likes me, and makes me
feel good, and listens to my stories.

STEPHEN

I'm right here, kiddo.

KATIE

No, I want those things from my husband.
Is that too much to ask?

STEPHEN
If I were your husband...

KATIE
But you're not.

STEPHEN
I could be. One day.

KATIE
Please. That's not what this is.

STEPHEN
I've always had feelings for you.

KATIE
You know how you get rid of those
feelings? You marry the person.

She gets up and leaves.

INT. CARR HOUSE - NIGHT

KATIE
(arriving home, feeling guilty)
Sorry I'm late. Long day at the--

David bows quickly and repeatedly as if she were royalty.

KATIE (CONT'D)
What are you-- why are you doing that?

DAVID
My back! It's fixed!

KATIE
You finally saw Dan Silverman?

DAVID
Nope. Saw a guy in Chinatown.

KATIE
Ava's guy?

DAVID
My guy. DJ GoodNews. Capital G, capital
N. Bad name, good doctor. Although,
technically, he's not a doctor.

KATIE
What is he? An acupuncturist?

DAVID
More like a healer.

KATIE
And how did you find this healer?

DAVID
I saw his flyer at the car wash.

David continues bending and twisting.

KATIE
You're doing this to spite me. You're
thumbing your nose at my profession.

DAVID
I admit that was the initial appeal, but
it turns out this guy knows his stuff.

KATIE
What is "his stuff" exactly?

DAVID
He sort of... lays his hands on you...
And there's a cream he uses.

KATIE
Nobody can cure a bad back in one
session.

DAVID
GoodNews can. I'm telling you, he's a
miracle worker. And you can go back as
much as you need, no charge.

KATIE
If you're "cured" why would you need to
go back? Isn't that the "miracle" part
of it?

DAVID
Katie, you wanted me to do something
about my back, and I did. And I feel
great for the first time in years. God,
why do you have to be so cynical?

Katie reacts. When did she become the cynical one?

INT. CARR KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

David is pouring Molly cereal when Katie enters, dressed for
work. Katie kisses Tom on the head; pours herself coffee.

MOLLY
I didn't get any raisins.

DAVID
You got some.

MOLLY
I got three. That's more like none than
some.

Molly reaches into the cereal box and fishes for raisins.

KATIE
Molly, that's not what we do.

MOLLY
It's what Daddy does.

Katie gives David a look. He shrugs. Then shrugs some more.

DAVID
(pleased)
It doesn't hurt to shrug anymore.

He shrugs repeatedly, like he just learned how. Then Katie notices Tom staring at her, then at David, then back to her.

KATIE
What's the matter with you?

TOM
Nothing.

KATIE
Why do you keep staring at us?

TOM
I want to see if you're getting divorced.

Everything stops. The shrugging, the raisins, all of it.

KATIE
Why would we be getting a divorce?

TOM
Someone at school told me.

DAVID
Who?

David's quick question seems to point to him as the leak.

TOM
Joe Salter.

KATIE
Of course we're not getting divorced.

David looks at Katie, happy to hear this news.

TOM
Then why did Joe Salter say you were?

KATIE
I don't know. But we know more about it
than he does, and we're not getting
divorced, right, David?

DAVID
If you say so.

MOLLY
Will you ever get divorced?

KATIE
We're not planning to.

MOLLY
Who would we live with if you did?

DAVID
Who would you want to live with?

Katie can't believe he just asked that.

MOLLY
Daddy! But not Tom.

DAVID
Tom can go and live with Mommy then.
That's fair.

Tom looks to his mother, who looks to David, who shrugs.

EXT. BAY CITIES ITALIAN DELI - LATER THAT DAY

Katie and David are sitting on opposite sides of a picnic
table in front of a local deli near Katie's clinic. David
unwraps his hoagie as Katie lectures him.

KATIE
My problem is that you alienated brother
from sister, daughter from mother and
father from son in the time it took to
eat a bowl of Raisin Bran.

DAVID
(proudly)
And I got you to promise not to divorce
me in front of our kids.

KATIE
Yeah, I think you might be hard pressed
to find a parenting manual that
recommends involving your children in
these discussions.

DAVID
I'm not the one who asked for a divorce.

KATIE
No, but you're the one telling everybody.

DAVID
I was upset. I told one person.

KATIE
Well, somehow it got to that big-mouth,
Joe Salter.

DAVID
I'm just trying to keep up. First you
want a divorce, then you tell me we're
never getting divorced.

KATIE
I told the kids we were never getting
divorced.

DAVID
So... what? You lied? To our children?
And somehow I'm the bad parent?

KATIE
I think I said we weren't planning to get
divorced.

DAVID
Well, nobody plans to get--

KATIE
David! We only have my lunch hour to
sort this out, and... and...
(suddenly overwhelmed)
...I don't see how we're going to get out
of this mess.

Katie starts to cry and can't stop. She puts her head down.

DAVID

Well, now you've got hair in your fruit.

She cries even harder. David goes around to her side of the table and puts his arm around her, then both arms. She sobs on his shoulder. It's tender. So tender that she cracks.

KATIE

David...

Katie breaks the hug and looks into David's eyes, where she sees genuine love and concern.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I slept with someone else. But it's over.

David pulls away abruptly, which causes his back to spasm.

DAVID

OW!!!

KATIE

What's wrong?

DAVID

What's wrong?!

KATIE

(weakly)

With your back, I mean?

David can barely speak he's so hurt by what she's done.

DAVID

I... can't be around you right now.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - THAT EVENING

Katie sits on the bed between Tom and Molly, holding onto them more than holding them. The kids are in their pajamas, and Tom is reading his "I Can Read" Humpty Dumpty book.

TOM

(reading slowly)

All the king's horses and all the king's men...

MOLLY

Where did Daddy go?

KATIE

I'm not sure.

TOM
Is he getting a house?

KATIE
No! No, honey. He's probably just...
running an errand or something.

Tom turns the page, still concerned, as is Katie.

TOM
...couldn't put Humpty... to get...
(sounding out the word)
...together again.

KATIE
Perfect.

She closes the book and puts it aside.

MOLLY
Why couldn't they?

KATIE
What?

MOLLY
Put him together again?

KATIE
Oh. I don't know. I guess he was broken
into too many pieces.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It occurs to me that Humpty Dumpty is not
a nursery rhyme. It's a cautionary tale
about affairs. All that humping and
dumping, no way to put things right.

Katie and the kids look beyond depressed. Then David can be
heard coming up the stairs.

DAVID (O.S.)
(calling out)
Guess what?

TOM
(resigned)
He got a house.

DAVID
(entering, proud)
DJ GoodNews fixed my back again.

KATIE
That's where you went? To this GoodNews person?

DAVID
(to the kids)
He's amazing. He can fix anything.

MOLLY
(re: her chapped, dry arms)
Could he fix my eczema?

DAVID
...I bet he could.

TOM
Could he fix Humpty Dumpty?

David LIFTS Tom and gives him a big hug, during which Katie looks at David, hopeful he's feeling forgiving, but his cold look says it all. Nobody can put this marriage back together again.

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BATHROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Katie and David are both brushing their teeth. David spits.

DAVID
I'm presuming you'll be moving out over the next couple of days.

KATIE
But... it was just the one time, and--

DAVID
We talked about this, remember?

David rinses his toothbrush and brings it into the bedroom. Katie follows him...

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

David starts pulling things out of drawers as they speak.

KATIE
Yes, I remember. After we had Molly, I asked if it was depressing imagining having sex with me and nobody but me for the rest of your life...

DAVID
And what was my answer?

KATIE

Yes.

DAVID

I didn't say yes.

KATIE

You said it did get you down sometimes,
but the alternatives were too horrible to
contemplate.

(reluctantly)

And that you knew you wouldn't be able to
tolerate anything less than monogamy from
me, so obviously you'd have to be
monogamous as well.

DAVID

There you go.

KATIE

We also talked about never going to bed
angry, in which case you'd have been
awake for the last ten years.

DAVID

I don't think it's the same thing.

KATIE

It is, in a way. It's a hope. It's an
ideal. It's what all couples say in the
beginning. It's not legally binding.

DAVID

I'm going away for a couple of nights.

Katie finally realizes that David's been packing.

KATIE

To where?

DAVID

I don't know. I need to clear my head.
While I'm gone, I'd like you to tell the
kids what's going on, and pack and leave.

KATIE

But why am I the one who has to move out?

David just looks at her, and it's a look of such contempt,
she wants to run away from everything and never come back.

INT./EXT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM WINDOW - A LITTLE LATER

The REV of David's car starting. Katie watches from the window, sad and remorseful, as her husband drives away.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - THE NEXT MORNING

Tom, dressed but barefoot, is eating cereal and Molly is doing the Jumble as Katie loads their backpacks for school.

TOM
Daddy usually does that.

KATIE
(trying to be upbeat)
Well, Daddy's away on business.

TOM
He hasn't got any business.

MOLLY
(sweetly and loyally)
Yes, he does. He yells on the radio.

TOM
That's a job?

MOLLY
What did you think it was?

TOM
I thought he was just mad all the time.

Molly heads upstairs, shaking her head as if this is the dumbest thing she's ever heard. Katie, on the other hand, feels a little validated by Tom's observation, until:

TOM (CONT'D)
Where is he really?

KATIE
(caught offguard)
He's gone to stay with a friend.

TOM
Because you're getting divorced?

KATIE
We're not getting divorced.

TOM
So why has he gone to stay with a friend?

KATIE

You go to stay with friends. Doesn't mean you're getting divorced.

TOM

I just know something's wrong.

KATIE

Nothing is wrong, okay?! Now where are your shoes?!

Tom defiantly stands and heads out. Katie feels terrible.

EXT. PUBLIC GOLF COURSE - DRIVING RANGE - LATER

MEN WHACK GOLF BALLS on the driving range. Katie, looking lost and out of place, spots someone who looks like he works there, PACO, a young kid, carrying a bucket of balls.

KATIE

Excuse me, I'm looking for my brother.
He works here. I think. Mark Kellogg?

PACO

(points to the driving range)
He's driving the ball collector.

Katie follows Paco's finger and sees, in the distance, a lone figure driving a large, rickety piece of equipment attached to a golf cart that is caged for protection as balls whiz past like bullets. It's Mark, in what looks to Katie like the world's worst job, collecting balls on the driving range.

EXT. PUBLIC GOLF COURSE - DRIVING RANGE - A SHORT TIME LATER

A ball HITS the cage, startling Katie, who has joined Mark in his vehicle as he works.

KATIE

Do people aim for you?

MARK

Some, but, you know, it's not personal.

KATIE

And this is what you left law for?

MARK

I love golf. I've always loved golf.
And I get to play anytime I want. No greens fees.

Another ball PELTS the cage.

KATIE

Doesn't it feel like you're under attack?

MARK

Yes. By my sister. Did you drive across town just to tell me what a loser I am?

KATIE

No, I drove across town to tell you what a loser I am.

MARK

Well, let's move on to that part of the conversation, shall we?

KATIE

Okay.

(trying to hold it together)

I sort of... slept with someone else, and now David wants me to move out.

MARK

(stops driving)

You're out of your mind.

KATIE

I know that's what it must look like, but see... I've been so depressed.

MARK

So write yourself a prescription! Go talk to someone! I don't see how an affair's going to help, and divorce certainly won't!

KATIE

Alright. Thanks for the pep talk.

MARK

What did you expect me to say?

KATIE

I don't know: Want to sleep on my couch? I'm sorry this is happening to you?

MARK

I don't have a couch, and it's not happening to you. You made it happen.

KATIE

I know! So how do I fix it?

MARK

You don't sleep with someone else!
(as another ball PELTS them)
I'm not going to make you feel better.

KATIE

Clearly.
(admitting to Mark and herself)
The truth is... I've been unhappy for a while. Unhappy enough to suggest counseling, which just provided David with material. Unhappy enough to say I wanted out, which I never really had the guts to do. Unhappy enough to sleep with someone else, which didn't solve anything. So maybe this is the right course of action. Not just for me and David, but for the kids.

MARK

But isn't it possible David could change?

KATIE

People don't change that much. And two happy parents in two houses has to be better than two miserable parents in one.
(a beat)
Which is what I will tell the kids tonight. Somehow. Over pizza maybe.

MARK

Of course, they'll never be able to enjoy pizza again.

EXT. CARR HOUSE - THAT NIGHT

Katie approaches her house, carrying a pizza. Full of dread, she puts her key into the lock.

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

DAVID

Nice day at the clinic?

Katie is startled to find David waiting for her. It seems entirely feasible that he might pull out a gun and shoot her.

KATIE

Yes, thank you. I... I might not have enough pizza.

DAVID

Actually, I asked your parents to take the kids out for dinner. Listen, I haven't loved you enough.

KATIE

If you're going to be sarcastic--

DAVID

This isn't sarcasm. I'm apologizing.

KATIE

You're apologizing to me?

DAVID

(tenderly)

If you'd let me. I do love you, and I haven't communicated that properly.

KATIE

(still suspicious)

No. Well. Thank you.

DAVID

And I'm sorry I said I wanted you to move out. I don't.

KATIE

But... I think maybe you were right. I think we might need to do this. You've been unhappy, and I've been unhappy, and it's like a Band-Aid, it's going to hurt, so we should just--

DAVID

No! Give me until the end of the year. I need a chance to be better. Six weeks. After ten years of marriage, that's not so much to ask.

He looks completely sincere and even a little desperate. And given what she's put him through, how can she refuse?

KATIE

Okay. Until the end of the year.

DAVID

(exhaling, relieved)

Thank you. And now, Katie...

(as she braces herself)

Will you go to the Hollywood Bowl with me tomorrow night?

KATIE

You want to go... on a date?

DAVID

They added some winter concerts... fringe benefit of global warming, I guess.

KATIE

I thought you banished the Bowl after it took us an hour to get out of the lot that time.

DAVID

But you used to enjoy going. And I'm thinking Park and Ride. What do you say?

Katie, not sure what he's up to, shrugs and nods "yes."

DAVID (CONT'D)

Great. Then tonight I'd like us to sleep in separate rooms, and wake up in the morning and try to rebuild our lives.

David approaches Katie (which still makes her nervous), then kisses her on the cheek and hugs her.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I'll take the spare bedroom. Sleep well.

Katie's not sure that's possible. PRE-LAP MUSIC...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL - NIGHT

The PHILHARMONIC PLAYS under a perfect starry sky. David watches and listens, smiling. Katie keeps stealing looks at this polite man who seems to be enjoying himself, or at least trying to. He catches her looking.

DAVID

Are you warmer now?

KATIE

Uh huh, yes. Thanks for the jacket.

DAVID

(taking her in)
You look adorable in it.

Katie reacts. He's never called her (or anything!) adorable.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOWL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Katie and David join a DISORGANIZED CROWD waiting for buses. This is the kind of thing that used to make David insane.

KATIE

I guess this is the down side of the Park and Ride.

DAVID

It's nice out, should we walk to our car?

KATIE

Walk four blocks? In L.A.?

DAVID

I know, it's so crazy it just might work!

He takes her hand and leads her through the crowd. They actually seem to be having a nice time together.

EXT. HIGHLAND AVENUE - NIGHT

Katie and David follow other CONCERTGOERS down the street.

KATIE

So, did you enjoy the concert?

DAVID

I did. Very much.

KATIE

But you've always hated classical music.

DAVID

I think... I thought I hated classical music. It was a prejudice I hadn't examined properly.

KATIE

Be careful. If you start examining your prejudices, there might be nothing left of you.

They pass a HOMELESS WOMAN huddled in a sleeping bag. David opens his wallet.

DAVID

I forgot to get cash. Do you have your wallet with you?

Katie pulls her wallet out of her purse and David takes it, removes all the cash, and hands it to the woman.

HOMELESS WOMAN

Thank you. God bless you.

David hands Katie back her empty wallet.

KATIE

What did you do?

DAVID

Gave her some money.

KATIE

You gave her all of my money.

DAVID

Not all of your money. You have a checking account.

KATIE

But that was almost two hundred dollars.
I just went to the ATM.

Katie, getting nowhere with David, appeals to the woman, who is still holding the stack of twenties.

KATIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, this is awkward, but I think he didn't mean to give you all of that.

DAVID

Yes, I did.

Katie gives David a "Please let me handle this" look.

KATIE

(to the woman)

The thing is, we need gas and we have to pay our babysitter and we're late already -- not your problems -- but could we just have a little back?

As Katie reaches out her hand, the woman clutches the bills to her chest.

HOMELESS WOMAN

DON'T TAKE MY MONEY!

A COUPLE OF CONCERTGOERS stop and stare. It looks like Katie is trying to take money from a homeless woman.

KATIE

But--

(off their looks)

(MORE)

KATIE (CONT'D)

It was my--

(defensive)

I'm a good person. I'm a doctor.

INT. DAVID'S SUV - LATER THAT NIGHT

A long silence. Katie is mortified. David is driving.

DAVID

Should we stop at an ATM?

KATIE

Unless you want to give the babysitter
our house.

DAVID

I just wanted to see how that would feel.

KATIE

And how did it feel?

DAVID

Good. Definitely better than walking by,
pretending not to see. I don't want to
walk by anymore.

(a promise and maybe a threat)

I'm gonna walk it like I talk it.

Katie looks at David. He's smiling, pleased.

KATIE

What's happening to you? What happened
when you went away? Where did you go?

DAVID

I'm sorry. I know it's confusing. I'm
not sure I can explain it, though.

A beat as they drive.

KATIE

We should stop. We're running on fumes.

DAVID

You said I had until the end of the year.

He drives past a gas station.

KATIE

The car. Is on empty.

DAVID

Oh.

As he makes a U-turn...

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BATHROOM - THAT NIGHT

Katie, happy to see the evening end, is wearing a comfy t-shirt and washing her face when she hears... MUSIC?

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Katie peeks into the bedroom where her husband is lighting a candle and playing PAOLO NUTINI'S "LAST REQUEST" on CD. David walks over and greets her with a kiss. A long, romantic kiss. Then he holds her face in his hands.

KATIE

What are you doing?

DAVID

I want to make love to you.

KATIE

Okay, fine. But does there have to be all this fuss?

DAVID

I want to make love, not just have sex.

KATIE

Well, what does that involve?

DAVID

Communication. Intensity. I don't know.

KATIE

But I thought the advantage of being almost 40 was that I no longer have to drink beer from a can, stay out past one, or be "intense."

DAVID

Please try it my way.

Katie finally relents. As they kiss and fall out of frame...

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - HALLWAY - THE NEXT DAY

Becca talks to Katie as they walk down the hall.

BECCA

So remember four-foot-nine? I break down and call him. Seeing somebody! Apparently he's a catch. That's how bad it is out there. Katie?

Katie is lost in thought.

BECCA (CONT'D)

Did you sleep with the mistake again last night?

KATIE

No, I slept with my husband.

BECCA

Guilty make-up sex. How was it?

KATIE

Who was it, is the question. I felt like I was cheating on David with David.

BECCA

So, you mean, it was great?

KATIE

Yes, but... sex was never our problem.

BECCA

What was your problem then?

KATIE

David! I wanted him to be more attentive and loving and kind... and now he's all of those things. And I don't like him.

BECCA

Am I supposed to feel bad for you? Because I feel bad for David.

KATIE

I know. I made my bed...

BECCA

(unsympathetic)

Now you have to have great sex in it.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - AFTERNOON

CLOSE on a CHUTES AND LADDERS game that David and the kids are playing. The PHONE IS RINGING AND RINGING. Katie, just home with groceries (in those reusable bags David used to resent), reaches for the phone.

KATIE

Why is no one--

TOM/MOLLY/DAVID

Don't answer that!

TOM
(loving this)
We're not answering the phone!

KATIE
Why not?

MOLLY
Daddy quit his job, and his boss is very upset.

KATIE
You quit your radio show?

DAVID
I don't want to be the Angriest Man in Santa Monica. I don't want to be angry, period.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Becca's jaw drops at this latest news. She and Katie are on their lunch break, making salads at a salad bar, and Becca is starting to look forward to Katie's updates as if this is her new favorite TV drama.

KATIE
And then we played Chutes and Ladders like we were the perfect nuclear family.
(beat)
Do you think they call it a nuclear family because it could explode and kill everyone involved?

Katie's CELL PHONE RINGS. She looks at the number, then opens and closes the phone, hanging up.

BECCA
Who was that? The mistake?

KATIE
He won't stop calling.

BECCA
Four words I've never uttered.
(a beat)
I can't believe David quit his job.

KATIE
And this is after begging me for six weeks to prove he could be "better." How is being jobless better?

BECCA
Why does he have to prove anything?
You're the one who cheated.

Katie gives Becca a "Yes, but please keep it down" look.

KATIE
Because he hasn't loved me enough. His
words, not mine.

Becca jaw drops again. Who is that mature and forgiving?

BECCA
(suddenly)
I know what it is.

KATIE
He's punishing me?

BECCA
No. He has a brain tumor.

KATIE
He doesn't have a brain tumor.

BECCA
It might not be a brain tumor.
(gravely)
But... he only has six weeks to live.

As Katie thinks about this, not quite on board yet...

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - THAT EVENING

Katie opens the door and Tom and Molly rush to her, crying.

TOM
(clinging to her leg)
Daddy gave away my computer!

MOLLY
He said Tom has to share mine! I don't
want to share my computer!

David appears in the doorway from the kitchen. Katie looks to him for an explanation.

DAVID
We took it to a women's shelter. They
were very appreciative.

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER

David and Katie are mid-discussion. Katie is now concerned.

DAVID

Why would you think I have brain tumor?

KATIE

Why would you give away a perfectly good computer?

DAVID

Just last Christmas you were worried we were spoiling them by giving them each their own. And now they can't share?

KATIE

It's not just that. You quit your job. And you're being so... nice.

DAVID

(sighs, then)

I guess we need to talk about this.

David sits on the bed. Katie sits next to him and puts a supportive arm around him.

DAVID (CONT'D)

I don't have a brain tumor!

KATIE

(gently)

Some other kind of disease then?

DAVID

No! I just want to lead a better life. And the fact that you'd think I'd have to be dying to be "nice" shows how bad a life I've been leading.

KATIE

But why now? Is this all because of--
(her cheating, she worries)

DAVID

--DJ GoodNews.

KATIE

What does he have to do with it?

DAVID

Everything. That's where I went when I was away, and it changed my life.

(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)
(with difficulty)
Katie, he doesn't use a cream.

KATIE
...Okay?

DAVID
He cured my back just by laying his hands on me. I didn't want to believe, but twice? And then this last time, I wasn't planning to go back, but I had a headache...

KATIE
Which... you know... can be a sign of a--

DAVID
Katie, listen to me. He touched my temples and cured my headache.
(with meaning)
And he cured some other things, too.

KATIE
(feeling a little sick)
By touching you other places?

DAVID
Not inappropriately if that's what you're implying.

KATIE
You spent the night with this man! I don't know what to think anymore.

DAVID
I'm not gay, and I'm not dying. I just want to... make a contribution, like you said.

KATIE
When did I say that?

DAVID
Right before you asked for a divorce.

KATIE
(feeling the weight of that)
Well, I don't think I meant cash... or computers.

DAVID
I know what you meant. And you were right. That's what GoodNews and I talked about. Well, I did most of the talking.
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

He just looks at you with these piercing eyes and listens. We talked about my work, and I found myself saying that I was ashamed of it. That I hated it for its... unkindness, its lack of charity. And we talked about religion... how I would never go to church with you--

KATIE

...and called me a "lemming" for going.

DAVID

(he nods apologetically)

And we talked about how I wasn't good to you, how I never tell you how beautiful you are. You are, Katie... And then at one point, he touched my temples again, and I felt this -- I know it sounds stupid -- but this amazing heat go through me... and he said it was pure love. You can imagine how uncomfortable I was with all of this, but it's as if he pulled all the negative stuff out of me.

KATIE

Just by listening? And touching your temples?

DAVID

Yes. Well, also... every so often he made me... God, I'm embarrassed.

KATIE

(bracing herself)

He made you what?

DAVID

Take his hand, and kneel on the floor... and meditate.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - DAY

KATIE

Frankly, it was easier to imagine him gay than meditating.

Katie is basting a Thanksgiving turkey while talking to Mark.

MARK

Just be thankful you're still together.

KATIE

Mom and Dad are still together. Is that love or inertia?

MARK

At this point, I think they're just in it
for the rockin' sex.

KATIE

(laughing)

Okay, that was not necessary.

INT. CARR DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Katie presents the perfect turkey. Burt stands, waiting to
carve it. Freda, Mark, David and the kids are seated at the
table, which is lavishly set and teaming with food.

BURT

Look at that bird!

FREDA

And as usual, we have enough food to feed
a small country.

DAVID

She's right.

(puts his napkin on the table)

I can't do this.

FREDA

Do what?

DAVID

Eat this feast while people have nothing.
Do we have any paper plates?

KATIE

No...

MOLLY

We do. They're above the sink.

KATIE

No, we're not giving away our turkey.

DAVID

But it's Thanksgiving.

KATIE

And this is our Thanksgiving dinner.
Dad, please... just start carving.

DAVID

No, Burt, wait--

Burt isn't sure what to do.

KATIE

(to David)

We have a frozen lasagna in the freezer.
After dinner we'll heat that up and you
can give it to whoever you want.

DAVID

It's the principle of the thing! There
are homeless right outside our--

KATIE

David, screw your principals! Screw the
homeless!

The whole family stares at Katie. They can't believe what
she just said, and neither can she.

EXT. VENICE BEACH/INT. DAVID'S SUV - LATER

Katie (contrite) sits with Tom (glum), Burt, Freda and Mark
in David's SUV, watching as David and Molly serve the
family's food to a motley assortment of VENICE BEACH FOLKS.

FREDA

I think some of those people are just
tourists.

BURT

What do you want to do, Freda? Ask them
for proof of not having a residence?

FREDA

I'm just saying if he's going to give
away our turkey dinner, I want to make
sure he gives it to people who are more
deserving.

MARK

I've been living on Ramen noodles. I'm
pretty deserving.

BURT

You have a law degree. If you choose not
to use it, enjoy your Ramen noodles.

MARK

Now it feels like Thanksgiving. I've
been insulted.

FREDA

(after a beat)

I guess we should help. C'mon, Tom.

The rest of the family piles out, and now Katie is alone in the car, not helping. A beat. She gives up and joins in.

EXT. CARR HOUSE - THAT EVENING

David waves from the porch as Katie's parents pull away.

BURT
(calling)
Thanks for a great... lasagna.

Just as David is about to go inside, ANOTHER CAR pulls up.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Katie is scraping lasagna off the dishes, thinking this Thanksgiving could not have been worse, when it gets worse.

DAVID
Katie, you have a visitor...

Katie's knees almost buckle when she sees that her "visitor" is Stephen. He is standing next to David. The kids are watching TV much too close by.

KATIE
(unsure about the etiquette)
Um, David, this is...

DAVID
(calmly)
I know who it is. Stephen introduced himself.

KATIE
Oh. Okay.

STEPHEN
I wanted to talk to you.
(off Katie's incredulous look)
Both of you.

David ushers Stephen toward the kitchen island as Katie washes her hands and tries to figure out how to handle this.

DAVID
We have bottled water or tap--

STEPHEN
Tap is perfect.

DAVID
Katie?

KATIE
(quickly)
Yeah. I'm here.

DAVID
Did you want water?

KATIE
No, no. I'm good.

DAVID
I could make a pot of coffee...

KATIE
No! Please, let's just--

DAVID
Right.

David brings Stephen the water and they all gather around the island. David and Katie look at each other. A beat.

DAVID (CONT'D)
Who should start, then?

STEPHEN
Maybe I should. Seeing as I'm the one
who called the meeting, as it were.

The two men smile. Katie is confused by the niceness.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)
I'm sorry to drop by like this, on
Thanksgiving no less. I left Katie a few
messages, but she wasn't returning my
calls, and then I thought, "Why don't we
just talk about this like adult--"

DAVID
--erers.

STEPHEN
Did you-- say something?

DAVID
Adulterers. Stupid joke. Sorry.

STEPHEN
No, it's fine. It's funny.

DAVID
Thank you.

STEPHEN

I just didn't hear you.

KATIE

If I can interrupt, move things along:
Stephen, what the hell are you doing
here?!

STEPHEN

Right. Okay. Deep breath. David, I'm
sorry if this comes as a shock, you seem
like a decent guy, but I've reached the
conclusion that Katie doesn't want to be
with you. She'd be better off with me.
I'm sorry, but those are the facts.

KATIE

That's ridiculous. Stephen, you should
go, before you make an idiot of yourself.

STEPHEN

I knew she'd say that.

He sighs and gives Katie an "I know you so well" smile.

STEPHEN (CONT'D)

David, maybe you and I should talk
privately.

KATIE

Sure, okay. I'll leave the room and once
you two sort this out, just tell me who I
should be with.

Stephen seems open to this idea.

DAVID

I think she's joking.

KATIE

Yes, I'm joking.

STEPHEN

Alright. Well, David, I know from
talking to Katie that some things aren't
great between you two.

DAVID

Katie and I have discussed that. We're
working on it.

STEPHEN

There are some things you can't work out.

DAVID

Like?

STEPHEN

Like that Katie doesn't love you.

David looks to Katie. She shakes her head and rolls her eyes, then realizes he needs more of a response than that.

KATIE

I never said that.

STEPHEN

You didn't have to. And then there's the sex.

KATIE

I definitely never said anything about--

STEPHEN

You did. You said something about the difference between art and science, and that you preferred art.

KATIE

I never said I preferred art.

STEPHEN

You said you were a scientist by profession, and you preferred art in bed.

DAVID

I'm afraid you've lost me.

KATIE

(to Stephen)

I might have said that, but if you must know, I was trying to be nice. It was an explanation for why I didn't... you know.

Silence all around. Katie was hoping this admission (that she didn't climax) might make David feel better, but discussing extra-marital sex in front of a spouse, even if only to say it wasn't so great: very dicey territory.

STEPHEN

That's what you're saying now. That's not what you were saying when you were lying next to me in San Diego.

David walks away, stung.

KATIE

No, we know what I said then -- the thing about art versus science. What we're doing now is interpreting the words we agree I used. Please try to keep up.

STEPHEN

Sorry if I'm not quick enough for you.

Katie and Stephen glower at each other. David lobs this in:

DAVID

I might be speaking out of turn here, but to be honest, Stephen, Katie doesn't seem to like you very much. And she should at this stage, right? She certainly doesn't seem eager to rush off with you.

KATIE

No, I'm not. I'm not sixteen, Stephen. I can't just jump on the back of your bike. I've got a husband and two kids. I made a mistake. I've got to live with it, and so does David. Now please go.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

The front door SLAMS. Katie looks at David.

KATIE

Thank you. Thank you, thank you.

DAVID

For what?

KATIE

Everything. I'm so sorry I put you in that situation.

DAVID

I put myself in it, too, I guess. It wouldn't have happened if I'd been making you happy. So I'm sorry, too.

David pours the remains of Stephen's water into the sink, then drops Stephen's glass into the trash, letting it BREAK. He's hurt. This is hard for him, but he's doing his best.

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Katie snuggles up on David's chest. She can't help but love David at this moment.

He stayed calm when he had every right to be angry at everyone, and as a result she feels, for the first time in a long time, that they are a unit, a couple, a marriage. She feels like she would do anything for this man.

DAVID

Katie, there's a favor I wanted to ask.

KATIE

Name it.

DAVID

I spoke to GoodNews yesterday, and he's got nowhere to live. His landlord just gave him notice. I was wondering if he could come here for a couple of nights.

On Katie, knowing she must agree to this...

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT AFTERNOON

DJ GOODNEWS, with two Hefty bags of his belongings, is at the door being greeted by the Carrs. He is thirtyish with bright blue eyes. Based on looks alone, he could be a surfer, could be a vagrant, could be the second coming. He has two turtles tattooed along his right temple, which fascinate Tom.

TOM

Are those tortoises?

GOODNEWS

No sir, they are not.

DAVID

(he's discussed this already)
They're turtles.

TOM

What's the difference?

MOLLY

Turtles can swim, right?

GoodNews points to her, yes! Molly is proud, Tom is annoyed.

TOM

Why did you want turtles and not tortoises?

GOODNEWS

You won't laugh if I tell you?

Katie laughs before he tells them. She can't help herself. This is all so absurd. GoodNews looks hurt.

KATIE

I'm sorry.

GOODNEWS

That was a bit rude. I'm surprised at you.

KATIE

Do you know me?

GOODNEWS

I feel like I do. David's talked about you. He loves you a lot, and I know you've had a rough time lately, yeah?

Katie starts to agree, then realizes his "yeah" is a verbal tic, not a question.

GOODNEWS (CONT'D)

Anyway, the turtles. It was weird, yeah? 'Cause I had a dream about blue turtles, and then Sting, the singer-- I don't like him much. My sister got me hooked on the Police when I was a kid, but if you ask me, his solo stuff? Crap. Anyway, Sting came out with an album called "The Dream of the Blue Turtles." So...

He shrugs.

KATIE (V.O.)

Apparently, the rest -- the part about tattoos and becoming a healer and advertising at car washes -- was self-explanatory.

GOODNEWS

And I've always had this thing about blue turtles. I've always thought they could see stuff we can't, yeah?

The children stare at their father, clearly baffled.

MOLLY

What can they see?

GOODNEWS

Good question, Molly. You're sharp. I'm going to have to watch you.

Molly beams again, but Tom notices GoodNews never answered.

TOM
He doesn't know.

GOODNEWS
Oh, I know alright. But maybe now is not the time.

DAVID
(to the kids)
Do you want to show GoodNews his room?

MOLLY
Sure.
(off Tom's hesitation)
Come on, Tom. He's our guest.

KATIE
(re: his Hefty bags)
Need help with your... bags... DJ?

GOODNEWS
Nah. I only keep what I can carry.

KATIE
Do you go by DJ or--

GOODNEWS
Just GoodNews. I'm not a DJ anymore.

DAVID
(off Katie's confused look)
He used to DJ in clubs.

GOODNEWS
Before I got the healing gig.

KATIE
Oh. Uh huh. Cool.

Once GoodNews and the kids are gone, David turns to Katie.

DAVID
I know what you're thinking, but try not to get bogged down in the superficial stuff.

KATIE
What does that leave?

DAVID
You don't pick up a vibe?

KATIE

I pick up a scent. Does he shower?

DAVID

It's interesting Molly and I can feel it,
and you and Tom can't.

KATIE

How do you know Tom can't? How do you
know Molly can?

DAVID

Tom was rude to him. If you pick up the
vibe, you wouldn't be rude. Molly isn't
rude. She got it the minute she saw him.

KATIE

And I was rude.

DAVID

Not rude, but... skeptical.

KATIE

And that's wrong? Given that he's
staying in our house? Given that for all
we know, he has body parts in those bags,
and we're now accomplices to some heinous
crimes where the scene bears the sign of
the blue turtle?

DAVID

Katie, he's been good for me. And I
think he'll be good for us, so please
give him a chance.

KATIE

(remembering she owes David)
A chance? I'm giving him a room.

David smiles, appreciative, and goes to join the others.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - A LITTLE LATER

Katie, trying to be a good sport, is marinating five chicken
breasts when Molly enters, excited.

MOLLY

GoodNews cured my eczema!

KATIE

Just now? He did the thing... to your...

Katie examines Molly's arms, which do look better. GoodNews enters with David and Tom, as if they're his entourage.

MOLLY
(to GoodNews)
You should do Mommy next!

DAVID
It's not a party trick, Molly.
(to Katie)
There are a few things GoodNews has a problem with.

KATIE
I'm sorry to hear that.

GOODNEWS
I don't really agree with beds.

KATIE
Okay. Do you mind if we sleep in them?

GOODNEWS
What other people do is their business.
But I think they make you soft. Take you further away from how things really are.

KATIE
And how are things?

David gives Katie a look worse than anger: disappointment.

GOODNEWS
That's the big question, Katie. And I'm not sure if you're ready for the big answer.

TOM
(loyally)
You are, aren't you, Mommy?

DAVID
Anyhow, GoodNews would like the bed taken out of the spare room, because there isn't really room for him to sleep on the floor if it stays there.

MOLLY
Can I take my bed out? I don't like it.

KATIE
(to David, whose fault this is)
What's wrong with your bed?

MOLLY

I don't agree with it.

KATIE

Tell you what. When you have your own apartment, you can sleep on nails for all I care, but while you're living here, you'll sleep on a bed.

GOODNEWS

I'm causing trouble, aren't I? Forget it. It's groovy. I can cope with a bed.

DAVID

No, that's okay, because the other thing that GoodNews was -- well, that we both were -- worried about was where he was going to heal people.

KATIE

Oh. I thought he was just staying a couple of nights.

DAVID

Probably he will be. But he needs to work. And he has commitments--

KATIE

And the spare bedroom's no good for healing?

David looks at GoodNews, who shrugs.

GOODNEWS

Not ideal. Because of the bed. But if there's nothing else...

KATIE

Wouldn't you know it? We had to choose between David's home radio studio and a healing room, and clearly we made the wrong choice.

DAVID

(to GoodNews)

I'm afraid sarcasm has been the primary language in this house. That's my doing.

(to Katie, a gentle request)

But I'm hoping we can undo it.

KATIE

Right. Sorry. We'll make the spare room work. We can put the bed in storage.

GOODNEWS

You've definitely got too much stuff if
you need a storage unit.

DAVID

Katie saves everything.

KATIE

And David saves nothing.

GOODNEWS

Except maybe... the world!

Katie doesn't even know where to begin with that.

DAVID

We're working on a project... a way to
address the homeless problem.

Katie nods, doing her best to avoid sarcasm.

DAVID (CONT'D)

And the last thing, Katie: GoodNews is a
vegetarian.

KATIE

(looking at the chicken)
Fine.

GOODNEWS

A vegan, actually.

KATIE

Even better. Very sensible. Healthier,
right?

INT. CARR DINING ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

CLOSE ON a fork picking at a piece of chicken. The fork
belongs to Molly, and Katie is watching Molly's thought-
process as Molly eyes GoodNews' vegetable plate.

MOLLY

Mommy, maybe I'm a--

KATIE

You're a meat eater and that's that.

A moment as the family and GoodNews eat in silence.

GOODNEWS

So Katie, David says you're a healer too.

KATIE

Well, I'm... I'm a doctor.

GOODNEWS

Ergo, you heal people.

MOLLY

(trying to help)

But she can't magically fix people like you can.

KATIE

Well, yes. I am... constrained by the laws of science.

DAVID

(to GoodNews)

I don't know if it's magic, but if you knew the number of doctors we dragged Molly to. And my back -- Katie thought I needed surgery!

KATIE

Well, you still might.

DAVID

(re: Katie)

DJ BadNews over here.

GoodNews and the kids find this hysterical. Katie just smiles and takes it.

GOODNEWS

I'm happy I could help. I believe in help. I think God is angry with us because we don't help each other enough.

MOLLY

Tom didn't help set the table. Maybe God is angry at Tom.

GOODNEWS

God is angry at Tom.

Everyone absorbs this. Tom doesn't like GoodNews at all now.

DAVID/KATIE

Well, let's not--/I don't think God--

GOODNEWS

He's angry at all of us, and if we don't start helping each other, something dire is going to happen.

KATIE
(trying to lighten the mood)
And I'm DJ BadNews?

TOM
Like what?

GOODNEWS
Like a do-over. A cosmic do-over.
Something big enough to wipe this town
off the map so we can start fresh.

Both children are now sufficiently scared.

KATIE
Who wants to help with the dishes then?

Molly and Tom immediately raise their hands. Katie smiles
at GoodNews. He might be helpful to have around after all.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - LATER

As David is clearing the rest of the table, GoodNews and the
kids bring their plates to Katie, who opens the dishwasher.

GOODNEWS
Oh.

KATIE
(half-kidding)
Do you have a problem with dishwashers?

GOODNEWS
I do actually.

KATIE
You have a problem with a lot of things a
lot of people don't have problems with.

GOODNEWS
Well, a lot of people didn't have a
problem with, like... slavery, but they
were wrong. That was bad.

KATIE
So slavery is the same as dishwashers?

GOODNEWS
I just believe, when it comes to things,
until everyone in the world has one,
nobody should have one.

MOLLY
(before Katie can respond)
But everyone has a dishwasher.

KATIE
That's not true, Molly. And you know it.

MOLLY
Who doesn't? That we know?

KATIE
What about your friends who take the bus
to school? Keisha and Mack?

TOM
They've got everything. They've got HD
TV. And Playstation.

KATIE
(feeling like a racist now)
Okay, okay. What about... the people we
gave our turkey to?

MOLLY
They don't count. They've got nothing.
They don't even have homes. And I don't
know them. And I wouldn't want to, thank
you. They seemed a little rough. Even
though I feel sorry for them and I'm
happy they got to eat our food.

Katie is horrified. GoodNews nods: See the problem? Katie,
feeling like she failed as a mother, closes the dishwasher.

KATIE
(handing Molly a towel)
Molly, you'll dry, and Tom can rinse.

EXT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - THE NEXT MORNING

Katie and Becca approach the clinic.

BECCA
I don't understand how it went from you
having a guy on the side to David having
a guy in the house.

KATIE
Me neither. But because of my "guy on
the side," I think I'm not allowed to
complain about this -- or anything --
ever again. Which might be worse than
being unhappy.

BECCA

At least you won't be alone for the holidays. I'll be having myself another very unmarried Christmas.

They see a figure in black, Mrs. Cortez, slowly and painfully approaching. Katie holds the door open for her.

KATIE

Morning, Mrs. Cortez. How are you?

MRS. CORTEZ

(out of breath)

Knees, very much pain.

KATIE

The pain medication isn't helping?

MRS. CORTEZ

No, and houses I clean, many stairs.

Katie nods, sympathetic, as Mrs. Cortez enters.

BECCA

Why does she keep coming here if nothing ever works?

KATIE

Because as a medical facility, we're supposed to be able to help people.

BECCA

Einstein defined insanity as doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.

KATIE

So she's insane for continuing to see me?

BECCA

No. I'm insane for continuing to date.

Becca goes inside. Katie lingers outside and thinks.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - EXAM ROOM - LATER

Mrs. Cortez eyes GoodNews and his turtles very skeptically.

GOODNEWS

Hello! You're a heartbreaker, aren't you? What's your name?

Mrs. Cortez continues to stare at him.

KATIE

This is Mrs. Cortez.

GOODNEWS

No, her real name. Her first name.

Katie is embarrassed to realize that after years of seeing this woman, she has no clue. She quickly scans her chart.

KATIE

Um... Maria.

GOODNEWS

(to Mrs. Cortez)

Maria! What can we do about Maria? You know that song? West Side Story?

KATIE

I think that's the Sound of Music one. The West Side Story one is different.

GOODNEWS

You've had two songs written about you. Not surprising. Pretty girl like you.

(off Mrs. Cortez's shy smile)

So what needs doing here? How can we get Maria dancing again?

KATIE

She's got chronic inflammation around most of her joints. Hips, knees, a lot of back pain.

GOODNEWS

Is she sad?

KATIE

Wouldn't you be? With all of that?

GOODNEWS

No, I mean like, mentally.

KATIE

Is she mentally sad? You mean sad in her mind as opposed to sad in her knees?

GOODNEWS

Yeah, all right, I'm not as good at talking as you, Dr. Diplomas...

(re: her framed credentials)

...but let's see which one of us can do something for her.

KATIE

I just didn't... Does she have to be unhappy before you can treat her?

GOODNEWS

It helps if I can key into that stuff, yeah.

Katie moves in closer to Mrs. Cortez.

KATIE

Mrs. Cortez, are you sad?

MRS. CORTEZ

Sad? Sadness?

KATIE

Yes. Sadness.

MRS. CORTEZ

Oh, yes. Very, very sad.

GOODNEWS

Why?

MRS. CORTEZ

Too many things.

(gestures at her black clothes)

My husband...

(then, eyes filling with tears)

My sister. My mother. My father. Too many things...

KATIE (V.O.)

I noticed she always wore black, but I never asked why.

MRS. CORTEZ

My son...

KATIE

Your son's dead?

MRS. CORTEZ

No, no. Not dead. Very bad. He moved to New Jersey. Never call me.

KATIE

(to GoodNews)

Is that enough sadness?

GOODNEWS

That all makes sense. I can feel most of that. Explain to her that I will need to touch her shoulders, neck and head.

MRS. CORTEZ

(somewhat affronted)

I understand.

KATIE

Is that okay?

MRS. CORTEZ

Okay. Yes.

Katie gets out of the way. GoodNews sits on a rolling stool opposite Mrs. Cortez and closes his eyes for a while, then he gets up and massages her scalp. After a moment...

MRS. CORTEZ (CONT'D)

Very hot!

GOODNEWS

That's good. The hotter the better.
Things are happening.

Katie doesn't want to believe, but suddenly Mrs. Cortez hops up, startling Katie, and stretches.

MRS. CORTEZ

Thank you. Is much better now. Much,
much better.

And with that she walks out at five times her usual speed. Katie looks at GoodNews, waiting for him to gloat.

KATIE

So... you can cure old age.

GOODNEWS

She's not cured. Of course she's not cured. Her body's wrecked. But life will be much better for her.

He's pleased, not for himself, but for Mrs. Cortez, and Katie feels small and petty and hopeless.

INT. KIDS' BATHROOM - THAT NIGHT

Katie sits on the edge of the tub, helping Molly rinse her hair and surreptitiously searching Molly's arms for eczema.

MOLLY
It's still gone.

KATIE
(busted)
Huh. So it is. Hey... when you went to see GoodNews, do you remember what he said to you? Did he ask you anything?

MOLLY
Like what?

KATIE
What you were feeling?

MOLLY
Oh, yes. He asked if I was feeling sad.

KATIE
And what did you say?

MOLLY
That I felt a little sad sometimes.

KATIE
What about?

MOLLY
Grandma Ruby.

KATIE
That was very sad.

MOLLY
And Poppy.

Katie nods sympathetically.

KATIE (V.O.)
The family cat. Died shortly after Grandma Ruby.

EXT. CARR HOUSE - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - ONE YEAR AGO

In the glow of the FLASHING RED LIGHT from an ambulance, a chaotic scene. GRANDMA RUBY is being whisked away on a stretcher. David runs behind the PARAMEDICS, nervous. Katie stands in the doorway, holding a crying Tom, as Molly tugs on her blouse, trying to tell her the cat is missing.

KATIE (V.O.)
In fact, Molly's proximity to both of those deaths was not ideal.
(MORE)

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Grandma Ruby was visiting when she collapsed, and in our hurry to the hospital we lost track of the cat. So when we got home we organized a Poppy search party thinking it would make the kids feel better...

EXT. SANTA MONICA STREET - LATER THAT NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Molly sees Poppy in the road ahead and runs to her, calling her name, then starts to scream as Katie rushes to her side.

KATIE (V.O.)
...but it definitely did not, because Molly and I found Poppy up -- and in and all over -- the road.

INT. KID'S BATHROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

Katie is now drying Molly's hair with a towel.

KATIE
That was sad, too.

MOLLY
And your baby.

KATIE
My baby?

MOLLY
The baby that died?

KATIE
Oh. That baby.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I had a miscarriage, two years after I had Tom.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAM ROOM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK - FOUR YEARS AGO

Katie sits on the edge of an exam table in a bathrobe, crestfallen. David has pajamas on under his coat. He takes Katie's hand. She has tears in her eyes, and although he's trying to be strong for her, he's fighting tears, too.

KATIE (V.O.)
I guess we stopped trying after that. In more ways than one.

INT. KIDS' BATHROOM - BACK TO PRESENT

KATIE (V.O.)

I can't for the life of me remember
telling Molly, but we must have, and she
must have mourned it in her own way.

MOLLY

And I was sad about you and Daddy, too.

KATIE

Why were you sad about us?

MOLLY

Because you might get divorced. And you
will definitely die.

INT. HALLWAY/MOLLY'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

DAVID

Is that... still true?

Katie and David are standing in the doorway to Molly's room,
watching their daughter sleep. They talk quietly.

KATIE

The divorce part or the death part?

DAVID

Don't give up on us, Katie. I've got
three weeks left, and... we are working
on something big.

KATIE

"We" being you and GoodNews.

DAVID

Did you tell Molly not to give up on us?

KATIE

"Us" being you and me?

(off his look)

I didn't know what to tell her, but she
said she's not worried about any of that
now. GoodNews made it all go away.

INT. SELF-STORAGE UNIT - THE NEXT DAY

Motion-sensitive florescent LIGHTS GO ON as GoodNews and
Katie slide the mattress in. GoodNews looks around at an art
deco vanity, books, art, a backpack, boxes...

GOODNEWS

It's like a thing orphanage in here! Why don't you get this stuff adopted?

They lean the mattress up against some other things and rest.

KATIE

It's not just "stuff." It's... me, when I was single. That vanity -- I loved. I had it in my first apartment. And this box is full of photos from a photography course I took. I've got my journals, my favorite books... But I had to make room for David, and he had his own stuff, and then Molly required other stuff, and then Tom...

GOODNEWS

So that's the big question.

KATIE

What's the big question?

GOODNEWS

How much of yourself do you have to let go of to be a wife and mother?

Katie looks at him, as if for the first time. That is the big question.

KATIE

What's the big answer?

GOODNEWS

I don't know. I'm a dude.

He smiles, and Katie feels silly for being drawn in.

KATIE

Can I ask you something?

GOODNEWS

You want to photograph me?

KATIE

No...

GOODNEWS

Still not psychic! What'd you want to ask?

KATIE

When did you discover you could heal people?

GOODNEWS

About five years ago. This girl I was seeing had a stiff neck, yeah? And she asked me to give her a massage, and then everything went all weird. The room got warmer, but it wasn't the room, yeah? It was me. It was my hands. We could both feel the heat from my hands.

KATIE

...and then her neck was better?

GOODNEWS

Actually, worse. It took me a while to get that part down. But the heat I got right away.

KATIE

And why do you think you could do that, all of the sudden?

GOODNEWS

Drugs.

(off her look)

I took a lot of drugs, when I was a DJ, in the club scene, and I think they altered my molecular structure.

KATIE

Other people did drugs.

GOODNEWS

Not enough. Not the right combo. That's why I quit. Quit while you're ahead.

(laughs, then)

Weird, yeah? You studied your ass off while I partied my ass off, and we end up in the same field. I still think there's a need for doctors like you, though.

KATIE

Thank you.

She rubs her head, which is throbbing.

GOODNEWS

What do you have there? A headache?

KATIE

Oh... yes... but it's fine.

INT. SELF-STORAGE UNIT - MOMENTS LATER

Katie sits unhappily on the vanity bench with GoodNews' hands on her head. Nothing is happening, which makes her feel vindicated.

KATIE

Nothing. I don't feel anything.

GOODNEWS

That's the problem, yeah?

KATIE

(amused)

Oh, so it's my fault it's not working?

GOODNEWS

It's not your fault, but you've got no juice, spiritually speaking. You're like a dead battery.

Katie is offended, and also worried it might be true.

GOODNEWS (CONT'D)

It's sad.

KATIE

Sad like we can use it, or just sad?

GOODNEWS

Just sad.

Katie nods. That's what she figured.

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On the couch, Molly watches TV, Tom plays with a GameBoy and Katie reads a magazine. She's like one of the kids now. Suddenly David appears in front of the TV and turns it off.

DAVID

That's enough TV for today.

KATIE

But they were just about to say who's getting kicked off.

DAVID

We want to tell you about our project.

David nods to GoodNews, allowing him the honor.

GOODNEWS
Homeless for the holidays!

KATIE
I am not living on the streets.

DAVID
(to GoodNews)
See, that's what I thought might happen
with that title. It sounds like you'll
be the homeless one.

GOODNEWS
Alright, we'll work on that, but the idea
is to take in a homeless person for the
holidays, yeah?

KATIE
And this is an ad campaign?

DAVID
It's more grassroots than that. We want
everyone on our street to invite a
homeless person into their house for a
year.

MOLLY
Will we get a homeless person?

KATIE
(delicately)
Haven't we got ours already?

MOLLY
Who else gets one?

DAVID
Anyone who wants one.
(off Katie's laugh)
Why is that funny?

KATIE
Um... it's not. Sorry.

DAVID
No, why don't you share the joke?

KATIE
--with the class?

Tom and Katie both laugh now.

DAVID
(to Tom)
Why are you laughing?

TOM
(through giggles)
Because. It's like Mommy is being
naughty, and you're the teacher.

DAVID
Well, I'm trying to talk about something
important, and she finds it hysterical.

KATIE
It's just... you made it sounds like it's
this year's Harry Potter book. Like
everyone will be scrambling for a
homeless person.

DAVID
Hopefully they will.

Katie and Tom see that he's serious and act accordingly.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(showing Katie the list)
Now the way we see it, there are about
forty spare bedrooms on this street.
Isn't that incredible? Forty bedrooms,
and thousands of people without a bed.

Katie looks at David's list. It has house numbers and
sketchy corresponding information like "Simon and Richard,"
"Old lady (old man also?) Makes no difference if sharing a
bed," "Nice Asian family (4?)," "For Sale," "Wendy and Ed,"
"Not-nice Asian Family (6)," "Amy and Pete?"

GOODNEWS
We should shoot to fill ten of them. I'd
be happy with ten.

DAVID
This is pretty hard to say no to, if we
pitch it right.

KATIE
You think?

GOODNEWS
Yeah. Some people just won't get it.

KATIE
Some people might need their spare rooms
for other things.

DAVID
Like what?

KATIE
Working. You used to work in one of our
spare rooms, for example.

Katie expects this to provoke David, but he is undeterred.

DAVID
Okay, let's say five out of the forty are
used as offices.

KATIE
David, you have no idea about our
neighbors' lives.
(re: list)
You don't even know half their names.

DAVID
I know more than you do.

KATIE
I know Pete is a dog, not a husband.

DAVID
I had that as a question mark.
(to GoodNews)
I'll fix that.

KATIE
Honestly, what gives you the right to
tell people how to use their spare rooms?

DAVID
What gives them the right to leave rooms
empty when people are sleeping in
cardboard boxes?

KATIE
Their mortgages! These are homes we're
talking about! And not huge homes.

DAVID
Are you afraid of the embarrassment?

KATIE

No! It's just...
(afraid of the embarrassment)
How do you plan to go about this?

GOODNEWS

We'll have a party, here at the house.
And David will speak, and it'll be great.

KATIE

Awesome!

Katie returns to her magazine. Tom returns to his GameBoy.

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - RECEPTION - DAY

A bunch of OLDER GUATEMALAN WOMEN, dressed in black, crowd the reception desk waving their hands and saying:

OLDER GUATEMALAN WOMEN

Hot! Very hot!

Then they mime sudden sprightliness, which, since they are not sprightly, is mostly suggested with their eyes and gestures. They also make faces to show they are sad.

REVERSE ANGLE on Katie, Becca and Dawn, who stare politely as if watching a bad play.

DAWN

(to Katie)
What did you do?

KATIE

Nothing. Well, I had this guy in. A masseur. For Mrs. Cortez's back.

DAWN

Is he really hot or something?

KATIE

No, no. He... uses some kind of cream... that makes you feel... some kind of heat.

The PHONE RINGS. Dawn fields calls as Becca confronts Katie.

BECCA

The rumor is that he has hot hands and he's a friend of yours.

KATIE

He's not my friend. He's my house guest.

BECCA
Is he seeing anybody?

KATIE
I thought you might be more interested in
his apparent ability to heal the sick by
touching them.

BECCA
Not really. I just figured... hot hands.

KATIE
Becca, he's kind of--

BECCA
A freak, I know! It's these damn
holidays. Ignore me until the new year.

As Becca exits, Dawn taps Katie on the shoulder.

DAWN
Dr. Carr, you have a call on Line One.

KATIE
Who is it?

DAWN
The principal's office.

KATIE
(wincing)
Did they say what it's regarding?

DAWN
(delicately)
Apparently Tom was caught stealing.

KATIE
Tom? My Tom?

DAWN
Dr. Carr, I've got a roomful of
Guatemalan grannies to deal with, so--

KATIE
Right. I'll take it in my office.

Katie starts to leave.

DAWN
No, no, wait! What do I tell them?

KATIE

Oh. What. Well, at the drug store, you can get, you know, those rubs, like Icy Hot. That might achieve the same thing. Maybe you could write the name down on a piece of paper for them: I-C-Y...

(to the women, brightly)

Alright? Good.

Katie hurries to take the call, trying to appear in control.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

CLOSE on the GameBoy that Tom had earlier.

KATIE (V.O.)

Tom doesn't own a GameBoy. I knew this, and so did David. And yet, we both saw him playing with one last night and didn't give it a second thought.

The GameBoy sits on the desk between David, Katie, Tom and the principal, JEANIE FIELD, a kind woman, who up until now enjoyed the fact that Tom and Molly weren't problem children.

JEANIE

There's more.

She dumps a bag out on the desk, revealing some DVDs (games and music), an LA Dodgers t-shirt, a half-eaten bag of gummy worms and an envelope of photos from someone else's family trip to SeaWorld.

KATIE

(looking through the photos)

We never went to... Who are... What did you want these for?

Tom just shrugs. He's hunched up in his chair, hugging himself. He won't make eye contact with anyone in the room.

JEANIE

He's basically been taking anything that's not nailed down. Have his home circumstances changed in any way?

As Katie considers how to answer this...

DAVID

Yes. We've had some difficulties. To begin with--

KATIE
(quickly)
Tom, will you wait outside, please?

Tom sighs, then reluctantly gets up and leaves.

DAVID
I'm sure Katie won't mind me saying that
she had an affair.

KATIE
I do mind you saying that, actually.

DAVID
(genuinely baffled)
Oh.
(explaining to Jeanie)
It was my fault. I was inattentive and
angry, generally a pain-in-the-ass to
live with. I didn't love her enough, or
appreciate her. But I... my shortcomings
were revealed to me when I met a
spiritual healer, and I'm trying to
change. Wouldn't you say I've changed,
Katie?

KATIE
Oh, you've changed.

DAVID
And the spiritual healer is currently
staying with us, and we're... examining
some of our lifestyle choices... and I'm
just thinking out loud here, but maybe
some of this has unsettled Tom?

JEANIE
I'd say that was a possibility, yes.

There's a knock on the door and Tom returns.

TOM
Have you finished? I mean, with the
stuff I can't hear, like about Mom's
boyfriend and everything?

Katie looks at her feet. She didn't realize Tom knew.

JEANIE
Sit down, Tom.

Tom sits in a chair in the corner so they all have to turn
and face him.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

We've been talking about what might have made you do this. Whether there's anything you're unhappy about at school, or at home...

TOM

(suddenly and angrily)
I haven't got anything!

JEANIE

What do you mean?

TOM

I haven't got anything at home. He keeps giving it away.
(nods toward his dad)

DAVID

Tom, that's silly. You've got so much. That's why we decided together to lose some of it.

KATIE

Wait. Tom, are you telling me there are things other than the computer?

TOM

Yeah. Tons of stuff.

DAVID

(impatient)
It wasn't tons.

KATIE

When did this happen?

TOM

Last week. He made us go through our toys and get rid of half of them.

KATIE

David!

JEANIE

(standing)
Some matters, I think, are better worked out at home. But thanks for coming in.

The Carrs get the hint and start to gather their things.

JEANIE (CONT'D)

And Tom? My cards?

Tom, caught, puts her business cards back in their holder.

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

As Katie and David walk together to their cars, Tom isn't talking to his parents, and Katie isn't talking to David.

KATIE (V.O.)

David explained that the toys went to the children's hospital.

EXT. CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - DAY - FLASHBACK

David, Molly and Tom enter the hospital with reusable burlap bags full of toys. The doors close behind them.

KATIE (V.O.)

Tom was on board initially, but Molly raised the stakes, saying it needed to be toys they actually liked for it to mean something, and Tom complied, but, according to David, "might have regretted it."

David, Molly and Tom exit with the empty bags, but this time David has to drag Tom away, a la Sophie's Choice.

TOM

(wailing)

I want my remote-controlled helicopter!

EXT. SCHOOL - BACK TO PRESENT

They arrive at David's SUV first, and Tom gets in and closes the door. David and Katie linger outside for a moment.

KATIE

I'm getting lost. I'm not sure what any of this is supposed to achieve anymore.

DAVID

Any of what?

KATIE

All the good you're doing. How is it helping us?

DAVID

You wanted me to be better, to do something that mattered, to contribute, so I am! And what I'm learning is... it's not just about us.

KATIE

I know! It's about our kids, too.
You're turning them into weirdos!

DAVID

Is it weird to worry what's happening in
the world?

KATIE

No. You can worry all you want. You
just can't try to fix everything.

DAVID

I can try. You try. Your clinic serves
people who can't get help elsewhere.

KATIE

Right. Exactly. So... I've got us
covered. You can stop.

DAVID

It doesn't work that way. You don't get
into heaven as a plus one.

KATIE

This is about heaven? You're the one who
said, "Heaven is a marketing hoax, the
ultimate VIP room. It's not about
getting in, it's about keeping people
out. Peter's not a saint, he's a
bouncer!"

DAVID

(surprised and touched)
You've been listening to my podcasts.

KATIE

Sometimes. When I miss you.

DAVID

(tenderly)
I'm right here.

KATIE

No, the other guy! My husband, who was
sarcastic and funny and would have hated
you! I don't know what to tell people
anymore. We've got dinner with Ava and
Ron tonight, and I'm dreading it.

DAVID

I'll be very well-behaved.

KATIE

That's what I'm dreading! What will you and Ron talk about?

DAVID

What do we usually talk about?

KATIE

People who are untalented or overrated.

DAVID

There are other things we can discuss.

KATIE

Like GoodNews? Will you discuss him?

DAVID

I won't mention GoodNews, okay?

KATIE

Thank you.

DAVID

But I might invite them to the party.

KATIE

(not sure what he's talking about, then remembering)
Oh, David, please don't have that party.

DAVID

It's too late. Invitations went out.

INT. NEIGHBORHOOD RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ava and Ron are ready for a fun night with David and Katie. They are all seated with menus in hand.

AVA

So how are you?

KATIE

We're fine, I think.

RON

Better than that asshole, Benson! His book is already half off.

Ron smiles, waiting for David to take the bait.

DAVID

He's had a bad run of luck, hasn't he?

RON
Yes. The asshole.

DAVID
How are you two?

RON
(giving it another shot)
Better than Benson's book sales!

DAVID
That's good. I'm glad.

RON
Did you read his New Yorker review? I
would have emigrated.

DAVID
I didn't read it.

RON
I might still have it. In my wallet!

Ron laughs. David doesn't.

DAVID
That's okay.

RON
How could you miss it?

DAVID
I've... I've stopped reading reviews.
I'm too busy.

RON
Well, I guess you put me in my place.

DAVID
No, no. I didn't mean to imply that
people who have time to read reviews are
inferior. I don't want to judge anyone.

AVA
You don't want to judge anyone?!

Ron and Ava laugh and look to Katie, who smiles awkwardly.

RON
So how come you're too busy to read
reviews all of a sudden? What have you
been up to?

DAVID

Well, at the moment... I'm trying to sort out a neighborhood adopt-a-street kid kind of thing.

Ava and Ron both study David's face before bursting out in laughter. This stings David.

RON

When you say you're trying to sort it out, do you mean trying to stop it?

DAVID

No. I'm trying to start it.

AVA

Sorry. How do you mean?

David looks at Katie, who doesn't know how to help him.

DAVID

It's a long story. I'll tell you another time.

Silence. It's going to be a very long night.

KATIE

Trout!

(off their looks)

You don't see trout on a menu very often.

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is now decorated for Christmas, the party is underway, and much to Katie's dismay, David is standing on a chair about to speak to a decent number of NEIGHBORS who are there, seemingly enjoying themselves. Tom sulks by Katie's side. He is as unhappy about this as she is.

DAVID

Good evening, residents of Euclid Street.

MALCOLM

Good evening!

KATIE

(to Tom)

That's Malcolm, formerly known to your father as Pete the dog.

Molly and GoodNews are serving appetizers; Tom's eating them.

DAVID

When our invitation arrived in your mailbox you probably thought, "What's the catch? Why is this guy we don't know from Adam inviting us to a party?"

MALCOLM

I'm only here for the free booze!

OLD LADY

(to David)

Can you speak up, please?

MALCOLM

I SAID I'M ONLY HERE FOR THE FREE BOOZE!

This prompts some laughter, which prompts Malcolm's wife, AMY, 45-ish, to say to the crowd:

AMY

Please. Don't encourage him.

David clears his throat and speaks up.

DAVID

I'd love to tell you there isn't a catch, but there is. A big one. Tonight I'm going to ask you to change people's lives. And your own life, too.

RICHARD

This isn't about The Secret, is it? Because Simon already made me watch the video.

SIMON punches his boyfriend RICHARD playfully in the arm.

DAVID

How many of you have got a spare bedroom?

MALCOLM

It's where I'm sleeping tonight, I think.

AMY

You got that right.

A little more laughter from the group.

DAVID

Okay, that's one spare bedroom. Any more?

Most people look into their wine glasses.

GOODNEWS
 (sotto to Katie)
 It's going well, yeah?

Katie turns and finds herself face to face with GoodNews.
 She nods vigorously and takes a cheese puff from his tray.

DAVID
 Here's the deal. I'm 41 years old, and I've spent half my life regretting that I missed the Sixties. I imagine the energy; what the music would have sounded like if you hadn't heard it a thousand times before, back when it actually meant something. I've always been sad that the world is different now. But then again, what have I ever protested? Other than a parking ticket?

A few laughs and nods from the crowd.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 The thing is, the problems... they're too big. And they're never going away. We can't change the world. But we can change our street. And maybe if we change our street, other people will change theirs, too.

Katie is nervous to look around, but she steals a look, and David seems to have everyone's attention.

DAVID (CONT'D)
 We have handpicked ten kids who need some help. They're good kids. They're not junkies or violent or mentally unstable. They're just people who got off track through no fault of their own. Maybe a stepfather was abusive, maybe a parent died and they couldn't cope, maybe life on the street seemed better than the life they knew... But we can vouch for them.
 (with purpose)
 Now, if I can find ten spare bedrooms for these kids, I'd feel it was the greatest thing I'd ever done.

MALCOLM
 Are you taking one?

DAVID
 Of course we are.

This is news to Katie: We are?

DAVID (CONT'D)

How could I ask you to do this if I
wasn't prepared to? Who else is in?

To Katie's amazement, four hands go up: Amy (daring Malcolm to protest), WENDY and ED (in their 50s, standing next to Katie), Simon and Richard (who seem completely in sync on this), and an ASIAN COUPLE who have TWO YOUNG KIDS there.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Four's no good to me. I need more.

Katie can't believe David's pushing it, but one more hand goes up. The old lady.

DAVID (CONT'D)

Okay... Half now. Half later.

And with that, the room breaks into SPONTANEOUS APPLAUSE and Katie, despite everything, feels like she could cry the kind of tears you cry at the end of a sappy film.

WENDY

You must be very proud of him.

Katie smiles politely and says nothing.

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Katie and David are in bed. David is concerned.

DAVID

Is five enough?

KATIE

Are you kidding? I didn't think we'd get
five people to the party.

(a beat)

That's what you're concerned about?

DAVID

Yeah, why? What are you concerned about?

KATIE

Um, a few things. Like what if that old
woman who was hard of hearing thought she
was joining a book club? Or... what if
one of these kids gets desperate and robs
a neighbor blind? Did you think about
that?

DAVID

No.

KATIE

Are you going to think about it?

DAVID

No.

KATIE

Why not?

DAVID

Because I want to change the way people think. And I can't change the way people think if I think like everybody else. I want to believe the best of everybody. Otherwise, what's the point?

Katie has no response to that, so she turns off her light and tries to sleep.

EXT. EUCLID STREET - DAY

An inspiring SONG FROM THE 60s PLAYS (maybe Magic Bus, The Weight, Shelter from the Storm or I'll Take You There).

A mini-van rolls up the street, bringing the FIVE TEENS (three boys, two girls) who are moving into the neighborhood.

Some neighbors who didn't "adopt" are still out on their porches, waving and welcoming the kids.

Katie, standing with Molly and Tom, begins to feel like their street is, in fact, special, and David might have done something rather significant here.

David and GoodNews greet each kid as they get off the bus, and make introductions and point out their new homes.

Simon and Richard greet CRYSTAL, a young girl who looks a like she could be anywhere from 12 to 18. Wendy and Ed meet ROBBIE, 17, who looks like he might be a little scared but hides it with swagger, and as other introductions are made, MONKEY, 18, tall and thin, steps off the bus and David greets him and points to Katie.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - DAY

Katie is making a pot of tea. Monkey rolls a cigarette at the table as Tom and Molly watch.

KATIE

So... Monkey? That's what we should call you?

MONKEY

Monkey works.

KATIE

Is that a nickname or...

Monkey shrugs and keeps rolling his cigarette.

MOLLY

What are you doing, Monkey?

MONKEY

Rolling a cigarette.

MOLLY

Do you smoke?

TOM

Duh?

Molly looks at her mother.

MOLLY

Are you gonna let him smoke in the house?

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - ANOTHER NIGHT

Monkey, SMOKING, home for the night, enters the empty living room and dumps change into the bowl that holds the mail.

KATIE (V.O.)

One thing I will say for Monkey...

INT. COMMUNITY CLINIC - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Katie is talking to Becca as they drink their coffee.

KATIE

...I don't know what he does all day, but sometimes he leaves me large amounts of change to cover food and whatnot. And I accept this from him, not just because I want him to feel like a contributing member of the family, but because he is the only other contributing member of the family.

BECCA

This is an amazing thing you're doing.

KATIE
It is. Right? It is.
(a beat)
Do you have a spare room?

BECCA
I... I don't think I'm ready to take in a
homeless kid.

KATIE
I meant for me.

Katie smiles. She's kidding. Sort of...

INT. CARR BACKYARD - DAY

David is grilling burgers as Monkey and GoodNews watch.

MONKEY
(re: a burger)
That one looks weird.

GOODNEWS
It's vegan.

MONKEY
What the hell is that?

Before GoodNews can answer, Katie opens the back door.

KATIE
David? Wendy and Ed--

Wendy and Ed emerge, upset.

ED
Robbie stole our plasma TV!

GOODNEWS
Your TV is gone?

ED
(to David, accusatory)
Yes. And so is our microwave, our Tivo
and God knows what else.

DAVID
Let's not jump to conclusions. We don't
know that Robbie did it.

KATIE
Who do you think did it?

DAVID

(largely for Katie's benefit)
The point is, we don't want to
stereotype. These are not bad kids.
They've had a hard time, and they're
doing the best they can. Like Monkey
here. He's doing great. So let's give
Robbie the benefit of the doubt.

MONKEY

Yeah. I think Robbie did it.

DAVID

But-- Okay-- But, it's not that simple.
The question becomes... why would a kid
like Robbie do something like that?

MONKEY

'Cause he's a lying, thieving piece of
shit.

As Wendy and Ed nod in agreement...

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - DAY

Katie, David, Ed, Wendy, Richard, Simon and Crystal wait in
the living room in silence. Crystal is aware this incident
makes all the kids look bad. GoodNews is manning the window.

GOODNEWS

Monkey's back! And he's got Robbie with
him!

RICHARD/SIMON

Good./Finally.

DAVID

(to Wendy, Ed and Katie)
See? Everything is going to be fine.

David opens the door for Monkey (who carries a Tivo) and a
bruised and bloodied Robbie (who carries a microwave).

MONKEY

(to David)
He sold the plasma, but he'll give 'em
the money.

KATIE

What happened to him? Is he okay?

MONKEY

Some people just need to be punched.

GOODNEWS

Oh, man. This is not what we're about.

DAVID

Monkey, we can't sanction violence.

MONKEY

Yeah, well, I asked him nicely and he wouldn't listen.

INT. KATIE AND DAVID'S BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

David sits on the bed as Katie turns down the covers.

DAVID

I'm just so disappointed in them.

KATIE

I know.

DAVID

He paid for the TV. They can't give him a second chance?

KATIE

You're disappointed in Wendy and Ed?

DAVID

Yeah. And the rest of them. They all want out now. I thought they were made of tougher stuff than that.

Katie doesn't know what to say. She's just about had it.

INT. STORAGE UNIT - MORNING

CLOSE ON Katie's jewelry box, sitting on the art deco vanity.

KATIE (V.O.)

I'm not proud of the fact that I put my jewelry in storage while Monkey was with us, but eventually he moved out. I guess life on the street was preferable to life in our house. I get that.

Katie sees something tucked in the back of the jewelry box...

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

But I don't want to move out. I want my old life back. And not the one in storage. The one on Euclid Street.

It's the CERTIFICATE and BROCHURE for Hawaii.

INT. DAVID'S HOME OFFICE/RADIO STUDIO - LATE AFTERNOON

David is at his desk, working on his computer when Katie enters, energized.

KATIE

I know what we should do for Christmas.

DAVID

(as if on the same page)

Soup kitchen?

KATIE

(she just looks at him, then)

You know how I never take time off from work? Well, I'm thinking it's time. I found a flight. There's a room available. The kids can stay with my parents...

(showing him the brochure)

Let's do this trip now.

DAVID

Why now?

KATIE

Because we need it. Desperately.

DAVID

We don't need it. There are many people needier--

KATIE

Not for a romantic getaway! Not for a final chance to save our marriage! David, we are in crisis!

DAVID

Crisis? You want to talk about a crisis--

KATIE

No! Not if you're going to bring up Darfur, or New Orleans, or anyplace two feet outside of this house. Look, I care about everything you care about, but I also care about us.

DAVID

I care about us. But shouldn't we be with our kids for the holidays?

KATIE

We'll be back before Christmas Eve, and by the way, this is all they want for Christmas: two parents who love each other. We owe it to them. And to ourselves.

DAVID

It's a very nice idea.

Katie feels hopeful finally.

DAVID (CONT'D)

But what about my work?

KATIE

What work?!

DAVID

The work GoodNews and I are doing. In fact, this week we're trying "reversals" -- which are all about righting a wrong from your past, apologizing to someone, forgiving someone. And this is all part of a larger project...

(re: a stack of typed pages)

A nonfiction book I'm writing called "How to Be Good."

Katie just looks at him, disappointed.

DAVID (CONT'D)

You don't like the title?

KATIE

David, you wanted until the end of the year. The year is ending.

DAVID

I know, Katie, but when you were starting your clinic, there was no running off to Hawaii. This is my clinic.

KATIE

This is our marriage! And I'm going to Hawaii with or without you.

She's angry he can't see her side; he's sad she can't see his.

DAVID

(sincere)

Have a nice time. You deserve it.

EXT. BECCA'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Katie is outside of the upper unit of a Spanish duplex. She KNOCKS. Then KNOCKS again.

KATIE

Becca? Are you home? Becca?

Finally Becca opens the door. She's in her bathrobe.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry! Were you in bed?

BECCA

(embarrassed)

Yes, but it's okay.

KATIE

You weren't answering your cell and I didn't have your home number--

(as upbeat as she can muster)

Want to go to Hawaii with me? You said you didn't want to spend the holidays alone...

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

(calling out from inside)

She's not alone.

Katie is startled, then horrified.

KATIE

(whispering to Becca)

Why didn't you say you had someone here?

Before Becca can formulate her answer, Mark emerges.

MARK

Hey, sis.

KATIE

What are you-- When did this--

BECCA

(sheepishly)

The damn holidays.

Becca smiles and shrugs, and so does Mark.

KATIE

I am so sorry. I'll leave you two to...

BECCA
 No, Katie, wait.
 (a beat)
 I would love to go to Hawaii with you.

INT. AIRPLANE - THE NEXT DAY

AS MUSIC COMES UP... reveal Becca on the plane, in her cutest travel outfit. And taking the seat next to her... is Mark. It might be a merry Christmas after all.

INT. BECCA'S APARTMENT - MORNING TO NIGHT

MUSIC CONTINUES as Katie enjoys having Becca's apartment to herself... at first. QUICK CUTS OF KATIE...

Enjoying Becca's music, checking out the CD we're hearing.

Looking in the refrigerator... half a Chinese chicken salad. Three diet sodas. Very little else.

Looking through Becca's books for something to read. Lots of self-help... He's Just Not That Into You, Finding a Husband After 35 Using What I Learned at Harvard Business School...

Sitting in Becca's bay window, thumbing through a women's magazine... a lot of advice about pleasing your man. Katie tosses the magazine aside.

Looking for a towel, seeing all of Becca's fun girly things in the cabinet... nail polish, makeup, perfume, a vibrator. Oops. Katie closes the cabinet.

Watching TV... the dinosaur show she watched with David and the kids. We hear the BRITISH NARRATOR low under the music.

Sleeping alone in a big bed. Luxurious. And lonely.

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - THE NEXT MORNING

Katie has shopping bags in her passenger seat (supplies -- fruit, vegetables, chips) when she passes her old church, St. Stephens. A sign says, "LET GOD RECHARGE YOUR BATTERIES." She pulls over to the curb and gazes up the steps...

EXT. ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

...where CHURCHGOERS are going in.

KATIE (V.O.)
 Most people don't expect a "sign from God" to be an actual sign, but I guess in my case, God wasn't taking any chances.

INT. ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH - DAY

A pretty little neighborhood church. Katie sits in a back pew while an OLDER PARISHIONER reads from Corinthians.

OLDER PARISHIONER

And though I have all faith, so that I
could remove mountains, and have not
charity, I am nothing...

KATIE (V.O.)

Most people don't go to church looking
for a way to bolster an argument with a
spouse, but sometimes you get lucky.

OLDER PARISHIONER

Charity suffereth long, and is kind;
charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not
itself, is not puffed up...

KATIE (V.O.)

I've heard this passage a hundred times,
but I never "understoodeth" it until now.
David is puffed up. He's been vaunting
and puffing all over the place. And as
soon as I see him again--

Katie looks around, pleased with herself, and sees... David?
A few pews up. He senses someone looking and sees her, too.

EXT. ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH - DAY

David and Katie are outside the church, talking.

KATIE

I thought you didn't go to church.

DAVID

I thought you were in Hawaii.

KATIE

I only got as far as Becca's. Were you
paying close attention to that reading?

DAVID

Yes! It was like it was for us.

KATIE

So you admit you're puffed up?

DAVID

Excuse me?

KATIE

Charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. I can move mountains, but--

DAVID

--if I lack love, then I am nothing. That's that Lauryn Hill song.

KATIE

It's Corinthians.

DAVID

It's also Lauryn Hill.

KATIE

I don't know that song, but--

DAVID

Yes, you do. We heard her sing it in concert at the Bowery Ballroom.

KATIE

That was some other tomato.

DAVID

No, it wasn't. I can prove it.

KATIE

It doesn't matter! It's about putting work aside for things that are more important.

DAVID

But this work is important.

KATIE

That's puffed up! That's what I'm saying. Charity is not supposed to be... vaunted... because without love... I'm paraphrasing, but the point is, our marriage is more important. At least... it is to me.

Katie leaves David alone in front of the church.

INT. BECCA'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

Katie is sitting in Becca's bay window, wrapped in a blanket, upset, when outside she hears MUSIC PLAYING. Loudly.

LAURYN HILL

LET ME BE PATIENT, LET ME BE KIND, MAKE ME UNSELFISH, WITHOUT BEING BLIND...

Katie looks outside, and in the driveway...

EXT. BECCA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - INTERCUT

...is David's SUV, which is playing a Lauryn Hill CD.

LAURYN HILL
THOUGH I MAY SUFFER, I'LL ENVY IT NOT,
AND ENDURE WHAT COMES, CAUSE HE'S ALL
THAT I GOT...

There's a KNOCK at the door. Katie considers not answering, pretending she's not home, but finally decides to open it.

LAURYN HILL (CONT'D)
AND TELL HIM... TELL HIM I NEED HIM, TELL
HIM I LOVE HIM... AND IT'LL BE ALRIGHT...

The MUSIC CONTINUES as David, with a weathered shoebox under his arm, presents her with TWO TICKET STUBS for Lauryn Hill at the Bowery Ballroom, September 1997.

KATIE
Fine. Okay. We saw Lauryn Hill.

DAVID
It was our third date. You were wearing a blue...
(indicating a top he can't describe, but he can see)
...thing with a thing. We got a fresh cannoli in Little Italy after. You were just finishing med school at N.Y.U., and you said you were going to San Diego for your residency. And I knew one day--

KATIE
You'd hate me?

DAVID
(tenderly, as he puts the stubs back in the shoebox)
I don't hate you.

KATIE
(reluctantly)
I don't hate you either.
(a beat, re: shoe box)
What else is in there?

DAVID
Just some things I wanted to save.
Listen, Katie--

His CELL PHONE RINGS. He doesn't want to answer, but...

DAVID (CONT'D)
That's probably GoodNews...

KATIE
Then... let it ring.

DAVID
But it might be about the kids--

Katie takes the shoebox so David can answer.

DAVID (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
Hey, is everything... That was tonight?!
When did they arrive?... I'm on my way.

He hangs up. Katie can't believe this. He's leaving?

DAVID (CONT'D)
Our reversals are at the house. Remember
I was telling you--

KATIE
David, if you walk out of here--

DAVID
You're the one who walked out! You're
not even living at home anymore. You're
the one giving up on our marriage!

KATIE
You know what? Just go. GO!

She SLAMS the door, pissed, and slides down onto the floor. Then she realizes she has the shoebox. She looks at it a moment. Then opens it. And finds... their wedding program, David's boutonniere (pressed), their place cards, a napkin monogrammed with *David & Katie*. She's amazed. Who knew he was sentimental? Maybe he does care. Maybe he always cared. Maybe she is the one giving up on the marriage.

EXT. CARR HOUSE - NIGHT

There are two cars in the driveway (one nice, one not) as Katie approaches, carrying the shoebox. She can see through the living room window lots of people having Chinese take-out: David, GoodNews, the kids, Monkey and a FEW MORE she doesn't recognize.

It's a motley crew, but it's her crew, and Katie no longer wants to be on the outside looking in.

The kids see her and run to the door to greet her.

INT. CARR LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

As Katie kneels down, hugging the kids, David approaches. She stands and hands him back his shoebox, then...

KATIE
(trying to be game)
So... who are these "reversals?"

DAVID
You really want to know?

KATIE
Yes, I do. This is my reversal.

DAVID
(smiles, touched, then)
Well, it was Molly's idea to invite Monkey...

KATIE
(trying to stay positive)
To move back in with us, or...

DAVID
Just for dinner. The kids felt badly they never got to say goodbye to him. And GoodNews invited Cantata...

He nods in the direction of a busty, redheaded woman, CANTATA, 35, sitting by GoodNews with a large glass of wine.

TOM
His sister.

DAVID
They had a falling out eight years ago, didn't speak that whole time, but we tracked her down, and here she is.

KATIE
(getting into the spirit)
That's wonderful. And that couple?

She nods toward a couple talking to Monkey... NIGEL RICHARDS, 41, good looking, expensive clothes, and his young, beautiful Polish girlfriend, BASIA, in a hot party dress.

DAVID
Nigel Richards and Basia. He's my reversal.

KATIE

What are you reversing?

DAVID

I used to beat him up in grade school back in Brooklyn. He was this awkward, chubby kid. I always felt terrible about it, like I ruined his life or something, and I'd heard he was here in Los Angeles--

KATIE

I love that. Should we go talk to him?

DAVID

It's... okay. I talked to him already.

Katie notes something strange in David's tone.

KATIE

Is something wrong?

DAVID

No, my back's just bothering me a little.

Before Katie can absorb the possible meaning of this, Nigel, who saw them looking at him, brings Basia over.

NIGEL

David -- and you must be Katie -- this was... really nice, but I've got some other holiday parties I better make an appearance at. You know, business stuff.

DAVID

I'm sorry about the misunderstanding.

NIGEL

I didn't mean this wasn't a party.

BASIA

We just thought big bar, big band...

DAVID

Yeah. No.

Katie now understands some of the awkwardness; tries to help.

KATIE

What is your business, Nigel?

NIGEL

I run Yahoo.

KATIE

Oh. So you're doing well.

DAVID

Yes, he's doing well.

MOLLY

And Basia was in Sports Illustrated.

DAVID

Yeah, she's a swimsuit model... so...

Katie smiles. This almost seems like the old David who actually got jealous and had flaws. Then suddenly:

GOODNEWS

I never called the police! That was Mom!

CANTATA

Screw you!

GOODNEWS

No, screw you! Screw YOU!

Cantata grabs a bottle of wine and leaves. GoodNews goes to his room. Nigel smiles at David.

NIGEL

(sarcastic)

Again, thanks for the swell party.

David PUNCHES Nigel in the nose. Basia SCREAMS. Tom and the Molly are speechless. Monkey looks at David and shrugs.

MONKEY

Some people just need to be punched.

INT. SPARE BEDROOM - A LITTLE LATER THAT NIGHT

GoodNews is lying on the floor, looking at the ceiling when Katie peeks in.

KATIE

We saved you a fortune cookie.

GOODNEWS

Does it say, "You just made an ass of yourself?"

KATIE

I didn't open it yet.

She sets the cookie down on the dresser.

GOODNEWS

Sorry I swore in front of the kids.

KATIE

It was nothing they haven't heard before.
From me, in fact.

GOODNEWS

I feel like an idiot. I'm all love this
and love that with people I don't know...

KATIE

People you don't know are the best. It's
family that'll trip you up.

GOODNEWS

I fear I'll be judged harshly for this.

KATIE

Not by me. And certainly not by David.

GOODNEWS

By the big man... Santa Claus. And
right before Christmas, yeah?

KATIE

Yeah.
(she smiles, then, tactfully)
GoodNews, I'm thinking...

GOODNEWS

It's time for me to move out?

Katie nods, trying to be gentle about it.

GOODNEWS (CONT'D)

Psychic! Finally!

GoodNews could not be more thrilled.

INT. CARR KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Katie is cleaning up from dinner. David is icing his hand.

DAVID

You know the worst part about that party?

KATIE

Hard to choose, I imagine.

DAVID

(laughs, then)
I actually enjoyed punching him.

KATIE
(quoting Monkey)
Some people just need to be punched.

DAVID
That's the new first chapter of my book.

KATIE
(laughs hard, then)
David... that was sarcastic. You don't
know how much I've missed your sarcasm.
And everything else about you.

DAVID
You're the reason this whole "puffed-up"
thing started, you know. I wanted to
prove to you that I could be a better.

KATIE
And somehow... the better you were, the
worse I was by comparison.

DAVID
That's how I used to feel all the time.

A moment as Katie realizes she sort of cast him that way.

KATIE
So what will you and GoodNews do next?

DAVID
I don't know. Maybe nothing.

KATIE
You can still work with him, even if he's
not living here, can't you?

DAVID
It's not that. I don't really believe in
what we're doing anymore. I haven't for
a while. I just didn't want to admit it.

KATIE
So, you might just... stop?

DAVID
I might still write the book. Or is that
crazy?

KATIE
No, I think it's great.

DAVID
I still care. So I guess you keep trying
until you believe again.

KATIE
Like... a marriage.

He nods, kisses her, sweetly at first, then passionately...

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
For Christmas I wanted my family back.
And that's what I got.

INT. STORAGE UNIT - NIGHT

KATIE (V.O.)
GoodNews found another place to live...

GoodNews, sitting on the floor of the storage unit, which he has set up like an apartment now, is holding playing cards to his forehead, trying to guess the card, then looking to see.

GOODNEWS
Queen of hearts? No. Ten of clubs? No.

EXT. PUBLIC GOLF COURSE - DRIVING RANGE - DAY

KATIE (V.O.)
Mark got promoted to "children's pro"...

Mark, in pro shirt and cap, teaches Tom to swing a golf club.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...and "boyfriend."

Becca watches, amused. And in love. Mark smiles at her.

EXT. EUCLID STREET - DAY

Richard and Simon are outside gardening...

KATIE (V.O.)
And some seeds of change that we planted
in the winter...

...with Crystal (looking her age, 14) who apparently stayed.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...were still blooming in the spring. It
was just the one girl. But that's
something.

INT. TOM'S ROOM - NIGHT

KATIE (V.O.)

And our family was back on solid ground.

The light fixtures RATTLE.

KATIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Sort of.

Tom's Humpty Dumpty book FALLS off a shelf, waking Tom.

TOM

Mommy? Daddy?

Katie rushes in and picks Tom up.

KATIE

It's okay, honey. I'm right here.

David rushes in, carrying a sleepy Molly.

MOLLY

What's going on? Is God angry? Is this the do-over?!

KATIE

No, no, no. It's just an earthquake.

As Molly and Tom react, scared...

DAVID

Under the mattress. Let's go.

David pulls Tom's mattress on top of them as toys CRASH down.

TOM

All my stuff is breaking!

DAVID

Not all of it. Most of it I gave away.

David grins at Tom. Tom is still scared, but has to laugh. Molly and Katie laugh, too. They huddle together, laughing, as things around them break, but the family is not broken.

INT. KATIE'S PRIUS - SUNSET - ANOTHER DAY

And as the sun sets, the Carrs return from SeaWorld. David is driving, Katie in the passenger seat. The kids are in the back, fast asleep, bathed in golden light. Katie looks at her husband, who looks handsome and happy.

KATIE (V.O.)

The thing is, when you hate your husband, you can't remember how you could ever love him. And when you love him again, you can't remember how you could ever hate him. Love, whether you're married or single, demands a certain amount of emotional amnesia. Much like the 405.

EXT. 405 FREEWAY ON-RAMP - CONTINUOUS (INTERCUT)

Katie's Prius climbs up the freeway on-ramp, almost like they're getting on a ride.

KATIE (V.O.)

Despite all the pain it's caused you in the past, you are ever hopeful that this time, because it's 7pm on a Saturday, because it's not a holiday weekend, because you're feeling lucky... this time, There Will Be No Traffic.

Katie watches as they reach the top of the ramp, anticipation building, until she sees... GRIDLOCK for miles.

KATIE (CONT'D)

Noooooooooo!

Katie is deflated. Almost despondent.

DAVID

It's okay. We're a carpool.

David maneuvers rather magnificently through lane after lane of thick, annoying traffic until they reach their lane. The carpool lane. Which has no traffic at all. Katie smiles at David. And the kids. Her carpool.

She's so happy she could almost cry.

EXT. 405 NORTH - SUNSET

Katie's Prius ZOOMS along, past those less fortunate, and KEEPS MOVING as MUSIC COMES UP and CREDITS ROLL.

THE END