





GOOD PEOPLE

BY DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE



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GOOD PEOPLE was originally commissioned by the Manhattan Theatre Club
(Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer)
with funds provided by Bank of America
and received its world premiere there on February 8, 2011.

GOOD PEOPLE received its world premiere at the Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) of February 8, 2011. It was directed by Daniel Sullivan; the scenic design was by John Lee Beatty; the costume design was by David Zinn; the lighting design was by Pat Collins; the sound design was by Jill BC DuBoff; the dialect coach was Charlotte Fleck; the production stage manager was Roy Harris; and the stage manager was Denise Yaney. The cast was as follows:

MARGARET Frances McDormand
STEVIE Patrick Carroll
DOTTIE Estelle Parsons
JEAN Becky Ann Baker
MIKE Tate Donovan
KATE Renée Elise Goldberry

CHARACTERS

MARGARET — white, about fifty.

STEVIE — white, late twenties.

DOTTIE — white, mid-sixties.

JEAN — white, about fifty.

MIKE — white, about fifty.

KATE — African-American, early thirties.

Various offstage voices, probably prerecorded.

PLACE

The play is set in South Boston's Lower End,
and in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

NOTES

A slash (/) in the dialogue indicates the start of the next spoken line.

The name "Margie" is pronounced with a hard "g" in the middle, not a "j."

GOOD PEOPLE

ACT ONE

Scene 1

South Boston, Massachusetts. The alley behind the Dollar Store. There's a dumpster back there, a rusty chair, and a door labeled "Dollar Store — Deliveries Only." The back door opens and Margaret, about fifty, comes out with Stevie, her manager, late twenties. Stevie carries a folder.

MARGARET. Did she ever tell you the turkey story? Up at Flanagan's?

STEVIE. No.

MARGARET. When I worked up there, and she came in? She never told you that turkey story?

STEVIE. I don't think so.

MARGARET. She was pregnant with you. No, Jimmy actually — she was pregnant with Jimmy — because it was near Christmas, and your father was locked up in Walpole again, so she didn't have any money for anything.

STEVIE. *(Offers her the rusty chair.)* You wanna sit down?

MARGARET. She had nothing. Except Saint Vincent de Paul's. Thank god for them. They used to give out toys at Christmas to the ones who couldn't afford it.

STEVIE. Margaret, listen for a / second —

MARGARET. *(But she keeps going.)* I don't think they did Christmas dinners though. And your grandmother had passed by then, so there was no dinner to go to. So your mother comes into Flanagan's, and she's out to here. *(Indicates belly.)* When's Jimmy's birthday?

STEVIE. January.

MARGARET. Right, so she's out to here, and in this *big* coat. Remember that blue coat she always wore?

STEVIE. Yeah.

MARGARET. And she's walking up and down the aisles, slipping things in the pockets — potatoes, and cans of cranberry sauce, cookies, because you guys gotta eat, right? So she comes waddling up to my register. And I'm like, "Hey Suzie, how are the kids?" And she doesn't wanna talk obviously, she's just trying to push through the line, "Oh, they're good, I was just looking for something, but you don't have it, so I'm gonna try someplace else." And then the turkey falls out of her coat. It hits the floor right between her legs. A turkey. Boom. And I swear to god, she didn't miss a beat. She looks up, real mad, and yells, "Who threw that bird at me?!" (*Really laughing now.*) Oh, we died. Everybody there. Ya had to laugh. "Who threw that bird at me?!" She was a funny sonofabitch. Pardon my French.

STEVIE. Look, Margaret —

MARGARET. God, she was funny. I think about her all the time. Your mother was a good lady. It's a lesson though. You're lucky you don't smoke. Too young, your mother.

STEVIE. Can we do this?

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) Sure. (*Moves to the chair.*) You gotta make them give you a real office, Stevie. Because these alley conferences? No way to run a business. It smells back here.

STEVIE. I know you don't wanna talk about why I brought / you out here —

MARGARET. No, I know. I was late, I'm sorry.

STEVIE. It's just, the district manager / comes in —

MARGARET. I know. It was my Joyzey again. You know I can't leave her alone when she gets outta sorts. And I pay Dottie Gillis a little bit to keep an eye on her, but Dot's not the most reliable.

STEVIE. Right, but the district manager comes down on *me* about it.

MARGARET. No, I know, that guy's an ass — pardon my French.

STEVIE. Maybe, but he's also my boss. And he looks over those punch cards.

MARGARET. Okay.

STEVIE. No, not okay. You're late every day. Twenty, thirty minutes. Yesterday it was almost an hour.

MARGARET. It's not every day.

STEVIE. Pretty much it is, and that reflects badly on *me*. He wants to know why I can't keep my employees in line.

MARGARET. You have to explain about Joyce. She's in a program, thank god, but that's only so many hours a week. I can't / always —

STEVIE. I explained it to him, but there's only so much / I can —

MARGARET. It's not just me, Stevie. Karen calls in sick every couple days.

STEVIE. Yeah, well, I'm talking to Karen next.

MARGARET. Well, while you've got her out here, you should ask her why she tells everyone you're gay.

STEVIE. (*Beat.*) What?

MARGARET. She says you're gay.

STEVIE. (*More bemused than offended.*) I'm not gay.

MARGARET. I know.

STEVIE. So why does she say that?

MARGARET. Because you go to bingo.

STEVIE. That makes me gay?

MARGARET. I'm just tellin' ya what Karen says to people. You go to bingo a lot. More than I do. More than Karen does.

STEVIE. I like bingo.

MARGARET. Obviously.

STEVIE. Plenty of men go to bingo.

MARGARET. I wouldn't say plenty, but yeah.

STEVIE. Freddy Gleason goes to bingo.

MARGARET. Yeah.

STEVIE. Frank Moore.

MARGARET. Yeah. A few old-timers, but yeah, that's what I've been telling her.

STEVIE. Okay, it doesn't matter.

MARGARET. Are you gonna bring it up with her though?

STEVIE. No, I'm going to say to her exactly what I'm saying to you. The district manager came / in —

MARGARET. She's late a lot more than I am.

STEVIE. Okay.

MARGARET. And she says you're gay.

STEVIE. Margaret —

MARGARET. I know you're not gay, and I tell her that, because you're dating what's her name. I don't know if that's supposed to be a secret, or whatever, but everybody knows that. Not Karen, obviously, but everybody knows that.

STEVIE. Can you listen to me, please? The district manager came / in —

MARGARET. Okay, I understand. I've been late, and I won't be anymore. You can tell him I got the warning. (*Heads back inside.*)

STEVIE. (*Stops her.*) No, this isn't a warning. You've *had* warnings. I've given you seven warnings in the last two months.

MARGARET. You know I can't leave Joyce alone. You know that. She's like a baby. And Dottie doesn't always show up when she's supposed to. So what am I / supposed to — ?

STEVIE. It's not like I have a choice in this. If I don't let you go then I get fired.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) What do you mean, let me go?

STEVIE. I told you it could happen.

MARGARET. Now, come / on —

STEVIE. Every week the district manager comes in to look at those punch cards.

MARGARET. I won't be late again. Tell him I promise.

STEVIE. I cover for you all the time, and he won't have it anymore. He wants me to let you go.

MARGARET. I'll get somebody else to look after Joyce.

STEVIE. That's what you always say.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) This is about the Chinese girl, isn't it.

STEVIE. No, and she's not Chinese.

MARGARET. She might be a little faster at the register, but she makes more mistakes.

STEVIE. First of all, she doesn't make mistakes. / Secondly —

MARGARET. She lives two blocks away! It's easier for her to get here on time!

STEVIE. Margaret, stop.

MARGARET. No, that guy comes in, and looks over your books, and who's getting paid what per hour — !

STEVIE. That's not what this is.

MARGARET. And because I've been here three years, I make a little bit more than the other girls, which costs the company a little bit more money —

STEVIE. You're not reliable.

MARGARET. You can't say that. I might be late once in a while but —

STEVIE. They don't want unreliable employees.

MARGARET. This is a *Dollar Store*. Who do they *think* is gonna work here?

STEVIE. Is that what I should tell them?

MARGARET. What they don't want is someone making ninety-two an hour. And you know that's what this is.

STEVIE. I'll talk to my brother. Maybe he can get you something down at Gillette.

MARGARET. *Gillette?*

STEVIE. I'll call him this afternoon.

MARGARET. That's just your way of getting me out the door.

STEVIE. I'll call Jimmy, I swear to god.

MARGARET. He's not gonna call me in there. Besides, I've been to Gillette, it's all line work. I can't work a line, I'm too old for that. I can't keep up.

STEVIE. I'm trying to help you.

MARGARET. You wanna help me, let me go back to my register.

STEVIE. It's not my choice!

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) I'll take a pay cut.

STEVIE. No. A pay cut? Margaret, listen to yourself.

MARGARET. I know the Chinese girl gets eighty-two an hour, I can make do on that. It'll be tight, but I can do eighty-two.

STEVIE. It's not about what you get paid.

MARGARET. That is bullshit. Pardon my French. But that is bullshit and you know it. I never asked for those raises. I only got them because you were required by law to give them to me. It wasn't much, god knows — a nickel here, fifteen cents one time — but I knew when I went over nine dollars, you were gonna start looking for an excuse to get rid of me.

STEVIE. You know that's not true.

MARGARET. Well if not you, then the district manager was. Or whoever adds up the numbers. Why pay *me* when you can give minimum wage to Chow Fun?

STEVIE. That doesn't help your case, you know. The racist stuff —

MARGARET. What racist stuff? That's her name.

STEVIE. (*Writes something down.*) You know that's not her name.

MARGARET. You gonna put that in my file now? How I'm a racist?

STEVIE. You wouldn't even be out here if you weren't late.

MARGARET. And I wouldn't be late if I didn't have to beg someone to watch my daughter! And I wouldn't have to beg someone if I could

pay someone, but you're making that very difficult, Stevie! (*Kicks the chair.*)

STEVIE. Margaret — !

MARGARET. *Please.* Last time I got fired it took me seven months to find something, and that was when things weren't so bad. Now? Forget it. I won't be able to find *anything*.

STEVIE. Of course you will. You start asking around / and —

MARGARET. Eight-fifteen. You can lower me to eight-fifteen. That's what I started at. It's what you'd pay a new girl. Just pretend I'm a new girl. I can do eight-fifteen.

STEVIE. I can't. I can't do that. I'm sorry. It's just not working out.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) You're lucky your mother's dead.

STEVIE. (*The discussion is over.*) All right.

MARGARET. We grew up together, me and your mother. If she knew what you were doing right now ...

STEVIE. You know what, Margaret? I *do* actually remember that story about her stealing the turkey. But you know what you forgot? The part where you called the cops. You forgot how she spent Christmas Day down at Station Six. That was always how I heard it. You should ask my sisters how funny that story was.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) I didn't call the cops. Pat Moody called the cops.

STEVIE. (*Moves to go back in.*) Okay.

MARGARET. I would never do that to your mother. Pat Moody called the cops. And they made her store manager. Because she was tough on shoplifters.

STEVIE. It doesn't matter.

MARGARET. Don't fire me, Stevie.

STEVIE. I have a job! What do you want me to do! I have to do my job!

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) I know.

STEVIE. All right then. And stop with the: "You're lucky your mother's dead."

MARGARET. I was talking about you dating a Chinese girl. That's all. I don't think she'd approve.

(*Stevie takes her in, then heads back inside, slamming the door behind him. Margaret is left alone. Lights out.*)

Scene 2

Margaret's kitchen, the next morning. It's small, and run-down. Her friend Jean, about fifty, and her landlady Dottie, mid-sixties, are here. Margaret, in the middle of a story, comes in from the next room with dirty dishes.

MARGARET. So he was on me as soon as I walked in. (*Puts dishes into the sink.*)

DOTTIE. Who's this now?

JEAN. Stevie Grimes. At the Dollar Store.

DOTTIE. He works there?

JEAN. He's the young guy. He stands in the back of the store. He's up at bingo all the time.

DOTTIE. I can't picture him.

JEAN. He's the kid who stands in back of the store.

DOTTIE. The Dollar Store.

MARGARET. Yeah, the Dollar Store.

DOTTIE. Oh, I never go in there.

JEAN. Then you're not gonna know him, Dottie.

DOTTIE. That store's got nothing but shit in it.

MARGARET. Okay, well, that's who fired me. (*A TV suddenly blares from the next room. Calls off.*) Turn it down, Joycey! (*The TV volume goes down again.*)

JEAN. I always thought that was peculiar. Stevie at bingo.

MARGARET. He got it from his mother. Suzie was always up playing bingo.

DOTTIE. Suzie who?

MARGARET. Suzie Grimes. Stevie's mother.

DOTTIE. Suzie with the turkey?

MARGARET. Yeah.

DOTTIE. She was funny. "Who threw that bird at me?!" (*Laughs hard.*) Remember that?

JEAN. Did you mention her? How you were friends?

MARGARET. It didn't matter to him.

DOTTIE. (*Still amused.*) "Who threw that bird at me?!"

MARGARET. He kept blaming the district manager.
 JEAN. That's how they do it. They blame the higher-ups. (*Again, the TV blares in the next room.*)
 MARGARET. (*Calls off.*) Stop playing with those buttons. Joyce! (*The volume goes down again. Margaret makes them all instant coffee over the following.*)
 DOTTIE. It's not gonna be easy finding something, Margie. My Russell's been looking for work almost a year now.
 JEAN. Yeah, well.
 DOTTIE. What.
 JEAN. Russell.
 DOTTIE. What's that mean?
 JEAN. Nothing. Just ... Russell. (*The TV blares.*)
 MARGARET. Can you go in and turn that down for her, Dot? (*But Dottie doesn't move. The volume lowers anyway.*)
 DOTTIE. Russell's a good worker. He's just having trouble findin' something.
 JEAN. Lucky that Franny works.
 DOTTIE. That bitch. You know she won't even give him walking around money? All those years he spotted her cash when she was at hairdressin' school, and she won't hardly give him a nickel. But she's out buyin' cigarettes, and scratch tickets, and whatever else.
 JEAN. It's her money.
 DOTTIE. They're *married*. They're supposed to share.
 JEAN. Then he should get a job.
 DOTTIE. That's what I'm tellin' you, he *can't*. He's been trying.
 JEAN. Russell can get a job. If Remy Hayes can get a job, Russell can.
 DOTTIE. Who said anything about Remy Hayes?
 JEAN. Well somebody hired *him*.
 DOTTIE. So?
 JEAN. So he's missin' half his face.
 DOTTIE. And?
 JEAN. And he's missin' half his face, Dottie! Whadaya mean, "And?"
 MARGARET. He was such a good-lookin' kid too. Remember his mother passing around those pictures of him in his uniform?
 JEAN. Then they sent him home with half a face.
 MARGARET. Sad.
 JEAN. And *still* he got a job at Jordan Marsh.
 DOTTIE. Remy Hayes got a job because people feel bad for him.

That's how he got a job. Russell didn't go to Iraq. Russell's not missing half his face. Nobody feels bad for Russell.
 JEAN. You got that right. (*TV blares yet again.*)
 MARGARET. I'm gonna put her headphones on. (*Heads off to the next room.*)
 DOTTIE. (*Regarding Margaret.*) And who's gonna hire *her*? I'm supposed to get rent at the end of the month. You think she's gonna give it to me?
 JEAN. Well if you had showed up to watch Joyce.
 DOTTIE. So it's my fault?
 JEAN. She relies on you. (*The TV is silenced in the next room.*)
 DOTTIE. I don't *have* to watch her. I do it as a favor.
 JEAN. What favor? She pays you fifty dollars a week.
 DOTTIE. Like that's anything.
 JEAN. You take it.
 DOTTIE. Of course I take it. I'm watching her kid.
 MARGARET. (*Reentering.*) When you show up, you mean.
 DOTTIE. Don't blame this on me, Margie. You know I have trouble getting up in the morning. I work nights after all.
 JEAN. (*Scoffs.*) You work nights.
 DOTTIE. I *do* work nights.
 JEAN. You're upstairs.
 DOTTIE. Yeah, *working*. I make my crafts.
 JEAN. Gimme a break, those stupid rabbit things —
 DOTTIE. That's my *work*.
 JEAN. You glue Styrofoam balls onto flowerpots.
 DOTTIE. I get five bucks a pop for those rabbits. People like 'em.
 JEAN. Then they're morons.
 MARGARET. I think those rabbits are cute.
 JEAN. Five bucks for forty cents of crap.
 DOTTIE. It's not crap.
 JEAN. I hate to break it to ya, Dottie, but anything with googly eyes is crap.
 DOTTIE. Oh fuck off.
 MARGARET. She sells a lot of those rabbits up at bingo.
 DOTTIE. And with Easter coming up, this is kinda my high season.
 JEAN. (*Laughs.*) High season.
 DOTTIE. It *is*! So watching Joyce all day, then working on my crafts all night, *yes* sometimes I have trouble getting up in the morning, but Margie knew that.

MARGARET. It's not your fault, Dottie.
JEAN. Of course it is! Don't let her off the hook like that!
MARGARET. Let it go.
JEAN. No, you're too nice. That's why you don't have anything.
MARGARET. Oh, is that why?
JEAN. Yeah, you have to be a selfish prick to get anywhere.
MARGARET. I hate when people say that. You know it's not true, Jean.
JEAN. No? Look at Dottie.
DOTTIE. What do you mean look at Dottie?
JEAN. You think she cares about you? No. I bet if you threatened to not pay her that babysitting money, she would've showed up on time. That's what she would've done to *you*. Maybe you should start acting like her.
MARGARET. That's not who I am.
JEAN. No I know, you invite her in for coffee instead: "Hey, thanks for gettin' me fired."
DOTTIE. I did not get her fired!
MARGARET. She's right, Jeannie. Now stop stirring / the shit.
DOTTIE. If you wanna get someone else to watch Joyce —
MARGARET. I don't.
JEAN. Why not? I'll do it. All you do is sit and watch TV. How hard is that? To sit in there with her and watch soaps.
DOTTIE. That's not all it is.
JEAN. No, I know, you put her to work sometimes, too.
DOTTIE. What are you talkin' about?
JEAN. Making those rabbits. Margie told me.
MARGARET. Joyce likes doing that.
DOTTIE. I let her put on the heads, that's all. It's fun for her.
JEAN. Oh, okay.
DOTTIE. And I have to redo most of 'em because she puts them on *lopsided*! So don't / act like —
JEAN. You got your own little *sweatshop* down here.
DOTTIE. Why don't you go home?
JEAN. Because Margie made me coffee. I wanna enjoy it.
DOTTIE. Then stop causin' trouble. Talkin' about sweatshops and tryin' to tell me how easy it is to watch Joyce. Have you ever tried to give her lunch, Jean? She's worse than a baby! The mess —
MARGARET. She's right.
DOTTIE. And if she gets mad, or upset about whatever, she has

a fit. I can't just leave her here, she'd hurt herself.
MARGARET. I appreciate you looking out for her.
DOTTIE. It's not fun. I could be upstairs in my *own* apartment watching TV, I don't need to be down here. I got punched last week.
MARGARET. By accident.
DOTTIE. Accident or no, it didn't tickle. She's as big as a grown man, and when she starts throwing those arms / around —
JEAN. All right, Dottie.
DOTTIE. Well you started it, trying to tell me how easy my job is. Saying Margie got fired because of me. You think I wanted her to lose her job? How am I gonna get my rent if she don't have a paycheck coming in?
JEAN. You'll get your rent. She'll find a job / and you'll —
DOTTIE. *Where?* You think everybody can get a job! Not everybody is Remy fuckin' Hayes!
MARGARET. All right.
DOTTIE. Not everybody had half their face blown off!
JEAN. Well then maybe she should start making rabbits!
DOTTIE. (*Pointed.*) She better *not*. (*After a beat.*) You can go down Gillette, Margie. Have you tried down there?
MARGARET. Gillette's not gonna hire me. Lorraine Feeney went down there last month, and they hardly looked at her application. And she's ten years younger than I am.
DOTTIE. Lorraine Feeney's got a record. They don't like to hire people who've been in prison.
JEAN. What are you talking about? Half the Politos work down there. Do you know how many of *them* did time?
MARGARET. I'm not going to Gillette. (*To Jean.*) You think Chucky might have something for me?
JEAN. He just cut me down to two shifts a week. I'm looking to pick up something myself. You don't wanna work banquets anyway. Not with your back. Those platters? Forget it.
MARGARET. I'm gonna be the next Cookie McDermott.
JEAN. God forbid.
MARGARET. (*Laughs.*) I am. The way I'm headed.
DOTTIE. Who's that?
JEAN. Cookie. The one up by the bank. She's got the granny cart.
MARGARET. We went to school with her.
DOTTIE. The wino in the sun hat?

MARGARET. That's what happened after her husband died. Left her with nothing. Now she sleeps against that wall.

DOTTIE. That's no life.

MARGARET. (*Laughing.*) Maybe me and Joyce can move in next to her.

JEAN. Stop it.

MARGARET. "Scoot on over, wouldja, Cookie?"

JEAN. Poor thing.

MARGARET. Don't say poor thing. Me and Cookie are gonna have a grand ol' time, passing that bottle back and forth.

DOTTIE. They should get her outta there. That Cookie lady. It's not right. Her sleeping on the sidewalk. It makes the neighborhood look bad.

JEAN. (*Beat. Trying to sound offhand.*) You know who you should ask for a job?

MARGARET. Who.

JEAN. Mikey Dillon.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) What?

JEAN. Yeah, why not?

MARGARET. Why would you mention him of all people?

JEAN. You just reminded me. All that Cookie talk. They were buddies, right?

MARGARET. Not really.

JEAN. He hung out with her brother though.

MARGARET. So?

JEAN. So I ran into him. Didn't I tell you?

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) No.

JEAN. Yeah, Mikey Dillon. I shoulda told you — *That's* who you should hit up.

DOTTIE. Who's this now?

MARGARET. Just a kid we grew up with.

DOTTIE. Kevin Dillon?

JEAN. No — *Mikey* Dillon. He lived down Old Harbor.

DOTTIE. His wife works up the clinic?

JEAN. That's Kevin Dillon. It's no relation.

MARGARET. Where'dya see him?

JEAN. At the hotel. One of the luncheons we did.

MARGARET. Oh yeah? He was a guest?

JEAN. It was for the Boys and Girls Clubs. Every year they give these medals to the kids for being good, or not killing each other,

or whatever. And he was one of the speakers.

MARGARET. No shit.

JEAN. Yeah, him and one of the Bruins. Because they were in the Clubs when they were kids, so they're like the success stories. And they tell the kids to work hard and stay in school, or whatever. Be all you can be.

MARGARET. Mikey Dillon.

JEAN. Yeah. I saw the name tag, and did a double take. I wasn't sure it was him, it's been so long.

MARGARET. He got old?

JEAN. Not really. He looks good. He was shocked to see me though. I was like, "Ya remember me, Doctor?" Ya know he's a doctor, right?

MARGARET. I heard that.

JEAN. Yeah, that's why he was there. As an example for the kids. They only cared about the hockey player though. He's downtown, he said. He does something with babies.

MARGARET. A baby doctor?

JEAN. No, something else. I wasn't really listening to tell ya the truth. I didn't want to get in trouble for talking to the guests, so ...

MARGARET. Wow, Mikey Dillon. (*Processes that.*) Did he ask about me?

JEAN. It was just a quick talk. He looks good though. You should go down there. Tell him you need a job.

MARGARET. (*Laughs.*) Right.

JEAN. I'm serious.

MARGARET. How am I gonna get a job in a doctor's office?

JEAN. I don't know, answering phones or something. Ask him what he's got available. Southie pride, right? Maybe he'll cut ya a break.

DOTTIE. Was this the kid who stole the bread truck?

JEAN. No, that's *Kevin* Dillon. Would you shut up? We're talking about a totally different person. You *don't know him*.

MARGARET. He was always good people. Mikey.

JEAN. Uh-huh.

MARGARET. He *was*.

JEAN. Okay.

MARGARET. I thought he was living in Pennsylvania or someplace.

JEAN. D.C., he said. He's been back a while though.

MARGARET. Dr. Dillon.

JEAN. I know, right? Southie doctor. That must be a first.

DOTTIE. Peggy Ford's daughter is a doctor.

JEAN. No she's not. She's a vet's assistant. She holds the dogs down when they're put to sleep.

DOTTIE. Oh.

JEAN. Now there's a job Russell should look into.

DOTTIE. Killing dogs?

JEAN. He'd be perfect for that.

DOTTIE. You're an asshole.

MARGARET. Mikey Dillon, huh?

JEAN. You should call him.

MARGARET. I haven't seen him in a hundred years.

JEAN. You should call him anyway, just to see what he says.

MARGARET. He's not gonna hire me.

DOTTIE. (*Heads for the door.*) Someone better. You can't stay here for nothin', Margie. You know I like you and Joyce both, but —

MARGARET. Can you stop, please? I said I'd pay you, so shut up about it.

DOTTIE. (*Beat.*) I'm upstairs if you need me. (*Exits.*)

JEAN. You should call him, Margie. Ya never know. (*Lights out.*)

Scene 3

Lights up on Dr. Michael Dillon's office. Tastefully decorated. A couple of family photos on a shelf behind his desk. Mike, about fifty, handsome, is working at his desk. After a couple beats Margaret peeks in.

MARGARET. Mike?

MIKE. (*Comes to the door.*) There you are!

MARGARET. How you doin'?

MIKE. Come on in! (*She comes in. He gives her a hug.*)

Holy Jesus. Margie Walsh.

MARGARET. Hi, Mike.

MIKE. From Prehistoric Times.

MARGARET. Just about. (*He's a little too amiable. She's a bit uncomfortable.*)

MIKE. Sorry you had to wait out there, I was on the line with the caterer.

MARGARET. It's okay.

MIKE. My wife's throwing this party, so there are all these questions about / the menu.

MARGARET. I hope it's okay that I came in without an appointment or / anything.

MIKE. It's fine. I had some cancellations, which never happens / so —

MARGARET. Yeah, they said.

MIKE. You got lucky.

MARGARET. Is the party for you?

MIKE. The party?

MARGARET. You said your wife was / throwing a party.

MIKE. Oh, yeah, it's my birthday this weekend —

MARGARET. March 22nd.

MIKE. (*Beat.*) That's right. Anyway, she lives for that stuff. Any excuse to throw a party.

MARGARET. That's nice.

MIKE. I'm really sorry you had to wait.

MARGARET. I wouldn't have come down, but I called a few times on Monday, and then again yesterday, but they wouldn't put me through.

MIKE. They do that if I'm with patients.

MARGARET. I didn't want to be a pest about it.

MIKE. It's totally fine. How you doin'?

MARGARET. I'm okay.

MIKE. Still in Southie?

MARGARET. Yeah, down on Tudor Street.

MIKE. The Lower End.

MARGARET. Lower End.

MIKE. Same as always.

MARGARET. I guess.

MIKE. This is crazy. Look at you.

MARGARET. I'm fat.

MIKE. You are not.

MARGARET. Well, I'm not seventeen.

MIKE. No, nobody's seventeen. How's Gobie?

MARGARET. Oh, he's, uh, down in Virginia somewhere.

MIKE. Oh yeah?

MARGARET. Or Georgia, I guess. Somewhere down there. Last I heard.

MIKE. Well say hi to him from me.

MARGARET. Okay. We haven't heard from him in / a while.

MIKE. Did you ever marry him?

MARGARET. Oh god, no.

MIKE. You were together a while though.

MARGARET. Not really.

MIKE. Well tell him I say hello. (*Laughing.*) I think he owes me a few bucks.

MARGARET. We don't really — He could be / dead for all I know.

MIKE. (*Laughing.*) That deadbeat was always — What'd you say?

MARGARET. I said he could be dead for all I know.

MIKE. Oh.

MARGARET. We've lost touch.

MIKE. That's too bad.

MARGARET. Not really.

MIKE. Oh, okay. (*Silence.*)

MARGARET. So Jeannie said she ran into you. At the luncheon thing.

MIKE. Yeah, she's the same, huh?

MARGARET. Yeah.

MIKE. Mouthy from Southie.

MARGARET. (*Little chuckle.*) Yeah.

MIKE. I would've known her anywhere.

MARGARET. I heard you were a doctor, but I didn't know if it was true or not.

MIKE. It's true.

MARGARET. That is awesome.

MIKE. Oh, thanks.

MARGARET. I never would've guessed that.

MIKE. No?

MARGARET. I mean, I knew you were smart. Everybody knew that, but I would never have pictured you delivering babies.

MIKE. I don't actually deliver the babies.

MARGARET. You don't?

MIKE. I mean, I *have* in the past but — I'm a reproductive endocrinologist.

MARGARET. I don't know what you just said, but I just got a little excited.

MIKE. (*Chuckles.*) Okay.

MARGARET. Was that even English?

MIKE. I do fertility stuff.

MARGARET. You should've just said that.

MIKE. And I help with high-risk pregnancies.

MARGARET. I only went to Southie High after all. You can't be using those five-dollar words on me.

MIKE. Sorry.

MARGARET. I'm just playin' with you.

MIKE. You asked what I did.

MARGARET. I know, I was kidding.

MIKE. Okay. I mean, I went to Southie High, too.

MARGARET. Yeah, and U-Penn, and wherever else.

MIKE. Right.

MARGARET. I didn't go to U-Penn.

MIKE. No, I know.

MARGARET. (*Chuckles.*) I didn't go to U-Anywhere. (*Pause.*) A doctor, though. I think that's awesome.

MIKE. Thank you.

MARGARET. You're the only doctor I know. In real life, I mean.

MIKE. Real life?

MARGARET. Not somebody I *go* to, in other words. You know what I mean.

MIKE. Yeah. Personally.

MARGARET. *Personally.* Exactly. (*Silence.*)

MIKE. So, are you pregnant, / or —

MARGARET. *No.* God. Am I / *pregnant?*

MIKE. I'm just pulling your leg.

MARGARET. Oh. I thought you were really / asking me.

MIKE. Although, we've had some older moms in here. You'd be surprised. Almost fifty, some of them.

MARGARET. I'm not pregnant.

MIKE. No, I know.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) So you got the messages then?

MIKE. Yeah, the receptionist played them for me.

MARGARET. Then you know why / I —

MIKE. Yes, I was just —

MARGARET. I didn't mean to bug you about it.

MIKE. No, I should've called you back. This is the first slow day we've had.

MARGARET. It's just, my landlady's tapping her foot for the rent, / so —
MIKE. No, I know.
MARGARET. I wouldn't have come, but I didn't know if you were getting the messages.
MIKE. No, I got them.
MARGARET. So Jeannie said I should just come down here.
MIKE. The trouble is, Margie, I don't have anything open right now.
MARGARET. *(Beat.)* No, I figured.
MIKE. And you saw, we don't have a lot of people out there.
MARGARET. No, I know.
MIKE. Just a couple girls answering the phones.
MARGARET. Right.
MIKE. Have you even worked one of those systems? You have to know / how to —
MARGARET. It wouldn't *have* to be answering the phones. I just mentioned the phones because I didn't know what you might have.
MIKE. I see.
MARGARET. I could do whatever. Janitorial stuff or —
MIKE. We have a service that does that. A cleaning service. They come at night.
MARGARET. Oh, I couldn't do nights I don't think. Not with my Joyce.
MIKE. *(Beat.)* I have nothing to do with the cleaning folks anyway. They hire their own people.
MARGARET. That's okay, I couldn't do nights. I just didn't know what the jobs are in a doctor's office. I don't know if there's filing or whatever?
MIKE. That's what I'm saying, I don't have anything.
MARGARET. Right.
MIKE. I'm sorry. I should've called you back.
MARGARET. I knew it was a long shot. I only came down because Jean said she ran into you. I told her it was stupid.
MIKE. Have you tried Gillette?
MARGARET. *(A wry chuckle.)* Yeah.
MIKE. Back in the day everybody worked down Gillette. Is that place still open?
MARGARET. Oh, yeah, they're open.
MIKE. I'm sorry, Margie.

MARGARET. That's okay.
MIKE. If I hear about anything, I'll definitely call you. I have your number now. *(This is probably the time she should leave. But she doesn't.)*
MARGARET. *(Regarding a photo over his shoulder.)* Is that your family?
MIKE. Yeah.
MARGARET. Can I see?
MIKE. *(Slightest pause.)* Sure.
MARGARET. You don't want to show me?
MIKE. *(Hands her the photo.)* Of course. I don't care / if —
MARGARET. *(A little laugh.)* I'm not gonna *stalk* them.
MIKE. It's just an old photo, that's all. That's in D.C. We were there for a while, so ...
MARGARET. *(Pause as she takes in the photo.)* Your wife is beautiful.
MIKE. Thank you.
MARGARET. And young.
MIKE. Oh. Not really. Like, I said it's an old picture.
MARGARET. How old?
MIKE. I don't know. Three years.
MARGARET. So, it's not *that* old. She's still young.
MIKE. Younger than me, yeah. A little bit.
MARGARET. *(A little chuckle.)* "A little bit." Okay.
MIKE. I waited a while. To settle down.
MARGARET. Well she's beautiful. Your daughter, too.
MIKE. Thank you. She's six now.
MARGARET. Your wife?
MIKE. You're funny.
MARGARET. *(Hands the photo back.)* She *is* beautiful though. They both are. Everybody's beautiful.
MIKE. Thank you. *(Beat.)* How's *your* little girl?
MARGARET. *Little girl.* Now who's funny? My little girl's older than your wife.
MIKE. Not quite.
MARGARET. Well she's not a little girl.
MIKE. No, I know. *(Beat.)* You know, my sister-in-law had a premature baby. Not as premature as ...
MARGARET. Joyce.
MIKE. Joyce, right, but she had some troubles, too. She's doing better though.
MARGARET. That's good. Mine's not.

MIKE. Sorry. And Gobie doesn't help out?

MARGARET. No.

MIKE. That surprises me. He always seemed like a stand-up guy.

MARGARET. Well he's not. Honestly, though? It's better he's not around. Or it *would* be, if I had a job.

MIKE. I'm sorry, Margie. I wish I had something. (*Puts on his doctor's coat.*)

MARGARET. I know. Nobody does. I went up and down Broadway, and put applications in *everywhere*. Nobody's calling me though. I even went online. Up at the library. You can apply for jobs online now.

MIKE. Oh yeah?

MARGARET. I *think* I did it right, but I don't know. I'm always so stupid when it comes to computers. And those librarians won't help. They're *supposed* to but — Anyway, I think I did it right. Nobody's calling though.

MIKE. You gotta give it time. Just keep putting yourself out / there.

MARGARET. You know it doesn't have to be full-time, right? I could fill in, like if somebody gets sick or whatever. Or if you need somebody to work weekends?

MIKE. That's not how we do it, Margie.

MARGARET. Okay. I figured. That's fine.

MIKE. I swear, I'm not holding out on you.

MARGARET. No, I know. (*Beat.*) I wouldn't fit in here anyway.

MIKE. What do you mean?

MARGARET. In the office. It's ... you know.

MIKE. Formal?

MARGARET. Formal, yeah. That's a good word for it.

MIKE. It's just a doctor's office.

MARGARET. No, I know. I don't think I'd be comfortable, is all. And that Spanish girl at the desk was pretty cunty to me.

MIKE. (*Chuckles.*) Yikes.

MARGARET. Pardon my French. But she was giving me some attitude.

MIKE. Denise was?

MARGARET. You obviously hired her for her looks, and not her friendly demeanor.

MIKE. I didn't hire her because of her looks.

MARGARET. No? Because she's very pretty. And she's got a whole lot of boobs goin' on.

MIKE. She's also very good at her job.

MARGARET. I guess. If her job means being rude to people. She was all suspicious, asking me these questions.

MIKE. Well, when you walk in off the street / like that —

MARGARET. I told her we were friends though.

MIKE. I know.

MARGARET. What I wanted to say is, "Mind your business, bitch."

MIKE. It's probably good you didn't.

MARGARET. She really didn't want me coming back here.

MIKE. Well, you got back here anyway. It was / good to see you.

MARGARET. Anyway, that's what I meant. She and I wouldn't have gotten along, I don't think, so it's probably for the best you don't have a job for me. I'm not fancy enough for this office. You're all lace-curtain Irish now.

MIKE. (*Beat.*) What?

MARGARET. You *are*, it's great. I'm happy for you.

MIKE. What do you mean, "lace-curtain."

MARGARET. What do *you* call it? "My wife is throwing me a party."

MIKE. What, you don't throw parties?

MARGARET. Not really. Not *catered*.

MIKE. It's a special — It's not like we do it all the time.

MARGARET. You don't have to get defensive. I was just saying. You're not ...

MIKE. What.

MARGARET. Southie at all.

MIKE. Ouch.

MARGARET. You wouldn't know that that's where you're from, I'm saying.

MIKE. So I've lost my street cred.

MARGARET. No, I think it's awesome.

MIKE. Yeah, you keep saying that, but I'm starting to not believe you.

MARGARET. I *do* think it's awesome. You're like someone on a TV show.

MIKE. Uh-huh.

MARGARET. You *are*. You know what I mean. Professional.

MIKE. All right, professional I don't mind, but lace-curtain ...

MARGARET. It just means you did good.

MIKE. No it doesn't. I haven't been in the neighborhood for a while, but I remember what lace-curtain means.

MARGARET. It's a good thing, Mike.
 MIKE. No it isn't. It means I think I'm better than other people.
 MARGARET. That's not what it means.
 MIKE. Yes it does.
 MARGARET. Well, that's not how *I* mean it.
 MIKE. The old-timers called the Kennedys lace-curtain: "Aw, they don't care about us. They're all lace-curtain now."
 MARGARET. Well, I don't know anything about that.
 MIKE. Or when a union boss or whoever moved out to Wellesley.
 MARGARET. Where do *you* live?
 MIKE. *(Beat.)* Not Wellesley.
 MARGARET. Brookline? *(No response.)* Weston?
 MIKE. *(Beat.)* Chestnut Hill.
 MARGARET. *(Laughs.)* You're not lace-curtain though. Kid grows up in the Old Harbor Projects —
 MIKE. Okay.
 MARGARET. — moves to Chestnut Hill.
 MIKE. Okay.
 MARGARET. Chestnut Hill!
 MIKE. I'm still a Southie kid at heart though.
 MARGARET. Are ya?
 MIKE. Yes.
 MARGARET. Chestnut Hill. That's nice. Not that I've ever been there. But it *sounds* nice. *Chestnut Hill*. Big house?
 MIKE. It's all right.
 MARGARET. Humble. I bet it's awesome. That's all I ever wanted — a big house somewhere. You got trees?
 MIKE. A couple.
 MARGARET. Sounds nice. Ya got a guest room? *(They sort of laugh.)* Mikey Dillon. You're rich!
 MIKE. Take it easy.
 MARGARET. You *are*! You're *rich*!
 MIKE. I'm not rich.
 MARGARET. Well what would *you* call it?
 MIKE. I don't know.
 MARGARET. Wealthy?
 MIKE. We're just ... comfortable.
 MARGARET. Oh, comfortable.
 MIKE. Yeah.
 MARGARET. You're comfortable. Okay. I guess that makes me

uncomfortable then. Is that what you call us lowly folk?
 Uncomfortable?
 MIKE. Nope.
 MARGARET. You're comfortable. I like that. It's nicer than rich. And you *look* comfortable.
 MIKE. Funny, I don't feel comfortable at this particular moment.
 MARGARET. I'm sorry. It's not polite to talk money, is it. Us Southie kids forget that sometimes.
 MIKE. Right.
 MARGARET. *(Beat.)* You ever get back there at all? Walk the Sugar Bowl? Grab a clam roll at Sully's?
 MIKE. Not really.
 MARGARET. How come?
 MIKE. *(Beat.)* My parents moved to Florida, so there was never a reason to ...
 MARGARET. Go back?
 MIKE. I don't know. I should though. I miss those clam rolls.
 MARGARET. Huh. Well they're still there.
 MIKE. I've been doing some work with the Boys and Girls Clubs though. I'm on the board, so ...
 MARGARET. *(A little laugh.)* You're on the board.
 MIKE. And I still have cousins in Southie.
 MARGARET. The Feeneys?
 MIKE. Yeah.
 MARGARET. *(Knowing.)* Close to them, are ya?
 MIKE. Well ...
 MARGARET. They gonna be at your party?
 MIKE. *(Chuckles.)* You know I was never tight with the Feeneys. But that's my father's fault.
 MARGARET. You still have ties though. You're still Mikey Dee from Old Harbor.
 MIKE. If I was close to the Feeneys they would come to the party.
 MARGARET. Oh, yeah? You'd let the Southie rats in?
 MIKE. What are you doing? Do you think I'm lying about the job?
 MARGARET. No.
 MIKE. Then why are you being so passive-aggressive?
 MARGARET. Okay, Big Words.
 MIKE. I think you're deliberately needling me.
 MARGARET. What I say?

MIKE. Did you get mean, Margie?
 MARGARET. (*Beat.*) No.
 MIKE. Southie girls could be so mean. I remember how hard they were. Your friend Jeannie? Forget it. She could beat the shit out of me.
 MARGARET. Still could.
 MIKE. You were never like that though. I hope you're still nice, Margie.
 MARGARET. You think I'm not? Because I called you lace-curtain?
 MIKE. I can't tell.
 MARGARET. Because I asked if you invited the Feeneys?
 MIKE. If the Feeneys wanna come, they can come.
 MARGARET. I'll let 'em know. (*Beat.*) Can I come, too?
 MIKE. (*A nervous laugh.*) Ha.
 MARGARET. Is that a yes?
 MIKE. You don't wanna come to *this* party, believe me. You'd be bored out of your mind. Bunch of stuffy doctors and their stuffy wives.
 MARGARET. Sounds like you need me to liven things up.
 MIKE. You'd certainly do that.
 MARGARET. Any of these people hiring, ya think?
 MIKE. Aw, and here I thought you wanted to celebrate my birthday.
 MARGARET. Well that, too.
 MIKE. I'm just a *Job Fair* to you.
 MARGARET. You know I'm not fussy, Mikey. I'll clean their pools if that's what they got. No shame in an honest job.
 MIKE. I don't think I know anybody with a pool.
 MARGARET. You just don't want me minglin' with your buddies. You afraid I might embarrass you?
 MIKE. Is that who you think I am?
 MARGARET. I don't know.
 MIKE. You're actually starting to offend me a little bit with all this lace-curtain stuff.
 MARGARET. Come on, I'm just playing.
 MIKE. You wouldn't embarrass me.
 MARGARET. No, I know. You're a good guy, Mikey. I'm just bustin' balls. You're good people. I always said that about you. (*Beat.*) You *are* good people, right?
 MIKE. I like to think so.
 MARGARET. Of course you are. Helping these babies in here. The nervous parents. Volunteering at the Boys Club, or whatever

it is you do. Donate money?
 MIKE. (*Beat.*) A little bit.
 MARGARET. See, that's a good guy. Giving money to these kids who you don't even *know*. That's good people. I know you'd help me if you could. I know you would.
 MIKE. (*Beat.*) You know you're welcome to come, Margie. If the party's *that* interesting / to you —
 MARGARET. Oh, now I get to come.
 MIKE. I never said you couldn't come.
 MARGARET. What I do, bruise your pride?
 MIKE. Yeah, actually, but I'm gonna overlook that and invite you anyway.
 MARGARET. No, not if I have to guilt you into it.
 MIKE. You're not. I'll tell Denise to give you directions right now.
 MARGARET. The Spanish girl with the boobies?
 MIKE. She's Dominican, but yeah.
 MARGARET. Nah, that's okay. I'll let ya off the hook.
 MIKE. (*Beat. Realizes.*) I see what this is.
 MARGARET. What.
 MIKE. You don't actually want to come. You just want me to feel bad.
 MARGARET. Why would I want that?
 MIKE. I don't know. But it's weird how you suddenly don't want to come to the party after all. I know Chestnut Hill's a scary place —
 MARGARET. You got that right. All that money in one town?
 MIKE. Suddenly you don't want to hang out with my boring friends.
 MARGARET. I'll hang out, I don't care. So long as they wanna gimme a job. They gonna gimme a job?
 MIKE. Somebody might. A couple of those guys have done stupider things. But you don't wanna come now.
 MARGARET. You think I won't?
 MIKE. No, I think you'll say you will, then call the next day, and leave a message saying your kid got sick or something.
 MARGARET. Hey, I just wanted a job, Mikey. But if you wanna play a game a chicken that's fine, too.
 MIKE. I'm not playing anything.
 MARGARET. Stop fucking with me.
 MIKE. I'm not.
 MARGARET. 'Cause you're very close to hurting my feelings.

MIKE. Hurting *your* feelings? Seriously, Margie, if you want to come you should come, but stop trying to make me out to be this jackass who's forgotten where he's come from.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) When is it?

MIKE. Saturday night.

MARGARET. I happen to be free Saturday night.

MIKE. I'm not surprised.

MARGARET. Now why don't you buzz your girl and tell her I'd like directions.

MIKE. (*Slightest pause.*) You're not gonna come.

MARGARET. I am *now*.

MIKE. Okay. (*He reaches for the phone and dials Denise's extension.*)

MARGARET. You don't want me to.

MIKE. I just invited you, didn't I? (*Into phone.*) Hey Denise, could you print out directions to my house for Miss Walsh? She'll be coming to the party on Saturday. (*Denise says something funny, he chuckles.*) No, you cannot.

MARGARET. I'll be taking the T.

MIKE. (*Into the phone.*) T directions ... yeah. Thank you. (*Hangs up.*) Hope you like salmon.

MARGARET. Never had it.

MIKE. Well, you're gonna.

MARGARET. (*Moves to go.*) All right. This was fun, Mike. Thanks for letting me in.

MIKE. Like I had a choice.

MARGARET. (*Laughs.*) Yeah. (*She heads for the door, then turns back.*) If you hear of anything in the meantime, call me though, okay? About work? I'll do whatever.

MIKE. Okay.

MARGARET. See you Saturday.

MIKE. Will I?

MARGARET. Oh yeah. You're in deep now, Doctor. (*Margaret goes. Mike is left alone. Lights out.*)

Scene 4

Margaret, Jean and Dottie are at a folding table in the basement of a church. They're playing bingo. We hear the murmur of the crowd, and the voice of a priest calling the bingo numbers over a cheap sound system.

The women, bingo daubers in hand, play their cards. The cards are on rip-off sheets. Margaret has one sheet of three cards. The others are playing twelve or fifteen cards at a time. They'll be playing and daubing their cards through much of this scene. Dottie has several of her crafted rabbits on display in front of her. They are for sale.

VOICE OF PRIEST. I-17. I ... 17. (*They play.*) B-11.

DOTTIE. They gave me shit cards.

VOICE OF PRIEST. B ... 11.

DOTTIE. (*Leans over to Jean.*) You got anything?

JEAN. Are you kidding?

DOTTIE. They always give me shit cards.

MARGARET. I'm down to two numbers.

DOTTIE. You're down to two?

JEAN. Oooh, Margie's got a little heat under her.

DOTTIE. I find it awful strange that someone with no money can afford bingo.

MARGARET. Jean treated me. If I win, we're splitting it.

DOTTIE. Huh.

JEAN. It's just a few cards.

VOICE OF PRIEST. O-70. O ... 70.

JEAN. He looked good, right?

DOTTIE. Who did?

JEAN. Mikey Dillon. (*To Margaret.*) You did good, Margie, going down there.

MARGARET. Tell me that after the party.

JEAN. It's gonna go great.

DOTTIE. Or it won't.

VOICE OF PRIEST. B-3. B ... 3.
 DOTTIE. Who's with Joyce?
 MARGARET. Ruthie.
 DOTTIE. Ruthie? How ya payin' her?
 JEAN. You think she's hiding money from you, Dottie?
 MARGARET. I'm not paying Ruthie anything. Her TV fried, so her kids are goin' nuts. I said she could come over and use mine if she watched Joyce.
 JEAN. Ruthie's kids are animals.
 MARGARET. Joyce likes 'em.
 DOTTIE. Joyce likes everybody, god love her.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-48. G ... 48.
 MARGARET. You think we jinxed her?
 JEAN. Who.
 MARGARET. Cookie McDermott.
 JEAN. Oh my god, would you quit with that?
 MARGARET. You don't think it's spooky though? That we were making fun of her?
 JEAN. We weren't making fun of her.
 MARGARET. Then a few days later she dies up there?
 JEAN. I'm surprised she lasted as long as she did actually. Lying on the ground months at a time, exposed to the elements like that. Cookie was a fuckin' wreck.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-31.
 JEAN. Way before she lived on that wall even.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N ... 31.
 MARGARET. You don't think it's spooky though?
 DOTTIE. I do. I think it's spooky. I think you people are witches.
 MARGARET. Sissy said she was layin' there for two days before anyone did anything. They thought she was sleepin'.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O-74.
 MARGARET. Two days, and nobody noticed. That's pretty sad.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O ... 74.
 DOTTIE. These cards are terrible. I think they see me comin' and say, "Oh here comes Dottie, give *her* the shit cards."
 MARGARET. I'm waiting now.
 JEAN. You are?
 MARGARET. G-53.
 JEAN. Come on, G-53.
 MARGARET. If I hit tonight, I'm gonna buy a nice party outfit.

DOTTIE. What do you need a new outfit for? Those people aren't gonna hire you.
 JEAN. Why are you so negative all the time?
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-59.
 DOTTIE. I'm not negative, I'm realistic.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 59.
 MARGARET. He said somebody might be hiring.
 DOTTIE. Who?
 MARGARET. He didn't say who.
 DOTTIE. Which means nobody. You're gonna go all the way out / there —
 JEAN. What do you care where she goes?
 DOTTIE. I don't, I'm just saying it sounds unlikely.
 MARGARET. I wanna see his house anyway. I'm curious. I bet it's nice. And if somebody wants to give me a job while I'm there, so be it.
 DOTTIE. And what if they don't?
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I-20.
 JEAN. I know what I'd do.
 MARGARET. What.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I ... 20.
 JEAN. I'd say Joyce wasn't premature.
 MARGARET. (*Beat.*) What are you talking about?
 JEAN. Joyce. If she wasn't premature then the math almost works out.
 MARGARET. Jesus, Jeannie.
 JEAN. That's what I'd do. Pull a Maury Povich on his ass.
 DOTTIE. What does *that* mean?
 JEAN. It means she whips out a picture of Joyce and tells him he has a long-lost daughter.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O-63.
 JEAN. You say, "Hey, Mike, you remember that summer we dated?"
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O ... 63.
 DOTTIE. You dated?
 MARGARET. No, we / didn't —
 JEAN. Yes you *did*, right before Gobie.
 MARGARET. Just a few *weeks*, Jean. Don't be stupid.
 JEAN. That's all it takes! If Joyce wasn't premature —
 MARGARET. But she *was*.
 JEAN. I'd walk her right up to the front door.

VOICE OF PRIEST. I-16.
 MARGARET. *(Laughs.)* You *would*, too.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I ... 16.
 JEAN. Damn straight, I would. You gotta start thinking like other people do. Get him to pay some of that child support Gobie refuses to cough up.
 MARGARET. *(Laughs.)* You are too much.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-51.
 JEAN. Jesus. He's calling all around you, Margie.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 51.
 JEAN. 53, Father! / We're looking for 53!
 MARGARET. Don't do that, you're gonna get these old biddies mad.
 JEAN. We gotta buy this girl an outfit!
 MARGARET. Shut up.
 DOTTIE. You know Helen Feeney did something like that.
 JEAN. Like what?
 DOTTIE. That Maury Povich thing. She made Bob Swanson believe those boys were actually his.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. B-13.
 DOTTIE. Why he'd ever believe her is beyond me.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. B ... 13.
 DOTTIE. You take one look at those boys, and you *know* they're Mexican. And I said that to him, too. Up at the VFW one night.
 MARGARET. No, you didn't.
 DOTTIE. Yes I did. I said, "Bob, those boys are Mexican." And he said, "Shut up, Dottie. They don't look like no Mexicans," and I said, "Well you've never seen a Mexican then. Because those kids are straight off the taco truck." And then he got crazy mad, and I was asked to leave.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-41.
 JEAN. *(To Margaret.)* Well there ya go.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N ... 41.
 JEAN. Worked on Bob Swanson, it could work on Mikey Dillon.
 MARGARET. Let's just stick with the job.
 DOTTIE. What job? Nobody goes to a fancy party lookin' to hire an unemployed cashier.
 MARGARET. Ya never know, Dottie. People have wanted crazier things.
 JEAN. Yeah, those stupid rabbits for example.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-55.

VOICE OF OLD LADY. Bingo! *(A collective groan from the crowd.)*
 DOTTIE. MARGARET. JEAN.
 Sonofabitch. Damn it all. Motherfucker.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. Check that card, Helen.
 JEAN. Win the next one, wouldja Margie? So you can give this nut her damn money.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. That's a good bingo. *(The women tear off their top sheets of bingo cards and crumple them up, revealing the next game. Stevie from the Dollar Store wanders over with a fistful of bingo sheets, looking for a seat.)*
 JEAN. Well, look who it is. *(Stevie sees Margaret. He wants to turn around, but it's too late.)*
 MARGARET. Hi, Stevie.
 STEVIE. Oh, hey.
 JEAN. We thought you might be here.
 MARGARET. You can sit here if you want.
 STEVIE. That's okay, I was just looking / for —
 MARGARET. There aren't any seats up front. We looked already.
 STEVIE. Oh yeah?
 MARGARET. It's fine, sit down. We don't have to be weird.
 STEVIE. You sure?
 MARGARET. Like you said, you didn't have a choice.
 STEVIE. Okay.
 MARGARET. Not that I believed that, but sit down anyway. It'll be fun. *(Stevie joins them at the table. Reluctantly.)*
 DOTTIE. Who's he?
 JEAN. Stevie Grimes.
 DOTTIE. Suzie's kid?
 JEAN. Yeah.
 DOTTIE. *(Leans over to Stevie.)* Your mother was a funny bitch. *(Laughing now.)* "Who threw that bird at me?!" You know that story?
 STEVIE. Yeah.
 DOTTIE. So funny: "Who threw that bird at me?!"
 MARGARET. He doesn't think it's funny.
 DOTTIE. How is that not funny? "Who threw that bird at me?!"
 VOICE OF PRIEST. Next game: Inside Square. No B's, No O's. And we're starting with ... I-17. I ... 17.
 JEAN. Hey Stevie, Karen Finch is telling everyone you're gay.
 STEVIE. I heard that.
 JEAN. Doesn't that bother you?

STEVIE. Not really.
 JEAN. Because you're gay?
 STEVIE. No, because I don't care.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-46.
 JEAN. It is peculiar though.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 46.
 JEAN. You coming here all the time?
 MARGARET. Leave him alone, Jean.
 JEAN. Why? You want me to be nice to the guy that fired you?
 (To Dottie.) She's too nice.
 MARGARET. No, I'm not. Mike said I turned mean.
 DOTTIE. How were you mean?
 JEAN. Who cares? It got her invited to that party, that's all that matters.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-41. N ... 41.
 STEVIE. (To Jean.) So how is coming to bingo peculiar?
 MARGARET. Aw, Jesus. See what ya did?
 JEAN. Well you don't see too many young guys in here. Bingo's a funny pastime for a young guy.
 STEVIE. But not a young *gay* guy?
 JEAN. No, you know what I mean.
 STEVIE. Not really.
 JEAN. Well, look around, there's a bunch of old ladies.
 MARGARET. Speak for yourself.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-58.
 JEAN. He knows what I mean.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 58.
 STEVIE. I would if this place was full of gay guys. Is it?
 JEAN. No.
 STEVIE. Then how is it gay?
 JEAN. I don't know.
 STEVIE. I'm just trying to win a little money, like everybody else. I don't see how that's gay.
 JEAN. Well it is, so I don't know what else to tell ya.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I-21. I ... 21.
 DOTTIE. (Turns to Stevie.) Stevie? You want a rabbit?
 STEVIE. What?
 DOTTIE. I made these rabbits. (Indicates her wares.)
 STEVIE. Oh.
 DOTTIE. Five bucks each.

STEVIE. They're nice.
 DOTTIE. You want one?
 STEVIE. No thank you.
 JEAN. Don't like rabbits, Stevie?
 DOTTIE. Of course he does. Who doesn't like rabbits?
 JEAN. Gay guys.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-36. N ... 36.
 DOTTIE. I'll give you three for twelve.
 STEVIE. I have nowhere to put them.
 DOTTIE. Nowhere to put 'em?
 STEVIE. I have a lot of clutter in / my —
 DOTTIE. They're just little rabbits. "Nowhere to put 'em." You talk like I'm trying to sell you a fridge.
 STEVIE. I just don't want them. They're not my taste. I don't care for that sort of thing. (Silence as Dottie stares at him.)
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I-24. I ... 24.
 DOTTIE. I think maybe you *are* gay.
 MARGARET. He's not gay. He's dating that Chinese girl up at the store.
 STEVIE. She's not Chinese! She's from / *Thailand!*
 DOTTIE. What Chinese girl? At the Ho Toy?
 MARGARET. I said *store*, not restaurant. The Dollar Store.
 DOTTIE. Oh, I thought you meant like Chinese food.
 MARGARET. No.
 DOTTIE. Like she works at Ho Toy Chinese.
 MARGARET. No.
 DOTTIE. The Chinese restaurant.
 JEAN. No, she works at the Dollar Store! Jesus *Christ*, Dottie!
 DOTTIE. Why are you getting mad?
 JEAN. Because you're like fuckin' Aunt Clara sometimes! It pisses me off!
 DOTTIE. Whose Aunt Clara are you talking about?
 JEAN. *Nobody's!* The show with the witch!
 DOTTIE. You don't make any sense, ya know it?
 MARGARET. Aren't you glad you sat here, Stevie?
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-60. G ... 60.
 DOTTIE. Hey, you know who else got fired?
 JEAN. Who?
 DOTTIE. Franny. (To Stevie.) That's my Russell's wife. Do you know my son Russell? Russell Gillis?

STEVIE. (*There's a story here.*) Yeah, I know Russell Gillis.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-32.
 JEAN. Why'd Franny get fired? She's been at that shop forever.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N ... 32.
 DOTTIE. I guess she got to talking to one of the customers, and forgot about another one, and left something in somebody's hair too long, and clumps of it fell out, or I don't know, some crazy story.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-52.
 DOTTIE. But I guess the owner got mad, and Franny got mouthy, and so out she went.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 52.
 DOTTIE. So now neither of 'em are workin'. Her *or* Russell, and they got nothin' saved up because of her and those stupid scratch tickets.
 JEAN. What are they gonna do?
 DOTTIE. I don't know. You hiring at the Dollar Store, Stevie?
 STEVIE. No. Jesus. Russell Gillis? No.
 MARGARET. Franny does good work though. She can go into any salon. She's got a following now.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I-30.
 DOTTIE. What following?
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I ... 30.
 DOTTIE. A bunch of cripple old ladies with walkers. They can hardly get to her now. Where are they gonna *follow* her to?
 MARGARET. Russell will be okay.
 DOTTIE. I don't know, their apartment ain't cheap. I might have to help them out, if it comes to that.
 JEAN. Comes to what?
 DOTTIE. If things get bad, and they need someplace to live.
 MARGARET. That's what I thought.
 JEAN. You'd give them Margie's apartment?
 DOTTIE. I'm not saying it's gonna *happen*.
 MARGARET. Funny, how it comes up just as I'm having trouble paying the rent though.
 DOTTIE. That's not how it is.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I-28.
 JEAN. Jesus, Dottie.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I ... 28.
 DOTTIE. He's my son. What am I supposed to do, let him go homeless?

JEAN. Hey, fuck you, Dottie.
 MARGARET. Easy.
 JEAN. No, fuck her. She pretends to be your friend.
 DOTTIE. I *am* her friend.
 JEAN. Yeah, you're a real pal.
 MARGARET. It doesn't matter. Dottie, you're right, Russell's your kid. If he needs a place to / stay —
 JEAN. It's gonna be fine, Margie. Something's gonna come up for you. Despite these assholes.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I-22.
 JEAN. Something always comes up. You'll be okay.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. I ... 22.
 MARGARET. Maybe somebody at Mike's party will have something.
 JEAN. That's right. You make an impression. People *like* you. Who knows, you might even find a husband there.
 MARGARET. Oh yeah, that's exactly what's gonna happen.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-45.
 JEAN. It *could*.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N ... 45.
 MARGARET. Right. 'Cause what guy can resist a middle-aged lady in an outfit from Goodwill?
 JEAN. You'd be surprised.
 MARGARET. "Oh you're single *and* rich. How lovely, because I'm up to my tits in credit-card debt." (*Jean laughs.*) "Oh, you *like* that? Good, 'cause I'm also in need of major dental work!" (*A little chuckle from Jean.*) "And did I mention that I come with an adult daughter! Not only is she severely retarded, but she still occasionally pisses the bed ..." (*And for just a moment, Margaret is overcome with emotion. She stops before she embarrasses herself though. It takes everyone by surprise, especially her. Silence. Then Jean turns to Stevie.*)
 JEAN. See what you did?
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-47. (*Margaret's cell phone starts to ring. She rummages in her bag for it.*)
 MARGARET. That's my phone.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 47.
 MARGARET. It might be Ruthie. I gave her this number in case something happened to — (*Answers phone.*) Hello? ... Yeah ... Oh, hi. (*Whispers to Jean.*) Do my cards. (*Jean watches Margaret's*

bingo cards for her. Into the phone.) What's goin' on? ... Uh-huh ...
No, I'm here with Jean.

DOTTIE. *(Whispers to Jean.)* Who's she talking to?

JEAN. Mind your business, Dottie.

MARGARET. *(Into phone, confused and disappointed.)* Uh-huh ...
Oh. Why, what happened?

DOTTIE. *(Again to Jean.)* Something happened.

MARGARET. *(Into phone.)* Is she okay? ... No, of course ... Is she
okay, though? ... All right ... No, it can come on quick like that.
If she's sick there's nothing you can —

DOTTIE. Sounds like somebody's sick. Maybe it's Joyce.
(Whispers to Margaret.) Is it Joyce? *(Margaret gestures that it's not.)*
Oh, good.

VOICE OF PRIEST. G-56.

MARGARET. No, you can't have a house full of people if she's
throwing up like that ...

VOICE OF PRIEST. G ... 56.

MARGARET. No, don't be sorry. Don't be. Your daughter's sick
... I mean, she *is* sick, right? ... No, I know, I'm just bustin' balls
again. That's how I do ... Hey, whadaya gonna do ... Yeah, if you
reschedule let me know ... No, I'm saying if you *do*. Okay. Bye.

VOICE OF PRIEST. N-40. N ... 40. *(Margaret hangs up. She goes
back to her bingo cards.)*

JEAN. Everything okay?

MARGARET. I just got uninvited.

DOTTIE. To what?

MARGARET. Mike's party. He said it's canceled. I guess his kid's sick.

JEAN. So? It's not the *kid's* party.

MARGARET. I'm just telling you what he said.

VOICE OF PRIEST. I-19. I ... 19.

JEAN. You think he's lying?

MARGARET. Oh yeah.

JEAN. How do you know?

MARGARET. I could just tell. His voice. He chickened out, he
doesn't want me there.

JEAN. Didn't I say he was an asshole?

DOTTIE. You think his wife made him do it?

MARGARET. How should I know?

DOTTIE. I bet he told her you went out.

JEAN. I bet he didn't.

MARGARET. I'm gonna go anyway.

DOTTIE. What?

MARGARET. I'm gonna go to that party.

JEAN. *(Smiles.)* You are?

MARGARET. You think I shouldn't?

JEAN. No, I think you *should*. You *definitely* should.

DOTTIE. Don't take advice from *her*, Margie. She likes trouble.

MARGARET. He said his friends might have something for me.
He said that. I think it's rude. To invite someone like that, and then
say it's canceled. That's rude.

JEAN. It *is* rude.

VOICE OF PRIEST. N-33.

MARGARET. Besides, I really wanna see that house.

STEVIE. *(Raises his hand.)* Bingo!

JEAN. Cocksucker! *(Lights out.)*

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Scene 1

Lights up on a beautiful home. Tasteful and suburban. The living room takes up most of the space. Up and left we may see part of a foyer that leads to the front door. Doorways and corridors lead off to other parts of the house — the kitchen, the dining room, maybe we see a staircase that leads up to the bedrooms. It's a beautifully decorated space. Obviously people with money live here.

It's early evening, say around seven or so. Mike is reading the newspaper when Kate enters with her datebook open. Kate is attractive, pleasant, African American, early thirties.

KATE. What about next Thursday?

MIKE. I can't do Thursday.

KATE. Friday then.

MIKE. You know what my Fridays are like, Katie.

KATE. Well she leaves for Saint Barts on the 12th and she really wants to meet before that.

MIKE. Of course she does. That's how she pays for these trips to Saint Barts. We miss a couple sessions, and she might not be able to swing the bar tab.

KATE. What about Tuesday morning? Can you go in late?

MIKE. Aren't we done?

KATE. No, Michael, she thinks it's important that / we keep —

MIKE. No, I know she does, but that's what they do. They string you along forever, and make you think you need their counsel —

KATE. We *do* need her counsel.

MIKE. Yes, and we got it. For many months. But are we learning anything *new*? Every week we go in / there —

KATE. I know.

MIKE. She says the same stuff, and then we say the same stuff, and

then we write her another check.

KATE. I know.

MIKE. It's become this security blanket.

KATE. Well maybe I *need* a security blanket.

MIKE. (*Beat.*) Okay. If you want to keep going to her, I'm fine with that. I just thought I'd bring it up. I'm fine either way. I can go in late on Tuesday if that's what you wanna do.

KATE. That's what I want to do.

MIKE. Okay. Do you notice how quiet Ally is?

KATE. I do.

MIKE. What'd I tell ya?

KATE. She's asleep?

MIKE. The Benadryl knocked her out.

KATE. You put the basin beside the bed?

MIKE. Yeah.

KATE. And changed the comforter?

MIKE. For what?

KATE. I didn't want her puking on that new duvet.

MIKE. I forgot. I can go switch / them — (*Moves to go.*)

KATE. Well don't do it now, you'll wake her up.

MIKE. You don't want me to change it?

KATE. No, I want her to sleep. I just wish you had changed it while I had her in the tub.

MIKE. I'll do it now.

KATE. Michael —

MIKE. It'll take me one minute. I won't wake her up. (*He heads upstairs. The doorbell rings.*)

There they are. I told you they'd come.

KATE. If you wake her up, we'll never get her back down.

MIKE. I won't wake her up. (*He's gone upstairs. Kate crosses to the foyer to open the front door.*)

MARGARET. (*Off.*) Hello.

KATE. (*Off.*) Hi.

MARGARET. (*Off.*) I'm Margaret.

KATE. (*Off.*) Hi Margaret, come on in. (*Margaret enters the foyer.*)

MARGARET. I didn't know if I was supposed to use the side door or the front door, or what I was supposed / to do.

KATE. I told Wally the side door, but it doesn't matter. It's just easier with the driveway right there, but this is fine. (*They move into the living room.*)

MARGARET. Am I early?

KATE. Not at all. I thought you'd be here sooner actually. You all must be busy.

MARGARET. Not really.

KATE. Oh. Okay. Well the kitchen's this way. Did you bring anyone with you?

MARGARET. No. I threatened to though. *(Chuckles.)* Did he mention that? I was gonna bring the Feeneys.

KATE. I'm sorry?

MARGARET. No, I didn't bring anyone.

KATE. *(Stops.)* You're not going to carry this stuff yourself, I hope?

MARGARET. What stuff?

KATE. The glasses, and the — It's pretty heavy. There are some folding tables that have to go, too. Wally usually sends a couple guys to pick it all up.

MARGARET. Oh yeah? *(Margaret stares at her, confused. There's obviously been a mix-up.)*

KATE. You're not with the caterers.

MARGARET. No.

KATE. Oh my god. I am so sorry.

MARGARET. That's okay.

KATE. *(Laughing now.)* I can't believe I did that.

MARGARET. I was wondering why you kept saying Wally.

KATE. I'm sorry.

MARGARET. I'm like, "Who the hell's Wally?"

KATE. *(Laughing.)* I just assumed he sent one of the waitresses. Which doesn't even make sense really, but it's been so crazy here today.

MARGARET. That's all right.

KATE. *(Still laughing.)* I just escort you right in without —

MARGARET. Mike invited me. I'm Margaret. *(Off her blank look.)* Margie Walsh? From Southie?

KATE. *(Realizing.)* Jesus. Oh my god, I am so sorry.

MARGARET. It's okay.

KATE. You must think I'm a crazy person.

MARGARET. It's fine.

KATE. It didn't even occur to me that you might be here for the party.

MARGARET. Am I the first? I should've come a little later.

KATE. Did Michael not call you?

MARGARET. No, he did, / but —

KATE. We canceled. We canceled the party last night.

MARGARET. *(Beat.)* Oh.

KATE. Yeah, Michael was supposed to call you. Our daughter got sick / so —

MARGARET. Oh my god.

KATE. That's why I thought you were with the caterer. They dropped off a bunch of stuff yesterday, and then we canceled last night, so they said they'd send someone to pick things up.

MARGARET. You canceled.

KATE. Michael said he called everyone / but —

MARGARET. No, he did, but — I misunderstood.

KATE. Oh.

MARGARET. I didn't understand what he was —

KATE. It was probably the way he said it.

MARGARET. Yeah.

KATE. He does the same thing to me all the time. *(Mike comes downstairs.)*

MIKE. Mission accomplished. I was like a magician with a table cloth. *(Mike enters the living room. Silence as he takes in Margaret.)*

MARGARET. Hello.

KATE. Margaret didn't get your message.

MARGARET. No, I got it, I just misunderstood it.

MIKE. You did?

KATE. He can be so confusing sometimes.

MARGARET. No, it's my fault, I wasn't / listening or —

KATE. Honestly, don't worry about it.

MARGARET. I feel so stupid.

KATE. Why don't you take off your coat?

MARGARET. No, I'm gonna go.

KATE. Don't be ridiculous.

MARGARET. No, there's no party, your daughter's sick —

KATE. She's asleep now. Let me take your coat.

MARGARET. That's okay.

KATE. Come on, you're here now, you might as well have a quick glass of wine.

MARGARET. No, you don't have to do that.

KATE. We're just about to open a bottle.

MARGARET. Still, I feel dumb, barging in / when —

KATE. We were just sitting here waiting for the caterers to pick / up the —

MARGARET. I know, but —

KATE. One drink. You can have *one* drink.

MIKE. Well don't force her, Kate. If she doesn't / want to —

KATE. I'm not forcing her, I'm just saying if she drove all this way —

MARGARET. I took the T.

KATE. You took the T?

MARGARET. Yeah.

KATE. No, you have to stay then.

MIKE. You don't *have* to.

KATE. But we would *like* you to. *(Pause. Margaret finally relents.)*

MARGARET. Okay, but only for a minute.

MIKE. There ya go.

KATE. Let me take your coat. *(Margaret unbuttons her coat. Kate glances at the coat, but doesn't betray what she thinks of it. She just brings it to the hall closet to hang it up. Margaret wears the nicest dress she could afford.)*

MARGARET. This is so stupid. I don't know how I did this.

KATE. Stop. It's fine. Have a seat, don't be shy.

MIKE. Oh she's not shy, are ya, Margie.

MARGARET. She thought I was with the caterer.

MIKE. She what?

KATE. They were supposed to come pick up the tables, that's why I / thought —

MARGARET. It's okay.

KATE. If it's any consolation, people always think I'm the *nanny*, so ...

MARGARET. *(Beat.)* The nanny?

KATE. If I'm out with Ally, or at the park? They assume I'm her nanny. Because she's so white.

MARGARET. I see.

KATE. I actually had a woman offer me a job. She said, "I don't know if you're looking for a new family, but we pay really well." Oh, it made me so mad.

MARGARET. I bet.

KATE. *(Beat.)* I'm sorry, Margaret.

MARGARET. No, you were expecting the caterers. Who else is gonna ring the bell?

KATE. Anyway, you settle in, I'm gonna get some cheese together.

MARGARET. You don't have to do that.

KATE. I do actually. I was able to cancel the caterers, but the cheese guy was a complete ass. He wouldn't take anything back.

MIKE. The fridge is packed with the stuff.

KATE. You're not lactose intolerant, I hope.

MARGARET. I don't think so.

KATE. Oh good, because all day I've been saying, "What are we gonna do with all this cheese?!" You ringing that bell was the best thing to happen to us.

MARGARET. Oh yeah?

KATE. Now you're trapped here until that cheese is *gone*.

MARGARET. *(A polite laugh.)* Okay.

KATE. I'll be right back. Michael, get her some wine. *(Kate heads off into the kitchen. Margaret and Mike are left alone.)*

MIKE. We have beer if you'd rather have beer.

MARGARET. *(Beat.)* Wine is fine.

MIKE. Red?

MARGARET. Sure. *(He goes to the glassware cabinet and gets a wine glass, opens a bottle and pours her some wine over the following.)*

I'm sorry, Mike. I misunderstood.

MIKE. How do you mean?

MARGARET. About the party. I didn't realize / that —

MIKE. Right, I'm not sure how you could've done that.

MARGARET. I know.

MIKE. I thought I was pretty clear when we talked.

MARGARET. No, I know.

MIKE. I said Ally was sick, and so my wife wanted to cancel.

MARGARET. I thought you were lying though.

MIKE. *(Beat.)* Ah.

MARGARET. I thought you were just making up an excuse / to —

MIKE. Why would I lie?

MARGARET. I don't know. I just thought you didn't want me to come. It seemed suspicious. To cancel at the last minute like that.

MIKE. Ally got sick. Kate thought it'd be better if we called it off.

MARGARET. No, I know that *now*.

MIKE. You're paranoid. *(He hands her the wine. Margaret looks around a bit.)* So you found it okay.

MARGARET. No problem. That receptionist of yours gives good directions.

MIKE. I'll let her know.

MARGARET. I was early though, so I walked around the block a few times.

MIKE. And you lived to tell the tale.
MARGARET. I should've figured out there was no party. Your driveway was empty. Most of your lights were off.
MIKE. Yeah, well.
MARGARET. The house is beautiful.
MIKE. Thanks.
MARGARET. I knew it would be. *(Beat.)* I pictured pillars though.
MIKE. Pillars?
MARGARET. On the outside? Like columns?
MIKE. Like Tara?
MARGARET. Tara?
MIKE. *Gone with the Wind?*
MARGARET. I don't know, I guess. Yeah.
MIKE. That's funny.
MARGARET. It's still nice though.
MIKE. But you would've preferred pillars.
MARGARET. I don't know. *(They drink.)* Should I go?
MIKE. No, you can't go now, Kate's getting cheese. You can't leave when she's getting cheese. She'll think I chased you off. *(Beat.)* Besides, she wanted to meet you.
MARGARET. *(Beat.)* She did?
MIKE. Yeah, she doesn't believe I grew up in Southie. You're my evidence.
MARGARET. Oh.
MIKE. You'll have to tell her what a hoodlum I was.
MARGARET. What do you mean?
MIKE. She only knows me as Mr. Doctor-Man.
MARGARET. Oh, I see.
MIKE. You gotta set her straight.
MARGARET. You want me to mention the Irish mob? How you ran with Whitey Bulger? How many bodies should I tell her you buried?
MIKE. All right. If you're gonna make fun / of me —
MARGARET. Well, I don't know what you told her.
MIKE. I didn't *lie* to her.
MARGARET. Well, you said hoodlum.
MIKE. You know what I meant.
MARGARET. You were just a kid from the projects.
MIKE. Exactly.
MARGARET. So that means hoodlum?
MIKE. No, I didn't mean to say it like that. Forget it. How's the wine?

MARGARET. How the fuck should I know? *(Silence as they drink.)* What'd you tell her about me?
MIKE. I just said you might come to the party.
MARGARET. *(Beat.)* That's not very interesting. You must've said *something* else. Otherwise why would she want to meet me?
MIKE. No, just that we ran in the same crowd when we were kids. And how you came by the office.
MARGARET. Looking for work.
MIKE. Yeah.
MARGARET. Okay. *(Beat.)* You didn't mention we used to go out?
MIKE. Oh god no. No, I didn't men — No.
MARGARET. How come?
MIKE. I don't know. That was such a blip.
MARGARET. Huh.
MIKE. A couple months.
MARGARET. No, I know.
MIKE. We were friends for so long before that. I just said we were friends.
MARGARET. *(A little chuckle.)* Okay. So she won't be weird about me at all?
MIKE. No.
MARGARET. Good.
MIKE. I mean, so long as you don't mention it.
MARGARET. *(Beat.)* Okay.
MIKE. I just said we were friends.
MARGARET. Right. *(Pause as they drink.)* So she *might* get weird? If she knew?
MIKE. No. I don't think so. *(Beat.)* I don't know. It's just ... we're in a really good place right now, and I don't wanna ...
MARGARET. Stir anything up?
MIKE. Exactly.
MARGARET. *(Beat. Smiles.)* What'd you do?
MIKE. Nothing.
MARGARET. "We're in a really good place right now."
MIKE. We *are*.
MARGARET. Which means at some point you *weren't*.
MIKE. Margaret —
MARGARET. What'd you do?
MIKE. Nothing.
MARGARET. It involves that Dominican receptionist doesn't it?

MIKE. *Jesus. No.*

MARGARET. *(Laughs.)* I'm just bustin' balls.

MIKE. Can you just ... not mention we dated?

MARGARET. All right.

MIKE. We were practically kids after all.

MARGARET. I'm not the one making a big deal out of it.

MIKE. I'm not making a big deal, I just wanna ...

MARGARET. Keep it secret.

MIKE. Well don't make it sound *dirty*.

MARGARET. *You did that, not me. (Kate comes in with a tray loaded with cheeses and crackers.)*

KATE. Okay, here we go.

MIKE. Wow. That's a lot of cheese, Katie.

MARGARET. Look at that.

KATE. And this is only half of them. There's plenty more if you don't find what you like.

MARGARET. You can smell them.

KATE. Yeah, some of them are pretty pungent. I try not to inhale.

MIKE. The worse the smell the better the cheese.

KATE. *(Places cheese down.)* What do you like, Margaret?

MARGARET. Oh, I don't know. Which one's the Cracker Barrel? *(Off Kate's look.)* I'm kidding.

KATE. *(Laughs.)* Oh, good! I was afraid you were seri — *(Catches herself.)* Not that there's anything wrong with — I actually love Cracker Barrel. I lived on it in grad school.

MIKE. Okay, you can stop.

KATE. What, I *did*.

MARGARET. I'm sure these are all great. You wanna gimme a tour?

KATE. A tour?

MARGARET. Of the cheese?

KATE. Oh, I thought you meant the house.

MARGARET. That'd be nice too, but I meant the cheese. I don't know what's what.

MIKE. You don't want a cheese tour.

MARGARET. Sure I do. *(Indicates cheese.)* What's this one?

KATE. Um, that's Humboldt Fog, which is a goat. Cheese.

MARGARET. Okay, and this one?

KATE. Epoisses. Which is a French cow's milk. It's very good. If you want something a little / nutty —

MARGARET. *(Smelling Epoisses.)* Whoa. You got anything mild?

MIKE. *(Indicates a cheese.)* Do this one, Margie.

KATE. That's Wensleydale. *(Cuts her a piece.)*

MIKE. She's not gonna remember the names.

KATE. How do you know? Just because *you* can't remember them / doesn't mean —

MIKE. *(To Margaret.)* Let me give you *my* tour.

KATE. Here we go.

MIKE. *(Indicates cheeses.)* That's Creamy Drippy, that's Smells Like Ammonia, that's Body Odor ...

KATE. This is what he does.

MIKE. That's Close to Cheddar but Not As Good, that one is Moldy Basement ...

KATE. This is how he orders at the cheese shop, too.

MIKE. They think it's funny.

KATE. No they don't.

MIKE. "A wedge of Moldy Basement, please."

KATE. They don't think that's funny, Michael.

MIKE. Yes they do.

KATE. I think they're slightly offended actually.

MIKE. You're crazy. They love me in there.

KATE. I don't think they do.

MARGARET. *(Eating cheese.)* This one's very good.

KATE. Wensleydale.

MARGARET. *Wensleydale.* Good to know.

KATE. *(To Mike.)* Guess I get to throw you a party after all. *(To Margaret.)* He was adamant we cancel when Ally got sick.

MARGARET. *(Beat.)* He was?

MIKE. No, we *both* were. We discussed it.

MARGARET. Huh.

KATE. I said she would've been perfectly fine with the babysitter and a DVD upstairs, / but —

MIKE. Kate, come on —

KATE. No, you were right, I know. I'm bad. *(To Margaret.)* It killed me to cancel. I *love* to throw parties. Just like my mama. You can take the girl out of Georgetown but you can't take Georgetown out of the girl.

MARGARET. We say that in Southie, too! "You can take the girl out of Southie / but ..."

KATE. Oh yeah.

MARGARET. Same thing.

KATE. Same thing. *(They all eat cheese.)*
MARGARET. So how'd you meet?
KATE. My father introduced us.
MARGARET. Really.
KATE. Michael worked under him at GU Hospital in D.C.
MARGARET. Huh. The boss's daughter.
MIKE. It was an arranged marriage.
KATE. *(Laughs.)* It was, practically. The way he kept dragging you out for those barbecues? "Katie, you remember, Michael."
MIKE. He was a wise man.
KATE. Yeah, the jury's still out on that one. I think he was just sick of me bringing home puppeteers. And djembe players.
MIKE. *(Chuckles.)* Djembe players.
MARGARET. Is that a sports thing?
KATE. It's a drum.
MARGARET. I see. Well you did good then. You don't wanna marry the drummer.
KATE. No, I guess not. *(Margaret takes them in for a moment.)*
MARGARET. Oh I just remembered! I brought you something! *(Heads to coat closet.)* It's with my coat.
MIKE. You brought me something?
MARGARET. Yeah, just a little gift for your birthday.
KATE. That is so nice.
MARGARET. Don't get too excited, it's just ... nothing big. *(She returns with a plastic bag, which she hands to Mike.)* I probably should've wrapped it, but I didn't have any paper in the house. *(Mike pulls one of Dottie's rabbits out of the bag.)*
MIKE. Ohhh ...
KATE. Look at that.
MIKE. Is that a rabbit?
MARGARET. My landlady made it.
KATE. That is so cute.
MARGARET. I thought your daughter might like it.
MIKE. She definitely will. Thank you.
KATE. The eyes move.
MIKE. I saw that.
MARGARET. Never come to a party empty handed. Isn't that what they say?
MIKE. We'll have to find a spot for that.
KATE. Right over here. *(Kate takes the rabbit and puts it in a*

prominent spot on a bookshelf.)
MARGARET. The head's a little lopsided.
MIKE. No, it looks nice.
MARGARET. You like it?
KATE. It's very cute.
MARGARET. My friend Jeannie hates those things.
MIKE. No, it's cute. Ally's gonna love it. We'll show her in the morning. Thank you. *(They eat cheese.)*
KATE. So, are you going to tell me all of Michael's secrets?
MARGARET. You bet.
MIKE. Uh-oh.
KATE. You were in the same class?
MARGARET. No. I repeated a grade, and he skipped a grade. So he got ahead of me. Smarty.
KATE. *(To Mike.)* You never told me you skipped a grade. *(Back to Margaret.)* He hardly tells me anything. You know, he's met all of my childhood friends, and I've met *none* of his.
MIKE. Yes, you have.
KATE. Not *one*.
MIKE. What about my groomsmen? Dean and Omar / and —
KATE. College buddies. I'm not talking / about —
MIKE. They're the ones with the secrets!
KATE. No, I'm talking about somebody who knows the true story.
MARGARET. What true story?
KATE. All of it. The stuff he tells me, I think he's making half of it up.
MIKE. *(To Margaret.)* See? What'd I tell you? My own wife thinks I'm a compulsive liar.
KATE. Well, it's not like you don't have a history.
MIKE. Hey, easy.
KATE. *(Chuckles.)* I'm sorry. That'll come up in the next session.
MIKE. Seriously, Katie.
KATE. What, I'm joking. *(To Margaret.)* Really though, you have to be my bullshit meter, because when he talks about growing up, he makes himself out to be this *Upton Sinclair* character.
MARGARET. I don't know what that means.
MIKE. Nobody does, Margie. Don't listen to her. *(To Kate.)* What are you — ?
KATE. What.
MIKE. Upton Sinclair. *(To Margaret.)* Kate teaches literature,

MARGARET. Oh, wow.
MIKE. Novels, and ...
MARGARET. Yeah, I know what literature is.
KATE. I teach at BU.
MARGARET. Harvard wasn't interested?
KATE. (*Beat.*) What?
MARGARET. I'm just kidding. That's great.
MIKE. (*To Kate.*) Ya see what she did there? She zotzed you a little bit.
KATE. I know.
MARGARET. I was kidding.
MIKE. "Harvard wasn't interested?"
KATE. It was like my mother was here for a second.
MARGARET. They hiring over there?
KATE. At Harvard?
MARGARET. No, BU. I'm talking about myself now.
KATE. Oh.
MARGARET. Didn't Mike tell you I was / looking —
KATE. Looking for work, yeah, he said. Um, no I don't know. You'd have to go to personnel, I guess. I don't know how that works.
MARGARET. That's why I came to the party. Mike said one of his friends might have something.
KATE. He did?
MIKE. That's not exactly what I / said —
KATE. He said a friend had a job?
MIKE. Not a specific friend. Just ... *someone* might — She said if she mingled, could she ask around.
MARGARET. But of course nobody's here. Which is why I was asking about BU.
KATE. I see.
MARGARET. So, who's Upton Whatever?
KATE. He's a writer. He wrote about ... you know, the city ...
MARGARET. Poor people?
MIKE. Upton Sinclair's a bad comparison.
KATE. Not the way *you* talk. You make it sound so dire. With the violence and drugs and rats —
MARGARET. (*Chuckles.*) Oh, the rats. What've you been telling her?
MIKE. Just that it was rough. It was a rough neighborhood.
MARGARET. It wasn't *that* rough.
MIKE. You didn't live in Old Harbor. The projects were a little

rougher.
MARGARET. You had a nice apartment.
MIKE. My mother *kept* it nice, but still —
MARGARET. She *did* keep it nice. That's probably where you got those lace-curtain ideas.
MIKE. (*To Kate.*) See? Lace-curtain?
MARGARET. He told you about that?
KATE. You hit a nerve.
MIKE. Well you mentioning Upton Sinclair doesn't help my argument.
MARGARET. You lost the argument when the cheese came out.
KATE. Oh I hope not.
MARGARET. You want Mike's big secret? Here it is: he didn't have it so bad.
MIKE. Come on, Margaret.
MARGARET. Not compared to other people.
MIKE. The way my father worked?
MARGARET. Let's start with the fact that you *had* a father, and he *worked*.
MIKE. The clothes from Morgan Memorial? The food stamps? The Welly Cheese?
MARGARET. You seemed like a pretty happy kid. You have some nice memories.
MIKE. Of course I do / but —
MARGARET. You obviously like to reminisce. So it couldn't have been *too* bad. Least you managed to get out.
MIKE. Because I worked my ass off. That's the only way out of there.
MARGARET. (*Beat.*) Right.
MIKE. I didn't mean *you* don't work your ass off.
MARGARET. No?
MIKE. Obviously you work hard.
MARGARET. Hey, thanks.
MIKE. Don't take it the wrong way. I was talking about scholarships and what / I had to —
MARGARET. No, you worked hard, you're right. You escaped. I didn't. (*Beat.*) You had a little help, but you did it.
MIKE. What does that mean? What help did I get?
MARGARET. You were luckier than most people, that's all. You were smart. You had a dad that pushed you. You had some advan-

tages. So I don't know if I'd be complaining if / I were you.

MIKE. I'm not complaining, I just said we struggled. Which we did. Life wasn't easy.

MARGARET. Of course not. So? That's normal. To struggle. For most people, it's normal. Most people I know at least. That's just how it is. Just because we weren't comfortable doesn't mean we were miserable. (*A little laugh.*) I mean, I am now, but ... Back then wasn't so bad, Mikey. (*Silence.*)

KATE. We can find a job for her, can't we? Somebody has to have a job for her.

MIKE. Like who?

KATE. What about Tom? He's gotta have something down / at the —

MIKE. Tom just laid off half his staff.

KATE. Well Bernie then?

MIKE. At the lab? How is she gonna work at a lab?

KATE. I'm gonna think of something for you, Margaret. Now I got my thinking cap on.

MARGARET. Okay.

KATE. The wheels are turning.

MARGARET. Great.

KATE. But in return you have to tell me some Mike stories.

MARGARET. Okay.

MIKE. Oh, I don't think I like that deal.

KATE. He said he got into fights.

MARGARET. What fights?

MIKE. Just ... schoolyard stuff. Or up at the Boys Club.

MARGARET. With who?

MIKE. Everybody. Danny Turpin, Dominic Vecchi ...

MARGARET. The only fight I remember was in the Old Harbor courtyard.

MIKE. Oh, that was — You don't remember the thing with Danny Turpin?

MARGARET. No, I remember Old Harbor. Right down your way. And even that didn't really count.

KATE. Why didn't it count?

MARGARET. He was just trying to prove something. He was trying to be one of the hard guys.

MIKE. Come on —

MARGARET. You were. It was you and Marty McDermott, and

Gobie jumped in, and the Burke brothers ... Who else?

MIKE. It was so long ago, I don't —

MARGARET. Johnny Dugger was there I think. You were all playing basketball.

MIKE. You know, that Danny Turpin story is pretty funny —

MARGARET. And we were on the front stoop watching. Me and Jeannie. Suzie Grimes and Sheila Sheen. Remember her? She was a whore, huh? Pardon my French.

KATE. Was this a gang fight?

MARGARET. (*Chuckles.*) Gang fight. No. Some kids came over from Columbia Point.

MIKE. Come on, Margaret —

MARGARET. Old Harbor was right on the Dot border, so Columbia Point was like right there. I don't know what they were thinking / but —

MIKE. One of 'em threw a bottle.

KATE. Who did?

MIKE. One of the kids. One of the guys from Columbia Point. That's how it started.

MARGARET. I don't remember that.

MIKE. Yeah, it almost hit Marty. That's what started the whole thing.

MARGARET. Huh.

MIKE. One of them chucked a bottle, and so we chased them off.

MARGARET. (*To Kate.*) Except one of the kids fell, running away, and smashed his face into a mailbox. His friends kept running, and Mike beat the shit out of him. Pardon my French.

MIKE. Not just me.

MARGARET. No, everybody did. They all —

KATE. They beat him up?

MARGARET. Yeah. It was a mess. His face was ... I was scared. We all were, I think.

MIKE. He chucked a bottle.

KATE. Still. Six guys on one.

MIKE. It wasn't six.

MARGARET. I think it was. At least six. I think I'm forgetting a couple people. If your father hadn't come out to break it up, I don't know what would've happened.

KATE. Jesus.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) You wanted to hear about fights.

KATE. That's not a *fight*.

MARGARET. No, you're right. It wasn't much of a fight. (*Silence.*)

MIKE. (*Off Kate's look.*) What. Everyone's an idiot when they're seventeen.

KATE. (*Referring to her wine.*) Does this taste corked to you? A little bit?

MARGARET. I don't know.

KATE. Something tastes ... I don't think I like this. I'm gonna switch to white. Would you rather have white, Margaret?

MARGARET. Doesn't matter.

KATE. I'm gonna get some white. (*The side doorbell rings.*) And that's the caterers picking up.

MARGARET. Are ya sure?

KATE. (*A polite chuckle.*) I'll get confirmation this time.

MARGARET. (*To Kate.*) Good thinkin'.

MIKE. Want me to help deal with them?

KATE. (*As she goes.*) No, I got it. (*Mike and Margaret are left alone. After a moment, Margaret grabs a piece of cheese.*)

MARGARET. She seems nice, Mikey.

MIKE. She *is* nice.

MARGARET. Gonna put her thinking cap on for me.

MIKE. She's got a big heart.

MARGARET. I can tell. (*Beat.*) And she's black.

MIKE. (*Beat.*) Yes. That is true. She is black. (*Beat.*) You seemed surprised by that.

MARGARET. No, I don't care. I was just saying.

MIKE. You did seem surprised though.

MARGARET. When?

MIKE. Back in the office. When I showed you the photo.

MARGARET. Oh, no that / wasn't —

MIKE. Your eyebrows went up.

MARGARET. Because she was so young.

MIKE. Okay.

MARGARET. I was like, "Holy shit, she's so young." Not 'cause she was black.

MIKE. All right. My mistake. (*They drink in silence for a couple beats.*) Why did you tell her that story?

MARGARET. She was begging me for a fight story.

MIKE. She wasn't begging.

MARGARET. (*Chuckles.*) I think she was expecting something

out of the Bowery Boys though.

MIKE. Well, you didn't give her that.

MARGARET. You ever hear from any of those guys? From the neighborhood?

MIKE. Not really.

MARGARET. I didn't think so. I bump into Johnny Dugger every once and a while. He owns that variety store down the rotary. He's doing okay. But you know Sheila Sheen's dead, right?

MIKE. No.

MARGARET. Yeah, she OD'd a few years back.

MIKE. That's too bad.

MARGARET. I don't know where the Burkes ended up. Nowhere good, I don't think. Marty McDermott's in prison. And remember his sister Cookie? She was living on the street. She'd sit outside the bank and ask people for money. She died last week. Right on the sidewalk. *My age.*

MIKE. Jesus.

MARGARET. It's good you got out, right?

MIKE. I guess.

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) Do you ever wonder what would've happened if you hadn't though?

MIKE. What do you mean?

MARGARET. If you hadn't left for U-Penn? You think we would've stayed together?

MIKE. Oh. Christ, Margie, let's not do *that*. She's coming right back, and I don't want / her to —

MARGARET. You haven't wondered?

MIKE. That was just a summer thing. Kids have those. I'm sure you had them after me.

MARGARET. Not really.

MIKE. Only because you were with Gobie. You jumped in with him right after I left. That went on, right? For a long time.

MARGARET. It's just something I wondered. If you weren't going off to U-Penn in September, would we have kept going.

MIKE. You broke up with *me*.

MARGARET. I know, because you were going away.

MIKE. You broke up with *me*, Margie.

MARGARET. I *know!* (*Beat.*) Remember how pretty I was though?

MIKE. I do.

MARGARET. You thought I was *sooo* pretty. And that was all it

took for me to like you back.

MIKE. It wasn't my irresistible charms?

MARGARET. Nope. *(Beat.)* You *were* charming though. *(This lingers in the air for a moment.)*

MIKE. Anyway. What's done is done. It all worked out.

MARGARET. It did?

MIKE. You know what I mean.

MARGARET. Yeah. *(Beat.)* Well you made the right choice. *(Kate reenters with two glasses of white wine.)*

KATE. *(Referring to the caterers.)* They're taking the stuff out the back. *(Referring to the wine.)* This is much better. Margaret, gimme your glass. Switch to this. *(Swaps Margaret's red for the white.)* You'll like this better. I prefer white anyway. Which is why I married Michael actually.

MIKE. Wow, that is a / terrible joke.

KATE. I know. I'm just being / stupid.

MARGARET. *(Referring to an ornate crystal vase on a bookcase.)* What is that?

MIKE. The vase?

MARGARET. Is that what that is?

KATE. That was my push present.

MARGARET. Your what?

MIKE. Kate, don't call it / that.

KATE. I know, as soon as I said it, I realized how obnoxious it sounded. *(To Margaret.)* It was a gift from Michael, when Ally was born.

MARGARET. Push present?

KATE. That's what *he* called it.

MARGARET. For pushing out the baby?

MIKE. I didn't make up the phrase. A lot of people use it.

MARGARET. I've never heard of that.

KATE. Obviously the baby was gift enough, but it *was* nice after twenty hours of labor.

MARGARET. He gave you a vase?

MIKE. I know, it's gross. *(To Kate.)* Why did you tell her that?

KATE. She asked what it was. *(To Margaret.)* A lot of husbands do it.

MARGARET. Give push presents?

KATE. Usually it's *jewelry*, but yeah.

MARGARET. I never heard of that. It's nice. *(Beat.)* I'd be a nervous wreck though, having something that nice with a kid in the house.

KATE. Oh, she knows not to touch it. And it's insured anyway.

MARGARET. Oh. Good. *(Silence.)*

KATE. Do you have any children?

MARGARET. I have a daughter. She's a grown-up though.

KATE. Oh yeah? And what does *she* do?

MARGARET. Not a lot. *(An awkward pause.)*

KATE. But you like kids?

MARGARET. Sure. I mean, I don't want to be a grandmother or / anything, but —

KATE. Because I was thinking, if you really need work, we're always looking for someone to watch Ally. For when we go out. Michael's always got these events he's dragging me to. Dinners and ... auctions, or whatever. *(Pause as Margaret and Mike both look to her.)*

MARGARET. You want me to babysit?

KATE. It's not a full-time job obviously, but it's something. At least a few times a month. How much are we paying Sarah now?

MIKE. I don't know.

KATE. We just gave her a raise last month. She's up to fifteen dollars, I think.

MARGARET. For babysitting?

KATE. It's not a lot but —

MARGARET. Fifteen dollars an hour?

KATE. Not a lot of hours. I mean, but if you can't find something it would at least give you a little money.

MIKE. Wait a minute.

KATE. What.

MIKE. You can't just fire Sarah.

KATE. It wouldn't be *firing* her, she's not on *salary*. She's a babysitter.

MIKE. Still.

KATE. And it's not like she needs the money.

MIKE. How do you know she doesn't?

KATE. She drives a Beemer.

MIKE. That's not hers.

KATE. Yes it is. It's *her* car.

MIKE. That her father bought. She didn't buy it with her own money.

KATE. Why are you arguing? You honestly think Sarah Katzman needs the money more than Margaret?

MIKE. Of course not.

KATE. All right then.

MIKE. But Margaret can't work nights.

KATE. Oh.

MIKE. Isn't that what you said? When I mentioned the cleaning crew?

MARGARET. You said you couldn't get me a job with the cleaning crew.

MIKE. No, I couldn't, but when it came up you said you couldn't work nights.

MARGARET. Well, they wouldn't have paid me fifteen dollars an hour. For fifteen dollars I can work nights.

MIKE. How? You pay someone to watch Joyce while you watch Ally? That's a wash.

MARGARET. No it isn't. I don't pay my babysitter no fifteen bucks an hour. Trust me, I'd definitely come out ahead.

KATE. Who's Joyce?

MARGARET. Joyce is my daughter. She was born premature.

KATE. Oh. (*This really confuses Kate.*)

MIKE. The thing is, Ally knows Sarah, and she's comfortable with her. We can't just change everything up. That's not fair to Ally.

MARGARET. I see.

KATE. Ally won't care. She sees Sarah for half an hour, and then it's time for bed. Ally hardly *sees* Sarah.

MIKE. But she *knows* her. She doesn't know Margaret.

KATE. So we'll introduce them.

MIKE. This isn't about you, Margie.

MARGARET. No?

MIKE. It's about Ally, and what she's used to.

KATE. Ally's asleep the whole time. Sarah just sits down here and reads. You talk like they're best friends.

MIKE. Come on, Katie, this is — Margaret doesn't want our charity.

MARGARET. Sure, I do.

KATE. It's not charity, it's a job.

MIKE. Plus Sarah is CPR certified, and she knows all the phone numbers god forbid something goes wrong.

KATE. What phone numbers?

MIKE. The pediatrician, poison control —

KATE. Those numbers are on the fridge, Michael!

MIKE. I know but —

KATE. They're all on the fridge!

MARGARET. He doesn't want me to babysit.

MIKE. No, that's not it.

MARGARET. He wouldn't feel comfortable.

MIKE. Not just me. Ally wouldn't. Ally knows Sarah.

KATE. You're ridiculous, you know it? It's just a couple times a month.

MIKE. What about the Foleys? Aren't they always looking for a babysitter?

KATE. I'm not gonna send her to the *Foleys*.

MIKE. Why not?

KATE. They're lunatics.

MARGARET. How much do *they* pay?

KATE. You say you want to help her. "Hey, come to my house, Margaret. I'll introduce you to my buddies."

MIKE. That's not what I said.

KATE. "Lemme find you a job."

MIKE. That's not what I said.

MARGARET. Yes it is.

MIKE. Margaret —

MARGARET. That's what you said.

MIKE. No, that's what you *heard*.

MARGARET. Oh, okay.

MIKE. It's not what I said, it's what you heard. Just like I *said* the party was canceled, and you *heard* that it wasn't.

MARGARET. (*To Kate.*) Well so much for your thinking cap.

KATE. I still don't understand what the problem is.

MARGARET. He obviously doesn't want me working here.

MIKE. Don't say it like that.

MARGARET. Well do you? Do you or don't you?

MIKE. (*Beat.*) No, I don't.

MARGARET. There. End of discussion.

KATE. No, he doesn't get to decide / what —

MARGARET. No, I understand. You can't force him. He thinks Ally wouldn't feel safe with me watching her.

MIKE. I didn't say safe, Margie, I said *comfortable*. And I don't have to justify why I don't want you watching my child.

MARGARET. No, you don't, because it's obvious. I'm not babysitter material.

MIKE. Margaret —

MARGARET. I'm not smart enough to watch a kid sleep.

MIKE. It's not just —

MARGARET. I don't know the right things. Or how to use a phone —

MIKE. Okay —

MARGARET. — and I might also be a racist.

MIKE. Now come on, nobody said you were a / racist.

MARGARET. You might as well have. (*Turns to Kate.*) I mentioned you were black, so —

KATE. How does that make you racist?

MARGARET. Ask him.

MIKE. It doesn't!

MARGARET. All I know, is that I'm not the one who chased down that boy at the Old Harbor Projects.

MIKE. (*Beat.*) All right, now you're just causing / trouble.

KATE. What boy?

MARGARET. The one we talked about. That's the part he didn't mention.

MIKE. What does this have to do / with — ?

MARGARET. Nobody threw a bottle. That fight he was talking about, in the courtyard? Nobody threw a bottle at anybody. Those kids came over from Columbia Point, which was a *black* part of Dorchester. That's the part he didn't mention.

MIKE. Because it wasn't relevant.

MARGARET. Oh, is that why?

MIKE. Yes.

MARGARET. There was no bottle. Marty McDermott saw those kids and yelled, "What are those niggers doing over here?" and that's when everybody went running.

MIKE. Look, you're obviously trying to bait my wife.

MARGARET. I'm *what*?

MIKE. Or get her mad at me, or something, but she knows what Southie was, okay? The forced busing and everything else, and she knows that that's not who I am. I've been very honest with her.

MARGARET. He told you that fight story?

KATE. No, not *that* story. That story's pretty shitty.

MIKE. It's not like she said, Katie.

MARGARET. And did he mention we used to date? (*Silence.*)

MIKE. What are you doing?

MARGARET. What, you said you were honest with each other.

KATE. You dated?

MIKE. Just for like a month.

MARGARET. Two months.

MIKE. Two months. In high school. Over the summer.

KATE. Okay.

MARGARET. See, she's fine with that. (*To Kate.*) He told me not to mention it, so —

MIKE. That's not true.

KATE. You told her not to mention it?

MIKE. No, that's / not —

MARGARET. Yes you did. You said to keep it secret.

MIKE. Margaret —

MARGARET. That's what you said. Or maybe it's just what I *heard*.

MIKE. Okay.

MARGARET. You said to not mention it because she might get weird.

MIKE. Why are you doing this? Because I won't let you babysit?

KATE. Why would I get weird?

MIKE. Look, I didn't tell you because it's not how — I don't even think of Margaret like that, as an ex — We were friends for so long. I just think of her as a friend.

KATE. So what's the big deal?

MIKE. There is none.

KATE. Then why not mention you dated?

MIKE. Because you're sensitive about that stuff, for obvious reasons, and I didn't want to rock the boat.

KATE. So you thought lying to me was better?

MIKE. I didn't lie. I just didn't ...

KATE. Tell the truth?

MIKE. Kate —

KATE. Are we actually having this conversation again?

MIKE. No, I — Can we / not —

KATE. And you wonder why I don't wanna stop seeing / the counselor.

MIKE. I said I'd see her! I was just asking whether we — (*Turns on Margaret.*) Why did you come here! I told you there was no party!

MARGARET. Why are you getting angry?

MIKE. I've tried to be nice to you, Margaret.

MARGARET. You *have* been nice.

MIKE. I tried to be a good sport, even though I haven't seen you in thirty years. I don't really know you, but I invite you out here ...

MARGARET. Oh, you don't know me?

MIKE. Not anymore, no. Neither of us know each other. And I'm sorry if / that —

MARGARET. You don't know me. / Okay.

MIKE. That's what happens! When you don't see each / other for —

MARGARET. You *asked* me to come out here, by the way, so don't make it seem / like I —

MIKE. You obviously turned into some kind of a troublemaker, / or —

MARGARET. Is that what I am?

MIKE. Yeah, you don't get your way so you have this tantrum.

MARGARET. What tantrum? Who's having a tantrum?

MIKE. Not literally! A figurative tantrum! Stop being so simple-minded!

MARGARET. KATE.

Wow. Michael —

MIKE. I don't return your calls, so you push your way into my office!

MARGARET. I'm simpleminded now.

MIKE. I don't let you babysit, so you start stirring the shit. You're *punishing* me for not giving you what you want.

KATE. Okay, Michael.

MIKE. But *I'm* the asshole. Because I don't want a stranger watching my kid. Because I have a nice house. Because I buy my wife gifts. That makes me an asshole.

MARGARET. No, that makes you lace-curtain.

MIKE. You know what? I think we should probably call it a night. Because you are really starting to piss me off.

MARGARET. You kicking me out, Mikey?

MIKE. (*To Kate.*) Can you get her coat, please?

MARGARET. You're kicking me out.

KATE. Nobody's kicking anyone out. Margaret — Michael, relax.

MIKE. You wanna take some of the cheese, Margie? Kate can bag it up if you like it.

MARGARET. I didn't even want to come here. *You* invited *me*.

MIKE. No, you kinda invited yourself!

KATE. Would you —

MARGARET. I only came here because I needed a job.

MIKE. Well it's not my fault you can't find one!

KATE. Ally's asleep.

MIKE. I'm sorry that you made some bad choices in your life, but that is not / my fault.

MARGARET. Oh, I had choices?

MIKE. Yeah. And if thinking you *didn't* makes your life a little more bearable, that's fine. But it isn't true.

MARGARET. What choices did I have?

MIKE. All the way back. The things you did, the people you hung out with.

MARGARET. The people I — ? We hung out with the *same* people!

MIKE. Plus you never applied yourself. Not at school or / anywhere else.

MARGARET. I didn't have someone checking my homework like you did, Mikey. My mother was too busy killing herself at that box factory.

MIKE. Oh poor you.

MARGARET. And you're right, I *did* drop out of school. Was that a choice though?

MIKE. Of course it was. Girls have babies, and still stay in school.

KATE. Are you serious?

MIKE. They *do*!

MARGARET. Well I chose to take care of the baby instead. Because that's what people did. I got a job. I got a bunch of jobs in fact. And every one of them sucked, because what other job *could* I get? Not much of a choice there either, I'm afraid.

MIKE. And you lost most of those jobs?

MARGARET. As a matter of fact, I did.

MIKE. Why?

MARGARET. Usually because I was late.

MIKE. Well there's a choice.

KATE. Would you stop it?

MIKE. What, she chose to be late.

MARGARET. I didn't *choose* to be late. Shit happened, that *made* me late! Some-times it was Joyce. Sometimes it was the T.

KATE. You don't have to explain / yourself to him.

MARGARET. One time I got my car taken. Why'd I lose the car? Because I missed a payment. Why'd I miss a payment? Because I had to pay for a dentist instead. Why'd I have to pay the dentist?

MIKE. We don't need the / sob story —

MARGARET. No, I've done this a hundred times in my head, Mikey. I think you should hear it, too. Why'd I have to pay the dentist? Because I didn't have insurance, and I cracked a tooth and ignored it for six months, until an abscess formed. Why'd I crack a tooth?

MIKE. I don't /care!

MARGARET. Because one night I thought I'd save a little money, and skip dinner! But I got hungry and decided to snack on a piece of candy brittle. And that's all it took — a piece of fucking candy brittle, and I was out of a job again. And that's how it always is. And if it's not the candy brittle then it's Joyce's medication, or my phone getting cut off, or Russell Gillis breaking in and stealing my goddamn microwave! And you wanna tell me about choices? While you sit up here practically breaking your arm patting yourself on the back for all you accomplished. Lucky you. You made some wise choices. But you're wrong if you think everyone has 'em. In fact, the only *real* choice I ever *did* make was dumping you. And yeah, I've thought about it a million times since: "What woulda happened if I hadn't dumped Mikey Dillon?" Maybe I wouldn't have ended up with Gobie, or maybe I woulda finished school, or maybe this coulda been *my* house. (*Silence. They look at her, confused.*) Maybe it coulda been. All of this. Maybe it coulda been mine.

MIKE. Jesus, Margie, what does that even mean? We dated for *two months*!

KATE. Be nice.

MIKE. (*To Kate.*) *Two months!* And you heard her, *she* dumped *me!* (*Back to Margaret.*) Which you didn't seem all that upset about at the time. You were with Gobie like three days later.

MARGARET. And why do you think that was?

MIKE. Because I didn't mean anything to you!

MARGARET. Wrong!

MIKE. Honestly, you've made up this thing in your head!

MARGARET. Joyce wasn't premature. (*Silence. Kate looks from Margaret to Mike.*)

KATE. What does that mean?

MIKE. What are you doing, Margie?

KATE. What does that mean? "Joyce wasn't premature."

MARGARET. Don't say you didn't have help getting out of Southie. You had help. And not just your dad. If I hadn't let you go, you'd still be there right now.

MIKE. If you hadn't let / me go?

MARGARET. You'd be working down at the variety store with Johnny Dugger. I let you go.

MIKE. All right, Margaret. I knew you were having trouble, but I didn't realize you were pathological.

MARGARET. Joyce didn't have all those problems because she

came early, she just had those problems. She was full-term. Late, in fact. I just said she was premature so Gobie would think she / was his.

MIKE. You *know* this is bullshit, Katie.

KATE. No I don't.

MARGARET. (*To Kate.*) I'm sorry. I wasn't gonna say anything but —

MIKE. Was this the idea? You thought you'd come here / and —

MARGARET. I could've kept you there, that's all I'm saying. If I wanted to.

MIKE. How'd you come up with this? Were you watchin' *General Hospital* one day and think, oh, here's an angle.

MARGARET. You wanna do a blood test?

KATE. What the fuck, / Michael?

MIKE. No, I don't want to do a blood test, because that is not my / child!

MARGARET. Why would I lie?

MIKE. Why? To squeeze me for money! To pay your rent! To do everything that you can't get Gobie to do! There's a hundred reasons / for you to lie!

MARGARET. I could've trapped you. That's what girls did, you know. They'd get pregnant to trap guys.

MIKE. Is that what you're trying to do now? Because you're a little late.

MARGARET. I didn't do that to you. But I *could've*. I let you go.

MIKE. And why would you do that?

MARGARET. Because you were going off to college! Because I didn't want to be the thing that ruined your life! BECAUSE I WAS NICE!

MIKE. Oh yeah, you're a sweetheart. Shoving your way in here, making up these bullshit / stories —

MARGARET. They're not bull / shit.

MIKE. You know what, Margie? It wouldn't have mattered. Even if any of this were true, which it isn't, it still wouldn't have mattered. You didn't do me any favors breaking up with me. I was gonna do it myself, but you beat me to it. You think I wanted a girlfriend when I was heading off to *college*? Do you know how many women were *at* U-Penn? We wouldn't have stayed together. Baby or no baby. I wouldn't have stayed.

MARGARET. Don't say that.

MIKE. I wouldn't have. No way. I'm sorry. I would've taken off anyway.

MARGARET. No you wouldn't have. That's not who you were.

MIKE. Are you kidding? I knew Southie was a black hole before I was thirteen. I wouldn't have stayed there for anything. Not for *you*. No way. Not for some retarded baby.

KATE. *Jesus*, Michael.

MIKE. I'm sorry. But self-preservation. I would've been one of those deadbeats that take off. Just like your father took off. Just like Gobie took off. That would've been me.

MARGARET. You're just saying that.

MIKE. Why?

MARGARET. I don't know why, but I don't believe you.

MIKE. (*Lunging at her.*) AND I DON'T BELIEVE *YOU*!

KATE. (*Blocking his way.*) STOP IT, MICHAEL! (*Silence.*)

MARGARET. There he is. There's still a little Southie in there.

MIKE. Too far, Margie. I know you're desperate but this is too far.

MARGARET. (*After a beat, more to herself.*) You were gonna dump me anyway. (*Beat.*) That's a mean thing to say, Mikey.

MIKE. Why?

MARGARET. Because it means that nothing woulda been different. That there really *was* nothing I coulda done to get outta there. (*Beat.*) It's a pretty fucking depressing thought. That's why. (*Margaret gets her coat on. To Kate as she goes.*) I'm sorry, I didn't mean to — I shouldn't have / come here.

KATE. (*Stops her.*) Why didn't you come find him earlier? (*Beat.*) If the baby stuff is true —

MARGARET. It *is* true.

KATE. Then why didn't you come find him?

MARGARET. I told you. Because ... I didn't want — Because ...

KATE. Because it was the nice thing to do. To let him go.

MARGARET. Yeah.

KATE. (*Beat.*) But that doesn't sound nice to me. Not for your daughter, at least.

MARGARET. My daughter?

KATE. You talk about how hard it's been and how you've struggled with her all these years —

MARGARET. I *have*.

KATE. Why? If you didn't have to struggle, why *would* you? Because you didn't want to inconvenience Mike?

MARGARET. No, that's / not —

KATE. I'd do anything for my daughter. If there was / something —

MARGARET. So would I.

KATE. Then your story doesn't make any *sense*.

MARGARET. No of course not. You gotta stand by your man, so —

KATE. No, I don't actually.

MARGARET. Well I don't know what to tell ya.

KATE. You could've looked him up at any point, and said, "Hey, I know this sucks, but I could really use your help with our kid." That's what *I* would've done.

MARGARET. Well I'm not you.

KATE. That's right. You're not. (*Beat.*) I could never put my pride ahead of my daughter.

MARGARET. Hey, take it easy.

KATE. And I *have* had to make that choice. Haven't I, Michael?

MIKE. Kate, enough.

KATE. A *few* times. And my pride always lost. My daughter's more important.

MARGARET. You think mine's not?

KATE. Not if your story's true. Because if it is, you're saying you let her suffer needlessly.

MARGARET. That is not what I'm saying.

KATE. Isn't it?

MARGARET. (*Beat.*) No.

KATE. Yes it is, Margaret. Which I could understand if you said, well I was scared, or stubborn, or I didn't know how to get out of the situation, or I couldn't be / bothered to —

MARGARET. Which is all true!

KATE. But that's not what you said! You said you did it because you're a nice person! Which, I'm sorry, is a *stretch*. Especially when you start pitting me and Michael against each other. When you already know we're having trouble.

MARGARET. I don't know anything about / that.

KATE. Yes, you do! *Jesus*, *everyone* knows! Ya spend five minutes with us / and —

MIKE. That's not / true.

KATE. Not now, Michael. (*Back to Margaret.*) The point is, you knew what you were doing. And I'm sorry this isn't your life, Margaret, but that's not *my* fault. And it's not *Ally's* fault. We didn't

do anything to you.

MARGARET. Of course not.

KATE. This is *our* life. And I'm not gonna let you come in here and deliberately try to sabotage us. That is just spite.

MARGARET. That's not what I was doing.

KATE. Well it's what you did. And I don't know if any of the other stuff is true or not, but I can tell you one thing — you are not nice. You are *not*. (*Beat.*) Is it true, by the way? The stuff about your daughter? Because if it is, Michael will just have to man up / and provide.

MIKE. Katie, stop.

KATE. We'll write you a check right now. If it's true. (*Beat.*) Is it, Margaret?

MARGARET. (*After a pause.*) I *told* her it was stupid. Jeannie. I told her it was a stupid idea. "Just say Joyce wasn't premature." She thought it'd be funny. (*Beat.*) You're right, it wasn't nice. (*To Mike.*) But you pissed me off with that babysitting thing. You could've let me watch her, Mike. It wouldn't have been any skin off your nose.

MIKE. You see, Katie? She made it up.

MARGARET. I'm sorry.

MIKE. People go to jail for this kinda thing, you know. What you just did?

MARGARET. You gonna call the cops, Mikey?

MIKE. (*To Kate.*) And she wants to say she doesn't make choices.

MARGARET. I'm gonna go.

MIKE. (*Grabs the flowerpot rabbit.*) Take this too, wouldja?

MARGARET. That was a gift.

MIKE. I don't want it.

MARGARET. Come on, it's a *gift*.

MIKE. And every time I look at it, I'm gonna think about what you just pulled. Take the rabbit.

MARGARET. It's for your daughter.

MIKE. Margaret —

MARGARET. I don't want it. (*Mike hurls it against a wall. It smashes to pieces.*)

MARGARET.

KATE.

Hey!

Jesus, Michael!

MARGARET. I paid for that.

MIKE. (*A little laugh.*) Okay.

MARGARET. I PAID FOR IT! (*He shrugs. Margaret, seething,*

rushes to the crystal vase.)

KATE and MIKE. No-no-no-no-no-no! (*She's about to throw it to the floor, but she stops.*)

MARGARET. What's the point? (*Hands it to Mike.*) It's insured.

VOICE OF ALLY. Dad? ... Daddy?

KATE. It's okay, honey. Daddy just dropped something. I'll be right up. (*Kate heads up the stairs. Margaret and Mike are silent for a few moments.*)

MIKE. Are you all right?

MARGARET. (*A wry chuckle.*) Am I all right.

MIKE. What'd you think was gonna happen, Margie?

MARGARET. I don't know. I just wanted a job. That's all. I just wanted a job.

MIKE. You can't blame me for your life, you know.

MARGARET. I don't. I just think you got lucky. That's all I was trying to say.

MIKE. I wouldn't call it luck, but okay.

MARGARET. What if your father hadn't come out to stop that fight with the black kid? (*Beat.*) You would've killed that boy.

MIKE. No, that ... You make too much out of everything. It never got close to that.

MARGARET. Yes it did. You know it did. You could be sitting up in Walpole right now, bunkin' with Marty McDermott.

MIKE. That wouldn't have happened.

MARGARET. If your father wasn't watching from the kitchen window it would've.

MIKE. But he *was*.

MARGARET. Which is *lucky*, that's all I'm saying. I never had anyone watching from a window for me. You got lucky. One hiccup, and it could've been *you* looking for work instead of me. Or you dying up on that sidewalk instead of Cookie. That could just as easily have been you, Mikey.

MIKE. I don't think so.

MARGARET. No?

MIKE. No.

MARGARET. (*Beat. Referring to the house.*) Then all this is wasted on you. (*Beat.*) And it wasn't my job to come looking for you, by the way. Not when you knew. You should tell that to your wife.

MIKE. Are you actually starting / that again?

MARGARET. And if you didn't know, you must've suspected at

least, that she *could've* been yours. *That* at least. The thought must've crossed your mind. *(Beat.)* Did it? *(Silence. He just stares at her.)* It wasn't my job to find you. Not when you knew where we were.

MIKE. Margaret —

MARGARET. And there was no way I was gonna beg. I can get damn close. Obviously. But I won't beg. Not even for Joyce. And if that makes me a bad mother, then I guess I'm a bad mother.

MIKE. You're not.

MARGARET. I know I'm not. *(Kate comes down the stairs and back into the living room.)*

KATE. She wants her dad.

MIKE. All right.

MARGARET. Sorry we woke her up.

KATE. That's okay. I'm more upset about the rabbit actually. I think she would've really liked it.

MIKE. I'm gonna go up and see her.

MARGARET. I was just about to head out anyway.

KATE. I'm sorry, can you just — *(Mike and Margaret both stop.)* You *were* lying, right? About your daughter?

MARGARET. *(Beat.)* Yeah, I was lying.

KATE. *(Beat.)* Okay.

MARGARET. *(Beat.)* I *do* think he's fucking that Dominican receptionist though. *(Kate and Mike stare at her.)* Just kidding. *(Then she turns, heads out through the foyer, and out the front door. Lights out.)*

Scene 2

Church basement. Margaret, Jean, Dottie and Stevie are at their folding table playing bingo. We hear the voice of the priest, and the murmur of the crowd. The women are mid-conversation.

JEAN. *(To Margaret.)* Why didn't you tell me? I gotta hear it from Dottie of all people?

DOTTIE. What's that mean?

JEAN. *(Still to Margaret.)* Finally some good news.

MARGARET. It's not good news.

DOTTIE. Of course it is.

MARGARET. It's no news. It's nothing.

DOTTIE. You're nuts.

JEAN. It came in the mail?

DOTTIE. It came in the mail. A stack of bills, with a note: "Margaret's rent."

MARGARET. That's not my rent, Dottie.

DOTTIE. Hell it ain't. It said right on it: "Margaret's rent." Can't get much clearer than that.

MARGARET. I'm gonna mail it back to him.

DOTTIE. No you're not. Not *this* money. You find it somewhere else, 'cause that money is ear-marked.

VOICE OF PRIEST. First up is B-12.

JEAN. Just take it and forget it.

VOICE OF PRIEST. B ... 12.

DOTTIE. You're lucky, Margie. My Russell was all set to move in. I told him I couldn't do that to you. I told him I wanted to give you a little more time. Good thing that envelope arrived when it did. Ya made it in under the wire. I said, sorry Russell, there's no room at the inn.

VOICE OF PRIEST. N-33.

DOTTIE. Which is lucky. I would've missed Joyce.

VOICE OF PRIEST. N ... 33.

JEAN. *(To Margaret.)* Did Mikey say he was gonna send money?

MARGARET. No.

JEAN. Did you *ask* for it?

MARGARET. No, Jean, of *course* not. Did I *ask* for it?

STEVIE. Maybe he just wanted to help out.

MARGARET. Yeah, I don't think so.

STEVIE. Why not?

MARGARET. It's not in his nature.

DOTTIE. Of course it is. Why else would he send that envelope?

MARGARET. It doesn't matter, I'm not taking it.

VOICE OF PRIEST. I-22.

DOTTIE. She goes there looking for money, then she gets all proud when she *gets* it.

VOICE OF PRIEST. I ... 22.

MARGARET. I went looking for a job, not a handout.

DOTTIE. Tomato-tomahto.

JEAN. What'd you say to him?

MARGARET. Nothing.
 JEAN. And he just pays your rent?
 MARGARET. He's not paying my rent.
 DOTTIE. He already has.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O-61.
 JEAN. Maybe the wife sent it.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O ... 61.
 JEAN. You think the wife sent it?
 MARGARET. I don't know. I don't care. I'm sending it back.
 JEAN. I swear to god, Margaret, the first break you've gotten since I've known you, and you want to toss it back in. It's not like you don't deserve it.
 MARGARET. I don't want that money.
 DOTTIE. It's already been deposited.
 MARGARET. What are you talking about? It's not your money to deposit, / Dottie.
 DOTTIE. The envelope was / addressed to *me!*
 JEAN. You're being awful hardheaded, / Marg —
 MARGARET. I'm not taking his money.
 STEVIE. *Jesus!* It's not his money! (*Silence. He looks up at them.*) He didn't send the money. And neither did the wife.
 MARGARET. (*Beat.*) Stevie ...
 STEVIE. You make everything so difficult, you know it? Don't you know what a gift horse is?
 MARGARET. I assumed Mike sent it.
 STEVIE. Well he didn't.
 MARGARET. You don't have money to be paying my rent.
 STEVIE. I won last week. It wasn't much, but it was enough. And I never win at bingo.
 MARGARET. Stevie —
 STEVIE. You needed it more than I did.
 MARGARET. Still, you can't —
 STEVIE. Can you stop? You'll pay me back when you can. (*Pause.*)
 MARGARET. Okay.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. B-5. B ... 5.
 MARGARET. Thank you.
 STEVIE. You're welcome.
 DOTTIE. (*After a few beats.*) So what are you gonna do next month? (*Beat. Jean slowly turns to her.*)
 JEAN. What is wrong with you?

DOTTIE. What. It's a logical question.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-51. G ... 51.
 JEAN. You didn't mention Joyce?
 MARGARET. No, I did. He didn't believe she was his. (*Beat.*) I always thought you didn't know about that.
 JEAN. (*Looks at her.*) Everybody knew.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. N-43. N ... 43.
 DOTTIE. Did he like my rabbit, Margie?
 MARGARET. He threw it against a wall.
 DOTTIE. (*Beat. Confused.*) Well why would he do that?
 VOICE OF PRIEST. O-72. O ... 72.
 MARGARET. I'll try Gillette this week. See if I can get something down there. Can you call your brother, Stevie? See if he can get me in there?
 STEVIE. (*Beat.*) Sure. I'll talk to him.
 MARGARET. Thanks.
 JEAN. It's something at least.
 MARGARET. Yeah, it's something.
 JEAN. And if not Gillette, then something else.
 MARGARET. Yup.
 JEAN. Something'll come up.
 MARGARET. I hope so.
 VOICE OF PRIEST. G-53. (*Bingo daubers raised, they scan their cards searching for the number. Nothing.*) G ... 53. (*They continue to search their cards as the lights slowly fade.*)

End of Play

PROPERTY LIST

Folder with employee records
Pen
Dirty dishes
Instant coffee, coffee pot, coffee cups
Family photos on a shelf
Numerous bingo cards
Daubers for bingo cards
Hand-crafted rabbits
Handbag
Cell phone
Newspaper
Datebook
Wine glasses
Bottles of red and white wine
Wine bottle opener
Tray of cheese and crackers
Plastic bag with hand-crafted rabbit
Ornate crystal vase

SOUND EFFECTS

Door slam
Blaring TV
Voice-over of priest calling bingo numbers over cheap sound system
Murmur of a crowd at bingo hall
Voice of old lady at bingo hall
Front doorbell
Side doorbell
Voice-over of little girl (Ally)

NEW PLAYS

★ **BENGAL TIGER AT THE BAGHDAD ZOO** by **Rajiv Joseph**. The lives of two American Marines and an Iraqi translator are forever changed by an encounter with a quick-witted tiger who haunts the streets of war-torn Baghdad. "[A] boldly imagined, harrowing and surprisingly funny drama." *—NY Times*. "Tragic yet darkly comic and highly imaginative." *—CurtainUp*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2565-2

★ **THE PITMEN PAINTERS** by **Lee Hall**, inspired by a book by **William Feaver**. Based on the triumphant true story, a group of British miners discover a new way to express themselves and unexpectedly become art-world sensations. "Excitingly ambiguous, in-the-moment theater." *—NY Times*. "Heartfelt, moving and deeply politicized." *—Chicago Tribune*. [5M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2507-2

★ **RELATIVELY SPEAKING** by **Ethan Coen, Elaine May and Woody Allen**. In **TALKING CURE**, Ethan Coen uncovers the sort of insanity that can only come from family. Elaine May explores the hilarity of passing in **GEORGE IS DEAD**. In **HONEYMOON MOTEL**, Woody Allen invites you to the sort of wedding day you won't forget. "Firecracker funny." *—NY Times*. "A rollicking good time." *—New Yorker*. [8M, 7W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2394-8

★ **SONS OF THE PROPHET** by **Stephen Karam**. If to live is to suffer, then Joseph Douaihy is more alive than most. With unexplained chronic pain and the fate of his reeling family on his shoulders, Joseph's health, sanity, and insurance premium are on the line. "Explosively funny." *—NY Times*. "At once deep, deft and beautifully made." *—New Yorker*. [5M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2597-3

★ **THE MOUNTAINTOP** by **Katori Hall**. A gripping reimagination of events the night before the assassination of the civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "An ominous electricity crackles through the opening moments." *—NY Times*. "[A] thrilling, wild, provocative flight of magical realism." *—Associated Press*. "Crackles with theatricality and a humanity more moving than sainthood." *—NY Newsday*. [1M, 1W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2603-1

★ **ALL NEW PEOPLE** by **Zach Braff**. Charlie is 35, heartbroken, and just wants some time away from the rest of the world. Long Beach Island seems to be the perfect escape until his solitude is interrupted by a motley parade of misfits who show up and change his plans. "Consistently and sometimes sensationally funny." *—NY Times*. "A morbidly funny play about the trendy new existential condition of being young, adorable, and miserable." *—Variety*. [2M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2562-1

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NEW PLAYS

★ **CLYBOURNE PARK** by **Bruce Norris**. WINNER OF THE 2011 PULITZER PRIZE AND 2012 TONY AWARD. Act One takes place in 1959 as community leaders try to stop the sale of a home to a black family. Act Two is set in the same house in the present day as the now predominantly African-American neighborhood battles to hold its ground. "Vital, sharp-witted and ferociously smart." —*NY Times*. "A theatrical treasure...Indisputably, uproariously funny." —*Entertainment Weekly*. [4M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2697-0

★ **WATER BY THE SPOONFUL** by **Quiara Alegría Hudes**. WINNER OF THE 2012 PULITZER PRIZE. A Puerto Rican veteran is surrounded by the North Philadelphia demons he tried to escape in the service. "This is a very funny, warm, and yes uplifting play." —*Hartford Courant*. "The play is a combination poem, prayer and app on how to cope in an age of uncertainty, speed and chaos." —*Variety*. [4M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2716-8

★ **RED** by **John Logan**. WINNER OF THE 2010 TONY AWARD. Mark Rothko has just landed the biggest commission in the history of modern art. But when his young assistant, Ken, gains the confidence to challenge him, Rothko faces the agonizing possibility that his crowning achievement could also become his undoing. "Intense and exciting." —*NY Times*. "Smart, eloquent entertainment." —*New Yorker*. [2M] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2483-9

★ **VENUS IN FUR** by **David Ives**. Thomas, a beleaguered playwright/director, is desperate to find an actress to play Vanda, the female lead in his adaptation of the classic sadomasochistic tale *Venus in Fur*. "Ninety minutes of good, kinky fun." —*NY Times*. "A fast-paced journey into one man's entrapment by a clever, vengeful female." —*Associated Press*. [1M, 1W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2603-1

★ **OTHER DESERT CITIES** by **Jon Robin Baitz**. Brooke returns home to Palm Springs after a six-year absence and announces that she is about to publish a memoir dredging up a pivotal and tragic event in the family's history—a wound they don't want reopened. "Leaves you feeling both moved and gratifyingly sated." —*NY Times*. "A genuine pleasure." —*NY Post*. [2M, 3W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2605-5

★ **TRIBES** by **Nina Raine**. Billy was born deaf into a hearing family and adapts brilliantly to his family's unconventional ways, but it's not until he meets Sylvia, a young woman on the brink of deafness, that he finally understands what it means to be understood. "A smart, lively play." —*NY Times*. "[A] bright and boldly provocative drama." —*Associated Press*. [3M, 2W] ISBN: 978-0-8222-2751-9

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GOOD PEOPLE

by David Lindsay-Abaire

2M, 4W

Welcome to Southie, a Boston neighborhood where a night on the town means a few rounds of bingo, where this month's paycheck covers last month's bills, and where Margie Walsh has just been let go from yet another job. Facing eviction and scrambling to catch a break, Margie thinks an old fling who's made it out of Southie might be her ticket to a fresh new start. But is this apparently self-made man secure enough to face his humble beginnings? Margie is about to risk what little she has left to find out. With his signature humorous glow, Lindsay-Abaire explores the struggles, shifting loyalties and unshakeable hopes that come with having next to nothing in America.

"David Lindsay-Abaire pays his respects to his old South Boston neighborhood with this tough and tender play about the insurmountable class divide between those who make it out of this blue-collar Irish neighborhood and those who find themselves left behind. The scrappy characters have tremendous appeal, and the moral dilemma they grapple with — is it strength of character or just a few lucky breaks that determines a person's fate? — holds special significance in today's harsh economic climate."

—Variety

"... shot through with aching authenticity, GOOD PEOPLE is that rare play that is both timeless and completely keyed into a specific moment in American life — without the need to grasp for topicality. Bringing the same clear-eyed emotional observation that distinguished his Pulitzer winner, Rabbit Hole, David Lindsay-Abaire has crafted another penetrating drama about deeply relatable issues, albeit this time with more warming doses of humor."

—The Hollywood Reporter

"... incisively drawn characters and sharp, witty dialogue. The interactions between the characters feel vividly real, from Mike's increasing registers of annoyance to Margie's edgy sarcasm to Kate's genuine attempts at civility. Even Steve, the dollar shop manager who fires Margie, is revealed to have unexpected depths in the bingo playing scenes that amusingly riff on the lower class characters' financial desperation."

—ScheckOnTheater

"Wonderful ... this isn't a manipulative tear-jerker or a simplistic diatribe. GOOD PEOPLE is poignant, brave and almost subversive in its focus on what it really means to be down on your luck."

—The New York Post

Also by David Lindsay-Abaire

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