

# “BIG LITTLE LIES”

Episode #1

“Somebody’s Dead”

Written By

David E. Kelley

**REVISED PAGE: 53**

Based on the book: “Big Little Lies” by Liane Moriarty.

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PRODUCTION DRAFT – 01/03/16  
FULL BLUE Revision – 01/07/16  
PINK REVISION – 01/09/16  
YELLOW REVISION – 01/23/16  
GREEN REVISION – 05/22/16

**CAST LIST**

MADELINE MARTHA MACKENZIE  
CELESTE WRIGHT  
JANE CHAPMAN  
PERRY WRIGHT  
ED MACKENZIE  
NATHAN CARLSON  
BONNIE CARLSON

Renata Klein  
Gordon Klein

Ziggy Chapman (minor)  
Chloe Mackenzie (minor)  
Amabella Klein (minor)  
Max Wright (minor)  
Josh Wright (minor)  
Abigail Carlson (minor)

Skye Carlson (minor)  
Joseph Bachman

Detective Adrienne Quinlan  
Detective Walt Gibson

Principal Warren Nippal  
Ms. Emily Barnes  
Di Chapman

Lori  
Tom  
Juliette

Gabrielle  
Harper Stimson  
Jackie  
Bernard  
Oren  
Matt  
Samantha  
Stu  
Thea Cunningham  
Dr. Leo Chang

**SETS LIST**

**INTERIORS:**

MADELINE'S HOUSE

- DINING ROOM - SUNSET
- HALLWAY OUTSIDE ABIGAIL'S ROOM - NIGHT
- ABIGAIL'S ROOM - NIGHT
- FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

CELESTE'S HOUSE - SUNSET

- DEN - NIGHT
- HALLWAY - NIGHT
- LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

JANE'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

- ZIGGY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BONNIE'S STUDIO - DAY

JANE'S PRIUS - MORNING

\*

MADELINE'S SUV - MORNING

BLUE BLUES CAFÉ - DAY

**EXTERIORS:**

OTTER BAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

- SCHOOL TERRACE - MORNING & MID-DAY
- PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

MADELINE'S HOUSE, BACKYARD BEACH - SUNSET

CELESTE'S HOUSE

- PATIO - DAY
- DECK - SUNSET

JANE'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

RENATA'S HOUSE - SUNSET

- DECK - SUNSET
- 

FISHERMAN'S WHARF

- PARKING LOT - DAY
- BOARDWALK - DAY

BLL - EP 1 - "Somebody's Dead" - FULL BLUE - 01/07/16

**EXTERIORS: (CONT'D)**

MONTEREY - BIXBY BRIDGE - MORNING

ROAD BY THE OCEAN - MORNING

BEACH - NIGHT

**SONG LIST:**

"BRIGHT LIGHTS" - GARY CLARK JR.

"VICTIM OF LOVE" - CHARLES BRADLEY

"KING KONG" - BABE RUTH

"CALL ON ME" - JANIS JOPLIN

\*

PIANO MUSIC - TBD (CHLOE & MADELINE PLAY)

"SEPTEMBER SONG" - AGNES OBEL

"WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A B.A. IN ENGLISH?" - Avenue Q (Madeline)

## BIG LITTLE LIES

## "Somebody's Dead"

100 OVER BLACK WE HEAR THE SOUND OF SOMEONE BREATHING OVER 100  
DISTANT, SPORADIC POLICE RADIO CLIPS; IT CONTINUES AS WE  
FADE IN ON BLURRY FLURRIES OF FLASHING LIGHTS AND AS WE  
INTRODUCE GLIMPSES OF DIFFERENT MALE AND FEMALE FACES  
DAZZLED BY THE LIGHTS. WE DO NOT SETTLE ON THESE PEOPLE,  
THEIR IMAGES ARE FAST, FLEETING, BUT WE DO HAVE TIME TO  
NOTICE SOMETHING: THE MEN ALL LOOK LIKE ELVIS PRESLEY; THE  
WOMEN LIKE AUDREY HEPBURN.

AS WE HEAR A CAR DOOR BEING SHUT...

101 EXT. SOMEWHERE - NIGHT 101  
WE WHIP PAN ON A POLICE CAR WHERE DETECTIVE ADRIENNE  
QUINLAN, forties, IS MET BY PARTNER/COLLEAGUE DETECTIVE  
WALT GIBSON, also forties. THEY WALK PAST A FIRE TRUCK, AN  
AMBULANCE, THROUGH A CRIME SCENE.

GIBSON

In the back.

QUINLAN

(re: all the people)  
What is all this?

GIBSON

Some Costume night, or something.  
School fundraiser.

AS QUINLAN SURVEYS THE SURROUNDINGS, WE GET OUR FIRST GOOD  
LOOK: DIFFERENT WHIP PANS REVEAL THE YARD LITTERED WITH  
ELVIS PRESLEYS RANGING FROM LATE TWENTIES TO MID-FORTIES; A  
BUNCH OF AUDREY HEPBURNS AS WELL, SAME AGE-RANGE, ALL  
SHAPES AND SIZES. A FORTUITOUS COSTUME FOR SOME OF THE  
WOMEN; LESS SO FOR OTHERS.

GIBSON (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Victim's on the back terrace.

AND WE WHIP PAN BACK TO THE DETECTIVES. We get it now. This  
is the POV of someone watching them. And we can still hear  
his or her breathing.

QUINLAN

Witnesses?

DET. GIBSON

Plenty. Though not a lot of clarity.

(CONTINUED)

101

CONTINUED:

101

QUINLAN

(no nonsense)

How contaminated is this scene?

GIBSON

They did a pretty good job of it.

They arrive on top of a staircase and stop, stare down at what we can only surmise is a dead body. EMT'S AT WORK BUT THERE'S NO PENDING EMERGENCY. WHAT'S DONE IS DONE.

GIBSON (CONT'D)

Already dead when we arrived.

Quinlan stares at the ground, shakes her head.

QUINLAN

My god.

CLOSE ON GABRIELLE

late thirties, in what appears to be a police interrogation room. NOTE: ALL FREE-STANDING CLOSE-ONS ARE IN THIS SETTING.

GABRIELLE

It wasn't just the mothers. It was the dads, too.

CLOSE ON STU, fortyish

STU

The thing about fundraisers. They're vicious.

CLOSE ON samantha, forty

SAMANTHA

Everybody wants to prove who's the richest.

CLOSE ON STU

STU

Add alcohol to the mix... and the fact that... women don't let things go. They're like the Olympic athletes of grudges.

CLOSE ON THEA, forties

THEA

It's sexist how the women always get blamed.

(CONTINUED)

101 CONTINUED: (2) 101

CLOSE ON HARPER, fortyish

HARPER

I'm telling you. It all goes back to  
the incident on Orientation Day.

AN ELECTRIC GUITAR STARTS TO PLAY THE FIRST NOTES OF "BRIGHT  
LIGHTS" FROM GARY CLARK JUNIOR AS WE CUT TO:

102 EXT. MONTEREY - BIXBY BRIDGE - MORNING 102

AN SUV CROSSES A BRIDGE BY THE OCEAN WITH A SPECTACULAR  
VIEW.

HARPER (V.O.)

And at the root of it was Madeline...

103 INT. MADELINE'S SUV - MORNING 103

A TIGHT SHOT OF MADELINE MARTHA MACKENZIE, DRIVING.

HARPER (V.O.)

... the Herculean talker.

forty, a whirlwind of a human being, quakes with good  
intentions, bright, bossy. The contrast between Clark's  
sexy, rock n roll track and Madeline's face is interesting,  
not an obvious match, but quite an intro. There is nothing  
apparently rock n roll about her, but sexy...

MADELINE

There's really nothing to be afraid  
of. Your sister had a great time and  
so shall you. No need to be nervous.

She speaks rapid-fire, perfect enunciation. NOW, SEEN FROM  
BEHIND, FROM HER SIX-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER'S PERSPECTIVE:

MADELINE (CONT'D)

You should be excited, you know why?

MEET CHLOE, seated in the back of the SUV, moving her head  
to the MUSIC AS THE BEAT EXPLODES. Glittery, bossy, just  
like her mother; precocious beyond her years, with a rock  
star quality. WE'RE ON A WELL-TRAVELED ROAD IN MONTEREY,  
CALIFORNIA, NEXT TO THE OCEAN, BLUE SKY, BRIGHT SUN. CHLOE  
MOUTHS THE FOLLOWING:

MADELINE (CONT'D)

This is the very first day of the  
rest of your life.

(CONTINUED)

103

CONTINUED:

103

CHLOE  
(some eye-roll)  
Okay, woman.

MADELINE  
Not a hundred percent sure about that  
tone.  
(then)  
Would you, please?

Chloe immediately LOWERS THE VOLUME OF THE MUSIC from her iPOD that is connected to the car radio when suddenly Madeline jams on the brake, LEANS ON THE HORN.

REVEAL IN FRONT OF HER, A BLUE MITSUBISHI, TEEMING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE, TEENAGERS, slowly moving behind other cars towards a stop sign at an intersection.

MADELINE (CONT'D)  
Mother--

CHLOE  
Fucker!

MADELINE  
Chloe Adeline Mackenzie!

CHLOE  
You were thinking it.

MADELINE  
Only 'cause that scared me. You want to see how teenagers die, this is how, that girl in front of me is driving her car and texting at the same time.

MADELINE LEANS ON THE HORN, YELLING OUT THE WINDOW:

MADELINE (CONT'D)  
You are going to die!!

THE DRIVER SPIES MADELINE IN HER REAR-VIEW MIRROR, AS MADELINE JAMS HER FINGER INTO HER PALM, SIMULATING TEXTING.

MADELINE (CONT'D)  
It's illegal! It's against the law!!

THE DRIVER, A TEENAGE GIRL, COOLLY EXTENDS THE FINGER: "UP YOURS," with the poise of a veteran bird-flipper.

(CONTINUED)

103 CONTINUED: (2) 103

MADELINE THROWS THE CAR INTO PARK, JAMS ON THE EMERGENCY BRAKE, AND IS OUT OF THE VEHICLE IN A FLASH. CHLOE SIMPLY TURNS UP THE MUSIC. She's seen this before.

104 EXT. ROAD BY THE OCEAN - CONTINUOUS 104

MADELINE STORMS UP TO THE OFFENDING CAR, BANGS ON THE WINDOW. THE DRIVER, LORI, SEVENTEEN-ISH, WHITE SKIN, SPARKLY NOSE-RING, CLUMPY MASCARA, SLIDES DOWN THE WINDOW.

LORI

What is your problem?

MADELINE

You put down that phone. You could kill yourself and your-- Abigail?

A stunned beat.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

What have I told you about riding with texters, young lady?!

On the back seat, a SIXTEEN YEAR OLD GIRL drops her head into her hands.

ABIGAIL

Mom!

MADELINE

It's worse than drinking!

MADELINE SNATCHES THE PHONE, THEN WINGS IT ONTO THE FLOOR IN FRONT OF THE GAPE-JAWED PASSENGER.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

You must stop it.

Lori looks back at this alien. As Madeline turns and heads back, she HEARS THE EXPLOSION OF LAUGHTER FROM WITHIN THE MITSUBISHI. Upon which, MADELINE NOTICES ANOTHER CAR, STOPPED BEHIND HERS; SHE THROWS OUT AN APOLOGETIC WAVE, BEGINS TO TROT BACK TO HER CAR, PROMPTLY FALLS. SPLAT.

CLOSE ON GABRIELLE

GABRIELLE

It's possible that had she not fallen, nobody would've gotten killed.

105 INT. JANE'S PRIUS - MORNING

105

JANE CHAPMAN, twenty-four, behind the wheel, her tired old Prius idling behind the parked SUV. There's a palpable fragility to Jane. No makeup, no effort made to draw attention to herself. A hint of anxiety on her face; through it all she oozes a fundamental kindness.

JANE

Ouch.

STRAPPED INTO THE BACK SEAT, HER SIX-YEAR-OLD SON, ZIGGY. Big eyes, the image of innocence and gentility. He could pass for a puppet.

ZIGGY

Did you hurt yourself?

JANE

No. The lady tripped, she fell down.

THE MITSUBISHI ZOOMS OFF after doing its stop at the intersection. JANE PUTS ON HER SIGNAL, BEGINS TO NAVIGATE PAST THE PARKED SUV.

ZIGGY

Where are we going?

JANE

We don't want to be late for Orientation.

ZIGGY

But shouldn't we make sure the lady's okay?

JANE

Well...

(then)

You're right, we should.

JANE PULLS THE PRIUS OVER, DEBOARDS, under--

106 EXT. ROAD BY THE OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

106

JANE

(calling to Madeline)

Are you okay?

As Jane helps her up--

(CONTINUED)

106

CONTINUED:

106

MADELINE

I'm fine. I just rolled my ankle a little.

JANE

You should probably get ice on it.

MADELINE

I've got to get to school. My daughter's first day, they have a thing about tardiness.

JANE

At Otter Bay? That's where I'm going, my son, Ziggy, is starting there.

MADELINE

Ziggy? Like Ziggy Stardust? What a great name.

(indicating)

That's my little Chloe, shrinking from embarrassment right there. Are you new to Monterey?

JANE

Just moved here. Two weeks ago.

MADELINE

I'm Madeline, by the way, Madeline Martha Mackenzie. I only go by Madeline, but for some reason I always mention the Martha.

JANE

Jane. Jane-no-middle-name Chapman.

MADELINE

I already like you, Jane-no-middle-Chapman. You're an intrinsically nice person, I have a nose for this sort of thing.

CLOSE ON BERNARD, forties.

BERNARD

What Madeline had was a nose for everybody else's business.

CLOSE ON OREN, also forties.

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED: (2)

106

OREN

(times ten)

Oh my god.

107 INT. JANE'S PRIUS - MORNING

107

Jane drives, Madeline rides, her injured foot elevated above the dashboard. Chloe sits in the back, next to Ziggy.

MADELINE

I'm a stay-at-home myself so I'm glad to welcome another full time mother into the ranks. It can be us against them sometimes, the career moms in this town, they put more into their various board meetings than they do parenting, trust me.

CHLOE

My Mom's an active talker.

JANE

I actually have a part-time job.

MADELINE

So do I, but it doesn't really count, the over-under in this town is a hundred and fifty thousand. I work in the community theater twenty hours a week, so I'm an "under," what do you do?

JANE

Bookkeeping. So I guess I'm an "under" too.

CHLOE

(to Ziggy)

When I grow up, I'm going to run a massive Label. Do you have plans?

ZIGGY BLINKS HARD, TWICE: A NERVOUS TIC HE HAS WHEN THINGS JUST DO NOT COMPUTE.

CHLOE (CONT'D)

I'm effervescent, which makes for a good leader. Do you have an adjective you like to go by?

ZIGGY

No.

(CONTINUED)

107

CONTINUED:

107

CHLOE

What kind of music do you listen to?  
I'm into soul. And rock n roll.

Ziggy blinks again.

JANE

He's a bit nervous.

CHLOE

There's nothing to be scared about.  
There aren't even that many rules to  
follow. We have to wash our hands  
before going into the classroom. And  
we're allowed only one paper towel.

AS ZIGGY BLINKS TWICE--

CHLOE (CONT'D)

No peanut butter allowed, 'cos some  
kids are allergic. You can't even  
have it in your lunch box. I got  
Janis on mine. Joplin, of course.  
My sister made it. Who's on yours?  
Don't tell me Bowie?

Jane takes a deep breath of anxiety.

JANE

Will he be teased if he brings his  
lunch in a bag?

MADELINE

Okay, darling, you need to relax.  
Ziggy will be walking in with Chloe,  
that's like arriving with the golden  
ticket.

The golden ticket smiles as she shows her iPod to Ziggy,  
and presses play.

107A

AN EXTREME CLOSE UP OF A FEMALE FINGER

107A

GENTLY HITTING THE HEAD OF A MICROPHONE THREE TIMES. THE  
INSTRUMENTAL BEGINNING OF A CHARLES BRADLEY SONG STARTS TO  
PLAY. Good old soul sound.

CLOSE ON HARPER

QUINLAN (V.O.)

An autopsy is still being  
conducted...

(CONTINUED)

107A CONTINUED:

107A

CLOSE ON GABRIELLE

QUINLAN (V.O.)  
... to ascertain the exact cause of  
death...

CLOSE ON SAMANTHA

QUINLAN (V.O.)  
... but at this point we can confirm  
that the victim...

CLOSE ON THEA

QUINLAN (V.O.)  
... suffered a broken pelvis...

CLOSE ON DETECTIVE QUINLAN

in front of a microphone. Perhaps a press conference.

QUINLAN  
... and a fracture at the base of the  
skull.

SMASH CUT TO:

GLIMPSES OF HARPER, GABRIELLE, SAMANTHA AND THEA, all looking like Audrey Hepburn, only now, they are not dazzled by FLASHING POLICE LIGHTS but by camera flashes, and they all have huge smiles on their faces. Then another Audrey Hepburn appears, one that we haven't seen yet, as we're startled by the voice of Charles Bradley who screams his heart out: I'M A VICTIM OF LOVIN YOU! Meet CELESTE WRIGHT.

108 EXT. CELESTE'S HOUSE, PATIO - DAY

108

A tall, statuesque beauty, mid-forties; she's stunning, even without her Audrey Hepburn look. We enjoy watching her as BRADLEY KEEPS SINGING OUT LOUD his broken heart. Her eyes closed, it looks like she's listening to the music and appreciating it. Perhaps retreating into it. This time, the match between sound and face seems perfect until something bounces off her forehead. She opens her eyes and clearly doesn't have the look of someone who is appreciating the moment.

CELESTE'S POV: her SIX-YEAR-OLD TWINS, JOSH AND MAX, scamper about the patio, firing Nerf missiles at each other.

(CONTINUED)

108

CONTINUED:

108

CELESTE

C'mon, guys, put down the weapons,  
we're going to be late.

(kneeling before Josh)

Let's get your jacket zipped, c'mon.

THUMP: A NERF MISSILE BOUNCES OFF HER FOREHEAD. SHE CLOSES  
HER EYES AGAIN AND SHAKES HER HEAD.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

(calling out)

Perry!!

JOSH

He's my POW.

CELESTE

Put down the gun, and grab your  
jacket. We need to go.

Josh fires again, as PERRY, forties, suit and tie,  
Hollywood good looks, enters with a suitcase. THE MISSILE  
HITS CELESTE IN THE EAR.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Dammit.

PERRY

(to the Twins)

Hey, hey, hey! What did we say about  
shooting Mom before noon?

As Max beams--

CELESTE

(slightly amused)

Can you help me out a little?

PERRY

(pointing an imaginary pistol  
at his boys)

Bang bang!

The TWINS DROP LIKE FLIES, PLAYING DEAD.

CELESTE

Thank you.

PERRY

(to the Twins)

First one to the car gets a dollar.

And THE BOYS POP UP; IN A FLASH THEY'RE OUT THE DOOR.

(CONTINUED)

108

CONTINUED: (2)

108

PERRY (CONT'D)

(charming)  
Just takes money.

CELESTE

(with a smile)  
You're bad.

PERRY

I thought you liked me bad.  
(tenderly; covertly)  
We make a "bad" team.

A smile. A kiss. A loving look. These two are clearly very much in love.

PERRY (CONT'D)

I wish I didn't have to go.

CELESTE

Do you really have to?

A look. Another kiss. This one a little hungrier... his hand slides to her buttocks, this could lead to the table, seems like it has before.

CLOSE ON THEA

THEA

There should be like a five-year limit on how long couples get to be gooey.  
(adding)  
My opinion.

109

EXT. OTTER BAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - MORNING

109

MORNING RECEPTION IN PROGRESS. THE TERRACE AND YARD ARE BUBBLING WITH ENERGETIC FIRST GRADERS AND THEIR PROUD PARENTS. A bright building, manicured landscaping, the DISTANT SOUND OF THE PACIFIC OCEAN: public school meets a bit of paradise.

JANE

Gosh. It's all just so beautiful.

MADELINE

Right?

JANE

I mean, it's so spectacular.

(CONTINUED)

109

CONTINUED:

109

As Gabrielle passes--

GABRIELLE  
Madeline, hello, hi.

MADELINE  
Hi, Gabby. Good summer?

GABRIELLE  
Fantastic, you look wonderful.  
(covertly, re: Madeline's  
face)  
Did you..?

MADELINE  
I didn't, but you're sweet to think so.

GABRIELLE  
Well, you just look fabulous.

MADELINE  
You are so nice.

As Gabrielle heads off--

MADELINE (CONT'D)  
(to Jane; re: Gabrielle)  
A gossip, we don't like her.

As Bernard and Oren play through, both distracted.

BERNARD  
Hey Maddie, have you seen Justin?

MADELINE  
(pointing)  
Just ran by me, whoosh.

BERNARD  
(to Oren)  
That way.

As Bernard and Oren depart --

JANE  
Where's Ziggy? I've lost him.

MADELINE  
He's fine, Chloe's got him.

As RENATA, forty-eight, appears. Beautiful, sophisticated,  
affluent, with a finely-tuned self-awareness of all of it.

(CONTINUED)

109

CONTINUED: (2)

109

A crisp, symmetrical haircut, stylish glasses, Prada Pacific blue pantsuit; a woman of power.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(warmly)  
Renata, hello.

RENATA

(big smile)  
Madeline!

So friendly, they can only hate each other.

MADELINE

(claiming dominion)  
Please meet my friend, Jane Chapman,  
she's new here.

JANE

(to Renata)  
Hello.

RENATA

Renata Klein. A pleasure, and  
welcome.

(to Madeline)  
How was your summer?

MADELINE

Flew by, how 'bout yours?

RENATA

The same. Joined the Board at  
PayPal, don't ask me why.

AS HER CELL PHONE GOES OFF--

RENATA (CONT'D)

Hold on. My "Hamilton" tickets.

MADELINE

(spotting Celeste)  
Celestee!

THEIR POV

CELESTE IS AIMING HER SMARTPHONE, HAVING THE BOYS POSE FOR  
A PICTURE.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(to Jane)  
Come meet my best friend.

(CONTINUED)

Madeline takes Jane by the hand.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(hello!)  
Oh my god.

CELESTE

Madeline!

MADELINE

When did you get back?

CELESTE

Last night.

They embrace, then--

MADELINE

You total bitch, you got even more beautiful.

CELESTE

So did you. Is that the dress I bought you?

MADELINE

Damn straight, got my new dress, new shoes, new friend. Meet Jane Chapman, we already love her.

CELESTE

Hi, Jane.

MADELINE

She came to my rescue after I fell, trying to save young lives. Her son is Ziggy, he's the one with Chloe, so cute.

CELESTE

Can you believe they're in first grade?

Upon which, NATHAN CARLSON, forties, and his wife, BONNIE, twenty-seven, arrive. Nathan wears his customary light blue shirt: "Carlson Premium Landscaping" embroidered over the left pocket. Bonnie is cheerful, pretty, physically fit, a beautiful, sensitive soul... makes Madeline ill.

NATHAN

Hey, Maddie.

(CONTINUED)

MADELINE

Nathan, Bonnie, meet Jane.

(to Bonnie)

That dress is so gorgeous, oh my god.

BONNIE

Thank you, I made it.

MADELINE

Of course you did.

BONNIE

(to Madeline; eagerly)

Listen, I'd love to arrange a play-date for Chloe and Skye.

(CONTINUED)

109

CONTINUED: (5)

109

Madeline puts an over-my-dead-body-face on, covering with the brightest of smiles.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

They're not just classmates, but basically half-sisters, y'know.

MADELINE

Are they, now, am I missing the math?

NATHAN recognizes Madeline's undercurrent of hostility.

BONNIE

Well, Skye is Abigail's half-sister, and Abby is Chloe's half-sister, so... y'know.

CLOSE ON HARPER

HARPER

We were all concerned about Bonnie and Madeline both having their girls in first grade together.

CLOSE ON JACKIE

JACKIE

What it would do to the classroom dynamic.

RESUME

Nathan pulls Madeline aside.

NATHAN

Listen, are you okay to swap weekends? Let Abby come with us Friday?

MADELINE

Why?

NATHAN

We're going to see Bonnie's mother in Camarillo and Abby hates missing out. She and Bonnie's mom have kind of a special connection.

Madeline feels a twinge of vomit burn on her esophagus.

MADELINE

No problem.

(CONTINUED)

109 CONTINUED: (6)

109

NATHAN

You sure?

MADELINE

(forced sweet)

Do I not look and sound sure?

CLOSE ON DETECTIVE QUINLAN

QUINLAN

We're looking at all angles. Nobody  
has been ruled out.

CLOSE ON SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA

So we're like seriously using the  
word... "murder"?

110 EXT. FISHERMAN'S WHARF - PARKING LOT - DAY

110

We're inside a car watching the ocean, the hue, the waves,  
the mood... unpredictable, powerful, frightening,  
beautiful... the ultimate intoxicant: fear and beauty.  
That is Celeste's POV as she sits still being the wheel,  
just watching. We hear a CAR DOOR being shut. Celeste  
turns to look at...

Jane and Madeline in the distance, getting out of Jane's  
Prius as they walk away, but we can't hear them, they're  
too far. Of course, Madeline is speaking non-stop.

That puts a smile on Celeste's face. She stares back at  
the ocean for a moment. The sadness comes back. She  
washes it away and gets out.

111 EXT. FISHERMAN'S WHARF - BOARDWALK - DAY

111

Madeline and Jane walk on the boardwalk. Hobbled a bit by  
the turned ankle, Madeline walks, arm locked with Jane.  
Already intimate friends, it seems.

MADELINE

(to Jane)

I actually like Nathan.

(then)

Okay, "like" might be a strong word,  
but I admit he's a decent person. I  
just wasn't prepared to see him  
there, he certainly wasn't for  
Abigail's first day.

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

111

JANE

And Bonnie's the new wife?

MADELINE

Yes, and she's wonderful. In fact,  
she's so nice and pretty and perfect  
and sweet I could just, y'know...

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED: (2)

111

JANE

Punch her in the face.

That startles Madeline; she stops, and spots Celeste in the distance, approaching.

MADELINE

(shouting, to Celeste)

We love her!

112 INT. BLUE BLUES CAFE - DAY

112

Funky, charming, a bit distressed... a great little gem of a salty beach cafe. TOM, thirties, proprietor-barista extraordinaire, is there as the three girls arrive.

TOM

Madeline! What's happened to you?

MADELINE

I am gravely injured, Tom. Turned my ankle.

TOM

(with a wink to Jane)

Oh, calamity.

MADELINE

This is my friend, Jane. She's my knight in shining armor, rescued me like a wounded dog, and you know what else, she's funny.

TOM

Nice to meet you, funny Jane.

MADELINE

She's just moved here, I'm guessing for your special coffee, could you bring us some, and throw in something chocolate that won't make my ass fat.

TOM

You got it.

(CONTINUED)

MADELINE

Everybody comes here for the schools, you're not alone, private school education at a public school price. Anyway, you're going to love it here. Do you surf? What about your husband -- or partner, I should say, or boyfriend, girlfriend -- I'm open to all possibilities.

JANE

No husband or partner. Just me.

MADELINE

So... Ziggy's dad..?

CELESTE

(to Madeline)

Easy, girl.

JANE

It's okay.

(then)

He's not in the picture.

(then)

He was actually never in the picture, we weren't... together.

MADELINE

(fascinated)

Really?

CELESTE

(sensing Jane's discomfort)

Where'd you move here from?

JANE

Santa Cruz. Lived with my parents there.

MADELINE

She's a part time bookkeeper, isn't that great?

(to Jane)

We actually hire freelance accountants at the theater when we go into production, I'll see if we have anything for you.

(CONTINUED)

JANE

Wow.  
(a beat, a bit overwhelmed)  
You're so... nice.

MADELINE

This is Monterey, we pound people  
with "nice."

CELESTE

Not to death.

Madeline and Celeste seem to have some sort of complicity.

JANE

You guys are long-time friends?

Madeline and Celeste look at each other.

MADELINE

We met what... four years ago?

CELESTE

(to Jane)  
She saved one of the twins from  
drowning.

MADELINE

Oh, please, he was in a swimming  
class.

CELESTE

Madeline. You jumped into a pool to  
save my child.

MADELINE

And I'd do it all over again.  
(to Jane)  
She bought me a new outfit after.

CELESTE

(to Jane)  
You could say we're lifetime friends.

Jane is just staring back at Celeste. She then diverts her  
stare. An awkward beat.

CELESTE (CONT'D)

(to Jane)  
Are you alright?

(CONTINUED)

112

CONTINUED: (3)

112

Jane nods. Madeline and Celeste exchange a look.

MADELINE

Tell us, honey.

JANE

It'll sound stupid.

They just stare at her; they'll wait for it.

JANE (CONT'D)

Sometimes when I go to new places...  
beautiful and lovely places... I get  
this sensation, if only I were here.

A beat. How odd.

MADELINE

But you are here.

JANE

I know, it's so weird. I feel like  
I'm on the outside looking in. At  
this other life, I guess. One that  
doesn't really belong to me.

ANGLE CELESTE

She knows exactly what Jane is saying. In fact, the words  
almost pierce her. This stranger with her raw, naked face -  
- suddenly, Celeste feels like she's known her forever.

RESUME

JANE (CONT'D)

(to Celeste)

And when I look at you... I'm sorry,  
I don't mean to embarrass you, but  
you are so beautiful it makes me feel  
almost ashamed.

MADELINE

Ashamed?

JANE

You both seem so exactly... right.  
Which makes me feel, I don't know...  
wrong, I guess.

The honest vulnerability of that is stunning to both  
Madeline and Celeste; they can only stare back.

(CONTINUED)

112 CONTINUED: (4)

112

We suddenly SEE them from outside, THROUGH A WINDOW, from a WALKING POV, JOSEPH BACHMAN'S, late thirties, as he arrives at the cafe. When he spots them, he stops.

JOSEPH'S POV

JANE (CONT'D)  
(muted through the glass)  
You probably think I'm crazy now.

MADELINE  
(muted)  
Of course not, but if you are, you'll be right at home in this town.

Some laughter.

ANGLE JOSEPH

Who turns... and leaves.

112A INT. BONNIE'S STUDIO - DAY

112A

Bonnie is getting ready to leave, gathering her purse and jacket as Nathan waits in the doorway. He's bristling.

BONNIE  
Honey. It's fine. Go back to work,  
I'll pick up Skye.

NATHAN  
It's not fine. She can be hostile to  
me. But not you. I'm coming.

BONNIE  
(Zen)  
And should she bottle up her emotions  
inside, what would that serve?

NATHAN  
Can't she see? You didn't do  
anything to her.

BONNIE  
None of us really see things as they  
are. We see things as we are.

(CONTINUED)

112A CONTINUED:

112A

NATHAN

With Skye and Chloe in the same class, it's only a matter of time before Madeline really gets to know you. Once she figures out you're smart, the shit's gonna hit the fan.

BONNIE

The shit's gonna hit the fan... if I don't tell her about the petition.

NATHAN

You're not gonna do that?

No answer. She's gone. He exits.

NATHAN (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Suicide. This is suicide.

113

EXT. OTTER BAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, TERRACE - MID-DAY

113

THE KIDS ARE EMERGING; FIND ZIGGY, CHARGING TOWARD JANE, STILL WITH MADELINE. THE PARENTS HAVE ALL REGATHERED.

ZIGGY

Mommy!

JANE

Hey, baby. How was it?

ZIGGY

Fun. I made friends.

JANE

(hugging him tightly)  
That's so wonderful.

MADELINE

He's beyond adorable, you do know that.

(then)

Where's the Chloe?

(then; spotting)

Ah, there, look at her, totally networking.

RENATA

(arriving)

Jane. Renata, hello, we met earlier.

JANE

Hello.

(CONTINUED)

113

CONTINUED:

113

With Renata is a YOUNG WOMAN, twenty.

RENATA

I wanted to introduce you to Juliette, my Amabella's nanny.

JULIETTE

(French accent)  
Pleased to meet you.

RENATA

She's French. I always think it's nice for the nannies to get to know each other. A little support group, shall we say.

MADELINE

Jane's not a nanny, Renata, she's a mother, only young. Like you used to be.

RENATA

Oh. I didn't mean...

TWO SIX-YEAR-OLD BLOND BOMBERS CHARGE BY, HEADING FOR CELESTE WHO BENDS DOWN TO HUG THEM BOTH, as Bonnie arrives--

BONNIE

Madeline. Hi.  
(pulls her aside)  
I just found out you're working at the community theater, which is great.  
(then; delicately)  
There's a petition going round...

Bonnie spots Nathan who is watching from a distance, shaking his head endlessly.

MADELINE

What do you mean, a petition?

BONNIE

About the play. There's some concern about whether it's appropriate, I know, it's ridiculous.

MADELINE

There's a petition to stop the production?

(CONTINUED)

113

CONTINUED: (2)

113

CLOSE ON THEA

THEA

That play was kind of a life-line to Madeline. Like it tethered her to a purpose.

CLOSE ON HARPER

HARPER

She grew up wanting to be Betty Grable.

(fighting a snicker)  
Ended up Betty Crocker.

RESUME

BONNIE

I signed it.

MADELINE

You signed it?

Nathan bites his lip, hoping the bomb won't explode.

BONNIE

Not because it's inappropriate, I just didn't think it was any --  
(catching herself)  
I had no idea that you were involved.

MS. BARNES (O.S.)

Excuse me.

AND THEN, A RISING WAVE OF COMMOTION: MADELINE SEES A SOBBING, CURLY-HAIRED LITTLE GIRL, SHOULDERS HUNCHED, CLUTCHING HER NECK. EMILY BARNES, twenty-four, known to all as Ms. Barnes, stands alongside her.

MS. BARNES (CONT'D)

Could I have everybody's attention for a moment?

Renata rushes to the distraught curly-haired child. Juliette follows, but hardly in a rush.

MS. BARNES (CONT'D)

Both children and parents please.

MADELINE

(to Jane)  
Uh oh, teacher voice.

(CONTINUED)

113

CONTINUED: (3)

113

MS. BARNES

(teacher voice)

We've had such a lovely morning, but we need to have a little chat about something. And it's a little bit serious.

WE HEAR SOME MUTTERING, WHISPERS: "What's going on?" etc.

MS. BARNES (CONT'D)

Someone just hurt Annabella. Excuse me, Amabella. And I'd like whoever it was to please come over and apologize because we don't hurt our friends at school, do we? And if we do, we always say sorry, because that's what first grade children do.

SILENCE. SOME KIDS STARE BACK. SOME STARE AT THE GROUND. SOME BURY THEIR FACES INTO THEIR MOTHERS' SKIRTS. There are no apologists forthcoming. Finally--

RENATA

Who was it, Amabella? Who hurt you, baby?

The child mutters something inaudible.

MS. BARNES

(steering the witness)

Was it an accident, maybe?

RENATA

It wasn't an accident, for God's sake, look at her neck, it has marks.

ANGLE ON BERNARD AND OREN, watching the others.

BERNARD

(whispering)

I bet it's Timmy Collins.

OREN

Way too much screen time.

Ms. Barnes kneels to talk to the little girl, whispers in her ear. The room is frozen, rapt.

JANE

(to Ziggy)

Did you see what happened, honey?

Ziggy shakes his head no. With vigor.

(CONTINUED)

MS. BARNES

Apparently one of the boys... um, well... my problem is that the children don't know one another's names yet. Amabella... she can't tell me which little boy...

RENATA

We're not going to let this go.

HARPER

(backing Renata)  
Absolutely not.

MS. BARNES

(over her head)  
Well...

ZIGGY

(taking Jane's hand)  
I'm ready to go home now, Mom.

JANE

It's okay.

MAX, ONE OF CELESTE'S TWINS, RUNS A MATCHBOX CAR OVER THE HEAD OF HIS BROTHER, JOSH, WHO SWATS IT AWAY LIKE A FLY.

ANGLE BONNIE AND NATHAN, WITH SKYE

BONNIE

(to Skye)  
Did you see anything, honey?

SKYE

No.

MS. BARNES

Amabella, honey, can you point to the boy who hurt you?

MADELINE

C'mon, really?

JACKIE

Shhh.

Amabella points at a little gangster standing next to Ziggy.

MS. BARNES

(re: the gangster)  
This boy?

(CONTINUED)

AMABELLA

No.  
(re: Ziggy)  
Him.

Jane's entire body clenches, as Ms. Barnes puts her hand on little Ziggy's head.

MS. BARNES

This boy?

ZIGGY BLINKS HARD, TWICE.

AMABELLA

Yes. He tried to choke me.

ZIGGY

It wasn't me!

AMABELLA

Yes it was.

TWO MORE HARD BLINKS from Ziggy; and we WHIP PAN ON JANE; she feels her chest tightening.

CLOSE ON THEA

THEA

There was something not quite right about that Ziggy. Something about his eyes.

CLOSE ON MATT

forties; blue-collar

MATT

They were spread kind of far apart.

CLOSE ON HARPER

HARPER

He picked the wrong little girl to strangle.

RESUME - ON ZIGGY, as Jane comes to the rescue.

ZIGGY

I didn't do anything.

MS. BARNES

Ziggy, sweetie, we just need you to say "Sorry," to Amabella, that's all.

(CONTINUED)

113

CONTINUED: (6)

113

JANE  
 (to Amabella)  
 Are you sure it was this boy?

RENATA  
 (nice, but firm; to Ziggy)  
 Could you say sorry to Amabella,  
 please? You hurt her quite badly.

ZIGGY  
 It wasn't me.

ANGLE CELESTE WITH MADELINE

CELESTE  
 (sotto)  
 Could she have got it wrong?

RESUME

RENATA  
 (to Ziggy)  
 Please don't lie. All you need to do  
 is say you're sorry.

JANE  
 Ziggy doesn't lie.

MADELINE  
 Alright.

RENATA  
 Well, I can assure you Amabella is  
 telling the truth.

HARPER  
 Absolutely.

The entire gathering is becoming tense.

JANE  
 If my son says he didn't do it, I  
 believe him.

MS. BARNES  
 Okay. This may not be the best way  
 to handle this --

Madeline looks at Ms. Barnes: "Now you realize." Bravo.

RENATA  
 The child needs to take  
 responsibility for his actions.  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

113

CONTINUED: (7)

113

RENATA (CONT'D)

He needs to see there are consequences, that he cannot go around choking other children, that he can't pretend he didn't do it.

AMABELLA

(to Renata)

It doesn't matter, Mom.

RENATA

It does matter,  
(to Jane)  
please make your son apologize.

MADELINE

Renata...

HARPER

(to Madeline)

Stay out of it.

As Bonnie takes a step to mediate; Nathan stops her.

JANE

I can't make him apologize for something he didn't do.

MS. BARNES

(way over her head)

Alright--

AMABELLA

I want to go home now.

ZIGGY

Me too.

RENATA

This is unacceptable.

MS. BARNES

Everybody--

RENATA

(to Ziggy)

If you ever touch my little girl again like that, you will be in big trouble.

Jane stiffens: Wait a minute!

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: (8)

113

MADELINE

(to Renata)

Now you need to apologize.

MAX

(thrilled; to his twin)

The grownups are fighting.

RENATA

Madeline--

MADELINE

Renata--

CLOSE ON BERNARD

BERNARD

The battle lines were drawn right there.

CLOSE ON THEA

THEA

Team Renata. Versus Team Madeline.

CLOSE ON PRINCIPAL WARREN NIPPAL

NIPPAL

(taking offense)

We have never had a Trivia Night end up in bloodshed before.

114 OMITTED

114

115 EXT. OTTER BAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - LATER

115

Madeline, Jane, and Celeste on a brisk walk; Madeline's ankle has been healed by adrenaline; KIDS IN TOW, they speak in hushed but urgent tones.

MADELINE

Aren't there laws in effect now, like a Students' Bill of Rights?

(to Jane)

Celeste used to be a lawyer. And a good one.

(back to Celeste)

Even first-graders are entitled to due process, am I wrong?

(CONTINUED)

115

CONTINUED:

115

CELESTE

He's not being punished.

MADELINE

But he could be stigmatized as a bully, which is worse.

JANE

I don't really want to make a big deal of this.

HARPER (O.S.)

Madeline.

REVEAL HARPER

Approaching

HARPER (CONT'D)

(to Jane)

Hey. Harper Stimson, hello, and welcome to Otter Bay. Hi, Celeste. How's Perry?

An imperceptible eye roll from Madeline, under --

CELESTE

He's great, thank you.

Harper immediately pulls Madeline to the side, but not out of earshot.

HARPER

If it'll help --

MADELINE

You didn't ask me about Ed.

HARPER

I'm sorry. Listen, Renata happens to be one of my best friends. So if there's any way I can play the role of peace maker in all this--

MADELINE

(smiling through her teeth)

Thank you so much, Harper. I'll let you know. And I'll be sure to let everyone know that Renata's your best friend.

As Harper's face falls--

(CONTINUED)

115 CONTINUED: (2)

115

HARPER  
I'm only trying to help.

MADELINE  
I'm sure you are.

And off Harper goes.

MADELINE (CONT'D)  
This could get ugly.

CELESTE  
(a hint)  
It doesn't have to.

JANE  
I think we should just let it blow  
over.

CLOSE ON THEA

THEA  
Things never blow over once Madeline  
gets involved. They blow up. Boom!

116 INT. MADELINE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - SUNSET

116

LOUD ROCK N ROLL MUSIC EXPLODES as Chloe's finger hits the  
play button on her IPOD's Sonos application.

ED, forties, Madeline, Chloe and Abigail set the table on  
Babe Ruth's dark, upbeat, psychedelic song, KING KONG.  
Nobody comments, nobody talks, everyone seems to accept the  
DJ's choice, quite a pick for a six year old. There is  
something dramatic about that track that totally suits the  
MALE VOICE that we start to hear...

MALE VOICE (V.O.)  
There was a four-by-three stellate,  
full thickness, scalp laceration,  
located on the superior occipital  
scalp.

CLOSE ON DR. LEO CHANG

fifties, to whom the voice belongs; some sort of press  
conference.

(CONTINUED)

116

CONTINUED:

116

DR. CHANG

We also found full thickness scalp contusion and associated galeal and subgaleal hemorrhages. Putrefied and liquefied brain.

RESUME ON MADELINE AND HER FAMILY now all seated at the dinner table.

MADELINE

(to Chloe)

Would you please?

Chloe LOWERS THE VOLUME OF THE BABE RUTH TRACK that is still playing.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

The teacher couldn't possibly have handled it worse, "can you point at the suspect, Amabella?" Come on.

ED

I take it this Jane is kind of damaged.

MADELINE

Why would you say that?

ED

You're drawn to damaged people.

MADELINE

I am not.

ED

Even Celeste, there's something wounded about her, if you ask me.

MADELINE

I didn't ask, and I am not drawn to damaged people. Do I bother to help people in need, last time I checked, that was not a personality flaw.

Abigail bites her lip. Fights a smile.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I see that, do you not think I see that?

As they eat in silence--

(CONTINUED)

116

CONTINUED: (2)

116

MADELINE (CONT'D)

On his very first day of school, to be accused like that. Can you imagine anything worse?

ABIGAIL

Being choked maybe?

MADELINE

Bruises heal, stigmas can last a lifetime.

ABIGAIL

You don't think assault victims bear lifetime emotional injuries?

MADELINE

I didn't say that, but it seems you read some recent study which you'd like to share.

ED

Alright.

MADELINE

Alright, what?

ED

Nothing.

MADELINE

Clearly it was something, Ed, you said, 'alright,' there was either meaning attached, or it was just a nervous tic. Which was it?

CHLOE

Guys, Mom had a day.

MADELINE

(to Chloe)

And never you mind.

CHLOE

I'm on your side, woman.

ABIGAIL

I think his 'alright' meant let's not fight at the dinner table.

MADELINE

Were we fighting?

(CONTINUED)

116

CONTINUED: (3)

116

ABIGAIL

We were about to. You said I probably read some "study," on women assault victims. I would've responded "no, I learned it at my 'Self-Defense and Wellness' class, which happens to be taught by Bonnie, who just the mention of her name can make your eyes twitch, so Ed said 'alright' to head it off.

A forced smile comes across Madeline's face, perhaps she's trying not to twitch. Then--

MADELINE

I see. While on the subject of Bonnie, you know what she did today? She actually signed a petition trying to stop our production of "Avenue Q".

ABIGAIL

This is the play where puppets drop F-Bombs?

CHLOE

Cool!

MADELINE

It is not only not about that but it would actually be a good thing for you to see, since it captures the struggle of young adults being disillusioned with life, feeling demoralized and defrauded by the false promises of tomorrow.

ABIGAIL

I can get all that here.

And Madeline whacks the table. Rises. Exits.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

What'd I say?

117

INT./EXT. CELESTE'S HOUSE - DECK - SUNSET

117

The backyard offers a striking view of the ocean, its waves crashing below magnificent cliffs as...

Celeste and the boys are on the deck. Her phone in hand, she's making them pose for photos. But we can't hear them. Or hardly. We're inside looking out through a window.

118

EXT. CELESTE'S HOUSE - DECK - SUNSET

118

CELESTE

Okay. To your right, guys, and closer together.

Now we hear them. Or hardly, because of the sound of the waves that crash on the cliffs.

As the boys lean closer--

CELESTE (CONT'D)

Perfect, except for the faces, can we maybe smile a little?

SOMEBODY'S POV... watching the above.

REVEAL PERRY

On the deck... watching his family. As much as he wants to rush over and hold them, kiss them... he has to just stop and absorb how incredibly blessed he is. That's his wife over there. His two beautiful boys, in this incredible home. He's hit the lottery in life.

RESUME

JOSH

(making a muscle)  
I have bigger muscles.

MAX

(making a muscle)  
No you don't... Mine are bigger.

JOSH

Dad!!

And now WE SEE WHAT JOSH SEES: PERRY is sneaking up behind Celeste; he's holding a finger up to his lips: "Ssshhh."

CELESTE

Okay, show me muscles, and smiles as big as the muscles.

Perry gently lowers behind Celeste.

JOSH

Hey, Mom. Wanna play "Angry Beaver"?

CELESTE

In a minute.

(CONTINUED)

118

CONTINUED:

118

MAX

I think the angry beaver is gonna get you, Mom.

CELESTE

(clicking away)

Oh my, I hope not, that'd be so awful.

And suddenly, PERRY ROARS AND GRABS HER. CELESTE LETS OUT A SCREAM OF HORROR; AS THE BOYS SQUEAL WITH DELIGHT, she turns to SEE PERRY. She's stunned.

PERRY

Okay, so I'm a happy beaver.

CELESTE

You're not going to Vienna?

PERRY

No, I still have to go. But I can get a flight out tomorrow.

A look between them.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Tomorrow's their first day of school. Didn't wanna miss.

Celeste, moved, grateful, goes to him, hugs him tightly. And they kiss. The kids are watching with huge smiles as Perry points the imaginary pistol at them. Bang bang.

The boys play dead, as the parents keep kissing passionately.

CLOSE ON GABRIELLE

GABRIELLE

I kind of agree with Thea, enough is enough.

CLOSE ON JACKIE

JACKIE

People over forty shouldn't be gushy.

119

EXT. RENATA'S HOUSE - SUNSET

119

A STUNNING RON MANN CONTEMPORARY, on top of a mountain, with an infinity pool overlooking the ocean, a breathtaking sight.

(CONTINUED)

119

CONTINUED:

119

WE FIND RENATA ON THE DECK, sipping a Tanqueray and tonic. Staring, glaring into the distant ocean. HUSBAND GORDON KLEIN, fifty, EMERGES, sits, glass of wine in hand. Silence. Until--

RENATA

What is our princess doing?

GORDON

She's on her computer. She seems okay.

No response. She's been quiet all evening. Dangerous territory for Gordon. He's doomed either for inquiring, or failing to. Finally--

GORDON (CONT'D)

You okay?

RENATA

Fine.

"Fine" means "beyond fucked" in Renata-speak. But he's on record for asking at least, maybe he can tip-toe out of the minefield. More silence. Until--

RENATA (CONT'D)

(simply)  
I'm not liked.

GORDON

What?

She fixes a look on him.

RENATA

I said I'm not liked.

GORDON

(a weak attempt)  
That simply isn't true, honey.

Renata holds a look: "You know it's true." And then she looks back to the ocean.

RENATA

It's one thing to be demonized for having the temerity to have a career.

She sips.

(CONTINUED)

119

CONTINUED: (2)

119

RENATA (CONT'D)

I mean, what kind of person would choose to work? Certainly not a "mother" by any acceptable definition.

(sips)

If you could have seen the looks I got today. The morning I decide not to go to the office but rather to accompany my child to her Orientation... to defend her after she is physically assaulted, to react humanly, as any mother would... I was met with utter contempt.

Okay. He has a job to do here. Certainly if he's hoping for sex this calendar year.

GORDON

(carefully)

I'm sure there are those, especially women, who might resent you. You're beautiful, hugely successful, financially independent, on the School Committee, the Board at the aquarium...

(nudging it even further)

...and to make matters worse, you're beyond sexy.

She stares. Straight ahead. Loves what she hears. Looks at him. Smiles. He smiles back. And she stares at the waves again. She's not going to cry.

GORDON (CONT'D)

Women. You all want to be the envy of your friends, but god forbid you garner too much of it.

Her head slowly turns; levying a punishing look on him. He fucked up. Knows it.

120

INT./EXT. MADELINE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD BEACH - SUNSET

120

Another POV through a window: Chloe's. She's looking at her mother who stands still, alone, on the beach, staring into the horizon. The backyard and its view on the ocean are not as impressive as Renata's or Celeste's but still. Ed emerges from the house...

121

EXT. MADELINE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD BEACH - SUNSET

121

... and approaches Madeline. A look between them...

ED

You want to talk about it?

MADELINE

No. Talking is not a problem for me,  
when I want to talk, I talk.

Ed knows to wait it out; her default mode is "vent." He goes to the picnic table. Sits. She paces about, and then, finally--

MADELINE (CONT'D)

I'm losing her. Abigail.

ED

Of course you're not losing her.

MADELINE

It's Bonnie this, Bonnie that. Last week, she came home all excited about peeling potatoes at a homeless shelter, said it was such a beautiful experience to be able to contribute. She'll whine if I ask her to set the table, but peel one fucking potato with Bonnie...

ED

Bonnie's a positive influence. You'd rather Abby be out with friends smoking pot?

(off Madeline)

That wasn't helpful, was it?

MADELINE

(off Ed; softening)

I can feel her pulling away.

(then)

And Chloe will be right behind her, you should have seen her march right into school this morning like a woman/child, never looking back: "I'm on my own now, Mom. See ya."

(a beat)

They'll all be grown and gone one day and then we'll be left to move on to other chapters in life and I don't have any other chapters. This is it. I'm a mother.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

121

CONTINUED:

121

MADELINE (CONT'D)

That's my entire universe which is in total melt-down at the moment because my oldest daughter prefers to hang with her fucking step-thing.

ED

Hey. You will never lose them. And you know that.

Both of them are suddenly distracted by a NEW SONG THAT IS PLAYING FROM INSIDE THE HOUSE...

MADELINE

(fighting against her emotion)

I um... I always thought that Nathan would get his due. That Abby wouldn't love him as much as me. But he hasn't paid the slightest price. He's got Bonnie, who's nicer and younger and prettier and probably gives him mint-flavored organic blow-jobs. And he gets to be buddies with Abigail. He got away with it all. He won.

Ed absorbs that.

ED

(voice of calm)

Okay. Speaking as the consolation prize, we're going to have a pretty big fight about what you just said. But not tonight.

MADELINE

I didn't mean... you are the best thing that ever happened to me, don't you think for one second that you're not.

(a beat)

It's just possible for me to love you with all my heart, and nevertheless...

ED

Hurt over your ex.

He gets her. God, is she grateful for that. He pulls her into a deep embrace. Love is love. And Janis Joplin seems to agree: "*When times are bad, just call on me darling.*" They look at the house, moved by the attention of the DJ who has vanished.

122

EXT. JANE'S TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT

122

A small, unloved building, some decay on the shingles. But nothing looks too shabby when bathed in a full Monterey moon. Jane's on her cell, seated on the stairs of the porch, smoking, speaking with DI, her mother.

JANE

He was a little shaken up at first, said he never wanted to go back to school. But he's okay now.

DI (O.S.)

Why would she accuse Ziggy?

JANE

I don't know. She could have been confused, there were a lot of new faces... the thing is, she seemed truthful, it wasn't like she was a brat. The mother was a little awful, but the girl seemed okay.

DI (O.S.)

Well, you can't possibly think Ziggy tried to choke her.

JANE

Of course not.

DI (O.S.)

So what's going to happen?

JANE

Well, the principal decided it's best to let it go, move forward, so that's what we're going to do.

DI (O.S.)

I still don't understand why you chose to move there... all alone.

JANE

I'm not. I've already made friends, Mom. Most of the people are really friendly.

DI (O.S.)

People need family in their lives, you know? I really think you should come back here.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

JANE

Jesus, Mom! Can we not get into that again?!

(deep breath to calm herself)

I'm gonna go check on Zig.

Jane clicks off, takes a hit of... what is it, a joint... throws it away in the street, and walks inside...

123 INT. JANE'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

123

... into the living room where she stops in her tracks, looks around: a few boxes unpacked, nothing on the walls, furniture at its strict minimum, used, old, and a sink that leaks. One drop at a time. She takes her cell and dials.

DI (O.S.)

Hello?

A long beat.

JANE

I'm sorry. I love you, Mom.

DI (O.S.)

I love you too, hon...

She doesn't let her mom finish, hangs up again. Seems to feel better now. We do love this girl. She walks to the couch, pulls out a hide-a-bed. Sits on it a while, then rises, and disappears into the only bedroom of the house.

124 INT. ZIGGY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

124

ZIGGY LIES THERE ASLEEP as Jane stares at him.

Even though it's dark, we can't help being touched by what we see: the colors, the posters on the walls, the toys, the brand new furniture, a six year old boy's dream room. Now we really love this girl.

There's a certain magic to Ziggy while he sleeps. All his innocence comes to the fore. It hurts to think that this tender, sensitive boy will one day grow into a whiskered, broad-chested man thing. Jane gently climbs onto the bed, lies next to him. Studies that little face, counting the freckles. And she can't help but wonder a bit. Could he have done it? Does anybody truly know their child? After all... she then shakes the idea out of her head: "don't think about that." Almost on cue, Ziggy's eyes open and he's staring at her. Into her.

(CONTINUED)

124

CONTINUED:

124

JANE

Hey. Did I wake you?

He says nothing. Jane stares.

JANE (CONT'D)

Zig.

ZIGGY

Am I in trouble?

JANE

No, baby.

But she has to ask. She has to.

JANE (CONT'D)

Ziggy. Did you touch that little girl? You can tell me.

He just stares.

JANE (CONT'D)

Did you, honey?

ZIGGY

No.

She studies his face. He just stares back. Then--

ZIGGY (CONT'D)

Why did she say I did it?

JANE

I don't know, baby. Maybe she just got it wrong.

A beat.

ZIGGY

Am I going to have any friends?

JANE

Of course you are, baby. It's all going to be great, I promise you.

A beat. His little eyes close again. She then pulls him tight to her. Holds him close, as if trying to corral his youth. If only he could stay small, insulated from the pains and hardship that tomorrow promises. As she cradles him tightly, a myriad of emotions trickles: joy, fear, love, worry... whatever the cocktail, it results in tears.

124A INT. MADELINE'S HOUSE, HALLWAY / ABIGAIL'S ROOM - NIGHT 124A

Through a cracked door, we see ABIGAIL laying in bed, over her laptop, probably on FACEBOOK. A KNOCK. Madeline pokes in. Abigail immediately shuts her screen off.

MADELINE

Can we talk about the SAT tutor?

ABIGAIL

Mom.

MADELINE

Honey, if you don't get your boards up...

ABIGAIL

Y'know, Mom, the whole college thing, it's kind of a racket. Especially liberal arts, people go off to study Homer for four years, they graduate with a ton of debt and no job prospects.

MADELINE

You are going to college, young lady.

ABIGAIL

Ed didn't go, he's doing alright--

MADELINE

He took computer engineering--

ABIGAIL

And Dad, he never went, and he seems perfectly happy in life.

(off Madeline)

Career-wise.

MADELINE

Go ahead, finish the analogy, let's not leave Bonnie out. Her little cup of happiness just runneth over, doesn't it, with no college degree.

ABIGAIL

I'm sorry that you hate Bonnie. And that I'm unable to.

MADELINE

This is not about Bonnie. Not about your dad, or Ed, or even me. It's about you. And your future.

(CONTINUED)

124A CONTINUED:

124A

ABIGAIL

And what I'm saying is... The metric of success is not always monetary or career related. It can be much more of a holistic equation.

Okay. That actually makes Madeline's eye twitch.

MADELINE

I will not pretend to know as much as others about the holistic wonder of life. What I do know... in the end, if you're not independent, if you're not self-sufficient... all that it-takes-a-village crap, it's only true to a point. Even the best-laid plans can go poof, in which case you need to be educated, strong, independent, strong.

ABIGAIL

You said 'strong' twice.

(then)

You kind of remind me of a space-alien right now, you do know that.

Madeline smiles, tries to brush a piece of hair off Abigail's face but the daughter moves back, annoyed.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

(pointing to her laptop)

Can I?

They hold a look. The mother gets it, as it should be, and exits in silence.

125 INT. CELESTE'S HOUSE, HALLWAY / LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

125

We see Perry laying on the couch, the boys draped over him as he reads from "The Gashleycrumb Tinies" by Edward Gorey. This is Celeste's POV as she watches from the hallway. Her man. Her boys. A contrast to the previous scene.

PERRY

E is for Ernest who choked on a peach.

Perry pretends to be choked, and holds back a small BURP.

PERRY (CONT'D)

F is for Fanny sucked dry by a leech.

(CONTINUED)

125

CONTINUED:

125

Perry makes the sound of sucking something.

PERRY (CONT'D)

That's what you'll get if you go down to the beach without me or your Mom. Strictly forbidden. Too many leeches.

MAX

There wasn't any last time we went.

PERRY

Of course not, I was there. They're scared of me.

JOSH

Pfff!

PERRY

Didn't you notice? Every time we go down there, I scare them away.

JOSH

How?

PERRY

With my...  
(and he BURPS)  
...burping superpower!

ANGLE CELESTE

Fighting a giggle.

PERRY (CONT'D)

Once you master it, ciao, bye leeches.

And he BURPS again. A big one. The kids laugh.

PERRY (CONT'D)

You guys want to know a secret? I mean... top secret.

They nod. Of course, they want to know.

PERRY (CONT'D)

My superpower?  
(looks around)  
I get it from Mom.

MAX/JOSH

No?

(CONTINUED)

125 CONTINUED: (2)

125

PERRY

What did we have tonight at dinner  
with the steak?

JOSH

Mom's spinach salad?

PERRY

Top secret.

And he BURPS again. The boys laugh out loud.

ANGLE CELESTE AS SHE SHAKES HER HEAD, BRINGS HER SMARTPHONE  
UP, FRAMES A SHOT, AND... CLICK.

126 INT. CELESTE'S HOUSE, DEN - CONTINUOUS

126

CLOSE ON A COMPUTER, ON CELESTE'S Facebook page with  
different photos of Perry and the twins. It's a collage of  
bliss; Celeste organizes and re-organizes the page; there's  
a certain art to story-telling. She works away. Then, as  
a hand touches her on the shoulder, she flinches.

REVEAL Perry.

CELESTE

You startled me.

PERRY

Sorry. The boys mentioned a little  
girl getting hurt today.

CELESTE

(distracted)

Oh. Renata Klein's daughter. I  
don't think she was really injured...

(re: a photo)

Do they look cute there, or what?

PERRY

I love this one, too. Look at  
Maxie's little face.

These two look like real suckers for their children.

PERRY (CONT'D)

So what exactly happened? With the  
daughter.

CELESTE

A boy tried to choke her.

(CONTINUED)

126

CONTINUED:

126

PERRY

Seriously?

CELESTE

Seems nobody witnessed it, but she was pretty distraught. And there was a mark on her neck.

PERRY

Which boy, do you know?

CELESTE

His name's Ziggy, he's new, and truth be told, he seems very sweet. I met his mother, who couldn't be nicer.

PERRY

Well, to be safe, let's tell Josh and Max to keep their distance from him.

CELESTE

I don't think that's necessary.

PERRY

Honey. If the kid is violent--

CELESTE

He's not violent.

PERRY

You know this, how, because he seemed sweet?

CELESTE

First off, he may be completely innocent--

PERRY

Or guilty, and the last thing we need is for the boys to be getting mixed up with the wrong crowd.

CELESTE

They're six.

PERRY

They're not to associate with him.

As she goes to pass him--

CELESTE

You're being ridiculous.

(CONTINUED)

126

CONTINUED: (2)

126

And he grabs her arm, hard.

PERRY  
(suddenly icy)  
The boys are to stay away from that kid.

CELESTE  
(in pain)  
Take your hand off me.

PERRY  
If I can't be here to look out for them all the time, I'll at least make sure that you do.

CELESTE  
I asked you. To remove. Your fucking hand.

This is scary now. Could it actually get violent? Finally, he releases. She holds a dagger-glare, then exits the room. OVER PERRY, WE HEAR THE TINKLING OF SOME PIANO MUSIC.

127

INT. MADELINE'S HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - NIGHT

127

MADELINE SITS AT THE PIANO, PLAYING IMPERFECTLY, SINGING SOFTLY to herself and only herself.

MADELINE  
What is my life gonna be? Four years of college/ And plenty of knowledge...

AS SHE HITS A WRONG NOTE, SHE STOPS PLAYING. SHE GETS IT BACK INTO GEAR AND STOPS AGAIN WHEN SHE SEES ABIGAIL IN THE DOORWAY, STARING AT HER.

ABIGAIL  
That's a song from your puppet show, right?

MADELINE  
It's really more than a puppet show.

A beat. Abigail goes in, sits next to her mother. They hold a look, Madeline suddenly gets ambushed.

ABIGAIL  
This play is important to you, isn't it?

(then)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

127

CONTINUED:

127

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

I'll tell Bonnie to start a new petition. In favor of.

That gets Madeline to smile. She spots the same piece of hair that she wanted to brush off Abigail's face earlier. She wonders if she should try again. She does. This time, it works; it's a gentle and loving gesture.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Mom, are you okay? You're not like dying or anything, are you?

MADELINE

Dying, of course not. Why would you say such a thing?

ABIGAIL

Well, you seem a little wobbly. Are you having one of your massive periods?

MADELINE

No, I just... What people don't tell you is that you lose your children as they grow. As beautiful and wonderful as you've become, that little girl whose curly hair I'd have to de-tangle... the one who -- every time she had a bad dream -- would crawl into my bed, she's gone. I think that's what's going on now with me a little, maybe compounded by Chloe going into first grade... I'm losing my babies.

(deflecting)

Which, by the way, has been clinically compared to a massive period.

ABIGAIL

I'll always be your baby.

And that almost undoes Madeline. She fights mightily, perhaps futilely to hold in her emotion. She dare not say anything, fearing tears could actually gush out of her mouth. She nods instead.

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)

Bonnie's like a friend. Maybe even a best friend sometimes. But you're my mother. I'm your daughter.

The tears flow now. Madeline goes to hug Abigail.

(CONTINUED)

ABIGAIL (CONT'D)  
(watch the shirt)  
Silk.

And Madeline pulls back. No tears on silk.

MADELINE  
I can still call you 'baby-cakes,'  
right?

ABIGAIL  
Forever.  
(then)  
Not in public.

Madeline smiles but soon stops when she spots Chloe behind the door, peeping on them.

MADELINE  
Jesus! Go back to bed, young lady!  
Now!

Instead of running away, Chloe runs to them with a million dollar smile on her face. Impossible to resist. She sits between her mom and her sister and BEGINS TO PLAY ON THE PIANO; A PLEASANT SONG; A SIMPLE MELODY; LIKE A CHILD SONG. SOON, MADELINE JOINS IN FROM HER SIDE, ON ANOTHER OCTAVE. THEY HAVE DONE THIS DUET BEFORE. IT SHOWS. ABIGAIL WATCHES IN SILENCE, ENJOYING EVERY SINGLE NOTE. THE MUSIC CONTINUES AS WE CUT TO:

A WALKING POINT OF VIEW, at dawn, as we follow footsteps on the beach from a single person, apparently a man, since the imprints in the sand are from male shoes. They haven't been washed away yet by the waves that are coming in and out of frame, almost touching the footsteps. The person was walking very close to the water. Not too long ago. We stop when suddenly we notice that there are no more footsteps ahead, nor to the right towards the ocean; nor to the left, as if the person had vanished.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
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QUINLAN (O.S.)  
We are treating the matter as a  
homicide. We have no suspects as of  
yet.

CLOSE ON DETECTIVE QUINLAN

QUINLAN (CONT'D)  
I will say that we do believe we have  
probably already spoken to the person  
or persons involved.

(CONTINUED)

127

CONTINUED: (3)

127

CLOSE ON RENATA

steely-eyed... in her backyard, staring straight ahead, standing somewhat rigidly, a nightcap in her hand. Alone. In front of...

violent waves that are hitting the cliffs but we don't hear them. All we hear is the SOFT PIANO THAT KEEPS ON PLAYING and soon transforms into something more complex, classical, modern, repetitive. We're now listening to Agnes Obel's instrumental track, SEPTEMBER SONG. As we pull back, we realize that we're looking through a window...

CELESTE'S WINDOW

ON CELESTE

eyes open, IN BED. It shakes a little. She turns to look at PERRY, on the other side, facing the opposite direction. Sleep came to him. She turns back, no desire to sleep in her eyes, but the reflection of the crashing waves.

CLOSE ON JANE

As she returns from Ziggy's room and sits on the hide-a-bed. Stares at the drawer of her end table. Opens it. With a key. Looks inside for a long time. We want to see what she's looking at... but she closes the drawer.

CLOSE ON MADELINE

AS THE PIANO CONTINUES

She's seated at her vanity in a nightgown, looking at herself in the mirror, and then at Ed's reflection, already in bed, sleeping like a baby.

THE PIANO MUSIC ENDS as Madeline TURNS OFF THE LIGHT. THEN--

BLURRY FLURRIES OF LIGHTS, CAMERA FLASHES AND GLIMPSES OF different Elvis Presleys and Audrey Hepburns. A LOUD, CRYING HARMONICA STARTLES US WHEN WE SEE FLASHES OF NAKED FLESH: BODY PARTS OF A MAN AND A WOMAN, HARD TO TELL IF THEY ARE HAVING SEX, OR TRYING TO KILL EACH OTHER.

END CREDITS over the mystery and sexy vibe of "THE RAINBOW" from Talk Talk that sets the tone for what's coming and...

TO BE CONTINUED