

# LATE BLOOMER

"Pilot"

written by

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LATE BLOOMER: "PILOT"

TEASER

CLOSE ON:

JESSICA, 40's. Black, pretty, in a suburban "mom" kind of way. She's on a stage, holding a microphone.

JESSICA (V.O.)

That's me, Jessica DuPrey. Struggling to find myself.

She takes a deep breath, nervously staring out.

JESSICA

Any parents out there? How many know who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

(sings along)

"Sponge-bob Square-pants!" Yeah, we've all heard it. Ever find yourself unable to stop hearing it? Like at three a.m. when you get up to pee?

(off some giggles)

Or during a presentation at work?

(some laughter)

Or when you're fooling around with that special someone?

More laughter. Buoyed by the response, she continues.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Ever give up and just go with it, make it work for you?

She emphasizes the rhythm with a nasty bump and grind.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

"Sponge-Bob, Square-pants!"

(sighs)

Only now, every time my kids turn on Nickelodeon, I get a little wet.

She stares out. The laughter has stopped.

JESSICA (V.O.)

The tricky thing about finding yourself? It's sometimes in the last place you look.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

TITLE CARD: TWO WEEKS EARLIER

INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - DAY

Jessica's kitchen is filled with the evidence of children: Superhero plastic dishes. Crayon drawings on the fridge. Crushed cereal on the floor. We hear TYPING, fast and furious. From behind, we see a 5 year-old race up --

DYLAN (O.S.)

Mommy!!

His POV: Jessica's at the table, focused on her laptop.

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

Russell says I'm adopted. He said I was made in Taiwan.

(beat)

What does that mean?

Jessica pauses long enough to glare at someone behind Dylan.

JESSICA

Dylan, sweetheart. I would've preferred to tell you myself...but is it really that big a surprise?

Standing before her is RUSSELL (8) who's biracial (African-American/white), holding SOFIA (2) who's Latina. Finally we see 5 yr-old DYLAN. Who is, in fact, Taiwanese.

DYLAN

So you're not really my mom?

JESSICA

Of course I am.

DYLAN

But Russell said you carried him in your belly. So you love him more.

JESSICA

Oh, honey, no. If anything I love you and Sofia more. Daddy and I paid good money for you. Russell, he was free.

RUSSELL

Seriously?

Jessica shrugs: *that's what you get for messing with your brother.* She wipes away Dylan's tears, then hands him some Goldfish crackers. He smiles and runs off with his siblings.

JESSICA (V.O.)

There are advantages to being an older parent. You already understand the power of distraction. And Goldfish.

QUICK CUTS as we glimpse Jessica's life up to now.

JESSICA (V.O.)

You could say I've always been a late bloomer.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL LOCKER ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Flat-chested TEENAGE JESSICA tries not to stare as incredibly BUXOM CLASSMATES change into their P.E. clothes.

JESSICA (V.O.)

I chose my career late...

INT. UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL - DAY (FLASHBACK)

30 yr-old GRAD STUDENT JESSICA is the only one listening as her 22 yr-old CLASSMATES text, sleep or make out.

JESSICA (V.O.)

I met my husband late...

INT. CORPORATE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

35 yr-old MARKETING MANAGER JESSICA watches as branding specialist MORGAN DUPREY (36, white) presents focus group footage testing names for a new product.

As their COLLEAGUES watch the video, Morgan and Jessica are focused on each other. He smiles at her. She mouths back --

JESSICA

Your fly is open.

She gestures. Thinking she's flirting, Morgan waves back.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

(mouthing bigger)

Your. Fly. Is. Open.

But he smiles, still not getting it. So she LOUD WHISPERS. Just as the video ends.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I CAN SEE YOUR JUNK!

The entire room turns to look. Jessica shrugs "sorry" to a red-faced Morgan. He tries to casually spin around to zip up -  
- and KNOCKS OVER the display of mock-ups like dominoes.

JESSICA (V.O.)

We started our family late...

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A very PREGNANT JESSICA and Morgan open gifts at their coed baby shower, surrounded by FRIENDS --

-- who are so focused on chasing after their elementary school KIDS and texting MIDDLE SCHOOLERS they pay no attention to the guests of honor.

JESSICA (V.O.)

But when Russell finally arrived, he was perfect.

INT. HOSPITAL DELIVERY ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Morgan videos as a NURSE hands NEWBORN RUSSELL to Jessica.

JESSICA (V.O.)

Unfortunately our attempts to give him siblings didn't go as planned.

INT. FERTILITY SPECIALIST EXAM ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Jessica wears a paper robe, Morgan holds her hand. Both look crestfallen as the DOCTOR delivers their tests results.

JESSICA (V.O.)

So we looked beyond our front door. And once we adopted Dylan and Sofia, our house was full.

INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

JESSICA (V.O.)

Didn't take long to figure out I'd traded in an exciting career working nine-to-six for a far less glamorous job working six-to-nine.

Brief glimpses of Jessica's life:

-- hosting a Guardians of the Galaxy birthday PARTY for Russell and other 3rd graders who turn the house upside down.

-- following a trail of FINGERPAINTING from the hallway until she locates Dylan, still painting on the dining room wall.

-- escaping for a quiet moment to PEE, only to have Sofia find her, and sit on the potty beside her to join in the fun.

Shooing Sofia out, Jessica catches sight of herself in the mirror. Grey peeks through her dark hair, making her look more tired than she already feels. A PHOTO of herself in a business suit (partying with former colleagues) stares down from a collage on the wall. What happened to that woman?

JESSICA (V.O.)

After spending eight years on everyone else, I discovered I missed me.

RESUME PRESENT

INT. JESSICA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Jessica's still typing away as the kids watch cartoons and eat leftover pizza for lunch. We see a glimpse of her screen:

*Millennial parents, nobody cares how many times your baby pooped or puked. Spoiler: you're not the first to have kids.*

Morgan comes downstairs in a shirt and slacks. Work attire. Seeing her typing so forcefully, he sighs.

MORGAN

You're doing it again.

JESSICA

What?

MORGAN

You know.

JESSICA

I happen to be applying for jobs.

MORGAN

With that much zeal?

JESSICA

Maybe they're really good jobs.

(off his clothing)

You're going in? Morgan, this is the third weekend this month.

MORGAN

But if I bring in this cruise account, we'll get an all-expense paid trip to--

JESSICA

Hawaii?!

MORGAN

Tampa.

(off her disappointment)

But still...sandy beaches...mojitos in  
the moonlight. 'Cause I know nothing  
puts you in the mood more than --

JESSICA

Free stuff! Oh, baby.

They share a tender kiss. Dylan holds up his pizza, alarmed.

DYLAN

Is this pepperoni?

JESSICA

It's okay. I took all the pieces off.

DYLAN

But I know they *used* to be there.

JESSICA

I feel the same way about my abs.

(to Morgan)

I'll start looking at hotels.

MORGAN

Hold on, I don't have it yet.

JESSICA

You really think Dan would give it to  
the new guy over you?

MORGAN

Steve is a machine. Gets in at seven,  
stays 'til ten. His idea of a long  
lunch is cooking his Hot Pocket all  
the way through.

JESSICA

Speaking of, it wouldn't hurt to have  
a salad once in a while. Or ever. You  
need to take better care of yourself.  
They have these apps for your phone --

MORGAN

The only apps I care about are the  
ones that come with my meal.

She ignores his joke and starts loading the dishwasher.

JESSICA

I'm serious, they check everything.  
Blood pressure, heart rate --

She turns around. He's gone. Oh well. Russell and Sofia are glued to the TV. But Dylan is staring at her.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

You okay, buddy?

(off his stare)

You still bothered about the whole adoption thing? Don't be.

She gives him a kiss. He waits, with those big eyes. She hands him more goldfish. He smiles. She walks away, patting herself on the back for handling it so well.

JESSICA (V.O.)

It's not easy raising three kids. The trick is to always stay one step ahead of them.

Mouth full of goldfish, Dylan calls to her --

DYLAN

At least now you won't have to worry about the show next week at school.

JESSICA

Show? What show?

DYLAN (O.S.)

The parent talent show.

Off Jessica, tripping over her own feet --

JESSICA (V.O.)

I think I missed a step.

INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jessica's in bed, MacBook on her lap. Still stressing.

JESSICA

What if he won't forgive me? What if this drives a wedge between us and robs him of the self-esteem he needs to succeed in life?

Morgan's brushing his teeth in the bathroom.

MORGAN

Glad to see you're not overreacting.

He finishes and climbs into bed. Seeing she's still upset --

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Honey, Dylan knows how much you care about him.

It's a tender moment as he takes her in his arms.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

You've invested time and energy into your relationship. The key is to stay consistent --

She suddenly pulls away.

JESSICA

Are you *selling* me?

MORGAN

No...

JESSICA

Yes you are.

She grabs his COMPANY BROCHURE from the dresser. Reads --

JESSICA (CONT'D)

"We know how much you care about your brand...you've invested time and energy in it...the key is to stay consistent --"

(tossing it aside)

I was a marketing exec for ten years. You thought that would work on me?

He shrugs.

MORGAN

Has before. (beat) Jess, this isn't about Dylan. You're feeling stressed 'cause you've hit some jobstables.

JESSICA

Jobstables?

MORGAN

Obstacles in your job search.

Jessica fights an eyeroll. Morgan loves coining new words.

JESSICA

Maybe I shouldn't go back to work.

MORGAN

Do you want to tell our kids which one of 'em gets to go to college?

JESSICA

Ellie says studies show kids with stay-at-home moms get higher test scores.

MORGAN

Didn't you tell me Ellie makes up half of those "studies"?

JESSICA

Yeah.

MORGAN

So why believe her now?

JESSICA

This one works for me.

MORGAN

It's normal to be nervous. But you'll find something. And you'll be great.

He gives her a kiss. Jessica nods, then --

JESSICA

Maybe that's the reason Dylan doubts me. He's never seen me go out and make a contribution to the world.

MORGAN

He still can't pee in a straight line. How much time you think he spends worrying about your contribution to the world?

He rolls over and within seconds begins to SNORE. She stares up at the ceiling as a new worry forms --

JESSICA

If that's not it, the only reason he could have for not wanting me in the talent show has to be...he doesn't think I have any.

(beat)

Which is much worse.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

An LED sign announces "RAFFLE TIX ON SALE" and "GO BADGERS!"

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - SAME

CLOSE ON: JESSICA and ELLIE seated beside each other, a line of 6 YR-OLDS on either side of them.

ELLIE (30's) is her usual, upbeat self, smiling at everyone who passes. But Jessica is not a happy camper.

JESSICA

This is the last time I let you sign me up for anything.

(gags)

We got a live one.

Pull back to reveal both women wear PLASTIC GLOVES and RAIN PONCHOS as they check the children's hair for LICE.

Jessica grimaces as she runs a nit comb through a BOY's hair. As a TEACHER removes the child, she whispers to Ellie --

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Shoulda known it'd be the Peterson kid. His mother's idea of a bath is letting him get caught in the rain.

ELLIE

Studies show lice spread faster to kids with *clean* hair. Bathing does not prevent you from getting them.

Jessica sniffs, reacting to the odor coming from the child.

JESSICA

Couldn't hurt.

ELLIE

If you want a say in where we volunteer, you have to stop turning off your phone.

JESSICA

I had no choice. Russell keeps asking Siri how to bury a dead body. Any day now Apple's gonna send Child and Family Services to my home.

She grows wistful, looking at the growing children.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Seems like yesterday he was running around in nothing but a cape and Superman undies. Okay, maybe not yesterday. More like last week.

(beat)

I really should get him a new cape. That thing is way too small.

TWO TEACHERS approach, with warm smiles for Ellie.

TEACHER #1

Ellie, your carnival raised twice as much money as last year's!

TEACHER #2

You're our hero.

ELLIE

Oh, stop. You're the real heroes.

Jealous, Jessica tries to get in on it --

JESSICA

Yeah, without you, we'd have to home-school our children. And you know how well those Duggar kids turned out.

The smiles disappear as the teachers quickly move on.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I spend just as much time here as you. But they're never happy to see *me*.

ELLIE

Don't say that. You sound bitter.

JESSICA

How come if one person is frustrated, she's bitter? But if she gets others to join in, it's a movement?

(off Ellie's look)

Don't look at me like that. I do not have anger issues.

ELLIE

No, you think the world could be a perfect place. If it didn't have all these *people* in it.

(beat)

How's the job hunt going?

As Jessica considers her answer, we FLASH TO:

INT. CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Dressed in a business suit, Jessica smiles patiently as a male PERSONNEL MANAGER (27) texts on his phone.

PERSONNEL MANAGER #1

Have you ever used a computer?

INT. ANOTHER CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

In the same suit, Jessica waits, still smiling, as a female PERSONNEL MANAGER (26) peruses her resume.

PERSONNEL MANAGER #2

Wow, your last job was in 2010?

INT. ANOTHER CORPORATE OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Same suit. Different office. But the hipster PERSONNEL MANAGER (25) has the same attitude as the others.

PERSONNEL MANAGER #3

Tell me, where do you see yourself in five years?

Smile still frozen on her face --

JESSICA (V.O.)

As far away as I can get from ironic-goateed, neck-tattooed, dubstep-listening fools.

RESUME PRESENT (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL)

JESSICA

I always figured I'd go back to marketing. I was on the team that designed the Elf Yourself campaign.

(Ellie looks confused)

The e-cards where you upload photos of family and friends onto elves dancing?

(Ellie shrugs)

Well, it was a thing. It was *huge*. And now I'm losing jobs to twenty year-olds 'cause they have more Instagram followers. Hashtag kill me now.

ELLIE

You mean hashtag KMN.

(off Jessica's glare)

What? You need to know the lingo.

JESSICA

I know enough not to say "lingo".

(sighs)

I'm busting my ass trying to return to a job that doesn't exist anymore.

ELLIE

Then what do you want to do?

JESSICA

I don't know.

Ellie does her best Oprah impersonation.

ELLIE

You have to think like a QUEEN. A queen is not afraid to fail.

JESSICA

I'm cancelling your subscription to "O".

JI-YEON ("jee-on", 30's, haughty) appears across the hall.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Why didn't you ask Ji-Yeon to do this? Her only job is finding new ways to brag about her genius son.

They watch as VICE PRINCIPAL HOUSER (button-down, bow tie) emerges from his office. Seeing Ji-Yeon, he tries to flee back inside. Too late. She quickly corners him.

ELLIE

I heard she's doing magic at the talent show.

JESSICA

Magic? I can do better than that. I know, I could tell jokes.

(off Ellie's silence)

What? I'm funny. People say I'm hilarious.

ELLIE

What people?

JESSICA

I don't know. People. It's not like I keep a list.

ELLIE

Maybe you should. Then you could invite them to the show.

Ji-Yeon approaches, speaking with a South Korean accent --

JI-YEON

Jessica. I hear Russell was runner-up in the science fair.

JESSICA

Yes, he was.

She smiles, staring back at Ji-Yeon, unwilling to play along. The awkward silence is killing Ellie.

ELLIE

You must be so happy Min-Soo won first.

Jessica glares at Ellie (did you have to?) as Ji-Yeon crows --

JI-YEON

Well, it was no surprise. After all, he does have a genius IQ.

JESSICA

Really. I hadn't heard.

The sarcasm is lost on Ji-Yeon. Ellie stays cheerful.

ELLIE

Fingers crossed for the regionals.

JI-YEON

Oh, he'll win. Min-Soo never settles for second place.

(beat)

But Russell is very smart. And so *handsome*.

Ellie gives Jessica a look. See? But then Ji-Yeon adds --

JI-YEON (CONT'D)

You must have been pretty when you were young.

She turns to pursue another teacher. Jessica sits there, stung.

ELLIE

I'm sure she didn't mean...after all, the language barrier is really --

JESSICA

She's lived here twenty years.

(beat)

I hope she knows a good vanishing act. 'Cause that bitch is going down.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Morgan walks down the hall with new guy STEVE (30, charismatic) and their boss DAN (50's, fake tan).

DAN

Don't you love the award system Steve designed for the cruise line?

MORGAN

Yeah. It's just a shame gimmicks like that have such a high failure rate.

Steve smiles, not fazed by Morgan's attempt to undermine him.

STEVE

That's why you use a social media portal. Our analytics show it allows the client to exploit customer data long after the promotion ends.

Dan nods, impressed. Morgan sighs, seeing his chances of advancement fading by the minute.

MORGAN

Well, sure, when you put it like that.

Seeing his assistant LUCY, Morgan hurries to join her.

LUCY

Everything's confirmed. The balloons will arrive at four, Princess Belle at five, and the pizza at six.

She walks off as Dan and Steve catch up.

STEVE

Morgan, I notice you're not on Snapchat, Twitter or Instagram.

Morgan holds up his phone, offering --

MORGAN

I have a Facebook account.

STEVE

Dude, my nana's on Facebook. If you want, I can help you install the apps.  
(gesturing to the phone)  
We'll put 'em right between Applebee's and your blood pressure monitor.

MORGAN

There's no blood pressure moni...

He looks at his phone. Yes, there is. Under his breath --

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Damn it, Jessica.

Glancing at Dan, Morgan pastes on a smile, trying to seem like a team player.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Thanks, Steve. But I'm headed to a meeting, could run pretty late...

Lucy returns with a huge TEDDY BEAR, a bow around its neck.

LUCY

I almost forgot. Tell Sofia "happy birthday" from me!

Morgan smiles uneasily at his boss.

MORGAN

Oh, I'll tell her. As soon as I get home from my meeting.

LUCY

What meeting?

Dan looks at Morgan as Steve stifles a grin. It's hopeless.

MORGAN

Never mind.

Defeated, Morgan takes the bear and heads for the elevators.

EXT/INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - LATER

Sofia's 3rd birthday party. Outside, Ellie puts finishing touches on the decorations. Inside, Morgan's mom DEDE helps Jessica with snacks as Morgan fills a cooler with drinks.

DeDe looks good for a woman in her late 60's. But she tries too hard, dressing in styles she can't pull off. Jessica eyes the latest inappropriate ensemble.

JESSICA

New outfit, DeDe?

DEDE

Got it on sale. Forever 21.

MORGAN

You've been "Forever 21" three times. They're going to start paying you not to shop there.

DEDE

You're as young as you feel. Speaking of which...now that Sofia's getting older, I'd like a new name. "Grandma" is so not "on fleek".

Jessica suppresses a grin.

MORGAN

I don't think they're saying that anymore, Mom.

DEDE

Grandma?

MORGAN

On fleek. Doesn't mean anything now.

JESSICA

Never did.

DEDE

Goldie Hawn goes by "Glamma". Sharon Osborne's grandkids call her "Shazza".  
(off their silence)  
Or they could just call me DeDe.

JESSICA

I'd rather they didn't. We're trying to teach them to respect their elders.

DeDe looks outside where Ellie's husband DENNIS (40, meek) is being lassoed to the ground by Russell and Dylan (along with Dennis & Ellie's sons JAKE (8) and KYLE (5)). Morgan shrugs.

MORGAN

Baby steps.

Scowling, DeDe takes the bowls outside.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

What's gotten into her?

JESSICA

Our new neighbor, Ace.

She gestures outside where Dede has joined ACE (late 50's), a muscular man in workout clothes. And an obvious toupee.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

He's a personal trainer. Your mom's nervous 'cause he's younger than her.

MORGAN

They're...dating?

JESSICA

Sure, let's call it that. Don't you want her to be happy?

Morgan looks back at them, sick to his stomach.

MORGAN

I thought she was happy baking cookies and babysitting the kids.

JESSICA

You are so not on fleek.

EXT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - LATER

Jessica passes out pizza to some younger PRESCHOOL PARENTS.

JESSICA

So she says "It's our anniversary. Let's go out and enjoy ourselves." And her husband says "Great. But if you get home before I do, leave a light on."

COUPLE #1 smiles politely, then both exclaim --

COUPLE #1

Oh, look, there's Sakina and Tom!

As they escape, Ellie walks past Jessica, shaking her head.

A young HOT MOM arrives, wearing the same outfit as DeDe. Jessica watches in sympathy as her mother-in-law sucks in her stomach, hoping Ace won't notice.

LATER -- Jessica tries out more material on COUPLE #2 --

JESSICA

And the man says to the kid, "You're scared. I have to walk out of these woods alone."

The couple exchanges a horrified look before walking away. Having overheard, Ellie stares at Jessica.

ELLIE

What the hell are you doing?

JESSICA

I honestly don't know.

ELLIE

Why are you recycling old jokes? Why not come up with something original?

JESSICA

People get judgy when a woman starts speaking her mind. Especially someone like me. I'm afraid they'll--

Dylan holds up his pizza and cries out in fear --

DYLAN

There's pepperoni in this!

MORGAN

Dylan, I swear, I took it off.

DYLAN

It's hiding under the cheese!

Morgan moves to get him another slice but Jessica stops him.

JESSICA

Honey, why don't you try a bite?

(Dylan shakes his head)

My mom always said "variety is the spice of life", that you should go outside your comfort zone, see what the world has to offer. You might surprise yourself.

A beat. Then Dylan takes another bite.

MORGAN

Well? How is it?

Dylan considers. Then he raises his hand and rolls his fingers down in succession, like a PINWHEEL.

DYLAN

Spicy.

But good. He keeps eating. Morgan looks at Jessica, amazed.

EXT/INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

It's getting dark out as Jessica bags the last of the trash.

Entering the kitchen, she finds Morgan holding her laptop.

JESSICA

What are you doing with my computer?

MORGAN

I wanted to check the score of the game. I wasn't expecting to find this.

He takes a deep breath. This is hard for him.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

After all we've been through, Jess? How could you keep this from me?

JESSICA

You don't understand...

MORGAN

I think I do. You opened a secret Twitter account.

Before she can respond, DeDe, Ellie and Dennis appear from around the corner. DeDe reads from an iPad.

DEDE

"Parents who refuse to vaccinate should be hung by their toenails and forced to watch old episodes of Jenny McCarthy's reality show."

Dennis takes his turn. He gives Jessica an apologetic shrug. Ellie gives him a look. Just read it.

DENNIS

"Stop saying 'everything happens for a reason'. Tell that to survivors of rape, genocide or natural disasters."  
(beat, quietly)  
"Asshole."

He moves behind Ellie, peeking out to see Jessica's reaction.

MORGAN

Honey, you're out of control. You need to transformitude.  
(off their collective stare)  
Transform your attitude.

Ellie suddenly regrets letting Morgan take the lead.

ELLIE

All we're saying is, you have some --

JESSICA

I do not have anger issues.

ELLIE

The blogger you called a self-centered, inbred moron might disagree.

JESSICA

She takes her baby on six-hour flights without a pacifier. That is not okay!

DEDE

(to Ellie)

I gotta go with her on that one.

MORGAN

You have to find a way to deal with these feelings. Imagine what you could accomplish if you channelled all this energy into a new job, or a hobby.

JESSICA

I don't have time for a hobby.

MORGAN

Yet you spent three hours on Gwyneth Paltrow's website arguing with "GuteMutter" in Germany.

JESSICA

She was buying burp cloths for two hundred dollars. The woman was obviously insane.

MORGAN

I know you're frustrated. But maybe you should follow the advice you gave Dylan. Expand your horizon. Think outside the box.

Off Jessica as she considers this --

EXT/INT. GIGGLES COMEDY CLUB - NIGHT

Open-mic night at this suburban comedy club. A few middle-aged couples on E-Harmony dates watch a 22 yr-old WANNABE COMIC riff on moving back home after college.

INT. LADIES ROOM - SAME

Inside a stall, a YOUNG WOMAN is THROWING UP. Standing at the sink, Jessica hears her. Tentatively --

JESSICA

Are you okay?

WOMAN THROWING UP (O.S.)  
My friend dared me to come tonight.  
She said it's the best way to get past  
my fear of public speaking.

JESSICA  
Do you want me to get her?

WOMAN THROWING UP (O.S.)  
She left with some guy. Said it was  
the best way to get over her fear of  
intimacy.

As soon as she finishes the sentence, she PUKES again.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Returning to the bar, Jessica nods to the bartender for  
another drink. The MANAGER passes, reading from a clipboard.

MANAGER  
Tina? There a Tina here?

No one responds. And Jessica realizes -- Tina's the girl with  
her head in the toilet.

INT. COMEDY CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Jessica's onstage, awkwardly trying to come up with jokes.

JESSICA  
My husband's a great father. But  
sometimes I question his judgment.  
Like when he tosses the baby up in the  
air right after she's eaten. The kid's  
a world-class puker, she doesn't need  
any help. But God love him, Morgan  
never sees it coming.  
(mimes tossing, looks upward)  
Well, until it does.

One person laughs. Jessica pauses, nervous.

JESSICA (CONT'D)  
He can't anticipate anything. He's the  
only person I know who'll let an  
Oldsmobile pull out in front of him.  
They're the number one car for elderly  
drivers. Everyone knows that. Hell,  
they even put it in the name.

There's mild laughter from an OLDER COUPLE.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Let's face it, most men don't anticipate as well as women. But you know, that could be the key to their happiness. And the entire institution of marriage.

(beat)

'Cause if men realized we'd stop going down on them as soon as we got that ring, they'd never propose. Am I right, ladies?

More LAUGHTER. Encouraged, Jessica looks out --

TIME CUT TO:

In a reprise of the Teaser, we're close on Jessica as she looks out at her audience.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Any parents out there? How many know who lives in a pineapple under the sea?

(singing along)

"Sponge-bob Square-pants!" Yeah, we've all heard it. Ever find yourself unable to stop hearing it? Like at three a.m. when you get up to pee?

(off some giggles)

Or during a presentation at work?

(some laughter)

Or when you're fooling around with that special someone?

More laughter. Buoyed by the response, she continues --

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Ever give up and just go with it, make it work for you?

She emphasizes the rhythm with a nasty bump and grind.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

"Sponge-Bob, Square-pants!"

(sighs)

Only now, every time my kids turn on Nickelodeon, I get a little wet.

She looks out. The laughter has stopped.

REVERSE TO REVEAL: We're inside the SCHOOL AUDITORIUM.

Pan across to see PARENTS. TEACHERS. STUDENTS. Jaws dropped, staring at her.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Just me, huh?

Morgan watches from the back, with Dylan on his shoulders. Ellie's beside them, videotaping with her phone.

ELLIE

Oh, dear God. It's like seeing your parents have sex. You know it'll scar you for life, but you can't look away.

Morgan gives her a look. Jessica struggles to find a segue.

JESSICA

You know how it is once you have kids. Their world becomes your world. Whether you want it to or not.

She sees Dylan, earnestly watching. The sight of him immediately calms her.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

You go from eating shrimp scampi by candlelight to scarfing leftover chicken nuggets, silently praying none of them were on the floor of the car.

(beat)

Oh, who am I kidding? I know they hit the floor.

A few people laugh. She smiles gratefully.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Truth is, as much as you want to be with your child, what was adorable the first three or four times gets old fast. I mean, five minutes to put on one shoe? Without laces?

(claps her hands)

Come on kiddo! Your rendition of "Booty n' da Beast" is cute, but the world ain't kind to people who don't know their left from their right!

A little more laughter. Jessica begins to relax.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

And you feel *guilty* for feeling this way. Because you go to the park and see other moms revel in EVERY FREAKIN' THING their kid does. "Oh look, Jasper went down the slide! Now he's on the monkey bars!

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Look how masterfully he pees in the sandbox: it's like the design on my cappuccino this morning!"

(beat)

You wonder, what the hell are they on?  
And did they bring enough to share?

The audience is with her again.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Something else changes when you become a parent. Just 'cause you spend three hours a day tweeting about Idris Elba's ass doesn't mean your child should. I'm looking at you, Vice-Principal Houser.

The bow-tied Vice-Principal blushes at the ribbing.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I mean, really; when did it become okay to give your nine year-old an Instagram account? We're raising a generation who think pouting is a marketable skill. Can't we go back to shaming them for not being the smartest kid in the class?

(beat)

We're not doing them any favors letting them believe the world cares about their every waking thought. When I was little, kids dreamed of playing in the NBA or winning an Oscar. Sure, that was wildly unrealistic. But it was better than hoping to strike it rich on YouTube by lighting your farts on fire.

(beat)

And if it's this bad now, what'll be like in a few years? If my kids get all their news from BuzzFeed, will they start writing school reports like "Here's Why Beyonce Should Run the World" or "15 Hair Products Albert Einstein Could Have Used."

As the audience laughs, Jessica looks out and finds Dylan and Morgan, beaming with pride.

She ROLLS HER FINGERS IN A PINWHEEL. They repeat the gesture back to her. Spicy. But good.

INT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - HALLWAY - LATER

Afterward, Jessica celebrates with Dylan, Morgan and Ellie.

Ji-Yeon passes in top hat, tuxedo and red-lined cape. Her son MIN-SOO is dressed the same.

Seeing Jessica, Ji-Yeon stops. Begrudgingly --

JI-YEON

You did good job, Jessica.

Ellie nudges Jessica to return the compliment.

JESSICA

You too, Ji-Yeon.

(beat)

Sorry about the rabbit. Could've happened to anyone.

Ji-Yeon frowns, nodding.

JI-YEON

Next time Min-Soo will remember, punch holes in the box.

She continues on. Min-Soo follows, hanging his head.

Jessica hugs Dylan to her and smiles at Ellie.

JESSICA

Genius my ass.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. MORGAN'S OFFICE - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Morgan eyes his less-than-appealing take-out salad as COLLEAGUES lunching behind him WHISPER.

1ST COLLEAGUE

Nothing's official yet. But it's not looking good.

Straining to hear, Morgan fumbles to open the container.

2ND COLLEAGUE

You never know. He could salvage it.

1ST COLLEAGUE

Nah. He's just living in denial. It'd be cruel to give him hope.

Morgan squeezes the packet of dressing, not seeing it's open at the top end. It SQUIRTS UP, hitting him in the face.

2ND COLLEAGUE

What do you think he'll do?

1ST COLLEAGUE

I don't know. The world is a cold place for a guy his age.

Unable to take it anymore --

MORGAN

I can hear you!

Surprised, they look up from their table.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

I know I'm not the first one in or the last to leave. It's tough trying to find a balance between work and home. I'm tired of going days without seeing my kids. Missing out on all their big moments. I've given ten years to this company and if Dan wants to toss me aside for some guy who'll work twenty-four-seven because he has no life, well that's his loss!

He finally takes a breath. His colleagues stare, confused.

1ST COLLEAGUE

We weren't talking about you.

MORGAN

Oh. (beat) Who were you talking about?

2ND COLLEAGUE

Steve.

She gestures to the doorway. Where Steve stands with Dan.

STEVE

My wife left me. Just when I thought  
we were ready to start a family.

That's why I work all the time.

(his voice breaking)

I can't go back to that empty house.

Dan puts a hand on Steve's shoulder and leads him away.  
Morgan's colleagues get up to leave. One shoots a  
sanctimonious glare --

2ND COLLEAGUE

Are you satisfied?

MORGAN

All things considered?

(beat)

Yeah.

INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY - DAY

The doorbell RINGS repeatedly. Carrying a basket of laundry,  
Jessica answers it to find an exasperated Ellie.

ELLIE

Stop turning off your phone!

JESSICA

What's going on?

ELLIE

You've gone viral.

Confused, Jessica locates her phone. Her eyes widen as she  
scrolls through dozens of missed calls and texts.

JESSICA

Holy crap.

ELLIE

One of them's from my cousin Becca.  
She works for Tatianna Farrington.

JESSICA

The billionaire with the website?

ELLIE

Becca showed her the video of you I posted on Facebook --

JESSICA

Wait, what? You posted a video?

ELLIE

Yeah, and it already has five thousand shares. She wants to meet you.

Jessica repeats it, like she can't comprehend the idea.

JESSICA

Tatianna Farrington wants to meet me.  
(off Ellie's nod)  
Why?

INT. FARRINGTON POST - TATIANNA'S OFFICE - DAY

An elegant office suite that looks out on a warehouse space filled with cubicles supporting this media giant.

TATIANNA is stylish, cultured, and every bit as eccentric as people assume her to be.

Her chief of staff BECCA is a younger, more professional version of Ellie: efficient and ambitious, but upbeat.

Jessica and Ellie follow them through the office.

TATIANNA

You have a unique voice and an unapologetic candor. Which is why I'm giving you a podcast.

JESSICA

A what?

ELLIE

A podcast. It's where you interview --

JESSICA

(whispers)  
I know what a podcast is.

BECCA

More people than ever before are embarking on parenthood or changing careers later in life. That's why so many connected with your video.

JESSICA

But I have no experience doing something like that.

TATIANNA

That's why you're perfect. Listeners will relate to you because you're just like them. Ordinary.

The way she says "ordinary" is not a compliment. Jessica and Ellie exchange a look as Tatianna keeps going.

TATIANNA (CONT'D)

We'll call it "Late Bloomers". I already have your first guest: a priest who left the church and fathered ten kids in eight years.

ELLIE

I heard about him. He just got a reality show. They're calling it "Father Knows Best".

(gestures)

But the "T" in father is a cross.

An ASSISTANT interrupts --

ASSISTANT

Tatianna, Anderson Cooper is on two.

Tatianna nods and Becca ushers Jessica and Ellie out to a waiting area that looks like an arcade.

BECCA

Exciting, huh?

(a colleague waves her over)

I'll be right back.

Jessica just stands there, stunned. This can't be real.

ELLIE

Two days ago, you thought you'd never work again. Now you have a chance to do something that expresses who you really are.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - BOOTH - WEEKS LATER

Jessica's at the mic with headphones on. She pauses, clearly uncomfortable.

JESSICA

At Late Bloomers, we know life doesn't always go as planned.

(MORE)

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Sometimes we have to change course.  
Rethink our goals. Spend some time in  
rehab.

MALE GUEST (O.S.)

Exactly.

JESSICA

But when people think of billion  
dollar hedge fund managers, they  
envision Wall Street, conservative  
types. Rather than, well, someone who  
looks like...you.

MALE GUEST (O.S.)

Success doesn't always bring  
fulfillment.

JESSICA

And you say you found true happiness  
only after adopting this new identity.  
Isn't that right, Mr. --

MALE GUEST (O.S.)

Oh, there's no mister. Just Pikachu.

Jessica nods in dismay. Because sitting across from her is a  
man dressed, head to toe, like the Pokémon character PIKACHU.

MALE GUEST (CONT'D)

Like Ghandi. Or Cher.

Jessica looks through the glass booth at Tatianna, who stands  
outside, giving her an excited thumbs up.

INT. RECORDING STUDIO - HALLWAY - LATER

Jessica follows Tatianna as she multi-tasks (reviewing copy,  
signing documents and whatever else Becca hands her).

JESSICA

I'm grateful for the opportunity. But  
I thought I'd be talking to people  
starting more meaningful chapters of  
their lives. Not bizarre wackjobs.

BECCA

Bizarre is good. Bizarre attracts  
listeners.

TATIANNA

In the current landscape, you have to  
find a way to stand out. There are  
millions of shows out there.

BECCA

Everything from improv'd Star Trek episodes to knitters on the subway.

(beat)

My plumber has his own podcast.

TATIANNA

Exotic collections are big right now. For your next guest we've narrowed it down to two choices. A nurse who collects celebrity bedpans. Or a waxer-to-the-stars with the world's largest collection of pubi--

Cutting her off --

JESSICA

Bedpans. Definitely bedpans.

An assistant pulls Tatianna away. Jessica turns to Becca.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I don't understand. I thought you hired me for my unique voice and unapologetic candor.

BECCA

We hired you because you got thirty thousand likes.

(gently)

I get it. This isn't exactly what you were hoping to do.

JESSICA

No. It's not.

Becca leans in, her sweet demeanor disappearing.

BECCA

And when you have ten million Twitter followers, you can call the shots. Until then, it's her show.

(beat)

On the plus side, she has the attention span of a gnat.

Her perky smile returns as she strides away.

INT. JESSICA'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Dressed to go out, DeDe helps Russell and Dylan assemble a Lego tower on the coffee table as Sofia plays beside them.

Morgan and Jessica pick up discarded clothes, books and toys from around the room.

JESSICA

But if Dan loved your presentation,  
why'd Steve get the account?

MORGAN

Turns out Dan's wife left him too, so  
they have something to bond over.  
Steve calls it a bro-voce.

(beat)

Wish I'd thought of that.

Jessica tenderly puts her arms around him.

JESSICA

Honey, you know I'd do anything to  
support your career...but there's *no*  
way you're leaving me with these kids.

The DOORBELL RINGS. As Morgan moves to answer it, DeDe turns to the children.

DEDE

Now remember, I want you to call me  
"DeDe". Okay?

RUSSELL

Sure.

DYLAN

Got it.

And as Morgan returns with Ace --

SOFIA

Okay, Gwamah!

She gives a winning smile. DeDe sighs and takes Ace's arm.

As they leave, Sofia accidentally knocks down the Lego tower. The boys yell in frustration. And Sofia starts to cry. Morgan turns to Jessica and shrugs.

MORGAN

We now return to our previously  
scheduled programming.

He picks up Sofia and leads the boys upstairs.

MORGAN (CONT'D)

Come on, guys. Bath time.

Halfway up, Dylan turns back to Jessica.

DYLAN

Mrs. Lopez says she needs chaperones  
for our field trip next week.

JESSICA

You want *me* to take you?

He nods, excited.

DYLAN

Please? It's gonna be so much fun.

JESSICA

Great. Where are we going?

DYLAN

The town dump! They're gonna show us  
how garbage is crushed. Billy said if  
we're lucky, we'll get to see some  
really big rats. Maybe even maggots.

Jessica swallows hard. Careful what you wish for.

JESSICA

I don't know, Dylan. That sounds like  
a job for *real* parents...

END OF ACT THREE

TAG

INT. JESSICA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

It's late. Wearing pajamas, Jessica sits at the table, once again typing furiously on her laptop. But now she seems invigorated.

JESSICA (V.O.)

Attention Snack Moms: Kale is not a snack. Neither is quinoa. And if you forbid your precious child from eating anything with sugar, as soon as she's old enough to steal money from your purse you'll find her snorting crushed Sweetarts on the floor of your local supermarket.

REVERSE ANGLE to show she's posting on Twitter. An ALERT pops up onscreen:

***JESSICA DUPREY, you have 205 new followers!***

She smiles, glancing at the upper left corner where her FOLLOWERS now total 14,680. Baby steps. But climbing the mountain. She exhales, then resumes typing.

JESSICA (V.O.)

Just once I'd like to go to the park with my kids and NOT have someone ask if I'm the nanny. It's 2018 people.  
#mindyourowneffingbusiness

Satisfied, she clicks the return key, then types another.

JESSICA (V.O.)

I have two words for all the men out there telling women to wax their bodies: You. First.

Morgan enters. Without a word, HE CLOSSES THE LAPTOP AND CARRIES IT OUT OF THE ROOM, turning the light off.

Leaving her alone in the dark. A beat. Then she calls out --

JESSICA

Can you hit "enter"?

END OF SHOW