

PUZZLE

Screenplay
by
Oren
Moverman
and
Polly Mann

Based on the film
ROMPECABEZAS
By
Natalia Smirnoff

MONTAGE - DAY

A WOMAN'S HANDS are:

--Filling small serving bowls with nuts and candy in the kitchen.

--Setting out plastic forks, knives, spoons and cups along with paper plates and napkins.

--Taking a steaming large cake out of the oven.

--Frosting the cooled-down cake on the kitchen counter.

--Stabbing toothpicks into perfectly-cut cheese cubes.

--Designing a fanned pattern of rolled cold cuts with great precision on a platter.

--Setting the bowls of nuts and candy on tables around the living room, den and dining room.

--Putting the platters of cheese and cold cuts on the dining room table.

--Laying out the plasticware, cups, plates and napkins.

INT. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The house is crammed with GUESTS OF ALL AGES. Birthday decorations announce the occasion.

We move through the party behind AGNES, the lady of the house, the woman behind the hands from the opening montage. She's carrying a tray, offering appetizers.

The occasional GUEST kisses Agnes on the cheek or says "thank you" but mostly people just take a piece off the tray without paying much attention to her. She doesn't mind it at all. She's happy unseen.

LAUGHTER AND CHATTER ALL AROUND.

Agnes glides by LOUIE, her husband, who's sitting on the couch with a FEW FRIENDS, shooting the breeze. Louie palms a few appetizers and passes them around to his pals.

LOUIE

Thanks, babe. You're the best.

RONNIE, Louie's close friend, takes a bite.

RONNIE

Amazing, Agnes. Really. Always.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

Agnes nods and moves down the hallway into the den where TEENAGE BOYS are sitting around with her son GABE (17), watching a YouTube video and laughing their heads off.

GABE
Hey Mom, more salami.

Agnes smiles and nods, turns on her heels, heading back to the kitchen.

2 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

2

A small crucifix hangs in the window above Agnes who is now expertly chopping up more salami and arranging the slices on a large plate.

3 **INT. LIVING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

3

Agnes is moving through the crowded living room with the plate of salami when Louie and his Friends burst out laughing. She jumps just as Louie's plate slides off his knee and shatters into a dozen pieces on the floor. Ronnie and the others all hoot. They've been drinking.

AGNES
Careful. I'll be right there. Don't move.

Agnes hurries to the hallway into the den to give Gabe the salami plate.

GABE
Thanks.

4 **OMITTED**

4

5 **INT. LIVING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

5

Agnes enters with a broom and a dust pan. She kneels next to Louie and sweeps up the pieces.

AGNES
Don't worry about it. Seriously.

He gives her a kiss.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Are you having fun?

LOUIE
Great time.

AGNES
I'm glad.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIE
We're going to go up front and
smoke.

AGNES
Really?

LOUIE
Just one. I swear.

AGNES
I'll call you for cake.

LOUIE
Is Ziggy around?

AGNES
He's around. Somewhere.

LOUIE
Tell him to come join us.

6 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

6

Agnes washes the broken pieces of Louie's plate.

7 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

7

Agnes gets glue out of the kitchen drawer. Spreads all the
pieces of Louie's broken plate out on the counter and
attempts to fit them together.

ESZTER, Agnes' sister-in-law, comes in. She gives Agnes a
baffled look.

EZSTER
Do you need a hand?

AGNES
What? Oh. No. I'm--
(re: plate)
I'm missing a piece. It's tiny.
I'll never find it.

EZSTER
There's no shame in asking for
help, you know. You don't have to
do everything.

AGNES
I know. I know. But-- I like doing
everything. I don't need any help.
Thank you.

8

INT. LIVING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - LATER

8

Louie and his friends walk back into the house to find Agnes crawling around on her knees looking for the tiny missing piece.

LOUIE
What's going on?

AGNES
There's a piece missing. From the plate. I don't want anyone to step on--

LOUIE
Come on, Agnes. Stand up!

She ignores him and continues to look. He puts a hand on her shoulder.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Hey. Later, okay? Not tonight.
Please. It's not like anyone ever walks around here barefoot.

She stands, disappointed, mission aborted.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
You're so cute.

Their oldest son, ZIGGY (19), scrutinizes them from across the room.

9

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

9

Agnes pulls the frosted cake out of the refrigerator.

She sticks candles in the cake and looks at it for a long beat.

10

INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

10

Holding the cake with the lit candles, Agnes walks out of the kitchen into the dining room. ALL THE PARTY GUESTS gather.

EVERYONE
(singing loudly)
*Happy birthday to you, happy
birthday to you, happy birthday--
dear... Agnes, happy birthday to
you.*

Agnes sets the cake down on the dining room table and looks at it, pleased, her face glowing in the candlelight. This is indeed HER birthday party. This is her world. Her life. She blows out the candles.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

GABE
Speech! Speech!

EVERYONE LAUGHS. They know Agnes well enough to get the joke. Agnes swallows hard. Clearly, she's uncomfortable with even a hint of attention.

AGNES
(whispering)
Thank you, everyone.

Ziggy inches closer.

ZIGGY
Speak up, ma!

LOUIE
Oh, leave the woman alone, will
you?

Agnes clears her throat, about to speak. Everyone quiets down.

AGNES
Who wants cake?

11 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 11

Humming to herself, Agnes puts the last of the party dishes away. The house is hers again; the guests gone, her men asleep upstairs.

12 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 12

Agnes sits down at the kitchen table, exhausted. She pours herself a large glass of red wine. Suddenly, she remembers something that sends her out of the room excitedly.

13 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT** 13

Agnes is halfway through unwrapping her presents. They're all pretty generic: a vase, a wooden ladle, a book.

AGNES
(reading book title)
Aging with Grace: What the Nun
Study Teaches Us About Leading
Longer, Healthier, and More
Meaningful Lives.

She rolls her eyes.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Oh, Zig.

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

She puts the book away. Opens and reads a series of Hallmark cards.

Opens a small box and finds an iPhone inside. Stares at it as if it came from the future. Puts it down with little interest.

Then she unwraps a long, rectangular present. It's a Ravensburger puzzle, 1500 pieces. A beautiful contemporary map of the world.

Agnes studies the puzzle, then sets it aside.

14 **INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - LATER**

14

Agnes crawls into bed next to Louie who is SNORING LOUDLY. She lies there awake for a while.

An old ALARM CLOCK TICKS on the night table on Louie's side of the bed. Agnes listens to the TICKING.

Louie groans and turns onto his side, putting his arm around her. The SNORING stops. Agnes closes her eyes, relieved.

A few seconds later, the SNORING starts up again. But she's already asleep.

FADE TO BLACK:

THE SNORING KEEPS GOING. THE CLOCK TICKS.

Card: **PUZZLE**

FADE IN:

15 **EXT. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAWN**

15

Burning street lights turn off neighborhood by neighborhood as night succumbs.

WE HEAR THE CLOCK TICKING. FOLLOWED BY AGNES'S WHISPERS, LIKE PRAYERS RECITED AND REPEATED: INDECIPHERABLE, RHYTHMIC, ACCOMPANIED BY LOUIE'S SNORING.

16 **EXT. WEST BRIDGEPORT - DAWN**

16

Day breaks over the working-class neighborhood. Modest houses line the residential streets, most darkened, but some already busy with early morning rituals.

AGNES'S WHISPERS CONTINUE. THE TICKING CLOCK KEEPS TIME. LOUIE'S SNORING KEEPS GOING.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

We move closer to a little side street to find Agnes and Louie's simple house with its well-kept front lawn.

17 **INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAWN**

17

Bars of sunlight streak the window glass, filtering into the dimness of the room.

Agnes is wide awake with her eyes closed, WHISPERING.

Behind her, Louie is asleep on his back, mouth open, SNORING.

As we glide closer to her we can make out Agnes's words, far from prayers:

AGNES
(whispering to herself)
Eleven, ten, nine, eight, seven,
six, five, four, three, two, one.

She opens her eyes, expecting... something. Nothing happens. She listens to the CLOCK TICKING. Quickly closes her eyes again. It's a game of sorts.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(whispering to herself)
Seven, six, five, four, three, two,
one.

Agnes opens her eyes. Nothing. She's clearly disappointed. Louie lets out a NASALLY SNORE. She giggles. She closes her eyes again in anticipation.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(whispering to herself)
Five, four, three, two, one. Now.

THE ALARM BELL RINGS. She opens her eyes and smiles to herself in victory. Sits up in bed. Leans over Louie and turns the ALARM BELL OFF.

Louie continues to sleep. Agnes shakes him.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Lou. Honey. Louie.

LOUIE
(groggy)
What?

AGNES
Time to get up.

LOUIE
What?

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

AGNES
It's a new day.

He turns over on his side, his back to her.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(whispering to herself)
Five more minutes.
(to Louie)
Honey, time to get up.

LOUIE
Five more minutes.

AGNES (whispering to herself) Please. LOUIE (CONT'D)

18 **INT. GABE'S BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING** 18

Lights on! In the TV monitor hooked up to an Xbox, we see Agnes's reflection as she shuffles in to wake up her youngest son Gabe. She touches his shoulder tenderly.

GABE
Five more minutes, Mom.

19 **INT. CORRIDOR. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING** 19

Agnes walks down the corridor, HUMMING TO HERSELF, and KNOCKS on a bedroom door. No response. She KNOCKS AGAIN.

20 **INT. ZIGGY'S BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING** 20

Lights on! Ziggy, bare-chested and sporting a botched tattoo, buries himself under the covers. In the large mirror, we see Agnes move in.

ZIGGY
Ten more minutes, Mom. I swear.

Agnes smiles to herself as she watches Ziggy go back to sleep. She starts picking up dirty clothes off the floor and desk.

21 **INT. STAIRS. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY** 21

Agnes walks down the stairs when LOUD HIP HOP EXPLODES FROM GABE'S ROOM.

Agnes stops on the stairs, turns and looks up to calmly watch:

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

Louie storming out of the bathroom, shaving cream hanging from his chin, razor in hand. He KNOCKS on Gabe's door.

LOUIE
Turn that off, goddamnit! Every morning the same crap.

The HIP HOP MUSIC IS LOWERED. Louie then catches Agnes's watchful eye. He shrugs innocently at her. She smiles at him.

AGNES
Manchego omelette?

He beams at the suggestion.

LOUIE
Be down in a minute.

22 INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY

22

Agnes inspects her hands by holding them up to the sunlight blasting the glass.

THE SOUND OF ZIGGY LAUGHING REVERBERATES FROM UPSTAIRS.

ZIGGY (O.S.)
Stop. Gabe. Stop. I'm serious. I'm gonna pee my pants.

Agnes GRINDS COFFEE BEANS IN THE GRINDER.

She walks over to get a coffee mug when her gaze falls on a framed photo of an OLDER MAN standing with YOUNG AGNES in the very same kitchen.

Tears start streaming down her face.

23 INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

23

Agnes is making omelettes and sausages while Louie and Ziggy chat over coffee; both men are wearing clean mechanics coveralls. Gabe is hunched over Agnes's new iPhone.
OVERLAPPING:

LOUIE
(to Ziggy)
Which grit do you use when you're doing the final sanding?

GABE
Hey, Mom, what kind of apps do you want?

ZIGGY
(to Louie)
Are you really quizzing me over breakfast?

AGNES
I don't want apps. I don't want that phone. Mine's perfectly fine. You take it.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIE
(to Ziggy)
I'm not quizzing you. I saw
you using a 1200 grit the
other day and that's never
gonna work.

GABE
(to Agnes)
How about the weather
channel?

ZIGGY
I don't want to talk about
this at home, dad. I need a
break.

AGNES
I have a radio and a window.
I know when it's going to
rain.

LOUIE
You'll get a break once you
do everything right, Zig.

GABE
(to Agnes)
I put my number and Ziggy's
and Dad's on speed dial. Who
else do you want?

ZIGGY
Mom, do you need any help cooking?

Agnes shakes her head, then puts eggs and sausages on a plate
and hands it to Gabe.

ZIGGY (CONT'D)
(to Louie)
Fine. What? I should've used
400?

GABE
(to Agnes)
What about Ezster? And the
Church ladies?

LOUIE
That or 600.

AGNES
(to Gabe)
I don't know why I wouldn't
just call them from the home
phone.

Gabe throws up his hands, exasperated.

GABE
Will someone please explain to my
mother why she has to stop living
in the 20th century?

ZIGGY
Are you even gonna use it, Mom?.

AGNES
I guess I might use it like my old
phone. For emergencies.

GABE
Forget it!

AGNES
I don't like all this technology.
Is that really so crazy?

(CONTINUED)

GABE
Yes. Absolutely. A hundred percent.

LOUIE
Leave your mother alone. She
doesn't like gadgets.

ZIGGY
Then why did we get it for her?

LOUIE
Because it's a thoughtful gift.

GABE
Not if she never uses it.
(to Agnes)
Just try it. Google something.
Recipes. Bible study. Whatever.
Everything in the world is inside
this one device.

AGNES
No. It's like carrying a little
robot in your purse. A little alien
robot friend. I don't need it.

GABE
Clearly it doesn't need you either.

Louie slaps Gabe's shoulder. Agnes serves Louie and Ziggy.
Gabe takes a series of pictures of Agnes with her iPhone:

24 **MONTAGE. AGNES KITCHEN PORTRAITS**

24

We move through the series of iPhone photos of Agnes, going
through a range of expressions flickering across her face--
affection, sadness, exhaustion, weariness, quiet judgment,
and, finally Agnes's hand blocking the phone.

AGNES (OVER)
Enough. You're all gonna be late.

25 **INT. FRONT PORCH. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY**

25

Agnes sits alone on the front porch, delighting in a piece of
her birthday cake, watching the daylight moon in the sky.
Every bite is a calm celebration.

26 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY**

26

Agnes walks back into the house and spots the puzzle box,
still sitting in its plastic wrapping on the table with the
other gifts.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

She moves closer to the table. Shuts her eyes and randomly places her finger on the puzzle map picture on the box top. She opens her eyes, looks at what she's pointed to:

AGNES
(disappointed)
Belgium!

She makes a face and walks into the kitchen. We stay in the dining room. Hear the SINK WATER TURN ON. FOLLOWED BY THE RADIO, THE DIAL MOVING, LANDING ON CLASSICAL MUSIC.

Suddenly, she marches back in, determined. Picks the puzzle box up and quickly, as if forcing herself against her better judgement, rips off the plastic wrapping and opens the box.

She takes out the sheet of paper with instructions on it and puts her hand in the loose pile of puzzle pieces, letting them sift through her fingers. It's like she's running her hand through sand or water; there's something sensual about it.

A second later, she dumps the puzzle pieces onto the table and sits down. Starts turning pieces over quickly.

27 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON** 27

POLKA MUSIC ON THE RADIO, a different program. Agnes hasn't moved from her seat in hours. She's fitting the last few pieces of the puzzle into place, rubbing her tired eyes. Suddenly she notices the time and leaps from her seat.

28 **INT. KITCHEN SIDE ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON** 8

Agnes quickly puts in a load of laundry.

29 **INT. AGNES'S CAR. MOVING - AFTERNOON** 29

Agnes drives through the streets of West Bridgeport. She's in a hurry but she steers carefully, slow and measured, with little confidence, foot jumping back and forth from gas pedal to brake, far from oblivious to the tension of the HONKS behind her.

AGNES
I'm trying. I know. I'm trying.

30 **MONTAGE. SUPERMARKET. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY** 30

AGAINST CANNED SOUNDS OF MUZAK:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--Agnes moves quickly up and down the brightly lit aisles of the supermarket.

--She chooses one cereal, then quickly looks at its ingredients, then puts it back on the shelf, then picks another and throws it in her cart, then reconsiders, puts it back and picks the original cereal...

--She stands at the deli counter watching impatiently while a PIMPLY ADOLESCENT BOY endlessly slices ham for her...

--She peers through the frosted windows of the frozen foods aisle...

--She hurries down the fruit aisle, pushing her cart like a race car driver.

--She stuffs cucumbers into a plastic bag in the produce section...

--She bags her groceries one by one just as soon as a particularly slow GROCERY CLERK scans them at the register, one after another. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. BEEP.

It's excruciating for her to wait, but she keeps the same polite, patient, slightly quizzical expression on her face.

The Grocery Clerk finishes. Agnes swipes her charge card. Punches in the number. The sound of a receipt printing.

GROCERY CLERK

All set.

AGNES

Thank you.

She grabs her bag and rushes off. Comes back and gets her receipt.

INT. AGNES'S CAR. MOVING - AFTERNOON

Agnes drives back home through the streets of West Bridgeport. There's more traffic than earlier. It's rush hour. She checks the dashboard clock. HONKS THE HORN when the light turns green.

OMITTED

INT. KITCHEN SIDE ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Agnes moves the wet laundry to the dryer.

34

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - EVENING

34

Agnes runs over to the sink, fills a pot with boiling water, and grabs a jar of tomato sauce from the cupboard. She hears the FRONT DOOR OPEN AND SHUT. A beat later, Gabe walks in.

GABE

Hey.

He gives her a kiss on the cheek.

AGNES

Hi, sweetie. How was your day?

GABE

Kind of whatever. Chess club was cool. Hockey was canceled; Coach Wilson got bad diarrhea.
(laughing)

How was your day?

AGNES

Busy. Pretty busy.

GABE

Any emergencies?

AGNES

None. Thank God.

He laughs and grabs an apple off the table.

35

INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

35

Wearing dirty coveralls, Ziggy walks in to set up the table. He checks out the finished puzzle.

ZIGGY

Hey, Mom, what do I do with this thing on--?

Agnes runs in, wiping her hands in a kitchen towel.

AGNES

Sorry.

She breaks the puzzle up.

ZIGGY

No, don't!

Too late. She throws puzzle pieces into the box.

ZIGGY (CONT'D)

That's 1500 pieces, Mom.

She shrugs. Louie comes down the stairs post-shower.

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

LOUIE
What's going on?

ZIGGY
Nothing. Mom just--

AGNES
Dinner is almost ready.

LOUIE
(to Ziggy)
You're not going to change?

ZIGGY
Mom asked me to set the table.

LOUIE
In these filthy clothes?

AGNES
It's okay. I'll do it.

36 **INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

36

Agnes is lying in bed, struggling to make out the small print of the puzzle instructions with an old magnifying glass. Louie is changing into his pajamas.

LOUIE
He's lazy.

He looks at her, she's trying to read.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Agnes, are you listening?

AGNES
Shhh. Lower your voice.

LOUIE
What are you reading there?

AGNES
Puzzle instructions.

LOUIE
You put the pieces together until you run out, what other instructions do you need?

AGNES
Suggestions. Strategies. It doesn't matter.

She puts the paper away.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIE
You're so cute.
(pause)
Puzzles are for children, Agnes.

AGNES
I don't think he's lazy.

LOUIE
He just sits there until I ask him
to do something. He'll do whatever
I tell him but he won't take any
initiative. All day long.

Louie faces her in his pajama bottoms, shirtless. Agnes eyes
him, her expression betraying worry.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
What?

AGNES
Huh?

LOUIE
You were looking at me with some
kind of-- some kind of look in your
eyes.

AGNES
No I wasn't.

LOUIE
I know you, Agnes.

AGNES
There was no look--

LOUIE
Just say it.

AGNES
There was no look.

LOUIE
I turned down a doughnut today.
Okay? A jelly doughnut! Do you know
how hard that was for me?

AGNES
You should be very proud of
yourself.

LOUIE
I am. I'm smoking a lot less. For
you. For us. Cholesterol is a
genetic thing. It's not my fault...

He turns the lights off and gets in bed, putting his arm
around her.

(CONTINUED)

AGNES
I just don't want to lose you.

LOUIE
(laughing)
Then pray for me!
(pause)
Is it hot in here?

She sighs, gets up and opens a crack in the window. Stops, staring out at:

Ziggy, smoking a cigarette outside, looking through messages on his phone, a picture of youthful loneliness. She gets back in bed.

37 **EXT. ST. STEPHENS CHURCH. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY** 37

Agnes steers her car into the church parking lot.

38 **INT. ST. STEPHENS CHURCH. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY** 38

THE ORGAN IS BEING TUNED, WAY TOO LOUD AND SCREECHY. Brightly colored light streams through the giant stained glass windows.

Agnes walks through the entrance, waves to THE SHORT WOMAN mopping the floors and crosses to a side door where a hand-written sign reads: ST. STEPHENS LADIES GUILD MEETING. She opens the door and walks down the stairs.

39 **INT. BASEMENT. ST. STEPHENS CHURCH. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY** 39

Children's Sunday School drawings decorate every inch of every wall.

The meeting is in progress: HOUSEWIVES (30s-70s) sit in a circle of chairs, Agnes and Ezster amongst them. FANNY, 50, overly made-up, is the Ladies Guild leader.

FANNY
Well, Lent starts in five days.
Since we're no longer doing the
soup kitchen, we need to start
organizing a food drive.

The women start passing around a sign-up sheet. Agnes's attention is on the children's drawings: the broken lines, the bright colors, the naive settings - she's mesmerized.

EZSTER (O.S.)
Is it true Father Kutash is only
going to do confession once a month
now?

39 CONTINUED:

FANNY (O.S.)
No one shows up. There's nothing we
can do about it.

The sign-up sheet gets to Agnes and she takes the pen and
paper.

AGNES
(to herself, loudly)
I guess we'll just pack our sins
into neat monthly portions.

Everyone stares at her. She turns beet red. Quickly signs her
name.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(passing the sheet)
I'm sorry. It was a joke. I didn't
realize I was speaking out loud.

40 **INT./EXT. AGNES'S CAR. PARKED/CHURCH PARKING LOT - DAY** 40

Church Ladies exit the building and head to their cars.

Agnes is sitting in her parked car, laughing to herself as
CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYS ON THE RADIO.

41 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY** 41

Agnes dumps her bags down on the counter. Then she walks over
to the phone and dials.

AGNES (TO PHONE)
Aunt Emily. It's Agnes. We missed
you at the party. How are you? I
heard. Completely broken? Which
part? The fifth what? Fifth
metatarsal? I don't know what that
is. I'm so sorry. Good, good. No.
It's just-- I have a question. The
present you sent me with Vlad. The
puzzle. Yeah. No, it's very nice.
Where did you buy it?

Agnes grabs a pencil and a note pad while she listens, and
scrawls something down.

AGNES (TO PHONE) (CONT'D)
Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
(disappointed)
Oh, that's too bad. No. I haven't
been to New York in years. I
couldn't ask Vlad. Online? Louie
says we shouldn't give credit card
numbers online. I guess sometimes
it's better to be paranoid.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

AGNES (TO PHONE) (CONT'D)
His friend Ronnie had his identity
stolen. His life was hell for nine
months. Anyway, thanks. All the
best. Bye bye.

She hangs up. Looks down at the note pad, where she has
written: 'Thompson and 3rd street.'

42 INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY 42

Agnes stares at the assembled world map puzzle on the table
with a great deal of pride. She did it again! And in half the
time.

She looks at the world. The world looks back at her. Then she
starts taking it apart.

43 INT. DEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY 43

Agnes has a stack of blank Hallmark invitations and envelopes
on the table, along with stamps and extra pens. She uses a
red pen to inscribe something in one card. Then puts the card
away. Takes another, repeats. Adds it to the pile.

44 OMITTED 44

45 INT. GABE'S ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY 45

Agnes searches through Gabe's closet. A small box of condoms
falls out from behind a pile of old clothes and onto the
ground. Agnes stares at it, then puts it back.

46 INT. BASEMENT. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY 46

A dim light turns on to reveal taxidermied fish of every
possible size, mounted on the wall and displayed on stands
all around. There are also stacks of fishing poles and boxes
of fly-fishing supplies.

Agnes goes into a corner of the basement and rummages through
boxes and toys, until:

AGNES
Tada!

She finds a very old children's puzzle set: The Incredible
Hulk. Only a hundred pieces. She immediately sits down on the
basement floor, empties out the box and starts assembling the
pieces. She's becoming an addict.

47

INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

47

The family around the table, plus NICKI, 17, Gabe's girlfriend.

Agnes comes in from the kitchen with a gorgeous stuffed chicken dish she adds to a salad assembled in the likeness of a fish. There's homemade bread along with other elaborate dishes on the table.

AGNES
The chicken is stuffed with
potatoes and-

GABE
Mom! Nicki!

AGNES
(to Nicki)
I thought you just didn't eat red
meat.

NICKI
I'm vegan.

GABE
We went through this already, Mom.

AGNES
So you never ever eat chicken?

GABE
(to Nicki)
It's like she's hoping you'll
forget. It's so embarrassing.

AGNES
I should have made fish. I'm sorry.

ZIGGY
She doesn't eat any animals, Mom.

AGNES
But she has to have protein, she's
still growing.

GABE
Mom, don't say dumb shit like that--

LOUIE
Hey. Enough. Okay.

AGNES
(to Nicki)
The way we were raised, everything
had to come with meat. I'm sorry.

(CONTINUED)

NICKI
It's fine. I can eat the salad.
And bread. I'm fine.

Nicki takes the salad, stirs it up with salad tongs and serves herself. Agnes watches confused.

AGNES
(to Nicki)
Have you always been this way?

GABE
Nicki's also a Buddhist.

LOUIE
That sounds interesting.

AGNES
You know, I have no idea what that really means. Buddhist. I always hear people talking about Buddhism and celebrities and nobody says what it is.

NICKI
It's like-- Like the root of all suffering is our desire not to suffer.

Intrigued by this strange young woman, Agnes stares, forgetting the food.

NICKI (CONT'D)
So we have to give up on the idea of being happy

Ziggy eats quietly. Gabe's practically glowing.

LOUIE
(impressed)
You don't care about being happy?

NICKI
I try not to think that way.
Happiness is an illusion.

Agnes serves herself some chicken.

AGNES
Are your parents unhappy?

Ziggy cracks up. Nicki stares, surprised.

GABE
Mom!

AGNES
I mean, like Buddhist? Did they raise you this way?

(CONTINUED)

NICKI
God. No. They're stuck in the past.

AGNES
Isn't Buddhism also from the past?

NICKI
No. Yeah. I mean they're more
conventional Western thinkers. When
they bother to think. That's what I
mean.

Louie laughs, he likes Nicki's spirit. Agnes gives him a
look, she's not amused. Ziggy clocks his mother's anguish.

GABE
Nicki won't even-- She doesn't even
kill mosquitoes.

ZIGGY
I read something about this kid who
drowned in a river because a
Buddhist monk was the only one
watching him and if you're a
Buddhist you're not supposed to try
to save people's lives. Like you're
not supposed to interfere with
their path.

LOUIE
What?!

NICKI
That doesn't sound true.

AGNES
Why can't Buddhists save lives?

GABE
Where did you read that?

ZIGGY
It was an article. It was a real
article on like the Huffington Post
or something.

NICKI
Um, yeah, that's not Buddhism.
Buddhism respects life. It just has
a different approach to death and
suffering.

LOUIE
That monk should be shot.

GABE/AGNES
Dad!/Louie!

ZIGGY
Are you volunteering, Dad?

(CONTINUED)

47

NICKI
No. He's right. I mean.
Metaphorically.

An awkward pause among the less righteous.

LOUIE
Yeah. Metaphorically. I get it.

He locks eyes with Agnes who stares daggers at him. It's as if he's betrayed her somehow.

AGNES
How's your chicken, Louie?

LOUIE
It's good.

He notices Nicki looking at him.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
A little dry. But good.

Agnes stands up alarmed.

AGNES
There's gravy.

A48 **EXT. BACKYARD. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING**

A48

Daylight. All is calm and quiet.

48 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING**

48

Agnes makes coffee. Ziggy, looking groggy, comes in and, without saying a word, takes the eggs out of the fridge and starts breaking them into a bowl. He likes to help.

AGNES
Good morning.

ZIGGY
What's good about it?

49-51 **OMITTED**

49-51

52 **EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY**

52

Agnes waits on the mostly empty train platform, shivering slightly. A FEW BUSINESS MEN in suits, late for work or working late, mill about, looking at their iPhones and iPads; ONE is shuffling through his iPod. Agnes eyes the i'S.

53 **OMITTED**

53

54

INT. TRAIN CAR. METRO NORTH TRAIN. MOVING - DAY

54

Agnes sits in the back of the moving train and looks out the window as Bridgeport flies by. Trees turn the outside world into a green blur. The TRAIN CONDUCTOR comes by.

AGNES
A ticket to Grand Central please.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
That's nineteen dollars.

Agnes balks. Stares horrified.

AGNES
How much?

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Nineteen.

AGNES
I thought it was eight.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Are you an active duty member of
the United States armed forces, or
disabled or a senior?

AGNES
No. None of those things.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
It's nineteen dollars one way, off-
peak hours when you purchase
tickets on board. Next time buy it
at the station. It's cheaper. You
could get a ten trip or a weekly.

AGNES
That's okay. I don't really think
they'll be a next time.

She hands him a twenty.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
One way?

AGNES
I'll buy the return in Grand
Central.

55

INT. GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL - DAY

55

Agnes stands in the middle of Grand Central's atrium, staring up at the golden constellations on the ceiling.

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

55

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE jostle past her, some almost knocking her over. But she can't stop staring.

56 INT./EXT. TAXI. MOVING/ NYC - DAY

56

Agnes sits in the back of a yellow cab, staring out the window at the Big Bad Apple, like a tourist, moving slowly through Manhattan traffic.

From time to time she looks at the meter with worry as the fare climbs mercilessly. When it gets to ten dollars, she leans forward toward THE DRIVER.

AGNES

Could you stop please? I'll walk.
I'm sorry.

57 EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK. NYC - DAY

57

Agnes crosses Washington Square taking in the fountain and the diverse crowds of STUDENTS, STREET MUSICIANS, TOURISTS and THE HOMELESS.

58 EXT. THOMPSON STREET. GREENWICH VILLAGE - DAY

58

Agnes stops in front of a tiny shop window filled with puzzles on display: PUZZLEMANIA. The look in her eyes is that of child-like awe. She's arrived!

59 INT. PUZZLEMANIA. GREENWICH VILLAGE - DAY

59

A BELL RINGS as Agnes enters the cluttered shop. A HEAVILY-PIERCED YOUNG MAN at the counter looks up from his phone.

YOUNG MAN

Let me know if you need any help.

The place is a puzzle-lover's fantasy come to life; dusty and dark, almost like an old bookstore, with wall-to-wall puzzles of every type imaginable.

60 INT. PUZZLEMANIA. GREENWICH VILLAGE - LATER

60

The Young Man watches Agnes, her arms full of puzzles, agonizing between two final purchases.

YOUNG MAN

You ready?

AGNES

What do you think, sir? Which one?

(CONTINUED)

She holds up the two puzzles: a portrait of a mother bathing her child (Mary Cassatt's painting "Mother and Child") and a painting of naked woman lying provocatively on a couch (Goya's "The Nude Maja").

YOUNG MAN

Uh... depends on what you want to spend days looking at.

AGNES

What do you mean?

YOUNG MAN

They're each a thousand pieces. They take forever.

Agnes looks at them.

AGNES

I'll take both.

She carries her pile of puzzles to the counter. The Young Man starts RINGING her up.

Agnes focuses on a handwritten sign with tiny tabs hanging off the bottom on a bulletin board nearby: "CHAMPION DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR PUZZLE PARTNER". She gazes at the sign for a while, then looks away and finds her wallet, but then her eyes land on the sign again.

AGNES (CONT'D)

(pointing to sign)

What's that about? "Desperately".

The Young Man turns to look at the sign.

YOUNG MAN

I don't know. Some guy. My father is usually here. I'm just visiting.

AGNES

Is he sick?

YOUNG MAN

Who?

AGNES

Your dad.

YOUNG MAN

No. He just had a meeting out of town.

AGNES

Good. Please take good care of him. It's devastating when they're gone, believe me.

(CONTINUED)

60

The Young Man stares at her, confused.

60

YOUNG MAN
He'll be back tomorrow.

61

EXT. PUZZLEMANIA. GREENWICH VILLAGE - DAY

61

Carrying two bags of puzzles, Agnes steps out of the store onto the sun-drenched sidewalk. She breathes the day in. Then turns around and steps back inside.

We see her through the window, pointing at the sign on the bulletin board and talking with the Young Man.

62

INT. TRAIN CAR. METRO NORTH TRAIN. MOVING - EVENING

62

The sun sets over New York City as Agnes's train speeds north back to Bridgeport.

Agnes sits near a knocked-out loaded SNORING MAN IN A SUIT. She's holding one of the little paper tabs from the Puzzlemania bulletin board in her hand, staring. It reads: Text 646-977-7839.

63

INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

63

Agnes lies awake in bed; Louie is asleep next to her. SNORING.

64

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

64

Agnes tiptoes into the kitchen in her nightgown with her iPhone in her hand and the Mary Cassatt's "Mother and Child" puzzle box.

65

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

65

Agnes puts puzzle pieces together with speed and efficiency. She's a natural.

66

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

66

"Mother and Child" completed, Agnes gets up, moves to the other side of the table, puts the phone on the table and sits next to it, as if it was a typewriter.

Using one finger, she touches the MESSAGES icon. Giddily, she gets into text mode. She looks at the screen, unsure, then touches the WRITE icon. Then balks.

66 CONTINUED:

66

Types the phone number off the paper tab she fishes out of her nightgown pocket. Then deletes it. Then she types it in again and writes:

"Hi. My name is Agnes. I think I might be good at this."
After a pause she types: "Puzzles, I mean."

Then, on an impulse, she presses "SEND" and closes her eyes. A beat later, a response text RINGS and she opens her eyes in surprise. The text reads: "How good?" She giggles and starts to type back with one finger.

67 **INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

67

Agnes lies awake in bed next to Louie. She's holding her phone to heart. Can't sleep. Louie's SNORING doesn't help.

68 **INT. ST. STEPHENS. BRIDGEPORT, CT - MORNING**

68

Agnes kneels before FATHER KUTASH, a line of people waiting behind her. Kutash dips his thumb into some ashes and makes a small cross on Agnes's forehead. It's Ash Wednesday.

FATHER KUTASH
Remember that thou art dust and to
dust thou shalt return...

69 **INT. METRO NORTH TRAIN. MOVING - DAY**

69

Agnes expertly hands her ticket to ANOTHER TRAIN CONDUCTOR and watches while he punches it. He also has an Ash Cross on his forehead, peeking from underneath his uniform hat. She likes that.

AGNES
Thank you.

70 **EXT. STREET. WEST VILLAGE. NYC - DAY**

70

Agnes walks down a cobblestoned street, counting numbers under her breath.

71 **EXT. PERRY STREET. WEST VILLAGE. NYC - DAY**

71

Agnes is standing in front of a beautiful but slickly contemporary townhouse.

She walks up the steps. Peers into the security camera. Lifts her finger to ring the buzzer, but before she even touches it the door opens.

Standing in front of her is ROBERT. Handsome, in his 50s, wearing simple but not inexpensive clothes. THE WEATHER CHANNEL IS ON TV INSIDE THE HOUSE.

(CONTINUED)

71 CONTINUED:

AGNES
I'm Agnes. Hi!

Agnes sticks her hand out. He shakes it.

ROBERT
Robert. Come in. You write funny
texts, Agnes.

Agnes smiles politely and enters the house where she takes
off her jacket. He follows her in and closes the door behind
him

A72 INT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - CONTINUOUS

A72

They stand awkwardly at the entrance.

ROBERT
Have you seen the news?

AGNES
What? No. I-- I'm-- I'm here about
the puzzles.

ROBERT
The flood in India. Thousands of
people washed away just like that.
Boggles the mind. There was an
earthquake in Northern Iran. I'm
not trying to be gloomy. I know
we're just meeting. It's just-- Too
much!

AGNES
Oh. I-- I didn't hear--

She laughs nervously, then stops herself.

AGNES (CONT'D)
How are my texts funny?

ROBERT
What? Oh-- I'm sorry, but... you
seem to have some dirt on your
forehead.

AGNES
Oh. I-

He reaches out to brush it off.

AGNES (CONT'D)
It's Ash Wednesday.

He pulls back.

ROBERT
Oh, is that today?

(CONTINUED)

A72 CONTINUED:

AGNES
All day.

ROBERT
You're Catholic?

AGNES
Is that a problem?

He smiles, she's strange.

ROBERT
Not at all. As long as we don't
have to share the prize with the
pope.

Agnes stays put, a bit stunned.

AGNES
What prize?

72 INT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - DAY

72

Agnes nervously follows Robert to a coat closet...

AGNES
You said "prize".

ROBERT
Every competition has a prize.

73 INT. LIVING ROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

73

Robert hangs her coat in the coat closet...

AGNES
Your ad didn't mention a prize.

Robert keeps walking and Agnes follows him...

74-75 INT. LIVING ROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

74-75

They move through a living room with a huge table and
chandelier...

ROBERT
I thought it was obvious. "CHAMPION
DESPERATELY LOOKING FOR PUZZLE
PARTNER". Did you think I was
looking for companionship?

AGNES
No. No. Of course not. Just-- a
partner.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
For a competition.

AGNES
I've never competed in anything in
my life.

ROBERT
Not even for the affection of your
husband?

AGNES
What? I-- How do you know I'm
married?

She realizes the ring on her finger.

ROBERT
Educated guess.

AGNES
I could be a widow.

ROBERT
Are you?

AGNES
Sometimes.

He laughs.

76 **INT. DEN. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

76

...And into the perfectly-organized den/study at the back of
the house where a TV is on, tuned to the Weather Channel.

Large magnets, plastic tubings and blueprints are piled up on
the desk and wall, untouched, like a museum piece.

Robert opens a small door and holds it for Agnes.

ROBERT
May I ask-- Why did you answer the
ad?

She shrugs, then looks away, embarrassed, about to say
something.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Oh, no, don't say it?

AGNES
What?

ROBERT
I thought you were going to say you
were... "puzzled by the ad."

(CONTINUED)

76 CONTINUED:

She smiles uncomfortably.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And don't think your smiling right
now worries me any less.

77 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

77

Agnes and Robert enter a beautiful mahogany puzzle suite, filled with reading lamps and lined with bookshelves and ladders leading to higher shelves, all filled with puzzles. The adjoining area is a circular room where an oak table with two leather chairs await the players.

ROBERT
Sit. Please.

Agnes sits down at the table. Still stunned. Robert peruses one of his bookshelves, pulls a puzzle out and dumps the pieces out in front of Agnes.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
All right. Let's see how we work
together.

AGNES
(anxious)
Is this a test?

ROBERT
Absolutely.

AGNES
What's the competition?

ROBERT
National Jigsaw Puzzle
championship. Single competition is
five-hundred piece puzzles. The
doubles is a thousand pieces. It's
limited to a hundred and eighty
couples. I won the singles last
year. My first time.

AGNES
I didn't know such a thing existed.

ROBERT
Don't tell anyone. There'll be a
run on the place.

AGNES
What happened to your partner?

ROBERT
How do you know I had a partner?

(CONTINUED)

77 CONTINUED:

AGNES
You wouldn't sign up for doubles if
you didn't have a partner.

ROBERT
Very good. She left.

AGNES
Why?

He takes her in.

ROBERT
Show me how you do puzzles, then
maybe I'll tell you.

Agnes nervously starts gathering pieces and looking at them.
She then grabs handfuls of pieces and begins spreading them
out.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You're not doing colors first?

Agnes shakes her head.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Rule number one of competitive
puzzling. You've got to organize by
color before you do anything else.

Agnes nods meekly and starts organizing by color.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
I'll do green and the oranges. You
do the red and the dark browns.

They are silent for a minute as they work. Then Agnes reaches
for the cover to turn it and look at it for a long time.
Robert sighs and pushes his chair back.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
How long have you been puzzling?

AGNES
A while.

ROBERT
How long is awhile?

AGNES
I'm very fast.

ROBERT
You said that in your text. How
long?

(CONTINUED)

79 CONTINUED:

She nods.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
May I ask. Again. Respectfully.
Why?

She shrugs. Then laughs to herself.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You were just tempted to say it
again, weren't you?

She nods.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Go ahead. Get it out of your
system.

She shakes her head.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
It's inevitable. Get out of jail
free. Say it once and never again.

AGNES
Your ad said "desperately". I
was... puzzled.

She cracks herself up, roaring with laughter. He looks at her with strange fascination. Something's off with her, something fascinating to him.

80 **INT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - AFTERNOON**

80

Agnes puts her jacket on by the coat closet.

AGNES
Are you sure you don't need to
think about it?

ROBERT
Not for a minute. You're a godsend.
This was meant to be.

Agnes tries hard to contain her smile.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
What works for you? We need to meet
at least twice a week. The
tournament is in a month. That's
barely enough time to prepare.

AGNES
Oh.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
Don't tell me you can't do it now.

AGNES
No. I can do it.
(forcefully)
I'll do it. I want to. I'll-- Yes.
Wait--

He stares at her, intrigued. She's looking away, as if doing calculations in her mind.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Why did she leave you, your partner?

ROBERT
She just left. No explanation, really. Just up and gone. Not even a note.

AGNES
So she wasn't just a puzzle partner?

ROBERT
No. She was my wife.

AGNES
Was she good? At puzzles, I mean.

ROBERT
Better than most. Not as good as you.

She smiles to herself.

AGNES
Okay. Mondays and Wednesdays.
(to herself)
Mondays and Wednesdays.
(to Robert)
You don't have to be at work?

ROBERT
I work at home.

AGNES
Oh, yeah? Me too.

Agnes, Louie and the boys are in the middle of dinner.

AGNES
(nervously)
...I got some bad news.

They all stop and look at her.

81 CONTINUED:

AGNES (CONT'D)
Aunt Emily is sick. I mean, she
broke her foot, the poor thing.

GABE
How?

AGNES
She tripped.

LOUIE
That's too bad.

AGNES
So I'll be going to New Rochelle
two days a week to help her out.
You know, buy groceries, cook some
meals for her... Mondays and
Wednesdays. For about a month.

LOUIE
That's a long time, Agnes.

AGNES
You won't even notice the
difference.

ZIGGY
Should we go visit her too?

AGNES
I don't think that's
necessary.

GABE
I've got a lot going on this
weekend.

ZIGGY
Should I write her a card?

Agnes pats Ziggy's hand.

AGNES
Yes. That's a nice idea.

82 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

82

Through the kitchen door we see Ziggy smoking in the backyard
and browsing through his phone. Agnes is cleaning up. She
hums to herself. Gabe is on his laptop at the kitchen table.

GABE
(staring at the laptop)
It says I have to write one essay
about "why I want to go to college"
and in another essay I have to
describe a "transformative
experience" in my life.

AGNES
What does that mean?

(CONTINUED)

82 CONTINUED:

GABE
They all ask for it. UConn, all the
SUNY schools..."why do you want to
go to college?" "Describe a
transformative experience in your
life."

THE DOORBELL RINGS and Gabe jumps up.

83 INT. LIVING ROOM/DEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 83

Agnes has her feet soaking in a tub of warm water in the
living room. Louie is meticulously handcrafting pieces of fly-
fishing lure.

Nicki and Gabe are splayed out on the den floor looking at
Gabe's laptop. Next to them, Ziggy is watching a "Big
Brother" type show on television.

AGNES (O.S.)
What about the time we went to
Hungary with Grandpa?

ZIGGY
That was me, mom.

GABE (O.S.)
I wasn't there mom. That was
Ziggy.

IT GETS QUIET FOR A LONG BEAT SAVE FOR THE REALITY SHOW.

AGNES
What about the time I got sick
after my father died? That was hard
on all of you.

They all freeze. The SOUND OF THE TV DOMINATES FOR A BEAT.
Nicki stares, unsure what to say. Louie pretends he isn't
listening.

ZIGGY (O.S.)
Okay, I got it. When that ugly girl
popped your cherry. That must have
been transformative. You haven't
made sense ever since.

Gabe throws a pillow at Ziggy, but misses and hits Louie.

GABE
Fuck you!

LOUIE
Hey! Hey! Goddamnit. There's a lady
present.

GABE
(to Nicki)
I apologize.

(CONTINUED)

NICKI
That's okay.

A long pause.

AGNES
I'm here too, Gabe. I'm a lady
present.

GABE
What? Oh. Sure. Sorry, Mom.

AGNES
Thank you.

LOUIE
I meant we had a guest, Agnes.

AGNES
I know.

GABE
Let's face it, there's just nothing
transformative in my life. Maybe I
shouldn't even go to college.

LOUIE
That's not a conversation for right
now.

AGNES
You have to go to college.

GABE
Whatever.

Louie shakes his head and goes back to his fly-fishing bait.

AGNES
(to herself)
"Transformative" is such a funny
word. Trans. Form. A. Tive. Trans.
For. Mat. Ive. Trans. Format...

Agnes looks up at the TV and splashes her feet in the water,
making a little rhythm out of the splashing. Ziggy watches
her, amused.

ZIGGY
Why are you in such a good mood all
of a sudden, Mom?

Agnes looks self-conscious for a second, caught. Then she
smiles and splashes her feet a little more.

(CONTINUED)

AGNES
I'm just happy we're all together
here. Right now. Like this.

Nicki looks at her. You can see a hurt, un-parented child all
of a sudden.

NICKI
Can I sleep over tonight? On the
couch.

AGNES
Well--

GABE
On the couch.

LOUIE
What about your parents?

NICKI
They're out of town. I feel safer
here.

GABE
I could go sleep over at her place.

No. LOUIE No. AGNES

Louie and Agnes exchange looks. Ziggy laughs.

AGNES (CONT'D)
I'll get the extra blanket.

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - LATER

MUSIC BLASTING UPSTAIRS SEEPS THROUGH THE CEILING. Louie and
Agnes are putting dishes away.

LOUIE
She's using you. Everyone always
uses you and you let them. You're a
sucker is what you are.

AGNES
It's called being kind.

LOUIE
Sucker is being kind with no
filter.

AGNES
She's my aunt.

LOUIE
She has her own family. You have
things to do here. We need you.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

LOUIE (CONT'D)
I need you. I got those invoices
piling up at the garage you could
help with. And, anyway, you need
rest. You can't go.

AGNES
I've rested enough. Why do you
always do this?

LOUIE
I'm just worried about you. The
doctor said--
(changing approach)
Maybe I'm selfish. Okay? I admit
it. I love you too much. You take
such good care of us. And I want
you to take it easy, is that so
wrong? Let me call her.

AGNES
No. I-- I-- I'll call her and let
her know I can't come twice a week.

LOUIE
Not even once a week. For your
sake, Agnes.

AGNES
Okay.

He kisses her on the cheek and leaves; he's done helping,
point made.

Louie is SNORING AGAIN. Agnes lies awake, listening to him.
After a second, she jabs him, with her elbow. He jumps.

LOUIE
Wha-? Huh?

AGNES
You're snoring.

LOUIE
What do you want me to do about it?

AGNES
Stop.

LOUIE
How?

AGNES
I don't know.

Louie moans and turns over on his side.

LOUIE
Relax. It's late. Go to sleep.

And then he goes back to sleep quietly.

THE SOUNDS OF GABE AND NICKI HAVING SEX SUDDENLY BUILDS UP
FROM DOWN THE CORRIDOR.

AGNES
Oh, God.

Agnes buries herself under the covers. Louie starts SNORING.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(whispering to herself)
I knew she wouldn't stay on the
couch.

86 **EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY**

86

Agnes waits on the platform as The Metro North train ROARS
into the station and comes to a full stop.

87 **INT. GRAND CENTRAL TERMINAL - DAY**

87

Agnes hurries through the Grand Central atrium.

88 **OMITTED**

88

89 **INT. SUBWAY TRAIN. MOVING. NYC - DAY**

89

Agnes sits in a crowded subway car, nervous. A BLIND MAN
stands close by, SINGING "AVE MARIA" IN AN ALMOST IMPOSSIBLY
HIGH VOICE.

Agnes gets up and gives The Blind Man a dollar.

90 **EXT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. PERRY STREET. WEST VILLAGE - DAY** 90

Agnes nervously approaches Robert's townhouse and stops cold
spotting:

An impatient MAN IN A SUIT RINGING ROBERT'S DOORBELL.

Agnes watches him try the bell a few more times, BANG ON THE
DOOR, then give up and walk off angry.

She remains frozen in place.

90 CONTINUED:

90

Then slowly Robert's door opens. He stands there smiling and motions for her to come in.

91 INT. HALLWAY. ROBERT'S TOWN HOUSE - DAY

91

Robert leads Agnes toward the den/study. MID-CONVERSATION:

ROBERT

...I don't open the door for the past.

AGNES

I'm not sure I understand.

ROBERT

That man was a business associate of mine. I don't have any patience for business these days. Too much pressure. And anyway, I was watching the surveillance camera footage online from the mass shooting last night. Have you seen it? It's so goddamn awful.

He stops and faces her. She lowers her eyes.

AGNES

I don't have as much time as I thought. I'm sorry. We better start.

92 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

92

Robert dramatically dumps an entire 1000-piece puzzle out onto the table.

ROBERT

So they give you the puzzle and you pour the whole thing out at once. You don't take little handfuls and spread them around the table. I noticed you doing that the other day.

Agnes nods, seated.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You also stand up.

She stands up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Then you walk around the table a couple of times before you start.

(CONTINUED)

92 CONTINUED:

They both walk around the table a couple of times, it's awkward. She giggles.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You get more perspective this way.
You see puzzle pieces without the
glare. You see patterns you might
not have seen from your chair.
Different color schemes.

Agnes nods, still circling the table.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
All right. Now we can sit.

They sit. Robert hits the timer.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
It's faster to divide things up. So
I'll do borders, you do colors.

93 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

93

Agnes and Robert are about halfway through the puzzle. She's moving with great speed, fitting pieces into the puzzle frame while sneaking peeks at the timer.

ROBERT
Your name should actually be
pronounced "Ag-NESH," right?

She looks up, surprised.

AGNES
That's how my father would
pronounce it, yes. But I was born
here.

ROBERT
Ag-nesh Oros.

AGNES
I was Mata before Oros. That's my
maiden name. Agnes Mata.

ROBERT
Really? Bet you've heard plenty of
Mata Hari jokes growing up.

AGNES
Not even one.

She goes back to the puzzle again. Robert stops the timer, then leans over and presses the intercom buzzer on the wall.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
Tea, Maria.

Agnes looks at him surprised. Then laughs.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
What's funny?

AGNES
A blind man on the train was
singing "Ave Maria".

ROBERT
And that's funny how?

AGNES
"Tea, Maria." "Ave Maria". I don't
know. It's ironic.

ROBERT
That's not irony. That's
coincidence. It doesn't mean
anything.

AGNES
It must mean something.

ROBERT
You don't really believe that. Do
you?

He gets up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Come.

She follows as they walk into:

A94

INT. TEA ROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A94

They sit just as MARIA, a young, pretty maid, comes in with a teetering tray full of teacups and cookies. Agnes immediately leaps up to help her.

MARIA
I'm fine, ma'am, thank you. ROBERT
She's fine.

Agnes sits down and watches as Maria sets the cups down, pours the tea, etc. She keeps reaching out to help her, to steady things. Robert watches Agnes.

When Maria leaves, Robert leans back in his chair, balancing his tea cup on his knee. Agnes takes a sip of the tea.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You like it?

Agnes nods, suddenly uneasy. She bites into a cookie. IT
CRUNCHES LOUDLY.

(CONTINUED)

A94 CONTINUED:

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You're so much more comfortable
when you're focusing on the puzzle,
aren't you?

Agnes nods.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Why?

AGNES
You ask a lot of questions.

ROBERT
That's how you get to know someone.

AGNES
But I don't ask you anything.

ROBERT
Go ahead.

She looks away, as if calculating.

AGNES
I can't think of a question right
now.

ROBERT
That's my point. You're
uncomfortable around me.

AGNES
Well, I don't know you... But it's
not just you. I don't feel
comfortable, generally, because I--

She's thinking. He watches her patiently.

AGNES (CONT'D)
--Because normally my mind is--
I-- I don't know.

ROBERT
Because normally your mind is
moving so fast, you don't really
know where it's going. There's
nowhere for you to express your
mind. No one to express it to. It
makes you nervous. So you shut down
and focus on menial tasks. Puzzles
are menial tasks for you, so you
can focus. But the results are
aesthetically pleasing and you like
it. It turns you on.

She stares at him.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Impressed?

AGNES
I'm not sure I totally understand
what you just said.

He laughs.

ROBERT
Honestly, Agnes, if you learn the
rules and hone your technique, I
think we have a good chance at
going to Belgium. I'm not kidding
here.

AGNES
(shocked)
Belgium?

ROBERT
The WJPF international competition.
It's in Brussels. Right after the
nationals. Ever been?

Agnes shakes her head, clearly anxious.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
All I'm saying is that if we win
the nationals we go on to the World
Jigsaw Puzzle Federation
competition.

The color drains out of Agnes's face.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You don't want a free trip to the
ancestral home of the Brussel
sprout, Mata?

Agnes shakes her head and tries to smile.

AGNES
We don't have time for tea.

He looks at her as she gets up and returns to the puzzle
table.

ROBERT
(singing softly)
*Ave maria, gratia plena, Dominus
tecum.*

She laughs.

(CONTINUED)

A94

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(singing)
*Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et
benedictus fructus ventris tui,
Jesus...*

94 **EXT. STREET. WEST VILLAGE - AFTERNOON**

94

Agnes hurries to the subway, passing the window of a gourmet chocolate shop. Suddenly, she slows her steps. Stops. And turns around. She studies her reflection in the window, becoming self-conscious. Moves her hair back. Switches her bag over to the other side. Stands straight.

She suddenly notices a MAN MUNCHING ON A CHOCOLATE BAR looking at her from inside the store through the glass. She turns her back to him.

95 **INT. METRO NORTH TRAIN. MOVING - LATE AFTERNOON**

95

Eating chocolate, Agnes rides the train back home, one bright dress in a sea of commuter suits. She checks her watch. Shakes her head to herself. Then gets her iPhone out. Browses through it tentatively. Turns to the BUSINESSMAN sitting next to her.

AGNES
Excuse me. Can you show me how
Google works?

96 **INT. METRO NORTH TRAIN - LATER**

96

Agnes is typing on her phone. We see a Google entry: "Mata Hari".

97 **EXT. LOUIE K'S AUTOBODY AND REPAIR. BRIDGEPORT, CT - EARLY EVENING** 97

Auto body sanding and grinding is going on.

We're in a small, somewhat rundown garage located on the outskirts of Bridgeport. An old sign reads: "Louie K's."

Agnes's car pulls into the garage. She gets out. Louie emerges, smudged with grease.

LOUIE
Look who it is!

He gives her a hug and a kiss.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
To what do we owe the honor?

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

She holds out a box of chocolates.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
What, are you trying to kill me?

AGNES
No. God. It's just-- You've been so good.

LOUIE
I was kidding, Agnes.

Louie takes the chocolate with his grubby hands and kisses her.

AGNES
I thought maybe I'll take a look at those invoices.

LOUIE
ZIGGY!! COME OUT HERE FOR A SECOND!

Ziggy emerges.

ZIGGY
Oh. Hey, Mom.

LOUIE
Where were you?

ZIGGY
Bathroom.

LOUIE
You were coming from outside.

ZIGGY
I was takin' a smoke break.

LOUIE
So why'd you just say you were in the bathroom?

ZIGGY
That's where I was before. You don't want me to smoke in the bathroom, do you?

The two men look at each other.

AGNES
I'm gonna get started.

98 **INT. BACK ROOM. LOUIE K'S AUTOBODY AND REPAIR - LATER** 98

A small glass window looks out onto the activity in the garage below.

Sitting at a messy desk, Agnes stuffs a pile of invoices into

(CONTINUED)

an envelope, scrawls something on it, then sets it aside. She picks up another piece of paper, starts to put it aside, then frowns and inspect it. She shakes her head to herself, looking very worried all of a sudden.

Then she stands up and looks out the glass window. Louie is talking to a YOUNG WOMAN who is picking up her car. She's nodding and thanking him. Then Louie cracks a joke and she laughs.

ZIGGY (O.S.)

I don't understand how you can stay
married to him for so long.

Agnes turns around. Ziggy is there, his hands stuffed in his pockets.

AGNES

Oh. You scared me.

ZIGGY

Sorry.

AGNES

Your father is a decent, good man.

ZIGGY

Yeah. That's what he says about
you. Seriously. All the other guys
flirt with the customers and he
just like talks about how awesome
his wife is all the time.

AGNES

That's nice.

They look at each other.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Are you okay, Zig?

ZIGGY

Ah...I don't know.

(pause)

I'm miserable. I hate my life.

AGNES

Oh, honey.

ZIGGY

Dad hired me out of pity. And now
it's been nine months.

AGNES

That's not true.

Ziggy sighs.

(CONTINUED)

ZIGGY

I'm not good at this. Do you know
what it's like to spend all day not
doing the thing you're good at?

Agnes doesn't answer. They look at each other.

AGNES

So what would you rather do? What
are you good at?

ZIGGY

I don't think I'm good at anything.

Agnes sighs and hugs Ziggy. He's fighting tears.

ZIGGY (CONT'D)

What happened to you, Mom?

AGNES

Nothing. I just got lost, honey,
when Grandpa died-- He was-- You
know, it was just my dad and me for
so many years. I was confused. I
needed a place to rest.

ZIGGY

You've only had men in your life.

AGNES

I guess that's true.

He wipes his tears.

ZIGGY

Can't be much of a man if I'm
crying.

AGNES

Oh, Ziggy, honey, men cry! They cry
more than women. But not always
with tears. It's okay.

ZIGGY

I want to cook, Mom.

AGNES

What?

ZIGGY

You asked me what I'm good at, I
don't know. But I want to cook.

AGNES

Seriously?

(CONTINUED)

ZIGGY

Yes. I've watched you cook all my life. I watch cooking shows when no one's home. I think I'd be happy doing what you do, not what Dad does.

AGNES

But I don't do anything.

ZIGGY

Are you fucking kidding me? You do a million things. And you're good at all of them.

She smiles, pleased.

AGNES

Can I ask you for a favor?

ZIGGY

Sure.

AGNES

Can you show me how to work the apps on my phone?

ZIGGY

Yeah.

AGNES

But don't tell Gabe.

99 **OMITTED**

99

100 **INT. DEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON**

100

HIP HOP MUSIC PLAYS LOUDLY as EIGHT SEVENTEEN-YEAR OLDS, including Gabe and Nicki, are hanging out, some deep into the XBox, some chatting, laughing, looking through a photo book, posing for iPhones snaps, drinking soda, etc..

Agnes enters from the kitchen and lays down snacks on the table.

NICKI

Thanks, Mrs. Oros.

AGNES

Does anyone need anything?

No reply. She looks at Gabe. He's busy.

AGNES (CONT'D)

(a bit too loud)

Does anyone need anything?

(CONTINUED)

100 CONTINUED: 53.
Everyone stares at her. She smiles to herself. 100

AGNES (CONT'D)
I guess it's just me.

101 OMITTED 101

102 INT. BATHROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 102

Agnes and Louie are brushing their teeth together, side by side, looking in the mirror at their reflections.

AGNES
I feel bad that Ziggy never got to go to college.

LOUIE
He got terrible grades. Gabe is the smart one.

AGNES
But still. Maybe he should've tried. Or we should've helped him try.

LOUIE
We didn't have the money.

AGNES
Do you ever wish you'd gone? To college, I mean? Learn things just to know them?

LOUIE
Nope. I would've hated it.

Agnes nods and spits out her toothpaste.

AGNES
I think I would have majored in math.

LOUIE
Math, huh? That's cute.

AGNES
Ever wonder what your life would be like if you met me a few years later. Or never met me at all?

LOUIE
Not for one second. I thank God I have you every day.

AGNES
Every single day?

(CONTINUED)

102 CONTINUED:

LOUIE
And night.

He chuckles and kisses her cheek.

AGNES
I think we should watch the news.

LOUIE
Now?

AGNES
No. Just more often.

LOUIE
Why? Nothing good's happening in
the world.

AGNES
Still. Shouldn't we know about it?

He shrugs. She rinses off her toothbrush, and then heads out
of the bathroom, shutting off the light as she goes.

LOUIE
(in the darkness)
Hey! Agnes! I'm still here.

AGNES (O.S.)
Sorry.

103 **EXT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY**

103

The door opens and Robert smiles at her. He's in his coat.
Agnes is taken aback as he steps out and closes the door
behind him.

AGNES
Are you going somewhere?

ROBERT
No. WE are.

AGNES
(alarmed)
Together? Where?

ROBERT
It's a surprise.

He takes her hand but she recoils.

AGNES
I don't like surprises.

ROBERT
You'll like this one.

104

INT. BASEMENT. PUZZLEMANIA. MANHATTAN - DAY

104

Agnes and Robert are sitting across from each other at a card table, working on a new puzzle, the timer running. Agnes is very tense and ill at ease.

We move back to see the store basement lined with shelves stacked with puzzles and filled with populated tables: a collection of ODD BALLS, mostly elderly folks, all gathered to puzzle together.

Agnes moves uncomfortably in her seat. She's not her usual fluid puzzler, she can't focus. AGNES AND ROBERT WHISPER WHILE PUZZLING FOR THE REST OF THE SCENE:

AGNES

I don't understand why we have to compete already?

ROBERT

What's the big deal?

Agnes shakes her head, she's upset.

AGNES

Who are these people?

ROBERT

I thought we'd do this to boost your confidence.

AGNES

Well, you thought wrong.

ROBERT

Just focus on what I'm doing.

She looks around, catches some glimpses. Gets back to the puzzle.

AGNES

I looked you up. I mean, I googled you. On my phone.

ROBERT

Oh?

AGNES

You're an inventor.

ROBERT

No. Not really.

AGNES

Something with magnets.

(CONTINUED)

104 CONTINUED:

ROBERT
I have a patent under my name. One invention. One good idea that took off. That's it. I stumbled onto it almost by accident. Haven't come up with anything since.

AGNES
It made your very rich.

ROBERT
It was a fluke. I'm no inventor. Let's just do the puzzle.

She gets frustrated trying to fit a piece in. Throws it back into the box. Looks around.

AGNES
Why are people staring at us?

He stops the timer.

ROBERT
Okay. Okay. This was a bad idea. I'm sorry. Let's get out of here.

105 **EXT. PUZZLEMANIA - AFTERNOON** 105

The street is filled with golden, late afternoon sunlight. Robert and Agnes exit Puzzlemania when Agnes suddenly stops, takes a deep breath and turns her face up towards the moon, smiling. He stares at her, moved and attracted.

106 **EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - AFTERNOON** 106

Agnes and Robert walk side by side. MID-CONVERSATION:

ROBERT
At the end she just didn't like... ME. We got divorced. I never wanted kids anyway.

AGNES
Why not?

ROBERT
Frankly, I don't like kids.

AGNES
How can you say that? You were a kid yourself once.

ROBERT
Right. And I hated it. Not everyone's supposed to have kids, you know. And not only for selfish reasons.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

106 CONTINUED:

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Sometimes for the kids' sake. In
this town kids are an ornament or a
fashion statement. An accessory. A
checked box. I never felt a need.
Does that make me weird?

The PHONE IN Agnes's BAG SUDDENLY STARTS RINGING. She
searches for it in panic. Answers.

AGNES (TO PHONE)
Is everything okay, Ziggy? Yes. You
scared me. Well, it's my emergency
phone! I'm not home right now. I'm
out. Out. I'm at a church meeting.
Yes, I'll see you later.

She hangs up.

ROBERT
Church?

AGNES
I have to go.

ROBERT
Was that your son?

AGNES
Yes. My oldest accessory. And no,
it doesn't make you weird. Just
different from everyone I've ever
met.

107 **EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM. BRIDGEPORT, CT - EVENING**

107

It's getting dark. Agnes hurries up the stairs over the
platform where she trips and almost falls on her face. A MAN
IN A TRENCH COAT catches her by the arm.

Agnes sits heavily down on the stairs and looks at her ankle.

AGNES
(sighing)
Thank you.

RONNIE (O.S.)
Agnes?

She looks up, heart sinking to realize the Man in the Trench
Coat is Ronnie, Louie's pal we saw taking an appetizer from
her at her birthday party.

AGNES
Hi. Ronnie.

(CONTINUED)

107 CONTINUED:

RONNIE
Where were you just coming from?

AGNES
Errands.

RONNIE
Your car on the fritz again?

AGNES
Yeah. Yeah. The car's having a bit of... yeah. No. Louie fixed it. I don't know. I felt like taking the train. Don't you have days like that?

RONNIE
If I never see another commuter train in my life I would be a very happy man.

She slowly gets to her feet.

AGNES
I'm actually running really late-

RONNIE
We got the invite.

AGNES
Great. We'll see you then.

RONNIE
Tell Louie I say hi.

AGNES
I will. I will.

RONNIE
Is the ankle okay?

Agnes is already limping away towards her car in the parking lot.

108 **OMITTED**

108

109 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER** 109

Agnes rushes in the door to find Louie's sister, Ezster, along with Louie, Gabe, Ziggy, and Nicki, all sitting around the dining room table, eating a large pizza.

AGNES
Ezster. I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

EZSTER

You missed the Ladies Guild meeting. We were worried.

She looks at Ziggy. He nods to her in reassurance.

AGNES

That was today?

EZSTER

Yes it was.

AGNES

I was with my Aunt Emily. In New Rochelle. I'm sorry. She had an accident, she broke her foot, and I... She needed me. There was no one else. Anyway, I was buying groceries for her, and the line was just out the door, and my emergency phone... I couldn't-

(to Louie)

She's my only living relative. Maybe that makes me a sucker, okay, but I had to--

LOUIE

Don't worry about it now. Sit. Eat.

ZIGGY

I offered to cook, but everyone was starving.

Agnes sits at the table. Suddenly, she notices Nicki's not eating.

AGNES

Oh, no, Nicki, the cheese! You can't eat it.

NICKI

It's not just that. I don't eat white flour anymore.

GABE

The bleach is just really, really bad for her stomach.

Long awkward pause. Agnes pushes her chair back.

AGNES

I'm going to make a little something for Nicki.

LOUIE

Who wants wine?

(CONTINUED)

109

EZSTER
No wine for me. It's Lent.

110 **EXT. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

110

Agnes stands in the doorway and waves goodbye as Ezster waddles over to her car and gets in.

AGNES
Sorry about dinner! Next time
I'll-- Bye!

Ezster slams the car door shut and drives away.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(whispering to herself)
Next time I'll just tell you to
leave my house and never come back.

ZIGGY (O.S.)
What's that?

She turns to see Ziggy stepping out of the house and lighting a cigarette.

AGNES
You shouldn't smoke.

ZIGGY
You shouldn't lie.

AGNES
I'm sorry. I--

ZIGGY
Don't tell me. I don't want to
know. Whatever it is, I hope it's
something that makes you feel good.

AGNES
It's nothing like that.

ZIGGY
Why didn't you ever divorce him?
Seriously? You were never truly
happy.

AGNES
I don't think a mother and son
should be having a conversation
like this.

ZIGGY
Whatever.

He sits on the front steps. She lowers herself next to him.

(CONTINUED)

110 CONTINUED:

AGNES
Give me one.

ZIGGY
A cigarette?

AGNES
Yes.

Laughing, he gives her a cigarette and lights it for her. She inhales. Starts coughing. Tries again. Coughs harder.

ZIGGY
Jesus, Mom. When was the last time you had one?

AGNES
This is my first.

He takes it out of her mouth and drops it on the ground. Stomps it out.

AGNES (CONT'D)
I love your father. I could never leave him. And I love you and I love Gabe.

ZIGGY
I had a feeling that was going to be your answer.

111 **INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

111

Agnes and Louie are getting ready for bed, MID-ARGUMENT:

LOUIE
Well, excuse me, saint Agnes.

AGNES
(angry)
You can't tell me to refuse a poor woman in need. And during Lent! It's bad enough your sister casts an evil eye on me for missing the church meeting. I'm sorry. My aunt needed me.

LOUIE
You're exaggerating. Ezster--

AGNES
For once, take my side! There's so much pain all around us. So much suffering in the world. Why shouldn't I help?

(CONTINUED)

111 CONTINUED:

Louie shakes his head, then tousles her hair.

AGNES (CONT'D)
What does that mean?

LOUIE
You lied to me. Like a child.

AGNES
You denied me an act of charity.
Like a heartless master.

LOUIE
What does that mean?

AGNES
You know exactly what it means.

Shaking his head, he walks into the bathroom. Agnes watches him go in shock, breathing hard, horrified by her ever growing string of lies.

112 **EXT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - DAY**

112

Agnes's finger presses the buzzer. A second later, Robert opens the door. He's in a gorgeous silk kimono. And nothing else. Agnes turns bright red.

ROBERT
Mata.

AGNES
Sorry. I'm early. I can come back.

ROBERT
No, not at all. Come in. The elections are too close to call. They think there's going to be a coup. Go ahead. I'll be right down.

He quickly walks back in.

AGNES
Which elections? Where?

113 **INT. DEN/STUDY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY**

113

BBC NEWS IS ON TV.

Agnes studies the photos on the wall in Robert's office: Robert in a suit, receiving an award at a banquet; Robert on the cover of a business magazine, the caption reading: "What's The Next Big Thing?"; Robert and a DATE before his high school prom; Robert with his ELDERLY PARENTS in the country.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED:

She looks over the magnets, plastic tubing and blueprints on Robert's neatly organized desk.

ROBERT (O.S.)
It was all way too premature.

She turns to face him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
The coup. Just rumors. They're
going to certify the elections.

AGNES
(pointing to desk)
Is this where you work?

He smiles without answering and tightens his kimono.

ROBERT
Tea?

AGNES
Okay.
(re: kimono)
Do you want to change before we
start?

114 **INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY**

114

Robert is still in his kimono. He and Agnes are facing each other at the puzzle table.

Agnes's eyes move up from the puzzle to his chest, and then back down to the puzzle again.

She picks up some puzzle pieces, looking for something, and then throws them back in the box.

ROBERT
Mata, If you've picked up a piece
and looked at it, then you
shouldn't put it back. You should
set it aside. It'll save you time
later. Remember?

Agnes nods and looks at his chest again. She gets up abruptly.

AGNES
Excuse me.

115 INT. BATHROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

115

Agnes sits on a chair in the middle of the white, shiny, palatial bathroom, her burning face in her hands. She takes a couple of deep breaths.

Then she gets up and walks over to the sink. There are dozens of expensive soaps and perfumes and lotions.

Agnes washes her hands, tries a couple of lotions, and then spritzes some perfume on her wrist.

116 MONTAGE. AGNES'S HALLWAY PORTRAITS

116

--Agnes walks into the hallway and stops, staring at the masks on the wall.

--We move through a series of portraits of Agnes trying on three different masks from Robert's collection in the hallway mirror: happy, blank expression, sad...

ROBERT (O.S.)
(calling)
Agnes, are we playing hide and seek? Cause I'm not sure who's "it".

117 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

117

Agnes and Robert finish up the puzzle and walk over to the tea room.

A118 INT. TEA ROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

A118

Maria holds up a tea canister to show Agnes.

MARIA
You like this one Mrs., right?

AGNES
Yes. Thank you, dear.

Maria pours as Agnes turns back to Robert to resume their conversation:

AGNES (CONT'D)
Kesz.

ROBERT
What does that mean?

AGNES
Done. Finished.

Maria places the teas in front of them.

(CONTINUED)

A118 CONTINUED:

AGNES (CONT'D)
Thanks, Maria.

Maria smiles and exits. Agnes winces and rubs her shoulder.

ROBERT
What's wrong?

AGNES
I hunch over and I--

ROBERT
You need to do some yoga.

Agnes shakes her head.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Why not?

He gets out of his chair.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
You know how to do Sun Salutations?

AGNES
Yoga is for little anorexic girls.

Robert laughs.

ROBERT
Get up, Mata.

Robert stands there, hands on hips.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Get up.

She gets up.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Hands above your head.

AGNES
I'm not taking instructions from a
man in a red kimono.

ROBERT
Hands above your head.

She obeys.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Now lean back.

Agnes tries to lean back.

AGNES
Eeee. Ow.

Robert gets behind her and starts massaging her shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

A118

AGNES (CONT'D)
What are you do--?

ROBERT
Now open your arms out in a circle
and let them fall to your sides.
I've been doing this for ten years.

She opens her arms out in a circle and lets them fall to her
sides

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Good.

He keeps rubbing her shoulder.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Have you ever had a professional
massage?

AGNES
No. Not really.

A tiny moan starts to escape her lips, but she stops herself.

ROBERT
I'd like to buy you a massage. You
won't believe what a difference it-

Agnes suddenly walks out of the tea room and back to her
chair where she picks up her bag. He follows.

AGNES
If I want a massage I can buy one
myself. I'm not a-- I'm not a bag
lady or a--

ROBERT
Agnes--

AGNES
I should go.

ROBERT
Come on, Agnes. Don't get weird on
me.

AGNES
It's three already. I can't be late
getting home.

ROBERT
If you want, I'll come to your home
next time.

AGNES
I'll see you here Monday.

(CONTINUED)

A118

A118

Robert regards her as she leaves.

AGNES (O.S.) (CONT'D)
And next time put on some real
clothes for God's sake.

118

INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

118

Agnes crawls in bed with Louie. They lie facing each other.
Louie reaches out to caress her.

AGNES
When I was at your office, doing
paperwork... I saw one of the bank
statements.

LOUIE
I told you we had a bad year.

AGNES
You didn't tell me it was that bad.
We don't have enough to send Gabe
to college. Now he's gonna need a
full scholarship.

LOUIE
Well, what am I supposed to do
about it? I'm working my ass off.

AGNES
We could sell the land in
Ellenville.

LOUIE
That's... no. That's impossible.

AGNES
Why?

LOUIE
Because fishing is the most
important thing in my life!

Agnes sits up in bed and looks at him, her eyes burning.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
What?

AGNES
Fishing is the most important thing
in your life?

LOUIE
Aw, come on, Agnes. You know what I
mean.

119

INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

119

Agnes lies awake in bed as the first sun rays caress the room. She listens to LOUIE SNORE.

AGNES
(whispering)
Five. Four. Three. Two. One.

Her IPHONE ALARM GOES OFF. She turns to face Louie.

LOUIE
(groggy)
Five more minutes.

AGNES
Take an hour or two.

He opens his eyes in surprise.

LOUIE
What?

120

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

120

Agnes walks into the kitchen in her nightgown, bleary-eyed, and stops short.

Ziggy is standing at the stove, frying eggs and making bacon.

AGNES
What are you doing up already?

ZIGGY
What does it look like?

AGNES
I was going to do that.

ZIGGY
Well, today I'm doing it. You can relax. I bought truffle oil at this imported goods store and I want to try it in the eggs.

Agnes sits down at the kitchen table, and watches Ziggy cook for a long beat.

AGNES
Are you gay, Ziggy?

He turns around and gives her a look.

ZIGGY
I don't think so.

(CONTINUED)

120 CONTINUED:

AGNES
It's okay if you are. Your father
will understand.

ZIGGY
I don't think I am. I'm just not
very--

AGNES
Experienced?

ZIGGY
Interested.

121 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - LATER** 121

Agnes, Ziggy, Louie, and Gabe sit around the table, eating a
beautifully cooked breakfast.

GABE
This is really good.

Ziggy beams. Louie, his mouth full, nods enthusiastically.

ZIGGY
It's the truffle oil.

GABE
Isn't that chocolate?

ZIGGY
(laughing)
No. Mushrooms.

Agnes stares blankly at her husband from across the table; he
looks back at her worried. She recognizes the look, recovers
and smiles at him. He smiles back.

LOUIE
(to Ziggy)
We better skedaddle or we'll be
late.

122 **EXT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE -- DAY** 122

Agnes rings the doorbell. Robert opens the door.

ROBERT
Hey--

AGNES
I don't want to hear anything
tragic right now. Thank you very
much.

(CONTINUED)

122 CONTINUED:

122

She pushes past him into the hallway. He looks after her.

123 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

123

Agnes is putting a puzzle together with a furious, almost inhuman speed. Robert watches her for a beat, impressed. He then picks up a puzzle piece.

AGNES

(not looking up)

Don't even try. It's not going to fit. We're wasting time.

ROBERT

Maybe I should just watch you do it then?

AGNES

Do what you want.

ROBERT

I was kidding.

AGNES

Don't kid with me. I don't have a sense of humor. Never have. Never will. That's why we get along. All you care about is disasters.

ROBERT

That's... actually funny.

AGNES

You're not listening.

124 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

124

Puzzle just finished, Agnes stands up and gathers her things.

ROBERT

Stay and have a drink with me.

AGNES

I have to beat traffic. My husband and I are going fishing.

ROBERT

I would have never guessed you liked fishing.

AGNES

I don't. He does.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT
Can I come? I love fishing! It
relaxes the mind.

AGNES
Don't say that. Fishing is vile.

ROBERT
I always throw them back in. I fish
for sport not food.

AGNES
Oh, God, the world's gone mad.

She walks out of the room. Robert watches, amused.

ROBERT
(calling after her)
I'll miss you, Mata.

He waits a beat before following Agnes into the adjoining
puzzle box room. She turns to him, furious.

AGNES
Why did you say that?

ROBERT
Because I meant it.

AGNES
How can you mean it? How can this
be happening?

ROBERT
I don't know.

AGNES
Why are we wasting all this time
doing puzzles?

ROBERT
What else is there to do?

AGNES
It's a childish hobby for bored
people.

ROBERT
You know that's not true.

AGNES
Tell me you're not a bored rich
guy. Tell me I'm not a childish
housewife.

ROBERT
That's not what we are.

(CONTINUED)

AGNES

You have much more important things to do. You're a man of ideas. Why do you do these stupid puzzles?

He hesitates. Sighs.

ROBERT

It's a way to control the chaos.

AGNES

That's ridiculous. My life was never in chaos before the puzzles. Now--

ROBERT

Come on, Mata! You're missing the point.

AGNES

Okay. What's your point, Robert?

ROBERT

Life is messy. It doesn't make any goddamn sense. Sorry to break the news to you. Life's just random. Everything is... random: my success, you here now, your kids, your life... There's nothing we can do to control anything. And then it ends.

(laughing)

Painfully usually, full of regrets.

She listens attentively.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

But when you complete a puzzle, when you finish it, it's like -- you know that you've made all the right choices. No matter how many wrong pieces you tried to fit into the wrong place, at the very end everything makes one perfect picture. I know it sounds simplistic but-- Why would I ever want to deny myself that kind of feeling? What other pursuit can give you that kind of perfection? Faith? Ambition? Wealth? Love?

She studies his face, moved.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Not even love can do that, Mata. Not neatly, not completely.

A long beat.

(CONTINUED)

124

AGNES
You're hiding.

ROBERT
Really? Who am I hiding from?

AGNES
You're hiding from your real life.

He smiles, as if caught. She takes him in.

ROBERT
I don't think I'm--

She suddenly grabs his face and pulls him into a long, passionate kiss. Then she flees the scene of her crime.

125 **INT. LOUIE'S PICKUP TRUCK. MOVING - DAY**

125

Agnes and Louie drive along a tree-lined two lane highway, Agnes in the passenger seat.

Louie SINGS ALONG TO THE POWER ROCK BALLAD ON THE RADIO and pounds out a drumbeat on the steering wheel. Agnes stares out the window, smiling, her mind elsewhere.

126 **EXT. FIELD. ELLENVILLE, NEW YORK - AFTERNOON**

126

Agnes and Louie stand in the knee-length grass of their patch of land in Ellenville. There's a little falling-apart cabin in the distance.

LOUIE
Breathe it in, Agnes. This is what
it's all about.

Agnes breathes in. Then coughs.

127 **EXT. CREEK. ELLENVILLE, NY - EVENING**

127

Agnes and Louie sit on a dock by a lake. Louie is fishing. Agnes takes her foot out of her shoe and dips her toe in the water. Louie looks at her for a long time. MID-CONVERSATION:

LOUIE
Fine. I'll think about it.

AGNES
Thank you.

LOUIE
I'm not saying we're selling it.
I'll just give it a thought. At my
own pace.

(CONTINUED)

127 CONTINUED:

AGNES
You're the big boss.

128 **EXT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - EVENING**

128

Agnes walks out into the knee-high wet grass, her arms wrapped around her shoulders, shivering in the cold.

LOUIE (O.S.)
Agnes! What are you doing?

Agnes keeps walking, farther into the grass, away from the cabin. Eventually she stops.

LOUIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Agnes!

She doesn't move.

129 **EXT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - NIGHT**

129

Louie and Agnes sit around a campfire by the lake, eating fish.

LOUIE
(smiling)
Husband catches fish, wife cooks fish... That's how God intended it to be. No computers, no TV, no phones... Tomorrow Tarzan go hunt for boar. Feed Jane.

AGNES
Jane doesn't want to eat a boar.

Louie pours some more wine for both of them. Raising his glass:

LOUIE
To my girlfriend.

Agnes raises her glass.

AGNES
To my husband.

He laughs. They clink glasses. Keep eating.

130 **EXT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - NIGHT**

130

Louie and Agnes have sex on their sleeping bags by the camp fire, missionary and lustful and totally at ease; two people who know each other's bodies completely.

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly he stops and looks at her.

AGNES
What's wrong?

LOUIE
Nothing's wrong. Everything's
perfect just like this.

He kisses her and they keep going at it.

AGNES
Ouch.

LOUIE
What?

AGNES
My back. The ground is so hard.

He turns her around clumsily.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Ouch. Careful. My--

She starts laughing. They keep kissing with her on top now.

AGNES (CONT'D)
We're not kids anymore.

LOUIE
Speak for yourself.

131 **EXT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - MORNING**

131

Louie and Agnes load up the back of the pickup truck. Agnes's face is stoney but she's frantic. There's something different about her now; something confused and shut down.

LOUIE
Honey. What's going on? You not
feeling well?

AGNES
I just want to go. Can we go now?

She gets into passenger side of the pickup truck, shutting the door.

132 **INT. LOUIE'S PICKUP TRUCK. MOVING - DAY**

132

Driving, Louie chuckles, then starts giggling uncontrollably. It builds into full-on laughter. Agnes stares at him insulted.

AGNES
It's not funny.

This only makes Louie laugh harder.

AGNES (CONT'D)
All these years, everyone saying
there's something wrong with me.
No. There's something wrong with
you. Stop laughing!

He starts shaking silently, holding back his laughter. Until
he finally calms down. She turns away from him and watches
the trees passing by.

LOUIE
It just took me by surprise, I
guess. That's all. You've never
been the competitive type and I
thought... I thought it was funny.
I-- It's cute.

They drive quietly for a bit, just the RADIO PLAYING CLASSIC
PROG ROCK.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
I don't think it's such a good
idea.

AGNES
Here we go.

LOUIE
I just don't think the excitement
would be good for you.

AGNES
I'm doing it.

LOUIE
Honey--

She turns to face him.

AGNES
I'm not asking you, I'm telling
you. I'm finally doing something on
my own and you can support me or
not, but I'll do it either way. I
don't want to talk about it
anymore.

Louie's anger rises but he keeps it in check, staring at the
road ahead.

LOUIE
How big is it?

(CONTINUED)

132

AGNES
Five hundred pieces.

LOUIE
Not the puzzle. The competition.

AGNES
About three hundred and sixty in
the individual competition.

He nods to himself over and over.

LOUIE
Do you want me to sign up with you
and do the couples competition
together?

AGNES
No. I'm doing it by myself.

LOUIE
Do what you want. I give up.

133

INT. BASEMENT. ST. STEPHENS CHURCH - DAY

133

Agnes and the other members of the Ladies Guild (Ezster, Fanny, et al) stand in an informal assembly line and put different foodstuffs in charity Easter baskets.

Agnes keeps putting canned sausage in the baskets, one basket after another, expressionless, looking at the new children's drawings on the wall.

The Other Woman around her are chatting and laughing.

Father Kutash walks over.

FATHER KUTASH
Confession, Agnes?

She considers him. Then shakes her head and keeps working.

134

INT. GABE'S BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY

134

Agnes is making Gabe's bed. She spots something lying on his desk, walks over and looks at it. It's a printout of his college application essay, entitled "WHY I WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE".

135

INT. TRAIN CAR. METRO NORTH. MOVING - DAY

135

Agnes sits next to the window, reading Gabe's essay.

136

INT. KITCHEN. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

136

Agnes and Robert stand in his gorgeous kitchen, facing an incredible array of teas in a rack on the wall. Robert is holding a box under her nose.

ROBERT
Smell it.

She does. She's nervous.

AGNES
Very nice.

ROBERT
It's a mix of rose petals and
bergamot. Smell this one.

He opens another box. Agnes leans into smell it. He watches her.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Like it?

Agnes nods.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Want to try it?

AGNES
Where's Maria?

ROBERT
Visiting family.

AGNES
I like her.

137

INT. KITCHEN. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

137

Robert is unfolding the paper Agnes just handed him.

AGNES
Second paragraph.

ROBERT
Uh... let's see.
(reading out loud)
"My mother doesn't know anything
about the world outside of our
house, our church, our traditions
and our family. She, like my father
and brother, never went to--"

He looks up at her.

(CONTINUED)

ROBERT (CONT'D)

He spelled "college" wrong. It says "collage". Probably the spell-check...

AGNES

Keep going.

ROBERT

(reading)

"I love my mother, but I also feel bad for her. She's a sheltered person and doesn't think of anything but serving the men in her life. A child of Hungarian immigrants, she lost her mother when she was young and grew up doting on her dad. She's still living in the house he raised her in. When he died after a long illness, she fell apart. She was treated for emotional problems and has never been the same from what I remember. I want to be different. I want to go to-- collage -- and learn about other cultures, not just my own, and other ways of being. I want to travel. I want to gain self-awareness and be sane. I want to try new religions. New foods. I don't want to just become my father, who is too scared to think outside the box, or my mother, who just won't let herself come alive."

*

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He puts the essay down. Awkward pause.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

He does say he loves you.

She turns away and looks at the spice rack on the counter.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

It's smart of him. College admissions love kids who are first generation to attend college. He's totally exploiting that. Very savvy.

Agnes reads the description on a tea box.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Oh, God. Mata. To me this all just rings false. It doesn't sound like you at all.

(CONTINUED)

AGNES
(working on puzzle)
I think it sounds exactly like me.

ROBERT
I disagree. You--

AGNES
You don't know me.

ROBERT
Hey.

Robert gently puts a finger under her chin and tilts it up so she's looking at him.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Hey. I know that you're the best
puzzler I've ever met. And I know
that you're modest and funny and
beautiful and strange. And I happen
to know you're an excellent kisser.

They look at each other for a long time. She closes her eyes, as if she's too overwhelmed to see him or be seen.

AGNES
I don't know why-- I don't
understand why someone like you
would ever find me interesting.

ROBERT
That's exactly why. Because you
don't understand.

Agnes's keeps her eyes closed.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
(Hungarian accent)
Agnesh.

She smiles slightly.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Agnesh. Can I--? Can I kiss you
back now?

AGNES
Oh, God. Please, don't!

Agnes sits in the window on the train heading back to Bridgeport. It pulls up to the New Rochelle train station; Agnes glances out the window absentmindedly. Then, after a second thought, she grabs her purse and dashes out the door.

139 **INT. KITCHEN. AUNT EMILY'S APARTMENT. NEW ROCHELLE -** 139
AFTERNOON

Agnes is standing at the stove in a dank, dirty little kitchen, making a grilled cheese sandwich.

 AGNES
 ...And I just feel terrible that I
 wasn't able to come visit you any
 sooner!

Agnes flips the grilled cheese sandwich onto a plate and carries it into the living room.

140 **INT. LIVING ROOM. AUNT EMILY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS** 140

AUNT EMILY, 90, a tiny woman with a shock of white hair, sits in an armchair with her foot in a cast on which names and kids drawings have been magic-markered. Agnes puts the plate on her lap.

 AUNT EMILY
 I have plenty of people looking in
 on me. It's like Grand Central
 station in here sometimes with
 grand kids and great grand kids.

She points to the colorful drawings and signatures on her cast.

 AUNT EMILY (CONT'D)
 I keep getting names wrong. So,
 this helps this old lady.

Agnes smiles as she sits down across from Aunt Emily and watches her eat.

 AUNT EMILY (CONT'D)
 How are you, Agnes?

 AGNES
 Me? I'm... I feel-- I'm different.

 AUNT EMILY
 Different how?

 AGNES
 I'm... Not good. But not bad at
 all. In between.

Emily nods; she's not surprised.

 AGNES (CONT'D)
 Louie?

She trails off.

(CONTINUED)

140 CONTINUED:

AGNES (CONT'D)
He's the same. I'm just-- all of a sudden--

AUNT EMILY
Sometimes that happens. I got mad at your Uncle Laszlo about the same things for fifty years. I would scream and scream at him. Same thing, every day. Then one day I stopped and started laughing all of a sudden. It didn't matter anymore. I forgot what I was yelling about.

AGNES
I always thought you two had a great marriage.

AUNT EMILY
Oh, we did. We did. Like you.

She smiles at Agnes, then yawns and takes her dentures out.

AUNT EMILY (CONT'D)
Okay, enough chit-chat. Feel like helping me take a bath?

141 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - EVENING**

141

Agnes is busy prepping dinner, a distracted look on her face, while Ziggy and Louie drink beer and Gabe hangs out.

GABE
Her parents are jerks. They grounded her for a month, but then they went on a cruise. So now her step sister is watching her, like a warden.

LOUIE
A warden doesn't watch the prisoners. The guards do.

GABE
Same difference. She's in jail and I have to break her out.

Louie gets up and opens the fridge, looking through it.

LOUIE
My manchego isn't in the cheese drawer.

Agnes bites her lip and closes her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

141 CONTINUED:

AGNES
I didn't go grocery shopping today.
Sorry.

LOUIE
Too bad. I was dying for a piece of
that stuff.

AGNES
(snapping)
I said I'm sorry. I'll buy it
tomorrow. Jesus!

The boys and Louie fall silent and stare at Agnes.

AGNES (CONT'D)
(to Gabe)
What are you looking at? Can't you
do something?

GABE
Like?

AGNES
Like why don't you set the table
for once? Ziggy helps when he can.
Why are you the prince in this
family?

Gabe raises his eyebrows.

GABE
Okay.

142 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - EVENING**

142

The family is seated around the dinner table.

AGNES
So I got into the tournament. I
signed up.

LOUIE
Oh good. You took my advice.

Agnes looks at him incredulously.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
(to the boys)
Your mom's gonna be in a puzzle
competition.

AGNES
Jigsaw puzzles.

GABE
What happens if you win?

(CONTINUED)

AGNES
What do you mean?

ZIGGY
If you win. What do you get? Is
there a prize?

AGNES
Oh. I don't know. I think you win a
trophy or something. Something
small.

Ziggy raises his beer.

ZIGGY
To Mom!

Gabe raises his glass.

GABE
To Mama!

Louie raises his beer.

LOUIE
To Mom. And her competition.

They all clink their drinks. Agnes is touched.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Your mother and I have something
else we want to tell you. We're
selling the land in Ellenville.

ZIGGY
You're kidding.

LOUIE
And we want to give the money to
you two. Gabe, to help to pay for
education. Ziggy, we want you to be
able to get your own place when
you're ready. Maybe put a payment
down on a house.

Agnes looks at Louie, confused.

AGNES
Lou, when did we--?

ZIGGY
Wait, seriously? Is this a joke?

LOUIE
It's no joke. We're absolutely
serious.

(CONTINUED)

142

ZIGGY
But don't you guys want to use the
money for yourselves? Take a
vacation or something? Mom, you
barely leave the house.

Agnes is upset.

LOUIE
(firmly)
It's for you two. It's a gift. End
of story.

GABE
I think it's a great idea.

143

INT. AGNES AND LOUIE'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

143

Agnes is lying in bed with her eyes closed while Louie climbs
in next to her. He leans over and kisses her on the cheek,
trying to initiate some kind of physical contact.

AGNES
I don't understand how you could
make a decision like that without
me.

LOUIE
It was your idea!

AGNES
But the last time we talked you
said you'd think about it.

LOUIE
And I did think about it.

AGNES
But we didn't even get to discuss
it.

LOUIE
Why do we need to discuss it? It's
what you wanted.

Agnes rolls over onto her side, facing away from him.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
What? I don't understand what the
fucking problem is.

AGNES
The fucking problem is my fucking
husband thinking there's no fucking
problem.

144

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING

144

Ziggy is making pancakes while Agnes scrambles eggs. He skillfully flips a couple of perfect-looking pancakes. Agnes peers over, surprised.

AGNES
Those are beautiful.

ZIGGY
Thanks.

Louie comes in.

LOUIE
Hey, Ag, a couple of people
told me they haven't gotten an
invitation to the Easter Party yet.

AGNES
That's strange. I mailed them all.

ZIGGY
I'm helping Mom cook for the party.

LOUIE
Okay.
(to Agnes)
And don't forget to buy my cheese.

He sits at the table just as Gabe stumbles in and drops to a chair. Agnes takes the frying pan off the stove and starts serving the eggs. Ziggy serves pancakes.

GABE
So-- Hey. Guess what, everyone.
Good news. I've decided what I want
to do with the Ellenville money.

All eyes are on Gabe. He bangs a drum roll on the table.

LOUIE
Stop that.

AGNES
That money is for college.

GABE
I'm going to take a year off and go
to Tibet with Nicki.

Agnes stops short. Louie stares.

GABE (CONT'D)
I'll go to college eventually. I
just want some time to figure out
what-

(CONTINUED)

144 CONTINUED:

AGNES
Dad said that money was for a house
for Ziggy and your college.

GABE
He said it was a gift.

Agnes looks at Louie.

AGNES
Are you going to say anything?

GABE
Travel is a kind of education unto
itself.

AGNES
Louie.

LOUIE
I did say it was a gift.

Upset, Agnes puts the frying pan down on the table and storms
out of the room.

GABE
What's her fucking deal?

ZIGGY
Watch your mouth!

145-150 OMITTED

145-150

151 INT. BEDROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY

151

Robert is reading a book in bed, watching volcanic eruptions
on the Weather Channel. His PHONE RINGS.

152 EXT. BACKYARD. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY

152

Agnes is lying on her back in the grass, looking at the moon
in the sky, her iPhone to her ear.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Hello?

She hesitates. Not sure what to say. Finally:

AGNES (TO PHONE)
Hi.

WE CUT BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN AGNES'S BACKYARD AND ROBERT'S
BEDROOM:

(CONTINUED)

152 CONTINUED:

Mata. Hi. ROBERT

AGNES
Hello.

ROBERT
What's up?

Agnes closes her eyes.

AGNES
Happy Holy Thursday.

ROBERT
Is it Thursday already?

AGNES
Holy Thursday. Tomorrow is
Good Friday. Then Sunday is Easter.
The resurrection.

ROBERT
I know what Easter is, Mata. I also
know that you're not the believer
you once were. And that's okay. You
have to be kind to yourself.

She smiles.

AGNES
I like it when you call me Mata.

ROBERT
It's who you are.

AGNES
It was... It used to be. What are
you doing right now?

Robert sits up in his bed.

ROBERT
Nothing, really. As usual.

She laughs. Then she puts her hands over her eyes, as if
remembering something terrible.

AGNES
God. That's the worst thing I've
ever done.

ROBERT (O.S.)
Wait, what? What happened?

AGNES
Kissing you.

ROBERT
Oh. Wow. If that's the worst thing
you've ever done, Agnes, you're
pretty damn lucky.

(CONTINUED)

152

AGNES
I haven't gone to confession. I
don't know how to confess this--
I've been telling lies.

ROBERT
You're not lying at all. Everything
you say is true.

AGNES
(impulsively)
I love you.

Agnes quickly ends the call, regretting. Then she slowly gets
to her feet.

153

MONTAGE. SUPERMARKET. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY

153

Agnes cruises down the aisles of her local supermarket,
selecting food and Easter supplies.

--She puts a carton of eggs in her cart...

--Then an Easter egg dyeing kit...

--A bag of green plastic grass...

--Some chocolate rabbits and Cadbury Creme Eggs...

--At the cheese section, Agnes gets manchego cheese. Thinks
it over. Puts it back.

--Agnes waits as the GROCERY CLERK scans her groceries. BEEP.
BEEP. BEEP. BEEP. It's the same old routine, but now she has
no patience for it.

154

OMITTED

154

155

EXT. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY

155

Agnes stabs the dirt with the statues to get them firm in the
ground. Then she walks out into the street to get a good look
at her work. She puts her hands on her hips and regards her
house and the decorations out front. There's a new kind of
critical distance in her eyes, nostalgia too.

156

INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

156

Tears running down her face, Agnes holds an egg in a wire
spoon, dips half of it in a bowl of blue dye, and then dips
the other half in a pool of red dye.

Finally Agnes pushes the eggs aside, and takes out the
unopened puzzle portraying Goya's The Nude Maja.

(CONTINUED)

156 CONTINUED:

She stares at the cover for a second-- it's a provocative, sensual painting-- and then rips off the plastic and the cover and dumps the puzzle pieces out onto the table.

157 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - SUNSET** 157

Louie and Ziggy enter through the front door, and find Agnes just where we left her. The Nude Maja puzzle is almost done. Agnes looks up at them in a fog.

AGNES
Oh. Hi.

ZIGGY
Are you okay, Mom?

LOUIE
Where's dinner?

She looks up, confusion in her eyes, as if not sure where she is.

AGNES
I guess I forgot.

LOUIE
You FORGOT to make dinner? What else did you forget? Did you forget us?

Agnes stares at him.

AGNES
I'll start making it in five minutes. I'm sorry.

Louie sighs.

LOUIE
Did you buy my cheese?

Agnes doesn't move.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
You forgot that too.

AGNES
(laughing)
I did.

LOUIE
You think it's funny?

Agnes stares at Louie, as if challenging him.

(CONTINUED)

157 CONTINUED:

LOUIE (CONT'D)
What the hell is wrong with you?

ZIGGY
Dad! Come on!

LOUIE
I slave all day for this family and
you're sitting around doing
puzzles!

Agnes gives him a look, and then goes back to The Nude Maja.
Her hand hovers over the puzzle board. Louie stares shocked.

ZIGGY
I'm gonna make dinner for
everyone. Okay? Dad. Go upstairs
and take a shower. I'll take care
of it.

LOUIE
No. This is bullshit.

Louie bolts toward the door.

AGNES
If you leave, don't come back.

Louie freezes. Ziggy sighs and leans against the doorway,
watching his mother fit the last piece of the puzzle in.

Louie watches her too, unsure what to say or do.

Agnes looks up at Louie, a tiny smile on her face.

AGNES (CONT'D)
It's done. I'll make dinner now,
dear.

158 **INT. DINING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

158

Agnes, Louie, Ziggy, Gabe and Nicki sit around the table,
eating pasta.

NICKI
A third of the population,
something like 32% of India, live
below the international poverty
line. That's \$1.25 per day. How is
anyone expected to survive like
that? I mean, basic needs. Shelter.
Food. Clothes.

A long pause of pondering and/or awkwardness. Everyone eats.

(CONTINUED)

LOUIE
(re: pasta)
This is pretty good, Agnes.

AGNES
I've been thinking. Ziggy.

All eyes are on Agnes.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Maybe instead of getting your own
place, you could go back to school.
Maybe culinary school.

LOUIE
Culinary school? You want him to be
a cook?

Ziggy, Gabe and Nicki watch like spectators at a tennis
match.

AGNES
He's clearly good at it.

LOUIE
So what?

AGNES
You think it's a bad idea?

LOUIE
Frankly, I don't think it's a very
manly thing to do, is what I think.

AGNES
All the great chefs today are men.

NICKI
Most.

LOUIE
(to Nicki)
No one asked you.

Nicki recoils.

AGNES
Most of the great chefs are men.
Many.

LOUIE
How do you know that?

AGNES
I looked it up. Online.

Gabe laughs.

GABE
Yes!

(CONTINUED)

LOUIE
(to Gabe)
Stay out of this!

AGNES
(re: Gabe)
I think that if this little punk is
going to Tibet, Ziggy should do
whatever he wants with that money.

Ziggy grins.

GABE
Punk?

LOUIE
(to Ziggy)
You don't want to work in the
garage anymore?

Ziggy shakes his head.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
You want to study... cooking?

Ziggy nods.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Cat's got your tongue?

Ziggy nods.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
(to Agnes)
You turned my eldest son against
me.

ZIGGY
No, Dad. It's what I want. It was
my idea. Mom's just trying to--

Louie stares at Ziggy, disgusted. Then he gets up and leaves
the table.

LOUIE
Don't wait up for me.

He walks out. A beat later, we hear the FRONT DOOR OPEN AND
SLAM.

Agnes is puzzling by the lamplight.

She hears the front door open, and then a few seconds later
Louie appears in the living room doorway, drunk. They
exchange looks before Agnes continues doing her puzzle.

LOUIE

Who gave you permission to turn my son against me? He's a man.

AGNES

You're drunk. Go to bed.

LOUIE

Goddammit, Agnes. You've forgotten how to listen. I've never done you wrong. Ever.

Louie takes the puzzle and hurls it across the room. It shatters, the puzzle pieces flying across the floor.

Agnes's face crumples and she sinks to the floor and crawls around, collecting the pieces. Louie watches her, horrified.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

Jesus. Look at you.

Agnes keeps collecting the pieces and pushing them back into the box.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

What's going on? Who's putting all these new ideas in your head?
Selling the land. Cooking school.
The puzzles. Fucking competition.

She ignores him and keeps looking for the pieces.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

You know what my father would do to my mother in a situation like this?

He grabs her and pins her against the wall, lifts his hand as if to hit her. She watches in horror. He freezes.

LOUIE (CONT'D)

That's what he would do. I never did. I'm not him. I never will be.
I'm not him.

And he walks out of the room.

AGNES

(to herself)

Thank you.

Agnes looks out of the window at the approaching New York City skyline.

(CONTINUED)

160 CONTINUED:

TRAIN ANNOUNCER (OVER)
Next stop, Grand Central. Next and
last stop Grand Central Terminal.

161 INT. DEN/STUDY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY 161

On her way to the basement, Agnes notices Robert's desk is now messy, blueprints, magnets, batteries and plastic tubings laid out. Clearly he's been getting back to his work. She smiles to herself, somehow it feels like a small triumph.

She hears a LOUD POP, like a gun shot, and jumps. Turns around swiftly to see:

Robert with a champagne bottle in his hand. He's just popped the cork.

ROBERT
Surprise.

162 INT. LIBRARY. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE- DAY 162

Robert is pouring champagne into two glasses. He and Agnes are sitting across from each other at the puzzle table.

ROBERT
To our last practice together.

They clink glasses.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
To you.

AGNES
To you.

ROBERT
To a great Good Friday.

She laughs. They clink again.

AGNES
To getting all the wrong pieces
right.

They clink again and the champagne sloshes out of Agnes's glass.

AGNES (CONT'D)
I feel drunk and I haven't even
taken a sip yet.

ROBERT
You're so beautiful.

Agnes looks down and blushes.

(CONTINUED)

162 CONTINUED:

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Let's start.

He dumps the puzzle out onto the table. Just as he does this, Agnes clumsily leans across the table and kisses him.

He kisses her back. They both stand up, embracing, puzzle pieces falling off the table.

163 INT. BEDROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - AFTERNOON

163

Agnes and Robert lie under the covers together, post-coital.
MID-CONVERSATION:

AGNES
I decorate the whole house, I make a turkey, we have an Easter Egg hunt... Louie's family comes early. Then all his friends from the garage. And all the women from the Ladies Guild.

ROBERT
What would happen if you didn't go?

AGNES
I don't know.

ROBERT
People would still show up, right? And your husband would have to entertain them.

Agnes thinks it over.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
And maybe that would be all right.

AGNES
I can't imagine it.

ROBERT
Stay here. Don't go to the party.

He strokes her arm while she gazes out the window. Then she turns to him and touches his face; his eyelids, his nose, his lips.

AGNES
I can't stay.

ROBERT
I know. That's okay.

They kiss.

164 INT. BEDROOM. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

164

The sun shimmers down behind a distant building and disappears.

Agnes sleeps in bed next to Robert. HER PHONE RINGS INSIDE HER PURSE. She suddenly wakes up, terrified.

 AGNES
Oh, God. He's going to kill me.

165 INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

165

Agnes enters quietly through the back door, then stops short when she sees Louie at the kitchen table.

He's sitting there, very still, surrounded by party detritus. Agnes flinches, terrified.

 AGNES
Look, I-

 LOUIE
Please don't make any excuses,
Agnes. Please. I know you weren't
with Emily. I called her. And
Ronnie was here. Said he saw you at
the train station the other day.

 AGNES
I was stuck in-

 LOUIE
Please don't lie to me. Just please
don't lie to me. Please, don't--

Louie takes a deep breath.

 LOUIE (CONT'D)
You have to tell me. You have to
tell me everything, Ag.

Agnes regards him, her mood darkening.

 AGNES
I don't have to tell you anything.
I'm not your servant. You don't own
me.

Louie gets up from the table and starts walking out of the room.

 AGNES (CONT'D)
But I will tell you this--

He turns to face her.

(CONTINUED)

165 CONTINUED:

AGNES (CONT'D)
Don't make decisions about the family without me. Don't laugh at me when I care about something. Quit telling me I'm cute all the time when you actually mean I'm dumb. Help me shop if you want your cheese. Stop looking at me like I'm damaged goods or a head case. Stop snoring! I can't sleep at night. And never ever, ever raise a hand on me again.

Louie is very still.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Did you hear any of that?

Louie nods, stoic.

LOUIE
Are you having an affair?

AGNES
Yes. I am. I think.

LOUIE
You think you're having an affair?

AGNES
I have a puzzle partner. He's a man. We're a team. We're competing as a team. We've had... sex. One time. And it wasn't good but it wasn't bad.

He nods to himself.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Do you have anything to say?

Louie hesitates, lets out a strange little laugh, then shakes his head no, and starts trudging up the stairs to bed. Agnes collapses against the wall, devastated.

166 **INT. BEDROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

166

Louie enters the bedroom, sits still on the edge of the bed and takes a series of long breaths.

A167 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - AT THE SAME TIME** A167

Agnes is on the floor, breathing hard, distraught.

167

INT. ST. STEPHENS CHURCH. BRIDGEPORT, CT - MORNING

167

The whole family sits in a full pew and listens to the Father Kutash deliver the Easter Sermon:

FATHER KUTASH

We began our celebration today with a service of light which represents Jesus Christ rising from the dead and bringing light to us. Christ light has shone in the world, scattering darkness forever. We had been waiting for this moment from the beginning. We heard in our readings today an account of the creation of man. And woman. This was in God's eternal plan for humankind. But the high point is the resurrection; it is the greatest celebration of God's Church. This day is the most blessed of all as we heard in the Exsultet, the Easter Proclamation. "Rejoice, let Mother Church also rejoice!"

Agnes and Louie keep glancing in each other's direction.

168

EXT. ST. STEPHENS CHURCH. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY

168

The family exits the church amid the WORSHIPPERS. Louie starts to peel off.

LOUIE

(avoiding eye contact)

I'm gonna go to the garage and do a little work.

AGNES

Do you want a ride?

LOUIE

Nah. Thanks.

Agnes and the boys watch Louie trudge away down the sidewalk, his hands jammed into his pockets.

169

INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY

169

Agnes and Gabe sit at the kitchen table while Ziggy stands at the stove, making grilled cheese sandwiches for lunch.

ZIGGY

Oh, and I also made these little tarts last night, these little mushroom goat cheese things...

(CONTINUED)

AGNES

From scratch?!

ZIGGY

Yeah. And everyone loved them. Oh,
and I roasted the turkey in a
different way. I used sage, too.

AGNES

Sage?

GABE

It was really good.

AGNES

What did Ezster say? About me not
showing up?

GABE

I dunno. She said something to Dad
and then he got mad and told her to
leave.

AGNES

He did?

GABE

Uh-huh.

Ziggy serves them sandwiches. They all eat.

ZIGGY

There's this school in New York
City. It's not that expensive but
it's really well-known. You can get
a degree in two years. And if it
was okay with you guys I would keep
living here and commute and then
I'd still have a little money left
over at the end. I don't know how
long the commute would be, though.
It might be too long.

AGNES

Just an hour forty to Grand
Central.

ZIGGY

Really? That's it?

She nods.

ZIGGY (CONT'D)

That's not bad.

Gabe looks at Agnes curiously.

AGNES

It'll be cheaper if you buy a
monthly.

170 **INT. BATHROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - DAY** 170

Agnes carefully applies mascara and a coat of lipstick while looking in the mirror. It's the first time we've seen her all dolled up.

171 **EXT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE - DAY** 171

Agnes rings the doorbell. Robert answers.

ROBERT

Ready?

Agnes shakes her head no. He smiles.

172 **EXT. GARDEN STATE PARKWAY - DAY** 172

A black town car drives down the highway.

173 **EXT. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - SUNSET** 173

The town car pulls in front of a flashy, decked-out casino with a sign out front that reads: WELCOME PUZZLERS.

Robert jumps out and runs to Agnes's door. He opens it. She looks at him in panic.

He offers her his hand. She hesitates.

AGNES

I shouldn't be here. This isn't me.

He gingerly takes her hand and leads her out of the car. She lets him.

174 **INT. LOBBY. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - NIGHT** 174

Agnes and Robert enter the lobby. They walk through the casino floor toward an entrance to an atrium where they sign in at the Puzzle competition registration table.

175 **INT. ATRIUM. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - NIGHT** 175

Agnes and Robert sit down across from each other at a folding table, surrounded by HUNDREDS OF OTHER PEOPLE at identical folding tables.

We catch glimpses of just a few of their fellow puzzle Competitors:

--AN OVERWEIGHT COUPLE in matching cowboys suits...

(CONTINUED)

175

CONTINUED:

101A.
175

(CONTINUED)

175 CONTINUED: (2)

--AN OLDER WOMAN with half a dozen medals from previous competitions hanging around her neck...

--Lots of KOOKY OVERDRESSED MATRONLY TYPES...

--An OLDER MAN with a floor-length beard and a paper crown that says: PUZZLE KING.

--A WOMAN wearing an American Flag sweater.

--A COUPLE OF NERDY TEENAGERS.

A WOMAN comes by and puts a paper bag full of puzzle pieces and a cardboard box on their table.

Agnes reaches out to touch it but Robert stops her.

ROBERT
(softly)
Not yet, honey.

She stares, shaken by that last word.

176 **INT. ATRIUM. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - NIGHT**

176

THE PUZZLE EMCEE, A WOMAN, STEPS UP TO THE MICROPHONE.

PUZZLE EMCEE
Alright, Puzzlers, this is it. The
moment of truth is upon us. Ready?
On my count: Five. Four. Three.
Two. One. BEGIN!

THE SOUND OF HUNDREDS OF PUZZLES BEING FRANTICALLY DUMPED OUT
ON THE TABLE AT THE SAME TIME FOLLOWS.

177 **INT. ATRIUM. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - NIGHT**

177

Agnes dumps out the pieces and starts sifting through them with her fingers.

Robert, along with EVERYONE ELSE IN THE ROOM, has stood up and is walking around the table, looking at the puzzle pieces.

ROBERT
(whispering)
What are you doing? Stand up!

Agnes shakes her head no.

ROBERT (CONT'D)
Remember? It's important to step
away and take a-

AGNES
Shhh. I'm working.

(CONTINUED)

177

CONTINUED:

She's rapidly separating the puzzle pieces into groups.

178

INT. ATRIUM. ATLANTIC CITY CASINO - NIGHT

178

Robert is now sitting across from Agnes and they're working quickly, silently. He glances over her work.

ROBERT

You're not doing it by color.

She nods and continues working.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

You're doing it the old way. Agnes.
What are you-?

AGNES

Everyone else is doing colors and borders.

ROBERT

Yes! That's how we trained!

AGNES

If we do it that way we won't win.
We'll come in second or third. I'm
doing it the old way.

ROBERT

Agnes.

AGNES

If we argue about this we
definitely won't win.

ROBERT

You're a goddamn rebel is what you
are.

She looks up for a quick second, smiling. She likes the idea of it.

179

INT. BATHROOM. ROBERT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

179

Agnes is standing in a corner of Robert's big white bathroom, making a call from her cell phone.

GABE (ON PHONE)

Hello. Is this an emergency?

AGNES (TO PHONE)

Yes. Hi.

(CONTINUED)

GABE (ON PHONE)
What happened?

AGNES (TO PHONE)
I won.

GABE (ON PHONE)
(shouting)
SHE WON!

THE FAINT SOUND OF ZIGGY AND NICKI CHEERING AND YELLING IN
THE BACKGROUND.

AGNES (TO PHONE)
I left a roasted chicken in the
fridge. You can just heat it up and-

GABE (ON PHONE)
Don't worry about it. We can take
care of ourselves.

Tears unexpectedly spring into Agnes's eyes.

AGNES (TO PHONE)
Okay. Love you, honey.

GABE (ON PHONE)
You wanna talk to Dad?

AGNES (TO PHONE)
No, no, that's okay.

GABE (ON PHONE)
Congratulations, Mom.

AGNES
Thanks baby.

He hangs up. Agnes just stands there in the bathroom for a
second, in pain. Suddenly, A KNOCK ON THE BATHROOM DOOR.

ROBERT (O.S.)
Mata, are you in there? I need your
date of birth.

AGNES
What for?

ROBERT (O.S.)
I'm on the phone booking tickets to
Brussels. Do you have a frequent
flier number with American?

She laughs.

183 INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 183

Agnes tiptoes into the dark kitchen. She takes off her shoes and leaves them by the door with the trophy.

184 INT. LIVING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 184

Agnes tiptoes through the dark living room towards the stairs.

Suddenly she stops in her tracks and SCREAMS, groping around in the dark and finally collapsing in a chair.

A lamp turns on. It's Louie. He's been sleeping on the couch. Agnes is illuminated, sitting in an armchair and cradling her bare foot.

 LOUIE
What happened?

Agnes shakes her head, unable to speak. Louie comes closer.

 LOUIE (CONT'D)
Let me see. Is it a splinter?

 AGNES
 (gasping)
It hurts like hell.

Louie crouches down in front of Agnes and holds his hands out. After a second, she gives him her foot. He inspects it.

 LOUIE
It looks like a piece of glass. A
piece of porcelain or something.
It's tiny.

He tries to touch it. Agnes yelps.

 AGNES
Don't.

 LOUIE
Sorry, sorry.

Agnes turns the bottom of her foot up and looks at it. And she realizes:

 AGNES
It's the last piece.

 LOUIE
Of what?

(CONTINUED)

184 CONTINUED:

AGNES
Of that plate you broke. On my
birthday.

LOUIE
Oh yeah. Hold on a second.

He gets up and leaves the room. We stay on her face.

Louie comes back with a pair of tweezers, a bag of cotton
balls, and a bottle of rubbing alcohol.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Here we go.

He kneels down in front of Agnes again.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Now tell me if anything hurts.

Agnes nods, biting her lip. Louie whistles slowly while he
works.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Ooh... Getting closer... That
doesn't hurt?

Agnes shakes her head.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
Ah ha... little bugger... It's
almost out...

Agnes studies Louie's face. It's full of concentration and
tenderness.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
(tearing up)
Ready?

AGNES
For what?

LOUIE
I'm gonna pull it out. It may hurt.
Ready for me?

She nods.

185 **INT. KITCHEN. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - MORNING**

185

Ziggy is cooking breakfast. Gabe inspects Agnes's trophy.

GABE
It's kind of small.

AGNES
I got some gift certificates for
puzzles too.

(CONTINUED)

THE FRONT DOOR OPENS OFF SCREEN, THEN SLAMS. Gabe jumps up and goes to see what's going on. A beat later he comes back.

GABE
Dad left for work.

ZIGGY
Without me?

GABE
Da!

Ziggy looks at Agnes, who smiles at him.

ZIGGY
Why are you smiling?

AGNES
It's his way of saying you can go to school.

A186 **EXT. LOUIE'S PICKUP TRUCK - DAY**

A186

The pickup truck travels down a country road.

186 **INT. LOUIE'S PICKUP TRUCK. MOVING - DAY**

186

Agnes drives west on the highway to Ellenville. Ziggy is riding shotgun. Nicki is squeezed in the back with Gabe; she reads out loud to everyone from one of her Shambhala books.

NICKI
"All worldly pursuits have but one unavoidable and inevitable end, which is sorrow. Acquisitions end in dispersion; buildings in destruction; meetings in separation; births in death. Do not dwell in the past, and do not dream of the future. One of Buddha's students asked him: "Are you the Messiah?" "No," answered Buddha. "Then you are a healer," said the student. "No," the Buddha replied. "Then you are a teacher," the student persisted. "No, I am not a teacher," said the Buddha. "Then what are you," the student asked, exasperated. "I am awake," said the Buddha."

AGNES
My father was the most charming, impossible man.

Nicki looks up from the book. Gabe and Ziggy stare tensely at Agnes. No one says anything.

(CONTINUED)

186 CONTINUED:

AGNES (CONT'D)
(laughing)
You would have loved him, Nicki.
(pause)
Keep going, dear.

Gabe and Ziggy exchange relieved looks.

NICKI
I can't.

AGNES
Why?

NICKI
I feel carsick.

187 **EXT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - AFTERNOON**

187

Everyone is cleaning out the cabin together, clearing out all the old debris and furniture. Agnes is carrying a big box out out to the car.

GABE
Careful, Mom. Can I help?

She shakes her head no.

188 **INT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - AFTERNOON**

188

Gabe unearths a mid-80s Frogger-type video game contraption from under a pile of toys.

He presses the play button over again over again, and every time the VIDEO GAME THEME SONG PLAYS he and Ziggy and Nicki dance to it.

Agnes stands on the cabin's front porch, watching them through the screen door, smiling.

189 **EXT. CABIN. ELLENVILLE, NY - SUNSET**

189

Agnes walks by herself through the tall grass, towards the creek.

190 **EXT. CREEK. ELLENVILLE, NY - SUNSET**

190

The sun sets over Agnes standing in a pair of galoshes in the middle of the creek.

191 **INT. DEN. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - SUNSET** 191

Robert is at his desk connecting tubing and magnets. His PHONE RINGS. He recognizes the number and answers quickly.

ROBERT (TO PHONE)
Are you all packed?

192 **EXT. CREEK. ELLENVILLE, NY - SUNSET** 192

She's on the phone, still standing in the middle of the creek.

AGNES (TO PHONE)
I'm with my family.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
But you're ready, right?

AGNES (TO PHONE)
Yes.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Do you want me to send the car?

AGNES (TO PHONE)
No. I'll take the train.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Mata, you have to get to the airport at least three hours early for an international flight. You should be here around one. Security's going to take forever. Did you tell Louie?

AGNES (TO PHONE)
No.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Are you going to?

AGNES (TO PHONE)
No.

193 **EXT. DEN. ROBERT'S TOWN HOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - SUNSET** 193

ROBERT (TO PHONE)
Are you going to flake on me, Mata?

AGNES (ON PHONE)
(laughing)
No.

ROBERT (TO PHONE)
Good. I love you.

(CONTINUED)

193 CONTINUED:

AGNES (ON PHONE)
I love you too.

194 **EXT. CREEK. ELLENVILLE, NY - SUNSET**

194

Agnes smiles to herself.

ROBERT (ON PHONE)
I miss you.

AGNES (TO PHONE)
I miss you too.

195 **INT. LOUIE'S PICKUP TRUCK. MOVING - NIGHT**

195

Ziggy drives. Gabe and Nicki are asleep in the back seat.
Agnes gazes out the window at the passing night.

196-197 **OMITTED**

196-197

198 **INT. LIVING ROOM. AGNES AND LOUIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT**

198

Agnes walks down the stairs to find Louie sleeping on the couch, a mask on, hooked up to an anti-snoring contraption that's pumping oxygen into his nose and mouth.

She sits on a chair across from him and watches him, the MECHANICAL SOUND dominating the room.

Finally, she gets up and wakes up Louie. He sits up.

AGNES
(re: contraption)
What is that?

LOUIE
For my snoring.

AGNES
But it's so loud!

LOUIE
Should I turn it off?

AGNES
Yes!!

He turns it off and removes the mask. She laughs. The room is dead quiet.

They sit there, staring at each other, inches away, with decades of marriage keeping them quiet and aware.

Finally, Louie reaches over and touches her face with his hand. Clears the hair from her eyes.

(CONTINUED)

198 CONTINUED:

AGNES (CONT'D)
Do you want to come up?

LOUIE
Please.

She takes his hand and leads him up the stairs.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
I love you, Ag.

AGNES
I love you too.

199 INT. AGNES'S CAR. MOVING - DAY 199

Agnes drives into the Metro North parking lot, tears streaming down her face. HINDI MUSIC PLAYS ON THE RADIO.

200 EXT. RAIL STATION. BRIDGEPORT, CT - DAY 200

Agnes gets out of the car, opens the back and takes out a suitcase.

201 OMITTED 201

A202 EXT. TRAIN TRACKS. CT - DAY A202

The train speeds through Connecticut landscape.

202 INT. TRAIN CAR. METRO NORTH. MOVING - DAY 202

The Train Conductor we met on Agnes' first ride into Manhattan comes by.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
Tickets please!

Agnes holds out a twenty.

AGNES
One way to Grand Central.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR
You know, it's cheaper if you--

AGNES
I know.

203 **MONTAGE. AGNES TRAIN PORTRAITS - DAY**

203

We move through a series of portraits showing Agnes's reflections in the window with the lights changing as the train moves. She is absolutely fascinated by her own image, a woman she is just now getting to know and like.

204 **EXT. ROBERT'S TOWNHOUSE. WEST VILLAGE - DAY**

204

The cab pulls away leaving Agnes standing across the street from Robert's townhouse.

She picks up her suitcase. Takes a deep breath. Can't bring herself to cross over.

She looks around. The sun gets in her eyes. She lets it.

She tries to cross over again, but can't quite do it.

She suddenly sees Robert appear in the window.

Alone, he seems even more handsome, more attractive, more vulnerable.

He spots her standing there in the street and waves to her. She waves back.

He stares for a beat, confused. She shakes her head ever so slightly.

Alarmed, he picks up his phone and dials. HER PHONE RINGS. She answers.

 ROBERT (ON PHONE)
Mata, please.

 AGNES
I'm sorry.

They stare at each other while on the phone; he - above in the window; she - down on the street.

 ROBERT
You can't do this to me.

 AGNES
I'm not. Not to you. You'll be fine.

He quickly steps away from the window toward the door.

 ROBERT
I'll be right down.

 AGNES
No! Stay there.

She sees him come back to the window, defeated.

(CONTINUED)

204 CONTINUED:

204

They stare at each other for a long beat, listening to each other BREATHING.

AGNES (CONT'D)
We'll be fine.

205 **EXT. WASHINGTON SQUARE PARK - AFTERNOON**

205

Agnes is sitting on the grass next to her suitcase. She's been here for awhile.

From time to time she closes her eyes and looks up, letting the sun caress her face.

THE PHONE RINGS IN HER PURSE.

Agnes watches the daylight moon above. Smiles to herself. She's made her peace.

THE PHONE KEEPS RINGING She looks around and we pull back to see: TOURISTS, STUDENTS, COUPLES (YOUNG and OLD), STREET MUSICIANS, DOG WALKERS, CHESS PLAYERS, THE HOMELESS, CHILDREN of all ages moving about.

Agnes takes everything in.

Then she fixes her gaze on a man moving through the crowd, his phone to his ear. It's Louie, clearly calling her, confused in this environment.

She laughs, seeing him stop to ask a STRANGER for directions. The Stranger points. Louie starts moving toward her. He finally spots her on the grass and hastens his steps.

She stays still. Closes her eyes.

LOUIE
 Agnes, for God's sake. Answer your phone. You said the east side of-- I've been calling--

Tears are streaming down her face, but she keeps her eyes shut. He softens.

LOUIE (CONT'D)
 I'm here. You told me to come so
 I'm here. What do you want me to do now?

AGNES
 Sit next to me.

He sits besides her. She keeps her eyes closed.

AGNES (CONT'D)
 Take my hand.

(CONTINUED)

205 CONTINUED:

He takes her hand in his and holds it to his lips. Now he's crying too.

AGNES (CONT'D)
Close your eyes.

He closes his wet eyes.

LOUIE
What now?

AGNES
Nothing.

LOUIE
Nothing?

AGNES
Just this. For now.

They sit there leaning into each other, shoulder-to-shoulder, holding hands with their eyes closed.

The world keeps going around them without noticing. A sea of humanity. The ultimate puzzle.

THE END