

WHAT THEY HAD

by

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Somewhere, a clock ticks.

We are CLOSE on a black and white PHOTOGRAPH.

In a simple frame, it is nestled among the evergreen needles of a moonlit Christmas tree.

It's the summer of '61. A YOUNG MAN stands in front of a movie theatre, holding a YOUNG WOMAN in his arms. Her legs hang limp over his forearm. They grin madly at us.

With the tick of the clock, another photo on the tree:

The same couple. 1962. She beams from an armchair in dark taffeta; he rests on the chair arm in Navy dress blues. A tiny diamond on her hand. A cane against her skirt.

Another tick, another photo:

Black and white, 1968. He's dashing in a suit and Buddy Holly glasses. She's stunning, a strapless gown and opera gloves.

They are BERT AND RUTH KELLER.

And this is a love story.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The same clock ticks here too.

A PAIR OF FEET touch down on blue shag carpeting. The feet are small, old, the toes polished red.

The feet pad softly over the carpet. In the silvery moonlight, blue veins peek through translucent skin.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON THE TREE -- Three more photos:

70s, black and white. An INFANT in a Christening gown.

70s, color. The same child, now 3, on a darling white rocker, wearing a darling yellow dress.

70s, color. A Christmas Card. The child is 6 now, holding her baby brother. Bert and Ruth sit on either side.

She is BRIDGET.

And this love story belongs to her.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

RUTH, now late 60s, sits on a chair, her leg silhouetted in the moonlit window as she pulls on silk knee-highs. She is thinner now, but not frail. She is still very beautiful.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - NIGHT

ON THE TREE -- A series of early 80s wedding portraits:

Bridget is a young bride, in head to toe lace, smiles lovingly at EDDIE, handsome, top hat and tails.

Bert bursts with joy as he gives his father-of-the-bride speech, scotch in one hand, cigarette in the other.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth selects pearl earrings from a jewelry box. A rosary is draped over the mirror, funeral cards tucked into it's frame.

In the bed behind her, BERT, now 70s, is sound asleep.

ON THE TREE:

1990s. Bridget looks down at an INFANT of her own.

1990s. Her brother, NICK, graduation gown, stands on the lawn of a midwestern college, flanked proudly by Bert and Ruth.

1990s. Two Polaroids, framed side by side. In one, Nick sits in a canoe holding a huge rainbow trout. In the other, Bert is in the same canoe, holding a tiny minnow.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

In the moonlight, Ruth steps to a long antique mail table. She fluffs her hair in the mirror above it.

ON THE TREE:

1990s. Bridget walks down a Chicago street, beaming at us, holding the hands of TWO LITTLE GIRLS.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Ruth pulls a short jacket from the hall closet and drapes it over her shoulders. She lifts her purse from the table and starts down the hall.

ON THE TREE:

2005. Bert sits in a hammock, Ruth on his lap. She kisses him like she means it, dislodging his rose-tinted glasses. He grins at us like the Cheshire Cat.

As the clock ticks, we pull slowly back, and back, and back.

There are lights on this tree. A garland of stars. But no ornaments. Just the pictures we've seen and a dozen others.

We pull back further. Sheer white curtains float in a breeze, framing SLIDING GLASS DOORS, open just wide enough for...

Ruth to stand between them.

She faces the snowy night. Her purse dangles at her side. Under the jacket, her white nightgown glows in the moonlight.

In her sensible heels, she steps into the snow.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Ruth walks away from us, framed by the alley, through the immaculate blanket of snow.

And then, slowly, the image of her fades from frame. Until her footprints are the only evidence she was there at all.

TITLE CARD

WHAT THEY HAD

EXT. MENLO PARK SUBDIVISION - NIGHT

Gray light is just beginning to crack over the horizon.

BRIDGET, now 40s, in athletic gear, sprints down a street of basically identical houses, basically identically decorated for the holidays with tidy strings of white lights.

She picks up her pace, racing now, faster and faster, hitting agony, pushing past it, around the corner into a cul-de-sac...

She comes to a stop in front of another basically identical house, the only one with colored lights strung out front.

Chest heaving, she puts her hands on her knees and recovers.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

EDDIE, now late 40s, in a bathrobe, pours himself cereal in their high-ceilinged, well-appointed kitchen. Bridget comes in with the newspaper. In silence, she pours coffee.

They weave around each other, a chilly, well-practiced dance.

They settle on either side of the counter with coffees and breakfast. He peruses the Business section, she the Arts.

Without looking up from their papers:

EDDIE

You're picking up Emma?

BRIDGET

Yep.

INT. DORM - EMMA'S FLOOR - DAY

At the end of a long, near-deserted dorm hallway, Bridget knocks on a door. There's no answer. She knocks harder.

Halfway down the hall, an RA stands with two GIRLS, who sit on a couch with suitcases, whispering in Bridget's direction.

RA

Is she not answering?

Bridget looks at her and shakes her head. The RA approaches and puts her master key in Emma's dorm room door.

INT. EMMA'S DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The curtains are closed; the room is dark. Bridget hurries in, past the tidy side belonging to Emma's roommate, and into Emma's filthy half of the room. Her suitcases are packed up.

There's a lump in bed. Bridget yanks away pillows, revealing EMMA, 20, sleeping in headphones. Bridget shakes her awake.

BRIDGET

Emma.

Emma cracks open her eyes and blinks at her mother.

INT. EMMA'S DORM ROOM/HALLWAY - DAY

Emma and Bridget pull a CART packed with Emma's belongings into the hall. Bridget notices something written on the dry-erase board hanging on her door.

For a good time... KNOCK

Bridget moves swiftly to erase it, but Emma has already seen it. She stares, punched in the gut.

Bridget marches down the hall toward the two girls. Emma follows, knowing exactly what her mother is about to do.

EMMA

Mom. Mom.

Bridget ignores her and steps up to them, furious. She glares at the girls. They stare back at her.

BRIDGET

Shame on you girls. What is the matter with you?

She turns toward Emma, who waits, mortified, by the elevator. As Bridget walks up, Emma glares at her.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

What? You have to stand up for yourself, you have to fight back. Show some self-respect, don't be a doormat --

EMMA

Shhhhhh!

BRIDGET

Oh whatever, you're kicked out of this stupid dorm anyway. Drug and Alcohol Free, it's college for chrissakes.

The elevator doors open. Emma ducks inside. Bridget struggles to push the cart in. The girls giggle from the couch.

Bridget gives them the finger as the doors close.

EMMA

Mom!

EXT. DORM - FRONT ENTRANCE - DAY

Bridget pushes the cart out the door. Emma follows behind, furiously digging through her backpack.

Emma stops to light a cigarette. Bridget whirls around.

BRIDGET

You should not be smoking. It is terrible for you.

(then)

What is going on with you?

EMMA

Nothing.

Bridget watches Emma puff awkwardly on the cigarette.

BRIDGET

You look absolutely ridiculous.

EMMA

Thank you.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Bridget changes into nicer clothes. Eddie brushes his teeth.

EDDIE

Maybe she shouldn't go back.

BRIDGET

Don't even *go there*, Eddie.

EDDIE

Why? She's a mess, let's take a semester off and regroup.

BRIDGET

Because she'll never go back, that's why, and then she'll be kicking herself. Just encourage her, would you please?

Bridget spots headlights in the driveway out the window.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

That's them.

She hustles out of the room into --

INT. BRIDGET/EDDIE'S HOUSE - HALLWAY/EMMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emma's door has a NOTE on it that reads:

HOW IT WORKS

YOU: Knock

ME: "Come in"

YOU: Enter

Bridget disregards these directions, knocking and entering in one fluid motion.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - EMMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emma is changing. She holds her shirt to cover her chest.

EMMA

Mom!

BRIDGET

Sorry. Mary and Daniel are here.

EMMA

David.

BRIDGET

David! David David David --

EXT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Bridget heads toward MARY, her eldest, who is stepping away from her fiancée DAVID'S BMW, parked on the curb. A diamond sparkles on her finger.

BRIDGET

You made it!

They embrace. As they pull away, Bridget's eyes go straight for Mary's hair.

MARY

Stop looking at my hair.

BRIDGET

I'm not.

Behind Mary, David is pulling a SHOPPING BAG of gifts and a platter out of the trunk of the BMW.

DAVID
Merry Christmas, Bridget.

BRIDGET
Merry Christmas!

Mary quietly reminds Bridget:

MARY
David.

BRIDGET
I know.
(loudly, to David)
David! Nice to see you!

David approaches. She hugs him around the platter.

DAVID
Thanks for having me. I brought
crab.

BRIDGET
(to Mary)
He brought crab!

DAVID
Well but I know you're a chef and
everything so -

BRIDGET
Oh I'm sure it's very good.

MARY
It is, it's very good.

BRIDGET
Good!

An beat, then:

DAVID
Shall we?

BRIDGET
Yes! Well. I'll be - right there -
I just have to grab something --

Mary and David head toward the front door as Bridget trots to her SUV, parked in the driveway and opens the driver's door and leans across the driver's seat.

She fishes through the pennies in the cup holder, then:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Shit.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

We are back in that condo with the ticking clock.

Bert sleeps in bed. A distant train horn rouses him.

His eyes open. He reaches for the other side of the bed.

Feeling it empty, he sits up and reaches for his glasses. His gray comb-over stands on end.

BERT

Ruth.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bert flips on the light and squints into the brightness. A gold crucifix glints in his salt and pepper chest hair.

He feels a draft and stiffens. Walks into the LIVING ROOM.

The sliding door is open. The curtains wave in the breeze.

BERT

Goddammit!

He sprints, panicked, for the door.

EXT. CONDO BUILDING - BACK ALLEY - NIGHT

Bert, in slippers and a robe, stands a few paces down the walkway, scanning the landscape urgently.

He spots Ruth's footprints in the blanket of snow.

INT. NICK'S BASEMENT - NIGHT

NICK, now 45, sleeps on an air mattress in a corner. On the floor beside it, his phone rings with the ALARM ringer, the one that sounds like an accident in a nuclear power plant.

He pries himself awake and squints down at the phone on the ground, next to a stack of books and a bottle of booze.

He reaches for the phone and answers it.

NICK

Dad.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mary stands in front of the mirror, wearing Bridget's wedding dress. Emma buttons the zillion buttons.

The dress is lace and satin, long sleeved, high necked. Bridget sits on the bed, trying to feign enthusiasm.

MARY

Pretty, right? If I get rid of the sleeves?

EMMA

Or the whole thing.

MARY

I like it.

EMMA

Just get your own dress.

MARY

I wanna wear Mom's.

BRIDGET

I didn't even pick it out.

EMMA

Who picked it out?

BRIDGET

Gramma. There was this other one, it was off the shoulder, it had these ribbons... I loved that dress.

EMMA

So where the hell is it?

BRIDGET

Gramma thought it was too revealing.

MARY

Well. I want to wear a family dress, so.

BRIDGET

You could get married in winter. It's more appropriate for winter.

MARY

We're getting married in June. We already have a venue. Undo me.

Mary backs up to Emma for her to undo her.

BRIDGET

You don't get married because you have a venue.

MARY

I'm getting married because I wanna get married, Mom.

Bridget tries to drop it but can't help herself.

BRIDGET

He's a lot older than you, Mare.

EMMA

Mom.

BRIDGET

What? What's the big rush? Why not be engaged for a couple of years?

MARY

Can we not talk about this right this second?

BRIDGET

It's just - lot of people have a long engagement, it's really not a big deal, it's --

MARY AND EMMA

Mom.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bridget and Eddie are in bed. She's awake, staring up at the ceiling. Her cellphone on the night stand rings.

Eddie rouses as Bridget reaches for it. It's Nick.

BRIDGET

Nicky?

She listens.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

What do you mean she's gone?

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT/NICK'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

It's still snowing.

Chicago news radio reports the snowstorm in Nick's used Range Rover. He's driving through O'Hare arrivals -- until he gets stuck behind an empty car.

It's OWNERS make out by it's open trunk. Cranky, Nick lays on the horn, startling them apart.

Nick pulls up to the curb and turns down the radio, spotting Bridget and Emma coming out of the airport doors. He leans out the open window.

NICK
Yo dickheads!

INT./EXT. NICK'S RANGE ROVER - DAY

Bridget sits in front, Emma in back. Nick hands out lattes.

NICK
Here's your ten dollar coffees.
Where's Eddie?

BRIDGET
He had to work. Where's Dad?

NICK
He's looking for her, looking everywhere, every single place she's ever been in her life.

EMMA
Did you check the hospitals?

NICK
Hospitals, St. Giles, the Rotary Club, even went by the nursing home in case she thought she was still working there.

EMMA
Did you call the police?

NICK
'Course I called the police.

His tone is sharper than he means it to be. She makes a face.

BRIDGET
They have Dad's number?

NICK

Dad's, mine, yours, yours, the
condo and Marion Down The Hall's.

(then; shaking his head)

Dad's goin' outta his mind, Bitty,
he's white as a ghost. When he
called I thought he was having
another heart attack.

Bridget looks out the window and sips her latte, taking in
the gray of her hometown. It looks very, very cold.

NICK (CONT'D)

I knew this was gonna happen. Been
tellin' him for years, figure out
what you wanna do with Mom when the
time comes, 'cause we all know it's
coming, we all know how this thing
works.

BRIDGET

It's hard for him.

NICK

You know what's gonna be hard for
him? Her turnin' up next week in a
goddamn block of ice.

Emma and Bridget's stomachs drop.

NICK (CONT'D)

It's over. She cannot be at the
condo anymore. She's goin' to a
place and he's gonna haveta let
her.

(then)

If I hear one goddamn peep about
freakin' *Florida*, I swear to God.

He fishes a pack of Pall Mall's out of his parka pocket.

BRIDGET

What happened to quitting?

NICK

Life, Bitty. Life happened to
quitting.

BRIDGET

Don't smoke in here, I'm chemically
sensitive.

NICK

You're *who*?

EMMA
Chemically sensitive.

NICK
What kinda California bullshit is
that?

Nick's phone rings. ALARM ringer. They all jump.

BRIDGET
That's your *ringer*?

NICK
For Dad it is.
(into the phone)
Dad.

INT. RUSH HOSPITAL - ER HALLWAY - DAY

Bert is at a desk filling out paperwork. He looks up to see Bridget, Nick, and Emma scurrying down the hall. He scowls.

BERT
(to Nick)
I toldja not to call her.
(to Bridget)
It's Christmas Day, Bitty, you
aughta be with your family.

BRIDGET
Is she all right?

BERT
She's fine.

Bert and Bridget kiss on the lips. It's a midwestern thing.

BERT (CONT'D)
(to Emma)
Hello Squeaks.

EMMA
Hi Gramps, you okay?

As Emma and Bert embrace, he glares at Nick and waves his hand in front of his face.

BERT
Dammit, Nicholas, knew you'd be
smokin' again with that bar.

BRIDGET

(to Bert)

Are you okay? Have them check your
blood pressure.

NICK

What'd the doctor say?

BERT

He hasn't been in yet.

NICK

Then how do you know she's fine?

BERT

'Cause she's fine! Go look at her!

INT. RUSH HOSPITAL - RUTH'S ROOM - DAY

Ruth sits on the exam table in her nightie, a blanket over her
shoulders, legs swinging like a kid.

Bridget walks in. Ruth doesn't recognize her.

BRIDGET

Mom?

Ruth suddenly lights up.

RUTH

Is that my baby?

She jumps off the table and throws her arms around Bridget.
Nick walks in behind them.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm so happy to see you --

NICK

You all right, Mom?

RUTH

And this baby too?

Ruth throws her arms around Nick, then sees Emma behind him.

RUTH (CONT'D)

(re: Emma)

Honey!

EMMA

Hi Grama.

She throws her arms around Emma, then holds her by the shoulders as Bert enters.

RUTH
You need some money? Let me getcha
some money.

BERT
See? She's fine.

RUTH
Where's my purse?

BERT
You don't need your purse.

RUTH
Oh, I do too, you turkey.

NICK
Where the heck was she?

BERT
Aurora.

NICK AND BRIDGET AND RUTH
Aurora?

BERT
Got on the commuter. Rode the damn
thing back and forth 'til the
conductor screwed his eyeballs in.

RUTH
Did she really?

NICK
Where'd she get on at?

BERT
Berwyn.

NICK
She walked to Berwyn in a
snowstorm?

BERT
She's fine, Nicholas.

RUTH
(re: Bridget)
Well she doesn't look fine to me.

Ruth puts her hand on Bridget's forehead.

NICK
She's fine, Mom.

BERT
She's fine, Ruth.

RUTH
(to Bert; indignant)
Excuse you, I spent thirty years in
geriatrics, thank you very much.

Ruth pulls Bridget down in a chair and rubs her shoulders.
Bert is eying Bridget's empty left hand.

BERT
(to Bridget)
Where's your diamond?

BRIDGET
Oh, I - forgot it.

BERT
Whaddya mean you forgot it?

EMMA
She doesn't wear it.

BRIDGET
I do too, I just take it off for
work.

BERT
How come?

BRIDGET
'Cause I got my hands in raw
poultry all day.

Ruth is going to town on Bridget's shoulders.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Ow, Mom.

Ruth moves the massage up to Bridget's head. Her hair flops
in her face.

BERT
You go to Mass last night?

BRIDGET
No, we were - gonna go today.

EMMA
We were?

BRIDGET

Yes.

NICK

You were?

BRIDGET

(shut up)

Yes.

There's a knock at the door. Quickly:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Come in!

DR. ZOE, 30s, pops her head in. Ruth lights up.

DR. ZOE

Are we ready for a pelvic exam?

RUTH

(to Dr. Zoe)

Is that my baby?

INT. RUSH HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER - DAY

Nick, Bridget, Emma and Bert stand around Dr. Zoe.

DR. ZOE

They are safer in memory care, but they also often *improve*. They're more relaxed, less anxious, they often feel more at home with peers than they do with family.

They all turn to look at Bert's reaction. He is staunch, arms folded stubbornly across his chest. She tries another tactic.

DR. ZOE (CONT'D)

Look, the reason I did a pelvic exam is... during wandering episodes, women are often - assaulted. Sexually.

Their eyes all widen.

DR. ZOE (CONT'D)

I don't see evidence of that today. But given how affectionate she is, I think that's very lucky.

INT. RUSH PARKING GARAGE - 2ND FLOOR - DAY

Bert slams through the door of the garage and marches in.

Bridget trots after him, followed by Nick, holding Ruth's purse, and Ruth, wearing Nick's parka and holding Emma's arm.

NICK

Dad!

Bert and Bridget stop and turn to them.

BERT

What!

NICK

I'm this way.

BERT

So go then!

Nick heads off with Ruth and Emma. Bert marches down the aisle of cars. Bridget trots up along side him.

BERT (CONT'D)

Goddamn hospital. Goddamn teenage doctors.

He pulls his keys out and approaches a black '59 4-seat Thunderbird Convertible and opens the trunk. Bridget gapes.

BRIDGET

What happened to the Camry?

BERT

I'm 75 years old, Bitty. Fuck the Camry.

He pulls a down parka from the trunk and chucks it at her.

INT/EXT BERT'S THUNDERBIRD - DUSK

The top is down. Elton John's *Amoreena* on the radio. They cruise downtown Chicago, lit elegantly for Christmas.

Bridget, wrapped in the borrowed parka, watches her hometown pass.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - FOYER - NIGHT

Bert and Bridget enter. Bert carries Chinese take-out.

BERT

Ho ho ho!

Nick bee-lines around the corner into the foyer. His eyes are wide as saucers.

BERT (CONT'D)

Where's your mother?

NICK

In with Emma.

As Bert takes the bag into the kitchen:

BERT

Gotcha a loo mein, Nicholas.

Bridget hangs the parka up in the coat closet. Nick stares at her, eyes huge, like he's seen a ghost.

BRIDGET

Whassa matter with you?

NICK

(grave; quiet)
She hit on me.

BRIDGET

What?

NICK

She - she - put her hand on my leg,
batted her eyes, she - hit on me.

BRIDGET

Who?

NICK

Who?

Like she even had to ask.

BRIDGET

Mom? What'd you do?

NICK

Whaddya mean, what'd I do, I just -
kept callin' her *Mom*, thanks *Mom*,
had a nice time too *Mom*, real glad
you birthed me, *Mom* --

Bridget can't help it. She starts to laugh. Nick is appalled.

NICK (CONT'D)
You're *laughing*?

Which makes her laugh harder.

NICK (CONT'D)
Don't *laugh*, asshole, it's not
funny. I'm freakin' traumatized.

Bridget is dying.

BRIDGET
Your *face* -- when we walked in, you
shoulda seen your *face* --

Finally Nick can't help himself. He laughs.

NICK
(through laughs)
It's not funny.

BERT (O.C.)
(from the kitchen; angry)
Goddamn Oriental places, how you
s'posed to eat rice with a stick?

Which makes them both hysterical.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Emma lays on one side of the antique double bed, headphones
on, computer open in her lap. Bridget sticks her head in.

BRIDGET
Wanna come for a drive with Uncle
Nicky?

EMMA
No. Uncle Nicky's a dick.

BRIDGET
No he isn't. Don't say that.

A beat, then:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Did you apply for a new dorm?

EMMA
Yeah.

BRIDGET
You did?

EMMA

Yes.

BRIDGET

Oh. You're okay here by yourself?

Emma glares.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Well. I have my cell.

EMMA

Oh, you do? Really? Great, I'll
call you, we'll chat.

Bridget closes the door and steps into the --

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bridget heads down the hall toward the back door. She stops
at the ajar bathroom door and peers in.

BERT (O.C.)

(in the bathroom; gently)

Wait, honey, take your nightie off.

In the mirror, Ruth's arms are in the air, like a child. Bert
gently pulls her nightie over her head. She giggles.

Bridget watches, touched by his care, until:

The back door opens. Nick pokes his head in.

NICK

Let's go, dickie-doodle.

INT. NICK'S RANGE ROVER - NIGHT

Nick drives west on 290. Bridget sits shotgun in her borrowed
parka, looking at the Chicago skyline ahead.

NICK

Jimmy Laciak sits on the board of
the best memory place in Chicago,
got a waiting list a mile long. He
can get Mom in there February one
and Dad in a two bedroom on the
same campus on the 15th.

BRIDGET

They can't be together?

NICK

Memory care's lock down, dementia only. It's a bunch of loons, he'd be ripping his hair out in there anyway.

She looks out. They're downtown now, driving along the El.

NICK (CONT'D)

Assisted living's fifty yards away, he can walk over whenever he feels like it.

BRIDGET

Dad's doesn't want assisted living.

NICK

It's not daycare, Bit, they don't wipe his ass. It's great, they do his laundry, give him a meal plan, he gets chest pains he pushes a button.

Nick parks the car at a meter on Division Street.

BRIDGET

Where are we?

NICK

Where do you think, dum dum?

She doesn't know. They get out of the car.

EXT. DIVISION STREET - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

They walk down deserted Division.

BRIDGET

What about a live-in person?

NICK

Insurance doesn't cover it.

BRIDGET

It doesn't cover memory care either.

NICK

It covers some of it, then they sell the condo.

BRIDGET

He's not gonna sell the condo.

NICK
What's he gonna do, take it with
him?

Nick pulls keys from his parka and goes to a door. She's confused for a moment, then it hits her.

BRIDGET
Oh! Oh my god!

She looks at the sign, awed. It reads NICK'S.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Is that you? Are you Nick?

NICK
That's the other owner. His name's
Nick too.

BRIDGET
Oh.

NICK
Whassa matter with you? Of course
it's me, dingleberry.

INT. NICK'S BAR - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

The walk in the bar, Bridget's eyes wide. It's a gorgeous space, high ceilings, long copper bar, gorgeous mural on one wall, tastefully decorated with curated antiques.

BRIDGET
Wow. My god, it's gorgeous.

NICK
Yeah, see? It's not some shitty
dive.

BRIDGET
Who said it was a shitty dive?

Nick looks pointedly at her - who does she think?

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Well has he been here?

NICK
Of course he hasn't been here.

BRIDGET
Did you invite him?

NICK

I shouldn't have to invite him.

Nick walks along the bar to the back and disappears down the stairs to the basement. Bridget follows slowly, taking it all in, then follows him down into --

INT. NICK'S BAR - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Nick sifts through the mess on the desk -- stacks of paperwork, bottles of corked wine, a well-worn book: *The Best Friend's Approach to Alzheimer's Care*.

In the corner of the basement is an unmade twin blow up bed.

BRIDGET

Somebody's living here.

NICK

You're one sharp cookie, Bit.

BRIDGET

Who?

NICK

The other owner.

Nick retrieves a folder from the mess and heads out of the office with it. Bridget follows. As they head up the steps:

BRIDGET

You're *living* here? What about Rachel?

Nick waves her off.

INT. NICK'S BAR - NIGHT - A MOMENT LATER.

Nick steps behind the bar and tosses a cocktail menu at her.

NICK

What do you wanna drink?

BRIDGET

(reading from the menu)
Norbert's Manhattan?

NICK

Best manhattan you'll have in your life, you'll shit your pants.

He mixes her manhattan and pours it in front of her.

NICK (CONT'D)
Emma's a real peach these days,
huh?

BRIDGET
I think she hates me.

NICK
For what?

BRIDGET
I dunno. She doesn't talk to me.

She sips her manhattan as Nick rinses the shaker.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
(uh-oh)
Shit.

NICK
What?

BRIDGET
In my pants.

NICK
Right? That thing's won awards.

BRIDGET
Norbert would be very proud.

Nick pours himself neat Irish whiskey.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
What happened with Rachel?

NICK
Oh who knows. All of a sudden she's
bursting into tears over a
hamburger 'cause I haven't
proposed.

BRIDGET
She's been waiting for you to *want*
to marry her, dummy. Nobody wants
to *ask* to be proposed to.
(then)
You gotta be *intuitive*, it's like
Eddie, right, I'm constantly
telling him how chefs hate kitchen
gadgets and what does he put under
the tree for me every year?

NICK

That's cause you open it and go
wow! A coconut roaster! Oh my god
thank you I love it!

BRIDGET

Well what am I supposed to say?

NICK

No thanks, where's the receipt?

BRIDGET

I can't say that.

NICK

Why not?

BRIDGET

I'm not gonna make him feel bad in
front of the girls.

NICK

You know what you're saying to the
girls? His feelings matter, mine
don't.

(then)

That's exactly what this world
needs, two more women who don't
tell you what's really going on.
Two more Rachels.

BRIDGET

She told you what's going on. Go
over there. Bring her flowers.

NICK

I'm not goin' over there. She
hasn't even called.

BRIDGET

She shouldn't have to call.

Nick frowns. Touche.

NICK

Yeah, well, now she's trying to get
full custody of her kid, so.

BRIDGET

So?

NICK

So what am I, gonna go be a parent?

BRIDGET

Why not?

NICK

Why not? What do you think I got goin' on here? I got my life savings is dumped into this business and I'm barely making payroll, I got the fire department and the health department double, triple fining me for the same shit I didn't even do, I got a barback stealing tips and then - and then - I'm filling Mom and Dad's prescriptions. I'm picking up their dry cleaning. I'm taking 'em to church.

He downs his drink.

NICK (CONT'D)

She knows I don't want kids, that's the whole reason we broke up six years ago. Here.

He tosses the folder from his office across the bar to her.

NICK (CONT'D)

I filled it all out, all he's gotta do is sign.

The folder reads THE REMINISCENCE NEIGHBORHOOD.

Beaming OCTOGENARIANS sit by a fire around a Parcheesi board. She opens it. Inside is a brochure and stack of paperwork.

BRIDGET

The Reminiscence Neighborhood?

NICK

They're all called shit like that.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - ALLEY - NIGHT

Bridget and Nick step out of Nick's car. He lights a smoke and tosses the Reminiscence folder across the hood to her.

NICK

Here we go now. Put your big girl pants on.

BRIDGET

Just - don't get how you get.

NICK

What do you mean, how I get? Don't get how you get.

BRIDGET

How do I get?

NICK

You can't even tell him you're not a Catholic anymore. What's he gonna do, pray for you?

BRIDGET

I just didn't want any more of the third degree.

NICK

You know what I do when Dad gives me the third degree?

Nick thrusts two middle fingers into the air.

BRIDGET

See? That's how you get.

NICK

Least I'm not lying to him.

BRIDGET

I'm not lying to him.

NICK

You are too.

BRIDGET

I am not.

They go through the back gate of the condo into the courtyard toward the condo's back steps.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bert sits in his recliner, scotch in hand, staring at the tree. When he hears the sound of the back door opening, he quickly grabs the paper and pretends to read it.

Bridget walks in. Bert looks over and sees Nick behind her, wrinkles his nose and waves the paper in front of his face.

BERT

Smell like an ashtray, Nicholas.

NICK
Took you four heart attacks to
quit.

BERT
Rachel must wanna throttle you.

BRIDGET
They broke up.

Nick glares at Bridget. She shrugs. Pointedly:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Just being honest.

BERT
I don't blame her. Been on and off
since high school, shit or get off
the pot.

NICK
Gee, Dad, thanks.

BRIDGET
Dad?

BERT
You know what your problem is,
waiting for some *feeling*. There's
no bells and whistles. You pick
somebody you can stand and you make
a commitment.

BRIDGET
Dad.

BERT
Have her meet us at Mass in the
morning. Marion Down The Hall's
coming over with a corned beef.

BRIDGET
Dad.

BERT
What.

BRIDGET
We need to talk about Mom.

Bert scowls and puts down the footrest of his recliner.

BERT

Goddamn teaching hospitals, that little girl shouldn't have been allowed anywhere near your mother.

NICK

What little girl?

BERT

The teenager calling herself a doctor. Your mother's doing fine.

NICK

Wandering off in the middle of the night's doing fine?

BERT

Well I gave her too much scotch, if you wanna know, which I never do but it was Christmas Eve so I said what the hell.

NICK

So what, she walked off 'cause she was drunk?

BERT

Can't drink hardly at all on her medications.

NICK

No. She walked off 'cause that's what happens with stage six.

BERT

Oh those stages are horse shit, everybody's brain is different and everybody knows it.

NICK

Everybody except the doctor?

BERT

She was not a doctor!

Bridget shoots Nick a look and steps in to peace-keep.

BRIDGET

So, okay, we get a second opinion.

BERT

Got an appointment next week with her geriatrician down in Florida, I'll let you know what he says.

Nick gets loud.

NICK
Goddammit, Dad, you're not goin' to Florida.

BRIDGET
Shh!

BERT
We are too going to Florida --

BRIDGET
You're gonna wake Mom.

BERT
I already put down a deposit!

Bridget puts a hand up to Nick, telling him to back off.

BRIDGET
Dad, listen. There's this - place Nicky found, it looks --

BERT
I am not putting your mother in a nursing home, she worked thirty years in nursing homes, they're horrible and I'm not doing it to her.

NICK
It's not a nursing home. It's a Reminisce Neighborhood.

BERT
A *what*?

Nick holds the folder out to Bert. He doesn't take it.

NICK
It's great. They got Mass twice a week, a restaurant, art classes, a Jacuzzi --

BERT
A Jacuzzi? Your mother can't swim, you wanna drown her?

Nick chucks the folder on the coffee table.

NICK
She's not gonna drown in a *Jacuzzi*.

BERT
She's terrified of water, Nicholas.

NICK
She used to be terrified of Berwyn
too, now she's walkin' down there
in a nightie.

Bert rolls his eyes and starts to get up.

NICK (CONT'D)
Two bedroom next door for you,
fifty feet away in assisted living.

Bert leaps to his feet.

BERT
Are you outta your mind?

NICK
Bitty feels the same way.

BERT
Don't you tell me what Bitty feels,
how the heck do you know what she
feels?

Nick looks expectantly at Bridget.

BRIDGET
I - Dad, I think this is a good
solution that is worth considering.

BERT
Well, I spent the last eight years
considering it and the answer's no.
Thanks for the suggestion, Merry
Christmas, I'm going to bed.

Bert heads toward the hall. Nick flails toward Bridget,
demanding her to speak. She flails back at him. She spoke.

NICK
She is wandering off in the middle
of a fucking snowstorm.

Bert has overheard. From down the hall:

BERT (O.S.)
Doesn't snow in Florida.
(then)
And mind your language.

Nick glares at Bridget. He turns and heads down the hall, pulling out his smokes. Bridget grabs an afghan from the couch and follows him.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - BACK PORCH - NIGHT - SECONDS LATER

Nick smokes on the back porch. Bridget is next to him, wrapped in the afghan.

BRIDGET

We can't force him.

NICK

You know why she wound up in Aurora? That's the train used to run to Amboy. Her dad worked that train.

(then)

She was trying to go home.

It takes Bridget's breath away.

NICK (CONT'D)

She thinks she's a little kid. Thinks her parents are worried sick about her.

He drags on his cigarette and looks out.

NICK (CONT'D)

All she wants is to get back to her poor mother. She can't figure out why she's stuck here, all alone with some strange old man.

(then)

What the hell do you think power of attorney is for?

Emotional, Nick hops the railing and heads toward his car.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget slips into the dark guest room. Emma's in bed. The Reminiscence folder has been shoved under the door. Bridget puts it with her belongings and pulls out pajamas.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget is in the living room looking at all the pictures on the tree. She bends down to see the two gifts underneath.

One is marked TO RUTH FROM BERT, the other TO BERT FROM RUTH in the exact same block handwriting.

Bert enters in his pajamas and robe, surprised to see her.

BRIDGET
Thought you went to bed.

BERT
I did. I got back up.

BRIDGET
Nice tree.

BERT
Your mother likes the pictures.
(then)
She put the ornaments somewhere,
so. I got creative.

BRIDGET
Both these presents have your
handwriting.

BERT
Wouldn't want her thinking she
forgot to get me something.
(then)
C'mon, I'll let you win a game.

BRIDGET
You're not too tired?

BERT
For my daughter who never visits?

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - BREAKFAST ROOM - NIGHT

Bert and Bridget sit on chairs-on-wheels at the table, playing a game of Chinese Checkers.

BERT
Emma said she got kicked outta her
dorm.

BRIDGET
She got caught drinking, it was so
stupid. You know what her problem
is? She's negative. She doesn't get
any exercise.

BERT

Her problem is she's not a student.
College is a waste of money if
you're not a student.

BRIDGET

Well. She's gotta get a degree.

BERT

Oh she does not, she'll figure it
out, look at you, you figured it
out.

(then)

Why can't you sleep?

He's asking out of concern, but she sees her in. Pointed:

BRIDGET

Why can't you sleep?

BERT

I can.

He's defensive. He doesn't want to talk about it.

BRIDGET

You take great care of her. I
oughtta be here more.

BERT

Oh you're here plenty. You got a
family, the girls need you, Eddie
needs you, you got that job. You're
halfway across the country for
chrissake.

(then)

We're fine. Marion Down The Hall
takes her on poker night and so
forth. Two peas in a pod, the two
of 'em, both battier than hell.

BRIDGET

Still. It's gotta be hard on you.

BERT

Nah. She was always a pain in the
ass. Gettin' her Irish up, stompin'
around all red in the face about
God knows what.

(then)

No bells and whistles. Love is
commitment. Better or worse,
sickness and health, death do you
part. That's the promise.

Bridget nods. Treading carefully:

BRIDGET
 She's gonna get worse, Dad.
 (then)
 She's gonna forget everything.

He stares down into his scotch for a long moment.

BERT
 She's my girl, Bit. You can't take
 my girl away from me.

It breaks her heart. He rises from the table, emotional.

BERT (CONT'D)
 Turn the tree off.

INT. ST. GILES CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

A CHOIR leads the congregation in "Joy To The World." MARION DOWN THE HALL is among them. She's Italian, dyed black hair, huge yellow tinted glasses.

Bert, Ruth, Emma, Nick and Bridget stand in a pew near the front. They all sing.

The PROCESSIONAL walks the aisle. ALTAR BOYS fling Holy Water from palm fronds. Ruth looks skyward and holds out her palm.

RUTH
 It's raining in here.

A CRANKY OLD COUPLE in front turns around to give Ruth a dirty look. She flips them the bird. Bert snatches her hand.

INT. ST. GILES CATHOLIC CHURCH - LOBBY - DAY

Mass has ended. Bert, Nick and Marion chat by the Holy Water with the ANCIENT PRIEST.

Bridget walks up the aisle and approaches the ALTAR. She stops at it and stares at the Virgin Mary.

A VOICE (O.C.)
 Bitty Keller?

THE VOICE -- is walking toward her from the left side of the church. He's 40s, Irish, built.

THE VOICE
 (pointing at himself)
 It's Gerry! Hoffstader! Dommie's
 little brother?

Dommie's little brother never looked like *that* before.

GERRY
 What the heck're you doing here?

BRIDGET
 Oh, I'm just, I'm, you know...

She gestures at the altar. He clocks that she's ring-less.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
 Hanging out, me and Mary.

Gerry nods, smiling like he gets that answer.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
 Gosh, you look - really great.

GERRY
 (nodding)
 Construction. I took over for Dad.

His eyes mist. He looks toward the altar reverently.

GERRY (CONT'D)
 Death comes for everybody, as it
 turns out.

Bridget nods like she gets that comment.

IN THE BACK OF THE CHURCH -

Nick stands in the aisle, near the back doors, watching them.

NICK
 Bitty!

Bridget and Gerry turn to him.

GERRY
 Hey Nick.

NICK
 Hey Ger.

Bert marches in, cranky. Emma trots behind him.

BERT
(to Nick)
Get your sister.

He turns and marches out. Nick looks at Emma.

EMMA
Gramma drank the Holy Water.

EXT. CHURCH - SIDEWALK - DAY

Nick's SUV is parked a ways up the street. The family walks towards it, Emma holding Ruth's purse.

Gerry trots behind them, then crosses to his truck.

GERRY
Um. Bye.

Bridget and Nick turn and wave.

NICK
See ya Ger.

BERT
Who is that?

NICK
Gerry Hoff-sniffer.

BRIDGET
Don't call him that.

NICK
He used to beat off smelling his
sister's Barbie dolls.

BRIDGET
Says who?

NICK
Says Dommie.

RUTH
Where's my purse?

EMMA
I have it, Gram.

BRIDGET
(re: Gerry)
He was so tubby in junior high.

BERT
So were you.

NICK
Old Big Butt Bitty.

EMMA
Nicky.

RUTH
Does somebody have my purse?

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - DINING ROOM - DAY

Marion sits grandly at one end of the table, holding court. Ruth is next to her. Nick and Bert read the paper at the other end.

MARION
So I said to Margie, I said Margie
honey he's a toddler, one day he
likes pancakes, next day he won't
touch the things, it's normal --

Bridget brings in two plates of corned beef and cabbage and sets them down in front of Nick and Bert.

MARION (CONT'D)
Bridget, honey, you're so skinny,
don't they feed you in California?

Bridget heads back into the KITCHEN and hovers over Emma as she slices the corned beef.

BRIDGET
Thinner. Thinner.

Emma slams the knife down and glares at her mother.

Emma grabs two completed plates and goes into the dining room. Bridget slices the last piece and brings the two last plates into the DINING ROOM. She sits next to Emma.

MARION
I said honey, this age is where it
starts, it's all about control --

BERT
(quickly, monotone)
Bless us O Lord for these thy gifts
which we are about to receive from
thy bounty through Christ our Lord
amen.

ALL

Amen.

Bert leans over to Ruth and begins cutting her meat.

MARION

Now Emma, you got a boyfriend or what?

NICK

She's got a few.

BRIDGET

Cool it, Nicky.

BERT

Just as easy to love a rich one as a poor one, Squeaks. No bells and whistles.

MARION

You know my Frankie died seventeen years ago and I never remarried even though I had plenty of chances and you know why? 'Cause hand to God, Frankie never left, every single night he's right there next to me, hand to God.

Bridget and Emma are looking at Marion intensely. Then, in unison, they look at their plates, hiding the same wound.

RUTH

That's right. He's out there, and when he finds you, watch out, he's never gonna let you go.

MARION

So I said to Margie, I said that kid's gonna be big as house if you don't watch it, but you know Margie, not a word about it.

RUTH

You know, I'm having a baby.

Everybody looks at Ruth -- except Marion, who drones on, oblivious.

MARION

Kid's gonna wind up with dia-bee-tus.

Bridget and Emma both sputter laughter - the kind that's just neighboring tears. Marion looks at them, indignant.

MARION (CONT'D)
Heck's a matter with you two?

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ruth's arms are raised in the air as Bridget pulls a fresh nightie over her head. Ruth's big eyes look at her.

RUTH
Why did I get on that train?

Bridget pulls the bedsheets down. Ruth gets into bed.

RUTH (CONT'D)
I live here. I don't know what's
the matter with me.

Then she remembers. She does know what's the matter with her.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Oh. Oh. Yes I do.
(looking up at Bridget)
Should I be in a home, do you
think?

Both of them want to take advantage of Ruth's lucidity.

BRIDGET
What do you think?

RUTH
I don't know. I don't know.

Ruth's brow is furrowed for a moment. Then her eyes go blank. Her mind has reset. She smiles up at Bridget, like a child.

RUTH (CONT'D)
'Night, Mama.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget paces the guest room, on the phone with Eddie. Her eyes wash over the framed family photographs on the wall.

EDDIE
How's it going there?

BRIDGET
Terrible. Dad won't even consider
it.

EDDIE
I don't blame him. Nobody wants to
be alone for the rest of their
life.

Bridget's eyes stop on a picture of Bert and Ruth.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Hello?

BRIDGET
I'm here.

EDDIE
What's going on with Emma?

BRIDGET
Nothing. She's fine.

EDDIE
She didn't register for next
semester.

Bridget stops pacing.

BRIDGET
What?

EDDIE
Her advisor called this morning
asking if she was coming back.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - KITCHEN / PANTRY / DINING - NIGHT

Bridget comes into the kitchen and through the pantry. Nick
stands at the counter, picking at the corned beef with his
fingers.

BRIDGET
Gross. Get a fork.

He makes a face at her.

Bridget continues into the DINING ROOM. Emma and Bert play
Chinese Checkers at the table. Bridget leans against the
door, waiting for a moment to interrupt.

BERT

... we always did road trips and that, she loves a good road trip. We're driving down to Florida, then across the country, be over by you right in time for Mary's wedding.

Nick appears in the doorway behind Bridget, agape, with a fistful of beef.

NICK

What're you, Thelma and Louise?

BRIDGET

Shh. Mom's in bed.

BERT

She does great in Florida, Nicholas, every year she's better.

NICK

No she isn't.

BERT

How do you know?

NICK

'Cause that's not how it works! How it works is she gets worse. No matter where you take her, she gets worse.

Ruth has entered.

RUTH

Who?

BRIDGET AND NICK

Nobody, Mom.

BERT

Nobody, Ruth. Go back to bed.

Emma gets up to take her back to bed.

EMMA

I'll take you, Grama.

NICK

Hang on Emma.

He taps Ruth's arm and points to Bert.

NICK (CONT'D)
Who is that?

BRIDGET AND EMMA
Nicky.

BERT
Oh, what is that?

NICK
(to Ruth)
Do you know who that is?

BERT
Of course she knows.

RUTH
(pointing at Bert)
Him?

BERT
You know who I am, honey --

NICK
Shh!

They all wait for Ruth to answer. She looks coyly at Bert.

RUTH
He's my boyfriend.

BERT
See?

NICK
Whaddya mean *see*, are you her
boyfriend?

BRIDGET
Well he's not *not* her boyfriend.

NICK
No he isn't!

RUTH
Who?

EMMA
He kinda is.

NICK
He is not, Emma, for chrissake --

EMMA
He is too, Nicky.

RUTH
Who're you talking about?

BERT
(to Ruth)
You.

BRIDGET
(to Ruth)
Dad.

EMMA
He's your husband, Grama.

NICK
Well don't *tell* her, dammit --

BERT
She knows I'm her husband.

RUTH
I know he's my husband.

NICK
No you don't.

EMMA
Yes she does.

BRIDGET
(to Nick)
Well now you're telling her.

NICK
No I'm not.

EMMA
Yeah you are.

BERT
You just told her she doesn't know
I'm her husband.

NICK
'Cause she doesn't!

RUTH
Who?

BERT
She just toldja she did!

NICK
'Cause Emma told her!

The home phone rings.

RUTH
I'll get it.

Ruth disappears into the kitchen and reaches for the phone.

NICK
She's flippin' off people in church
for chrissake, she's drinking the
holy water!

EMMA
So?

NICK
Wouldja stay out of it, Emma,
you're a kid for chrissake!

RUTH (O.S.)
Hello? Hello!

The phone is still ringing. They look over toward the kitchen doorway.

RUTH (O.S) (CONT'D)
Hello? This damn thing.

She wanders out toward them, jabbing at a stapler. She puts it back to her ear.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Hello?
(to them; shaking her head)
Damn thing never works.

They all stare at her.

EMMA
Gramma.

RUTH
What.

EMMA
It's a stapler.

She looks down at it. Then she snorts laughter.

RUTH
What the heck am I doing with this?

She's cracking up. Emma starts to laugh, and then Bridget, and suddenly the three of them are in hysterics.

Bert and Nick are not amused. Finally:

NICK
Yeah, yuk it up, it's all so
hilarious, life's just one big
riot.

He's had it. He turns on his heel and goes.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - BACK PORCH / COURTYARD - NIGHT

Nick marches down the steps and stops to light a smoke.
Bridget appears in the door behind him and steps onto the
porch.

BRIDGET
Hey!

Nick turns.

NICK
Lemme ask you something. What'd you
fly all the way out here for?

BRIDGET
Because Mom was missing.

NICK
No. Because I asked you to. I asked
you to. Which I *never* do. I need
some *help*.

BRIDGET
I'm working on it.

NICK
You don't have time to work on it!
You rip the bandaid off, Bit, you
say guess what, we're coming in
with moving boxes.
(then)
Jimmy Laciak is holding spots. It's
a big ass favor, he was supposed to
have the paperwork two days ago.

BRIDGET
Okay.
(off his look)
Okay.

He turns and walks to his car. She goes in.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Grey light peeks over the curtains. Bridget, dressed in her running gear, sits on the edge of Emma's side of the bed and shakes her awake.

BRIDGET

Emma.

Emma squints at her.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Come for a run with me.

Emma blinks at her, one hundred percent not having it.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

You'll feel great afterward, I'm
telling you, you just have to --

Emma grabs one of Bridget's pillows and whacks Bridget in the face with it as she turns and covers her head.

Bridget gets up and goes for the door. Then she notices Emma's computer laying on the floor by her bedside.

She tiptoes over, grabs it, and carries it out of the room.

EXT. OAK PARK STREET - DAY

Bridget runs down Oak Park Avenue, picking up her pace, sprinting faster and faster, as fast as she can for as long as she can.

Something catches her eye. She slows and stops.

A HOFFSTEADER CONSTRUCTION pickup is parked at the curb. She stares at it a moment, looks around for its owner, then continues on at a jog.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - DINING ROOM - DAY

Ruth sits at the table sipping coffee, a towel draped over her shoulders. A bottle of Ensure sits on the table.

Bert is behind her, drying her roots, in a frilly apron. Road Runner cartoons play on a small TV in the corner.

Bridget enters from her run. Ruth starts to get up.

RUTH

There's my baby!

BERT

Sit down Ruth, you got dye all over you. Drink your Ensure.

She sticks her tongue out at him.

RUTH

My boyfriend. Mr. Bossy.

Bridget gets a mug from the cabinet and sits. She pours coffee from a carafe on the table.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Do you need anything?

BERT

She's fine. Drink your Ensure.

Bridget moves the Ensure closer to Ruth.

BRIDGET

Here, Mom.

She drinks the Ensure.

BERT

See? Tastes just like a chocolate malt.

RUTH

You wouldn't know a chocolate malt if it bit you in the tush.

(to Bridget)

See, I was a fountain girl, in...

BERT

Amboy.

RUTH

Amboy, and consequently... my Dad works on the trains, he's a...

BERT

An engineer.

RUTH

An engineer, that's right, he'd get off the trains and bring me chocolate malts 'cause I was sick, I was very sick, I had...

BERT

Polio.

RUTH
Polio, mm-hmm, and all I did was
drink chocolate malts all day, and
consequently...

BERT
You got fat.

RUTH
I got fat.

BRIDGET
Dad.

BERT
What?

BRIDGET
She was not fat.

BERT
She was too fat.

RUTH
No, I was, I was very fat.

Bert pulls the gloves off and washes his hands.

RUTH (CONT'D)
And then I was a housewife, and
consequently --

BRIDGET
You were not.

BERT
You were a career woman, Ruth, two-
time administrator of the year.

RUTH
(impressed)
Holy shit.

Bert sits down at the table and pours himself coffee. He
grabs his paper. Bridget picks up the arts section.

RUTH (CONT'D)
(re: Bert and Bridget)
And how do you two know each other?

Bridget and Bert look up from their papers.

BERT
 (a touch sharp)
 She's our daughter, Ruth. For
 chrissakes.

Ruth blushes at his tone. Her face twists anxiously.

RUTH
 Lemme get my purse.

BERT
 Don't touch anything.

RUTH
 I'm not gonna touch anything, I'm
 gonna get my purse!

Ruth exits. Bert goes back to his paper.

BERT
 We're going to Edna's for supper.

Bridget makes a face. Bert eyes her over his paper.

BERT (CONT'D)
 Wanna do me a favor?

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

The mirrors are fogged. Over the sound of the shower:

BRIDGET (O.C.)
 Keep rinsing.

A nightie and set of panties are a puddle on the floor.

IN THE SHOWER -- Ruth, naked, thin, stands in the stream of water, letting it run over her hair. Bridget soaps her own body.

RUTH
 Your turn.

BRIDGET
 Gimme your hand.

Ruth does. Bridget squeezes shampoo into Ruth's hand. Ruth stares at it, not sure what to do.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
 Rub it on your hair.

Ruth does, wide-eyed. Bridget steps into the water and wets her own hair. Shampoo drips down Ruth's forehead.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Close your eyes, Mom.

Bridget wipes the dripping shampoo with a washcloth.

RUTH

It's so nice of you to do this for me.

BRIDGET

You did it for me. Rinse your head.

Bridget shampoos her own hair. As Ruth rinses her head, her face relaxes. She has a memory.

RUTH

I did, didn't I? Oh Nicky hated the bath, he kicked and screamed, I said to hell with it, let him stay dirty. But you were always a good girl.

She opens her eyes and looks at Bridget with concern.

RUTH (CONT'D)

I shoulda been a better mother.

BRIDGET

You were a great mother.

Ruth searches for more, behind her closed eyes, then her face goes slack. Her eyes pop open, blank.

RUTH

Do I need to wash my hair?

BRIDGET

You did already. Here.

Bridget puts a bar of soap into Ruth's hand.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Wash your whoo-ha.

Ruth does. Bridget rinses her own head, then turns to rinse her face. Ruth begins to soap Bridget's back.

RUTH

You have a boyfriend?

BRIDGET
I have a husband.

RUTH
Are you happy?

Bridget, as usual, opens her mouth to lie. Then realizes: she doesn't have to. Ruth won't remember.

BRIDGET
I'm lonely.

Ruth blinks. She stares at the soap, lost.

RUTH
Do I need to wash my hair?

BRIDGET
Rinse your whoo-ha, Mom.

Ruth rinses her whoo-ha and gasps in delighted discovery.

RUTH
Whoo!

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM CLOSET - DAY

Bridget, one towel around her torso, another wrapped around her head, stands with Ruth, fully dressed, in front of a pair of shoes.

Down the hall, Marion can be heard droning on to Bert.

RUTH
I don't want her to be upset.

BRIDGET
Who?

RUTH
Whoever's shoes those are.

BRIDGET
They're your shoes, Mom.

RUTH
They are not. Ugliest things I ever saw in my life.

Nick comes in.

NICK

Put your shoes on, Mom. Marion's waiting for you.

(to Bridget)

Go get the folder.

BRIDGET

Just - lemme get dressed.

Bridget heads down the hall, passing yammering Marion, passing Bert, who's eyes are crossed listening to her.

BERT

(to Bridget)

Hurry up, we're gonna be late.

And on down the hall into the -

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Emma sits on the bed, arms crossed, fuming.

EMMA

Did you go into my computer and log into my school account?

Bridget ignores her. She rifles through her suitcase, looking for clothes.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Somebody did. Somebody went in and signed me up for a bunch of random classes. That wasn't you?

BRIDGET

No.

EMMA

Liar.

BRIDGET

Well you lied to me. You told me you filled out the dorm application. How does it feel?

EMMA

'Cause I didn't want you on me, okay, I didn't feel like dealing with your bat shit *hovering*.

Emma starts to get dressed.

BRIDGET
Were you ever going to do it?

EMMA
Yes.

BRIDGET
When?

EMMA
When I decided whether or not I was
going *back*, okay?

Nick knock/barges in. Bridget hikes up her towel. Emma hugs
her shirt to her chest.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Doesn't anybody know how to *knock*?

NICK
Where's the folder?

BRIDGET
Do you *mind*?

Nick spots the Reminiscence folder and grabs it.

NICK
(to Bridget)
Get out here, Bitty, wouldja?

BRIDGET
Just a *minute*, Nick.

Nick goes.

EMMA
I am a *grown up*, okay? You make me
feel like there's something wrong
with me.

BRIDGET
There's nothing wrong with you.

EMMA
I *know*!

Emma gets her boots.

BRIDGET
I would have killed to go to
college, Emma. Killed.

EMMA

I *know*.

BRIDGET

You have no perspective. You have no idea how lucky you are.

Emma turns to her, suddenly angry.

EMMA

Do you think I'm *trying* to hate school? You think I *wanna* not get out of bed in the morning, that I *like* laying there feeling like this giant loser for blowing it, for wasting Dad's money? Laying there thinking about how much you wanted to go until I *wanna* throw myself out the window, you think that's fun for me?

It's a gut punch for Bridget. Outside their door, voices begin to raise.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Telling me I just need to come on your stupid runs. Like you're not a fucking mess.

BRIDGET

I am not a mess.

Emma scoffs laughter as she steps into her boots.

The voices down the hall grow louder. Bridget opens the door.

Nick and Bert are yelling down the hall. Bridget grits her teeth, hikes up her towel, and heads down the HALLWAY into the --

FOYER. Emma follows.

Nick and Bert are going at it. The Reminiscence Folder is on the mail table. Bert is pulling his coat from the closet.

NICK

It's the best goddamn memory care in Chicago! Jimmy skipped a six month waiting list for you!

Bert turns. As he pulls his coat on:

BERT

Lemme tell you something. Those pictures on the tree in there? Tellin' her how she takes her coffee, how many ice cubes she likes in her scotch? *That's* memory care. I was there for every damn memory she made the last sixty years, and if I wasn't there I had to hear about it thirty-seven times. So *I'm* the best memory care in Chicago. I bathe her, I feed her, I give her her pills, I wipe her ass and I do it a helluva lot better than some *aide* who doesn't give one goddamn hoot about who she spent 60 years becoming.

He puts his cap on.

BERT (CONT'D)

(to Bridget)

Get your clothes on, we're late.

(re: the folder)

And put that thing away before your mother sees it.

He goes. The front door closes behind him. Silence.

And then Emma bursts into tears.

NICK

Whassa matter with you?

Bridget and Emma both turn to him, dumbfounded.

BRIDGET

It's *sad!*

EMMA

It's *sad*, Nicky, God!

Emma plops on the couch. Nick disappears into the guest bath.

Bridget leans down and tries to put her arm around Emma, but she swats it away. Nick re-enters with a wad of toilet paper and holds it out to Emma. She glares at him but takes it.

EMMA (CONT'D)

(to Nick)

What are you, dead inside?

NICK

Almost.

Bridget sits heavily in the chair next to Emma.

NICK (CONT'D)
 Watch the towel, huh, we don't
 wanna see your whoo-ha.

Bridget adjusts the towel. Emma blows her nose. Then,
 suddenly resolved:

BRIDGET
 I don't wanna go to Edna's. I hate
 Edna. All she ever talks about is
 her stupid hip replacement.

NICK
 Then don't go.

BRIDGET
 (to Emma)
 Do you wanna stay here with me?

EMMA
 No.

NICK
 (to Emma)
 C'mon Emma.
 (to Bridget)
 We'll tell Dad you got menopause.

Emma and Nick head for the foyer. The door closes.

Bridget is alone. She sits for a few moments. Then she goes
 to the BAR in the corner and pours herself a drink.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - KITCHEN - DAY

Bridget, still in her towel, holding a scotch, stands at the
 kitchen table, looking down at the open Yellow Pages. The
 cordless house phone is to her ear.

BRIDGET
 Hi, is this -- Hoffstader
 Construction?... Is this Gerry? Hi,
 it's - Bitty Eberhardt!... Hi!
 Listen, you don't do locks, do you?

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST BATH - DAY

Bridget looks in the mirror, fiddling with her frumpy
 sweater.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bridget, in her bra and jeans, shuffles through her mother's closet. She pulls out a ivory blouse in a plastic dry cleaning bag.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - BOUDOIR - A MOMENT LATER

Bridget buttons the blouse in the mirror. It's sheer; her bra shows through. She rifles through her mother's slips in a dresser drawer and pulls out an unopened TV dinner.

The doorbell RINGS.

BRIDGET

Shit.

She grabs one of her mother's lipsticks and swipes it on her lips, then makes a horrified face at it's brightness. She blots vigorously, pulls her hair out of it's messy bun and races out toward the front door.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - FOYER - DAY

Bridget, in the blouse, bra showing underneath, stands at the open door with Gerry, who is on a knee, examining it.

BRIDGET

I was thinking a lock with a key
but the key on the inside, you
know?

GERRY

Right, so you can lock it and hide
the key from her.

BRIDGET

Exactly.

GERRY

Smart. Back door too?

BRIDGET

Yeah, if you have time, that'd be -
good.

GERRY

For you? I got all the time in the
world.

An awkward beat, then Gerry covers nervously.

GERRY (CONT'D)

I mean 'cause it's an easy thing to do. Things. Two doors are things. With an s. Take me twenty minutes, half hour tops, so.

BRIDGET

Great.

Another awkward beat, then:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Do you want some coffee?

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - KITCHEN - DAY

Bridget pulls the crock of corned beef out of the fridge and makes Gerry a sandwich as he pours coffee into mugs.

GERRY

Sorry about your mom.

BRIDGET

Oh, thanks. That's okay.

GERRY

No. No it isn't.

His unwillingness to dismiss things people generally dismiss catches her off guard.

GERRY (CONT'D)

Dad's been gone two years, Mom eleven Easter Sunday. Still not okay.

(then)

Doesn't matter how old you are. Life is just harder when you don't have parents.

A beat, then:

GERRY (CONT'D)

Do you have sugar?

BRIDGET

Sugar? Sugar.

She opens the cabinet to the left of the sink. A bag of sugar is high on a shelf. She jumps for it.

GERRY

Here.

He comes behind her and reaches over her for it, his other hand on the small of her back. There is nothing forward or inappropriate about this, but something about him behind her, his smell, his touch...

Her knees begin to buckle. She literally swoons.

She steps away before her knees give completely, and fumbles, light-headed, to steady herself on the counter.

GERRY (CONT'D)
You all right?

BRIDGET
Mm-hmm!

Utterly flustered, she pulls her blouse away from her chest.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Sorry, I just - got hot, is it hot?
I have low blood pressure. Blood
sugar. I think I'm starving.

A beat, then Gerry points, obviously, at the sandwiches. She grabs a bagel from the plate from this morning and pulls the insides out and eats the edges.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
I don't eat... things.

GERRY
California girl.

She nods, mortified. He picks up his coffee and smiles knowingly at her.

GERRY (CONT'D)
I get it, you know? I'm divorced
too.

BRIDGET
What?

GERRY
I have a radar. Like gay-dar.
Divorce-dar. Plus no ring, so.

She waits for herself to correct him... but is suddenly mute. He blushes, thinking he's overstepped.

GERRY (CONT'D)
So, I'll just - get started.

He takes his coffee and plate with the sandwich and goes.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALF BATH OFF KITCHEN - DAY

The distant sound of drilling over Led Zeppelin.

Bridget paces the small bathroom off the kitchen.

BRIDGET

(rehearsing)

I am married, I lost my ring and.
I'm still married. I'm actually
still married. I'm... you have
beautiful biceps but I'm...

She slaps herself in the face. She's stoic, then:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Ow.

(then)

I'm married. It was a joke.

(laughing)

Gotcha! Funny!

(sobering)

No. Not funny. I didn't say
anything because I, I --

(to herself)

You don't need to *explain*, he
doesn't need to *know*, who is he,
he's Dommie's little brother,
Dommie's tubby little junior high
brother, who cares what he thinks.

(resolved)

I'm married. Can I get you more
coffee?

She takes a deep breath, steps out into the foyer.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - DAY - LATER

Bridget, glass of scotch in hand, talking a mile a minute, is rifling through Emma's suitcase, rambling loudly.

BRIDGET

'Cause he's a wonderful guy, he
really is, we don't fight, we don't
cheat, we don't - do *anything*,
actually, he's just -

She finds what she's looking for: Emma's cigarettes. She grabs them and heads out into the --

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY - DAY

Gerry stands by the back door, holding a scotch of his own and an afghan for her. Bridget comes out of the guest room, still rambling.

BRIDGET

He's a *checklist* person, you know?
College, check, corporate law,
check, wife, kids, check check
check.

She pulls at the back door as he drapes the afghan over her shoulders.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Which is fine, it's just that I'm
not, I'm a *mess*, I'm *messy*, I'm -

The door isn't opening.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

(re: the door)

What is this, why is this...

Gerry reaches over her shoulder and turns the new key in the lock at the back door. Bridget gets the door open. They head out the door and up the steps onto the landing.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - PORCH - DAY - CONTINUOUS

BRIDGET

I was just so *young* when we got
married, I mean, 20, God, Emma's
20, she can barely tie her shoes,
and Mary, at 20 Mary thought she
was a lesbian, which - good for
her! She should still be
experimenting, she's got the rest
of her life to make sacrifices for -
what's his face - Daniel. David!
David? David. David David David.

She opens Emma's pack of cigarettes. There are two left. She hands him one.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is
that - I'm... I'm...

GERRY

(reminding her)

You're a mess, you're messy...

BRIDGET

I'm a mess, I'm messy, and I'm...

GERRY

(suggesting)

You - work out?

BRIDGET

I work out, I work out, I run, I'm
a runner, I run...

He lights her cigarette for her, then his own. She inhales.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

I haven't smoked in twenty years. I
don't smoke. I don't drink. I don't
eat things.

(then)

You know, everybody thinks being
alone is so bad, so lonely, no, you
know what's lonely? Laying awake in
the middle of the night thinking
*this is it, this is the rest of my
life, this is as good as it gets,*
and then looking over at the man I
spent twenty five years with,
thinking - he must be awake too,
thinking the same thing I am, he
must be.

(dragging on her cigarette)

Looking over to see him sleeping
like a baby?

She exhales.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

That is loneliest thing. That.

There are tears in Gerry's eyes.

GERRY

Jesus Christ, Bitty, goddamn.

BRIDGET

Alone? Alone is great! I went from
my father's house to my husband's
house, I was never alone my whole
life. You have your coffee in the
morning, in your little -
Victorian, with soul, with a porch
swing, you have your coffee, do a
little writing, a little
meditating...

She drags on her cigarette.

GERRY

See, I knew you were a writer.

BRIDGET

I'm... a writer, a lover, a
fighter, I'm a nurturer, I'm - I'm -

GERRY

You're sexy as all get out.

She blinks, rocketed back to planet Earth.

BRIDGET

What?

He gets on his knees and comes to her.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Oh! No. No no no, listen I --

She leans back as he gets very close to her and... *sniffs*.

GERRY

God you smell good, you always
smelled so fucking good.

She did not think this through. She tries to push him back.

BRIDGET

Uhh... I'm sorry, I'm not, I'm
still-

Suddenly, he is kissing her. She freezes, paralyzed. And then... she lets herself have one second, just one tiny, tiny second before she pushes him away, just as:

NICK (O.S.)

Bitty!

Bridget turns slowly toward the voice, praying it's not Nick standing in the courtyard with a clear view.

But it is, of course. In his parka, cigarette lit.

NICK (CONT'D)

Whoops.

GERRY

Hey Nick.

NICK

Hey Ger.

BRIDGET

What - what - what about Edna?

NICK

She's dead. Died this morning.

(then)

What, d'ja change the locks?
They're standing at the front door,
you dope, go let them in!

Bridget stares, holding her cigarette, paralyzed. Gerry quickly disappears down the stairs to let them in the front.

Bridget's eyes go wide. She chases after Gerry.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY - SECONDS LATER

The Zeppelin plays on a boom box on the mail table.

Gerry appears in the back doorway and heads down the hall toward the front door. Bridget chases after him, panicked, still holding the cigarette, hissing at him:

BRIDGET

Wait! Wait!

Gerry turns.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Can you go - go - in the --

GERRY

What?

She gestures he goes down into the living room.

BRIDGET

Down -- down -- the --

GERRY

(re the cigarette)

Did you want that in here?

Bridget realizes she's still holding the cigarette. She races back down to the back door and flings it out wildly as Gerry walks into the living room.

She races back down the hallway, waving the smoke away, and shuts off the music.

The new dead bolt locks the door from the inside; the key is in the lock. Bridget turns it and opens the door - to an incredibly pissed off Bert.

Emma and Ruth sit on the steps in the hallway behind him.

BERT
What the heck's going on in here?

BRIDGET
Nothing, Dad, sorry, the music --

Bert sniffs the air.

BERT
You're smoking in here?

RUTH
Is that my baby?

BERT
You're smoking in my house?

BRIDGET
No.

BERT
You are too smoking in my house.

Ruth throws her arms around Bridget.

RUTH
I'm so happy to see you!

BERT
What the heck're you wearing?

BRIDGET
Hi Mom.

BERT
Is that your mother's good blouse?

RUTH
Whose mother?

BERT
That I just had dry cleaned?

Ruth spots Gerry, who is loitering in the living room.

RUTH
Who's that?

BERT
Who's who?

Bert rounds the corner and spots Gerry. He freezes.

BRIDGET

It's... Gerry. Gerry Hoffstader,
remember, from Mass?

Bert is staring at Gerry, stone-faced.

GERRY

Nice to see you again, Mr.
Eberhardt.

Gerry approaches and extends his hand. Bert doesn't take it.

BRIDGET

Dad! It's Gerry! He's Dommie's
little brother, he's a construction
guy!

Bert is stone-faced. So is Emma.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

You didn't see his truck in the
lot? The - Hoffstader Construction
truck, he's a construction guy!

Nick enters the foyer, having come in the back door. He grabs
a sandwich from the mail table and watches the show.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

He's Dommie's little brother, we
haven't seen each other since --
(to Gerry)
-- God, you were in junior high,
right? Except for Mass.

Gerry doesn't reply, putting together pieces of his own. Nick
looking Bridget up and down.

NICK

Is that Mom's blouse?

BRIDGET

We were just catching up, he
finished the locks, and --

NICK

Dad just had that dry cleaned.

BRIDGET

-- 'cause that's why I called him,
to put locks in like they have at
the Reminiscence Community --

NICK
 (mouth full)
 Reminiscence Neighborhood.
 Neighborhood.

BRIDGET
 That way she can't get out and you
 guys can stay here!

NICK
What?

BRIDGET
 (to Nick)
 For now! As long as they don't go
 to Florida.

Ruth has a sudden realization of who Gerry is.

RUTH
 (to Bridget; re Gerry)
 Oh! Your husband!
 (to Gerry)
 Oh honey!

She goes to Gerry and throws her arms around him.

Emma turns and marches down the hall. Bridget goes after her.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bridget walks into the guest room -- just in time to see Emma
 disappear into the GUEST BATH and slam the door behind her.

Bridget goes to it and knock / barges. The door is locked.

BRIDGET
 Emma.

Emma doesn't answer.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
 Emma!

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - PARKING LOT - DAY

Gerry loads his tools into the bed of his pick-up. Bridget
 stands nearby, coat-less, mortified, holding her checkbook.

BRIDGET
 Can I just pay you? Lemme just pay
 you, what do I owe?

He closes the tail of the pickup and eyes her.

GERRY
So you're not divorced.

BRIDGET
No.

He chews on this.

GERRY
Are you a writer?

BRIDGET
I'm a part-time demo chef in a
kitchen showroom.

He chews on that.

GERRY
Do you wanna have sex?

Despite this being a fair question, Bridget is taken aback
and a little insulted.

BRIDGET
No.

GERRY
1500.

She blinks at him.

GERRY (CONT'D)
Includes materials.

She waits for him to say he's kidding. He doesn't. She bends
over her checkbook.

GERRY (CONT'D)
Gerry with a G... H-o-f-f...

As she writes, he gets close to her and takes one last sniff.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - BUILDING SIDE DOOR - DAY

Nick smokes in front of the side door, overseeing the above.
Gerry's truck pulls out, Zeppelin blasting. Bridget walks up,
shivering, waving Nick's smoke away.

NICK
Chemically sensitive, huh?

BRIDGET
Lemme in, I'm freezing.

NICK
Nice *bra*.

BRIDGET
Let me *in*.

His eyes narrow at her.

NICK
They can stay? They can *stay*?

She turns and marches around the building toward the front entrance. He marches after her.

NICK (CONT'D)
Who the hell do you think you are?

BRIDGET
The person with power of attorney.

NICK
Oh right, Queen Bitty, ladies and gentlemen, spends three days, *three fucking days*, gets it all figured out, throws in a lock, what a genius, why didn't I think of that?

She whirls on him.

BRIDGET
Who do you think *you* are? I'm not ten minutes off the plane, you're telling me what to do before I even had a chance to *evaluate* the situation.

NICK
Who am I? Who am I? I'm the one who *is here!*

She's startled by his sudden rage.

NICK (CONT'D)
Me! I'm the one getting phone calls in the middle of the night. I'm the one with her geriatrician on speed dial --

She turns and storms up the front walkway. He follows.

NICK (CONT'D)

The fact that he gave you power of attorney is the biggest, stinkiest piece of favoritist bullshit I ever heard!

She opens the front door into the --

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - VESTIBULE - DAY

VESTIBULE -- and pulls on the second set of doors leading into the condo lobby. They're locked. There's a keypad and a list of a zillion residents on the wall.

NICK

Oh, you don't know the code? Isn't that funny.

She squints at the tiny print of residents' names.

NICK (CONT'D)

Let's get Gerry back here, have him change the lock, I'll take Emma to the mall, you two can go at it.

BRIDGET

You know why I got power of attorney? 'Cause you're an asshole, that's why. You're an asshole.

NICK

You got power of attorney 'cause you're a chicken shit. He knew you'd never use it. You been letting him tell you what to do your entire life.

BRIDGET

I have not.

NICK

Yeah? Why'd you marry Eddie?

She's caught and it makes her furious.

BRIDGET

Because I didn't know who I was, that's why, 'cause Mom had her big career and I was the housekeeper.

NICK

Oh my *god*.

NICK (CONT'D)

Who got dinner on the table? Who ironed your Fenwick shirts?

NICK (CONT'D)

Who put a gun to your head?

BRIDGET

Somebody had to do it, I was the girl.

NICK

Oh gimme a break, it was woman's lib, Mom was running around in a power suit.

BRIDGET

And Dad's home raising me like it's 1945 on the farm, telling me to lose ten pounds and learn how to cook.

NICK

Who told you to *listen*?

(then)

You're not some victim, some martyr, nobody made you *obey*. Grow up, don't be so *terrified*, don't be such a liar.

BRIDGET

I'm not a liar.

NICK

You've been lying so long you can't even tell the difference between the truth and what you want everybody to *think* is the truth.

An ELDERLY NEIGHBOR LADY comes into the Vestibule from the outside and eyes them suspiciously as she puts in her key.

BRIDGET

Our father lives here.

NICK

She doesn't know the code.

NEIGHBOR LADY

(shaming her)

Oughtta visit him once in a while.

NICK
 (to the lady)
 Hey. What are you, the guiltmonger?

BRIDGET
 Nicky.

The lady's eyes narrow at Nick as they step into the LOBBY.

NEIGHBOR LADY
 I know you. You're the one who
 smokes so close to my rosebushes.

NICK
 Oh, go sit on your rosebushes.

The lady walks down the hall in a huff.

BRIDGET
Nicky.
 (calling to the lady)
 I'm so sorry.

NICK
 For what? What are you sorry for?

Bridget glares at him and starts down the hall. Then she spins back on him.

BRIDGET
 You know, just because I don't
bulldoze people, I'm not some
bully, talk about chicken shits,
 bullies are the biggest chicken
 shits around, going you, you, you,
 lemme tell ya what's wrong with you
 so you don't see everything wrong
 with me! At least I'm not blaming
 Mom and Dad for all my bullshit.

NICK
What? You just blamed them for your
 entire shitty 20 year marriage!

BRIDGET
 At least I had the guts to *try*, to
try to love somebody, let somebody
 love me. At least I have *something*.

NICK
 Oh I got plenty, honey, believe me.

BRIDGET
 Yeah. You got a bar.

Bert storms out the door, furious.

BERT
Get. In. The house.

Nick marches past Bridget and steps up to Bert into the CONDO FOYER. Bridget watches from out in the hall.

NICK
Why is Bitty power of attorney?

BERT
'Cause you're a hothead like your mother.

NICK
'Cause you're *selfish*. You know why they improve in the memory places? Cause they don't have people like you in their face going *don't forget me Ruth, don't forget me, don't forget, you're losing your mind.*

(then)
The one blessing of this disease is they don't remember that they don't remember. Until you go and *tell them.*

Bert's jaw sets. His eyes narrow at Nick.

BERT
You think you're a doctor? What the hell do you know, you're a *bartender* for chrissake, almost graduated from college, almost.

NICK
I am a *bar owner*, Dad.

BERT
Do you tend the bar?

NICK
I *own* the bar! I own it!

BERT
Do you *tend it* or not?

NICK
Yes! Yes! I *tend it*! I *tend it*! I *tend the bar that I own.*

I know it's a real bumner, I hear you loud and clear Pop, it's a real shit fucking deal you gotta admit that to your poker buddies.

BERT
Watch your language.

Nick glares, waiting for Bert to say more. He doesn't.

NICK
She hit on me the other night. She hit on me. I had to tell her she was hitting on her own son, you shoulda seen the look on her face.

Nick turns to Bridget.

NICK (CONT'D)
I'm done. They're all yours, Bit, godspeed.

She watches him head down the hall, pulling out his smokes. Then she looks into the Condo. Bert has disappeared into it.

She looks back down the hallway, empty except Neighbor Lady, outside her door, hands on hips, giving her a dirty look.

BRIDGET
What are you lookin' at?

Bridget goes in the condo.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - HALLWAY/GUEST ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bridget heads down the hallway, eyes peeled for Emma.

She heads into the GUEST ROOM. It's empty. The bathroom door is open; it's empty too.

BRIDGET
Emma?

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO/NICK'S RANGE ROVER (PARKED) - DUSK

Nick storms up from the sidewalk by the condo, cigarette in hand, and climbs into his Range Rover. He puts his head back for a moment. Then he turns the ignition.

Emma jumps into the front seat and closes the door behind her.

NICK
What're you doin'?

EMMA
(re: his cigarettes)
Gimme one.

NICK
No.

EMMA
Mom smoked mine.

NICK
Good. You shouldn't smoke.

EMMA
Either should you.

He caves and tosses her his Pall Malls. She takes one and lights it. They smoke in silence a moment.

He watches her puff awkwardly on the cigarette.

NICK
Well if you're gonna do it at least
look cool for chrissake. Here.

He adjusts the cigarette in her fingers. She tries it.

NICK (CONT'D)
There you go, now you don't look
like an asshole.

They smoke.

EMMA
I cannot deal with her.

NICK
Nothing happened with that dude.
Your mom's a pain in the ass but
she's one loyal duck.

EMMA
She's a hypocrite.
(then)
I hate watching her hate herself.
But it's like if I don't see her
nobody else does.
(then)
It's like I'm stuck there. On their
glacier. The third wheel in their
silent treatment.

Bridget comes into view on the sidewalk, looking for Emma. She doesn't see them.

EMMA (CONT'D)
Can I go with you?

NICK
I don't have anywhere to put you.
I'm living in the basement of my
bar.

Emma looks at him.

EMMA
Hate yourself too, huh?

NICK
Go on, get outta here, you're
spoiling my big exit.

Emma gets out of the car.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - SIDEWALK - A MOMENT LATER

Emma walks up to Bridget, still holding the cigarette. They stop a few feet away from each other.

Neither of them say a word.

And then Emma holds out her cigarette, sly, pointed, offering it to Bridget. She doesn't take it.

Emma tosses it and walks past her toward the condo.

Bridget's eyes meet Nick's, who has been watching from the car. He flips her the bird and pulls off.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget and Emma sleep in bed. The door is open.

Ruth, in her white nightie, passes by the doorway several times as she paces the dark hall, wringing her hands.

Finally she peers into the guest room and goes to the bed. Bridget starts awake. Ruth's face is inches away.

RUTH
There's a man in my bed.

BRIDGET
It's Dad.

RUTH
I sleep with our Dad?

Bridget opens her mouth to correct Ruth. Then she remembers what Nick said.

BRIDGET
Yeah.

Ruth's face relaxes. She pads softly out of the room.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ruth crawls into bed, rousing Bert.

BERT
Stay in bed, honey.

RUTH
You're a turkey.

BERT
You're the turkey.

He pulls her close. Bridget watches from the doorway.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - GUEST ROOM - DAY

Bridget and Emma sleep. On the night stand, her cell phone vibrates.

Bridget reaches over and grabs it. It's Eddie. She sends it to voicemail.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - BATHROOM - DAY

Bridget brushes her teeth. Her phone is on the counter, playing Eddie's voicemail on speaker.

EDDIE'S VOICEMAIL
Hi, um, your father just called.

Bridget stops brushing and stares at the phone.

EDDIE'S VOICEMAIL (CONT'D)
He said you're coming home tonight?
Gimme a call.

Bridget stares at the phone. Then she chucks the toothbrush at the mirror and marches DOWN THE HALL.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - FOYER / LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bridget peers in, looking for Bert. Ruth is peering at pictures on the tree. She sees Bridget.

RUTH
Is that my baby?

Bridget ignores her and heads around the foyer corner into the KITCHEN DOORWAY.

Bert is pouring a cup of coffee. Bags of groceries sit on the counter. Bridget stands in the doorway and seethes at him.

He holds the coffee out to her.

BRIDGET
I don't want it.

BERT
It's coffee.

BRIDGET
I don't want it.

BERT
A course you want it. Here.

She explodes.

BRIDGET
I am a grown-up! If I don't want
the coffee I *don't want the coffee!*

He plops the coffee on the counter and goes to his groceries.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
What did you tell him?

Ruth wanders in.

RUTH
Who?

BERT
Nobody. Go turn on the Road Runner.

Ruth wanders out.

BERT (CONT'D)
I told him I bought you plane
tickets and to pick you up at the
airport, that's what I told him.

He unpacks his groceries angrily, shaking his head.

BERT (CONT'D)
 Floozin' around with some
 construction bozo, I don't even
 know who you are.

BRIDGET
 He put *locks* on, Dad, and you're
 welcome by the way.

Bert slams down a can of peas.

BERT
 What am I, some horse's ass?

He returns to his groceries.

BERT (CONT'D)
 Eddie is as much a son to me as
 your brother is.

BRIDGET
 I think you like Eddie more than
 you like me. And my brother, for
 that matter.

BERT
 Oh for chrissake, Bitty, what kinda
 thing is that to say?
 (then)
 Go get packed, we're leavin' in an
 hour.

He exits the kitchen. She follows him down the HALL -- past
 the DEN, where Ruth watches the Road Runner -- and into the

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

She shuts the door behind her.

BRIDGET
 All my life you've been telling me,
 there's no bells and whistles,
 there's no bells and whistles.

BERT
 There isn't.

BRIDGET
 How can you say that? You have more
 bells and whistles than *anybody*.

She's losing her mind and you still can't live without her. Didn't you want that for me?

BERT

Of course I wanted that for you, that's *all* I want for you, why do you think I'm sending you home?

(then)

Love is commitment, Bit, you work at it.

BRIDGET

I been working at it for 20 years.

BERT

Well you work at it 20 more if you want what we got. Go home and think about why you married him in the first place.

BRIDGET

I married him because you told me I couldn't do better.

BERT

You couldn't! Eddie's a home run! Your wedding was the best day of my life, walking you down the aisle to a man who might deserve you.

(then)

You know what your problem is? California, that's what, everybody out there flowin' in the wind, re-inventing, what the heck is that? You are who you are. I'm a husband, a father, a Catholic, I know it 'cause I am it and I never had to think about it. You go home to your husband or you go stay with your brother. There's no reason to be unhappy in a perfectly good marriage.

The only thing she can think of to make him understand is:

BRIDGET

Why were you unhappy in your perfectly good Camry?

He looks at her, appalled at the comparison.

BERT

I don't wanna look at you. Go sit with your mother.

BRIDGET

I never said I was *leaving*, I'm saying I don't have what you have.

BERT

You do too! You think we didn't have rough patches? You oughtta go talk to a priest.

BRIDGET

I'm not a Catholic anymore.

BERT

Well there's your problem right there.

Bridget explodes.

BRIDGET

How do you know?

He looks at her, startled.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

How did you *always* know what my problem was? Do I do that to you? Did I march in here saying Mom's going in a home, if you don't like it, *go talk to a priest?*

(then)

I *listened* to you, Dad. I asked you what you *wanted* and I fought like hell to get it for you because you *matter* to me, what you want *matters* to me, why don't I *matter* to you?

(losing it)

Why did I *never* matter? I'm *capable*, I coulda done something, I-
- Mom was a *feminist* for chrissake, didn't it occur to anybody to ask me what I *wanted*?

Bert is astonished.

BERT

We did, honey. We did ask you. You said you couldn't wait to be a mother.

It lifts something massive from Bridget's shoulders. There is a still moment. The Road Runner wafts from down the hall.

And then - there's a knock/barge at the door. It's Emma.

EMMA

Is Grama in here?

Bridget and Bert's eyes go wide. They race out into the HALLWAY and look into the doorway of the DEN.

It's empty.

They race to the FOYER. The front door is wide open.

Bert sprints through it. Bridget throws her feet into a pair of Bert's shoes and races after him. Emma sprints the other way, down the building hallway.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - BUILDING ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Bert bolts out the doors and scans the landscape for Ruth. She's nowhere. He sprints off toward the elevated tracks.

Bridget flies out the building doors and down the walkway, hand over her eyes, scanning into the sun.

BRIDGET

Mom!

There is no sign of Ruth. Bridget sprints across the lawn.

A moment later, Emma races down the walkway behind her.

EMMA

Mom!

Bridget whips around to Emma.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I got her! She's at Marion's!

Bridget whips around to Bert. He is kneeling on the ground, head down.

BRIDGET

Dad!

Bridget races to him, clumsy in his too-big shoes.

He doesn't move. She arrives at him and kneels, terrified. He is sweating, head down, shoulders shaking.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
Is it your heart?

Then she realizes: he is crying.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - DINING ROOM - DAY

The clock ticks. Bridget and Bert sit at the table. His head is down, but he's recovered.

BRIDGET
I'll stay. I'll stay and help.

He is still for a long moment. Then he rises and leaves the room.

Moments later, he returns, carrying the Reminiscence Folder. He sits, opens it, and pulls out a pen.

EXT. O'HARE AIRPORT - NIGHT

The T-Bird idles on the curb. Bert and Emma pull suitcases out of the trunk. Emma watches Bridget and Ruth embrace.

When they part, Ruth's eyes are filled with tears.

BRIDGET
It's okay, Mom. I'll be back in a couple weeks.

RUTH
Oh, I won't be here.

She's so earnest that Bridget can't help smiling.

BRIDGET
Yeah? Where you going?

As though it were the most obvious thing in the world:

RUTH
I expect my mother'll want me home by then.

Bridget and Emma stare, haunted. Bert goes to get in the car.

BERT
Let's go, Ruth, it's cold.

Bert gets in. Emma helps Ruth into the front seat.

BERT (CONT'D)
Love you, Bit.

BRIDGET
Love you, Dad.

They watch the car pull off, then head into O'Hare.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget, Eddie and Emma sit at the dining table, Emma in between her parents, eating the dinner Bridget has made.

They eat in silence for a long moment. And then:

EDDIE
So? How was it?

BRIDGET
Fine.

Eddie nods and looks at Emma.

EMMA
Fine.

And it occurs to Bridget that Nick might be right, that she's raising two women not to say what's really going on.

EDDIE
Are they all set? Your dad signed everything?

BRIDGET
Mm-hmm. Yes. I have to go back in a couple week, help them get moved.

EDDIE
Sure. It's good. It was time.
(then)
Nick's gotta be pretty happy. Being right for once in his life.

They eat. Eddie looks at Emma.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
(to Emma)
Did you register for classes?

Bridget looks down, guilty.

EMMA
Mm-hmm.

EDDIE
Oh. Well. Good.

INT. NICK'S BAR - DAY

Sun bounces off the copper bar. TWO QUIET REGULARS watch the muted Bears game on the flat screen. Nick is behind the bar with a clipboard, doing inventory. The front door opens.

Bert enters, in his coat and hat, newspaper under his arm. He checks it all out as he takes a seat at the bar.

Nick goes over. Puts a cocktail napkin down and looks at Bert expectantly. He's not saying the first word.

BERT
You do a Manhattan?

Nick turns and mixes it expertly. This very moment is the reason he's perfected his manhattan.

Bert reads his paper. Nick strains the manhattan into a martini glass in front of him, then rinses the shaker.

He pretends not to watch Bert take his first sip.

BERT (CONT'D)
Damn good manhattan, Nicholas.

Head down, cleaning, Nick smiles.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bridget lies awake. Eddie sleeps soundly beside her.

Quietly, she gets out of bed.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - EMMA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Emma sleeps in her bed. Bridget tiptoes into the room and crawls into bed beside her. Emma moans.

EMMA
What are you doing?

BRIDGET
Just - let me.

Emma lets her crawl in beside her. Bridget touches her hair tenderly.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
I'm sorry. I just look at you...
and all I see is my baby.

EMMA
I know.

BRIDGET
You don't have to go back if you
don't want.

EMMA
I can't stay here, Mom.

Emma closes her eyes. Bridget watches her sleep.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The clock ticks. Ruth sits cross-legged on the floor, looking
at the pictures on the tree. Bert hands her a scotch.

RUTH
Is it Christmas?

BERT
You got drunk on Christmas.

RUTH
(pious)
I did not.

BERT
Get the presents.

She picks up the two presents as he sits in his recliner.

BERT (CONT'D)
Here. I'll go first.

He takes the gift he bought himself. She looks on anxiously.

RUTH
Who got you that?

BERT
You did, you turkey.

She wrings her hands, hoping she got him something good.

BERT (CONT'D)
Macadamias!

RUTH
Oh! You love those!

BERT
Thank you honey.

She smiles at him as he leans down and kisses her.

BERT (CONT'D)
Your turn. Open up.

She looks down at the box, not sure what to do. Bert reaches down and gently pulls open a flap.

BERT (CONT'D)
Now rip it.

She starts to, unsure.

BERT (CONT'D)
Just rip it, honey.

She does. Inside is a long skinny jewelry box.

BERT (CONT'D)
Open it up.

She does, carefully, and gasps. It's an antique locket on a silver chain.

RUTH
Oh!

BERT
C'mere, now, lemme show you.

She shuffles to Bert spryly on her knees. He opens the locket and shows her the picture inside.

BERT (CONT'D)
You know who that is?

She stares at it hard for a moment. Then she remembers.

RUTH
That's you 'n me.

BERT
That's right. You 'n me.

He struggles not to get emotional.

BERT (CONT'D)
 (brightly)
 So when you forget, you can just
 look at it. All right?

Tears well in her eyes. She knows exactly what he means. She
 throws her arms around him and holds him tight.

RUTH
 I'm so sorry, Bertie.

He blinks back tears and holds her just as tightly.

BERT
 It's all right, honey. I'm all
 right.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - WHEATON, ILLINOIS - DAY

Nick, freshly shaven, approaches the front door of a small
 house, holding a bouquet of flowers and a wrapped gift. He
 rings the bell and messes with his hair nervously.

The door opens slowly. A tow-headed four year old is behind
 it. This is NATE. He beams up at Nick, delighted.

NATE
 Hey Nicky.

NICK
 Hey Natey.

The door opens wider, revealing RACHEL, 40s. She stares at
 Nick. And then she smiles just a little.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's New Year's Eve. Ruth's soprano hums Auld Lang Syne.

In the light of the tree, Bert and Ruth slow dance, her cheek
 on his chest.

INT. MARY AND DAVID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mary and David are curled up on the couch. The Ball Drop
 plays on the TV. She is fast asleep on his chest.

He gently kisses her forehead as the countdown begins.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget, Emma and Eddie sit on the couch, Emma between her parents. The ladies sip champagne. Eddie dozes with the remote in his hand. As the countdown hits midnight, Emma nudges Eddie awake.

EDDIE
Happy New Year.

BRIDGET
Happy New Year.

Over Emma, they share a perfunctory kiss.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bridget reclines in bed with cookbooks, copying recipes into a notebook. Eddie comes in and begins to get ready for bed.

EDDIE
Who is Gerry Hoffstader?

Bridget looks up and catches her breath, caught.

BRIDGET
I don't know.

EDDIE
You don't know?

BRIDGET
I don't know.

Eddie turns to her.

EDDIE
You didn't write him a check for
1500 bucks?

BRIDGET
Oh! Yes. Yes. He's a construction
guy. He did some work on my
parents' locks.

Eddie stares at her.

EDDIE
What'd, he replace every lock in
the building?

He gets up and heads into his closet. Bridget breathes. He returns with a nicely wrapped box and hands it to her.

EDDIE (CONT'D)
Merry Christmas.

She unwraps it. It's a fancy cheese grater, packaged in it's rectangular box.

BRIDGET
Oh!
(then)
Um. I think you got me this already.

EDDIE
Did I? Open it, they said it was new.

BRIDGET
Oh. Maybe it has a new feature or --

She opens the lid of the box. Inside, nestled in tissue paper, is a sizable diamond ring in an open jewelry box.

EDDIE
Figured if I had the diamond upgraded you might stop leaving it with the pennies in the car.

She's speechless, eyes glued to the diamond. Then, incredibly moved:

BRIDGET
Thank you.

EXT. STREET - DAWN

Bridget jogs along her tree-lined path. She picks up her pace, speeding, sprinting --

And then, all of a sudden, she is crying.

She stops, sits on a curb, puts her head down and lets it all go.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAWN

Eddie wakes. It isn't until he sits up that he realizes Bridget is not in bed beside him.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - DINING AREA - DAWN

Eddie stops at the foot of the stairs. Bridget is sitting quietly at the table.

EDDIE

Are you all right?

BRIDGET

You are such a good man. That was one of the most romantic gestures I can imagine.

(then)

The problem is... what is so, so awful is... how much worse I feel now than before you gave it to me.

Eddie shakes his head, endlessly frustrated.

EDDIE

I have no clue what to do for you. You are never happy, never.

BRIDGET

Do you want to leave?

EDDIE

No. I made a promise. I'm a loyal person.

BRIDGET

So am I. That's the thing. There are such good reasons to keep the promise, to get up day after day, keep going the way we've been going, and that's why I have this... *weight* on my chest, this... terror that next week or next year or five years from now, there's gonna come a night where I lay in that bed next to you, wide awake long enough that I get up, walk out the door and disappear like a ghost.

(then)

How do I live with that?

(then)

Somewhere, there is a woman who would make you feel like such a good man without you having to do a *thing*.

(then)

How do I live with that? How do you? Don't you want to find her?

EDDIE
I thought I did.

BRIDGET
When?
(then)
You married me for the same reason
I married you. I checked the boxes.

EDDIE
I'm okay with that.

BRIDGET
I know.

Bridget takes a deep breath.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)
And I'm not.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Eddie, Bridget, Mary and Emma sit at the kitchen table in silence. Emma looks down, picking at a place mat. Mary is glaring from one parent to the other. She scoffs angrily.

MARY
You guys really have timing.

Neither parent says anything.

Mary gets up and leaves the table. A second later, the front door slams shut. Bridget looks at Eddie. He shrugs, angry.

EDDIE
Don't look at me.

EXT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bridget hustles out the front door as Mary marches toward her Golf in the driveway.

BRIDGET
Mary. Mare!

Mary stops and glares at her.

MARY
What? What? You want me to
congratulate you? Way to go, Mom.

Way to *finally* deal with the elephant in the room, your timing is *impeccable*. I'm wearing your fucking wedding dress.

BRIDGET

I'm sorry.

Mary starts toward her car, enraged. Bridget follows.

MARY

Yeah, well, put that in the divorce announcement. We'll stick it in with the wedding invitations. Save a stamp.

Mary starts to lose it. It's not about her wedding or their divorce. She turns back to Bridget.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're sorry? *I'm* sorry. I'm sorry you have *regrets* or whatever, I wish it were different for you, I really do.

Mary opens the door to the Golf, gets in, and starts the ignition. Bridget opens the passenger door and gets in.

IN THE GOLF --

MARY (CONT'D)

What are you *doing*?

BRIDGET

Listen to me.

(then)

You have every right to be pissed at me. And you can be as pissed as you are for as long as you need to be. But do not ever question that you and your sister are the best things that will ever happen to me. I do not have a single regret. Not a *single one*. Do you understand?

MARY

Can you please just get out?

Bridget takes that in, then opens the door to the car.

BRIDGET

I love you. Drive safely.

Bridget gets out of the car and watches Mary speed off.

INT. BRIDGET AND EDDIE'S HOUSE - EMMA'S ROOM - DAY

Bridget knocks and enters. Emma is on her bed, with her computer, in headphones. A beat, then:

BRIDGET
Are you all right?

EMMA
I'm fine.

BRIDGET
Talk to me.

EMMA
Are you gonna tell me I'm wrong?

BRIDGET
No.

Emma sighs and pulls her headphones off.

EMMA
Do you think this is some big shock
or something?
(then)
You've been pleasing other people
for 40 years. The next 40 years
should belong to you.

Bridget stands there, processing the wisdom of her daughter.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I wanna move to Chicago. Nicky
needs a barback. And I need a life.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

That clock ticks.

Ruth and Bert sleep. His eyes open. He blinks a few times,
then looks over at Ruth. She is still.

He watches her for a long moment.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bert sits in a kitchen chair in his bathrobe. With shaking
hands, he dials 911 on the land line.

EXT. OAK PARK CONDO - FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Bert walks into the vestibule, still in his bathrobe, holding the phone.

He slides down the glass and sits on the ground against it and listens as sirens grow in the distance.

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nick sleeps with Rachel beside him, her arm around his waist.

His cell phone rings on the side table. Rachel moans. He grabs for the phone and sits up.

NICK

Hello.

As he listens, he drops his head into his hands.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Bridget is asleep. Her cell phone rings on the night table. She reaches for it.

BRIDGET

Hello?

She lays for a long time, listening, expressionless, until:

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

Okay.

She hangs up. She slowly rises and sits at the edge of the bed, absolutely still for a very long moment.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

It's a large viewing room, and it's full. The whole family stands in front of a casket, receiving a long line of guests.

At the end of the line is Ruth.

She's beautiful, in a black suit, greeting guests, truly remembering everybody or doing a darn good job of faking it.

Nate scampers around with a LITTLE GIRL, both in Sunday best.

Marion is nearby, holding court to a cleaned up Gerry Hoffstader. Nick walks up and gives Gerry a stare-down.

In a corner, a SCREEN plays OLD SUPER 8 FAMILY FOOTAGE.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

It's later. Quieter. Bridget and Nick stand at the casket, greeting the stragglers. Eddie, Mary and David sit nearby.

In a corner, Emma sits with Ruth, who stares down at a folded paper program. On the cover is a recent picture of Bert.

Ruth looks up from the program and looks around, anxious.

RUTH
This looks like a wake. Is this a
wake?

EMMA
Yes.

RUTH
See, that's what I thought it was.

She looks down at the program again. Bridget walks over.

BRIDGET
(quietly to Emma)
How we doing?

Emma shakes her head. Bridget sits on the other side of Ruth.

EMMA
(quietly to Bridget)
Should we take her home?

BRIDGET
You ready to go, Mom?

Ruth is concentrating on the picture of Bert on the program.

RUTH
I just - I can't figure out for the
life of me whose wake this is.

She opens the program and puts her finger on the name inside. Traces along as she reads the words out loud.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Norbert. Ivan. Keller.

She inhales sharply. She understands.

RUTH (CONT'D)
Oh.

She looks out distantly at the room.

RUTH (CONT'D)
How could I have forgotten that?

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bridget comes out of the funeral home carrying a flower arrangement. Nick sits on a curb, smoking a cigarette.

She joins him. They sit quietly. And then Nick loses it.

She puts her arms around him and holds him as he cries.

INT. ST. GILES'S CATHOLIC CHURCH - DAY

Bert's casket is closed at the altar, American Flag draped over the top. Sunlight streams in the stained glass.

Bridget stands at the podium.

BRIDGET
My dad grew up on a farm in a small town called Amboy. He met Ruth O'Shea at an ice cream social and had a thing for her ever since - even though she wouldn't give him the time of day. After high school, Dad went off to Korea. When he came home on leave, his mother told him poor Ruthie O'Shea had gotten polio and hadn't been out of bed in six months. Dad marched over there, picked her up out of bed and carried her, in his arms, to the movies.
(then)
That was that. He never let her go.

EXT. AMBOY CEMETERY - DAY

The mourners are huddled. It's a bitter cold day in Amboy.

An ANCIENT VETERAN, light blue jacket over his dress blues, plays Taps on a trumpet. An AIR FORCE OFFICIAL hands Ruth Bert's American Flag.

The final note of Taps hangs over the endlessly flat snow. TWO OFFICERS fire their weapons once, and then again.

There is silence. And then the creaking of the casket being lowered into the ground.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

In the moonlight, Bridget tucks herself quietly into Bert's side of the bed. Bert's smell is everywhere.

She turns to the side. Ruth's eyes are open, looking at her.

RUTH

It was the perfect time.

(then)

Any later, I'd have forgotten him.
Any earlier, I'd a missed him too
much. Right now is perfect. I'll
hardly ever know the difference.

It takes Bridget's breath away. She looks at Ruth, and Ruth at her, until Ruth's eyes close.

INT. CONDO BUILDING - STORAGE CLOSET - DAY/NIGHT

An overhead bulb clicks on. Bridget stands in a small storage closet packed floor to ceiling with her parents' life.

She takes a deep breath and starts scouring boxes. She opens one labelled VA PAPERWORK. It's full of Christmas ornaments.

She moves it aside and keeps searching. She finds what she's looking for: a box labelled RUTH. She opens it, pulls out old clothes and, at the bottom, a box with a see-through cover.

Inside that box is Ruth's wedding gown.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bridget buttons the back of the dress on Mary. It's enormous.

BRIDGET

Geez. I guess she was fat then.

MARY AND EMMA

Mom.

EMMA

She was not fat.

MARY

Lemme see it.

Mary walks to the full-length mirror. The dress is huge on her, and kind of hideous, but it's perfect.

BRIDGET

I will never understand how he could look me in the eye and tell me there's no bells and whistles when they had what they had.

MARY

Well how would he know? She was the only person he ever tried to love. He didn't know he hit the jackpot. He thought it'd be that good with anybody.

Bridget stands there, mind totally blown.

INT. OAK PARK CONDO - DINING ROOM - DAY

Nick and Bridget stare each other down over reading glasses. The table is strewn with a sea of documents and coffee cups.

BRIDGET

You hate the car.

NICK

I don't hate the car.
(then; relenting)
How would you even get it to California?

BRIDGET

I'm gonna drive it.
(then)
With Mom.

Nick blinks at her.

BRIDGET (CONT'D)

It's my turn. And if you wanna fight about it we can fight about it but at the end of the day I got power of attorney, so.

They stare each other down. Until:

NICK

Did somebody find the big girl pants?

BRIDGET

Shut up.

NICK
Hope you got Triple A.

INT. BERT'S THUNDERBIRD - DAY

The top is down. The car heads into the sun along California wine country, pulling a small U-Haul behind.

Bridget drives. Ruth is in the front seat, a scarf on her head. Mary is in back.

EXT. BRIDGET'S NEW HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Ruth waits in the doorway of Bridget's modest house. Bridget joins her with two cups of coffee.

RUTH
See I was a fountain girl, in...

BRIDGET
Amboy.

Bridget hands Ruth her coffee. They walk off the front stoop and down the garden path.

RUTH
In Amboy, my father would come home
on the trains, he was a - a...

BRIDGET
An engineer.

RUTH
An engineer, and bring me chocolate
malts 'cause I had...

BRIDGET
Polio.

RUTH
Polio, and consequently...

BRIDGET
You got fat.

RUTH
I got fat, mm-hmm.

They sit side by side in the garden, sipping their coffees.

RUTH (CONT'D)

Who are we missing? Are we missing somebody?

Bridget takes Ruth's locket, opens it and puts it in her hands. Ruth looks at the picture.

RUTH (CONT'D)

My boyfriend.

Ruth snaps the locket closed.

RUTH (CONT'D)

He's home. He's waiting for me.
He's always hanging around, that turkey.

(then)

You got a boyfriend?

BRIDGET

No.

RUTH

Watch out. Once he finds you, he is never gonna let you go.

INT. NURSING HOME - LONG HALLWAY - DAY

Bridget and Ruth walk arm in arm down a long hallway toward a set of double doors. A keypad is on the wall next to them.

Bridget punches in the code. The doors open with a click.

INT. NURSING HOME - MEMORY NEIGHBORHOOD - CONTINUOUS

It is bright and cheery. On one wall, a BUS STOP sign sits above a bench. A LADY sits primly on it, purse in her lap.

A FEMALE AIDE walks through a doorway and smiles at Ruth.

RUTH

Is that my baby?

She throws her arms around the aide. The aide hugs her back, waving at Bridget over Ruth's shoulder.

Bridget watches as Ruth takes the aide's arm and guides her down the hall. At the end, THREE LADIES come out and greet her. They chatter like schoolgirls, all of them battier than hell, and disappear in a gaggle down the hall. Ruth doesn't once look back at Bridget.

It never gets easier to be forgotten.

EXT. NURSING HOME - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Bridget walks to the Thunderbird, parked in the lot with the top down. She gets in and starts the engine.

She looks over her shoulder and backs out of the parking space, then puts the car in drive, faces forward, and gasps.

An enormous WILD TURKEY stands directly in front of the car.

It is staring right at her.

She stares back at it. They square off for a long moment.

And then the turkey steps out of her way. Bridget, in the T-Bird, smiles, revs the engine and disappears down the road.

THE END.