

Duplex

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EXT. BUILDING – PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN – AFTERNOON

A magnificent, if weathered, Victorian brownstone row house.

Music: "Sunny Side of the Street," by Rickie Lee Jones

A RUN DOWN SMALL BACKYARD

A young couple and a man stand on a rear porch. The man unlocks the door. He is KENNETH, 40ish, a big guy in a bigger sweater. He enters the building, followed by NANCY and ALEX.

INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY - DAY

We enter a pantry, which leads to the kitchen.

KENNETH  
Butler's pantry, the old  
dumbwaiter...

KITCHEN

Kenneth is low-key, letting the place sell itself. They are obviously first-time buyers, young people pretending to be adults.

KENNETH  
(gesturing around vaguely)  
Built-ins, built-ins, built-ins...

NANCY  
Kitchen's a bit teensy.

KENNETH  
(indicating framed wall)  
Yes. This dividing wall was put in  
by a recent owner...

Kenneth maneuvers them to look around the added wall.

KENNETH  
Knock it out and you have an eat-in  
kitchen. Cozy fireplace there.

A TINY SQUEAL escapes from Nancy.

KENNETH (CONT'D)  
Original glass tiles in all the  
fireplaces.

NANCY  
Fireplace-es?

KENNETH

Another in the living room, one in  
the bedroom.

NANCY

(cozying up to Alex)  
Fireplace in the bedroom.

She waggles her eyebrows saucily at Alex. He waggles back.

INT. APARTMENT – PARLOR

Matthew leads Nancy and Alex in from the hallway. One wall is filled with a ornate hutch; on another is an oak fireplace with an antique mirror above the mantle. There is carved wood everywhere. It's real estate porn.

KENNETH

The parlor...

ALEX

(referring to listing  
sheet in his hand)  
Built in 1881? So... that would  
make this Victorian?

NANCY/KENNETH

Queen Anne.

Nancy twirls around the parlor slowly.

NANCY

This entire house is an antique!

Alex subtly gives Nancy a "remember what we discussed" look. She assumes her "buyer's face."

NANCY

Of course, we're in no hurry.

KENNETH

Perhaps this isn't for you then.  
I'm sure it'll be sold by Monday.

Nancy digs her nails deeply into Alex's arm.

KENNETH

... original inlaid parquet floor.

The floor is scuffed, gouged, pocked and puttied.

KENNETH

A lot of story there.

NANCY

Can you imagine all the furniture  
that's lived here over the years?

Kenneth gestures to an alcove of bookshelves.

KENNETH

This is the library...

ALEX

(can't stop himself)

Wow.

Nancy playfully shoots him an exaggerated "buyer's face." He  
laughs, busted.

NANCY

Alex is a writer.

KENNETH

(doesn't give a shit)

Really? What do you write?

ALEX

(modestly)

I wrote a book, you probably never  
heard of it... "Unbodied Souls."

NANCY

It was nominated for all sorts of  
first novel awards.

KENNETH

(not apologetic)

I don't read books.

NANCY

Alex is almost done with his second  
novel. Which would look great  
(spokesmodel flourish)  
in these magnificent, built-in  
Nineteenth Century bookcases!

Alex obviously likes that idea. But...

ALEX

Too bad it's out of our price  
range.

NANCY

(gesturing)

It is at the top of our price  
range.

ALEX  
(gesturing above her)  
Over the top.

NANCY  
(intertwining her fingers  
with his)  
At the tippy top.

KENNETH  
Would you like to see the bedroom?

NANCY  
Yes please.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM DOOR

Kenneth pushes open a large wooden accordion divider. He's saved the best for last...

They walk into the light. Nancy actually GASPS. The bedroom is huge; there is a curved front window area that looks out to the leafy street.

As they walk into the center of the room, Alex steps on a floorboard that CREAKS LOUDLY. He stops to look down at it.

Nancy semi-pirouettes over to the fireplace; Kenneth follows.

KENNETH  
Fireplace is tiger-eye maple—

He is interrupted by SEVERAL CREAKS. He looks over to see Alex STEPPING REPEATEDLY on the creaky floorboard.

ALEX  
(re: floorboard)  
That could get annoying.

KENNETH  
Yes.  
(back to fireplace)  
If you look closely you'll see it's actually hundreds of hand-carved pieces fitted perfectly together.

NANCY  
(caressing fireplace)  
Who could have done this?

KENNETH  
Craftsmen.

NANCY  
I miss craftsman.

KENNETH  
And over here you've got a little  
alcove, if that's the word, a round  
outcropping.

NANCY  
A nook!  
(excitedly, to Alex)  
A writer's nook.

Alex looks at the nook, and out the windows at the park. He  
is buying into the fantasy.

ALEX  
A writer's nook.

NANCY  
(innocently caught up)  
Or it could be a nursery!  
(notices something)  
Ew.

The opposite wall contains a large interior window that has  
been painted over for some reason. Nancy approaches it,  
frowning, but then looks more closely. She scratches at the  
paint, which flakes off in several layers.

NANCY  
Is there stained glass under here?

KENNETH  
(unctuous smile)  
Could be.

INT. APARTMENT – FOYER/PARLOR

The three emerge from the bedroom.

KENNETH  
You've got my card if you want to  
make an offer...

Alex's attention is caught by a large spiral planter.

NANCY (O.C.)  
Can you call us if anybody else  
makes one?

KENNETH (O.C.)  
I'm not supposed to, but...

Over the proceeding, we follow Alex's gaze up the planter. The plants still have price tags. The wrought-iron planter spirals to the top, where a rather obvious circular piece of wood has been painted white to match the ceiling.

ALEX

Excuse me, is this a stairway?

Now that he mentions it, it very clearly is a spiral staircase. Kenneth doesn't miss a beat.

KENNETH

Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you realized. This is a duplex.

ALEX

There's another floor?

KENNETH

It's on the listing sheet. In your hand.

Alex looks at the listing sheet. Fucking Kenneth is right.

NANCY

(a little worried)

Why's it sealed off? Were there a slew of murders up there? You have to tell us if there were.

KENNETH

Oh, nothing like that. It's just, there's a sweet old lady who lives up there...

ALEX

A tenant.

KENNETH

Yes, and it is rent-controlled, so... but she's so sweet and so,  
(annoying chuckle)  
she's gotta be a hundred years old.

ALEX

(good-natured sigh)

Well, that's unfortunate, because--

NANCY

Can we meet her?

Kenneth CHUCKLES, in a chortling sort of way.

INT. BROWNSTONE — LOBBY

As they climb the stairs, Nancy caresses the banisters.

ALEX  
Rent-controlled means we can't kick  
her out, right?

NANCY  
Alex!

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING — CONTINUOUS

Kenneth stops at a door in mid-landing.

KENNETH  
(that chuckle again)  
A legitimate question. No, you  
can't evict her. She has to decide  
to leave, or...  
(as if changing subject)  
Poor dear hasn't been feeling well.

He KNOCKS, loudly.

KENNETH (CONT.)  
She's hard of hearing.

The three stand there for a long beat.

KENNETH (CONT.)  
It may take a little while for her  
to get to the door.

They all smile at each other. After another longish beat, we  
hear a lock being LABORIOUSLY OPENED on the other side. There  
is another beat.

KENNETH (CONT.)  
(mouthing, low volume)  
Arthritis.

We hear a second lock being opened with a LONG GRINDING  
CREAK. A moment later, the door opens slowly, JERKING to a  
halt at the end of the security chain.

Nancy's eyes widen in expectation; Alex is curious. Their  
expressions flash to shock, then polite suppression of shock.

INSIDE THE DOOR

Peering behind the chain is MRS. CONNELLY. She's a tiny,  
frail lady, in a housecoat that may be as old as she is.



She stares unblinkingly; this, combined with her total lack of make-up, makes her look more than a little like a corpse. After a moment, her face flashes in recognition; she smiles sweetly and speaks with a slight Irish brogue.

MRS. CONNELLY

Kenneth!

KENNETH

Good afternoon, Mrs. Connelly! How are you feeling today?

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, don't let me burden you with my troubles...

(then)

I don't feel good, Kenneth.

ON KENNETH

Nancy peeks over his shoulder into the apartment.

KENNETH

I'm sorry to hear that. I've brought by a young couple, who might want to buy the apartment.

Kenneth steps back to reveal Nancy on tip-toe; she drops down quickly and interlocks arms with Alex.

NANCY

Good afternoon, Mrs. Connelly! I'm Nancy, and this is my husband, Alex.

ALEX

(tiny wave)

Hello.

NANCY

Do you mind if we look around?

NANCY'S POV

As Mrs. Connelly speaks, Nancy's gaze drifts above her head. She sees only a sliver: another magnificent fireplace, its mantle draped with Catholic memento mori.

MRS. CONNELLY (OVER PRECEDING)

It's in a horrible state. Haven't had the energy to tidy up in ages. I can only imagine what it must smell like.

NANCY

We'll be in and out in a jif.

MRS. CONNELLY

Sorry, dear. I don't feel up to it.

The door CLOSES on Nancy's face. We hear the door slowly being LOCKED again. Then, from behind the door:

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)

(Long sad coughing; tiny squeak of sickly despair.)

Nancy and Alex are thinking the same thing.

KENNETH

Poor dear.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — STOOP

Kenneth gestures across the street.

KENNETH

And you've got the park right there, of course.

Nancy sees kids in the park. She emits a YEARNING SIGH.

KENNETH (CONT.)

Shame you're not ready to buy. But there'll be other places. Not as special but... Maybe we should look a little deeper into Brooklyn...

Alex takes one look and his crestfallen wife and:

ALEX

We'll take it.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE — SIXTH STREET — NIGHT

Alex and Nancy sit in the window of a restaurant. A neon sign above them reads, "NY Delhi."

INT. NY DELHI — CONTINUOUS

A cheesy pairing of traditional Indian kitsch and faux hip. A sitar-lead combo plays an Indian-inflected "Mood Indigo."

Alex is happily eating; Nancy is too happy to eat.

ALEX

Nobody does tandoori like these guys. I don't care if the rumors are true.

NANCY

(gleefully)  
We bought a house!

ALEX

(mouth full)  
If the bank gives us the money.

NANCY

They'll give us the money. Banks love giving people money. Besides, we make enough: we've got my salary, you're getting the rest of your advance when you hand in the book, my Christmas bonus, my annual raise... and let's not forget the royalties from your book...

Alex LAUGHS.

NANCY

There's gonna be scads of royalties. Your book is so good, Alex.

ALEX

It'd be better if it was finished.

NANCY

Well, now you've got a writer's nook.

ALEX

(fondly)  
It is a great nook.

Nancy brings a forkful of food to her mouth, then:

NANCY

What rumors?

EXT. TOMPKIN SQUARE PARK IN MANHATTAN – NIGHT

The couple walk along, cradling Starbucks™ cups. Nancy is practically skipping, and half circling Alex with giddy energy. Alex is thoroughly enjoying her delight; he playfully baits her.

ALEX

You do realize that once we move to Brooklyn, we won't be able to walk to our favorite Indian restaurant and pick up extra-hot-no foam-lattes on the way home...

NANCY

We'll eat take-out in front of one of our several fireplaces!

They pass a scruffy gentleman in a long coat.

SCRUFFY GENTLEMAN

(not so sotto)  
Smoke. Smoke.

ALEX

And what if we want to buy drugs?

NANCY

We won't need drugs! We won't be able to afford them anyway.

ALEX

C'mon, Nance, admit it. You're gonna miss this park.

CRAZY WOMAN

You're killing the frogs!

The woman swings at Alex, deliberately KNOCKING his extra-hot latte all over the front of his pants.

CRAZY WOMAN (O.C.)

A harbinger!

Steam rises from Alex's crotch.

ALEX

Oh-christ! Hot Hot!

Alex pulls anxiously at the pants, trying to air them out. He sighs, relieved, then:

ALEX

Now cold.  
(he starts walking)  
Really cold.

He walks briskly off-screen, leaving Nancy standing there.

INT. EAST VILLAGE APARTMENT — NIGHT

It's one room, with "areas" designated by the placement of mismatched pieces of furniture. The "office" is a clawtooth bathtub in the kitchen; an iBook sits on a wooden board laying across it. There are stacks of books everywhere, and no where to walk. Paintings and wall-hangings sit on the floor because there is nowhere to hang them, etc.

BARELY MUFFLED STREET NOISES invade the space.

The "bedroom" sits behind a Chinese scrim. The couple lies in bed in the "dark" (Streetlight through the barred windows casts a classic prison shadow across the couple.) Alex is on his back, uncomfortable. Nancy peeks under the covers.

NANCY

Does it still hurt?

ALEX

Yes. Yes it does.

NANCY

Should I rub some cream on it or something?

ALEX

No, that's okay.

NANCY

I was really looking forward to sexing you up tonight.

ALEX

(sadly)

Yeah. Me, too.

NANCY

Oh! You just wait until we get into our romantic Queen Anne duplex...  
(suggestively)  
with so many separate rooms...

The enormity of it suddenly hits Alex.

ALEX

We're going to be homeowners.

From the street we hear a HUGE GARBAGE TRUCK. A car drives by, its STEREO violating noise ordinances. Nancy cuddles up next to Alex and closes her eyes.

ALEX

It will be nice to get a decent  
night's sleep for once.

Then right below their window:

YOUNG DRUNKEN MAN (O.C.)

I'm gonna kill the shit out of you!

ANOTHER YOUNG DRUNKEN MAN (O.C.)

Famous last words! Famous last  
words!

From below we hear two men KILLING THE SHIT OUT OF EACH OTHER, smashing GARBAGE CANS and setting off CAR ALARMS. Nancy nuzzles Alex. Alex smiles, and closes his eyes.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — PARK SLOPE, BROOKLYN — SUNDAY MORNING

A "MOVE-A-MUSCLE" moving van is double-parked in the street. Huge, hunky fellows unload boxes and furniture.

Music: "Happy Days Are Here Again," by Lucinda Williams

Alex, in blue jeans and sweatshirt, sips from his new no-spill metal coffee cup. He approaches the truck, signalling them to hand him a box. One of the fellows happily tosses Alex a box, which, it turns out, is quite heavy.

INT. APARTMENT — PARLOR — CONTINUOUS

A mover is about to put a box down when Nancy stops him. She directs his attention to a Xerox on the wall; drawn on it is a crude layout of the apartment with various colored round stickers on it. The sticker on the box is red, not Dayglow™ orange like on the layout. Nancy directs him to a different corner of the same room. He walks a few feet and puts the box down. Nancy smiles.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — CONTINUOUS

Alex helps two movers unload a large TV from the truck. He takes a sip of water, and then looks up to see the two "movers" make off down the sidewalk with the TV. Before he can do anything, two of the real movers take off after the would-be thieves.

INT. APARTMENT — PARLOR — LATE AFTERNOON

Assorted boxes, and furniture that doesn't really fit in: a mixture of Ikea and kitschy fifties and sixties stuff. Most notable, though, is how small and insignificant it looks, dwarfed in the space.

Alex and Nancy survey the scene.

ALEX

I could have sworn we had more  
stuff.

Nancy paces the floor, working it out.

NANCY

It'll be fine once we spread it  
out. Maybe we need to add a couple  
small pieces for accent, maybe a  
couple of big pieces to anchor  
it...

Alex arches an eyebrow, half seriously.

NANCY

You can get me a couch for  
Christmas.

She kisses his cheek. Suddenly, she excitedly grabs his hand  
and yanks him backwards out of the room.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Nancy arrives in the doorway, Alex in tow.

Golden light pours into the room. Nancy turns to Alex, her  
eyes welling up in sublime joy.

NANCY

Welcome home, Alex Kendricks.

She kisses him deeply. In unison, they move to the bed. The  
floorboard SQUEAKS, but they ignore it. They fall on the bed,  
kissing.

CLOSE ON ALEX AND NANCY

Smooching.

SFX: Distinctive PITTER-PATTER OF FEET above them.

Alex and Nancy hear this but continue kissing.

SFX: The PITTER-PATTER, going in the opposite direction.

They both open their eyes, and stop kissing. Nancy stares up  
at the ceiling.

NANCY

How old do you think poor old Mrs.  
Connelly is?

Alex rolls off Nancy, lying face up on the bed.

ALEX

That image is going to hard to get  
out of my head.

NANCY

We should go say hello.

ALEX

Let's.

Alex sits up and heads for the door.

NANCY

Not dressed like that!

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Alex, in slacks, pullover sweater and tie, looks as uncomfortable as a twelve-year-old going to visit his grandmother. He holds a bottle of wine with a red ribbon on it. Nancy, in a conservative sweater set and wool skirt, licks her fingers and smooths down Alex's hair.

We hear the locks all OPEN, as laboriously as before. The door CREAKS open to the end of the chain, and we again see Mrs. Connelly's suspicious eye. Only now it's surrounded by bright blue eye shadow.

NANCY

(a little loudly)

Mrs. Connelly? It's Nancy and Alex!  
From downstairs!

MRS. CONNELLY'S EYE (MOUTH O.C.)

Ohhhh. Oh!

She SLAMS the door. We hear the chain being UNHOOKED. She opens the door again. Mrs. Connelly, wearing make-up usually reserved for the wake, stands there in a red satin cheongsam (that mandarin slip dress that was briefly popular 40 years ago) covered with a tiny, pink sweater jacket.

MRS. CONNELLY

Come in! Come in!

Mrs. Connelly patters in. The parlor is dominated by a huge brass-plated birdcage containing a giant macaw.



Abutting it is a ratty vinyl chair next to an even rattier couch, all oriented toward an old TV (with knobs) on a brass-plated rolling cart.

NANCY

You have a lovely apartment, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, please call me Josie.

ALEX

(offering wine)

We got you this, Josie. Ah. Housewarming.

MRS. CONNELLY

(accepting bottle)

Oh, I don't drink, dear. It's a sin.

ALEX

(interesting fact)

Irish Catholics don't drink.

Nancy pinches his side.

MRS. CONNELLY

Sit down, sit down.

Mrs. Connelly gently pushes Nancy and Alex over to the sitting area. She directs Alex to the easy chair.

MRS. CONNELLY

You sit in my chair.

Alex looks down in the seat of the chair. It has a very distinct, slightly greasy, impression in it.

MRS. CONNELLY

(re: wine)

Let me open this for you.

Mrs. Connelly patters away. We notice for the first time that the back of her dress is completely worn away, revealing saggy gray old lady underpants. She disappears down the hallway. Alex looks around.

The magnificent parlor is crammed with Irish Catholic tchotchkes: praying hands sculpture; assorted Lladro figurines, mostly from the angel series; Jesi everywhere.

ALEX

This must be what heaven is like.

Nancy looks around the room, mentally redecorating.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)

Here, dear.

Mrs. Connelly returns, carrying a bartender's corkscrew and a small glass. She hands Alex the glass, which we now see is an old Peter Potamous jelly jar. Mrs. Connelly then places the wine bottle between her knees and with one swift motion, UNCORKS it. She pours Alex an inch of wine, puts the bottle down, and patters out of the room again without saying anything.

Alex turns toward the macaw.

It's a sad specimen: hunched over, feathers missing. Suddenly it LUNGES toward camera. Its beak comes through the bars, missing Alex's eyeball by a 32nd of an inch.

Alex lurches back, and settles himself with a swallow of wine. He eases back into the chair. He feels something funny. He lifts up his arm adjacent to the cage and sees the armrest is speckled with white and green clumps.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)

And some snacks!

Mrs. Connelly places a black lacquer tray on the brass-plated glass coffee table. The tray features a Polynesian dancer, whose toplessness has been strategically covered by a bowl full of Bugles™ and a container of Onion Dip, half empty with numerous Bugle™ strafings in it.

ALEX

Wow, they still make Bugles™.

Mrs. Connelly holds a Bugle™ up to the cage. The bird gently takes it by the tip, and rears its head back.

BIRD

(BUGLE-LIKE TOOTLE)

ALEX

That's a great parrot you have there.

MRS. CONNELLY

He's a macaw, dear. I've had Mr. Fawkes for sixty years now.

As Mrs. Connelly speaks, she drags a Bugle methodically through the dip.

Without saying a word, she sticks it right under Alex's nose, close enough that her minor hand shake causes the crusty dip to get on the tip of his nose.

ALEX'S POV

Mrs. Connelly looms over him, selling.

MRS. CONNELLY  
It's French onion.

Alex swallows, and smiles. Mrs. Connelly sits down on the couch, too close to Nancy. She pats her knees, happily.

MRS. CONNELLY  
There.

NANCY  
How are you feeling, Josie?

MRS. CONNELLY  
Why do you ask, dear?

NANCY  
Because the last time we saw you, you were quite ill.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, I had a bit of a cold. I'm in fine fettle now. But tell me about yourselves. What do you do, Alan?

ALEX  
Alex.

NANCY  
Alex is writing a novel.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Well. Now, I never thought of it, but that is a job, in a way.  
(turns to Nancy)  
So I suppose you must have to work then?

NANCY  
Alex's already had one novel published. In hardback. It was called "Unbodied Souls."

Mrs. Connelly looks confused.

ALEX  
(just being helpful)  
It's from a John Donne poem.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I think it was "souls unbodied" in  
that poem, dear.

ALEX  
(smiling politely)  
You might be right.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I am, dear. Oh, let me refill that  
for you.

Mrs. Connelly pours another inch into Alex's empty glass.

MRS. CONNELLY  
(mostly to Nancy)  
Mr. Connelly had the taste, too.  
The drink took him from me in 1959.  
We had been married forty years.

Nancy and Alex are doing the math in their heads. Mrs.  
Connelly breaks the silence.

MRS. CONNELLY  
So now, tell me, when might you be  
having children?

Alex finds this question a little forward; Nancy does not.

NANCY  
Soon.

ALEX  
In the next few years.

NANCY  
We've talked about two years.

ALEX  
Depending. On economic conditions,  
and other considerations.

MRS. CONNELLY  
You sound just like Mr. Connelly.  
We never did have children. And now  
its too late for me.

Alex reaches for his wine glass. We hear a WATERY PLOP. Alex looks over and sees Mr. Fawkes' tail feathers hanging over his glass. He pulls his hand away uneasily.

NANCY  
(genuinely concerned)  
So, Josie, you don't have any family?

MRS. CONNELLY  
They've all gone on to their reward, please God.

Nancy puts her hand over Mrs. Connelly's hands.

NANCY  
I'm sure they have.

MRS. CONNELLY  
When you live long as I have, you see so many deaths. Me mammy and me daddy went, oh, it was back in the Great Consumption...

Alex glances at a clock built into a Pietà reproduction. It reads 7:15 p.m. The face MATCH DISSOLVES to 8:37.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)  
We lost Uncle Dennis and little Nuala in the influenza outbreak of 1918...

The clock face MATCH DISSOLVES to 10:24.

Mrs. Connelly sits between a stupefied Alex and Nancy.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I did have one sister, Lily. But she died horribly.

NANCY  
I am so sorry.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Ah, well, it's the Irish way.  
(noticing)  
Look, I've kept you up. I'm sorry; I didn't notice the time. Let me show you out.

Mrs. Connelly stands to lead them out. As Alex rises, a RUDE NOISE emanates from his chair. Nancy looks at him askance.

ALEX

It was the chair.

Nancy gives him a "let's just drop it" look. Instead Alex turns back to the chair and pumps it with his hand, trying to get it to recreate the sound. He turns back to Nancy.

ALEX

(under breath, urgent)

It was the chair.

Nancy is suddenly hit by a ripe, eye-watering odor. It hits Alex a moment later.

ALEX

(desperate, sotto to  
Nancy)

That wasn't me!

ON MRS. CONNELLY

She smiles serenely.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nancy sits in bed with a pad and pencil. Alex, in T-shirt and underpants, walks in reading a dictionary. He steps on the SQUEAKY FLOORBOARD, but ignores it.

ALEX

A macaw is a parrot.

He SLAPS the book closed with satisfaction and gets into bed. Nancy is figuring something on her pad.

NANCY

She's between 95 and 105 years old.

(looks around, gets idea)

Ooo. Turn out your light!

A little puzzled, Alex turns out his light. So does Nancy. Their faces are bathed in a flickering glow.

THEIR POV

A tiny blaze burns in the fireplace. Soft street light filters in; the room seems even more majestic than in broad daylight. Nancy suppresses a squeal.

NANCY

We're millionaires!

Alex smiles, and KISSES Nancy. She KISSES him back hard. They lie down, KISSING.

CLOSE ON ALEX AND NANCY

They make out. But something is on Alex's mind. He stops.

ALEX

You know, we don't have to wait a full two years, if you, you know...

NANCY

Shut up.

Nancy shoves Alex's T-shirt up and starts kissing his chest. He tilts his head back. She starts moving down his chest.

Music (Really Loud): "HAWAII 5-0" THEME.

Startled, the two stop. They LAUGH.

ALEX

God.

NANCY

She is deaf. Poor thing.

Music (Much Louder): "HAWAII 5-0" THEME.

They both stare at the ceiling, amazed.

DISSOLVE TO:

MUCH LATER

They place pillows on their heads, etc., trying to sleep.

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)

Simply put the beef...

VERY LOUD TV WOMAN (O.C.)

Or chicken?

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)

Or chicken. Or fish. Into the chamber, snap the SureSeal™, and pull back the Infuser™.

VERY LOUD TV WOMAN (O.C.)

And then we wait, what, an hour?

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)

It's done.

VERY LOUD TV WOMAN (O.C.)  
It's done?!

VERY LOUD TV MAN (O.C.)  
It's marinated! Throw it on the  
grill!

SFX: HUGE AUDIENCE APPLAUSE.

Nancy and Alex stare at the ceiling.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

Sunlight comes through the window. Nancy and Alex lie face  
up, bleary eyed.

Music (from above): THE THEME FROM "THE BILL COSBY SHOW."  
(The one in which he played gym teacher Chet Kincaid.)

The music stops abruptly. Nancy and Alex close their eyes.

SFX: ALARM CLOCK BUZZ

INT. BROWNSTONE - SECOND FLOOR LANDING - MORNING

A bedraggled Nancy waits as the last LOCK disengages. The  
door CREAKS open. Mrs. Connelly peers across the chain.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Please forgive me, dear. I must  
look awful. You woke me.

NANCY  
I apologize for that, but Josie-

Mrs. Connelly furrows her brow as if insulted.

NANCY (CONT.)  
Mrs. Connelly, we had some trouble  
sleeping last night; your TV was  
on, uh, quite loud.

MRS. CONNELLY  
(merrily)  
Oh, was it? I'm stone deaf! Getting  
old is a terrible thing.

NANCY  
Well, if you could...



MRS. CONNELLY

It's just that it gets so quiet at night, and I get frightened. We have mice, you know.

NANCY

No, I didn't know that. Thank you for telling me. But do you think you could you turn the TV down, a little?

MRS. CONNELLY

Certainly, dear.

Nancy smiles as if about to say goodbye.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, dear, before you go, could you ask your husband to take a look at my shower? The pipes in there are making a bangety-bang sound.

NANCY

Well, it's an old boiler; they make sounds sometimes. It's nothing.

MRS. CONNELLY

It's a new sound. It goes bangety-bang, then... bang-bang.

NANCY

Well, my husband is on a tight deadline right now. But I tell you what: I will look at your shower as soon as I get home from work.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, where do you work, dear?

NANCY

I'm a graphic designer at New York New York magazine...

MRS. CONNELLY

That's pretty magazine.

NANCY

Thank you, but I'm going late if I don't leave right now, so...

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, don't let me keep you.

NANCY

Have a good day, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY

(sweetly)

You have a nice time at work, Miss  
Kendricks.

NANCY

Kendricks is my husband's name. I'm  
Nancy Rose.

MRS. CONNELLY

Wives not taking their husband's  
names. My. Now the children, will  
they be Roses or Kendrickses?

NANCY

That's a discussion we haven't had.

MRS. CONNELLY

Well, now, this is a problem you  
and your husband should work out.

NANCY

We're not having a problem.

MRS. CONNELLY

But you now, don't wait too long to  
have children.

(between women)

Drink damages the seed.

NANCY

I have to go now. Have a good day,  
Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY

You have a nice time at work, Miss  
Rose.

She SLAMS the door, and starts RELOCKING.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – DAY

Alex's iBook sits regally on a small desk; Alex settles into  
his writing chair. He sips his coffee. Everything is perfect.  
Alex stares out the window at the park, forming a perfect  
sentence in his head. He begins TYPING.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

He looks puzzled for a moment. He gets up and walks across the floor, causing it to SQUEAK. He smirks, half annoyed.

INT. APARTMENT – FOYER

Alex opens the door; Mrs. Connelly stands in the hallway.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Good morning, Mr. Kendricks.

ALEX  
Good morning. Uh, can I help you?

Mrs. Connelly is holding the bottle of wine from the previous evening. She presents it to him.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I wanted to give this back. I won't drink it and I thought you might need it.

ALEX  
Thank you very much. And if there's anything else I can do for you...

Alex CLOSES the door gently on Mrs. Connelly. He holds the bottle up to the light, and sees there's only an inch left in the bottle. He shakes his head, smiling, and exits the foyer.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

Alex reenters, and opens the door.

MRS. CONNELLY  
There is one thing.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT – BATHROOM

Alex stands in the claw-foot tub, listening to the wall.

ALEX  
Sorry, I don't hear any banging.

MRS. CONNELLY  
You have to stand there a bit.

Alex steps out of the tub, and leads Mrs. Connelly out of the bathroom, his hand on her shoulder.

ALEX  
I tell you what, Mrs. Connelly. I'm right downstairs. If those pipes start banging, you just run  
(MORE)

ALEX (cont'd)  
(makes running down stairs  
fingers)  
down and get me, and I'll run  
(running up fingers)  
right up and listen to them.

MRS. CONNELLY  
All right then. Oh, Mr. Kendricks,  
could you do me a favor and take  
out my trash? It's so heavy for me.

Mrs. Connelly points off screen.

ALEX  
Sure, no problem.

Alex sees the trash. It is a kitchen-sized can, crammed to  
well past overflowing with week's worth of trash.

MRS. CONNELLY  
We don't want to be feeding the  
mice.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND STORY LANDING — DAY

Alex exits Mrs. Connelly's door, struggling with a vastly  
overstuffed kitchen garbage bag. Mrs. Connelly follows.

ALEX  
You know, Mrs. Connelly, if you  
took your trash out every week, or  
every other week, instead of...  
never, maybe—

The bag bursts and garbage CASCADES down the stairs.

MRS. CONNELLY  
You'll need another bag.

She patters away.

INT. NYNY MAGAZINE — ART DEPARTMENT — DAY

We PAN across several, large framed nyny magazine covers.

Nancy is seated at a drafting table with by a portrait  
computer monitor on it. Next to her is SYN, also in her late  
20s but much more downtown.

ON THE MONITOR

Is a large two-page layout of various New York celebrities at various New York events under the rubric, "Scene and Herd." There are also large pullout quotes and numerous captions, in the current fashion. Nancy is expertly moving pictures with one hand while painting Syn a picture with the other.

NANCY

All along the ceiling there's gadrooning. I own gadrooning!. Oh, Syn, you have to come over and see our place. Oh, wait....

She clicks something on her screen. The party layout disappears and a DVD-ROM program boots up.

NANCY

Through the miracle of technology:

On screen, a CGI house spins around; the walls fall away so we can see how everything is arranged inside. The opening title flies up: DECORATOR 3D. Nancy CLICKS again and the screen changes to a digital rendition of their parlor.

NANCY

(faux British)  
Welcome to my home.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER MONITOR

We "walk" through a remarkably well-rendered CGI version of Nancy and Alex's apartment.

SYN

Yikes. How long did it take you to input all this?

NANCY

A few hours. Four or five. Six.

SYN

Jeezu-Beezu. You live in a mansion!

NANCY

We will. Watch this...

ON SCREEN

The cursor clicks on a couch (which looks like one in the real apartment), and drags it to garbage truck in the corner. The truck makes a satisfying HYDRAULIC CRUSHING SOUND.

NANCY  
(faux British)  
Ta-ta, Ikea!

Seeing something, Syn taps Nancy on the back; Nancy immediately clicks on the screen so the magazine spread pops up. Their boss walks up. Michael is tall, thin and bald; he wears vintage wool pants, a blue oxford shirt, and suspenders. He looks more annoyed than usual.

NANCY  
(all business)  
This looks great Syn, but maybe vary the point sizes on the quotes, and, oh, hello, Michael.

MICHAEL  
Ladies. "Celebrity Scene"? Status?

NANCY  
Tickety boo.

MICHAEL  
I'm assuming than means soon.

Nancy and Syn scrunch their noses at him as he walks away. Nancy clicks the CGI layout back on the screen. Syn points at a cheap, ugly leather reclining chair.

SYN  
Throw that out.

NANCY  
(I'd sure like to, but...)  
That's from Alex's bachelor pad.

SYN  
He's not a bachelor any more.

A mischievous smile. Nancy moves the mouse. We hear a very satisfying HYDRAULIC CRUSHING SOUND.

INT. BROWNSTONE – STAIRWAY – AFTERNOON

Alex is on his knees, picking up garbage, as Mrs. Connelly stands watching over him.

Alex picks up something, which he realizes to his horror, are big ol' granny panties. Mrs. Connelly's hand reaches into frame and plucks them away.

MRS. CONNELLY  
How did those get in there?

Mrs. Connelly brushes coffee grinds off the panties and shoves them in her pocket. Then she notices in Alex's hand:

MRS. CONNELLY (CONT.)  
A can! We have to recycle that!

ALEX  
You didn't recycle it before.

MRS. CONNELLY  
That's no excuse now. You need to make two piles. Three piles, one for paper.  
(pointing)  
Those Q-Tips go in the paper pile.

Alex delicately picks up a Q-Tip, both ends of which are coated with a yellowish brown jam-like substance.

ALEX  
I don't think so.

MRS. CONNELLY  
You'll have to wash them first.

Alex picks up a can, and looks at it. The can has been badly opened and the lid is merely pried back. Also, it's cat food.

MRS. CONNELLY  
That tuna was near inedible.

Mrs. Connelly reaches into frame, and takes the can from Alex's hand. The jagged edge of the lid nicks his forefinger.

ALEX  
(under breath)  
Jesus!

MRS. CONNELLY  
You will not take the name of the lord in vain in this house!  
(then, chipper)  
I'll get you a plaster.

Mrs. Connelly patters away.

ON A COMPUTER MONITOR

Is a CGI rendering which looks a lot like Mrs. Connelly's parlor. Mrs. Connelly's chair is selected and moved to the garbage truck with a satisfying HYDRAULIC CRUSHING SOUND.

INT. NYNY MAGAZINE – ART DEPARTMENT – CONTINUOUS

Nancy is happily CRUSHING everything in Mrs. Connelly's parlor. A hand reaches in from behind and covers her mouse hand. It's Michael's. Without a word, Michael guides Nancy's mouse hand up to FILE, and selects QUIT. He arches an eyebrow at Nancy and walks away.

NANCY  
(eyes narrowing, "I'll...")  
Crunch you.

INT. BROWNSTONE – WRITER'S NOOK – LATE AFTERNOON

Alex is typing, wincing every time he has to hit a key with his bandaged finger.

Music (extremely loud, from above): SCRATCHY RECORD of John McCormick singing the "Derry Aire."

Alex stops typing.

EXT. PARK SLOPE F STOP – EARLY EVENING

It's sleeting. Several commuters with umbrellas exit, followed by Nancy, holding a nyny magazine over his head.

INT. BROWNSTONE – LOBBY

Nancy enters, soaking. She's carrying a Wiz™ bag.

INT. APARTMENT – LIBRARY AREA

Alex is on a stepladder, unpacking boxes of books and placing them on his antique shelves. This pleases him immensely.

Nancy enters the parlor, hanging her coat on the spiral staircase, which has been repurposed as a coat/shoe rack.

NANCY  
Hey, handsome.

ALEX  
Hey cutie. How was work?

NANCY  
Okay. Yours?

ALEX  
Well, first of all: I love my nook.  
I feel like I'm a real writer...

Nancy hugs him from behind.



NANCY

You've always been a real writer.

Nancy straightens some of the books Alex has already shelved.

ALEX

Unfortunately, our sweet old tenant kept me from writing in my nook, and so now I'm one day closer to a rapidly looming deadline with absolutely nothing to show for it.

NANCY

How could you lose a whole day? What did she do?

ALEX

Well, for one, she wounded me.

Alex presents his cut finger for Nancy's inspection.

NANCY

(smiling)

She "wounded" you.

ALEX

She cut me with a jagged can. She'll say it was an accident.

Nancy peeks under the bandage.

NANCY

It's just a tiny nick.

ALEX

Look, it's right on the crease. It will never heal.

NANCY

Well, it's not like you touch type or anything.

ALEX

I do touch type, just according to an individual system.

NANCY

It's just one finger.

ALEX

It's my e-t-and-h finger. It's a crucial finger!

NANCY  
(affectionate, motherly)  
Let me kiss it.  
(she does)  
Better?

Alex pouts like little boy. They both CRACK UP.

SFX: A LOUD, METALLIC BANGING on the second floor.

INT. BROWNSTONE – SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Nancy and Alex wait as the door OPENS to the end of the chain (Nancy has that Wiz™ bag with her). Nancy and Alex smile into the opening. The door SLAMS, and reopens again.

NANCY  
Good evening, Mrs. Connelly! Is  
everything okay up here? We—

SFX: VERY LOUD BANGING.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, that's Mr. Dzerzhinsky.

Mrs. Connelly patters off and the couple follows her.

SFX: RUDE NOISE

Alex and Nancy turn toward the noise. Mr. Fawkes is staring at Alex. Mr. Fawkes makes another RUDE NOISE.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT – BATHROOM

MR. DZERZHINSKY, a very large Russian man, stands in the tub. He is using huge pipe wrench to rather unprofessionally BANG THE CRAP OUT OF SOME NEW COPPER PIPING to wedge it into place. The entire wall has been torn open.

MRS. CONNELLY  
This is Mr. Dzerzhinsky, the  
plumber.

Mr. Dzerzhinsky GRUNTS. Nancy points to a pile of broken ceramic on the ground.

NANCY  
Those were the original tiles.

MR. DZERZHINSKY  
Yeah, you gonna need a tile guy.  
(looks down at Alex)  
You the landlord?

ALEX

Yes, but I didn't order any work.

Mr. Dzerzhinsky hands a bill to Alex anyway, and goes about packing up his tools. Mrs. Connelly turns to Nancy.

MRS. CONNELLY

The pipes were going bang-bang-bang-bang-BANG. I thought it would explode.

MR. DZERZHINKSY

It coulda.

ALEX

(re: bill)

You were here for four hours?

MR. DZERZHINKSY

More or less.

ALEX

I'm not going pay for something I didn't auth-

Mr. Dzerzhinsky belly-bumps Alex.

MR. DZERZHINKSY

I did the work, my friend. Or I can rip the pipes outta the wall.

ALEX

(giving up)

No, no.

Mr. Dzerzhinsky exits. Alex and Nancy walk with Mrs. Connelly back toward the door.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, Mr. Kendricks, before I forget, it's the first of the month.

She patters over to a counter and retrieves a small stack of money. She counts it out into Alex's palm.

MRS. CONNELLY

Twenty... forty... fifty... fifty-five... sixty... sixty-five... seventy... seventy-five... seventy-six... seventy-seven... seventy-eight... seventy-nine... eighty-one... eighty-two... eighty-three... eighty-four... eighty-five... eighty-six... eighty-seven... eighty-eight...

She removes a coin purse from her pocket.

MRS. CONNELLY (CONT.)  
Eight-eight twenty-five... fifty...  
seventy-five... eighty-nine dollars...  
and twenty-five, thirty-five, forty-  
five, fifty cents. Would you like  
to count it?

ALEX  
You look like an honest person.

Nancy takes Mrs. Connelly hands in hers.

NANCY  
(remembering)  
Oh, Mrs. Connelly, I got you a  
present.  
(producing object from her  
Wiz™ bag)  
Here are some headphones for your  
television.  
(glances at old TV,  
unsure)  
I'm sure it has an ear jack,  
somewhere...

MRS. CONNELLY  
That is so sweet, dear, but I could  
never wear those. I don't pay  
twenty dollars a week for this  
hairdo just to muss it up.

INT. APARTMENT – PARLOR

Nancy and Alex enter.

NANCY  
She does not spend twenty dollars  
on that hairdo.

ALEX  
Those repairs were completely  
unauthorized. We should put a stop  
on that check.

NANCY  
You can't do that.

ALEX  
So he sues me.

NANCY

He'll beat you with a wrench.

Nancy exits, toward the bedroom.

ALEX

(mostly to himself)

No, you listen, my friend, you've caused criminal damage to property here... You're trespassing, my friend.

NANCY (O.C.)

(Horrorified Shriek)

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Nancy stands, looking up in abject terror. Alex trots in. Unable to speak, Nancy points to the ceiling.

ON THE CEILING

A fairly large water stain has started in the corner, apparently caused by Mr. Dzerzhinsky's plumbing. Alex puts his arm around Nancy's shoulder.

ALEX

Don't worry, honey. We'll just patch it.

NANCY

(near tears)

It's a canvas ceiling! You can't patch it; you have to replace the whole thing!

Not knowing what to say, Alex squeezes her shoulder harder.

NANCY

(sniffles)

I'm going to bed.

She exits frame. He looks at his watch.

ALEX

It's not even eight-o'clock.

Alex realizes he's exhausted, too. He starts to take off his sweatshirt as he exits frame. We hear the floor SQUEAK.

EXT. BROWNSTONE – MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

A blue glow emanates from Mrs. Connelly's floor.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Alex can't believe they are hearing:

Music (from above): THE THEME FROM "UNDERDOG."

INT. BROWNSTONE – LOBBY – MORNING

A tired Nancy shuffles out. She is nearly to the door when:

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)  
Miss Rose?

Nancy's eyes flit. She quickly grabs the door and bolts out.

INT. BROWNSTONE – WRITER'S NOOK – MORNING

Alex, dark circles under his eyes, sips from his stainless steel Starbucks cup. He begins typing, annoyed every time he has to hit a key with his e-t-h finger.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

Alex gets up determined and crosses the floor. It SQUEAKS. He shoots the floor a dirty look.

INT. APARTMENT – FOYER

Alex opens the door; Mrs. Connelly stands in the lobby.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Good morning, Mr. Kendricks.

ALEX  
(prepared speech)  
Now, Mrs. Connelly...

MRS. CONNELLY  
I bought your book!

Mrs. Connelly cheerfully holds up a very thick book. Alex is completely disarmed.

ALEX  
Oh, Mrs. Connelly, you didn't have to, I could have lent you one...

MRS. CONNELLY  
That's all right, dear. It only cost 99 cents.

Alex starts to close the door gently.

ALEX

Well, thanks for the support...

MRS. CONNELLY

(stopping door)

One more tiny thing, Mr. Kendricks.

Alex fortifies himself for his prepared speech.

ALEX

Mrs. Connelly, I working right now. Writing is a job, like any other job. And my boss, my editor, she'd be pretty upset if she knew that I wasn't at my desk writing. She'd say, you have a deadline, Alex. Get back to work. So from 9 to 6, I'm at work. At six o'clock, I'm yours, for whatever you want. But not until 6. You see what I'm saying? I'm not really at home right now; I'm at work.

MRS. CONNELLY

(getting it)

Oh.

(then)

It will only take two seconds.

INT - MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Alex opens the refrigerator door.

ALEX

Seems cold. What's the problem?

Mrs. Connelly "takes" the door handle from him and closes and opens the door several times. Alex shrugs, confused.

MRS. CONNELLY

The little light doesn't go on!

Alex suppresses an eye roll; he peers into the refrigerator.

ALEX

You can see all the food...

Alex sees a whole pig's head wrapped in cellophane. Mrs. Connelly joins him with her head in the refrigerator.

MRS. CONNELLY

If the little light doesn't work,  
goodness knows what else is going  
wrong in there. It could start a  
fire...

Alex takes his head out the refrigerator.

ALEX

I'm sure it's just a burnt bulb.

Mrs. Connelly closes the refrigerator door.

MRS. CONNELLY

Well, then it's off to the hardware  
store with us...

Mrs. Connelly takes Alex's hand and leads him off-screen.

INT. NYNY MAGAZINE – NANCY'S WORKSTATION – LATE MORNING

Nancy sits at her computer, nodding off. She repeatedly marks  
her face with a Sharpie. Finally she settles into a  
comfortable position, drooling happily.

Michael enters, frowns and leans in close to Nancy. He blows  
on her face. Her eyes flutter open. Startled, she FALLS off  
her chair (and out of frame). She pops back up a moment later  
and hops onto her stool.

NANCY

Michael! Can I help you?

MICHAEL

Yes. You can work.

Michael walks off.

EXT. PARK SLOPE – SEVENTH AVENUE – AFTERNOON

Mrs. Connelly patters down the street. Alex follows her,  
carrying a several grocery bags, in addition to a bag from  
the hardware store and, for some reason, a large broom.

ALEX

Mrs. Connelly, I really have to get  
back to work; I'm right in the  
middle of this very tricky  
passage...

MRS. CONNELLY

We're going home now, dear.



Mrs. Connelly suddenly stops. Alex has to pull up sharply, in order to not run into her; he drops the broom and some bags.

MRS. CONNELLY

I need stamps.

Mrs. Connelly starts walking back in the opposite direction; Alex struggles to gather the packages to follow her.

INT. POST OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Alex and Mrs. Connelly are at the front of a very long line at the only available teller. Alex has long since passed the end of his patience.

Mrs. Connelly closely examines what appears to be her tenth sheet of stamps.

MRS. CONNELLY

Those are very nice. Do you have any with birds on them?

The MASSIVE POSTAL CLERK turns ever so slowly to the stamp drawers at his side. He moves as if through an exceptionally viscous fluid. He returns ever so slowly with the sheet of bird stamps.

Mrs. Connelly carefully scans each individual stamp. Alex smiles uncomfortably at the many folks waiting impatiently in line. More scanning. Finally, Mrs. Connelly looks up.

MRS. CONNELLY

I'll take these.

There is visual relief throughout the room (except of course on the impassive mass behind the counter).

MRS. CONNELLY

Do you have any other pretty ones?

The postal mass doesn't move at all for a moment, then begins turning toward the stamp drawer, impossibly slowly.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Alex trudges to his nook. The floor SQUEAKS. He grits his teeth. He sits down at his desk and looks out the window. The sun is going down.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

Alex does not make a move to answer it. After a beat, he looks down at his ibook to begin writing again.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

Alex doesn't get up. But neither does he start writing.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

INT. NYNY MAGAZINE — ART DEPARTMENT — EVENING

Nancy is frantically working on this layout. Michael stands opposite her, waiting impatiently.

NANCY  
Just two ticks...

MICHAEL  
Tick tick tick...

The phone RINGS. Nancy answers it.

NANCY  
Nancy Rose... Hello, Mrs. Connelly.  
Listen, can I call you back?

Nancy listens to LOW LEVEL YAMMERING. She looks up at Michael and smiles. He does not smile back.

NANCY  
Well, Mrs. Connelly, I don't know  
why my husband isn't answering the  
door... I'm sure he's fine, no,  
he's fine, please don't call the  
fire department.

Barely audibly, we hear Mrs. Connelly YAMMERING.

NANCY  
I sincerely doubt he got drunk and  
hit his head on something. Look,  
Mrs. Connelly, I'm going to be home  
in just an hour or so...

MICHAEL  
No, you're not.

Nancy looks up at Michael helplessly as Mrs. Connelly's YAMMERING continues unabated.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

A blue glow emanates from Mrs. Connelly's floor.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Alex and Nancy stare at the ceiling.

TV (from inside): THEME FROM "STARSKY AND HUTCH"

ALEX  
Mrs. Connelly? Mrs. Connelly!

EXT. BROWNSTONE – MORNING

It's very cold, but bright. Young couples walk strollers and dogs toward the park.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Alex lie like corpses in the bed. Nancy rouses first, and shakes Alex.

NANCY  
Up, up! We got some shopping to do.

ALEX  
No, gotta write. After sleeping.

Alex rolls over onto his face. Nancy starts to get up, but drops back onto her pillow. She closes her eyes. We hear LOUD CACKLING and BANGING. Nancy opens her eyes.

INT. BROWNSTONE – LOBBY

Nancy peeks out her door. Three OLD BIDDIES lug cases for a tuba, trombone and French horn up the stairs.

FIRST OLD BIDDY  
It's a cold one.

SECOND OLD BIDDY  
Cold for November.

THIRD OLD BIDDY  
Winter's coming.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM

Nancy trudges in and collapses on the bed. From above, we hear CACKLES OF GREETING and CHAIRS SCOOTCHING. Then BRASS INSTRUMENTS warming up. Then silence. Then a "SONG" starts.

ALEX  
ohgod.

NANCY  
What song is that?

ALEX  
"On the Street Where You Live?"

NANCY  
No, it's "Every Breath you Take."

Alex and Nancy both sit up, wearily.

EXT. MANHATTAN - 25TH STREET FLEA MARKET - DAY

Nancy haggles with an ANTIQUES MERCHANT.

NANCY  
I'm sorry, but I can't go over one-  
sixty.

ANTIQUES MERCHANT  
Then I'm sorry, too.

NANCY  
Okay then.

Nancy start to walk away, but then turns back.

NANCY (CONT'D)  
(laughing)  
You win that one.

Nancy writes a check. Alex walks up excitedly, holding a manual typewriter.

ALEX  
A Remington Royal! Twenty dollars.

NANCY  
What were they asking?

ALEX  
Twenty dollars.

Nancy shakes her head in mock disappointment.

EXT. GRAND STREET - OUTSIDE SOHO ANTIQUE FAIR - CONTINUOUS

Nancy supervises a cabbie as he finished tying down a trunk crammed with antiques. Satisfied, Nancy opens the passenger door, revealing Alex jammed in, surrounded by with bags and furniture. Even the cabbie's front passenger seat is packed with stuff. Nancy wedges herself into the cab strategically.

FIXING-UP-THE-HOUSE MONTAGE #3764A

Music: "In a Shanty in Old Shanty Town" by Ted Lewis

A) Nancy rubs door trim with a can of block oil. Seeing the results, she excitedly grabs Alex. She keeps showing him unoiled vs. oiled, but he can't tell the difference.

B) In the lobby, Nancy supervises Salvation Army workers removing their Ikea couch. Seeing something, she urges them to hurry. Alex appears, wondering what's going on. Nancy kisses him and leads him back into the apartment.

C) Nancy strips paint from stained glass window in the bedroom. She is ecstatic to see a ruby panel and calls Alex over. He smiles, pretending also to be impressed.

D) Alex struggles to tie up flattened moving boxes as behind him Nancy wanders around with an end table looking for the exact right place to put it.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - EARLY EVENING - ESTABLISHING

Music: "BABY, IT'S COLD OUTSIDE" BY LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND JILL SCOTT (SCOTT MIXED INTO ARMSTRONG ORIGINAL)

INT. APARTMENT - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

A mini-stereo is on the mantle, playing the music.

Alex and Nancy are asleep together in the chair. Alex rouses, awaking the Nancy.

ANOTHER ANGLE shows the apartment as we first viewed it when Nancy and Alex moved in. It has been transformed.

REVERSE ANGLE of the couple considering all this. Nancy hugs and kisses Alex.

NANCY

We're making a home.

ALEX

(curious)

What happened to all my stuff?

Nancy responds by kissing Alex, deeply. As they make out, Alex stands, picking Nancy up in his arms. He carries her to the bedroom as she undresses him.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM

Alex carries Nancy into the dusky bedroom. Colored light illuminates them. It's pouring through the stained glass from the lobby.

NANCY  
(Swooning sound)

ALEX  
I love you.

NANCY  
(kissing him repeatedly)  
I love you. I love our house.

ALEX  
I love our house, too.

Alex sets Nancy down as the two tear at each other's clothing.

SFX: SHARP KNOCKING ON GLASS.

Nancy jumps out of what's left of her clothing when she sees:

THROUGH THE STAINED GLASS

A shadowy figure stands on the other side. It's face comes very close to the glass. It's Mrs. Connelly. She peers inside; she frowns disapprovingly. She backs away and disappears. A moment later:

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

Alex noticeably flinches.

INT. APARTMENT – FOYER

Alex and Nancy quickly redress their dishabille. At the door is Mrs. Connelly, in church clothes.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I hate to bother you on a Sunday evening like this, but I'm cold.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT – DOORWAY

Mrs. Connelly leads the two in.

NANCY  
It doesn't seem that cold in here, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY

I'm cold. Mr. Fawkes is cold.

She gestures to Mr. Fawkes, who just sits there.

ALEX

Maybe that's because Mr. Fawkes is supposed to be in a South American rain forest, not New York City in November.

Nancy puts her hand on Mrs. Connelly's shoulder, gently.

NANCY

The heat is just started up, Mrs. Connelly. If you wait, it'll be fine in just a few minutes. If you want, I have a sweater you could borrow. Or a caftan.

MRS. CONNELLY

No, that's all right, dear. I understand.

INT. APARTMENT — FOYER

As they re-enter,

ALEX

It was at least 70 degrees up there.

NANCY

She's lonely, that's all.

ALEX

I don't know why; she hangs out with me all day....

Alex surveys the apartment. It hits him.

ALEX

(laughs)

Wow, honey, you went on quite a shopping spree this weekend...

NANCY

(A tad defensive)

It wasn't a spree. This all serves a purpose.

Alex points to two end tables sitting side by side.

ALEX

(teasing)

So that end table, it serves as an  
end table to that end table?

NANCY

First of all, that's not an end  
table, it's an antique telephone  
stand, and second of all, it's not  
going there, it's going in the  
upstairs foy-ay.

ALEX

We don't have an upstairs foy-ay.

NANCY

But we will. Eventually.

ALEX

That? What purpose does that serve?

He points to a two-foot tall wooden pyramid.

NANCY

That serves a design purpose.

ALEX

What is it?

NANCY

It's a pyramid. Obviously.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — LOBBY — SECONDS LATER

The door opens, revealing an exasperated Alex.

ALEX

Yes, Mrs. Connelly?

HIS POV

Two police uniforms. He adjusts his gaze upwards into the  
large, sober faces of OFFICER DAN and OFFICER SANDRA.

OFFICER SANDRA

We have a reported heat emergency.

ALEX

She called you?



OFFICER DAN  
Come with us upstairs, please?

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING — MOMENTS LATER

Officer Dan KNOCKS. Alex shakes his head.

ALEX  
You'll see. She likes to complain.

The door opens (without the usual rigmarole). Mrs. Connelly is wrapped in several shawls, tiny and weak.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I'm terribly cold.

The officers walk into the apartment. We can see their breath. It's like "The Exorcist."

OFFICER DAN  
Good Christ.

MR. FAWKES  
So cold. So cold.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — STREET — A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alex and Nancy stands on the sidewalk, shivering without coats. Officer Dan is writing a citation.

OFFICER DAN  
That poor, dear sweet woman.

ALEX  
Look, I think it's pretty obvious she opened all the windows to —

OFFICER DAN  
What I should be doing is tossing your naked ass in a cell and hosing you down for the night, but quite sadly, all I can do is fine you.

He hands the citation to Alex.

ALEX  
A thousand dollars?!

OFFICER DAN  
Are you complaining?

NANCY  
No, we're not.

OFFICER DAN

Next time I enter Mrs. Connelly's apartment — and I will be checking in — I want to break out in a sweat, I want to be on the goddam beach at Hedonism II, do you understand?

ALEX/NANCY

Yes, officer.

They shiver for a long beat.

ALEX

Is that all?

OFFICER DAN

It's such a lovely night, I thought we'd stand out here for a while.

We PULL OUT slowly as they continue to shiver.

INT. APARTMENT — BEDROOM — LATER THAT NIGHT

The two sit in bed, wearing little but drenched in sweat. They are sorting through bills and fines are laid out before them, putting them in two separate piles...

NANCY

(re: bills)

Electricity, let's float that...  
Phone, float... Cable, pay...

ALEX

Visa, minimum... Mastercard,  
minimum...

NANCY

Yowza, did the price of heating oil suddenly double or something?

ALEX

(wiping brow)

Better pay that.

(re: credit card bill)

Couch? What couch?

NANCY

It's being delivered Tuesday! It's it's a George Smith and it's both cute and beautiful —

ALEX

Honey, I don't think now is the best time for us to be spending eight-thousand dollars on a couch.

NANCY

(hurt)

It's my Christmas present.

ALEX

I'm afraid your Christmas present  
(pointing to ceiling)  
is Granny's trip to Hedonism II up there; mine is all that lovely exposed copper piping in her bathroom.

NANCY

(switching tactics)

You know what? You're right. We've invested tons of money into this house, and it's time it started paying us back.

ALEX

Uh, okay. And how would that be?

NANCY

You'll see, at the party.

ALEX

What party? We're renting our house out for a party?

NANCY

No, we're having a party.

ALEX

I'm sorry. I, but I'm not seeing how that is going to help our financial situation...

NANCY

You'll see. At the party.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — EVENING

INT. APARTMENT — PARLOR — CONTINUOUS

Tiny pumpkins and ears of baby Indian corn on the spiral staircase suggest a fall theme. A table has been set for a small but elegant dinner party. Every detail is perfect.

Music: "I GOT THE WORLD ON A STRING" BY SARAH VAUGHN

Four guests mingle, while

INT. APARTMENT – KITCHEN

Nancy bustling around nervously, trying to make everything right. Alex, also nervous, is at a loss of what to do.

ALEX

What can I cook?

NANCY

Honey, all I need you to do right now is go out and mingle with our guests.

ALEX

Yeah, but Jean is just going to want to know why the book isn't done, and...

Nancy stops bustling and takes Alex's hands.

NANCY

Then you better get over there then and suck some butt. That's what this dinner party is for.

She kisses Alex, and then playfully turns him around and pushes him out of the kitchen. She returns to the stove and lifts the lid on one of the pots. Whatever's in there distresses her slightly.

BY THE LIBRARY

JEAN, a tall, handsome woman, nurses a white wine. TOMMY, a squat man with flyway hair and a bucket-sized glass of bourbon, has his arm around Jean's hips. Alex approaches tentatively, like a schoolboy into the principal's office.

JEAN

Alex! Do you know Tommy Zubrick? Tommy, Alex here is a highly talented writer who ought to be in the pages of your magazine.

TOMMY

(Britishy affectation)  
Then he shall be.

This is apparently a big deal to Alex.

JEAN  
(a little scolding)  
But only after he finishes his  
novel.

ALEX  
Yeah, I know. I know I've fallen a  
little behind schedule, my  
schedule, with the moving, all the  
redecorating and other factors...  
But I will make my deadline.

Jean cups her hand around the back of Alex's neck.

JEAN  
Just make it good and true.

A mother-son moment.

IN THE KITCHEN

Nancy has the oven door open and is peering inside when  
Michael appears behind her.

MICHAEL  
Wedgewood?

NANCY  
(startled)  
Oh! Michael! Hope you like salmon.

MICHAEL  
Not particularly.

Nancy notices that standing next to Michael is a BOMBSHELL,  
which wasn't exactly what she was expecting. After an  
uncomfortable beat, Nancy extends her hand to Michael's date.

NANCY  
Hi, I'm Nancy...

MICHAEL  
This is Becca.

BECCA  
Fish is high in Omega-3 oils...

NANCY  
(ice-breaking laugh)  
That's good, right? Listen, would  
you guys like a tour?

MICHAEL

I suppose.

IN THE LIBRARY – SIMULTANEOUS

Jean examines Alex's books as Tommy, deep into his bourbon, talks at Alex.

TOMMY

Novelist is the bravest profession we have. Squeezing your soul onto paper...

ALEX

It does feel like that sometimes...

Nancy gooses Alex as she passes with Michael and Becca. We follow Nancy, who points toward the ceiling.

NANCY

You'll notice the gadrooning...

IN THE BEDROOM

MICHAEL

So this is what you've been neglecting your work for.

NANCY

Do you approve?

MICHAEL

Not terrible.

NANCY

(playfully)  
And what bedroom is complete without antique stained glass...

MICHAEL

(approving)  
It's almost blasphemous.

Michael opens a closet. It's filled with antiques.

MICHAEL

A furniture closet. Intriguing. No, ridiculous.

NANCY

That stuff's all going to go upstairs. Eventually.

(MORE)

NANCY (cont'd)  
This is a duplex, but... would you  
like to see the second floor?

Michael makes a "show the way" gesture. A LOW CREAKING is heard. They turn to where the water stain is. A huge section of the ceiling PEELS down and dangles there.

NANCY  
We're getting that fixed.

IN THE LIBRARY

Tommy Zubrick talks very close to Alex.

ZUBRICK  
For the longest time I've wanted to  
do a column on the writing life,  
but I needed a writer who wasn't  
famous yet, and I simply don't know  
any. Would like to take a crack at  
it? I can pay you \$4,000?

ALEX  
\$4,000 a column?

ZUBRICK  
All right, five thousand.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Nancy unlocks several locks.

NANCY  
Currently, we have a tenant. Sweet  
old Irish lady. She goes out to  
bingo every Saturday night; I don't  
think she'd mind if we peeked in--  
(opening the final lock)  
It's a bit elderly person-y, but  
you can see the potential.

Nancy opens the door a crack, and ushers the couple over.  
Michael and Becca peek in the door opening.

THEIR POV

Mrs. Connelly, wielding a can of Mace™, baring her teeth.

BACK TO SCENE

A FULL BLAST of Mace™. Becca SCREAMS. Michael, GAGGING,  
staggers backward, and down the stairs.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — A HALF HOUR LATER

An ambulance pulls out. A squad car is parked in front, lights flashing. Jean and Tommy exit, shaking their heads.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING — CONTINUOUS

Officer Dan has his arm around Mrs. Connelly, who looks very much the victim. Alex sits on the landing, pressing a cold cloth to Nancy's face.

OFFICER SANDRA

Being a landlord doesn't give you the right to enter your tenant's premises any time you feel like it.

NANCY

She was supposed to be at bingo!

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, I never gamble...

ALEX

She used pepper spray! That's illegal, right?

OFFICER DAN

I gave it to her. Do you have a problem with that?

ALEX

I'm just saying, it's illegal.

OFFICER DAN

Your wife is the one who broke and entered. And your weird bald friend could've easily been a degenerate. I'm not sure he's not.

(to Officer Sandra)

Call the hospital and have them hold him until we can question him.

NANCY

Oh, God.

OFFICER DAN

Mrs. Connelly, would you like to press charges?

ALEX

Her press charges?



OFFICER DAN  
(matter-of-fact)  
Don't make me subdue you.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, I couldn't press charges.

OFFICER DAN  
(disappointed)  
If you change your mind, give me a  
call. Is it warm enough for you in  
there?

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, yes, it's quite nice.

Officer Dan leads Mrs. Connelly back into her apartment, as  
Nancy SNIFFLES and Alex hugs her protectively, rocking.

INT. APARTMENT – WRITER'S NOOK – MORNING

Alex is exhausted. His eyes itch.

Music (from above): SCRATCHY RECORD of John McCormick singing  
"She Moved Through the Fair."

Alex takes a deep breath, bends toward the ibook and starts  
typing intently, as if writing through sheer will. But he  
can't stand the music. He gets up and stalks across the  
floor. It SQUEAKS. He returns moments later with a broom.  
Standing in the center of the room, he BANGS on the ceiling  
with the broom. Plaster FALLS and hits him in the face. As he  
wipes his face, he notices:

OUT THE WINDOW

Mrs. Connelly strolls past with a portable shopping cart.  
Perched on the bow, like a ship's mascot, is Mr. Fawkes.

Then he notices:

JOHN MCCORMICK RECORD  
(skipping)  
Till our wedding day... till our  
wedding day... till our wedding day...

Alex throws his hands up and he takes a step. The floor  
SQUEAKS again. Alex angrily stomps on the squeaky floorboard,  
for much longer than the audience would expect.

INT. NYNY MAGAZINE – NANCY'S WORKSTATION – MORNING

Nancy enters apprehensively. There is a yellow sticky on her computer. It reads, "See me - M."

INT. NYNY MAGAZINE – MICHAEL'S OFFICE

Nancy enters, smiling weakly. Michael is at his desk, head down, going over a layout. His arm is in a sling.

NANCY

Michael?

Michael looks up. His face is bright red. He is not smiling.

EXT. NY DELHI – NIGHT

INT. NY DELHI – CONTINUOUS

The combo plays an Indian-tinged "NIGHT AND DAY." Alex and Nancy have seen better days.

NANCY

We're pretty screwed, huh?

ALEX

(eerily calm)

Let's see. We're behind in all our bills, our savings are pretty much gone, and now we have no money coming in. I'd say screwed is apt.

NANCY

I did get severance, and I'll find another job. And you'll get your advance...

ALEX

When I hand in my completed manuscript in less than a week?

NANCY

I'm sure Jean will give you an extension. Although we do sort of need the money now.

ALEX

(sounding sincere)

I don't see how I'm going to be able to write fifty pages a day and still faithfully perform my duties as Mrs. Connelly's manservant...

NANCY

Can't you just ignore her?

ALEX

(his voice rising)

But what if she needs me? What if she needs me to change the channels on her TV? What if she needs me to peel a banana? What if she needs me to wipe her ass?

Other diners hear this. Nancy makes a tiny shush gesture.

ALEX

(gets louder, bigger)

I can't just let her walk around with shit on her ass, can I? I have to run right up there quick as a bunny and wipe it all off and "Oh, my, that's quite a nice stool you've made today, Mrs. Connelly."

(He stands to act it out)

"Oh, let me get that one last little bit of shit there, Mrs. Connelly. Would you like me to moisten the tissue or should I just lick--"

INDIAN RESTAURANT OWNER

(cutting him off)

I am asking you to leave now.

Many of the restaurant's patrons are no longer hungry.

EXT. APARTMENT - MORNING

INT. BROWNSTONE - LOBBY- CONTINUOUS

Alex, carrying his iBook, and Nancy, in a business suit with her portfolio, are almost out when:

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)

Mr. Kendricks? Miss Rose?

Nancy turns to Alex, like the hero staying behind to fight the aliens.

NANCY

You go. Write a great novel.

ALEX

Bless you.

Alex exits. Nancy sighs and trudges up the steps.

INT. SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Mrs. Connelly waits at her door.

NANCY  
Yes, Mrs. Connelly?

MRS. CONNELLY  
One of my lights is buzzing.

NANCY  
I'm sure it's nothing. Could you  
just turn off the light, just for a  
few hours, and I'll look at the  
moment I get home?

MRS. CONNELLY  
(ominously)  
I'm afraid it might explode.

Nancy DROPS her portfolio and trudges into the apartment.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM

Nancy stands tiptoe on a chair, removing an ornate light globe. Mrs. Connelly looks on.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Please don't drop that. It's glass.

NANCY  
I'm aware of that, Mrs. Connelly.

Nancy touches the light bulb and gets BADLY SHOCKED. She falls out of frame and we hear a CRASH of glass.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Oh, you broke it.

EXT. PARK SLOPE – STARBUCKS – MORNING – ESTABLISHING

INT. STARBUCKS – CONTINUOUS

Alex, ibook under his arm, pays for his coffee. He turns from the counter to find someplace to sit. He sees:

The entire place is filled with dozens of earnest writers, all tapping away on their ibooks.

INT. OFFICE — LATER

A magazine DESIGN DIRECTOR pages through Nancy's portfolio.

DESIGN DIRECTOR  
This is a really impressive  
portfolio, Nancy, and your  
credentials are impeccable...

The director looks up, and is puzzled.

A REVERSE ANGLE reveals Nancy, her hair completely frizzed out from the electrocution and her eyes wandering aimlessly. She reaches up to grab a non-existent fly.

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE — PARK SLOPE — DAY

Alex is walking around with his coffee and ibook, looking for someplace to write. He ducks into a corner bar.

INT. THE ROOST

Alex settles at the bar and props open his ibook. The FEMALE BARTENDER doesn't seem surprised to find him there.

FEMALE BARTENDER  
What can I get you?

ALEX  
Just coffee.

The bartender reaches back and plops a well-yellowed coffee urn next to Alex. He nods his thanks. Behind him, a rummy has just finished putting money in the jukebox.

MUSIC: John McCormick singing "SHE MOVED THROUGH THE FAIR."

INT. APARTMENT — BEDROOM — MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Alex and Nancy sleep restlessly because of UNIDENTIFIABLE HORROR MOVIE MUSIC coming from upstairs.

EXT. THE ROOST — PARK SLOPE — DAY

INT. THE ROOST — CONTINUOUS

Music: "Let's Have Another Cup of Coffee" by Lyle Lovett

Alex types diligently at the bar, pouring bar coffee into his metal coffee cup.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT — KITCHEN

There's a small black object on the counter.

NANCY

That's not a mouse dropping. It's a raisin.

MRS. CONNELLY

(leans in to look)

It's the leavings of a mouse.

NANCY

(losing patience)

It's a raisin.

Nancy matter-of-factly picks up the object and pops it in his mouth. She gets a very strange look on his face.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, dear, I should have told you. I sprayed it with Lysol.

INT. THE ROOST

Alex types, pausing briefly to drink directly out of the coffee urn.

EXT. FLEA MARKET — DAY

Nancy is at the flea market, surrounded by many of the possessions she bought there. It's a very cold day.

POTENTIAL BUYER

I'll give you thirty.

NANCY

I paid one-fifty.

The potential buyer shrugs and walks off. After a beat, Nancy gets up and runs after her.

INT. THE ROOST

Alex stops typing. He's a little twitchy.

ALEX

Decaf, over here.

The decaf urn is put in front of him. He takes a swig and begins typing again.

EXT. FLEA MARKET — DUSK

Nancy is shivering, having sold many things but not too happy about it. Buyers pass without a look. Her cell phone RINGS.

NANCY

Hello?

What she hears makes her break out in a huge smile.

INT. THE ROOST — LATER

Alex types the final letters, using Nancy's fingers.

NANCY

T-H-E E-N-D.

ALEX

(triumphantly types)

Apple-save!

Nancy kisses Alex hard.

NANCY

I told you. I knew you would finish it. And it's so good, Alex.

ALEX

(insecure)

It's not too good, is it? I mean, I also want it to be popular.

NANCY

It's so good people are going to have to buy it, even if they don't read it.

ALEX

Does it feel like a brain book, though, not a heart book?

NANCY

I think it's brain and heart.

Alex finally breaks into a smile.

NANCY

Barkeep, some champagne!

FEMALE BARTENDER

You don't want to drink our champagne.

NANCY  
(thinks, then:)  
Tequila!

EXT. BROWNSTONE – NIGHT

Nancy and Alex walk up the stairs arm in arm, laughing.

INT. BROWNSTONE – FOYER

Alex and Nancy enter, cold but happy.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)  
Mr. Kendricks? Miss Rose?

The two happily bound up the stairs to Mrs. Connelly's door.

ALEX  
Mrs. Connelly, is there something  
we can help you with?

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT – PARLOR

As Alex and Nancy enter, he places his book on the fireplace mantle. He rubs his hands together as if eager to take on any task Mrs. Connelly may have in mind. Mrs. Connelly patters past them, beaconing with her hand. They follow.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I was wondering if you could help  
me set some mousetraps?

NANCY  
Oh, certainly.

Mrs. Connelly hands Alex a cardboard box that must have a hundred mouse traps in it.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I'd do it myself, but this weather  
surely brings out the arthritis.

ALEX  
(indulgent)  
Where would you like them, Mrs.  
Connelly?

MRS. CONNELLY  
I think they live in that closet.

Alex and Nancy exit in the direction she's pointing.



ON THE MANTLE

Mr. Fawkes flaps up and lands next to the ibook.

ON ALEX AND NANCY

Placing the traps down, with Mrs. Connelly hovering.

MRS. CONNELLY

Could you place them in a line? I  
don't want the little beggars to  
have an escape route.

Alex smiles solicitously, a straightens the traps.

ON THE MANTLE

Mr. Fawkes nudges the ibook along with his beak.

ON ALEX AND NANCY

Making great time on the traps.

NANCY

You know, Mrs. Connelly. We've  
never seen any evidence of mice on  
our floor...

ON THE MANTLE

Mr. Fawkes pushes the ibook off the mantle.

ON THE FIREPLACE

The ibook hits the floor, and bounces neatly into the roaring  
fire.

ON ALEX AND NANCY AND MRS. CONNELLY

Watching this with horror and slight distress.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, dear. Your purse fell into the  
fire, Mr. Kendricks.

We hear a mouse trap SNAP; Alex flinches less than he might  
otherwise.

CLOSE ON

A scorched and somewhat melted ibook.

INT. MICHAEL'S RESTAURANT – THE NEXT AFTERNOON

The flame-broiled portable sits on the table between a very nervous Alex and his very dubious editor, Jean.

ALEX

... You're wondering why I didn't  
back up. I did. I burned a CD right  
before, but...

Alex grabs at the ibook's CD slot. Frustrated, he BANGS the computer on the side of the table (drawing the attention of other diners.) A warped CD pops out.

ALEX

(weak joke)

Looks like I really burned it.

Jean fails to laugh at Alex's bad joke.

ALEX

You don't think I threw my own  
computer in a fire to get out of a  
deadline?

JEAN

I doesn't matter what I think,  
Alex. All that matters is that you  
missed the deadline.

ALEX

If just give me a couple weeks,  
three days...

JEAN

As you know, we're owned by a pet  
food company now, and that's a  
bottom-line business. And sadly,  
the corporate overlords have  
decreed that we trim our mid- and  
low-list authors. So we've been  
canceling every contract that's in  
breach.

ALEX

I'm not in breach. You said just  
make it good and true—

JEAN

(genuinely sad)

A person's word is no good in this  
business anymore.

She puts her hand on his.

JEAN

But if you ever do finish your  
book, I hope you know that I  
genuinely wish you the best of luck  
placing it elsewhere.

Alex pulls his hand away.

ALEX

No, you can't do that; You can't  
just cancel my book contract.

JEAN

Our lawyers already have, Alex.

Alex stands. He's getting worked up.

ALEX

I'm a writer, not dog food. You  
can't treat writers like this,  
like, like horse meat!

JEAN

(a little offended)

We only use highest quality beef  
and beef by-products.

Alex notices everyone is staring at him, and not on his side.  
He sits down, quietly. After a beat:

ALEX

Would you say I'm mid-list or..

JEAN

Oh, Mid. Right there in the mid.

A waiter leaves the check. Jean immediately picks it up, and  
scans it. She smiles warmly at Alex.

JEAN

Let's split this.

ON TV

Martha Stewart stands at a table, painting a perfect pine  
cone with clear lacquer.

MARTHA STEWART

...remembering always to brush out.  
We'll let that dry and...

INT. APARTMENT - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

Nancy watches in her much denuded parlor (conspicuously remaining is that pyramid, which she couldn't sell.)

On TV, Martha Stewart places the lacquered cone upright in a perfect drying rack and moves down the table to a large wooden bowl filled with perfectly hand-lacquered earlier.

MARTHA STEWART

Here we have some pine cones we lacquered earlier. But before we string them together, we'll need to drill a small hole through the base of each one.

Martha Stewart stands in front of a professional drill press, wearing safety goggles. She DRILLS a pine cone.

MARTHA STEWART

I'm using a 1/16 inch bit, but you can go smaller...

NANCY

Oh, bite me!

SFX: LOUD RACKET.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN

Nancy enters. The racket appears to be coming from the dumbwaiter. Nancy opens the dumbwaiter and looks inside.

LOOKING UP THE DUMBWAITER SHAFT

Nancy sees Mrs. Connelly looking down.

MRS. CONNELLY

Hello, Miss Rose.

ON NANCY

NANCY

Is there something wrong, Mrs. Connelly?

LOOKING UP THE DUMBWAITER SHAFT

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, Mr. Fawkes is caught in the dumbwaiter again.

ON NANCY

NANCY  
How did he get—

LOOKING UP THE DUMBWAITER SHAFT

Mr. Fawkes appears out of the darkness, talons first.

MR. FAWKES  
(HORRIFYING SCREECH)

Mr. Fawkes attacks Nancy, biting and pecking her face. It's like a scene from "The Birds".

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)  
What are you doing to Mr. Fawkes?  
Stop it!

Nancy gets her head out of the dumbwaiter, but Mr. Fawkes is still on her face. She staggers out of the kitchen, and into the antique hutch, breaking some hard-to-replace leaded glass. (She's shrieking the whole time, of course).

Nancy is so occupied with Mr. Fawkes that she does not hear the door open and a quick pitter patter of steps.

Mrs. Connelly rushes up behind Nancy and starts WHALING on the back of her head with a pot. This goes on for some time.

EXT. SEVENTH AVENUE — EARLY EVENING

Music: "I'LL GET BY" BY ALICIA KEYES.

Alex walks dejectedly down the street. Noticing he is still carrying his burnt iBook, he tosses it in a garbage can. He walks a little further, past...

EXT. HOMETOWN REALTY

A storefront operation, decorated with Christmas lights. Matthew is sitting at his desk.

INT. HOMETOWN REALTY

Alex sits across from Matthew.

ALEX  
We were wondering, in the current market, how much we might make if we were to sell now. Right now.

KENNETH

That depends on how much you come down on the price.

(off Alex's stare)

You way overpaid, and what, with that awful tenant...

ALEX

You said she was a sweet old lady...

KENNETH

(chuckles)

I can't imagine saying that.

ALEX

Okay, what if we bought her out...

KENNETH

You wouldn't be the first person who tried. Mrs. Connelly has lived most of her life in that apartment; she's going to die there. Can I be honest with you?

ALEX

Sure, why not?

KENNETH

The only way you're going sell that duplex is if you can get some young, naive couple caught up in the romance of it, and even then, you're going to take a huge, huge loss.

ALEX

Huge?

KENNETH

(correcting)

Huge huge.

INT. APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Nancy looks in the mirror, sadly. Dozens of pieces of bloody tissue are on her face; hanks of hair are missing.

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

A tear runs down her cheek. It burns one of her cuts.

INT. APARTMENT – FOYER – EVENING

Alex opens the door, glumly. He hears QUIET SOBBING.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM

Alex finds Nancy sitting on the bed. Her face his red. Alex sits down, and puts his arm around her.

ALEX

What did she do this time?

NANCY

It's what I did.

NANCY'S FLASHBACK

Nancy kneels on the stairs, tapping with a hammer.

NANCY (V.O.)

I was fixing the stairs...

ALEX (V.O.)

What wrong with the stairs?

Mrs. Connelly stands above Nancy, supervising her work.

MRS. CONNELLY

I hope you're tacking that  
carpeting down good.

NANCY

(carpet tacks in mouth)  
That's what I'm doing, Mrs.  
Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY

It's very loose. I could slip and  
fall and break my neck.

That's it! Nancy YANKS hard on the carpet runner, literally pulling it out from under Mrs. Connelly. Mrs. Connelly tumbles down the stairs dramatically.

Mrs. Connelly lies at the bottom of the steps, face down but with the rest of her body right side up.

CLOSE ON

Nancy's face as she smiles, causing the carpet tacks in her mouth to tilt up at a devilish angle.

OUT OF FLASHBACK

Nancy's eyes are rimmed with tears.

NANCY  
I can't believe I did that!

ALEX  
(confused)  
You pushed her down the stairs?

NANCY  
No, but I imagined it! And I liked  
it!  
(She sobs on his shoulder)  
What's wrong with me? I'm evil!

Alex caresses her head lovingly.

ALEX  
C'mon, c'mon. It's okay. It's  
perfectly natural to have fantasies  
like that.

NANCY  
You?

ALEX  
Sure.

ALEX'S FANTASIES

In rapid succession, we see fantasies Alex had earlier:

Alex takes out a garbage bag that clearly has a body in it.

Alex grabs his 99 cent novel from Mrs. Connelly and slams her  
on the head with it.

Alex waits with Mrs. Connelly at a street corner, holding her  
groceries. He shoves her in front of an oncoming car.

Alex has Mrs. Connelly by the waist and is shoving her into  
the fireplace with the burning ibook.

ALEX (OVER PRECEDING)  
Look, after all that woman has done  
to us, there'd be something wrong  
with you if you didn't want her  
dead.



NANCY

I don't want her dead. I just  
wouldn't mind if she was dead.

ALEX

(strangely comforting)  
Hey, when you think about it, she  
should be dead. She's 105 years  
old, at least 20 years more than  
she's allotted. And what has she  
done for anybody? She drove her  
husband to drink himself into an  
early grave, she's got us so worn  
out, it seems like we're never  
going to have sex again...

NANCY

(choked up, squeaky)  
I want to have sex again!

ALEX

Me, too. But with all this stress  
she's causing, the repairs and  
fines, she got you fired...

NANCY

She killed your computer.

ALEX

You know, in, uh, Eskimoland, she'd  
be on an ice floe. Bye bye, Mrs.  
Connelly! Tell it to the polar  
bears!

Nancy LAUGHS reflexively; she pinches Alex's chest.

NANCY

You're evil, too.

ALEX

There's nothing you can do about  
it, so you might as well dream.

Nancy cuddles into Alex. They lie back on the bed together;  
he turns on the TV with the remote.

ON SCREEN

Behind a FEMALE NEWSCASTER is a mortise of a caduceus  
superimposed on a skull and crossbones. The mortise reads,  
"KILLER FLU?"

FEMALE NEWSCASTER

...accompanied by nausea and violent diarrhea. Doctors warn that this particular strain is particularly dangerous, and potentially deadly, to children under five and especially the elderly.

Nancy and Alex watch this, silently. On the TV, the newscaster turns to the SPORTSCASTER.

FEMALE NEWSCASTER (CONT.)

Those Nets could have used a couple of last minute flu shots, eh, Hank?

SPORTSCASTER

(a little confused)

That's right, Pepper! Let's go to—

Nancy takes the remote from Alex and clicks off the TV. They both stare ahead for a moment, saying nothing.

Music (from above): "HAWAII 5-0" THEME

INT. BROWNSTONE - LOBBY

Alex, wearing a suit and tie and professional overcoat, walks toward the door.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)

Oh, Mr. Kendricks?

Alex looks up in her direction but says nothing.

MRS. CONNELLY

Could you de-ice the steps? They're terrible icy.

ALEX

(thin smile)

You'd better not go outside then.

Alex exits. Through the door, we see him take a terrific fall on the steps.

INT. UPSCALE MEN'S MAGAZINE - CONTINUOUS

On the wall is a large mock-up of this month's ZUBRICK magazine. The cover features a bodacious quasi-celebrity in a state of promotional undress.

Alex, his coat scraped dirty from the steps and a bruise on his forehead, stands in front of an unyielding ASSISTANT.

ALEX

Jean Begley introduced us.

ASSISTANT

He says he's never heard of you.

ALEX

He asked me to write a column for him. On the writing life.

ASSISTANT

Did he say this at a party?

ALEX

A dinner party. At our house.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

I'm sorry to tell you this, but Mr. Zubrick is a terrible alcoholic. He won't remember you. You didn't have sex with him, did you?

ALEX

No.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

No harm done then.

INT. SUBWAY CAR — EVENING

A glum Alex is smashed in among commuters. After a moment, he notices that the businessman behind him is rhythmically bumping into him. Then he sees:

THE OTHER END OF THE CAR

There are several seats available, next to one very sick-looking businessman. Seeing this, Alex makes a decision.

Alex worms his way through the crowd. He walks to the other end of the car. He sits down next to the man. He draws a DEEP BREATH.

CLOSE ON

A door. The door opens, revealing an incredibly sick-looking Alex and Nancy.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT — DOORWAY — CONTINUOUS

Nancy leans in close.

NANCY  
Hi, Mrs. Connelly. We were wondering, is there anything we can do for you?

ALEX  
(hitting the 'h')  
Happy Thanksgiving.

MRS. CONNELLY  
You two look awful. Did you catch that horrible Chinese flu?

Alex and Nancy act unconvincingly innocent.

ALEX  
Oh, no, we're fine.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Good. But you should get a flu shot. Officer Dan took me to get one last week.

NANCY  
We'll do that. Well, Happy Thanksgiving.

MRS. CONNELLY  
No, come in. I do have something for you to do.

She SLAMS the door, UNHOOKS the chain, and lets them in.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

In front of her chair is a TV tray with the remains of a huge Thanksgiving feast.

MRS. CONNELLY  
This lovely black lady brought me a whole turkey and a lovely dinner but I'm afraid some of the turkey bones didn't go down the disposal.

Nancy and Alex follow her into the kitchen.

NANCY  
You don't have a disposal, Mrs. Connelly.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Well, it should be taken care of. It's very unsanitary.

Alex stares down into the sink, looking queasy. It's a greasy cesspool with skin floating on the surface and glops of mashed potato and cranberry churning in it.

DISSOLVE TO:

LATER

Alex's lies under the sink, inexpertly STRUGGLING to loosen the elbow joint. The joint suddenly jars loose, and a sink full of watery goo pours onto Alex's face.

Nancy looks down into the sink. Through the open pipe she sees her husband's gristle-covered face.

Alex looks up in terror. Through the open pipe he can see his imminently upchucking wife.

Nancy's head dips into the sink as she VOMITS. We hear it SPLASH out of the bottom of the pipe. Alex MOANS weakly.

Mrs. Connelly watches all this matter-of-factly.

MRS. CONNELLY

Let me get you some rags so you can clean that up.

She patters away.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - DAY

Bundled-up kids play happily in the park.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Alex lay on the bed at odd angles, near death.

NANCY

What day is it?

ALEX

I died on Sunday. So I think it's Tuesday.

They both stare up at the ceiling for a long moment.

NANCY

I can't believe we tried to kill Mrs. Connelly.

ALEX

I don't know what you're talking about.

NANCY

You know. We thought, we, when you  
got sick, you knew if she...

ALEX

Maybe we did try to kill her a  
little bit.

NANCY

That's not nice.

CLOSE ON

An open box of Godiva™ chocolates. An elderly thumb pushes  
deep into one of them.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT — PARLOR — CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Connelly frowns, and thumbs another chocolate. Alex and  
Nancy sit across from her, not looking well.

NANCY

You know, there's a chart showing  
what's inside each chocolate.

MRS. CONNELLY

(thumbing a chocolate)  
That's all right, dear.

NANCY

Anyway, like I said, we just want  
to apologize for...

ALEX

Any misunderstandings.

NANCY

With the heat, and the plumbing.  
And anything else.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, you two are so sweet. You're  
the nicest landlords I've ever had.  
So many of them were not very nice  
at all, in the end.

ALEX

You've had a lot of landlords?

MRS. CONNELLY

Gobs and gobs, over the years! Ten  
in just the past eight years, if  
you can believe that.

NANCY  
(realization sinking in)  
Ten people have moved out of here  
in the last eight years?

MRS. CONNELLY  
Well, they didn't all move out. Mr.  
Myer took his own life. Poor dear  
had money problems.

Alex is preoccupied with something he sees at the bottom of  
Mr. Fawkes' cage.

ALEX  
Is that my novel?

It is. Torn-out pages, covered with birdshit.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I'm sorry, dear. I couldn't read  
it. It was filthy dirty.  
(to Nancy)  
Mr. Connelly hid his dirty books  
inside the toilet tank.  
(thumbing chocolate)  
Butter cream!

Mrs. Connelly pops the chocolate in her mouth.

ALEX  
(insecure fury)  
Just because you don't like my  
writing, which others have praised--  
(noticing)  
Mrs. Connelly?

Mrs. Connelly is turning red. She's CHOKING.

Alex jumps up and hoists Mrs. Connelly out of her chair. He  
Heimlich's her violently, several times. The chocolate flies  
out. Relieved, Alex relaxes his grip. Mrs. Connelly instantly  
drops out of frame. We hear a DEAD THUMP.

Nancy drops to Mrs. Connelly's side, feels her neck pulse.

NANCY  
Oh, God!

ALEX  
Clear!

Alex slams his fist down on Mrs. Connelly chest, like he's  
seen on TV.

NANCY  
What are you doing?!!

ALEX  
CPR.

Nancy pushes Alex away, and starts doing real CPR. Alex looks on helplessly.

NANCY  
Clear her airway!  
(manic finger gesture)  
Clear her airway!

Alex anxiously sticks his finger in Mrs. Connelly mouth, and scoops out a fingerful of gooey chocolate.

NANCY (CONT.)  
Give her mouth-to-mouth!

Alex is terrified. But dutifully, he opens Mrs. Connelly mouth and blows in. He comes up for breath, starts to blow again. Mrs. Connelly eyes snap open. He backs off, startled.

MRS. CONNELLY  
What are you doing?

She looks down. Nancy's hands are on Mrs. Connelly's breasts.

NANCY  
You choked on chocolate.

Flustered, Mrs. Connelly pushes them away and starts to stand. She recoils from Alex's attempt to help her up.

MRS. CONNELLY  
I think you should go now.

ALEX  
We should call a doctor..

Mrs. Connelly pushes them toward the door.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Time to go. Go now. Please go.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING — CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Connelly slams the door. She starts to LOCK it.

INT. APARTMENT — PARLOR

Nancy and Alex sit, brooding. After a beat:



ALEX  
We should have just let her die.

NANCY  
(realizing they could  
have)  
Oh, poop!

SFX: A LOUD, DISCONCERTING, THREE-TONE CHIME.

INT. APARTMENT – FOYER – MOMENTS LATER

Alex opens the door, and looks up into the face of:

OFFICER DAN  
You sicken me.

ALEX  
Excuse me? What are you--

Officer Dan's fingers pinch Alex's lips closed.

OFFICER DAN  
Shut up.  
(keeping fingers clamped)  
We keep a list of people like you  
down at the station, and you're on  
that list now. If I see or hear of  
you ever doing your sickness on  
Mrs. Connelly or any other elderly  
person, I am going to come here to  
arrest you and then I am going to  
shoot you trying to escape. Do you  
understand?

Alex nods his head. Officer Dan pinches his lips tighter.

OFFICER DAN  
Say "Yes, I understand."

ALEX  
(through pinched lips)  
Yes, I understand.

Officer Dan lets go.

OFFICER DAN  
You have a good day now.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK – AFTERNOON

Nancy and Alex walk slowly in the park, arm in arm.

NANCY

I guess this would technically be murder, huh?

ALEX

Technically, she's already dead.

They walk in front of the playground. Nancy stops to watch.

ALEX

We're just making room for future generations.

NANCY

(face lighting up)  
For the children.

Nancy hugs Alex. He hugs her back, and kisses her forehead. They watch the children play.

EXT. EAST VILLAGE – LATE AFTERNOON

A tiny blacked-out storefront with "ANARCHY" sloppily painted in red across the window. Alex, acting as suspicious as possible, exits with a bag full of books. He's wearing a hooded sweatshirt and sunglasses – the Unabomber Disguise.

INT. APARTMENT – BEDROOM – SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Sun streams in the window. We PAN over to the bed, where we see the titles of several pamphlets and books with type-only covers: "Art of the Kill," "Amateur Assassination," "50 Ways to Off Your Lover," "Clean Kills," etc.

Nancy and Alex lazily lie on the bed, their legs overlapping, flipping through the books and trading them as if they were reading the Sunday New York Times together.

Music: "I'LL BE GLAD WHEN YOU'RE DEAD (YOU RASCAL YOU)" BY LOUIS ARMSTRONG

ALEX

How about this?

He hands her the book (The title is simply, "KILL YOUR ENEMIES!"). Nancy scrunches up her face in disgust.

NANCY

Too messy.  
(been on her mind)  
Alex, what about Officer Dan?

ALEX

I think we're smarter than Officer Dan.

We hear the BRASS ENSEMBLE from above. Nancy and Alex smile at each other and cozy closer together.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING — THE NEXT DAY

Nancy and Alex sit on the stairs, in crouched positions. Wearing yellow rubber gloves, they rapidly twist banisters back and forth. They're both hopped up on adrenaline.

NANCY

She's gone to the pharmacy, so we've got two hours.

ALEX

The pharmacy is two blocks away.

NANCY

She likes to recount the pills.

Alex twists a banister and it moves easily.

ALEX

These are loose.

NANCY

(diligently twisting)  
I noticed it when I was tacking down the carpet. I'm surprised she hasn't noticed it.

ALEX

It's her own fault then.

Nancy stands and backs up against Mrs. Connelly's door.

NANCY

(miming it as she speaks)  
Okay. Pitter-pats out, holds on for support, ancient railing collapses, over she goes, Aaaahhh. Tragic. One paragraph in the New York Post.

Alex stands and puts his arm around Nancy's waist.

ALEX

You're sexy when you're evil.

They kiss. As they do so, the handrail starts to move, not out, but parallel with the stairs.

The couple glances over just as the banisters start to collapse like dominos, gathering speed as they round the corner. The final banisters bounce wildly on the wood flooring. Two bounce up and SMASH into the stained glass.

Nancy stifles a SCREAM. Alex is dumbstruck.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — MORNING

The street lamps are striped with red for the holidays.

FISH-EYE LENS

Mrs. Connelly, in a black wool coat and wearing a small black hat with a semi-veil, pitter-pats toward the front door. She stops, and turns around as if she's forgotten something.

NANCY (O.C.)  
Jesus Christ!

CLOSE ON

Nancy stares through the peephole impatiently.

INT. BROWNSTONE — FOYER — CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Connelly walks a couple of steps back, then remembers she hasn't forgotten anything, turns and pitter-pats out.

Nancy springs into the lobby and reconns the area like a commando. She's wearing a black sweatsuit and black gloves.

NANCY  
(gesturing anxiously)  
Go go go!

Alex runs out, in black jeans, turtleneck and gloves, and scurries up the stairs (which has been rebuilt, probably at some expense, with lots of clamps still in place; where the stained glass was is covered with a black plastic tarp). Nancy does a quick recon, and runs up the stairs after him.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Alex is crouching down in front of the lock, even though he is using the key. When the door opens, he clenches his fist like he's accomplished something. Nancy pushes him inside.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT

Nancy shuts the door, quickly locks it; she's all business.

NANCY

Okay, she's going to be at church  
for at least an hour; but let's be  
out of here in thirty.

ALEX

Let's move.

The two "break" and scurry in different directions. We follow Alex as he scampers about the parlor, looking for dangers he can create. He hops around commando-style.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM

Nancy runs in and scans quickly. Seeing that the new tiles in the shower don't match the old ones, she gets briefly heartsick. Then, remembering her mission, she starts going through all the bottles around Mrs. Connelly's sink and on top of her toilet tank. It's mostly beauty products. Nancy picks up a large jar of face cream.

NANCY

Chanel? I can't even afford Chanel.

Nancy opens the medicine cabinet; there are dozens of prescription bottles inside.

NANCY

(grim)  
Jackpot.

IN THE PARLOR

Alex fiddles with the brackets holding a very large, heavy bronze crucifix hanging from the wall. The crucifix drops down and BANGS him on the head, very, very hard.

IN THE BATHROOM

Nancy swaps medications in bottles, as quickly as possible.

NANCY

Little white pills in with other  
little white pills, tragic mix-up.

She puts the medicine back in the cabinet. She looks in the shower, grabs a bottle of shampoo. She starts squirting some on the bottom of the tub.

NANCY

So many accidents occur in the  
shower...

IN THE PARLOR

Alex scans for kill ops; Nancy runs back in.

ALEX  
What's our time?

NANCY  
T minus 12.  
(noticing)  
Alex, are you bleeding?

A trickle of blood runs down the middle of Alex's forehead.

ALEX  
Am I?

NANCY  
Let's not leave any of that in this  
apartment.

Holding the sides of his face, Nancy bends Alex's head down and licks the blood off his forehead. He kisses her. She kisses him back. They start to make out. Then she sees:

Perched on an upper cornice is Mr. Fawkes, staring down at them, like the Raven.

NANCY  
(suddenly all business)  
Let's get out of here.

They scurry toward the door; Alex peels away from her.

ALEX  
One more thing!

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Nancy peeks out of the door anxiously.

NANCY  
(loud whisper)  
Hurry up!

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT — KITCHEN

Alex lies on the floor next to stove, with the broiler door open. He BLOWS several times hard.

ALEX  
And out goes the pilot.

He hops quickly to his feet, and turns the oven on.

ALEX

An hour at 375 should do it.

Nancy sticks her head in the door.

NANCY

Did you blow out the pilot for the  
burners?

Just as he turns back toward the stove, Alex is instantly enveloped in a HUGE FIREBALL. It burns off in a flash, leaving his face sooty and his hair frazzled.

EXT. D'AGASTINO'S ON SEVENTH AVENUE - PARK SLOPE - DAY

Christmas decorations in the window; snow on the sidewalk.

CLOSE ON

A grocery shelf containing various burn ointments. Alex's hand reaches in and takes several tubes of each.

INT. D'AGASTINO'S - CONTINUOUS

Alex walks down the aisle with his shopping basket. His face looks badly sunburned and shiny from various unguents. Tiny blisters on his forehead. His eyebrows are partially missing. He is trying to look totally casual. Then he sees:

The CUTEST BABY, in a grocery cart, staring at him.

Alex waves to the baby. She GIGGLES. Alex comes up close to the baby, and makes silly faces and FUNNY NOISES. The baby SHRIEKS IN TERROR.

Suddenly, the baby's mother appears and sweeps the baby away.

ALEX

(calling after her)  
I'm sorry. I was just-

Alex sees the lady at the end of the aisle, consoling her baby and talking to Officer Dan.

Alex manages a sick grin. Officer Dan enters frame.

OFFICER DAN

What, are you scaring babies now?  
(disgusted)  
What happened to your face?

ALEX  
(practiced casual)  
Oh, I had one of those chemical  
peels. Takes years off your face.

OFFICER DAN  
Please come with me.

Officer Dan grabs Alex's coat and starts hauling him down aisle. Alex PROTESTS INARTICULATELY and falls down. Officer Dan continues dragging him.

EXT. D'AGASTINO'S

Officer Dan tears the shopping basket from Alex's hands and tosses him into a dirty pile of snow.

OFFICER DAN  
Stay off of my beat.

ALEX  
I need my ointments!

INT. APARTMENT - FOYER

Alex walks in, apparently replaying his encounter with Officer Dan, and winning.

NANCY (O.C.)  
Honey? I'm in here!

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM

Alex finds Nancy on a ladder, jabbing at a supporting beam with a screwdriver. (Most of the ceiling plaster has fallen away at this point). She seems slightly manic.

NANCY  
I noticed we had some dry rot here,  
and I thought I'd help it along...

Nancy begins gouging the wood with her fingers.

ALEX  
(gentle criticism)  
Sweetie, aren't the police going to  
know you, I mean, finger prints and  
DNA and all that.

NANCY  
Not after our friends the termite  
get through with it.



Nancy produces a glass vial with bugs in it.

ALEX  
Where'd you get termites?

NANCY  
Pet store.

ALEX  
People keep termites as pets?

NANCY  
New York.

ALEX  
(impressed)  
Wow, you're like an evil genius.

NANCY  
Thank you.

Nancy gently pushes the termites into the wood.

NANCY  
Eat, my pretties.

One of the termites falls in her eye.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATER

Alex and Nancy sit on the bed. Alex stares straight ahead; Nancy is looking up at the hole in the ceiling.

NANCY  
You know, as long as we're putting  
a hole in the ceiling, this might  
be a better place for a staircase.  
We could turn the two front rooms  
into a split level living-slash-  
entertainment area.

ALEX  
(distracted)  
Sure.

Alex exits. Nancy doesn't really notice.

Alex returns, lugging the wooden pyramid. He places it right under the ceiling hole.

ALEX  
A little insurance.

NANCY  
(upset)  
You can't - that cost \$600!

This is news to Alex. But he just shakes his head, amused.

ALEX  
The best six hundred bucks we ever  
spent.

Nancy appraises the scene, unhappily.

NANCY  
It doesn't look right there.

ALEX  
Function over form.

NANCY  
(reluctant)  
Okay.

Alex stands and kisses Nancy. They look up. We follow their gaze to the hole, and then through the floor to:

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

The "trap" lies a few feet between Mrs. Connelly's chair and her TV set. We watch from the trap's POV as Mrs. Connelly patters down the hall right at it. She stops inches from the trap and turns around.

Music from TV (Very Loud): "QUINCY" THEME

The camera swings to follow Mrs. Connelly as she walks right by the trap, missing it by inches. She sits down, oblivious.

INT. APARTMENT - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex and Nancy sit on the bed. Alex stares up at the hole, Nancy down at the pyramid.

ALEX  
That the theme from "Barnaby  
Jones"?

NANCY  
(re: pyramid)  
The police are going to know that  
piece doesn't belong there.

ALEX

Not Barnaby Jones. This is going to drive me crazy.

NANCY

I don't like this. Could we move it about five feet that way?

ALEX

If we move it five feet that way, it won't be under the hole.

Nancy frowns. Alex hugs her.

ALEX

It's only for a little while, honey. Then you can move it anywhere you little heart desires.

NANCY

(happily)  
Quincy!

Alex and Nancy high five.

DISSOLVE TO:

MUCH LATER

There's several empty Chinese food cartons on the bed. Alex is nodding off; Nancy has her arms around her knees and is rocking nervously. From above we hear:

WOMAN ON TV (VERY LOUD)

I thought our lack of intimacy was my husband's fault, but you made me realize it was my hair. It was a ratty mess.

NANCY

(through gritted teeth)  
I. Hate. That. There.

From above, we hear a chair leg SQUEAK on the floor.

ALEX

(jarred awake)  
She's getting up!

Alex and Nancy watch the ceiling, listening as Mrs. Connelly's PITTER-PATTING FOOTSTEPS seem to come right up to the trap but then again miss it by inches.

NANCY

Goddamit!

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

She reaches behind an oatmeal box and pulls out a bottle of cheap scotch. She fills a small Magilla Gorilla jelly jar to the brim, and starts pattering back.

TRAP'S POV

She stops at the precipice.

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - PARLOR - CONTINUOUS

She places her jelly jar on top of the TV, and changes the channels. From the TV, we hear a quite loud PING-PONG MATCH accompanied by EXCITED JAPANESE COMMENTARY. She reaches for the jar and knocks it to the ground. It shatters.

MRS. CONNELLY

Shite.

IN ALEX AND NANCY'S BEDROOM

As he hears Mrs. Connelly PATTERN away, Alex throws up his arms in EXASPERATION. Nancy stares at the pyramid.

NANCY

Maybe if I just rotate it...

IN MRS. CONNELLY'S PARLOR

Mrs. Connelly patters back from the kitchen with a sponge, dustpan and brush. She looks down and sees a lot of the broken glass is under the TV's rolling cart.

IN ALEX AND NANCY'S BEDROOM

Nancy gets up and starts to fiddle with the pyramid.

IN MRS. CONNELLY'S PARLOR

Mrs. Connelly pushes the TV cart away from the spill.

TRAP'S POV

The rolling cart barrels right at it. We hear the WOOD CRACKING. We quickly switch to:

TV'S POV

The floors gives way, revealing Nancy, looking up in surprise. The camera plummets towards her.

ON THE GAPING HOLE IN THE CEILING

Mrs. Connelly peers over the edge.

HER POV

Nancy is pinned under the TV. She MOANS, dazed.

ON MRS. CONNELLY

Looking down.

MRS. CONNELLY  
Goodness. I could've fallen  
through!

EXT. BROWNSTONE — THE NEXT MORNING

The police car is in front again.

CLOSE ON

Officer Sandra's face.

OFFICER SANDRA  
(flatly)  
The television set fell through the  
floor and landed on your wife.

INT. APARTMENT — BEDROOM

Alex sits on the bed, trying to act casual. Officer Sandra is taking the report. Officer Dan stares at Alex.

ALEX  
Some kind of a freak accident, huh?

OFFICER DAN  
(pointing up)  
You're going to need to get that  
fixed right away. Mrs. Connelly  
said she nearly fell through there.

ALEX  
We're getting some estimates.

OFFICER DAN

Right away, Dr. Phibes. And you owe  
Mrs. Connelly a new TV.

(before Alex can respond)

A nice one.

We here a METALLIC CLACKING O.C. Nancy enters, carrying a tray. A jointed steel armature surrounds her whole leg like a scaffolding; metal pins go into her leg just above and below her knee and at hip level. Nancy CLACKS over to the Officer Dan with great difficulty.

NANCY

I have to apologize for all the  
debris. Would you like a cookie?

EXT. BROWNSTONE — EVENING — ESTABLISHING

INT. APARTMENT — BEDROOM — CONTINUOUS

Nancy hands a check to a SENIOR WORKMAN as workers cart off their ladders and tools. They placed a huge ugly hydraulic lift in the middle of the room, holding up the ceiling.

NANCY

I know it's getting late, but it  
would be great if you could clean  
up now.

(off his blank stare)

Or you could come back in the  
morning.

SENIOR WORKMAN

We don't clean up.

Nancy sits on the bed.

NANCY

That check's going to bounce.

Alex is pacing back and forth, thinking.

ALEX

So after Mrs. Connelly, "moves  
out," we'll have to sublet the  
upstairs until we can get back on  
our feet. We can probably get,  
what, fifteen-hundred?

NANCY

More. If we can get the smell out.

They both CHUCKLE. Alex casually leans against the mantle. It CRUMBLES away, causing him to TOPPLE over. The rest of the mantle FALLS in pieces on top of him. As he emerges from the rubble, we see several termites crawling across his face.

INT. APARTMENT – PARLOR – LATER

Nancy strings her Martha Stewart pinecone garland along the ceiling, draping it in perfect arcs around the room. Alex decorates the Christmas tree.

Music (ambient): "Blue Moon" by the Cowboy Junkies

ALEX

How about that thing we read, where  
the British secret service used to  
use poison-tipped umbrellas?

He mimes poking Mrs. Connelly in the back with a poison-tipped umbrella. Nancy appears, and starts rearranging the ornaments Alex has already placed on the tree.

NANCY

They used some kind of special  
superdeadly poison.

ALEX

(miming)

We could just poke her a bunch of  
times with regular poison.

They both CHUCKLE, a little evilly.

After a beat:

NANCY

You know, Alex, I think we're being  
too smart for own good.

ALEX

Smart?

Nancy reaches into a box and takes out a beautiful angel.

NANCY

We're making everything overly  
complicated. Maybe it should just  
be something simple.

ALEX

Push her down the stairs, you mean.

Alex lifts Nancy, so she can place the angel atop the tree.

NANCY

That might not work.

ALEX

If it doesn't, we carry her back up  
and push her down again.

Nancy turns off a lamp. The tree glows. The couple wrap their arms around each other, admiring it. They kiss.

INT. APARTMENT - FOYER - VERY LATE AT NIGHT

Alex and Nancy are again in their commando outfits. Nancy looks out the peephole, holding a pillow.

ALEX

I still think this is going to look  
suspicious.

NANCY

Old people die in their sleep all  
the time. Especially with all the  
excitement she's had lately.

ALEX

(realizing)

Is that my pillow?

NANCY

Mine's too fluffy.

ALEX

Why can't we use one of her  
pillows?

NANCY

I don't want to leave face prints.

Alex smiles and kisses the back of her neck. Nancy puts a finger to his lips, and opens the door.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LOBBY

The two begin to "scurry" up the steps, except of course, Nancy is limping wildly. As she goes up the steps, we hear a loud SQUEAK. They freeze. Nancy signals it's all right; She reaches into her pocket, pulls out a tiny can of oil and applies some to the joints of her leg brace. They continue up the stairs silently.



INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT - DOORWAY

It's completely dark. Two dark figures enter. They creep toward the hallway when they hear the distinct sound of a MATCH BEING LIT. They turn quickly.

The flame hovers in the air above Mrs. Connelly's chair. After a moment, the red tip of a cigarette glows, illuminating two disembodied eyes, staring sternly.

ALEX  
(STIFLED SCREAM)

NANCY  
(thinking quickly)  
Mrs. Connelly, we thought you might be cold, so we brought you an extra pillow.

They drop the pillow and run out.

INT. BROWNSTONE - LOBBY

They tear down the stairs. Nancy turns toward the apartment, but Alex grabs her and pulls her toward the outside door.

EXT. BROWNSTONE - FRONT STOOP

Alex and Nancy half stumble down the stairs. Nancy resists being pulled any further.

NANCY  
What are you—?

Alex picks her up in his arms, and runs across the street.

ALEX  
We are so screwed. We are so screwed. We are so screwed.

INT. PROSPECT PARK - PLAYGROUND

Alex runs around the playground, desperate. Finally, he dumps Nancy in a play structure and dives in after her.

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - INSIDE STRUCTURE

They lie on the ground. We can see their breaths.

NANCY  
What are you doing?!

ALEX  
She's calling the police!

NANCY  
You don't know—

ALEX  
She always calls the police!

NANCY  
(realizing he's right)  
Goddam Officer Dan!

ALEX  
(panicked)  
We're going to have to go on the  
lam. Where do you want to live? It  
can't be Los Angeles. It's got to  
be someplace like Bumblefuck,  
Idaho.

NANCY  
(taking control)  
Calm down. We're not moving to  
Idaho. Let's see if the police show  
up. If they do, we'll hop the F to  
Coney Island and hide out there.

ALEX  
(takes two deep breaths)  
Okay. Good plan.

ANOTHER ANGLE

From outside the structure. There is a beat of silence.

ALEX (FROM INSIDE)  
(joshingly quoting her)  
"We thought you might be cold, so  
we brought you an extra pillow"?

NANCY (FROM INSIDE)  
Better than you screaming.

They both CHUCKLE. A beat, then:

ALEX (FROM INSIDE)  
I'm freezing.

NANCY (FROM INSIDE)  
Come here then.

DISSOLVE TO:

MORNING

Music: "I'VE GOT MY LOVE TO KEEP ME WARM," BY BETH ORTON

Alex and Nancy are curled up together on the ground, spooning, frost in their hair. Nancy awakes. She looks up.

A small boy in a cowboy hat stares down at them. Nancy smiles at him. Alex awakes.

The boy pulls out a space laser gun and SHOOTs them.

BOY

You're dead! You're dead!

Nancy is taken aback. Alex is getting an idea.

CLOSE ON ALEX

ALEX

I need to buy a gun.

EXT. TOMPKINS SQUARE PARK – NIGHT

Alex skulks through the park in a long, down-filled coat. A man approaches him.

DEALER

Smoke. Smoke.

ALEX

(to dealer)

Gun. Gun. Need to buy a gun.

The dealer looks at him askance, and hurries off.

EXT. BROOKLYN – DESOLATE LOT BY THE EAST RIVER

Alex stands with a GUN DEALER behind an old beat-up car.

GUN DEALER

Is this for protection or are you taking proactive measures?

ALEX

What I need is a starter gun. A real gun, though, not a starter's pistol.

GUN DEALER

I gotcha.

He pops the trunk; it's loaded with guns. Alex's eyes widen.

GUN DEALER  
(suspicious)  
You're not going to shoot up a  
schoolyard, are you?

ALEX  
No, no, nothing like that.  
(beat)  
Do I look like the kind of person  
who would shoot up a schoolyard?

GUN DEALER  
You look a little crazy, yes.

ALEX  
I've been under a lot of stress.

GUN DEALER  
(looking closer)  
Did somebody throw acid in your  
face?

ALEX  
No, no. Cosmetic thing.

GUN DEALER  
Acid in the face, you could  
probably swing self-defense. Okay,  
here we go.  
(displaying gun)  
Black Widow, your basic 22-caliber  
revolver. Five hundred dollars.

ALEX  
\$500? It cost half that on the Web!

GUN DEALER  
I offer more personalized service  
than on the Web. Now that comes  
fully loaded, but if you're going  
on any kind of spree, you're going  
to need more bullets.

ALEX  
I'm sure whatever's in there's  
fine. Cash, right?

The dealer gives him a "what do you think," stare. Alex counts out almost all of his money and hands it over.

GUN DEALER

Thanks. One last thing: if you end up in the legal system, and there's even a suggestion I might have been involved, you are dead, your wife is dead, your children are dead.

Alex stands up, SNIFFLING.

ALEX

We don't have any children; we're talking about it.

(off his look, soberly)

But I understand.

GUN DEALER

Don't shoot anybody I wouldn't shoot.

The dealer gets in the car.

ALEX

Listen, I know you're going back to the city, but if you wouldn't mind swinging by Park Slope...

GUN DEALER

I'm not a cab. End of the line.

ALEX

But you drove me out here! And, let's face it, this is dicey neighborhood.

GUN DEALER

What're you worried about? You've got a gun.

He PEELS out.

INT. APARTMENT — PARLOR — NIGHT

Nancy sits, nervously smoking a cigarette. We hear the DOOR OPEN. She stands, and is relieved to see Alex enter in one piece. Alex walks to her, takes the gun from his down coat and places it on the coffee table. They both stare down at it, with great moment. After a long silence,

ALEX

So it's come to this.

Nancy picks the gun off the table.

NANCY

I don't think I've ever even held a  
gu-

The gun GOES OFF. A huge explosion of fluffy down erupts from Alex's crotch.

EXT. PARK SLOPE HOSPITAL - EARLY MORNING

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nancy sits by Alex's side, tightly holding his hand, as DR. KANG nonchalantly briefs him.

DR. KANG

Okay. It's kind of mess down there.

NANCY

Will he still be able to have  
children?

ALEX

(to Nancy, annoyed)  
That's your first question?

DR. KANG

Well, we won't be able to really  
determine the damage until we can  
sort out what's what. But even in  
the worst case scenario, I imagine  
we'd still be able to extract some  
sperm.

NANCY

Oh, thank God.

ALEX

What's the worst case scenario?

DR. KANG

Let's not focus on that just yet.  
Keep in mind that reconstructive  
surgery can do some amazing things;  
I mean, they can turn a woman into  
a man, so, well, that's where we  
are.

(an uncomfortable beat)

I'll give you a moment.

Dr. Kang exits. Nancy lays her head on Alex's chest.

NANCY  
(voice cracking)  
I'm sorry I shot you in the penis.

ALEX  
(patting her head)  
I know. I know.

Dr. Kang reenters.

DR. KANG  
Now, there's two officers here who  
would like to talk to you.

It's Officers Sandra and Dan.

OFFICER DAN  
(to Alex, rote)  
I'm sorry for your loss.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE – SEVERAL NIGHTS LATER

Alex, a little hunched over, and Nancy, limping to keep up,  
walk through bright, sanitized Times Square. And yet the  
tableau is strongly reminiscent of "Midnight Cowboy."

MUSIC: "SILVER BELLS" BY TOM WAITS

INT. NONDESCRIPT MEETING ROOM – MIDTOWN SOMEWHERE

Alex takes a seat on a folding chair next to a BIG GUY.

At the front of the room is a podium, with a banner behind it  
which reads, "Men Accepting Non-Voluntary Genital Loss." a  
MEMBER is speaking.

MEMBER  
Well, a lot of you are asking, what  
kind of idiot would rest an idling  
chain saw in his lap?  
(raises hand sheepishly)  
Guilty.

BACK OF THE ROOM

The Big Guy, wearing a MANGL button, turns to Alex.

BIG GUY  
You're new here.

ALEX  
(eyes forward)  
Yeah.

BIG GUY

We're here to talk about it. I'm Frank.

ALEX

I'm Ben.

FRANK

Share with me, Ben.

(getting no response)

I'll start. In the profession I have chosen, one does not sexually pleasure one's bosses' mistress.

ALEX

(without looking at him)

My wife shot me in the dick.

FRANK

(turns to look ahead)

At least you didn't have to eat yours.

Alex puts it all together. He gets an idea.

ALEX

Say, Frank, in this profession you have chosen... do you freelance?

EXT. THE ROOST - DAY

INT. THE ROOST - CONTINUOUS

Music: "SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN" BY FRANK SINATRA

Alex and Nancy are huddled in a booth with Frank. Nancy's titanium Powerbook sits between them.

ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

Using Nancy's CGI design program, we enter Mrs. Connelly's apartment and turn toward the parlor.

NANCY (O.C.)

The door will be unlocked. Once you get in, okay, I realize this is horribly cluttered, but we're going to go for a much cleaner, brighter look. For starters, those drapes won't be there...

ALEX (O.C.)

Nancy...



NANCY (O.C.)  
(Back to business)  
You might find her here.

The computer's camera swivels toward Mrs. Connelly chair, which has a virtual little old lady sitting it.

NANCY  
Or she might be in her bedroom,  
that's down the hall, second door  
on the right. You got that?

Frank, who doesn't look like he has got that, nods.

FRANK  
When do you want this done?

ALEX  
As soon as possible.

NANCY  
Tonight?

FRANK  
Tonight's Christmas Eve. I like to  
spend Christmas Eve with my family.

ALEX  
It's Christmas Eve?  
(to Nancy, apologetic)  
I didn't get you anything.

Nancy gives Alex and good-natured "forget about it" wave.

FRANK  
I could do it later, after the kids  
go to bed.

Alex and Nancy nod their heads. That sounds good.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — CHRISTMAS EVE — EARLY EVENING

INT. BROWNSTONE — LOBBY

Nancy and Alex enter, looking a little guilty.

MRS. CONNELLY (O.C.)  
Mr. Kendricks! Miss Rose!

Nancy and Alex bow their heads, like guilty dogs.

INT. BROWNSTONE — SECOND FLOOR LANDING

Mrs. Connelly wears a Santa hat.

MRS. CONNELLY

I hope you won't be mad. Officer Dan told me to buy a new TV and give you the bill, but when I ordered it, I didn't realize it was so expensive.

They look into Mrs. Connelly apartment. It's a gigantic flat screen, cinema aspect-ratio HDTV plasma monitor.

MRS. CONNELLY

It gets a much better picture than my old TV. And it has a sleep timer, so if I fall asleep watching it, it'll turn itself off.

ALEX

That's great.

Mrs. Connelly hands her the bill.

MRS. CONNELLY

They said they have easy financing.

NANCY

(big smile)

Enjoy your new TV, Mrs. Connelly.

ALEX

Merry Christmas, Mrs. Connelly.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — CHRISTMAS EVE — NIGHT

MUSIC: "OH, HOLY NIGHT" BY MAZZY STAR

INT. APARTMENT — BEDROOM— CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Alex sit in the dark for a long beat.

NANCY

I never thought of myself as the kind of person who would hire an assassin to kill a little old lady.

Another beat.

ALEX

I feel bad about myself.

They sit there, contemplating what they've become. Suddenly, we hear a LOUD CRASHING O.C. Alex and Nancy leap out of bed.

INT. APARTMENT – PARLOR

Alex rushes in, and reaches for a light switch. A crowbar SMASHES his hand. He SCREAMS.

In the light, we see Frank, shielding his eyes with the crowbar-wielding hand. He backs up and falls into the Christmas tree, CRASHING with it to the ground. He thrashes around in a sea of ELECTRICAL SPARKS.

NANCY

(screams)

What are you doing?!!!

Frank struggles to the ground. He looks sheepish, and obviously drunk.

FRANK

(drunk)

You said second floor. I climbed up...

He points to the broken window he came through.

ALEX

This is the first floor! You climbed up from the basement floor!

Frank hits himself on the forehead.

FRANK

Stupid Frank!

(defensive)

I had a couple of drinks, okay? Have you ever killed anyone? It's hard!

ALEX

Look, Frank, maybe we should just...

Nancy smells smoke. She and Alex look over to see the tree is BURNING. Then Nancy's pine cone garlands catch on fire, and the fire ZIPS along them like a fuse, ringing the whole apartment with fire.

Nancy and Alex are frozen in stunned silence for a moment. Then they hear SOMETHING. They turn to see:

Frank is stumbling out their front door toward the stairs.

INT. BROWNSTONE — LOBBY

Alex and Nancy run out just in time to see

Frank bounds to the top of the stairs. He rips open Mrs. Connelly's door with the crowbar. He rushes in. Nancy and Alex watch in horror as they hear:

MRS. CONNELLY  
(SCREAM)

Frank staggers back out of the door, Mrs. Connelly wrapped around his head like an ATTACKING BABOON. She strikes him on the head with a huge brass crucifix. He falls against the railing, which COLLAPSES. They plunge together over the side.

Nancy and Alex rush up. Bob eyes are wide open. He's dead. Then he blinks. He struggles to his feet, and staggers out.

Alex stares down at the injured Mrs. Connelly. On her forearm, written in blue, are a series of numbers.

ALEX  
Hitler couldn't kill her! What  
chance do I have!?

Nancy looks down. She bends over, licks a finger and rubs it on the numbers. They smear off.

NANCY  
That's the number of the Park Slope  
police department.

Alex and Nancy huddle together and look down at the unconscious Mrs. Connelly. Then back at the fire engulfing their home. Then back at Mrs. Connelly.

NANCY  
We could just leave her here...

ALEX  
But we won't.

NANCY  
(sadly)  
We'll never be rich.

Alex turns to kiss Nancy on the forehead and sees:

THEIR DOORWAY

Dozens of mice scurry out, escaping the fire. This scares them, but not as much as when they turn back to see:

IN THE LOBBY

A dark figure rises in front of the black plastic tarp, which burns away at that moment, revealing the inferno in their bedroom. The figure is Mrs. Connelly. A SCREECH is heard. Mr. Fawkes swoops down and lands on Mrs. Connelly shoulder. Seen only in silhouette, she looks like some kind of pirate.

ON ALEX AND NANCY

Their moment of truth.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — A MOMENT LATER

Nancy opens the door. Alex carries Mrs. Connelly out in his arms. We PULL OUT and UP as they hobble down the stairs. Once they get to the sidewalk:

NANCY

Where do we go now?

WE CONTINUE PULLING OUT. Alex points in one direction and they start going that way. After a few steps, Nancy stops and points in the opposite direction. They go that way.

Music: "WELCOME CHRISTMAS" (THE WHOVILLE SONG) BY LOVE SPIRALS DOWNWARD

It begins to snow.

EXT. BROWNSTONE — SPRING — DAY

INT. APARTMENT — LIBRARY — CONTINUOUS

Kenneth leads another young couple through the apartment. It's battered (and a lot of glass is missing) but it's still mighty impressive.

KENNETH

There's a little fire damage, but under that you'll find all the original wood. It's a real handy man's dream. But the bank is taking a loss on the property, so it's going to go fast.

INT. BROWNSTONE — LOBBY — A MOMENT LATER

Kenneth exits the apartment with the couple.

KENNETH

Oh, and here's Mrs. Connelly!

Mrs. Connelly is making her way across the lobby, leaning on a three-footed cane. Officer Dan walks next to Mrs. Connelly, carrying her groceries. She turns to the couple.

MRS. CONNELLY

Are you looking at the apartment?  
The young couple that was here  
before you, they were so nice. I  
wish they could have stayed.

Officer Dan smiles, betraying nothing.

CLOSE ON

We see a series of romantic photographs of Alex and Nancy. Their wedding photo, in front of their fireplace, etc. PULL OUT to reveal we are:

INT. STATE WOMEN'S PRISON - NANCY'S CELL - DAY

Nancy is walking around the cell, trying to demonstrate what she's talking about.

NANCY

I'm just saying the whole thing is  
a little boxy. But if we angle the  
bed a little, it'll make a kind of  
"conversation pit" with the toilet,  
which we should get some sort of  
pretty fabric to drape over it.

Nancy's cellmate, who's killed before, is unconvinced.

NANCY'S CELLMATE

No.

NANCY

Look, if we're going to be roomies  
for the next twelve to eighteen  
months...

INT. STATE MEN'S PRISON - ALEX'S CELL - DAY

Alex sits on his bunk, portable typewriter in his lap. On the wall next to him are several of the same pictures Nancy has on hers. Alex types: THE END. He pulls out the paper and rolls in another one. He smiles as types: FOR NANCY.

VOICE (O.C.)

Yo!

On the top bunk, his cellmate is reading Alex's manuscript.

ALEX'S CELLMATE

They don't kill the old lady? You  
gotta kill the old lady!

INT. BROWNSTONE – LOBBY

The young couple watches as Mrs. Connelly slowly makes her way toward the stairs, and stops.

MRS. CONNELLY

Oh, these stairs will be the death of me. If only I had one of those elevator chairs, that carry you up..

WIFE

That would be nice, but...

HUSBAND

(patronizing)  
I imagine they're quite expensive.

MRS. CONNELLY

Yes, I suppose you are right.

With Officer's Dan's help, she makes it up the first step. The couple share a knowing glance.

CLOSE ON

Officer's Dan's pocket. Sticking out is a pamphlet, "American People With Disabilities Act: Know Your Rights!"

INT. MRS. CONNELLY'S APARTMENT – PARLOR

Mrs. Connelly parks her cane next to her chair and sits down. She takes out the pamphlet and starts to read. She takes a swig of whisky, and picks up a remote control.

ON HIGH-DEFINITION PLASMA SCREEN TV

It springs to life with the opening of "Hawaii 5-0."

CREDITS

OVER CREDITS

Music: A duet of Cole Porter's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," by Drew Barrymore and Ben Stiller.

The End