

The Box

By

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FADE IN

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - DAY

A crumpled paper ball arcs over a messy desk, and swishes into a trash can's mini basketball hoop. Paper basketballs litter the floor around the trash can.

Business executive ALEX SNOW, mid 30s, thrusts his arms in the air.

ALEX

Yesssssssss!

His momentarily happy eyes betray the deep dark circles beneath them. Behind him? A towering view of neighboring downtown Los Angeles office buildings.

A paper airplane soars over the desk and collides with his last paper ball. They crash and land between his wedding portrait with KATE, mid 30s, and one of her nephew, HENRY, 10.

MARTHA DESMOND, late 20s, smiles from the doorway. She breathes a natural air of confidence and high self-esteem but today? She shrugs.

MARTHA

There is no way the new Tuft Proposal will be ready in two weeks.

ALEX

Get any sleep last night?

Martha shakes her head. He sits down and sifts through the mess on his desk. Martha flings a computer printout at Alex, her briefcase on one chair and herself in the other.

MARTHA

Drinks with Michael and me after work?

ALEX

Can't. Kate gets home from a ten day business trip. Tonight promises to be the overture to a great weekend.

MARTHA

Right. Forgot. Rain check?

ALEX

As soon as this proposal is out of the way.

MARTHA

I thought it got easier up here. I thought our ideas were recognized for their greatness and stress was left to the underlings.

ALEX

Nope.

MARTHA

Think a little sex will--unclog you?

ALEX

Hasn't worked for you.

MARTHA

True, but men are different.

ALEX

Bullshit.

He swoops up three paper balls and goes to the windows. Throws them at the trash can, missing all three.

MARTHA

Like I said-

ALEX

No, like I said--bullshit.

Martha picks up three paper balls from the floor and goes to the windows. She aims carefully and misses wide.

MARTHA

My point is proven.

ALEX

How?

MARTHA

Because Michael and I just had incredible sex less than an hour ago.

Misses again.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

The best we've had in a while.

Her third paper ball swishes in. All net. She frowns.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Well, no theory's absolute.

The telephone beeps.

EDNA (O.S./WHISPERING)

Mr. Noch is on his way.

Alex hides the trash an under his desk as Martha grabs up the paper balls from the floor and looks for where to put them.

Decides on Alex's chair just before he sits in it and looks busy at his computer. Martha looks just as busy reading a file when CEO DAVE NOCH, 50s, pops his head into the office.

MR. NOCH

Morning, Snow. Desmond.

ALEX & MARTHA

Morning, Mr. Noch.

MR. NOCH

Dinner tonight with Sam Tuft. No excuses.

The door closes. Alex's jaw clenches. He squeezes his eyes closed and massages his temples. No use. He jumps up, fell swooping the papers on his desk to the floor.

Kicks his briefcase across the room and kicks the desk. Repeatedly. When he stops, Martha calmly picks up the telephone and presses a button.

EDNA (O.S.)

Yes, Mr. Snow?

MARTHA

Edna, we need new printouts of the Tuft Proposal?—oh, and call my husband and tell him I'm working late.

EDNA (O.S.)

Yes, Mrs. Desmond.

Martha looks at Alex.

MARTHA

We'll make it short and sweet, Alex.
Let's just work through lunch and come up
with something.

He doesn't answer.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Alex, are you with me?

No answer.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Alex-

ALEX

All right, Martha. Okay.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - DUSK

The sun sets in business class as executive Kate Snow refuses dinner from a flight attendant. She sips tea and sifts through reports on her tray table.

INT. RESTAURANT - SIMULTANEOUS

SAM TUFT, 80s, a doddering old executive, rambles on about his company's glory days. A barely touched entree sits in front of Alex who glances at his watch one time too many.

MR. NOCH

Are we keeping you from something
important, Snow?

Martha casts a quick sideways glance at Alex.

ALEX

No, sir. Not at all.

EXT. STREET - LATER

Alex and Martha wait by the valet kiosk.

MARTHA

Think you'll make it?

ALEX

Just.

MARTHA

Relax, Alex. Just have fun.

Martha's car pulls up. She gets in. Smiles and waves goodbye, pulling away as Alex's car pulls up.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - LATER

Kate picks up the airplane telephone.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex places gourmet takeout food containers in the microwave oven. The telephone rings as he decants a bottle of red wine.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - CONTINUOUS

Kate opens a lap top computer and discusses work over the telephone. She accepts a hot tea refill.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex takes out two place settings. The phone is cradled between his ear and shoulder.

ALEX

No, Henry, not yet. I'll call as soon as she gets in.--Yes, I promise. --Yes, we're still having the dinner party Monday.--Bye.

He hangs up. The phone rings immediately. He snatches it up.

ALEX(CONT.) (CONT'D)

Kate!--Oh, hi, Mom. No, not yet.--Yes, Monday night. I--Mom, we-- Mom--Mom, I need to go, okay? Goodbye.

He hangs up, then takes the phone off the hook.

INT. AIRPLANE CABIN - LATER

The flight attendant asks Kate to prepare for landing. Kate looks at her watch, closes her laptop and puts her papers away. Brushes her hair and applies some lipstick.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex lights the candelabra of an elegant dining room table setting. Looks at his watch, smiles and exits.

MOMENTS LATER

Alex steps into the steamy shower. Lathers up his face with shaving cream.

SMULTANEOUS

Kate opens the front door and enters the living room with her briefcase, laptop, and garment bag.

KATE

Alex?

No answer. She sniffs the air and smiles.

CONTINUOUS

Alex steps out of the shower. He tucks a towel around his waist and clears a spot in the foggy mirror.

CONTINUOUS

Kate enters the kitchen with an expectant smile.

KATE

Alex?

She finds dinner in the microwave. Pours herself a glass of wine, sipping it as she gets out a plate.

A LITTLE LATER

Alex is buttoning his shirt, frowning at the open take out containers on the counter and the depleted wine decanter.

SIMULTANEOUS

Black mesh bookcases line two walls of a small tidy study. A desk sits in front of a window.

Kate's empty dinner plate sits on the desk with the computer, printer/scanner/fax machine, and telephone. She sips her wine as she reads the monitor screen.

ALEX (O.S./FAINT)

Kate?

She listens to the air, frowning.

CONTINUOUS

Alex finds the garment bag on the couch.

ALEX

Kate?

SECONDS LATER

Alex is about to enter the bedroom when a pair of arms slide around his waist from behind. He turns to find Kate smiling that way.

They hug and kiss and kiss and kiss, then step back to look at one another. Her arms drape around his neck.

ALEX & KATE

When did you get home?

ALEX

I've been here.

KATE

About twenty minutes ago.

They laugh.

ALEX & KATE (CONT'D)

I didn't hear you-

They laugh again. She sighs.

ALEX

Miss me?

KATE

(nodding)

I was afraid I'd forget how good you smell.

She takes a deep breath. Smiles.

KATE (CONT'D)

But I didn't.

ALEX

Hungry?

She nibbles at his bottom lip.

SECONDS LATER

Alex hurries into the dining room to blow out the candelabra. Kate slinks in behind him in very sexy, very lacy lingerie. Alex catches sight of her in the mirror. He turns around.

ALEX

Whoa. Wow.

She shoves him onto the table. The candelabra wobbles. She climbs on top of him and rips open his shirt. Buttons go flying. Kate's hands go all over Alex's skin.

He closes his eyes, smiling as she unzips his jeans and plunges her hand deep inside. Crystal, china, and silver crash to the floor.

LATER

Their king sized four post bed is rocking. Matching night stands on each side have an alarm clock, telephone, and curios. The closet doors are mirrored.

Alex leans against the headboard. Kate sits in his lap facing him. Her hands grip his sweaty bare shoulders. His hands grip her bare ass. The bed rocks harder.

They're staring into one another's eyes intently until Kate smiles and closes hers. Her breathing grows hard and heavy and she holds Alex as close and as tight as she can.

WAY LATER

Alex wakes up in bed alone. He gets up and heads down to the study. Pushes open the door. Kate works away on her laptop.

ALEX

That can't wait?

Kate doesn't answer. Doesn't even seem to hear her.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Kate.

KATE

Five minutes, Alex. Just give me five minutes and I'll be all done.

Alex's dead silence is deafening.

KATE (CONT'D)

(turning around)

What?

ALEX

Can't you spend your first night home
without sneaking in here?

KATE

(turning back to her laptop)
Oh. Right.--Well, why don't we nip this
one in the bud. You're right, I'm wrong,
you win and I'll be done in five.

ALEX

It's not about right or wrong. It's about
work being more important than-

KATE

You? Well guess what? I was just trying
get some last details of this trip
finished so that we can have the whole
weekend just for us.

She slams the laptop closed.

KATE (CONT'D)

How about you, Alex? All done that Tuft
Proposal or blowing it off until the last
minute this weekend, too?

ALEX

This isn't about me.

KATE

I have to disagree with you there. This
is all about Alex.

He storms over, snatches up the lap top and hoists it over
his head. They stare at one another in stunned silence for a
few seconds before she lunges for the laptop.

They grapple over it, jerking the connecting cable until Alex
snatches it free and hurls it across the room. It hits the
wall and crashes to the floor.

They gape at the mess that was once the laptop.

ALEX

(deadpan)

Oops.

He turns to leave and trips over the cords. Falls into the door face first.

KATE
(deadpan)
Oops.

She steps over him on her way out.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Kate pulls into a parking spot marked with her name. She removes large sunglasses to examine puffy, red eyes. Puts on the sunglasses.

INT. OFFICE POOL - MOMENTS LATER

There are rows and rows of cubicles with desks, computers, and working drones in every one. Kate barely returns the "Morning, Kate. Welcome back," spoken from each cubicle she blows past.

She approaches her assistant, SASCHA, 20s, sitting at a desk all alone by a door with Kate's name on it. Barely slows down.

SASCHA
Morning, Kate. Welcome back.

KATE
Morning, Sascha. Hold my calls.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - SECONDS LATER

A miniature Bonsai tree sits on Kate's tidy desk next to a framed wedding portrait of her and Alex. A picture of Henry sits between it and an in-box full of opened mail. Her briefcase leans against a desk leg.

She sits in the dark, in her sunglasses, facing the fingers of light squeezing through two sets of closed vertical blinds that meet at the outer corner of her office.

There's a knock at the door. She takes off her sunglasses.

KATE
Come in.

Sascha enters with a large steaming black mug with a white "K" on it. She sits it on the coaster.

SASCHA

Kim's says she's coming in if you don't
take her next call.

Kate stands. Picks up her briefcase.

KATE

She can do whatever she likes. Anything
pressing on us out there?

SASCHA

Not really.

KATE

Then I'll see you Monday.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - LATER

Kate lies on the couch reading a local rag. Her pumps, suit
jacket and briefcase lie on the floor. She spots a classified
ad that reads:

TRouble WITH YOUR SPOUSE?
TRouble WITH YOUR BOSS?
TRouble WITH YOUR NEIGHBOR?
CALL US! 1-800-SHRINKS
WE'LL PUT AN END TO YOUR TROUBLE!

She looks at the phone, picks it up, hangs up. Looks at the
ad, looks at the phone, picks it up. Hangs up, sighs. Wipes
away a lonely tear.

A FEW DAYS LATER

Alex sulks at the head of the dining room table. A fading
bruise sits high on his cheek. The chair opposite him is
empty. He looks at his watch.

His parents, WHITNEY and HENRY SNOW, III, 60s, sit across
from Kate's twin sister, KIM, Kim's husband, JAKE, 30s, and
her son, Henry. It's the soup course!

Young Henry slurps noisily until Jake gives him a nudge.
Henry Snow smiles and winks at young Henry, who smiles and
winks back. Kim scowls at both of them.

KIM

You shouldn't encourage him, Henry.

YOUNG HENRY

I didn't.

KIM

I wasn't talking to you.

YOUNG HENRY

But-

Kim smiles through a clenched teeth.

KIM

I thought we were going to practice our
best behavior this evening.

A surly maid, young coed ELISE, pushes an empty serving cart into the room. She wears all black, an iPod, and chews gum. Blows a bubble, holding it as she clears the soup bowls.

All eyes, except young Henry's, try not to watch her every move. He hands her his soup bowl. She sucks in her bubble.

ELISE

(shouting)

Thanks, Henry.

Just startles the silent room. Young Henry giggles.

YOUNG HENRY

(shouting back)

You're welcome!

The bowls teeter in her arms until she clanks them onto the cart and pushes it out of the room as Kim glares at her son.

LATER

Kate's chair remains empty. Elise enters with a platter of grilled tuna steaks. Kim offers young Henry asparagus spears from a serving dish on the table.

YOUNG HENRY

Is Aunt Kate coming home soon, Uncle
Alex?

Kim slaps his hand gently when its fingers go for a spear.

ALEX

I-

The front door opens and slams closed.

KATE (O.S.)

Hello!?!

All eyes are on the doorway of the dining room as she dashes in, rushed and flustered. She wears a smart navy blue business suit and nervous eyes.

Knows better than to kiss Alex hello before she sits down.

KATE (CONT'D)

Sorry I'm late.

HENRY SNOW

Don't apologize. Did you close?

He beams at her proudly as if she is his own child. She's about to burst with excitement but with Alex glaring down at her she is able to subdue herself.

KATE

Lisle, Incorporated is now the proud parent company of Truman Resources.

HENRY SNOW

Excellent. Ned Truman was discussing your smooth negotiations at lunch the other day. Wishes you were on his side.

Young Henry is studying Kate's face.

YOUNG HENRY

Your eyes look sad, Aunt Kate. Are you okay?

As she opens her mouth to answer, Elise reaches her end of the table. Kate reaches for the serving utensils and realizes the iPod. Stares. In shock. Elise stares back.

ELISE

(shouting)

What?

Kate reaches up to take Elise's earbuds out. Loud tinny music annoys the air.

KATE

Lose the iPod.

Elise rolls her eyes and skulks out of the room.

YOUNG HENRY

You just can't get good help these days.

KIM

Henry, please!

ALEX

Did Ned Truman discuss how many employees will be jobless thanks to his sellout?

KATE

He didn't sell out, Alex, he just sold.

HENRY SNOW

It's sound business sense. He's about to retire. Better to sell then allow those useless sons to ruin his name.

Kim and Jake sneak peeks at one another. Young Henry catches them and sneaks a few peeks of his own.

WHITNEY

I thought we weren't discussing business tonight, Henry.

HENRY SNOW

Is the man supposed to not retire just to keep people employed?

ALEX

Ned Truman is screwing life long employees left and right-

Henry Snow's face clouds over.

WHITNEY

Goodness, Sandy! That kind of language isn't necessary at the dinner table!

Elise enters with two bottles of white wine.

YOUNG HENRY

What kind of lang-

KIM & JAKE

Shut-up!

HENRY SNOW

Well, there's no need to speak that way
to the boy, is there?

As Elise pours the wine, she blows a bubble. Kate is furious.
Not really at Elise, but she'll do.

KATE

Elise!

ELISE

What?!

KATE

Lose. The. Gum.

Elise pops the bubble in Kate's face, sucks it in, and slams
both wine bottles on the table.

ELISE

Look, I'm just the help, so don't drag my
good mood into your family squabble.
Damn!--Has it occurred to any of you that
you all need a long vacation--away from
one another?

YOUNG HENRY

Wow, you must be psychic, Elise. Jake
said the same thing last night when he
and Mom were trying figure out how to get
out of having to come to this damn dinner
party.

Jake chokes on a sip of wine and is barely able to get his
napkin to his mouth in time. He flees the room as it falls
silent. Again. Kim smiles a painful smile down at her son.

ELISE

Well, then--I guess all that's left to
say is, bon appetit.

And she's gone. Kim regards the fare on the table, deciding on
rice pilaf. Whitney follows her cue and decides on asparagus.
Knives and forks clink politely against one another.

Kate drains her wine glass and refills it.

YOUNG HENRY

Think she'll quit again, Uncle Alex?

His mouth is full and chewing wide open. Alex smiles. Shrugs.

ALEX

Wouldn't you?

Young Henry smiles and stabs an asparagus spear with his fork.

YOUNG HENRY

Heck no. I love you guys. Elise must, too,
because your home is always spotless.

He bites the tip of his spear. Jake eases into the room, and his chair, sheepishly.

JAKE

Um--Elise says she does love you and she
does quit, but just for the night.
Dessert's in the freezer.

YOUNG HENRY

What are we having?

KIM

Chilled crow.

Kate and Alex sigh and give her a final scolding look.

MUCH LATER

Alex's arms plunge into the kitchen sink as it fills with hot, soapy water. Dirty dishes are stacked on the counter. Kate wraps leftovers and looks for room in the refrigerator.

KATE

I think Elise counts on getting mad at
our dinner parties so she won't have to
do the grunt work.

Alex washes the crystal. Kate sighs over her shoulder.

KATE (CONT'D)

Still mad at me?

He shrugs. She closes the refrigerator.

KATE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Alex, I really did my best to get home on
time.

He carefully lowers the china in the water. Kate tries to hug him from behind. He spins to push her hands away, clipping her mouth with his shoulder.

KATE (CONT'D)

Ow!

Her eyes fill with tears and anger when they see the red on her probing anxious fingers. Alex looks on helplessly.

KATE (CONT'D)

Damn, Alex! What the hell is wrong with you?

ALEX

I'm sorry, Kate. I--It was an accident.

He tries to dab her bloody lip with a kitchen towel. She brushes his hand away. He holds the towel out until Kate finally takes it.

He returns to his dishes. Kate looks at his back in disbelief.

KATE

Alex, we need to think about getting some help.

ALEX

For what?

KATE

For us. For us, Alex. Something's wrong and we need to fix it.

He stops washing the dishes.

KATE (ONT'D) (CONT'D)

I have a number to call.--What's the worst that can happen?

ALEX

I've learned not to ask that.

Her silence is almost begging.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Sure, Kate. Make the call.

Alex holds soapy fingers against his closed lids, but tears seep out anyway. Kate opens the refrigerator, wiping away her tears as she puts the leftovers away.

INT. SHRINKS' OFFICE - EVENING

Kate and Alex enter the front door in business attire. Kate reaches for Alex's hand as they approach a subtly sensual and smiling receptionist, MS. BOOM, late 50s. Kate smiles.

Alex hangs behind Kate watching Ms. Boom's every move. Not smiling.

A nervous looking older gentleman scurries towards the exit clutching a plain brown package tied with twine. It has three small holes in each end.

A little beaded handbag is tucked under his other arm.

MS. BOOM

Good afternoon. May I help you?

KATE

Good afternoon. Yes. We have an appointment with Dr. Fitch?

Ms. Boom checks her appointment book.

MS. BOOM

That makes you--Mr. And Mrs. Snow. Right this way.

MOMENTS LATER

A lush and cozy office is overflowing with flora, art, and curios. Two plush chairs face a small pine desk and three squat fat windows offering a ground level park view.

Photographs of pioneers in science and modern medicine hang side by side over the windows. Off to the side is a closed second door with an open transom.

DR. FITCH, 40s, wears a white lab coat and a generous smile as she sits front and center on her desk with crossed ankles swinging to and fro. She gestures for Kate and Alex to sit.

DR. FITCH

So. How may I help you?

Kate and Alex look at one another and back at Dr. Fitch who shrugs.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

Someone has to talk second and I don't think it should be me.

KATE

We need help.

DR. FITCH

This much is clear. What kind of help?

KATE

--Our marriage is in trouble.

ALEX

No it isn't!

ALEX (CONT'D)

(looking from Kate to Dr. Fitch)

We've just hit a little hump and need help getting over it.

DR. FITCH

And then?

ALEX

Then what?

DR. FITCH

Precisely.

ALEX

--Excuse me?

DR. FITCH

For?

ALEX

For what?

DR. FITCH

You tell me.

His eyes narrow on the doctor. His jaw is clenching.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

Who made your appointment?

KATE

I did.

ALEX

But I agreed that we needed help. I agreed to get it.

DR.FITCH

Well, bravo. What's under your hump?

ALEX

Hump? What hump?

DR. FITCH

The hump you agree your untroubled marriage needs help getting over. What's under it?

ALEX

Oh.--I don't know. Things.

DR. FITCH

Finally, we're getting somewhere. What kind of things?

More silence.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

You have no idea do you? I bet you only recently discovered that you have a hump with things under it.

And more.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

And each of you thinks the other is responsible when in fact-

ALEX

You know, Dr. Whatever Your Name is-

DR. FITCH

Yes. I do.

ALEX

Do what?

DR. FITCH

Know whatever my name is. Dr. Fitch. Although I have been called worse.

ALEX

(standing suddenly)

This--is not working for me.

DR. FITCH

Who stumbled over your hump first, Mr.
Snow? And how did you get this?

She points at his fading bruise.

KATE

We had a fight. Things got out of hand.

ALEX

Shut-up, Kate. It's none of her business.

KATE

Excuse me? You don't get to
tell me to shut-up!

DR. FITCH

But how can I help your
business if I can't know what
it is?

ALEX (CONT'D)

You shut-up, too, Dr. Psycho Babble! We
don't need your help. You're nuts!

He is all in Dr. Fitch's face, who doesn't seem to mind. She
just blinks, but Kate gets between them.

KATE

Alex, get a hold of yourself!

Dr. Fitch leans back and tilts her head to see around Kate.

DR. FITCH

I'm nuts, Mr. Snow? You're the one with a
hump with things under it that you can't
even identify, the one who's come to me for
help, the one standing in my office with
spittle flying out of his mouth and into my
face. And you call me nuts?--So, Mr. Snow,
what on Earth do you call yourself?

ALEX

--Gone! I'll see you at home, Kate.

Dr. Fitch's fingers inch back to push the first of three
buttons on a panel on her desk. The main office door is
locked when Alex tries it. Won't unlock.

He looks back at Dr. Fitch who offers a polite smile.

DR. FITCH

In your current state, it would be better
for my other patients if you used the
side exit.

She pushes the second button. The second door opens into a
bright corridor. Alex storms out. The door and transom slam
closed behind him. Dr. Fitch is watching Kate.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

Mrs. Snow?

When Kate looks at her, Dr. Fitch presses the third button.
There's a sudden and quick blue flash in the transom. The
door opens seconds later and Ms. Boom enters with a small
rectangular package: plain brown wrapping tied with twine.
Three small holes in each end. She gives it to Dr. Fitch.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

Thank you, Ms. Boom.

Ms. Boom leaves. Dr. Fitch gives the box to Kate.

KATE

What's this?

DR. FITCH

Your troubles are over, Mrs. Snow.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - LATER

Kate rushes into the living room and slams the front door
closed. She carries her briefcase, Alex's, plus the package.
She drops the briefcases and sits on the couch.

Sits the package on the coffee table. Stares at it before
picking it up. Turns it slowly in her hands. Peers into one
of the holes. Sits it down and unties the twine.

The telephone rings. Without taking her eyes off of the
package, she reaches behind the couch for the telephone.

KATE

Hello?

KIM(O.S.)

Well. Did he do it? Did he go?

KATE

Um--yeah. he went, but-

KIM(O.S.)
Get out. No way.

KATE
I know. I couldn't believe it, either.

KIM(O.S.)
So, how'd it go?

KATE
Not quite like I expected.

KIM(O.S.)
Better or worse?

KATE
I'm not sure.

KIM(O.S.)
What's that mean?

KATE
I don't know.

KIM(O.S.)
Kate, can your marriage be saved or do I
come help you pack?

KATE
No, Kim! Don't come over.

KIM(O.S.)
Why not? What's wrong?

KATE
It just isn't a good time.

KIM(O.S.)
But-

KATE
I have to go. I'll call you.

KIM(O.S.)
When?

KATE
I don't know. Soon.

KIM(O.S.)

How soon?

KATE

I don't know, Kim.

KIM(O.S.)

Tomorrow?

Kate sighs. Her eyes well with tears.

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

Tomorrow, Kate, or I'm coming over to make sure you're okay. Okay?

KATE

Okay. Tomorrow.

KIM(O.S.)

Don't forget.

KATE

I won't! Good-bye, Kim!

She hangs up and tears the brown paper away from a beautiful black lacquered box with a hinged lid. She eases open a sliding bolt lock on the front of the box.

She lifts the lid, and slowly leans forward to peer inside. Gasps, and slams it shut, quickly re-locking it.

KATE (CONT'D)

Oh, my God! Oh, Alex, what have they done?--What have I done?

She unlocks the box, opens it and stares inside.

INT. A DARK ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Alex sleeps on the floor. Six solid light beams stream down from three high round windows at each end of the room. His head lies in a light circle on the floor.

The bruise on his cheek is much fainter. His nose twitches as his eyes squint open and look around, then down at his wrinkled and disheveled self. He springs to his feet.

His footsteps echo as he feels his way through the darkness squinting and shading his eyes each time he passes through a light beam. He feels his way along all four walls. No door.

He hears what sounds like a door opening and closing,
followed by muffled voices.

ALEX

Hello? Kate?--Kate? Somebody! Help! No
answer. He pounds on a wall.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

The living room is filled with late daylight. Kate and Kim
share a pizza while watching TV. Kate wears jeans and a T-
shirt and Kim wears half of a business suit.

Her pumps and jacket lie with her briefcase on the floor.

KIM

What tired old movie is this?

KATE

"The Incredible Shrin--"

KIM

Did you hear something?

KATE

Like what?

KIM

Like--I don't know--noise.

KATE

What kind of noise?

Kim pauses the movie and listens to the quiet air.

KIM

Forget it. It was nothing.

KATE

What was nothing?

KIM

Nothing, Kate! Nothing! Nothing was
nothing!

She unpauses the movie.

INT. DARK ROOM - SECONDS LATER

Running footsteps echo as Alex passes quickly through the light beams. His body hits a wall with a thud. He cries out.

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX AND KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Kate and Kim's eyes lurch towards the box sitting on an table in front of a fully fantastic view of the Pacific Ocean.

KIM

I take it we both heard that.

KATE

What?

KIM

All right, Kate. What goes on? You've been as jumpy as a cat since I arrived.

KATE

Have not.

KIM

Have too.

The doorbell rings. Kate hurries to the intercom.

KATE

Hello?

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Kate, Dear. It's Whitney.

KATE

Hi, Whitney. What do you want?

WHITNEY (O.S.)

What?

Kate!

KIM

WHITNEY (O.S.)

What do I want? Well--I--I just wanted to visit.

KATE

Alex isn't here.

KIM

Kate!

WHITNEY (O.S.)

That's all right, Dear. I'd like to see you, too.

KATE

It's not a good-

Kim rushes to the intercom and pushes Kate aside.

KIM

Hi, Whitney.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

What? Kate?

KIM

It's Kim. The buzzer's broken, so Kate's coming down.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Oh--well, all right. If it isn't an inconvenience.

KIM

Not at all. She'll just be a minute.

Kate steals a glance at the box as Kim glares at her. Leaves the front door ajar.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alex stands in a light beam.

ALEX

(hollering)

Kate! Kate! Somebody! Help!

He sweats heavily, gasping for air as he staggers out of sight to weep in the darkness, barely able to even whisper Kate's name as he pounds on a wall.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - EVE

Kate rushes up plush carpeted stairs a few steps ahead of Whitney panting behind her, struggling to keep up.

WHITNEY

Goodness, Kate. What's your hurry? Kate reaches the landing and runs down the long corridor to her front door.

INT. ALEX AND KATE'S CONDO - SECONDS LATER

Kim stands staring down at the box when Kate bursts in. Her eyes lurch towards Kate, who freezes in the doorway. Whitney runs up behind her and can't avoid colliding. They both fall.

Kate gets up and helps Whitney up.

KIM

What's in the box, Kate?

WHITNEY

What box?

Kim steps aside. Whitney looks from Kim to the box to Kate.

KIM

What's in the box, Kate?

KATE

Nothing.

KIM

Nothing, my ass. Something's in there.
Something alive. I heard it.

KATE

Then you're hearing things. There's
nothing in there.

KIM

You heard it, too. Either tell-

She reaches for the lock. Whitney looks distressed looking back and forth between the two of them.

KIM (CONT'D)

-or I see for myself.

KATE

No! Kim, don't!

She dashes across the room and slaps Kim's hand away, then stands in front of the box wild eyed as she looks from Kim to Whitney, who both take a cautious step back.

KIM

Kate, what is wrong with you?

WHITNEY

Oh, dear. Maybe I should let you girls settle this privately. After all, you did say it isn't a good time.

KIM

Kate?

Kate spins around suddenly, snaps open the lock and flips up the lid. Kim and Whitney look at one another and then Kate before slowly moving towards the box.

CUT TO:

INT. DARK ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex's room suddenly fills with light. He looks up, stands up, but only sees a white ceiling until six huge eyes appear above him. Four of the eyes are identical.

The other two are two different colors, with one wall eye, and eyeglasses. All six of the eyes stretch in amazement.

WHITNEY (O.S./WHISPERING)

Oh, my God! Sandy.

Alex screams in terror and faints.

INT. ALEX AND KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Whitney faints dead on the living room floor.

LATER

Kim sits two sets of dirty dishes on the kitchen counter. Kate loads them into the dishwasher, scowling up at Kim's giggles.

KIM

Think she'll say anything?

KATE

She's his mother. Of course she will.

KIM

Who'd believe her?

KATE

I don't know--I'd better check on them.

Kim finishes loading the dishwasher. On the sly, Kate grabs a plant mister bottle from the windowsill.

SECONDS LATER

Whitney is out cold on the living room couch. The box is open in front of the windows. Kate enters and peeks at Whitney, then mists every plant, taking time to spray their undersides.

She walks over to the box, turns the bottle's nozzle to stream and squeezes the trigger.

INT. THE BOX - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex, out cold on his back, springs up when a blast of water hits him. Another blast quickly follows. He scrambles to a corner and looks up at Kate's huge face.

ALEX

What the-

KATE

I know. You thought it was a dream, but we're both wide awake and you're only ten inches tall.

Kim enters and lays a damp cloth on Whitney's forehead. Kate hides the spray bottle behind her back. Whitney wakes up. Sits up. Kim sits beside her.

KIM

How are you feeling?

WHITNEY

What happened?

KIM

You fainted.

WHITNEY

I fainted? Really? I've never fainted in my life. Why now?

Kate looks at Alex and holds her forefinger to her lips. Eases the box closed and steps in front of it.

KATE

That's what we wondered.

KIM

Do you remember anything?

WHITNEY

Anything what?

KATE

Whitney, why don't you lie down in the bedroom. I'll call Henry.

WHITNEY

That sounds like a good idea. I'm not feeling at all well. And I've just had the oddest dream.

KATE

Really? What was it?

WHITNEY

I can't really remember--I just know that it was odd, very odd.

Kim helps her stand. When they're gone, Kate opens the box. Alex stands defiant; arms crossed, jaw firmly set. Kim returns and peers to see what's behind Kate's back, then into the box.

KIM

Hello, Little Man.

ALEX

Kate, where are we? What's going on? This isn't funny. It isn't funny.

KATE

Kim, I can handle things from here. I'll call you.

ALEX

What things? Kate--

KIM

When?

KATE (CONT'D)

I don't know. Soon.

KIM

How--

ALEX

Kim! Go home!

Kim sticks her tongue out at him. He sticks his out at her. She shakes the box. Good.

Alex tumbles to the floor screaming.

KATE (CONT'D)

Kim!

Kim kisses her cheek and leaves. Kate looks into the box.

KATE (CONT'D)

Okay, Alex. There was a little misunderstanding on my part as to why that telephone number spelled SHRINKS.

Alex stands up and crosses his arms.

ALEX

Try again.

KATE

Think about it. This is not "The Twilight Zone". This is not "The Outer Limits".

ALEX

Kate-

KATE

I'm tired, Alex. I need a nap.

She closes the box.

ALEX(O.S.)

Wait! Wait! Kate. Open this box! Kate!

MUCH LATER

Kate sits on the edge of the bathtub in her bathrobe staring into space. The sound of a stream of water splashing into a body of still water dribbles to a stop.

She flushes the toilet. Alex stands on the toilet seat in his underwear. Sniffs an underarm.

ALEX(CONT.)

Whew! Well, I need a shower.

They look up at the showerhead, then over at their double basin countertop.

ALEX (CONT'D)

But, based on the harrowing experience
I've just had with the toilet, I'll take
a bath.

Kate fills his basin with water, squirts in some designer
liquid soap, then carefully carries him to the counter. He
sits down and dips a toe in.

ALEX (CONT'D)

It's a little hot.

She blasts out some cold water. He rears back.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Hey! Careful!

She turns it off, then roots around in a drawer until she
pulls out a razor blade. His hands drop to his privates.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What's that for, Kate?

She picks up a bar of designer soap, shaves a little piece
off and gives it to him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Oh.

He watches until the razor blade is safely back in its drawer
and Kate moves to her basin. Ditches his boxers and slides
into the water. His head emerges.

As he bathes, he watches Kate's every move: brushing her
teeth, rinsing, washing her face and patting it dry.

She is absentminded, seeming to just go through the motions
as she swabs her face with astringent and moisturizer.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Couldn't you have just left me?

KATE

I love you, Alex. I don't want to leave
you.

ALEX

But this can't be the answer.

She finally looks at him.

KATE

Do you love me?

ALEX

You know I do, Kate.

KATE

Then why did you attack me?

ALEX

I attacked your computer. You attacked me.

KATE

Because you shoved me!

ALEX

Not as hard as you shoved me!

KATE

Back, Alex. I shoved you back.

It was just a fight--a very bad fight.

KATE

That you started. And you haven't apologized.

ALEX

You know I'm sorry. You know I am.

KATE

I know you're sorry. You know what I know? I know you shoved me.

He doesn't say anything.

KATE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Did it make you feel better?

ALEX

Stop it, Kate.

(CONT'D)

KATE

Or did you just want to make sure I knew that before work or anything, I'm your woman? Before I'm a brilliant business executive, who recently got a huge promotion and raise, I am, first, Henry Alexander Snow IV's woman.

ALEX

I said stop it!

He jumps up punching his bath water. Kate flinches, then crosses her arms and stares him down.

KATE

All done with your bath?

ALEX

Go to Hell.

She pushes the drain stopper down. Turns the light out as he slips and scrambles to stay standing in the swirling water.

ALEX(CONT.) (CONT'D)

Kate! Come back here! Kate!--Kate!

THE NEXT MORNING

Kate flips on the light. Alex is curled up asleep in the hand towel Kate used the night before. Without a word or second glance, Kate gets in the shower.

CONTINUOUS

Alex is awake and sitting up when Kate steps out of the shower and puts her robe on. Not a word as she rubs a gigantic circle in the foggy mirror with her sleeve.

He stands and checks himself out. Yikes! Hair's a mess.

ALEX

I need some clothes.

She reaches into a pocket of her robe as she brushes her teeth. Lays a tiny pile of clothes on the counter. He sifts through it and pulls out some way too big hospital scrubs.

Puts on the matching white lab coat, also way too big. Looks in the mirror.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What the hell is this?

KATE

Clothes.

ALEX

Who's?

KATE

Ken's.

ALEX

Ken who?

KATE

Doll. Kim, guardian of our fondest
childhood memories and pastimes, dropped
them off on her way to work.

ALEX

(sighing)

Doesn't Dr. Doll have a tailor?

KATE

So, Alex, why are you so angry?

ALEX

Leave me alone.

He rolls up the sleeves and cuffs of his ensemble.

KATE

--No reason? You just are?

ALEX

I'm hungry, Kate.

LATER

Kate sits on one of two swivel stools at a kitchen counter.
Business attire. Napkin on her lap. Legs crossed. Pump under
her stool on the floor with her briefcase.

Her other pump barely hanging onto her toes as she reads the
Financial times. Alex sits on the counter, by an almost empty
plate of scrambled eggs and fruit, eating a handful of eggs.

The phone rings. Kate reaches for the wall extension.

KATE

Hello?

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Hello, Kate.

KATE

Hi, Whitney.

She looks at Alex looking at her.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Is my little boy there?

Kate spins away burying a smirk in her shoulder. Her dangling pump falls to the floor.

KATE

Um--no.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Oh, horse feathers! I guess I'll have to catch him at the office. I hate to bother him at work, but I haven't heard from him in days.

KATE

Um--okay.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

You sound funny, Kate. Is everything all right?

Kate spins back to look at Alex.

KATE

Everything's fine, Whitney.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

All right then. Good-bye.

KATE

Bye. Give Henry our love.

WHITNEY (O.S.)

I will, Dear.

Kate hangs up, wiping her mouth as she slips into her pumps. She lies her napkin on the counter and loads her dishes into the dishwasher. Alex wipes his face and hands on the napkin.

ALEX

What did Mom want?

KATE

You. She's calling you at the office.

ALEX

And they'll call here.

KATE

Guess so.

She looks at her watch. Picks up her briefcase.

KATE (CONT'D)

Well, I'm late.

ALEX

Then they'll call you.

KATE

They have to get past Sascha.

ALEX

Kate, please. Can't we end this? I'll get help. Real help. I promise.

KATE

We'll see.

INT. THE BOX - LATER

The box is open and flooded with daylight. Alex sits in a corner, eyes closed, head leaned back against a wall. The telephone rings. His eyes spring open.

KATE & ALEX(O.S.)

Hi. Say something after the beep.

EDNA(O.S.)

Hi, Mr. Snow. Are you coming in? If not, what should I tell Mr. Noch?

LATER

Alex leaps up high enough to hang from one of the air holes.

MARTHA(O.S.)

Alex, where the hell are you and why the hell isn't it here and what the hell about the Tuft proposal? Noch wants answers yesterday.

With great difficulty, he pulls himself up high enough to see out of the air hole. His eyes pan family photographs on the piano. He looks up at the top of the box. Reaches up. Falls.

LATER STILL

Alex paces the floor angrily.

WHITNEY(O.S.)

Sandy? It's Mom. Please call as soon as you get home.

MUCH LATER

Alex lies staring up at the ceiling.

KATE(O.S.)

Alex? Hi. I'll be late. Are you okay? Do you need anything?--Guess there's no way for you to tell me.--I'm sorry.

He jumps to his feet and runs to pound a wall repeatedly.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - NIGHT

The box sits open on the coffee table. Kate's home! She drops her brief case, turns on a lamp, and flops onto her back on the couch. Kicks off her pumps. Finally shuts her eyes.

INT. THE BOX - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex lies on his back on the floor, eyes closed.

ALEX

You need to call Mom. She called all day. And work.

KATE(O.S.)

--Are you hungry?

ALEX

Yeah--you?

KATE (O.S.)

Um-hm.

ALEX

You used to love when I had dinner waiting when you worked late.

KATE (O.S.)

I still do.

ALEX

(eyes slowly opening)

Kate? Can't we end this? Please?

KATE (O.S.)

Tell me why you're so angry, Alex.

He closes his eyes and swallows hard. She sighs.

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

I have to start dinner.

LATER

Kate and Kim dine at the dining room table. Alex dines on the dining room table. His bright colored plastic furniture is just too big enough to be annoying.

There is a tiny plate of food and a tiny plastic wine goblet in front of him. The tiny plastic knife snaps in his swollen and bruised left hand.

ALEX

Judas Priest!

He glowers at Barbie sitting opposite him in dressy evening wear.

ALEX (CONT.) (CONT'D)

Kate, please get rid of the doll.

KIM

But she's the perfect dinner companion, Alex. Her tits will stay up forever, and she smiles no matter what you say or do.

ALEX

Why aren't you at home with the people
you're supposed to bother?

Kate and Kim stare at him until he feels uncomfortable enough
to have to look away. Kate holds a small dropper over his tiny
goblet.

KATE

More wine, Alex?

ALEX

No!

KATE

Kim?

KIM

Please. Another knife, Alex?

Kate refills Kim's glass as Kim pushes Barbie's knife in
front of Alex. Alex pushes his little plastic plate of food
away.

ALEX

Are we having dessert?

KATE

No dessert for Alex until he tells why
he's so angry.

He pounds the table with both fists.

ALEX

Goddammit! I've said I'm sorry! I've said
I'll get help! What the hell else can I say?

KATE

Why, Alex! You can say why!

He glares at Kim eating quieter than she's probably ever
eaten in her life, looking anywhere but.

ALEX

Does Jake even **know** you're out past your
curfew?

KIM

Don't try to drag my husband down to your gutter just because he can't stomach dining with the likes of you.

He jumps to his feet, fell swooping his and Barbie's dinner off the table. Kate shoos Kim out and closes the door. Alex kicks the table over, picks up his chair and slams it down with all his might, shattering it.

He pants with clenched fists and darting angry eyes. Eyes that narrow on Barbie's smile. That soften and fill with tears. That look down at the mess he's made of things. Then look up into his wife's tear filled eyes.

KAT

Alex, what is wrong with you?

ALEX

I don't know, Kate.-- I don't know.

KATE

I think--maybe it's time for me to be more realistic about us.

ALEX

They say we always hurt the one we love most.

KATE

Then I don't want to be your one.

ALEX

--I'm sorry it took being this--way for me to know how badly I've treated you.

KATE

Brave words, Alex, but would you say, or mean, them if you weren't this way?

ALEX

I only know that I love you and I hate what I've done to us.

KATE

--So what are we going to do?

ALEX

I'll get help, Kate. Real help. I will. I promise. I'll even move out and stay out as long as it takes.

They exchange uneasy smiles. Kate looks at the door, walks over. Puts her ear to it. Snatches it open. Kim falls into the room, to the floor. An empty glass bounces out of her hand, up in the air, and smashes to the floor.

INT. SHRINKS' OFFICES - DAY

Kate sits in a chair facing Dr. Fitch who sits on her desk, crossed ankles swinging to and fro. The box sits on the desk.

DR. FITCH

So. How are--your things?

KATE

(shrugging)

Odd?

DR. FITCH

Yes, well naturally the adjustment period is the hardest phase.

KATE

I guess it was my adjustment you couldn't anticipate.

DR. FITCH

Actually we do. Clients often ask why we don't warn them, but many seem inclined to insist upon immediate reversal when warned that they might-

ALEX(O.S.)

Hello, out there. Kate? Do you mind?

CUT TO:

SIMULTANEOUS

Alex stands in a fluorescent light beam, barefoot, in way too big jeans and a T-shirt. His bruise is all but gone.

INT. DR. FITCH'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Dr. Fitch looks down at Alex. He smiles up insincerely.

DR. FITCH

Hello, Mr. Snow. How are you?

ALEX

Fine. Everything's fine. Kate and I have worked out everything, so you can just undo this.

DR. FITCH

Is this true, Mrs. Snow?

KATE

Yes--Alex is moving out and we'll see a therapist together.

ALEX

A real therapist.

DR. FITCH

Mrs. Snow, this is too soon.

ALEX

Too soon? What too soon?!?

DR. FITCH

We recommend at least a month for our method.

ALEX

A month!? What method!? And who's we?!

DR. FITCH

I have a colleague, Dr. Davis.

ALEX

Davis & Fitch? You sound like lawyers.

DR. FITCH

That's Fitch & Davis, Mr. Snow, and let's not digress. You have a sick relationship.

ALEX

Our relationship is fine. I may have some problems, but if you'll undo this, we, Kate and I, can solve them. We can't do anything like this.

DR. FITCH

Ah, but that's where you err, Mr. Snow,
we must first get you to reconcile
yourself to not having access to your
life for a while.

ALEX

Kate, say something. Help me out.

KATE

Let's at least hear her out, Alex.

His quiet rage dashes to Kate.

ALEX

What?! Wait! We have a plan!

DR. FITCH

And let me guess-

She reaches back for the intercom button on her desk.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

-Alex came up with the plan, Kate made
pertinent modifications that Alex eagerly
agreed to. Then Kate agreed to restore Alex?

No answer. Ms. Boom enters.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

Ah, Ms. Boom. Please take care of Mr.
Snow for a few minutes.

ALEX

Wait! Wait!! Kate, don't you change your
mind on me!

Ms. Boom exits, closing the box.

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

Kate! Kate!! Kate!!!

DR. FITCH

Mrs. Snow, I'm a scientist. An inventor.
When I first made my invention available
to people in desperate need of it, I went
along with clients who thought their
troubles were over. Two of them were
killed by their spouses.

KATE

(stunned)

--Alex and I aren't like that.

DR. FITCH

I don't doubt your faith in that.-- One of those clients had a restraining order and a gun.

KATE

Dr. Fitch. Couples fight. It's normal.

DR. FITCH

Really? It's normal to become verbally and physically abusive when you fight?

KATE

That was the first and last time that happened.--We came to you for help.

DR. FITCH

Mrs. Snow, we can only get people in here under false pretenses once. This is your chance to have a true dialogue with Alex about what's gone wrong. He tells his side, you tell yours. Somewhere in between, the truth surfaces.

KATE

Maybe the only truth that matters is that violence shouldn't be a response to anyone's side.

DR. FITCH

Or maybe it's, why would a smart woman stay with someone who's allowed abuse to become his response?

Kate blushes a hot red.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

There's a nexus where your pains meet. When you and Mr. Snow figure out where that is, your relationship's healing will begin.

KATE

What about his job? His parents?

DR. FITCH

Tell them he's left you and you don't know where he is. Pack some of his clothes and the key things he'd take on, say, a business trip. Put them in storage. Tell work he's sick.

KATE

But this doesn't seem fair if Alex swears it won't happen again.

Dr. Fitch's easygoing attitude grows slightly nervous; edgy.

KATE (CONT'D)

Dr. Fitch, is something wrong?

DR. FITCH

--We can't restore your husband.

KATE

Excuse me?

DR. FITCH

It's nothing to be alarmed over. Our computer crashed.

KATE

What?!

Dr. Fitch laughs nervously.

DR. FITCH

It's some sort of virus. We're working around the clock to figure it out.

Dr. Fitch takes advantage of Kate's shock and silence and hits the intercom button.

DR. FITCH (CONT'D)

Ms. Boom, Mrs. Snow will need one of our luxury packages.

EXT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO BUILDING - LATER

Kate turns her car into the garage. A huge doll townhouse sits in the passenger seat.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOMENTS LATER

Kate steps off the elevator with the doll house, walks down the corridor to her front door, and sits the doll house down.

DETECTIVE MARN (O.S.)

Katherine Snow?

Kate turns suddenly to face the badge of DETECTIVE MAX MARN, 40s. She is all plain: clothes, face, demeanor. Plain shoes.

KATE

Yes?

DETECTIVE MARN

I'm Detective Max Marn.

KATE

Max?

DETECTIVE MARN

Maxine--May I ask you a few questions?

KATE

About?

DETECTIVE MARN

I received a call from Alexander Snow's office today. They say he hasn't been in since Tuesday nor returned numerous calls.

KATE

Oh.

DETECTIVE MARN

Is he ill?

KATE

Kind of.

DETECTIVE MARN

Why hasn't he called in??

KATE

Do you mind if we do this inside?

DETECTIVE MARN

Not at all.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SECONDS LATER

Detective Marn follows Kate, and the doll house, inside. The box and a large bag sit on the floor just inside the front door.

KATE

Would you like to sit down?

DETECTIVE MARN

No, Ma'am. Just an answer.

As Kate opens her mouth the doorbell rings. She walks to the intercom.

KATE

Hello?

WHITNEY (O.S.)

Kate? It's Whitney. Is Sandy there?

Kate's rolling eyes glance at the detective.

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

Is anything wrong, Kate? It's not like either of you not to-

KATE

Whitney, the door's fixed, so I can buzz you in.

She presses a button on the intercom, then turns to Detective Marn. Shrugs.

KATE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

My mother-in-law.--If you don't mind, I'd like her to hear the answer to your question. It's unpleasant one and I'd rather not say it twice.

DETECTIVE MARN

Okay, Mrs. Snow.

KATE

Would you mind if I made tea? I know Whitney'll want tea.

Detective Marn shakes her head. Kate grabs up the box on her way out.

A MOMENT LATER

Kate puts the box on top of the refrigerator. She fills a kettle with water and puts it on the stove.

SIMULTANEOUS

Detective Marn looks at photographs, curios, and objets d'art. She reaches for Alex and Kate's wedding portrait. Whitney knocks and lets herself in as Kate returns. She and Whitney hug.

KATE

Detective Marn, this is my mother-in-law,
Whitney Snow. Whitney, Detective Max Marn.

WHITNEY

Max?

DETECTIVE MARN

Maxine.

WHITNEY

And you're a police detective?

DETECTIVE MARN

Yes and apparently, we're here for the
same reason.

WHITNEY

Sandy? Why are you here for Sandy? Has he
done something?

She and Kate sit on the couch. Detective Marn sits in a chair facing them.

KATE

--He left me.

WHITNEY

Left you?

KATE

I haven't seen him, and he hasn't gone to
work, since Tuesday.

WHITNEY

Oh. I see. Well, this explains Why he
hasn't called.

DETECTIVE MARN

Mrs. Snow?

KATE & WHITNEY

Yes?

DETECTIVE MARN

(looking at Whitney)

What did you mean when you asked if your son had done something?

WHITNEY

Well--I don't know. You know how we say things we don't know we mean, I mean mean we know when we're upset.

DETECTIVE MARN

Mrs. Snow, your son has been missing for days. If you have information that may help find him, I advise you to tell me.

The tea kettle whistles.

KATE

Whitney, would you mind?

WHITNEY

Not at all, Dear.

She looks quite sad as she exits.

KATE

Detective Marn, Alex and I had a very bad week. It was ugly and it caught both of us by surprise. He has a temper, but I've always been able to speak my mind. This time it got physical.

DETECTIVE MARN

I'm sorry, Mrs. Snow.

KATE

So am I.--I don't know where he is. No matter how upset he gets, he's always very responsible about work.

DETECTIVE MARN

You last saw him Tuesday evening?

KATE

--Morning. We were supposed to go to a business function that evening, but I cancelled. I assumed he went.

DETECTIVE MARN

He didn't come home at all?

Kate shakes her head.

DETECTIVE MARN (CONT'D)

When did you last speak?

KATE

When I cancelled.

DETECTIVE MARN

Did you argue?

KATE

No. He just told me not to wait up.

Whitney returns with tea for three and a small plate of madeleines. She sits the tray on the coffee table and pours.

WHITNEY

How do you take your tea, Detective Max?

DETECTIVE MARN

Marn.

WHITNEY

I beg your pardon?

DETECTIVE MARN

It's Detective Marn. Max is my first name. Maxine.

WHITNEY

Oh.--And how do you take your tea?

DETECTIVE MARN

Lemon and two sugars, please.

WHITNEY

Just like Henry.

DETECTIVE MARN

Henry?

WHITNEY

My husband.

Whitney drops in two lumps of sugar, places a lemon wedge on the saucer, and passes the tea and a napkin to the detective.

Whitney stirs two lumps and milk into hers, blowing across its surface before taking a quiet sip. Nibbles a madeleine absentmindedly. Kate sips her tea black.

DETECTIVE MARN

Would you mind if I had a look around
your home, Mrs. Snow?

KATE

Not at all.

WHITNEY

Oh, I don't live here.

Detective Marn exits. Kate and Whitney say nothing, but finally look at one another. Whitney looks away sipping.

A MOMENT LATER

Detective Marn looks around the bedroom: through the very neat closets, in the hamper, through drawers of the night stands and armoire. Under the bed.

NEXT

Kate's briefcase sits on the desk in the study. Alex's leans against a leg of the desk. Detective Marn scans the desk and looks through its drawers.

THEN

Detective Marn looks through the bathroom's medicine chest, drawers, cabinets under the basins, and in the toilet tank. Snatches open the shower curtain.

A MOMENT AFTER THAT

She looks through kitchen drawers and cabinets, the freezer and refrigerator but barely at the things on top: tortilla chips, a cookie jar, a popcorn maker. Some cookbooks. The box.

UNTIL FINALLY

Detective Marn enters the living room as Kate refills their teacups. The detective sits. Stirs.

DETECTIVE MARN

Would you say that Mr. Snow is a disciplined man?

KATE

Not at all.

WHITNEY

Very.

They look at each other.

DETECTIVE MARN (CONT'D)

Would he actually drop out of sight without taking anything? Has he done this before?

KATE

No.

WHITNEY

Yes.

Kate looks at Whitney looking back at the detective.

WHITNEY

Sandy used to disappear every time Henry went away on business. He was only fifteen that first time, and only came home as Henry's car pulled up.

She sips.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

I hardly had time to ask where he'd been. He wouldn't say more than, 'Nowhere. I was just gone. Tell Dad if you want. I don't care.' But he knew I wouldn't.-- Henry would've killed him.

Detective Marn looks up at Whitney. Everyone sips.

WHITNEY (CONT'D)

Henry's always been hard on Sandy. I guess that's why I let him get away.

DETECTIVE MARN

So this disappearance isn't out of character?

WHITNEY

Sandy never took things, or much money. He'd come home in the clothes he'd left in, shower, change, and come to dinner like nothing had happened.

Detective Marn takes a last sip of tea and stands offering Whitney and Kate business cards.

DETECTIVE MARN

Thank you, Mrs. Snow. You've been very helpful.

WHITNEY & KATE

You're welcome.

DETECTIVE MARN

Let me know when Mr. Snow returns and that'll wrap this up.

KATE

Certainly, Detective.

DETECTIVE MARN

Good day. I'll let myself out.

She leaves.

KATE

Whitney, Alex never mentioned running away.

WHITNEY

I don't know that it was running away--we should think of something for work. I used to use his recurring tonsillitis for school.

KATE

His health insurance paid for a tonsillectomy two years ago.

WHITNEY

Oh, yes. I forgot. Well, I should help tidy up.

KATE

Don't worry about it.

WHITNEY

Will you be okay, Kate?

KATE

(shrugging)

Sure.

WHITNEY

Sandy loves you very much, Kate. I know that. I hope you know that.

KATE

I suppose.

WHITNEY

Don't give up on him. Please? He'd be lost without you. He'll come home. I know that, too.

KATE

Maybe by the time he gets home, he'll have helped himself.

A LITTLE LATER

Kate sits the tea service on a kitchen counter and takes the box down from the refrigerator. Looks inside.

Alex is sound asleep on some bedding in a corner, disappears into darkness as Kate closes the box.

EXT. THE SKY - DAY

Clouds rush past. A motor buzzes under Alex screaming, windblown bearded face that is distorted with terror. His bloodshot squinting eyes suddenly stretch wide.

EXT. CITY PARK - SIMULTANEOUS

People ride bikes, roller blade, jog, skate board and walk dogs. TEENAGERS throw a Frisbee. They look up as a good sized remote controlled airplane buzzes overhead.

It flies left, right, climbs, dips, coming in a little too low, and almost collides with the Frisbee.

TEEN

(shouting)

Hey, Miss! You wanna watchit with that thing?!?

Kim stands on an isolated fringe of the park holding a remote control panel.

KIM

(shouting)

Sorry about that!

She swerves left, right, tilts forward, leans way back, and dips low with the remote control. The airplane climbs up high, stops, and begins a sudden downward spiral.

EXT. THE AIRPLANE - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex's lies face down, arms outstretched on the spiraling airplane's wings. He wears a Pilot Ken outfit that's just a little too big.

ALEX
(screaming)
KIIIIIIIMMMM!!!!!!

His face turns over and over and over. A patch of swirling grass grows closer and closer and closer until the airplane suddenly climbs and does a few more twists and turns.

It levels out and lands safely in the grass.

EXT. PARK - A MOMENT LATER

Alex's mouth hangs open panting.

KIM(O.S.)
Wow! They aren't kidding about that glue?
We should make an ad for them.

She squats by the plane.

KIM (CONT'D)
Promise not to tell and Kim promises never
to do it again.

He doesn't say anything. The airplane engine turns on.

ALEX
Okay! Okay! Yes! I promise!

KIM(CONT.)
(looking at her watch)
Well, Kate and Henry should be back from
the movies. Better get you home.

INT. ALEAX & KATE'S CONDO - LATER

Young Henry sits on a kitchen counter stool in front of a half eaten peanut butter and jelly sandwich and almost empty glass of milk. He wears an iPod and plays a portable video game.

Kate takes down everything on top of the refrigerator. Puts it all back. Leaves, then returns with a look of utter confusion. She searches every kitchen cabinet.

HENRY

(shouting)

Whatcha looking for, Aunt Kate?

KATE

Henry, how many times have we told you to take off those headphones when you talk to someone?

HENRY

(shouting)

What?

She removes his headphones. Loud tinny music annoys the air.

KATE

Have you seen a black box?

HENRY

What kind of black box? You mean like the kind they look for in a plane crash?

KATE

No. Just a plain black box.

HENRY

What's in it?

KATE

Nothing.

HENRY

What do you need it for?

KATE

Nothing.

HENRY

Then why are you looking for it?

KATE

Henry, have you seen the box or not?

HENRY

It was on the fridge when Mom and me got here. It wasn't when you and me got back from the movies.

He gets milk from the refrigerator, refills his glass and returns to his stool. Puts on his headphones and picks up his video game.

Kate exits, passing through a few more times. Now beginning to look more nervous than confused. Henry looks up each time.

SIMULTANEOUS

The front door eases open and Kim tiptoes into the living room with the box and the airplane. She drops the airplane on the couch and heads towards the kitchen.

SECONDS LATER

Kim tiptoes past Henry, eases the box on top of the refrigerator, and tiptoes out of the kitchen unnoticed. Then the front door opens loudly and slams off screen.

KIM (O.S./SHOUTING)

Hello!

She breezes in.

HENRY

(shouting)

Hi, Mom.

She turns off his iPod and kisses the top of his head.

KIM

Hi, Mom, yourself. You know, one of these days, you're gonna electrocute yourself. How was the movie?

HENRY

It really sucked. Glad I only paid half-price. Aunt Kate's sweatin' me about some lost empty black box she doesn't even need, though.

Kate enters and has moved on from nervous to extremely agitated. Her eyes question Kim, who looks towards the top of the refrigerator.

Henry looks up in their long silence, follows their sight line, and jumps off of the stool. Running for the refrigerator. Kim catches his shirt just in time.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Is that it? Can I see it?

KIM

Not today. We have to pick Jake up from the airport.

HENRY

But-

KIM

But, nothing. Let's go.

HENRY

Mom, did you see my airplane?

KIM

Not the one on the couch?

KATE

We looked in the living room.

Kim shrugs innocently. Kate eyes grow suspicious while Henry leaves and returns seconds later with the airplane.

HENRY

Aunt Kate, do you and Uncle Alex have ghosts or something?

KATE

I don't think so. We paid an awful lot for this condo for it to be haunted.

HENRY

I thought people only paid lots for homes when they don't want to live around crack 'hos and cockroaches.

KIM

That's it, You. Let's go.

She's dragging him out by the shirt she still holds.

HENRY

Can you come for dinner tonight, Aunt Kate?

KIM

We're eating out. Let's go.

HENRY

Then you can come with us since Uncle Alex is out of town.

KATE

I can't make it tonight, Henry. Do me a favor, though?

HENRY

What?

KATE

Make sure your mom calls me tonight?

HENRY

What for?

KATE

She'll think of something.

HENRY

Something I guess I can't know.

Kate kisses and hugs them both good-bye, gives Kim a warning glare, then dashes to take down the box once they're gone. Opens it. Alex sits in a corner in his tattered Pilot Ken outfit.

ALEX

(smiling)

I miss old Henry.

KATE

He misses you, too. You had a date for the movies today.--What happened to your clothes?

ALEX

They got torn.

KATE

Where did Kim take you?

ALEX
On a magic carpet ride.

KATE
What?

ALEX
(sighing)
Kate, I need my life back.

KATE
I know, Alex. I'm sorry.

ALEX
I'm going to lose my job, you know. We'll
go from DINKS to SINKS.

KATE
Dr. Fitch gave me a note for work. You
have viral bronchitis.

ALEX
Really? And those corporate twits
believed you?

KATE
Few questions are asked when the words
'extremely contagious' are spoken. Of
course, Martha may be another story.

ALEX
Good ol' Martha can smell a cover-up a
mile away.

KATE
She's also a bit distraught about the
Tuft deadline.--So she's bringing by what
you have so far.

He's very quiet.

KATE (CONT'D)
I thought we, you and I, could work on it.

ALEX
I can do my own work.

KATE
I just want to help.

ALEX

Oh, I think you and your SHRINKS have helped plenty, thanks.

KATE

Shall I call Martha and cancel?

ALEX

Do whatever the hell you want. I don't care. I give up! This is pointless! Just leave me alone.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

It is quite early in the morning. The quiet detective squad room is overrun with desks and stuffed filing cabinets.

Detective Marn sits at her desk typing information(name, address, etc.)fed to her by a young handcuffed boy. Her phone rings. She cradles the receiver between her ear and shoulder.

DETECTIVE MARN

Detective Marn.--Oh, yes. Hello, Mrs. Desmond.--No. Not yet.--Oh, really?--Bronchitis?

She stops typing.

DETECTIVE MARN (CONT'D)

I see--Well, thank you for the update.--Yes.--Good-bye.

She rolls the paper out of her typewriter as she hangs up. Scans it. Looks at the young boy.

DETECTIVE MARN (CONT'D)

Okay, Sweetie. Lets call the parents and get you out of this hole.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - LATER

Kate works at her computer. Her telephone beeps.

KATE

Yes, Sascha?

SASCHA(O.S.)

It's a Detective Marn on line one?

Kate stops working. Stares at the phone.

KATE
I'm in a meeting.

She waits a moment, then buzzes Sascha.

SASCHA (O.S.)
Yes?

KATE
What'd she say?

SASCHA (O.S.)
You should return her call ASAP.

KATE
Okay. Thanks.

She hangs up, thinks a moment, then picks up the phone. Dials.

KATE (CONT'D)
Hi, Whitney?--Hi.--No. No, not yet. --Oh,
I'm sure he's fine, Whitney. By the way,
have you spoken to Detective Marn?--
Detective Marn? The--Yes. Her. Have you--
No?

She organizes papers on her desk.

KATE (CONT'D)
--Oh, no reason. I just wondered.--Me?
No, I haven't spoken to her, but she just
left a message for me to call and--I
don't know--God, no, Whitney. If it were
something bad, I'm sure she wouldn't call
to tell me--Whitney--Whitney, I have
another call.--Yes, I promise.--Okay.--
Yes, good-bye.

She hangs up and hits speed dial.

KATE (CONT'D)
--Hi, James. Is Kim in?--Thanks.--Hi. Can
you get away for an hour?--Yes, Kim, it's
important. Meet me by the garage of the
condo.--Just meet me there. I'll tell you
then.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Uniform and plain clothes police mill about taking care of business. Detective Marn sits at her desk staring into her coffee cup. Her doughnut sits untouched.

Her partner, gruff and tumble DETECTIVE JAY LOUIS, 40s, sits across from her at his desk with his feet propped up, periodically glancing over as he loads his weapon.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

What's up over there?

DETECTIVE MARN

Not sure. Our domestic abuse case just took a turn for the weird.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

The corporate couple?

DETECTIVE MARN

Yeah.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Still no word from the...
husband?

DETECTIVE MARN

Not sure. The wife called in sick for him. Viral bronchitis.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Mayhaps she's covering so he'll have a job when he resurfaces.

DETECTIVE MARN

Why should she care?

DETECTIVE LOUIS

I think they call it alimony?

DETECTIVE MARN

If these two divorce, she pays him.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Well, excuse me. Then mayhaps she don't wanna pay.

DETECTIVE MARN

No cell phone or ATM or credit card activity for over a week. How's an executive used to the best get along with no money? Where's he eating and sleeping?

DETECTIVE LOUIS

(shrugging)

Guys get drastic when their lives turn to shit. Did he take his car? Coulda sold it. Bet he got some change for his briefcase, too.

Detective Marn looks up suddenly.

DETECTIVE LOUIS (CONT'D)

What? Do I got something in my teeth?

DETECTIVE MARN

How'd his briefcase get home?

DETECTIVE LOUIS

What'd the Mrs. say?

DETECTIVE MARN

I don't think she knew it was there. She didn't even know if he came home.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Mayhaps it was hers what you thought was his.

DETECTIVE MARN

(shaking her head)

Hers was on the desk.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Monogrammed?

Detective Marn nods.

DETECTIVE LOUIS (CONT'D)

Hmmmmmm.

EXT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO BUILDING - LATER

Kim and Kate drive up to the garage at the same time. Kate gets out of her little convertible and walks to Kim's station wagon. She leans down to the window to chat a moment.

Kate goes back to her car, gets in, and drives into the garage. Drives out minutes later in Alex's fancy sports car. Kim follows her down the street.

The detectives follow them both in an unmarked police car.

LATER

Kate and Kim return in Kim's car. Kim drives into the garage. She exits alone. Kate exits in her car. Kim turns left at the corner and Kate turns right. The detectives turn right.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - NIGHT

Pages are spread out on the dining room table. Some are covered with text, some colorful pie sheets, graphs and charts. Martha and Kate sit, side by side, pouring over them.

MARTHA

The new proposal needs to come in under fifty pages. We have it down to seventy-five, not counting graphics.

KATE

So what's the problem?

MARTHA

(laughing)

Sam Tufts wants to downsize without cutting jobs or benefits.

Kate laughs and looks at Martha. The laughter leaves her eyes.

KATE

You're serious?

MARTHA

Yes, and Alex and his altruistic capitalism actually presumes we can do it.

KATE

Of course he does.

MARTHA

Did I mention that Sam Tufts also wants company growth and shareholder profits?

KATE

Without cutting jobs or benefits? In this current economical climate.

MARTHA

Which is why our last proposal was thrown out.

KATE

Alex said you'd cut too many jobs.

MARTHA

And one job is too many for Sam Tufts. He's a sweet old guy, but trapped in his Way Back Machine.

KATE

What's your window?

MARTHA

Right now? Never.

KATE

And Tuft Consolidated's?

MARTHA

Two years.

KATE

How generous. Let me look this over. I'll get back to you.

MARTHA

Sure. I really appreciate this.--So how's Alex holding up?

KATE

(looking at her watch)

I'm going over to check as soon as we're done.

MARTHA

How much longer is he staying at Mommy and Daddy's?

KATE

Not sure. I think he's secretly enjoying the fawning.

MARTHA

I remember when Michael got chicken pox last year. I would've paid his mother to let him come home for two weeks.

KATE

I wouldn't mind taking care of Alex. It's just the worst time for me to take time off.

MARTHA

I hear you. I used so much sick leave taking care of Michael that I hardly had any when I caught his chicken pox.

KATE

And did he take care of you?

MARTHA

Hell, no.

She slaps her briefcase closed and stands.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

Say hi to Alex for me.

LATER

Alex stands on the dining room table, on a large red section of a pie chart. He ponders a smaller yellow section, then the smallest blue section.

KATE (O.S.)

First, let's factor in employees retiring in the next two years.

Her oversized finger taps the blue section.

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

They create cost reductions in all three divisions if you don't rehire those positions.

ALEX

And who does their work?

Her finger moves to the blue and yellow sections.

KATE (O.S.)

Increase middle management productivity.
Make them earn their keep. Manipulate
lateral promotions that spread their
workload around.

ALEX

How do we pull that wool?

KATE

Obviously the standard, "stock options",
mean little in our current anti-
corporate climate, but fancy titles and
new offices go a long way when
piggybacked on minimal, say cost-of-
living, raises.

Alex shrugs, nods a little and taps his foot in the section
he stands in with questioning eyes.

KATE (CONT'D)

Ahhh--the proletariat. Piece of cake.

ALEX

Or pie?

They laugh.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Output is down, profits are down and
everyone wants a raise. The market is
saturated with every stupid gadget this
company makes. Sam Tuft is going under
unless he does something drastic.

KATE

(frowning)

So why did you say you could do this?

ALEX

I got all caught up in the dizzying
frenzy of believing that we actually
could save the company the way Sam Tuft
wants it done.

KATE

Oh.

ALEX

I know. I know. Let's face it, Kate. This career is natural to you but unnatural to me. You love it. I don't.

Kate sighs and sits back crossing her arms like she's preparing for an old and tired gripe.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Everything about it contradicts my very existence.

KATE

So why are you there?

Alex sits yoga style in the red slice of pie.

ALEX

What else would I do?

She leans back and stares at Kate thoughtfully.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Wish I was more like you. You can work with the worst corporate shark asshole, without once ever having to consider that you're becoming one.

KATE

--Is it hard being my husband, Alex?

ALEX

Some days. Clearly I'm no walk in the park either. So?

KATE

Tension. Stress. I'm doing very well in a career you hate.

ALEX

(suddenly angry)

Your success has never bothered me!

KATE

Then what about me bothers you?

ALEX

Not that!

He sulks. Ponders the pie surrounding him.

KATE

Alex, has Henry ever hit Whitney?

ALEX

What?! No!

KATE

Are you sure?

ALEX

(jumping to his feet)

Yes! Dad loves Mom! He'd never hit her!

KATE

So then you don't love me?

ALEX

Of course I do! Look, my parents are different. And I'm the one who got tae kwon doed. You seem to forget that!

KATE

How, Alex?

ALEX

How what?

KATE

How are your parents different?

ALEX

I don't know. They just are.

She arches an eyebrow. He sits down. They can only stare at one another with their sad faces.

THE NEXT EVENING

Kate lies on the living room floor, barefoot, in blue jeans and a white T-shirt. Kim lies on the couch in half a business suit and stocking feet. They drink beers and watch TV.

KIM

What's this tired old movie called?

`KATE

"Honey, I Shrun-"

There's a crash off screen. They sit up with a start and look towards the kitchen, at each other, towards the kitchen, then scramble out of the room.

CUT TO:

SECONDS LATER

Henry stands in the middle of the kitchen floor. His bottom lip is bleeding and the front of his shirt is splattered with blood.

The box, his iPod and his video game are scattered across the floor. Kim and Kate run in. Kim doesn't see the box and kicks it. She hops around in pain as it ricochets off floorboards.

KIM

Oh, My God! Oh, my God! Oh-

KATE

It's okay, Kim.

She picks up the box and shakes it vigorously. Kim limps over to examine Henry's mouth.

HENRY

I knocked a tooth out.

KIM

Where is it?

He points to a bloody tooth lying on the counter. Kate rinses it off as Kim wipes his chin with a dish towel.

HENRY

I wanted to see what was in the box. I slipped putting it back.

KIM

And what was in the box, Miss Marple?

HENRY

Some scraps of rags or something. I'm sorry. I thought you and Aunt Kate were hiding something special for me.

Kate puts some ice in a towel and crushes it with a meat tenderizer.

KATE

And what if we were? You would've spoiled a great surprise. Now we have to think of something special to make up for all this trouble you went to.

She puts the tooth in a plastic bag she fills with ice. Gives Kim a bag of crushed ice wrapped in a dish towel to hold against Henry's mouth.

KIM

Plus we have to spend the rest of our evening in an emergency room.

HENRY

Really? Wow! How come?

KATE

So they can root your tooth back into your head, Silly.

HENRY

Can't we leave it out? I'll look just like a pro boxer or a hockey player.

KIM

No!

Kate is wiping off the counter methodically and thoroughly.

KATE

You'll only regret the decision when you're an adult, Henry, and then you'll blame Kim and me and do something rash and antisocial to prove it.

HENRY

Huh?

KIM

What?

KATE (CONT'D)

No, Henry. I'm sorry. We have to put the tooth back.

HENRY

Will it hurt?

KIM

Since when has pain mattered to you?

Kate follows them out of the kitchen, grabbing the bag with the tooth in it.

THE EVENING AFTER THAT

Kate and Martha assemble pages spread on the dining room table.

KATE

Has Tuft Consolidated shown any interest in a global market?

MARTHA

Kate, their slogan is "American Products for American People".

KATE

I know.--But global is your only option.

MARTHA

The man's a hillbilly. He'll shut me down the minute he hears the words web site or telemarketing.

KATE

How about a catalogue? Does he have anything against the printed word? Or postal service?

Matha's head hangs down and her bottom lip quivers.

KATE (CONT'D)

What's wrong?

MARTHA

Michael. He's giving me a hard time about how much I'm working while Alex is sick.

KATE

Oh.

MARTHA

I tried to explain to him how you were helping me out for Alex so we can make our deadline next week-

She looks up all blubbery.

MARTHA (CONT.) (CONT'D)

-but he said I was doing all the work but yet another Snow will get the all the glory for doing nothing.

KATE

Oh.

MARTHA

If anyone should worry about no glory it's you.

Kate grabs a tissue box from a side table.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

(wiping her eyes)

Thank you.--I suppose I'm more angry than upset. We usually have more-

She makes quotation marks with her fingers.

MARTHA (CONT'D)

-"healthy fights".--Do you and Alex have this problem? I mean, you guys seem so perfect. I bet you never fight.

KATE

(smiling)

I assure you, that's an illusion.

Martha seems relieved, almost happy even. Blows her nose.

MARTHA

Really? What do you fight about?

KATE

--The weather?

Martha is simply staring. Waiting.

KATE (CONT'D)

(laughing sadly)

--I don't know, Martha. Lots of issues dilute the joy of marriage.

And waiting.

KATE (CONT.) (CONT'D)

--I actually do work too much. I go in early, stay late, and bring home whatever isn't finished.

MARTHA

Why?

KATE

--I'm a Fucking Over Achiever: straight As, honor rolls, and deans' lists from kindergarten to my MBA. My choice of Ivy League schools and then all the major corporations sitting up and begging me to take their offers.

Martha looks absolutely dumbfounded.

KATE (CONT'D)

--I don't see this as a bad thing.

MARTHA

But Alex does?

KATE

His name has made it very easy to get ahead his whole life. He doesn't know anyone needs to work as hard as I have to get where I am and stay here.

MARTHA

Do you?

KATE

Think I need to work hard?

MARTHA

No. Do you need to?

KATE

I enjoy my work, Martha. I thrive on barely made deadlines, and Alex knew this way before we got married.

MARTHA

That's what I told Michael. But he asked if it was fair to compare how we lived before we got married to how we should live after?

KATE

Maybe not, but we can't be expected to change inherent behaviors.

MARTHA

Compromise? Concessions? Altering our behaviors to compliment the compromises, concessions, and altered behaviors our husbands make.

KATE

And what compromises have they made? Picking up both of their socks? Putting the seat down?

Finally a smile from Martha.

MARTHA

Alex is always talking about wanting kids. Do you?

KATE

Yes, just not right now.

MARTHA

When?

KATE

I don't know.

MARTHA

Do you think about knowing?

KATE

Well, yes, but--well maybe not lately. What about you?

MARTHA

Please. I can kiss my ass and my career good-bye if I have a baby now. You, on the other hand, can at least think about it.

Kate thumbs the pages of the assembled proposal.

KATE

I suppose. Look through this. Find a spot to sneak in the words 'global market'.

THE NEXT MORNING

The study door is open. Alex sleeps in the second floor bedroom of his townhouse. Off screen, the front door opens and closes. Alex wakes up, sits up, and stretches. Yawns.

MOMENTS LATER

Elise enters the kitchen wearing her iPod. She pours a glass of orange juice and drinks it as she gets cleaners, sponges, a bucket and rubber gloves from under the sink.

SIMULTANEOUS

Alex gets out of bed and walks to the edge of the floor.

ALEX

Hello? Kate? Is that you?--Hello?--Kim?

THEN

Elise leaves the laundry room, returning with a vacuum cleaner, a mop, a broom, and a feather duster.

MOMENTS LATER

Alex throws a rope ladder over the edge of the bedroom floor and climbs down.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE POOL

Kate walks past rows of drone cubicles, so absorbed in a report she reads, she barely returns the "Good morning, Kate" spoken from each desk she passes. She stops at Sascha's desk.

SASCHA

Morning, Kate.

Kate doesn't look up.

KATE

Morning, Sascha--Get Will Harris on the phone.

SASCHA

Okay.

KATE

Who's in charge of coffee today?

SASCHA

I am.

Kate looks up and smiles.

KATE

Ready for a refill?

SASCHA

Sure.

Kate leans her briefcase against the leg of Sascha's desk. Lays her report on the desk and takes Sascha's mug to the office kitchen. Says "Good morning" to each drone she passes.

A MOMENT LATER

Kate sits Sascha's mug on her desk.

SASCHA (CONT.)

Thanks. Will's on line one.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

The blinds are drawn offering a spectacular view via two huge glass walls that meet at the outermost corner. The hold light flashes on Kate's telephone. She enters and sits her mug on the coaster. Hits the speakerphone button.

KATE

Morning, Will.

She drops her briefcase, sits, and flips through the report.

WILL (O.S.)

Morning, Kate. What's up?

KATE

Turn to page six of the Truman report.

She dips her tea bag a few times and spins her chair around to face the magnificent view.

WILL (O.S.)

Got it.

KATE

What's wrong with this picture?

WILL(O.S.)

--Oops.

KATE

Oops? Will, this report is in every board of director's hand as we speak.

WILL

I didn't have it sent out like this.

KATE

Well, who did?

WILL(O.S.)

I don't-

KATE

I trusted you, Will! I assumed you wouldn't screw this up!

WILL(O.S.)

So tell Mr. Lisle it's my bad.

KATE

I can't say it's your bad because it's mine for not scrutinizing every detail.

WILL(O.S.)

I'm sorry, Kate--What do we do now?

KATE

Get corrected reports upstairs now. And you'd better hope the blame falls where it belongs. When are you free?

WILL(O.S.)

Lunch?

She spins around to check her schedule on her computer.

KATE

That's no good for-

Her eyes stretch wide.

KATE (CONT'D)

Oh, my God!

WILL(O.S.)

What's wrong?

KATE

I have to get back to you.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SECONDS LATER

All of the living room furniture is pushed to one side. The telephone and answering machine are buried under it.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

Kate listens impatiently.

KATE & ALEX(O.S.)

Hi. Say something after the beep.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - CONTINUOUS

Elise dances as she vacuums. The feather duster sticks out of her back pocket. Telephone rings are barely audible under the vacuum.

KATE(O.S./BARELY AUDIBLE)

Elise?! Pick up the phone! Elise?!

INT. OFFICE POOL - SIMULTANEOUS

Sascha and the office drones at their desks, by the water cooler, and in the office kitchen stop whatever they're doing and look at Kate's door.

KATE(O.S.)

(shouting)

Elise?! Pick up the phone! Elise!

CUT TO:

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Elise stops dancing and vacuuming. Takes off her headphones and listens to the silent living room air for a few seconds. Shrugs and turns everything back on.

INT. KATE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kate hangs up and rifles through her purse for keys.

INT. OFFICE POOL - CONTINUOUS

Kate's door flies open. Everyone but Sascha looks away quickly or slinks back to their cubicles as Kate runs out.

SASCHA

Is everything okay?

Kate doesn't answer. Just runs for the elevator bank and pushes the down button repeatedly until a set of doors open. She gets on, yelling when the doors take too long to close.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Kate spills out of the elevator, runs to her car, jumps in, and starts the engine. Screeches out of the garage, setting off car alarms.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Alex slides down the FAX machine cord to the study floor, runs to a bookcase, scoots under it, and peers out.

EXT. KATE'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Kate shouts into her cell phone.

KATE

Elise! Pick up the phone!

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Elise pushes the vacuum cleaner into the study and leaves it in front of Alex's bookcase. He looks up at the formidable machine.

MEANWHILE

Elise closes the shower curtain, sets the cleaners outside the bathroom door, and mops the floor.

EXT. KATE'S CAR - SIMULTANEOUS

Kate screams around a corner, screeching to a halt in front of her building.

INT. CONDOMINIUM LOBBY - SECONDS LATER

Kate runs to the elevator, pushes the up button, waits, pushes it again, waits, then heads for the spiral staircase.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Elise frowns at the townhouse on the desk, and the clothes hanging in a little doll trunk. She flicks the townhouse lights on and off, shrugs, then tidies it up a little.

She makes Alex's bed, then dusts the desk and everything on it. When she turns on the vacuum. Alex backs further under the bookcase.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Kate is a third of the way up to the top floor.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

The living room is in perfect order. The vacuum cleaner runs off screen.

INT. SPIRAL STAIRCASE - MOMENTS LATER

Kate is two thirds of the way up to the top floor.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - SIMULTANEOUS

Elise is on her knees, spot vacuuming under the bookcase next to the one Alex hides under.

His panic stricken eyes dart all about for a better hiding place: under the desk, behind the door, behind a large potted cactus. They look at up at Elise's huge face.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - MOMENTS LATER

Kate bursts into the living room, panting.

KATE

Elise!

She hears the vacuum running off screen.

SECONDS LATER

Kate runs into the study, panting.

KATE

Elise!

She unplugs the vacuum. Elise pushes the vacuum for a few more seconds, then stops, looking confused.

KATE (CONT'D)

Elise!

Elise looks at the vacuum. She takes off her headphones when she turns around and sees Kate. Loud tinny music punctuates Kate's panted breaths.

ELISE

Kate? What are you doing here?

KATE

Elise-

ELISE

And I didn't see my money on the coffee table, by the way.

KATE

I know--I forgot which Thursday it was.

She sees the rope ladder down.

KATE (CONT'D)

Elise, why don't you take the rest of the day off?

ELISE

What? Why? I'm only half-

KATE

Don't worry about it. I'll drop your full amount by the dorm after work.

ELISE

But-

KATE

Please, Elise. Just go. Please.

ELISE

Whatever.

She puts on her headphones. Kate listens until the front door closes, then runs to the desk.

KATE

Alex?

He crawls out from under the bookcase.

ALEX

Down here.

She swings around. He's smiling up at her. She smiles, relieved. He shrugs.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Gotta love that Elise.

KATE

You okay?

ALEX

Yeah. I kind of like it down here.
Reminds me of Manhattan.

She picks him up and puts him on the desk.

KATE

I have to get back to the office and
clean up a big mess I spilled.

ALEX

Go. I'll be fine.

KATE

Are you sure?

He walks to the window and stares down at the tiny people and cars passing. From that height, they all look his size.

ALEX

I'm sure.

INT. AN ULTRA EXECUTIVE OFFICE - LATER

This is also a corner window office with a spectacular southwestern view. Kate and WILL HARRIS, 20s, sit in chairs facing the desk of stately executive, EDWARD LISLE, 60s.

He frowns at a report he reads, shaking his head. Will watches nervously, chewing a hangnail. Kate flicks a speck of lint from her skirt. Edward closes the report and looks up.

EDWARD

I suppose this could've been much worse.--
And I'm still confused as to your delay
in rectifying it, Kate.

She clears her throat.

KATE

I had an emergency at home.

EDWARD

I see. I trust you were able to rectify that in a timely manner?

WILL

Mr. Lisle, you must know that Kate would never have let this-

EDWARD

Had I addressed you, Mr. Harris?

Will squirms and adjusts his tie.

WILL

No, sir.

KATE

Edward, believe me when I say that no report will ever leave my department again before I've approved every word.

EDWARD

Very well. Because the last thing we need is for shareholders to think that we, too, are book chefs.--You've reprimanded Miss Ditweiler, Mr. Harris?

WILL

Yes, sir, although she said-

EDWARD

Please. There are no althougs in my world. Things are either done properly or they aren't.

WILL

Yes, sir.--Shall I fire her?

EDWARD & KATE

What!?!

Will shrinks in his chair.

WILL

I--I--I-

EDWARD

I said no room for althoughs, Mr. Harris,
not errors.

WILL

Yes, sir. I'm sorry, sir. I'm--I wasn't
thinking.

EDWARD

Well, now isn't that headline news?--
Kate, does everyone have copies of a new
report showing quarterly gains, not
losses, minute though they be?

KATE

Except for Mr. & Mrs. Dorey. They weren't
at the meeting and it seems they don't
have a FAX machine.

EDWARD

I don't think they know what one is. Ask
my secretary if we still have our end of
their tin cans and string.

Kate smiles as Will laughs much too hard, slapping his thigh
and doubling over.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

You must have piles of work on your desk
by now.

Will jumps up and backs towards the door as Edward stands and
walks over to his view.

WILL

Yes, sir. I'll get back to my office,
unless there's anything else.

EDWARD

No, there's nothing else. And assure Miss
Ditweiler that her employ is not in
jeopardy.

WILL

Yes, sir. I'll do that right away, and
again, I'm very sorry, Mr.-

EDWARD

Get out, Mr. Harris.

WILL

Yes, sir.

Kate stands as Will stumbles out of the room.

EDWARD

That man will wallow in middle management
for the rest of his life.

KATE

Shall I get out, too?

EDWARD (CONT.)

--Word seems to be out that Alex has--
taken quite ill?

She sits.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Kate, I've been married for over thirty-
five years. I know the peaks and valleys
very well.

KATE

This error has nothing to do with my
personal life, Edward.

He sighs. Sits.

EDWARD

I also never to get involved in my
colleagues' peaks and valleys. But I like
you, Kate. I like how you do things, so
as a colleague--as a friend, I'm saying:
a troubled marriage should affect your
concentration. If it doesn't, it's worse
than you think.

KATE

And women have a hard enough time in this
business without becoming known for
taking a holiday when they have personal
problems.

EDWARD

So then I'm right to be suspicious about
this--contagious illness?

She finally nods.

EDWARD (CONT'D)

Kate, your career is solidly made ten times over. You'll probably be named CEO when I retire, if you play your cards right, so don't play them wrong and jeopardize your marriage for your career.

KATE

Edward, I-

EDWARD

I'm ordering you to take a week off. Fix your marriage; if you want to. End it if you have to, but take the time to make the best decision.

KATE

--Okay, Edward. Starting tomorrow.

He smiles.

EDWARD

Starting today. Now.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - NIGHT

Kate types at the computer. Alex watches the screen from where he lies on the desk atop the huge print on a page of the Tuft Proposal lying beside the keyboard.

KATE

Right here where you mention expansion of goods and services, we can ease in the word global. When Sam Tuft's ears prick up, Martha quickly spouts off statistics from successful companies that pioneered this course.

Alex nods. Shrugs. Yawns. The telephone rings.

KATE (CONT'D)

Hello?--Dr. Fitch.

Alex sits up eagerly as Kate hits the speakerphone button.

ALEX

Is your computer is working?

DR. FITCH(O.S.)

--Yes.

He is up and jumping around with glee.

KATE

When can Alex be restored? You may disagree, but we really do want to try the more conventional approach.

She and Alex are smiling at one another.

DR. FITCH(O.S.)

I'm afraid the news isn't all good.

KATE & ALEX

(frowning at the phone)

What?

DR. FITCH

The machine only works in one direction. As luck would have it, it's not the preferred direction.

Kate and Alex look at one another, dejected.

DR. FITCH(O.S.) (CONT'D)

So we have to start from scratch and reprogram the entire operating system.

KATE

How long will that take?

The speakerphone falls and remains very silent.

KATE (CONT'D)

I see.

DR. FITCH(O.S.)

I really am sorry. I'll call when there's better news.

The line goes dead.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Kate stands at the entrance of a roomy, clubby dining room. She is dressed casually, although she does not wear pants.

There is a touch of disdain on her face as she scans the array of businessmen lunching in the comfort of their hunter greens, tartan plaids, hand polished leather, and cherry wood.

Henry Snow sits alone at a table for two sipping a frosty martini as he reads a menu. The MAITER D' leads Kate to the table. Henry Snow stands and remains standing until she sits.

HENRY SNOW

Send Mrs. Snow a glass of chardonnay.

MAITER D' (O.S.)

Yes, Mr. Snow.

He snaps for a waiter and disappears. Kate observes the other diners, particularly the very few other women, who take note of her as well.

KATE

So. To what do I owe the invitation into this bastion of maleness?

HENRY SNOW

At least women are finally allowed to dine here, Kate.

KATE

Wives and daughters?

HENRY SNOW

When it's time, we'll vote women in as full members of The Hunt Club.

KATE

It's the 21st century.

HENRY, SNOW

--So. I bumped into Sam Tuft at a business lunch the other day.

Her wine arrives. She sips it cautiously.

HENRY SNOW (CONT.)

He wanted to congratulate me on the excellent job Sandy and Martha Desmond did on the new proposal he just accepted to expand his company into "American Products for People Around the Globe".

Henry Snow sips his martini.

HENRY SNOW (CONT'D)

He also wanted me to wish Sandy a speedy recovery.

Kate wants to take a bigger sip of wine but instead sits her glass down.

HENRY SNOW (CONT'D)

I don't like having to lie unless I know what I'm lying about and why.

KATE

--Alex and I separated while you were away on business.

HENRY SNOW

Where is he?

KATE

That's a good question.

HENRY SNOW

And that's no answer.

KATE

It's the best I can do, Henry. I don't know where Alex went.

HENRY SNOW

You mean that damn fool left you? I thought you left him.

KATE

--Alex hasn't been happy for some time.

HENRY SNOW

With what? With you?

KATE

With anything.

HENRY SNOW

What's being happy got to do with it? You think I'm happy? Snow's aren't meant to be happy. We're meant to do what's expected of us: work hard, marry well and carry on the family name.

KATE

I want Alex to be happy. If that means not being with me, then that's the way it is.

HENRY SNOW

Is that why you're helping him keep a job he's, I assume, not happy with? Because the Tuft proposal reeks of you.

KATE

(opening her menu)

Are you hungry, Henry?

HENRY SNOW

What?

KATE

I love you, but either we have a nice lunch where I don't answer anymore questions that are none of your business, or I leave.

He looks at her incredulously. Smiles.

HENRY SNOW

And Sandy actually left you?

Kate reads her menu. He signals for the waiter.

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Kate steps off the elevator looking sad and tired. As she unlocks her door, she is startled by a familiar voice.

DETECTIVE MARN (O.S.)

Hello again, Mrs. Snow.

KATE

Hello again, Detective Marn.

DETECTIVE MARN

This is my partner, Detective Louis.

He nods as Kate opens the door.

KATE

What I can do for you?

DETECTIVE MARN

We need to ask you a few more questions.

KATE

Ask away.

DETECTIVE MARN

Downtown, Mrs. Snow.

KATE

Why?

DETECTIVE MARN

Conflicts have arisen in your account of
and what may actually have happened to
your husband. We need to iron them out.

KATE

What conflicts?

DETECTIVE MARN

This won't take long, Mrs. Snow. It's
just procedure. You'll probably be home
for dinner.

Kate locks the door. They walk towards the elevator.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

The detectives escort Kate past busy cops and criminals to a
drab interrogation room.

DETECTIVE MARN

Would you like some coffee?

KATE

Tea, please. Black.

MOMENTS LATER

Detective Louis returns with three Styrofoam cups and gives
the one with the tea bag to Kate.

DETECTIVE MARN

Mrs. Snow, do you know Martha Desmond?

KATE

Yes. Why?

DETECTIVE MARN

Mrs. Desmond showed us Mr. Snow's agenda for the day he disappeared. A business dinner was scheduled.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

This dinner was, however, crossed out for a marriage counseling appointment.

KATE

Marriage counseling?

DETECTIVE MARN

Did you keep that appointment?

KATE

No. We had none to begin with. The only plans we had were for dinner.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

And why did you cancel those plans?

KATE

I told your partner why.

DETECTIVE MARN

Right. When you cancelled your dinner plans, did you call him, or did he call you?

KATE

He called me.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

He called you?

KATE

--Yes.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

You're sure about that?

KATE

--Yes.

DETECTIVE MARN

Because his telephone records don't show any calls made to your office.

KATE

Then I called him.

DETECTIVE MARN

There's no record of any calls between your offices.

KATE

He must have called from his cell phone.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

I thought you called him.

KATE

Look, I'm on the phone all day everyday. All I remember is that we spoke and when Alex wanted to confirm dinner plans, I cancelled.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

He called to confirm plans he'd crossed off of his agenda?

KATE

Alex probably got his dates confused.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Then it's a good thing you decided to cancel, isn't it?

KATE

Excuse me?

DETECTIVE MARN

Did this conversation take place in the morning?

KATE

--Afternoon.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Did you carpool that day?

KATE

Yes. It was my week to drive.

DETECTIVE MARN

So you saw him last on Tuesday morning and talked to him last on Tuesday afternoon?

KATE

Yes.

DETECTIVE MARN

Martha Desmond claims she saw Mr. Snow
get into your car after work Tuesday.

KATE

--Martha's wrong.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

So Mr. Snow didn't expect a ride home?

KATE

No. Because he was going to dinner.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

The cancelled dinner?

KATE

I guess so.

DETECTIVE MARN

Mrs. Desmond is lying?

KATE

Or she made a mistake.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

There are an awful lot of maybes entering
into your account of what occurred on the
last day your husband was seen alive.

KATE

Seen alive? What-

DETECTIVE MARN

Did Mr. Snow take his briefcase to work
that day?

KATE

Yes.

DETECTIVE MARN

But he never came home again?

KATE

I don't know.

DETECTIVE MARN

Then, Mrs. Snow, how did his briefcase
make it home?

Dead silence all over the place.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Do you know what happened to him?

KATE

No. I haven't seen Alex since I dropped him in front of his office building. We last spoke when he called about dinner, not marriage counseling. I don't know how his briefcase got home. I didn't know it was there.

DETECTIVE MARN

Then, Mrs. Snow. You won't mind if we have a look at that briefcase?

KATE

Yes, I will mind. I don't know what's going on here, what you're trying to prove, but I'm certainly not going to-

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Yes, Mrs. Snow, you are.

He pulls out a search warrant.

KATE

Is this where I call my lawyer?

DETECTIVE MARN

You're not under arrest. We just want to find Mr. Snow.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

You do want to find him, don't you?

KATE

Of course, I do, but obviously Alex doesn't want to be found, does he?

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - LATER

Kate's hand reaches into the study and flicks up the light switch. She leans against the doorjamb, watching the detectives.

Detective Marn picks up Alex's briefcase and looks for room on the desk. Detective Louis pushes the townhouse and clothes trunk out of the way.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

You got a daughter?

KATE

A nephew.

His eyes linger on Kate for a few confused seconds, then get busy watching his partner struggle to open the briefcase. Until she looks over her shoulder at Kate.

Kate walks over, sets the combination and snaps up the locks. Steps back as the briefcase is opened. The detectives sift through papers, then look into the upper pouch.

They pull out Alex's car keys, cell phone and wallet filled with credit cards and cash. Kate rolls her eyes. Detective Louis takes out his handcuffs.

DETECTIVE MARN

Jay, please.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

What? I'm just doing my job.

DETECTIVE MARN

Mrs. Snow, why did you move your husband's car last Friday?

KATE

Should call my lawyer now?

DETECTIVE LOUIS

You should call your lawyer.

DETECTIVE MARN

Katherine Snow, you're under arrest for suspicion of the murder of Henry Alexander Snow, IV.

Kate is silent as Detective Louis turns her around to snap on the cuffs.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

That's very good, not saying anything else, because you do have the right to remain silent. You also have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford one-

KATE

Right.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

Shhhhh, Mrs. Snow. Now is not a good time
for sarcasm.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Kate cradles a pay phone between her shoulder and ear as she
wipes ink from her fingertips.

CUT TO:

INT. EXECUTIVE OFFICE - SIMULTANEOUS

It's a mid-size room with a middle floor view. The very simple
décor is similar to Kate's. A picture of Henry sits on the desk
between a cactus and Kim and Jake's wedding portrait.

Kim sits with her feet up on her desk. Her keyboard is in her
lap. Her telephone beeps. She leans up just far enough to hit
the speaker button.

KIM

What now, James?

JAMES (O.S.)

Your sister's on line one.

She hits another button.

KIM (CONT.)

Hi. What's up?

KATE (O.S.)

I've been arrested.

KIM

(laughing)

Okay. What else?

KATE (O.S.)

The police think I've killed Alex.

Kim stops typing and looks at the phone.

KIM

How can they arrest you with no body or
weapon?

KATE

It's the LAPD. They can do whatever they want.

KIM

Okay--let me think--who else have you called?

KATE

I'm only allowed one call.

KIM

And you picked me? Why didn't you call your lawyer?

KATE

(whispering)

Because I want you to call SHRINKS and ask Dr. Fitch what I should do.

KIM

Shouldn't I come down and post bail or something first?

KATE

It's not even set. They have all these procedures and protocols.

KIM

They're not keeping you there overnight, are they?

KATE

I don't know.

KIM

All right. I'll call SHRINKS.

KATE

Thanks, Kim. I knew I could count on you.

KIM

Forever and for always, Kate.

INT. ALEX & KATE'S CONDO - LATER

The front door unlocks and Kim rushes in.

KIM

Alex!

SECONDS LATER

Kim runs into the bedroom.

KIM

Alex!

He lounges poolside out on the patio. In goofy sunglasses that don't fit quite right.

ALEX

What!

KIM

Okay. This holiday is over. The police think Kate's done away with you.

ALEX

What?

KIM

Those SHRINKS have to restore you so we can prove you're alive and well.

ALEX

I'm not going back to that place. What if they shrink me even more?

KIM

Look, right now my sister's sitting in some stinky, dingy, vermin infested jail cell. She doesn't deserve that, Alex. Hell, you don't deserve her, but she loves you. So let's get her out.

ALEX

They're not going to let you do it. It has to be Kate.

KIM

(running into the closet)
I have a plan.

ALEX

Oh, no.

MINUTES LATER

Kim runs out of the closet in one of Kate's suits.

ALEX

What about your hair?

KIM

Duh? It grew?

ALEX

Exponentially?

EXT. SHRINKS' OFFICE - LATER

It's a small round detached adobe building. Beige. Nondescript. Kim pounds on the front door, shaking the closed sign in the window. The box is under her arm.

Ms. Boom opens the door. Peeks her head out.

MS. BOOM

Mrs. Snow?

KIM

I need to speak with Dr. Fitch.

MS. BOOM

She's rather busy right now.

KIM

See if she can get unbusy-

She glances at Ms. Boom's name tag.

KIM(CONT.) (CONT'D)

-Ms. Boom. I won't take long.

She pushes her way inside.

INT. SHRINKS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Kim waits at the reception desk. Ms. Boom and Dr. Fitch approach.

DR. FITCH

Mrs. Snow, what can I do for you?

KIM
Restore Alex.

DR. FITCH
But-

KIM
No buts. Restore him. You've had plenty
of time to get that computer up.

DR. FITCH
Mrs. Snow-

KIM
I really don't have time for one of your
heartfelt lectures. Restore Alex. Now.
Please.

She pushes the box into Dr. Fitch's hands.

KIM(CONT.) (CONT'D)
By the way--I've been wondering.

DR. FITCH
Yes?

KIM
This idea's great for people who can afford
it, but what about the majority? Abused
poor women? With kids? What about them?

DR. FITCH
I do this to help people, not make money.
If someone, anyone who finds us, can't
afford to pay, we do it free of charge
and charge people like you a fee that
helps SHRINKS pay the bills.

KIM
That's beautiful. I wish the whole world
were like you.

DR. FITCH
So do I.

KIM
One more question.

DR. FITCH

Yes?

KIM

Do you do ex-husbands?

DR. FITCH

Excuse me?

KIM

Children?

DR. FITCH

Mrs. Snow-

KIM

Never mind. I was just asking for a friend.

Dr. Fitch doesn't move. Kim gives her a gentle nudge.

KIM (CONT'D)

Well, go on. Let's see what happens.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Detectives Marn and Louis sit at their desks. Detective Marn types a report. Detective Louis is on the phone.

A full sized Alex walks up. He has a thick bushy beard, his hair's a mess, and his clothes are too big. And wrinkled.

ALEX

I hear you're looking for me.

DETECTIVE MARN

And you would be?

ALEX

Henry Alexander Snow, IV. Close friends call me Alex. My parents call me Sandy.

Detective Louis hangs up, stands up, and walks around Alex, looking him up and down.

DETECTIVE LOUIS

You're Alexander Snow?

ALEX

In the flesh. Now, you haven't really arrested my wife for murder, have you? Not without evidence or a body-my body?

DETECTIVE MARN

Mr. Snow, where've you been?

ALEX

Nowhere. I was just gone. My wife, Detectives?

Detective Marn snatches the report from her typewriter, tears it up and throws it away. Detective Louis gets a ring of keys from a hook. Walks away sifting through them.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You know, I'd kill-no pun intended -for some hot strong coffee: cream and sugar.

Detective Marn points to the coffee station. Alex walks over, pours himself a cup. Kim enters the station house as Detective Louis returns with Kate.

She sees Kate's face see Alex absentmindedly stirring cream and sugar into a coffee cup. Sees her stop cold and take a step back.

KIM

Damn, but it's a bitch to find parking downtown. Ready to go, Kate?

Alex spins around as Kim walks over and takes Kate's hand.

KIM(CONT'D)

We have to stop by the hardware store for some locks and then we'll help Alex pack. He's staying at a very posh hotel.

ALEX

Just like I promised, okay, Kate? Let's just go.

KIM

And just so we're clear, Alex, touch my sister again, and I'll kill you.

Alex glances nervously at the gaping detectives. Kate's hand gives Kim's fingers a discouraging squeeze.

KIM (CONT'D)

I'll shoot you, I'll bludgeon you, I'll stab you with an ice pick, and cleave your body into tiny bits and pieces-

Kate gives Kim's arm a tug.

KIM (CONT'D)

-which I will then burn and toss into a river one by one.

Kate is dragging her out of the police station.

KIM (CONT'D)

(looking back)

You so much as pluck your finger against her temple-

ALEX

Okay, Kim. I think got it all.

He throws down his coffee in a few fast gulps and arcs the crumpled empty cup into a trash can. Arms in the air.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Yesssssssss!

INT. DR. FITCH'S OFFICE - DAYS LATER

Dr. Fitch sits at her desk, hands clasped under her chin. Her partner, DR. DAVIS, a youthful 60 something, sits beside the desk, her face wearing a look of grave concern.

Kate and Alex sit facing the doctors. They wear business attire. Alex's hair is freshly coiffed, his beard long gone.

KATE

At first it was very hard to get him to say what he really felt about anything.

ALEX

Self expression wasn't encouraged in my parents' house.

KATE

And all my family did was express ourselves--Alex and I figured there had to be some median ground for us.

ALEX

It was all very new. Foreign.

KATE

But eventually he became more honest about his feelings. Maybe a little too honest sometimes.

ALEX

She created a monster.

DR. DAVIS

Why do you say that?

ALEX

Because my destiny was set in stone before I was born: my name, my alma maters. My major. My career. My whole life-before Kate-I made sure to do exactly what was expected of me. Kate was the first person to convince me that I didn't need to do that.

THE FOLLOWING WEEK

DR. DAVIS

So how did you choose not to work for the company your great grandfather founded? Was it rebellion? Because you did that before you met Kate.

ALEX

What? No. It was pure need not have them up my ass with an endoscopic camera, dictating my every move. To know that I could succeed on my own without any ways being paved for me.

DR. FITCH

How did you do it? How did you tell them?

ALEX

I don't know. I just did.

DR. DAVIS

You just did?

ALEX

(laughing)

Yeah.--The old Henrys' tickers really needed jump starts that day.

DR. DAVIS

I see. This would be the day you told them you were going off to make a name for yourself in a world you despise?

ALEX

At least no one put me there. I knew I could do it myself, and I did.

DR. DAVIS

I see.

He watches the doctors write, looking away quickly when they stop.

A WEEK LATER

DR. DAVIS (CONT.)

Does your father love you, Mr. Snow?

He shrugs.

DR. DAVIS (CONT'D)

Does he like you?

He shrugs.

DR. DAVIS (CONT'D)

Do you love him?

He shrugs.

DR. FITCH

Mr. Snow--

ALEX

Ask me if I like him. I can answer that. No.

DR. DAVIS

But you don't know if you love him?

ALEX

Some days I only know that I hate him.
And then I decide I must love him deep
down because I love my mom and she loves
me and she loves him and how can I hate
someone that someone I love loves?

The doctors frown. Write.

DR. DAVIS

Mrs. Snow, how do you think your father-
in-law feels about Alex?

KATE

--It's kind of hard to tell. They don't
agree on much, although they don't really
fight, either. It's more a matter of Alex
not fighting back when Henry picks on
him.

She looks at Alex.

KATE (CONT'D)

Neither of them are especially emotional--
except with me and our nephew, Henry.

The doctors look perplexed.

ALEX

What?

DR. FITCH

I thought you were an only child?

ALEX

I am. Henry is Kate's sister's son.

DR. DAVIS

Your sister named her son after Mr.
Snow's family?

ALEX

It's just coincidence. Henry was three
when Kate and I met.

The perplexed doctors write for some time, only looking up
when Kate suddenly laughs out loud. Alex regards her from
the corner of his eye.

KATE

Henry says it's like having four grandpa's.

DR. FITCH

Four?

KATE

My and Kim's dad, his dad's dad, his step-dad's dad, and Alex's dad.

The doctors' pens race across their note pads. They flip to new sheets of paper and keep writing.

DR. DAVIS

Mr. Snow, do you resent your father's relationship with Mrs. Snow's nephew?

ALEX

Are you kidding? Everybody loves Henry. You can't help yourself. He even asked if we and Dad would still love him when we had our own Henry.

The doctors scrutinize Alex like a product they might buy.

ALEX (CONT'D)

What?

DR. DAVIS

Do you secretly crave your father's approval?

ALEX

That's the last thing I crave.

DR. DAVIS

I see. So then you don't fear that if you did what you wanted with your life you might risk looking like a failure in his eyes?

ALEX

Did what I want like what?

DR. DAVIS

--Start a new career. End your marriage.

ALEX

I don't want to start or end anything.
Why are you saying that?

DR. DAVIS

Have you ever heard of misplaced anger?

ALEX

What? I'm angry because I think my dad
will be disappointed if I leave Kate?

He looks at Kate.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Is that what you think?

Everyone looks at Kate who looks as if she wants to shrink
into the fabric of her chair. Alex looks at Dr. Fitch.

ALEX (CONT'D)

You said you wanted to save our marriage.
Why don't I feel like that's ever been
your intention?

DR. FITCH

We try to save relationships, Mr. Snow.
Unfortunately, some relationships work
best without the aspect of marriage.

ALEX

Well, not this one! This relationship will
work best with marriage as its main aspect!

DR. DAVIS

I see. Can you ever see yourself changing
careers midstream to just up and do
whatever you wanted to do?

ALEX

What?--Sure. I could quit my job any time!

DR. DAVIS

And the opinions of people you respect,
yet revile? You could risk being thought
a failure by them if doing whatever you
wanted didn't work out?

ALEX

I guess so. I don't know.

DR. FITCH

You could arise like a phoenix from the ashes of failure? Start over? Or stay home to raise your--Henry's?

ALEX

I've never considered it.

DR. FITCH

Never?

The doctors and Kate look at one another and at Alex.

ALEX

--Oh, no! I'm not quitting my job. I like my job. I worked my butt off for it and it's mine, all mine. I'm not giving it up to run some fool's errand. No, thank you. That's a woman's prerogative, not a man's.

DR. DAVIS

You like your job?

KATE

A woman's prerogative?

Alex looks at Kate, then quickly at the doctors.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Some parts of it.

DR. FITCH

Which parts?

KATE

A woman's prerogative?!

Alex continues to avoid Kate's glare.

ALEX (CONT'D)

The part where I bring home the handsome salary I'm supposed to--isn't it Kate's turn to answer questions?

KATE

Why's it a woman's prerogative, you asshole!?!

She stands and slaps him hard on the temple. He and the doctors jump up.

ALEX

Hey!

DRS. FITCH & DAVIS

Mrs. Snow!

DR. FITCH
(stepping from behind her desk)
Sit down, Mrs. Snow.

KATE
I work just as hard as you, Alex! Harder!
And if I chose not to do it anymore, I'd
look as much like a failure as you would!

ALEX
You see?! You see?! She'd consider it
failing! So would Dad! So would everyone!

DR. DAVIS
Yes, Mr. Snow. I do see.

ALEX
What? What do you see now?

DR. DAVIS
(looking at her watch)
That our time is up.

DR. FITCH
Sit down, Mrs. Snow.

Kate and Alex sit, Alex keeping an eye on his riled up wife.

KATE
You want to quit your job?

She looks at the doctors incredulously.

KATE (CONT'D)
He wants to quit his job?

DR. DAVIS
If he was no good at it, that would be fine,
but he's very good and, hence, under great,
if unspoken, pressure from family and
colleagues to keep doing it. No way out.

INT. A DARK ROOM - DAY

Henry Snow sleeps on the floor. Six light beams stream down from three high round windows at each end of the room. His head lies in a light circle on the floor.

His suit is wrinkled and disheveled. He has a gray five o'clock shadow.

CUT TO:

INT. "SUDS" BREWPUB & LAUNDROMAT - DAY

In the windowpane of a front door flanked by two storefront windows, the word SUDS reads backwards. It reads correct in shadows on the floor. The OPEN sign in the window faces inside.

Light streams down from three high round windows on each side of the building, creating six circles of light that land on the floor. A ceiling fan spins overhead.

On one side of the spacious room, candy colored washers and dryers line sidewalls opposite an island folding and ironing station. The back wall is all glass and reveals rows and rows and rows of clothes flapping on outdoor clotheslines.

And Whitney in rubber gloves scrubbing even more laundry clean on a large washboard in a big steel washing tub. Elise is her sullen but worthy assistant.

Over on the other side of the room is a collection of tall tables stacked with matching chairs. Behind them? A bar with a row of beer taps and seven swiveling stools.

A soda fountain, professional juicer and cash register are also behind the bar. Young Henry organizes a rolling kiosk full of laundering accessories available for purchase.

Alex takes down chairs. They both wear crisp white bib aprons. Henry wears his iPod. His head bops back and forth. Drs. Fitch and Davis knock on the door.

Alex looks up and smiles. They wave and show off their large and full laundry bags.

ALEX

Henry, get the door?

No response. Alex lets the doctors in.

DRS. FITCH & DAVIS
Morning!!

ALEX
Good morning! Welcome to SUDS!

He turns the OPEN sign around. Henry looks up, turns off his Ipod and hurries over with two rolling laundry carts.

ALEX (CONT'D)
This is my nephew, Henry Spring. Henry, meet Drs. Fitch & Davis.

HENRY
Hello! Welcome to SUDS!

DR. FITCH
Thank you. How's business?

The doctors drop their bags into the carts.

HENRY
Not bad. Not booming, yet, but the slackers already love us.--May I interest you in a couple of beverages or some high end designer detergent and softener?

DRS. FITCH & DAVIS
How about everything?

HENRY
Very well.

The doctors saddle up to the bar. Alex squeezes them two glasses of orange juice while Henry wheels over his kiosk.

HENRY (CONT'D)
So whataya think of our place?

The doctors smile at Henry, who smiles back and looks at Alex when the doctors look at him.

ALEX
Henry, will you see if Mom and Elise need any help?

HENRY
Okay.

He runs out of the back door and up to Whitney and Elise, who've reached their hand rinse and wring cycle.

DR. DAVIS
How's Mr. Snow?

Alex shrugs.

DR. FITCH
Any sign of him waking up?

HENRY (O.S.)
Not yet.

ALEX & DRS. FITCH & DAVIS
What!?!?

HENRY
Grandma Whitney doesn't need any help.

ALEX & DRS. FITCH & DAVIS
Oh.

HENRY
I'll just wait over there while you
decide which product you wish to launder
your fine fabrics with today.

He goes to sit alone at a far table, puts in his earbuds, and pulls out his portable video game. His head bops back and forth.

The doctors pretend to window shop at the kiosk, their mouths opening only for sips of juice.

ALEX
It's okay. It's like he's not even here.
We do it all the time at home.

But Dr. Davis still keeps a quiet eye on him.

DR. FITCH
Does anyone else know yet?

Kim and Kate stroll in. One of them is very pregnant, but which? Henry looks up and smiles.

HENRY
(shouting)
Hi, Mom. Hi, Aunt Kate.

KIM & KATE
(shouting)
Hi, Henry.

KATE
We stopped by the hardware store.

A set of keys arcs through the air. Alex catches them. Henry removes his headphones.

HENRY
You're moving home, Uncle Alex?

ALEX
Not quite.

KATE
But he can visit at my leisure.

She and Alex exchange a longing, sexy smile.

HENRY
And you can finally start that family
you've been putting off?

KIM
Henry, please!

KATE
Yes, Henry. That's exactly what we'll do.

The front door opens. Martha enters with her husband, MICHAEL, 30s, who has a huge full duffel bag on his shoulder. Henry dashes over with his rolling kiosk.

HENRY
Good morning, and welcome to SUDS.

ALEX
Martha! You made it!

He hugs Martha as Michael waves at Kate as she and Kim join the doctors at the bar.

HENRY
May I interest you in a couple of
beverages or some high end designer
detergent and softener to launder your
fine fabrics with today?

MARTHA

Yes, but first, we need a cart, don't we?
And we want your special golden bubbles
delicate hand wash and fresh air dry
service. Everything's already sorted, but
please make sure that my clothes are on
top once they're ironed and folded.

HENRY

Wow.--Guess you wear the pants in your
condo.

KIM, KATE, & ALEX

Henry, please!

Martha and Michael scowl at him as Kim hurries over to drag
him away.

KIM

How about a little less lip and a little
more service, oh fruit of my loins!

Alex laughs sheepishly as he eases the Desmonds towards the
laundromat and a rolling cart for Michael's burden.

ALEX

Can you believe Kate and I are actually
planning to have one of our own?

MICHAEL

No. I can't.

His angry eyes try to find Henry over his shoulder.

INT. DARK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Henry Snow's nose twitches as his eyes squint open and look
around the room, then down at himself. He gets to his feet
slowly. His tassled footsteps echo through the darkness.

He squints and shields his eyes each time he passes through a
light beam as he makes his way to a wall and feels in vain
for a door or window.

As he returns to the center of a light beam, he hears what
sounds like muffled voices.

HENRY SNOW

Hello? Whitney? Whitney?--Is that you?

INT. "SUDS" BREW PUB & LAUNDROMAT - SIMULTANEOUS

Whitney bursts through the back doors carrying a large wicker basket of laundry ready for ironing.

ALEX

Mom, come meet some friends.

As Alex introduces Whitney to Martha and Michael, Michael looks up suddenly. Looks around frowning.

MICHAEL

Did you hear something?

MARTHA

Like what?

MICHAEL

Like--I don't know--a noise.

WHITNEY

What kind of noise?

Michael listens to the chatter spilling over from the bar.

MICHAEL

Forget it. It was nothing.

The doctors try to eavesdrop on the conversation in the laundromat. Alex glances over, but quickly returns to business when he realizes Kate is watching.

Kate looks at the doctors trying to look innocent. As Martha gives Whitney involved and detailed instructions for how she wants her clothes washed, Alex steals another look at the doctors.

Their eyes follow HIS glance towards rows and rows and rows of Laundromat shelves on the far side of the room that are filled with books and board games. A black box is tucked safely out of plain sight.

THE END

FADE OUT