THE MONEY PIT

"Pilot"

written by

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NETWORK 4TH REWRITE

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ACT ONE

SCENE A

FADE IN:

I/E. OLD, DISGUSTING, DECREPIT, UGLY HOUSE - DAY
(WALTER, ANNA, NARRATOR (V.0))

WE'RE WATCHING ONE OF THOSE CHEESY ONLINE VIRTUAL TOURS OF A TINY, RUNDOWN HOUSE, ZOOMING AND DISSOLVING BETWEEN PHOTOS WHILE BAD JAZZ PLAYS AND A NARRATOR DESCRIBES THE HOUSE.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...cozy handyman's delight is an ideal project with great potential. With some love and TLC, this charming starter home is a diamond in the rough...

INT. WALTER'S STUDIO APARTMENT - MORNING - (D1)

NEWLYWEDS WALTER AND ANNA, LATE 20'S, SIT ON A FUTON IN WALTER'S COMICALLY TINY, YET WELL ORGANIZED, STUDIO APARTMENT. THEY'RE WATCHING THE VIRTUAL TOUR ON A LAPTOP, THEIR MOUTHS OPEN IN ASTONISHMENT.

WALTER

Okay, plus sides: It is the nicest of any of the houses we've seen so far.

ANNA

The carpets match the blood spatters.

WALTER

That's blood? Phew, I'm color blind, I thought that was mold.

ANNA

And that's a "phew" for you, is it?

(SHE LAYS HER HEAD ON HIS SHOULDER)

We're never going to find a house.

WALTER

This is just the beginning of the process. I told some realtors I'd call them when we got back from our honeymoon, they'll start showing us listings, I bet we find a place within... (THINKING) six months.

ANNA

That’s as long as it took for us to meet, have our first date, fall in love, and get married.

WALTER

(SHRUGS) Dating is easy. Real estate is hard. (CLICKS THE BROWSER) I want to look at that first one again. I think it’s where they filmed *Saw*. (HE REALIZES SHE’S SMILING AT HIM) What?

ANNA

I just love that we’re not one of those couples that dated for twenty years before getting married so there’s no surprises left. Like, I didn’t even know you were color blind.

WALTER

Oh yeah. I have numbers on everything so I know what to wear with what. (SHOWS HER HIS SHIRT LABEL) See?

ANNA

(READING) Six...

WALTER

Blue, right? I can wear it with twos, fours, and elevens.

ANNA

So you don't even know what color my eyes are.

WALTER

Yeah I do. They're a deep, beautiful 8.

HE KISSES HER.

ANNA

It's weird to think about. Six months ago I was sure I'd never meet a nice guy. And now here we are, married and buried in a coffin together.

WALTER

In Tokyo, this would be considered a spacious family apartment. It would mean you were a congressman, or Yakuza.

ANNA

Tomorrow, let's drive around and look for Open House signs.

WALTER

No no no, anyone can stick a sign in their front yard.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

And then you walk in and it’s some psycho waiting to kill you or sell you Herbalife or something. (OFF HER LOOK, HE SMILES) I know, we're married.

ANNA

No, I'm trying to time our breaths so we don’t deplete all the oxygen in here and pass out. (THEN) I just don't want this to be like the wedding bands, where we take so long trying to find the “perfect” one that all the good ones get booked out from under us.

WALTER

Ours sounded good to me, but I’m tone deaf.

ANNA

Do <u>any</u> of your senses work properly?!

WALTER

(SMILES) Okay. I doubt we’re gonna buy some random house we just stumble into, but sure, let’s check out some open houses. (HE KISSES THE TOP OF HER HEAD) But I am gonna laugh in your face so hard when we get murdered.

<u>CUT TO:</u>

ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - THE NEXT DAY - (D2)
(WALTER, ANNA, NOEL, ESTELLE)

PROSPECTIVE BUYERS TOUR THIS VERY LARGE, BEAUTIFUL OPEN HOUSE. WALTER AND ANNA ARE WALKING BACK DOWNSTAIRS AFTER HAVING SEEN THE SECOND STORY. THEY'RE BOTH AWESTRUCK. ANNA GIVES WALTER A GIANT "I TOLD YOU SO" GRIN. THERE'S A BEAT, THEN:

WALTER

It doesn't seem a little too nice to you?

ANNA

Maybe we should talk about what we're looking for here. Are we trying to find a place for us to live in or to incarcerate criminals?

WALTER

It just feels too good to be true. Plus, I thought we were looking for a starter home.

ANNA

So? We skip a step and go right to dream house.

WALTER

Four steps. (OFF HER QUIZZICAL LOOK) Starter house, mature house, new family house, mature family house, dream house.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

And then empty-nester house, elderly house, musty apartment, retirement community, cemetery.

ANNA SHAKES HER HEAD. SHE LOOKS AROUND, THEN SAYS, A LITTLE TOO LOUDLY:

ANNA

Walter, I think this is our house!

WALTER

(GLANCING AROUND) Shhh! If we do make an offer, we don't want to start a bidding war. (THEN, LOUDLY) Uch, all these windows. Good luck cooling this place in the summer.

ANNA

It has really good bones.

WALTER

What does that mean? People always say that about houses. What bones?

ANNA

You know, the placement of the walls, and the windows, the general flow...

WALTER

What's the flow?

ANNA

Just trust me, it's a thing. I'm gonna look upstairs again.

ANNA LEAVES. WALTER TURNS TO A WOMAN HOLDING A BABY, WHO'S FLIPPING A SWITCH NEXT TO A GAS FIREPLACE. THE FLAMES IGNITE.

WALTER

Imagine an infant crawling in there?

HE WALKS ON, LEAVING THE WOMAN TO REACT IN HORROR.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER - (D2)

ANNA ENTERS THE BEAUTIFUL BATHROOM. TWO SINKS. CLAWFOOT TUB. FIREPLACE. ESTELLE, A SWEET-LOOKING OLD LADY, IS THERE.

ESTELLE

What do you think?

ANNA

Uch, it's the worst. It's so tacky and gross. And that tilework? (MOCK VOMITS)

ESTELLE

(BREAKS DOWN CRYING) I picked those tiles out with Carlos in Asunción.

ANNA

Oh, no, I'm sorry, I didn't know you were the owner. I love the house. We're just pretending to hate it to drive down the price. (REALIZES) I'm not sure I should have told you that.

ESTELLE

No, it's not that. (THEN) You think you know the man you married. And then one day, Israeli intelligence comes to the door.

ANNA

Israeli intelligence?

ESTELLE

Last Tuesday. That's why I've got to sell the house so quickly. It turns out, Carlos was Hitler's poolman.

SHE SOBS ON ANNA'S SHOULDER, WHO COMFORTS HER AWKWARDLY.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME TIME - (D2)

WALTER LOOKS AROUND THE PERFECT KITCHEN. AN AFFABLE MAN IN HIS 40'S (WHO WE'LL LATER LEARN IS NOEL) ENTERS. HE STARTS LOOKING AROUND, NODDING APPROVINGLY.

WALTER

Sure, it seems nice, to the untrained eye. But to the eye of an architect, (LYING) which is the thing that I am, it's a mess.

NOEL

Really?

AS WALTER TALKS, HE PUTS ON THE AIR OF AN EXPERT, PLACING HIS EAR TO WALLS AND KNOCKING, THEN FROWNING LIKE HE DOESN'T LIKE WHAT HE HEARS. HE OPENS A CABINET AND LETS IT SHUT, AND THEN REACTS LIKE HE CAN'T BELIEVE HOW CHEAP IT IS.

WALTER

Oh yeah. The proportions are atrocious, the flow is, well, there's no flow. The... (MAKING UP A WORD) jousting is a disaster.

NOEL

The jousting is impeccable.

WALTER

Oh really? And where did you go to architecture school?

NOEL

Yale.

WALTER

(NOT WILLING TO GIVE UP) Guess you haven't been there in a while, huh?

NOEL

Just yesterday. That's where I teach architecture.

WALTER

Uh-huh. And, uh, you think this a pretty good house, huh?

NOEL

I've been going to open houses every Sunday for over four years now. I haven't seen a place <u>half</u> this nice for what they're asking. If I lose this house, I'm gonna be kicking myself for the rest of my life.

WALTER REACTS AS NOEL STEPS AWAY. <u>ANNA ENTERS</u>.

ANNA

What do you think?

WALTER

The jousting is impeccable.

ANNA

What's the jousting?

WALTER

Just trust me, it's a thing.

HE GLANCES AT NOEL, THEN TAKES ANNA'S HAND AND PULLS HER OUT ONTO THE PATIO, OUT OF EARSHOT.

EXT. HOUSE - PATIO - CONTINUOUS

HE LOOKS THROUGH THE WINDOW, AT NOEL WHO IS KNOCKING ON THE WALLS AND LISTENING IN ADMIRATION AT HOW SOLID THE HOUSE IS.

WALTER

Let's buy it.

ANNA

What? What about all that: "it's too nice" and "it interrupts our planned march to the graveyard"?

WALTER

I don't know, I think you're right, I need to stop overthinking every decision. I mean, not everything can be too good to be true, right?

ANNA

I've read about some things that are both very good and also happen to be true, but I never believed it before. (THEN) But I don't want to talk you into anything.

WALTER

You know what this is? This is the short line at motor vehicles.

ANNA

What?

WALTER

Yeah, you go to motor vehicles to get your license renewed, and you get on this line that reaches to Spain. And right next to it is this little short line with only two guys on it. But you don't get on that line because it seems too good to be true, otherwise everybody else would be on it, so you waste three hours.

ANNA

Are you talking about the line for handicapped people?

WALTER

(GENUINE) This is our first big decision as a married couple. I don't want to mess it up.

ANNA

(THINKS) Was the counter lower than the other counters... (THEN, SHE SMILES) Let's do it!

THEY KISS. THROUGH THE WINDOW BEHIND THEM, WE SEE NOEL OPEN ONE OF THE CABINETS... AND THE CABINET DOOR COMES OFF IN HIS HANDS. HE LOOKS AROUND TO MAKE SURE NO ONE SAW, THEN GENTLY PUTS IT BACK AND WALKS QUICKLY AWAY.

CUT TO:

ACT ONE

SCENE C

INT. TECH COMPANY OFFICES - LATER - (D2)
(WALTER, ANNA, BENNY, MARIKA, ESTELLE)

A HUGE OPEN LOFT SPACE, WITH AMAZING VIEWS OF THE CITY. PROGRAMMERS TYPE AWAY AT COMPUTERS, PLAY PING PONG, ETC. WALTER SITS AT A TABLE ACROSS FROM A BUSINESSMAN IN A SUIT (40). A 25-YEAR-OLD IN A HOODIE SITS BESIDE HIM.

WALTER

I hate asking you for this. It makes

me feel like a little kid having to

run to my rich brother for money.

THE BUSINESSMAN CONSIDERS THEM. THEN, THE 25-YEAR-OLD SAYS:

BENNY

Why me? Why not a bank? (THEN, TO

BUSINESSMAN) Thanks Alan, drop this

off with the software guys.

HE SIGNS A PAPER AND HANDS IT TO THE BUSINESSMAN, WHO NODS AND RUNS OFF. AND WE REALIZE THIS IS WALTER'S YOUNGER BROTHER BENNY. DORKY, ENERGETIC, AT TIMES CONDESCENDING. MARK ZUCKERBERG. HE TURNS BACK TO WALTER.

WALTER

There's no time. They're already

getting other offers, we don't want to

lose this house. Plus, extradition is

Friday. (OFF BENNY'S LOOK) Long story.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CONCERT HALL - SAME TIME - (D2)

ANNA TALKS TO HER FELLOW VIOLINIST, MARIKA (EARLY 30'S, BRIGHT AND OPTIMISTIC), AS ALL THE MUSICIANS IN THE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ARE PACKING UP THEIR INSTRUMENTS AFTER A REHEARSAL.

MARIKA

Buying a house! That's a big commitment.

ANNA

Not bigger than getting married.

MARIKA

No. (THINKS) Although, getting a divorce is easy. If you decide you don't want your husband anymore, you don't have to put him on the market and hope someone else takes him off your hands.

CUT TO:

INT. TECH COMPANY OFFICES - SAME TIME - (D2)

WALTER IS SHOWING BENNY THE HOUSE ON HIS IPAD.

BENNY

Sure it looks nice. How are the bones?

WALTER

Great bones. Strong bones.

BENNY

I just don't understand how you can buy the first house you see. Why not look around at what else is out there first?

WALTER

We might not find anything else we love as much.

(MORE)

WALTER (CONT'D)

It's like marriage - you can date around forever, but when you find the right girl, you have to act.

BENNY

(HALF TO HIMSELF) Didn't have to act THAT quickly.

WALTER

What does that mean?

BENNY

Anna seems great, the few times I've met her. But my interview process for new employees is longer than you two dated before deciding to spend the rest of your lives together. And they have references I can call!

CUT TO:

INT. CONCERT HALL - SAME TIME - (D2)

MARIKA

Don't stress about it, though. When it's right, it's right - for houses and husbands.

ANNA

Exactly! It's like, I didn't have cold feet getting married because I knew that Walter is the right one for me.

MARIKA

Absolutely!

THEN, THINKING ABOUT IT, SHE CAN'T HELP BUT ADD:

MARIKA (CONT'D)

I mean, with each of my husbands, I probably never knew like you know, it just felt like I knew at the time, but if I knew then how much I know now, I'd have known how little I knew, you know?

ANNA DOESN'T KNOW.

CUT TO:

INT. TECH COMPANY OFFICES - SAME TIME - (D2)

BENNY

How much can you know about a person in six months? Does she get bored with relationships after a year? Does she get weirdly depressed around the holidays? - who knows, you hadn't met her yet last Christmas.

HE GRABS A LAPTOP AND STARTS TYPING.

WALTER

What are you doing?

BENNY

I'm just curious, if I google her, what I'm gonna find. What's her middle name?

WALTER LOOKS DOWN, REALIZING WITH SOME EMBARRASSMENT THAT HE DOESN'T KNOW IT. BENNY SHAKES HIS HEAD.

CUT TO:

INT. CONCERT HALL - SAME TIME - (D2)

ANNA

So you mean that every time you got married, you were just as sure you were with the right guy, even though they all ended in divorce?

MARIKA

I promise you, at none of my weddings did I walk down the aisle thinking, "This probably isn't going to work out, but I need another gravy boat."

ANNA REACTS. MARIKA REALIZES SHE'S UPSET HER.

MARIKA (CONT'D)

But it's not the same thing. I mean, I only thought I knew I knew, but you know you know you know, you know?

CUT TO:

INT. TECH COMPANY OFFICES - SAME TIME - (D2)

BENNY

You know I'm going to loan you the money. You're my brother and I love you. I just hope you know what you're doing.

WALTER

Thanks. (MAKING A CALL) Benny said yes!

SPLIT SCREEN:

INT. CONCERT HALL - SAME TIME - (D2)

ANNA

Oh. So, we really... (UNCERTAIN) want to buy this house then.

WALTER

(EQUALLY AMBIVALENT) Yep. I mean, I do if you do. Do you?

ANNA GLANCES AT MARIKA, WHO'S TRYING TO GRIN LIKE SHE'S FULLY SUPPORTIVE. BUT IT'S OBVIOUSLY A FAKE SMILE.

ANNA

I do.

MARIKA

(UNCONVINCING) ...yay...

WALTER

Hold on.

HE DIALS HIS PHONE, CONFERENCING IN:

TRIPLE SPLIT SCREEN:

INT. HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - SAME TIME - (D2)

WALTER

Estelle? This is Walter and Anna Fielding. We're taking the house.

ESTELLE

Oh, that's such good news. I'm sure you'll be very happy here.

ESTELLE HANGS UP THE PHONE. THEN SHE WALKS TO THE DOOR AND TURNS OUT THE LIGHTS. THE SWITCH SPARKS AND EXPLODES WITH A LITTLE FLAME. ESTELLE SHRUGS AND LEAVES.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE D

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - DAY - (D3)
(WALTER, ANNA)

MOVING DAY! BOXES ARE EVERYWHERE, ALONG WITH A FEW PIECES OF FURNITURE. ANNA IS UNPACKING A BOX OF TCHOTCHKES ONTO THE MANTEL. WALTER WALKS AROUND THE ROOM APPRECIATIVELY.

WALTER

So weird: six months ago we were having our first date, and now we're married people with a house. "How's the house, Frank?" "Real good Bob, how's your house?" "Fantastic!"

ANNA

I love how guys talk.

HE TAKES A SEAT ON THE WINDOW BENCH, WITH A VIEW OF THEIR AWESOME YARD. THERE'S A BIRD ON A BRANCH JUST OUTSIDE.

WALTER

Look, we have our own birds.

HE TRIES TO TAP THE WINDOW, BUT THERE'S NO GLASS IN IT AND HE ENDS UP TAPPING THE ACTUAL BIRD. HE JUMPS BACK AS THE BIRD SQUAWKS AND FLIES THROUGH THE FRAME INTO THE HOUSE. IT DISAPPEARS UP INTO THE SECOND STORY. HE EXAMINES THE WINDOW.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Should probably shut the... Huh, no glass, that's... fine. Let that clean country air in.

ANNA

It smells a little funky to me.

WALTER

Does it? I have a terrible sense of

smell.

ANNA THROWS UP HER ARMS - ANOTHER SENSE THAT DOESN'T WORK. SHE PULLS AN UGLY, FRIGHTENING-LOOKING STATUE FROM THE BOX.

ANNA

Hey, what's this?

WALTER

Benny's wedding gift.

ANNA

Did we register for a terrifying

cursed tribal statue?

WALTER

I don't think so. But I don't

remember registering for the spoon

rest either, so who knows?

SHE PUTS IT ON ONE END OF THE MANTEL. ITS WEIGHT CAUSES THE ENTIRE, BADLY-SECURED SHELF TO TIP LIKE A SEE-SAW, SENDING EVERYTHING SLIDING TO THE FLOOR. WALTER PICKS UP THE STATUE - THE ONE THING THAT DIDN'T BREAK.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Don't worry, it's fine.

ANNA

(SARCASTIC) Phew!

SHE TAKES ANOTHER BOX AND WALKS UP THE STAIRS, MUTTERING:

ANNA (CONT'D)

Probably can't be destroyed unless

it's thrown into a volcano.

CUT TO:

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER - (D3)

ANNA IS EXAMINING THE MEDICINE CABINET MIRROR, IN WHICH SHE LOOKS WIDE AND STUBBY, LIKE A FUNHOUSE MIRROR. WALTER ENTERS.

ANNA

Either our mirror is warped, or I have

really let myself go since the wedding.

WALTER

Oh yeah. Everyone's noticed.

SHE OPENS THE CABINET, REVEALING THAT EVERY SHELF IS PACKED TIGHT WITH BOTTLES OF MEDICATION, TUBES OF OINTMENT, BOTTLES OF SPRAY, ETC.

ANNA

The old lady left her meds.

WALTER

Those are mine.

ANNA

You take all of this stuff? (HE NODS)

How do you even find anything in here?

WALTER

It's alphabetical.

ANNA

(THINKS HE'S JOKING) Right.

STARTING AT THE TOP LEFT, WALTER POINTS TO EACH ITEM:

WALTER

Aspirin, blood pressure, cough,

diarrhea, eczema, fever, gas...

ANNA'S EYES WIDEN IN DISBELIEF AS HE CONTINUES.

WALTER (CONT'D)

...heartburn, insomnia, jet lag, knee pain, lactose intolerance, migraines, nasal decongestants, omega-3, probiotics, queasy stomach, Rogaine, sunburn, Tylenol, UTIs, vitamins, witch hazel, Ex-Lax, yellow dock root, zits.

ANNA

(BEAT, THEN) Ex-Lax starts with E.

WALTER

Yeah, but I try not to get all OCD about it.

WALTER EXITS. ANNA UNPACKS HER STUFF INTO THE OTHER CABINET: ONE TOOTHBRUSH AND ONE TUBE OF TOOTHPASTE - THAT'S IT.

CUT TO:

INT. GREAT ROOM - MOMENTS LATER - (D3)

WALTER IS UNPACKING SOME PAPERWORK AS ANNA COMES DOWN.

WALTER

You don't really have this much credit card debt, do you?

HE POINTS TO A PLACE ON THE SHEET. SHE LAUGHS.

ANNA

Oh god no.

WALTER

Phew!

ANNA

That's the minimum monthly payment. The total amount is down here.

SHE POINTS TO THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE. WALTER GULPS.

WALTER

Oh. I thought that was your social security number.

SHE STEPS ON A CREAKY STAIR.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Oh yeah. We have a creaky step.

ANNA

It seems like there's a lot of problems. You don't think that means we made a mistake, do you?

WALTER

Now who's the one who's overthinking everything? It's an old house, it's gonna need a little work. I'll start a list of what we need to fix.

HE LEANS A SHEET OF PAPER AGAINST THE WALL AND WRITES:

WALTER (CONT'D)

Number one:

THE PEN GOES THROUGH THE DRYWALL.

WALTER (CONT'D)

(WRITING) Hole...in...the...wall.

(THEN, TRYING TO BE REASSURING) It's fine. Nothing to agonize over.

HE PUTS THE PEN DOWN ON THE MANTEL... AND ONCE AGAIN, IT TIPS AND EVERYTHING CRASHES DOWN. THEY EXCHANGE A WORRIED LOOK.

<u>CUT TO:</u>

ACT TWO

SCENE E

INT. GENERAL STORE - LATER - (D3)
(WALTER, ANNA, NOEL)

A LITTLE NEIGHBORHOOD SHOP, SELLING EVERYTHING FROM TOOLS TO BOOKS TO GROCERIES. WALTER IS HOLDING A BASKET OF GROCERIES AND COMPARING ROLLS OF PAPER TOWELS.

WALTER

The “super-double” roll has 128 sheets, the “mega-giant” roll has 216 sheets, but they're different sized sheets. Shouldn't there be an agency that standardizes this stuff?

ANNA SHAKES HER HEAD AT HIS COMPULSIVENESS. SHE LOOKS BACK AT THE MAGAZINE QUIZ SHE’S LEAFING THROUGH: “HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR SPOUSE?”

ANNA

Alright, here’s another one: “How long would you allow a houseguest to stay with you and your spouse?”

ANNA (CONT’D)
One night.

WALTER
About three months.

WALTER

We have a big house now. If my parents visit, you’d kick them out after one night?

ANNA

If <u>your</u> parents visit, I’d kick them out after lunch. (THEN) I’m gonna go look at the birdhouses.

WALTER

Do we need a birdhouse?

ANNA

We can just charge it.

ANNA WALKS OFF. WALTER CALLS AFTER HER.

WALTER

We're going to talk about our credit card situation soon, right?

WALTER NOTICES NOEL, THE MAN HE TALKED TO AT THE OPEN HOUSE, WORKING BEHIND THE COUNTER. HE APPROACHES HIM.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I thought you were an architect.

NOEL

Archite-- Oh, from the open house. No, I was just there to talk up the house, you know, drive up the price. The previous owner was such a sweet old lady, I liked to help her out.

WALTER

Most people help sweet old ladies by helping them cross the street, not perpetuate real estate fraud. (THEN, NERVOUSLY) So... when you were talking about how well-built the house was...?

NOEL

I don't know anything about that stuff, I was praying you wouldn't call me on it. By the way, what's "jousting" mean?

WALTER

It's complicated, it's a thing.

NOEL

Believe me, you wouldn't have wanted that place. I heard she got a couple suckers from the city to buy it.

ANNA APPROACHES WITH A BIRDHOUSE.

ANNA

Look! It's just like our new house.

NOEL

(REALIZING) Ohhhhhhhh... (THEN, PUTTING ON A HAPPY FACE) Noel Shirk, welcome to the neighborhood.

WALTER

(TO ANNA) Noel was telling me what big suckers we are.

NOEL

No, that's just what I call people, like "buddy". (CALLING TO A COUPLE PATRONS) Hey suckers, let me know if you need help finding anything.

THE PATRONS LOOKS OFFENDED.

NOEL (CONT'D)

It's a beautiful piece of land. Have you given any thought to what kind of house you're going to build on it?

ANNA

We were going to, sort of, live in the existing house, that's already there.

NOEL JUST STARES AT HER BLANKLY FOR A BEAT. THEN:

NOEL

I'm gonna give you my number, I do some handyman work on the side. Just, you know, if something breaks and you can't get a contractor to come out in the middle of the night... or to your house in particular.

WALTER AND ANNA LOOK FREAKED AS HE WRITES DOWN HIS NUMBER. WALTER REACHES FOR HIS WALLET TO PAY FOR THE GROCERIES.

WALTER

How much for...?

NOEL

Please, it's on me. You need the money more than I do.

CUT TO:

ACT TWO

SCENE H

INT. HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - LATER - (D3)
(WALTER, ANNA, BENNY, MARIKA)

WALTER SULLENLY HAMMERS AT THE CREAKY STEP. ANNA ENTERS, PUSHING A ROLLING OFFICE CHAIR LOADED WITH LOOSE CLOTHING.

ANNA

Last of the stuff from the truck.

(WALTER DOESN'T RESPOND) What's wrong?

WALTER

I've been doing the math. With the money we owe, plus what I'm guessing it'll cost to fix this place up, we should be out from under water in about thirty years, assuming we don't buy any furniture and we take in a boarder. And then get life insurance on the boarder. And then kill the boarder.

ANNA

I'm sure it won't be as bad as you think. It's like you said, it's an old house. There's going to be leaks, there's going to be faulty wiring, there's going to be...

ANNA LETS GO OF THE CHAIR. THEY WATCH AS IT ROLLS ACROSS THE FLOOR TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM AND THROUGH THE DOOR...

INT. KITCHEN – CONTINUOUS – (D3)

...ACROSS THE KITCHEN, AND THEN THROUGH THE OPEN SLIDING DOORS AND OUT ONTO...

EXT. PATIO / POOL – CONTINUOUS – (D3)

...THE RAISED PATIO, ACROSS TO THE OTHER END, WHERE IT TIPS THROUGH THE RAILING AND PLUMMETS...

...INTO THE POOL BELOW WITH A GIANT SPLASH! THE CHAIR SINKS WHILE THE CLOTHES FLOAT ALONG THE SURFACE.

INT. GREAT ROOM – CONTINUOUS – (D3)

ANNA

There's going to be ghosts.

WALTER

The floor's sloped. I tried to use a level to figure out how much, but the level slid away.

ANNA

Look, we're both tired. Maybe we should call it a day. Take a bath.

WALTER

Go ahead. I'll finish up here.

ANNA

I think we should take a bath... at the same time.

WALTER

Lots of bathrooms.

ANNA

I think we should take a bath... at the same time... in the same bathtub.

WALTER

(REALIZING) Ohhhhhh.

ANNA WALKS UP THE STAIRS. WALTER STARTS TO FOLLOW, THEN HEARS A DIFFERENT STEP CREAK. HE STARTS TO EXAMINE IT.

ANNA

Leave it.

WALTER

Leaving it.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER - (D3)

THEY STUMBLE IN, MAKING OUT AND UNBUTTONING CLOTHES.

WALTER

Tomorrow I'll start in on the wainscoting.

ANNA

I love it when you talk handyman.

WALTER

(JOKINGLY FAKING IT) Yeah, I'm gonna

jerryrig the phlange compressor and

then recalibrate the spark plugs...

ANNA TURNS ON THE FAUCET OF THE CLAWFOOT TUB. THE WATER COMES OUT IN A VERY, VERY SLOW TRICKLE. SHE TURNS BOTH KNOBS, BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE TERRIBLE WATER PRESSURE.

ANNA

And now we play the waiting game.

WALTER

No problem. Gives us time to stretch

out in front of: the fire!

WITH A FLOURISH, WALTER FLIPS A SWITCH NEXT TO THE FIREPLACE. WE HEAR THE CLICK OF THE STARTER, BUT IT DOESN'T IGNITE. IT JUST KEEPS GOING: CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK...

ANNA

I don't think it's gonna--

WALTER

(HOLDS UP A FINGER) Any second.

HE WAITS A COMICALLY LONG TIME FOR IT TO IGNITE: CLICK-CLICK...

SUDDENLY, THEY'RE STARTLED BY A <u>HIDEOUS, DEAFENING SCREECH</u>.

ANNA

What was that?!

WALTER

(SCREECH) It kind of sounds like an

oboe... (SCREECH) being tortured by a

bassoon.. (SCREECH) while a set of bag

pipes watch.

THERE'S ANOTHER SCREECH, FOLLOWED BY SOME KNOCKING AT THEIR FRONT DOOR. ANNA REALIZES, WITH SOME DISAPPOINTMENT:

ANNA

It's our doorbell. I told Marika she

could stop by tonight. I'll get rid

of her.

SHE RUNS OUT AS THE DOORBELL SCREECHES AGAIN.

<u>INT. GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)</u>

ANNA, WHOSE SHIRT IS STILL UNBUTTONED EXPOSING HER BRA, RUNS DOWN THE STAIRS AND OPENS THE FRONT DOOR, EXPECTING MARIKA. INSTEAD, IT'S BENNY. HE LOOKS AT HER CHEST AND SMILES.

BENNY

Hi sis.

ANNA

(QUICKLY BUTTONING UP) Benny, sorry, come in. I was expecting a friend.

BENNY

It's fine, we're family now, we're gonna be seeing each other naked all the time.

ANNA

Are we?

BENNY

(SHRUGS) I've seen my dad in the locker room, it's no big deal.

HE HANDS HER ANOTHER FRIGHTENING STATUE, LIKE THE ONE HE GAVE THEM FOR THEIR WEDDING.

BENNY (CONT'D)

Here - "happy housewarming" or whatever you're supposed to say. I didn't know what you'd like -- since I've only met you a couple times before.

ANNA

Well, you're always safe with... things such as what this is. Walter's upstairs, I'll go get him.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

WALTER IS STILL AT THE FIREPLACE: CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK-CLICK. HE LOOKS UP WHEN ANNA WALKS IN.

WALTER

It's possible it's not going to ignite.

ANNA

That was Benny, actually. Did you know that he and I are gonna be seeing each other naked all the time?

WALTER

Obviously. You're family.

ANNA

How's the tub coming?

WALTER

We almost have enough for a cup of tea.

ANNA

Alright, you go get rid of your brother. I'll try the tub in the rehearsal room bathroom.

WALTER

Which one's the rehearsal room?

ANNA

Down the hall, with the big windows.

WALTER

We said that would be the nursery.

ANNA

Yeah, eventually. But why can't I use it as a rehearsal room for the next ten years or so?

WALTER

(REALIZING) ...Because then our kids wouldn't have a bedroom for the next nine years or so.

ANNA

Oh... So when we said we'd have kids in the future, you were talking <u>immediate</u> future.

WALTER

Yeah. And you were talking the future of flying cars and robot overlords.

THEY CONSIDER THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THIS.

WALTER (CONT'D)

This is probably something we need to talk about.

THERE'S ANOTHER EARDRUM BLASTING DOORBELL.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Right after the ritual sacrifice.

ANNA

That must be Marika. I'm not sure I'm in the mood anymore anyway.

WALTER

Yeah, I know, me neither. I'll be down in a minute.

ANNA WALKS OUT. WALTER GOES TO TURN OFF THE TUB, BUT THE WATER PRESSURE INCREASES. HE TURNS THE KNOB THE OTHER WAY, AND THE PRESSURE INCREASES EVEN MORE. HE REALIZES: <u>THIS COULD BE A PROBLEM</u>.

INT. GREAT ROOM – CONTINUOUS – (D3)

ANNA WALKS DOWN THE STAIRS, WHERE BENNY HAS PUT BOTH STATUES ON THE MANTEL AND OPENED THEM UP TO REVEAL A SERIES OF SMALLER, EVEN CREEPIER STATUES INSIDE, ALL LINED UP IN A ROW.

ANNA

Oh look, they're multiplying.

BENNY

You didn't know they were nesting dolls? That'd have been a pretty crappy wedding present.

ANNA

It would, wouldn't it?

SHE OPENS THE DOOR TO MARIKA, WHO IS HOLDING A GIANT, PERFECTLY ARRANGED BASKET OF HOUSEWARMING GOODIES.

MARIKA

Pust' st'eny t'ebya a-hran'ayut at napad'eniya kazakof! That's the Russian expression for "Welcome to your new home!"

ANNA

Come in. (RE: BASKET) You didn't have to do this. This is Walter's brother Benny. Benny, Marika.

MARIKA

Hi. (TO ANNA) Literally, it's "May your walls protect you from rape by Cossacks."

BENNY

What's in the basket?

MARIKA

Oh, just an assortment of snacks, some wine, olive oil, chocolates...

BENNY

(SARCASTIC) Great gift.

BENNY ROLLS HIS EYES TO ANNA, LIKE "WHAT A TERRIBLE GIFT". MARIKA PUTS THE BASKET ON THE COFFEE TABLE.

MARIKA

Well it's not just a housewarming present, it's also an apology. The other day I may have implied that you and Walter might not be right for each other, or that you shouldn't buy this house. I was wrong, and I'm sorry.

ANNA

(BEAT, THEN) Don't mention it. We all make mistakes.

THERE'S A CREAK FROM THE CEILING. THEY ALL LOOK UP.

ANNA (CONT'D)

I'm just gonna check on Walter.

<u>INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)</u>

WALTER IS FRANTICALLY TURNING THE KNOB AS THE WATER GUSHES OUT, QUICKLY FILLING THE TUB. THE FLOOR CREAKS FROM BENEATH THE TUB AS ANNA WALKS IN.

ANNA

What's going on?

WALTER

The water won't turn off!

ANNA

Well, unplug the drain.

WALTER

There is no drain!

ANNA

Maybe you're turning it the wrong way.

SHE GRABS THE KNOB AND SPINS IT THE OTHER WAY - THE FLOW INCREASES EVEN MORE - UNTIL THE KNOB COMES OFF IN HER HAND. AS WATER FLOODS INTO THE TUB AND THE FLOOR GROANS, THEY LOOK AT EACH OTHER IN PANIC - IS THE FLOOR ABOUT TO GIVE OUT?

ANNA (CONT'D)

What do we do?!

WALTER

Um... bail!

ANNA

Right!

AS HE CUPS HIS HANDS TO SCOOP WATER FROM THE TUB INTO THE SINK, SHE SPRINTS OUT OF THE ROOM.

WALTER

HEY!! What are you doing?!

ANNA

(RUNNING BACK IN) You said bail.

WALTER

Yeah, *bail*, like on a boat.

ANNA

Oh, I thought you meant *bail* like run.

WALTER

Why would I possibly suggest running?

ANNA

I have no idea!

THE TWO OF THEM START SCOOPING WATER OUT OF THE TUB AND INTO THE SINK, THE TOILET, THE FLOOR, ANYWHERE.

INT. GREAT ROOM - SAME TIME - (D3)

IN CONTRAST TO THE BATHROOM CHAOS, THE SCENE DOWNSTAIRS IS SEDATE. BENNY AND MARIKA SIT ON THE COUCH AWKWARDLY. MARIKA WATCHES AS BENNY RIFLES THROUGH HER GIFT BASKET.

BENNY

So, were you at the wedding?

MARIKA

Yes. I was the bridesmaid to whom you drunkenly asked, “Have you ever had sex with a millionaire?”

BENNY

You’re gonna have to be more specific.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

DESPITE WALTER AND ANNA’S BEST EFFORTS, THE TUB IS FILLING FASTER THAN THEY CAN EMPTY IT. FINALLY, WALTER PUTS HIS BODY UNDER THE SPOUT TO DEFLECT THE WATER AWAY FROM THE TUB. IT SPRAYS ALL OVER THE BATHROOM.

WALTER

We need to turn off the water valve outside the house.

ANNA

Right. (SHE DOESN’T MOVE, THEN SEES HE’S LOOKING AT HER) Oh, now you do want me to go. Okay.

SHE STARTS TO GO, THEN STOPS.

WALTER

What's wrong?

ANNA

I don't want Marika to know she was right about the house, cause then she'll think she was also right about...

WALTER

About what?

ANNA

About my glissando sounding flat in the Brahms.

WALTER

Sweetie, I love your glissando. But I also love not drowning in our bathroom. So would you please...?

ANNA

Right, right, going!

SHE SPRINTS OUT OF THE BATHROOM.

INT. GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

SHE SLOWS AS SHE WALKS DOWN THE STAIRCASE, PRETENDING TO BE CALM LIKE NOTHING'S WRONG. A BUNCH OF THE STEPS CREAK.

ANNA

He'll be down in one minute, tops.

BENNY

You've got some creaky steps there.

MARIKA

If that's the worst thing about the house, you should be thankful.

ANNA

So far so good. (BIG SMILE) I'm going to go get our mail for the first time.

SHE WALKS CALMLY OUT THE FRONT DOOR, THEN BREAKS INTO A RUN...

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

...AROUND THE SIDE OF THE HOUSE, SEARCHING. SHE SPOTS A PAIR OF VALVES, SHOUTS UP TO WALTER THROUGH THE WINDOW ABOVE.

ANNA

There are two valves! How do I know which one is the water?

WALTER

Okay, I need you to look at both valves very closely!

ANNA GETS ON HER KNEES FOR A CLOSE INSPECTION.

ANNA

What am I looking for?!

WALTER

Is the word "water" written on either valve?!

ANNA

(ROLLS HER EYES) Seriously?!! That's your solution?!

WALTER

I don't know! Just try one!

ANNA TURNS ONE OF THE KNOBS.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

THE FIREPLACE (WITH THE STARTER STILL ON) IGNITES IN FLAME - SHE TURNED ON THE GAS. WALTER LOOKS FRIGHTENED AS FIRE ENGULFS THE FIREPLACE AND SHOOTS OUT INTO THE ROOM.

WALTER

AAAAAHHHHH!!

INT. GREAT ROOM - SAME TIME - (D3)

FLAMES SHOOT OUT OF THE FIREPLACE, SHOCKING MARIKA.

MARIKA

AAAAAHHHHH!!

BENNY BARELY NOTICES, HIS ATTENTION ON THE JAR OF OLIVES FROM THE GIFT BASKET THAT HE'S STRUGGLING TO OPEN.

BENNY

I can never unscrew these things.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

WALTER

OFF, OFF, TURN IT OFF!!!

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

ANNA TURNS THE KNOB THE OTHER WAY.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

THE FLAMES DIE OUT. WALTER BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF.

INT. GREAT ROOM - SAME TIME - (D3)

THE FIRE GOES OUT. MARIKA TREMBLES WITH FEAR. BENNY SPITS OUT A PIECE OF OLIVE.

BENNY

Blech, pimento. (TO MARIKA) Why?!

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - SAME TIME - (D3)

WALTER CATCHES HIS BREATH. A BIRD, BURNT TO A CRISP, FALLS THROUGH THE CHIMNEY AND OUT OF THE FIREPLACE.

WALTER

Found the bird!

ANNA (O.S.)

What?!

WALTER

Nothing! Try the other one!

EXT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

ANNA TURNS THE OTHER KNOB.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

THE WATER SLOWS AND FINALLY STOPS. WALTER BREATHES A SIGH OF RELIEF AS HE DROPS TO THE FLOOR, SOAKED AND EXHAUSTED.

INT. GREAT ROOM - SAME TIME - (D3)

ANNA WALKS CALMLY INSIDE. MARIKA POINTS BREATHLESSLY TO THE FIREPLACE, BARELY ABLE TO PUT WORDS TOGETHER.

MARIKA

...your...fire...place...

ANNA

Oh thank you, that’s Cararra marble, I

know, it makes the room, we’ll just be

two minutes, tops.

SHE WALKS UP THE STAIRS...

INT. MASTER BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

...AND RUNS INTO THE BATHROOM.

ANNA

Did it work?

WALTER NODS. ANNA SEES THE ROASTED BIRD.

ANNA (CONT'D)

What happened there?

WALTER

Got hungry. Made a snack. (THEN)

Still think we didn't make a mistake?

ANNA GRABS A CUP AND STARTS SCOOPING WATER OUT OF THE TUB TO DUMP INTO THE TOILET.

ANNA

Okay, obviously, we have a lot of work

to do. But still, so far there's

nothing all that seriou--

AS SHE POURS THE CUP INTO THE TOILET BOWL...

INT. GREAT ROOM - SAME TIME - (D3)

MARIKA

(TO BENNY, TRYING TO COMPOSE HERSELF)

Do you know where their toilet is?

INT. MASTER BATHROOM / GREAT ROOM - CONTINUOUS - (D3)

THE ENTIRE TOILET SUDDENLY BREAKS THROUGH THE FLOOR, PLUNGING INTO THE GREAT ROOM BELOW AND SHATTERING INTO A MILLION PIECES RIGHT IN FRONT OF MARIKA.

BENNY AND MARIKA LOOK UP, AT WALTER AND ANNA LOOKING DOWN AT THEM THROUGH THE HOLE. BEAT, THEN:

ANNA

Hey guys, sorry, five minutes tops.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

SCENE J

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT - (N3)
(WALTER, ANNA, BENNY, MARIKA, NOEL)

BENNY AND MARIKA ARE HELPING WALTER AND ANNA CLEAN UP THE MESS. NOEL IS ON A LADDER, CHECKING OUT THE CEILING DAMAGE. HE POKES AT THE EDGES OF THE HOLE AND THE WOOD CRUMBLES A LITTLE. AS HE DESCENDS THE LADDER:

NOEL

Yep, it’s dry rot. I'd stay off the second story, you don't know where else it's gonna cave. Of course, ground floor's not much better - the foundation's cracked and you're in a soil liquefaction zone, which means the house is sinking into the earth like quicksand. Also, you have a spider infestation, which is both keeping-in-check and being-kept-in-check by a rodent infestation, so you should be fine as long as neither gains supremacy. And I wouldn't swim in the pool unless you already have hepatitis.

BEAT, THEN:

MARIKA

But at least the bones are good, right?

NOEL

Oh no. The bones are the worst part.

WALTER

Bad bones?

NOEL

The worst. That's 75 bucks parts and

labor.

ANNA

I think I put our joint checkbook

somewhere around here.

SHE STARTS LOOKING THROUGH THE ROOM, IN DRAWERS, ETC. BENNY TAKES A BREAK FROM CLEANING, SITS, AND GRABS A BOX OF CHOCOLATES OUT OF THE BASKET. HE LOOKS AT THE CEILING.

BENNY

I told you not to buy the first house

you saw. You can't make such a giant,

life-altering decision without knowing

exactly what you're getting into.

HE BITES INTO THE CHOCOLATES, DISCARDING THE ONES HE DOESN'T LIKE. WALTER AND ANNA GLANCE AT EACH OTHER TENSELY.

WALTER ANNA

<u>She</u> fell in love with it-- <u>He</u> really wanted to--

THEY STOP SHORT AND LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

ANNA

(SWEETLY) I'm pretty sure you were the

one who said we should buy it.

WALTER

Was I? I remember hearing the words:

"Walter, I think this is our house,"

but I can't remember who said it.

NOEL

Sounds like it was the lady. I mean, why would you use your own name?

WALTER

That's what I was thinking too.

ANNA

I think I did say that at one point. But then you said it was like the handicapped line at the DMV.

WALTER

It was not the handicapped line!

NOEL

Were the line barriers especially wide to accommodate wheelchair access?

WALTER

(BEAT, THEN) Why don't we just mail you a check?

NOEL

Oh that's fine, I can wait. Ooh, is that a Malbec?

HE POURS HIMSELF SOME OF THE WINE FROM MARIKA'S BASKET.

MARIKA

You know in a way, this is almost a good thing, cause you'll get to rebuild the house exactly how you want it. <u>Your</u> curtains, <u>your</u> paint colors, maybe a little doggie door...

ANNA WALTER

Yeah, we love dogs! Noooooo, thank you!

WALTER AND ANNA STOP SHORT AND LOOK AT EACH OTHER.

BENNY

Didn’t you talk about this stuff beforehand? If I can be blunt, it speaks to a lack of maturity. (SPITS OUT A CHOCOLATE) Uch, is that pumpkin?

HE TRIES TO HAND IT TO WALTER, WHO WAVES IT OFF.

BENNY (CONT’D)

Oh right, you’re allergic.

ANNA

You’re allergic to pumpkin?

WALTER

Yeah. I never told you that?

ANNA

Nope.

BENNY

Didn’t you notice at Halloween-- oh right, you guys hadn’t met yet last Halloween. Weird to think about.

ANNA LOOKS ANNOYED, TRIES TO IGNORE IT, BUT THEN CAN’T HELP BUT SAY IT.

ANNA

That would have been nice to know going into this.

WALTER

That I was allergic to pumpkin?

ANNA

Just seems a little convenient that you kept that a secret until after I signed the papers.

WALTER

Are you saying you wouldn't have married me if you knew I was allergic to pumpkin?

ANNA

It's a consideration!

MARIKA

(TRYING TO LIGHTEN THE MOOD) Do you know what's just as good as pumpkin but gets overlooked? The squash.

ANNA

You have weird food allergies, you hate dogs, what else don't I know? Does Mossad knock at my door one day and tell me you were Hitler's poolman?

WALTER

WHAT?!!

MARIKA

Maybe we should leave.

BENNY

It's fine, I'm family, I'd like to watch them fight.

WALTER

Hey, it's not like you were exactly an open book going into this.

ANNA

What did I ever hide from you?

WALTER

Um, you're a total disorganized mess, you're in debt up to your eyeballs-- no, I'm sorry, I meant we're in debt up to our eyeballs. I get why you want to wait so long to have kids - you're holding out for your Social Security payments to kick in!

ANNA

Well after seeing the amount of medications you're on, I get why you want to have kids tomorrow. You're gonna be dead by Thursday!

NOEL

It's none of my business, but I'm not sure this is a child-friendly house at the moment. Those aren't my words, they're the Department of Health's.

BENNY

Okay guys, now why don't the three of us try to work this out like adults.

ANNA

Maybe this was all a big mistake!

WALTER

Obviously, it was a huge mistake! We should've looked at a lot more houses--

ANNA

I wasn't talking about the house!

SILENCE - SHE SAID IT. IT'S AWKWARD FOR EVERYONE THERE.

BENNY

Actually, I think I am going to leave.

NOEL

Yeah, check in the mail is fine.

THEY EXIT. WALTER AND ANNA TAKE A BEAT TO COLLECT THEMSELVES.

WALTER

Do you regret marrying me?

ANNA

No. I don't know. No, of course not. I just... maybe I have cold feet.

WALTER

Little late for that.

ANNA

Well, there's something else you didn't know about me: I'm late a lot. You don't have any doubts?

WALTER

Of course I have doubts, I have doubts about everything. I never thought I'd be the guy who meets someone and gets married six months later.

ANNA

Why did we do it so quickly?

WALTER

We fell in love. It makes you do things you wouldn't normally do. I read this article in the Atlantic, your brain gets flooded with dopamine and serotonin, it acts like cocaine, they've done these imaging studies... (OFF HER LOOK) That might be a less romantic explanation than is currently called for.

ANNA

So we got high on love and went on a dopamine-fueled marriage and house buying binge. You never see that in the after school specials.

ANNA THROWS UP HER ARMS IN EXASPERATION, ACCIDENTALLY HITTING THE ALREADY UNSTABLE MANTEL, WHICH NOW, UNDER THE WEIGHT OF ALL THE NESTING DOLLS, FALLS ENTIRELY OFF THE WALL, CRASHING TO THE FLOOR. WALTER PICKS UP ONE OF THE DOLLS.

WALTER

Didn't break.

ANNA

Great, the only thing in our entire

lives that isn't falling apart are

these stupid dolls.

SHE THROWS ONE OF THE DOLLS DOWN. IT BOUNCES, DOESN'T BREAK.

ANNA (CONT'D)

These stupid, ugly, scary, stupid...

SHE THROWS MORE, HURLING THEM AROUND THE HOUSE, AGAINST WALLS, DOWN TO THE FLOOR. THEY JUST BOUNCE. SHE'S FREAKING OUT.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Why won't these stupid things

break?!!! AAAAHHHH!!!

WALTER IS TAKEN ABACK AT FIRST. BUT THEN, AS SHE GETS MORE AND MORE HYSTERICALLY ANGRY, HE CAN'T HELP HIMSELF BUT SMILE. AND THEN CHUCKLE A LITTLE. AND THEN OUTRIGHT LAUGH - HARD!

ANNA (CONT'D)

What are you laughing at?

WALTER

(BARELY ABLE TO PUT WORDS TOGETHER)

I'm sorry, it's just... you... you

just... "Why won't these break -

aaahhhh..." (CALMING A LITTLE) I've

never seen you mad before. Your face

gets all pink, your eyes bulge out,

it's so... <u>adorable</u>.

ANNA

I'm full of surprises.

HE WIPES THE TEARS OF LAUGHTER FROM HIS EYES AS HE LOOKS AT HER. FINALLY, HE SMILES.

WALTER

I think we're gonna be okay.

ANNA

How can you possibly think that?

WALTER

Because... we have good bones.

HE KISSES HER. SHE SMILES.

ANNA

What does that even mean?

WALTER

Just trust me, it's a thing.

HE KISSES HER AGAIN. IT BECOMES MORE PASSIONATE. THEY'RE NEAR THE STAIRS AND SHE SITS ON THE STEPS, PULLING HIM DOWN.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Should we go to the bedroom?

ANNA

Right here is good.

WALTER

Okay. (AS THEY MAKE OUT) I've never done it on stairs before. (THEN) Have you?

ANNA

Have I what?

WALTER

Have you ever done it on the stairs?

ANNA

Yeah, long time ago. Just, you know,

college. College girlfriend.

WALTER

Girlfriend?

ANNA

Can we not talk about this now?

WALTER

Right.

THEY START TO HAVE SEX ON THE STAIRS. THE VERY CREAKY STAIRS. SUDDENLY, ANNA NOTICES THAT THE STAIRCASE IS STARTING TO SWAY. SHE LOOKS UP, WHERE BOLTS ARE POPPING OUT.

ANNA

Oh my god! Walter, <u>OH MY GOD</u>!!

WALTER

Really, already? Awesome!!

ANNA

No, not-- the stairs! THE STAIRS!!

HE SEES. AND THE TWO OF THEM, JUST LIKE IN THE MOVIE, SPRINT UP TO GRAB ON TO THE FLOOR ABOVE AS THE ENTIRE STAIRCASE GIVES OUT AND CRASHES TO THE FLOOR BELOW. AS THEY HANG THERE FROM THE LANDING, ANNA SPOTS SOMETHING ON THE FLOOR.

ANNA (CONT'D)

Oh! I found the checkbook!

<u>CUT TO:</u>

ACT THREE

SCENE K

INT. HOUSE - GREAT ROOM - LATER - (N3)
(WALTER, ANNA)

WALTER AND ANNA SIT ON THE SECOND FLOOR LANDING, HAND-IN-HAND, LEGS HANGING OVER THE SIDE, POST-COITAL. ANNA IS READING QUESTIONS FROM THE MAGAZINE QUIZ.

ANNA

"What is your spouse's favorite flavor

of ice cream?" Mine's pistachio.

WALTER

I don't really have a favorite. I

don't have the most well-developed

sense of taste.

SHE SHAKES HER HEAD IN DISBELIEF. WALTER LOOKS OVER THE LANDING.

WALTER (CONT'D)

I guess we need to get new stairs.

I'll start the process tomorrow.

ANNA

The "process"? How long is this gonna

take?

WALTER

We're gonna have to live with these

for a long time, we should do it

right. Do we want mahogany? Walnut?

Maple? Cherry? Teak?

ANNA SIGHS AND PUTS HER HEAD EXHAUSTEDLY (BUT SWEETLY) ON WALTER'S SHOULDER AS HE CONTINUES TALKING. WE WIDEN OUT.

WALTER (CONT'D)

Do we want them to go straight up, or spiral, or one of those L-shapes with a landing half-way? Sometimes you see those floating stairs with no railing, it's cool-looking, kind of dangerous though. Should we have Noel do it? I'll check his references, but we should start meeting with a bunch of contractors...

AS WE...

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW