UNTITLED LAGRAVENESE ABC PILOT

Written by

RICHARD LAGRAVENESE

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EXT. THE NOBLE - NIGHT

An exclusive Members Only private club on the Upper East Side of New York occupying a seven floor building between 5th Ave and Madison Ave on a residential street. There is no sign. The front doors are frosted glass and chrome with a peek-a-boo clear glass divider through which a passerby may catch a glimpse of a Damien Hirst original above the front desk. The Doorman stands inside the lobby. His figure is silhouetted by the frosted glass.

CAMERA PANS UP TO THE PENTHOUSE FLOOR.

INT. THE NOBLE - PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

CLOSE-UP: A Man's manicured hand with an expensive but tasteful ring, a Patek Philippe watch, pours two glasses of whiskey.

In SOFT BACKGROUND, we can see the figure of a NAKED WOMAN draped beneath white bed sheets.

The Man lays the Woman's drink down on her night table beside her bed as he speaks to her:

PHILIP (O.S.)
You know the biggest lie people tell? "I don't like games"...

As The Man talks, Camera tracks him in one continuous move that will revolve around the back of the Woman's bed always keeping the Man in Camera view and the Woman in soft focus. We are introduced to our first main character:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
God, imagine a day without them...

PHILIP FITZGERALD JULIEN is a man who is always standing in the perfect light. The power of his looks, his confidence, his breeding and style is immediately imposing. He never speaks a word or makes a move that isn't well chosen. He drips intelligence, wit and sensuality. An artist at manipulation.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
...Days of obligations, of "accomplishing" things, friends with issues, families with ties, lovers with needs. Honestly, what does everyone think they're doing if not playing games just to stay awake.

By this point, Philip has taken a seat in a leather George Smith club chair. The penthouse is expansive and tastefully designed with the utmost attention to detail.

The Naked Woman under the sheets has come in Camera view in the BG. She lies still. She is in her early 20's. The bed sheet, we now realize, is twisted around her body as if she had struggled with it.

SHE IS DEAD. An overdose. Drug paraphernalia is visible. Her beautiful face is contorted, her body discolored, mucus clogging her nostrils and mouth.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
That's not to say that everyone plays well. Take you. Suicide is such a creative opportunity. I mean, a speed ball? Who even does that anymore? But no one ever said, "top of the charts does an artist make". You hicks with your auto-tuned voices, write a dance hit about party girls who sleep with party guys while the whole world has a party. (*Sighs*)

By this point Philip has risen and stands at the end of the bed talking directly to the corpse, holding his drink.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Well, at least you've stopped writing lyrics. There's your one contribution in all this.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR. Philip crosses to open it revealing:

LEO JAMES - late 20's, strikingly handsome, loyal, in love with Philip. Leo is Philip's right arm and some time lover.

Philip and Leo speak in the penthouse doorway.

LEO
The front desk says they're on their way.

PHILIP
No uniforms.

LEO
No. He assured me he would send over his personal security.

PHILIP
Senator Fontaine's personal security must be experienced at this.

Leo starts to exit, Philip's words stop him.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Leo. Don't you want to look?

LEO
I've seen death before, Philip.

PHILIP
A celebrity?
(Leo shakes head)
Whole different class of worms.

Leo steps back. He peers into the penthouse to the gory tableau of the dead girl. He is about to look away when Philip grabs the back of his neck and holds him in place, making him look longer. Although there's a dominating quality, Philip also strokes Leo's hair. Leo surrenders to Philip. They are cheek to cheek as they look at the girl:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
You have to keep looking until you're past the shock. Keep looking until you realize how little it means. You're given life. You're given death. And all the moments in between mean nothing to anyone but you. Seven Grammys, worth 125 million dollars and she just became worthless. All that fighting for attention and pretending to be interesting and for what?
(sniffs Leo's neck)
Is that a new cologne?

LEO
Something different.

PHILIP
Wear what I bought you.

LEO
All right.

PHILIP
Tell Senator Fontaine's security men I want her out of here within an half hour. And I expect a call from the Senator tomorrow. Go.

Philip releases Leo as quickly as he grabbed him. Leo exits. Philip closes the door, crosses into a lavish bathroom.

INT. PENTHOUSE BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Dirty towels on the floor. The shower and sink still wet. Used by the Senator as he made a hasty exit.

Philip checks himself in the mirror. Admiration. Apathy. He's used to looking good. His eye catches something partially covered beneath a used washcloth:

A BOTTLE OF CIALIS WITH THE SENATOR'S NAME - GERARD FONTAINE - ON THE PRESCRIPTION.

Philip can't help but laugh. He pockets the Senator's Cialis, opens a Noble Club's complimentary mouthwash, rinses & spits.

CUT TO:

INT. COLE TOWNSHOUSE - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

An Upper East Side townhouse formal dining room. In the background, perhaps in the adjacent living room we see a beautiful Grand Piano.

An intimate dinner for five is being given by our next main character:

MARGOT WORTH COLE - a beautiful woman whose power, style and intellect command attention the instant she enters a room. As long as she is interested in attracting anyone's attention. For Margot is always in control. A fierce competitor, Margot will ruthlessly protect her freedom from convention and domination by anyone. Margot lives by her own amoral code.

At her table are two couples of varying ages who are among New York society's wealthiest - and in Margot's current opinion - most boring people.

Margot is seated at one end of the table. The couples are seated at either side. The seat at the other end of the table - the seat of her husband - is conspicuously empty. Margot is drinking wine as the men talk with the men and the women talk with the women in overlapping conversations. What they say is of no importance:

MALE GUEST ONE
..I heard from Teddy that Larry's in the middle of a helluva proxy fight.

MALE GUEST TWO
...you don't make a leveraged recapitilzation without doing your managerial due diligence. It's minor league

FEMALE GUEST ONE
...she had the nerve to tell me she never received my rsvp when I've only gone to the benefit for the past 15 years...

FEMALE GUEST TWO
...Did you see what see wore? Off one shoulder with those arms. I mean you spend over $10,000 for a gown and you don't have your arms done? It's insanity.

Margot is thoroughly bored. She sips the last of her wine and picks up the bottle to pour another but it's empty. Immediately a hired WAITER is at her side and pours the last of the bottle. He is very young and very handsome.

WAITER
(Whispers to Margot)
Should I get another bottle?

MARGOT
(Whisper back)
No. They'll think I want to them to stay.

She waves him off. She sips her wine. She watches: the couples in front of her as is she were watching a play.

Suddenly, her imagination decides to make them more interesting.

MARGOT'S POV: *EACH MAN AND EACH WOMAN ATTACK EACH OTHER WITH SILVERWARE, A BROKEN WINE GLASS AND FOOD HURLING EPITHETS OF TRUTH. THE TWO COUPLES ATTACK EACH OTHER LIKE SAVAGES IN DESIGNER CLOTHING.*

Margot is enjoying herself until her fantasy is interrupted:

FEMALE GUEST ONE
Margot, is there anymore wine?

Margot is brought back to the reality of her boring dinner guests. She looks at the Waiter who smirks. Margot likes him.

MARGOT
Yes. Actually, I was waiting til after dinner. I have something very special. I have to get it from the cellar.
(rises, looks to Waiter)
Uh...

She searches for the Waiter's name. He gives it to her:

WAITER
Walter.

MARGOT
Really?
(He nods)
Come.

Margot escorts Walter OS to the wine cellar as the two couples continue table talk.

INT. COLE TOWNSHOUSE - WINE CELLAR - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

A light goes on. Margot leads the Waiter down cellar stairs to a vast collection of wines on racks eight feet high, with labels of countries and vintages. Margot has her sights on Walter throughout:

WAITER
What would you like me to get?

Margot pauses a moment, staring at him.

MARGOT
The Quinto do Noval Port. It's on the second from the bottom shelf under Portugal.

The Waiter turns his back to Margot and kneels down searching for the port.

Margot steps closer to him, her legs lean against his back.

The Waiter smiles. He thinks he knows what she wants.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Turn around.

The Waiter is about to stand when:

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I didn't say stand up. I said around.

NOW the Waiter knows what she wants. He turns around to face Margot's body on his knees. He begins to lift her clothing.

ON MARGOT: As the Waiter makes love to her in the cellar. We hear the faint voices of the boring couples upstairs.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

RAPID INTERCUTTING: THE MORNING RITUALS OF PHILIP AND MARGOT AS THEY PREPARE THEMSELVES FOR THE DAY TO A SOUND TRACK SONG_ A POP DANCE TUNE SUNG BY THE DECEASED.

OVER THE SONG A VOICE OVER NEWS ANCHORS COVER THE STORY:

INT. PHILIP'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - MORNING

Philip's showers. His shower has a glass window that overlooks the Hudson River.

ANCHORWOMAN 1 (V.O.)
Pop Star "TAMMI" was found dead in her Tribeca loft apartment early this morning...

INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Margot showers in a lavish shower stall that could fit four people, with multiple heads.

ANCHORWOMAN 1 (V.O.)
...The victim of an apparent drug overdose which may or may not have been intentional.

A naked Walter the Waiter steps into the shower to join her.

INT. PHILIPS' BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Philip enters his bedroom with exquisite views. A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN is still asleep in his bed, her clothes draped over a chaise. Philip opens a closet that runs the length of the room with designer clothes. He begins his selection.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.)
Authorities will not officially comment on cause of death until...

INT. MARGOT'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Walter the Waiter exits the bedroom never to be seen again, as Margot enters her "closet" which is actually the size of a small bedroom, with clothes, shoes, bags, etc...all arranged by color in glass shelves and mirrored walls.

ANCHORMAN (V.O.)
...they receive the official autopsy report in six weeks and have completed their investigation.

INT. PHILIP'S APARTMENT/GARAGE - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Philip exits through a back door in his kitchen into a private garage where he enters his car, parked before a private elevator.

ANCHORWOMAN 2 (V.O.)
"TAMMI" first hit the music scene when she was 16 with the smash single "PARTY PARTY PARTY PARTY"...

Philip drives onto the elevator. The doors close.

EXT. THE BLACK BUILDING - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

A black glass building overlooking the Chelsea piers.

ANCHORWOMAN 2 (V.O.)
She won seven Grammys including Best New Artist but her recent string of concert cancellations have caused a rift between her and her fans. "TAMMI" was 21 at the time of her death.

A black garage door opens and Philip drives out of his residential building, heading to the Noble Club.

EXT. THE NOBLE CLUB - MORNING

Philip drives up to the curb. A young Valet immediately exits through the frosted glass doors. Philip hands him the keys to park the car, then enters the Noble.

INT. THE NOBLE CLUB - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Philip breezes through as Two Desk Clerks and a Doorman greet him, expecting no reply:

DESK CLERKS/DOORMAN
Good morning Mr. Julien. Good Morning.

Philip glides right into an elevator.

INT. PENTHOUSE BATHROOM - MORNING

ROSA CANSINO - a strong, black haired woman of Spanish descent, still beautiful at 45 - she is Philip's head of housekeeping.

Rosa is supervising the staff to restore the penthouse to it's original state. Rosa instructs one of the maids:

ROSA
Get rid of the towels. Don't bother washing. Just throw them out.

Philip appears.

PHILIP
Rosa? Everything under control?

ROSA
Yes.

They step away for a private moment.

PHILIP
I want the sheets, towels, everything---

ROSA
I know.

Rosa is a trusted, loyal and discreet employee:

PHILIP
Were there any condoms?

ROSA
Too many. You don't want me to save them?

PHILIP
God knows, this isn't the White House.

ROSA
Have you eaten?

PHILIP
Not yet.

ROSA
Thomas wants to see you. Have some breakfast.

Philip exits confident Rosa has everything in hand.

INT. NOBLE RESTAURANT - MORNING

Philip walks through a two star restaurant as waiters set up for lunch. Philip enters the kitchen.

INT. NOBLE RESTAURANT - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS - MORNING

Philip passes by sous chefs who greet him expecting no reply.

CHEFS
Morning Mr. Julien. Good morning.

He crosses the kitchen to the Chef's station:

THOMAS RIZZO is a four star chef. The Noble is merely one of his restaurants. He is a burly down to earth culinary artist with no pretention and a ravenous appetite for life. In the midst of supervising prep, he asks Philip:

THOMAS
You want an omelette?

Philip nods as he gets himself coffee. Thomas takes control. As Thomas cooks, they talk:

PHILIP
Rosa said you wanted to see me.

THOMAS
Yeah. I want my four stars. You gotta play the game, kid.

PHILIP
Tommy, that straw-for-brains critic will never give us four stars until I allow him to be a member and he will never be a member because he doesn't deserve to be.

THOMAS
(laughs)
Why? Cause he's a critic?

PHILIP
Because he's a fraud. He doesn't deserve to use your talent for an exchange of favors. His being a member of the Noble doesn't equal what you can do with an omelette. You're an artist.

THOMAS
I'm a cook.

PHILIP
You create. You don't know what that really means unless you're someone who can't.

THOMAS
You confuse me. All cold, hard assed steel most of the time and just when I'm convinced there's nothing to like about you, you go and have values.

PHILIP
I love you too, Tommy.

Thomas slides the omelette onto a plate as Philip eats.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
We'll be four star by the end of the year. Trust me.
(Eating)
Hmmmm. Perfect.

INT. ROTHSTEIN, FISHER & TUBBS LAW FIRM - DAY

Margot enters, greeted by her lawyer, MARK TUBBS. They kiss.

MARK
There she is. You look beautiful.

MARGOT
Is this really going to happen, Mark?

MARK
Just say yes. The papers are all there.

MARGOT
And the acquisition?

MARK
The deal was finalized Monday.

MARGOT
Where is he?

Mark motions to escort her to the conference room:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS = DAY

Mark opens the door and ushers Margot in. He closes the door.

Margot stands in the conference room alone with her soon-to-be ex-husband. There are piles of duplicate documents on the long conference table waiting to be signed.

ANDERSON COLE - 50's, old and new money, one of the Forbes 500, a man whose power, along with a ruthlessness intelligence and charm, has resulted in expanding a multi-million dollar company into a multi-billion dollar corporation - and fooled three beautiful women to marry him.

ANDERSON
Are you ready to end this?

MARGOT
You said the same thing two years ago.

ANDERSON
Then can we call them in?

MARGOT
Not yet.

Margot wants to play - she also is smart and cautious.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I'm curious.

ANDERSON
I'm giving you what you want.

MARGOT
That's why I'm curious...Why now, Anderson? Two years of this circus and suddenly you say, "all right I'll give you what you want"? What happened?

ANDERSON
I couldn't give you a cable company I didn't own yet. The acquisition took a long time.

MARGOT
I'm sorry, you must be mistaking me for your mentally challenged second wife.

ANDERSON
She was a published author.

MARGOT
Of a diet book she called "*THE LAST SUPPER*".
(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)
You could have closed that deal at any time. I want to know what happened.

Beat.

ANDERSON
I'm getting married. That is, I want to get married. So I'd like to have this settled.

Margot is stung but she won't show it.

MARGOT
Ah...Anyone I know?

ANDERSON
I'd rather not say. I haven't officially asked her yet.

MARGOT
But you're not even considering she'll say no so why not tell me.

ANDERSON
I'd rather not.

Beat. Margot takes a moment to size Anderson up:

MARGOT
All right. Let's settle this.

Anderson moves to call in the lawyers but Margot stops him:

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Just for the record, it is not lost on me that if the divorce weren't finalized by next week, the pre-nup would have been invalidated.

ANDERSON
You wouldn't have gotten much more. New York isn't California when it comes to wives.

MARGOT
I could have tied you up for a while.

ANDERSON
(re-stating)
You're getting a cable company. Isn't that what you wanted? To be your own mogul? To be your own man?

MARGOT
I'm just saying the timing of finding the fourth love of your life was well played.

ANDERSON
We don't all play at feelings Margot. Some of us have actual them.

MARGOT
You, for instance? Ha, ha, ha...
(Beat)
We were the best for a while, Anderson. Until you ruined it. We were honest about things like feelings. I wasn't a trophy wife. I was a partner. You said you loved that about me. How many deals did I help make happen for you that I won't be seeing a share of?

ANDERSON
I'll admit that.

MARGOT
How many Chairmen of companies I charmed for you before they knew their throats were about to be slit. The CEO's I entertained and numbed with expensive wine and celebrity friends til they were begging you to buy them out. You had money and no class. You had power and no imagination. Until me. But what a wife does can't be proven, can it? It's not documented and no man would admit to it.

Anderson stays silent but knows Margot is right.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
No, I can't prove I helped triple your assets. All that matters is who signs their name on the assets.

ANDERSON
So sign. Have your name on an asset.

Beat. Margot is eager to do just that. But:

MARGOT
I want to look at the cable company acquisition documents first.

Anderson obliges, via the intercom.

ANDERSON
Can you send Mark back in here with the CCB network documents.

He and Margot pause for the last moment they will be alone together as man and wife.

MARGOT
This is how it ends. So quietly.

PRE-LAP APPLAUSE:

INT. AL HIRSCHFELD THEATER - NIGHT

A performance of THE HEIRESS is in progress. We can hear the performance O.S.

Camera on Philip sitting with A FEMALE DATE. In the row behind him, there are TWO TOURISTS. The Man is unwrapping and eating a lobby snack during the performance. Every time he goes for a chip his package makes a crinkling noise.

Every time he hears the noise, Philip's blood boils. Finally, Philip turns round in his seat, reaches over and grabs the tourist's snack out of his hands, in a threatening whisper:

PHILIP
Stop eating or get back on the bus to Tulsa.

TOURIST WIFE
We're from Dallas!

PHILIP
Like there's a difference!

Philip dead stares at The Tourists who are shocked. As Philip is about to turn back in his seat he sees:

MARGOT sitting with two friends two rows behind the tourists.

Their eyes meet. It's a surprise to both. A sly smile is exchanged. They know each other. Philip turns back in his seat. He is distracted now by Margot's presence.

Margot, as well, finds it difficult to pay attention to the play.

EXT. AL HIRSCHFELD THEATER - NIGHT

The doors are opened. The play is over. Margot is saying good night to her friends as she gets into her town car.

Philip exits the theater just in time to see Margot get into her car. He watches her drive away.

INT. MARGOT'S TOWN CAR - NIGHT

Margot settles into the backseat, tired from the day. Her cell phone rings. It's MARK, her lawyer.

WE INTERCUT THE CALLS:

MARGOT
Mark? Hi. It's late.

MARK
We've been scammed. Anderson. The CCB deal. It's worthless.

Margot goes numb with anger as she listens:

MARK (CONT'D)
The assets were elevated but the guts are gone. It's a hollow company. They basically own their technology and the lease of their air time until the end of June but after that, the FCC is cancelling their license. They fired their entire staff. They have no content. There is no network. The CEO and COO are leasing the air time to shopping and soft porn until they get out.

MARGOT
How did you miss this?

MARK
We were played. Anderson had the whole thing rigged. We can file immediately. But it'll be a long battle before--

Margot ends the call before Mark can finish. She is furious.

EXT. COLE TOWNSHOUSE - NIGHT

Margot exits the town car. The town car drives away. She steps to the front door of her townhouse as she gets her keys. She tries to unlock the door...

But the door won't unlock. Margot tries again...and again...she checks her keys. But the door will not open. She rings the bell.

INT. COLE TOWNSHOUSE - NIGHT

Anderson is sitting in the living room drinking a scotch as doorbell is heard. A MAID crosses to open the door but Anderson silently stops him with a motion. They hear Margot banging. The Maid feels badly for Margot. But Anderson won't let her in.

EXT. COLE TOWNSHOUSE - NIGHT

Margot bangs. She rings. No response. She tries to look through the window but suddenly: She realizes what Anderson has done. She takes out her cell and calls Anderson.

A moment later she hears Anderson's cell from inside the living room, which is the front room of the house. She realizes Anderson is inside. The cell phone call is ended by Anderson. He won't answer her.

Margot is humiliated and enraged. She is about to shout out and bang again, but she is stopped by:

A Man walking his dog passes by. Margot realizes she can't react in public. She has to retreat.

She begins to walk. She strains to carry herself with dignity on a public street, while inside she is about to explode. On her face is a mask of fury.

INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - NOBLE CLUB - NIGHT

A dark wood office with a wall of SECURITY MONITORS recording various areas of the club, including the front desk.

Philip sits at his desk enjoying an expresso when Leo enters.

LEO
What are you doing here?

PHILIP
I wasn't ready to go home.

LEO
How was the play?

PHILIP
The Heiress locks her lover out in the end like always. Endings never change.

Philip seems introspective. Thinking about Margot. Philip's desk phone intercom rings. Leo answers:

LEO
(intercom)
Vicky, what is it?

VICKY (V.O.)
There's someone asking if Mr. Julien is in.

PHILIP
I'm not.

LEO
Vicky, I hope you didn't tell whoever asked that Mr. Julien--

PHILIP (O.S.)
Wait, Leo.

Leo sees Philip staring at the monitor of the front desk.

Philip is looking at Margot. He exits quickly, much to Leo's curiosity.

INT. THE NOBLE CLUB - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

Philip appears out of the elevator and crosses to the front desk. Margot rises from a cushioned lounge. Their eyes meet.

PHILIP
Margot.

MARGOT
Philip.

For a moment they don't know what else to say. They both laugh.

PHILIP
Sorry, I'm...What's going on?

Beat. How does she say it? For Margot, plainly:

MARGOT
I have nowhere to go.

Philip can’t believe his ears. He realizes she’s serious.

PHILIP
Come.

Philip eases his arm around Margot and escorts her to the elevators.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE NOBLE - PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - NIGHT

The penthouse is newly cleaned with different sheets and comforters. All remnants of the "Tammi" episode are gone.

As in the teaser, Philip is pouring two scotches. But this time, his female companion is very much alive.

MARGOT
How long has the club been open now, Philip?

PHILIP
Uh, this summer it'll be a year.

MARGOT
You've done a beautiful job. Not surprising. You always had incredible taste.

PHILIP
Thank you.

MARGOT
I remember you talking about this since - when was it?

PHILIP
Since London at least.

MARGOT
Yes. London. I remember.
(She thinks)
Lord, it can't be almost three years since we've be alone together, can it?

Philip hands her the scotch. They pause a moment. He doesn't answer because it's a sore subject for him. Margot's innocent tone doesn't mask anything. And she knows it.

PHILIP
Tell me something. If we hadn't seen each other in the theater, would you have called on me?

MARGOT
I don't know.

Philip hands her the drink. They clink. The circle each other like two predators with a predatory attraction:

PHILIP
So I should consider myself lucky they revived THE HEIRESS for the fifth time in four years.

MARGOT
I've wanted to come before Philip but something always got in my way.

PHILIP
Since when would something like a husband get in your way.

MARGOT
Oh no, it wasn't him.

PHILIP
How could you stand him as long as you did?

MARGOT
Separate bedrooms. Separate lives. It was fun when it started.

PHILIP
So the way is all clear now.

MARGOT
(laughs)
Oh darling, I've never had such an open road ahead of me.

PHILIP
Didn't you have an agreement about leaving the townhouse in the divorce?

MARGOT
Yes, I had until the end of the year.

PHILIP
He broke the agreement. Take him to a judge.

MARGOT
He knows I won't. Imagine that story! Being locked out of my home. Being fooled by him and all the details coming out, leaving the marriage with practically nothing. I'd have to hide, move to some place in Central America.

PHILIP
You hated Costa Rica.

MARGOT
I meant Oklahoma. That's somewhere in the center isn't it?

Philip laughs alone with Margot.

PHILIP
You're getting alimony.

MARGOT
Controlled by him. Divorce is supposed to liberate you. I think it's humiliating to be paid to leave. That's why men pay prostitutes you know. Not for the sex. They pay them to leave.
(Fake Southern accent)
Oh God, what shall become of me now?
(she shifts)
I hate this! I won't be one of those people who whine their pathetic stories to old friends.

PHILIP
Old friends? Is that what we are?

MARGOT
(genuine)
I hope so.

Beat. The two seem to being playing carefully with one another, like a studied chess game. But Philip makes the first bold move:

PHILIP
I'll have all your things brought here. You'll move in. That'll get everyone talking about something.

Margot is jolted for a moment.

MARGOT
Philip, are you serious?

PHILIP
Of course I am. Homeless women do not wear $1100 Alexander McQueen boots.

Margot looks to her feet - indeed she is wearing $1100 boots. She sits, almost collapsing. As if she lost her breath or were about to cry. Philip is concerned. He kneels to her.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Margot?

MARGOT
(vulnerable)
Yes, I just...I hadn't realized I'd been holding my breath for the past two hours.

Margot looks to Philip with a moment of sincere gratitude.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Thank you.

PHILIP
You're welcome.

Margot kisses Philip. Their kiss is long. They separate. Margot, referring to Philip's kiss:

MARGOT
Mmmmm, that's just how I left it. I'm glad some lips never change.

PHILIP
I haven't been saving myself for you.

MARGOT
Awww. You'll break my little girl's heart.

PHILIP
That was the point.

They kiss again. But the feelings get too intense for Margot. She breaks away.

MARGOT
But Philip if you're thinking my moving in will...I mean, us--

PHILIP
(overlaps)
I wasn't. That's not the reason.

MARGOT
(overlaps)
Because right now, I can't go from one thing to another...

PHILIP
(overlaps)
I know. I know.
(Beat)
You need a place. I have a place.
We're old friends.

Margot's relieved. Philip, as usually, gets her immediately.

MARGOT
I'm such an idiot. All this time.
You were always here. I stayed away
because...well, because of what
always happens when we're together.
It's something nuclear, isn't it?

PHILIP
From the first day we met.

MARGOT
(remembering)
Haaa! We were children.

PHILIP
We were never children.

Margot looks into Philip's eyes and sees his desire for her is still there. Their intense connection is immediately felt.

MARGOT
We never ended, you and I? Did we?

Beat.

PHILIP
Why did you leave me?

Beat.

MARGOT
To keep us together, I think.

Philip is curious.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
The best way to stay tied to
someone is to never commit fully.
Marriage is the only way to kill a
relationship. I think it should be
more like a car rental. Every year
or so you get the chance to choose
again or get a new one. This "til
death do us part" is just sadistic.
(Beat)
(MORE)

MARGOT (CONT'D)
We can't ever lose each other, you know.

PHILIP
You almost did last time.

MARGOT
Did I? Were you heartbroken?

PHILIP
I only tell you this because I know how much satisfaction it will give you...Yes.

MARGOT
(smiles)
See. You're mine forever.

PHILIP
I planned to kill you more than once.

MARGOT
Which was your favorite scenario?

PHILIP
With my own hands, around your neck. Very slowly...Simplicity.

He moves his hands to her neck and they kiss again. Margot is beginning to feel her desire for Philip too overwhelming.

MARGOT
You said you understood, Philip. If you can't do this, I'll go.

Philip takes a beat, rises and steps away like a gentleman.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I've been planning Anderson's murder all night.

PHILIP
Too easy.

MARGOT
Oh I don't mean literal murder. I want something more painful. I mean a social killing.

PHILIP
I like that.

MARGOT
How can I destroy him?

PHILIP
Use me.

Margot loves Philip for that. She smiles but warns:

MARGOT
Remember, Philip, you said it first this time.

PHILIP
I'll remember.

MARGOT
I want him publicly humiliated. I want him to not be able to show his face in this city for the next ten years.

PHILIP
We'll send him to Oklahoma.

Margot is impressed. Feeling much better:

MARGOT
Oh, this should fun.

PHILIP
And if I succeed?

Beat. Margot adjusts slightly:

MARGOT
Ahh...I was waiting for your gender to kick in. What do you want in return for you services?

Beat. Philip wants Margot. But how to have her?

PHILIP
We don't have to worry about that now. Just tell me that when the time comes, whatever I ask for - you'll give it to me. Without question. Without hesitation.

Margot smiles. She likes the challenge.

MARGOT
A blind challenge. Yes. I agree. Without hesitation. Do you believe me?

PHILIP
Yes.

Beat. Does Margot mean this? Philip smiles.

MARGOT
Anderson's getting married. Again. Or at least he plans to pop the question. I'm sure some nitwit with a bulging cleavage will be choking on a ring stuck in her Tiramisu. The man has no imagination.

PHILIP
Don't you hate that about people?

MARGOT
I hate people. Isn't it awful?

PHILIP
I know all about the fiance.

Beat. Margot is surprised.

MARGOT
Who is she?

PHILIP
She'll be here tomorrow. Our art gallery is being used for a photo shoot.

MARGOT
A model? How perfect. Anderson can stick his hand up her rear end and make her say big words and everything.

PHILIP
She's also a virgin.

Margot puts two and two together. She's delighted:

MARGOT
Cecelia Karelle. No! But how?

PHILIP
Corena. Her mother. Ever since the husband lost everything and hanged himself - that's right isn't it, hanged not hung.

MARGOT
Not hung.

PHILIP
Corena been pimping Cecelia to get back on the inside track.

MARGOT
How do you know?

PHILIP
My mother can not keep a secret. I have to say in Corena's defense, she did it brilliantly. The sexiest model on every cover pages whom everyone knows is untouched. Everyone wants her.

MARGOT
And she wants Anderson? How does that work?

Philip shrugs. Margot challenges Philip:

MARGOT (CONT'D)
She's a beautiful girl. And I hear a genuinely nice girl, if there is such a thing. Do you really think you can? I mean, are you up to it?

PHILIP
I'm insulted you're asking.

Margot's mouth is practically watering.

MARGOT
I adore you.

PHILIP
A tale as old as time.

MARGOT
Show me where you'll start it.

INT. THE NOBLE CLUB - ART GALLERY - CONTINUOUS - NIGHT

The fifth floor ART GALLERY has paintings mounted on walls as well as free floating. Photography equipment has already been installed for pre-lighting.

Philip turns on a light. Beautiful colors reflected off of beautiful paintings make our two protagonists even more beautiful as they move in and around these masterpieces.

PHILIP
They set up their lights today.

Margot is genuinely moved by the paintings, by art:

MARGOT
Oh Philip - look at them. Look at real beauty. How long do you get to keep them?

PHILIP
We usually have a showing last for three months then change up. We only get private loan-outs. And usually from members or people who want to be. We're doing Keith Haring next fall.

MARGOT
One your favorites. Speaking of which, I never asked--

Philip smiles. He knows what she's referring to:

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Is there any one special?

PHILIP
No one.

MARGOT
Man nor woman?

PHILIP
(shakes head)
Man nor woman.

Margot and Philip have reached the finale of their agreement.

MARGOT
I'll need real proof about Cecelia's loss of purity. Not just rumor. There can't be a hint of doubt. It's has to be all anyone's talking about.

PHILIP
How about witnesses?

They get closer and closer to each other on each line.

MARGOT
To a de-flowering? What a 21st Century concept, what with the *Tweeking* and *Facebooking*.

PHILIP
We can call it *Instagroaning.*
Maybe Anderson can be a witness.

MARGOT
Oh, that would be heaven.

CLOSE UP - Their faces are in profile fill the frame.

PHILIP
Of course, then you should be one too.

MARGOT
Of course.
(Beat)
You know what a fan I am of your work.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. THE NOBLE CLUB - ART GALLERY - DAY.

PHOTO MONTAGE INTRODUCING US TO: *CECELIA KARELLE - A stunning beauty of 21 who's success has been constructed by fusing purity and sexuality into one girl. Every man's fantasy. The truth is: Cecelia is genuinely a beautiful spirit and a good person*

Cecelia wears little more than her male ensemble, who are draped around her like adornments, by the Photographer.

CORENA KARELLE - Cecelia's mother - Attractive with a slightly comical slant. Dyed hair, great figure. She was a confident sexy woman in her youth, who simply married the wrong man for a lifestyle she longs to recapture, especially as the years advance. She's terrified of middle class poverty.

Corena is keeping a close watch over the proceedings. Philip enters and stands beside Corena.

PHILIP
Corena?

CORENA
Philip...
(kisses his cheek)
I didn't think you'd have time to stop by.

PHILIP
How's everything going?

CORENA
He doesn't light her the way I like but I'll fix it later.

PHILIP
Mama has final approval? Does he know that?

CORENA
Doesn't matter what he knows. Oh, I was going to ask one of your people but can you put Anderson Cole and Ann Walker on the guest list. They're meeting us here for lunch.

PHILIP
Of course. Ann Walker? Why do I know that name.

CORENA
She's my cousin. Married to Franklin Walker of Walker Trust.

PHILIP
Oh, yes, he's the one always in khakis building a village somewhere.

CORENA
(irritated by him)
They're philanthropists, yes. The benefit is for them. Your mother said you're coming.

PHILIP
I am coming. I just never pay attention to who they're benefitting. Let me call the desk and take care of this for you.

Philip exits. Corena re-focuses on the shoot.

Philip moves away from the photo shoot area to a private corner. He calls Leo.

INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - NOBLE CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Leo is in their office. WE INTERCUT THE CELL PHONE CALL.

LEO
Hey.

PHILIP
I need you to call the desk and give them a lunch guest name.

James picks up a pen and writes

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Ann Walker.

LEO
OK.

PHILIP
Anderson Cole will also be coming.

LEO
(writes)
Anderson Co--

PHILIP
No, I don't want you to put his name on the list.

LEO
(understands)
OK.

PHILIP
Who's at the desk today.

LEO
Rebecca and Nia.

PHILIP
Which is the nice one?

LEO
Rebecca.

PHILIP
Make sure Nia handles this.

Leo understands.

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Oh, and Leo?...Knock out the wireless in the restaurant.

Philip buzzes. He looks: A call from his mother, Judith:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Oh, it's the Dowager Empress. I have to go.
(clicks to other line)
Hello Mother.

INT. THE CIPRIANI WALL STREET - DAY

A re-converted bank on Wall St that serves now as a banquet hall for lavish events.

WE INTERCUT PHILIP AND THE BENEFIT HALL:

JUDITH JULIEN *- Philip's mother. Sixties-Early Seventies. Old money. But nothing about her resembles age, except for fearless ability to say exactly what she feels whenever she feels like it.*

Judith stands by the buffet table as people whiz by setting up the hall.

JUDITH
You have to help me. Maggie is driving me crazy. Everything we agreed on has been changed. The first course, like the table linens..

Philip gets another call on his cell: ***MAGGIE WHITMORE*** *- Late forties. NY's premiere event planner and PR woman. Maggie is the eyewitness to society. She knows every secret and inside story. Though she works hard for a living that consumes her life, she is always at the epicenter of whatever is happening.*

PHILIP
Hold on, Mother.
(puts on hold)
Maggie.

Maggie is at the other end of the benefit hall as people whiz by setting up the hall.

MAGGIE
If you mother says the words "Shrimp cocktail" to me one more time, I'm going to slit her throat.

PHILIP
Hold on Maggie.
(Hold. Back to Judith)
Mother, look, I'm free this afternoon, I'll stop by.

JUDITH
Please. I don't know what to do with her.

PHILIP
But mother - shrimp cocktail? I thought we cured you of the 1980's?

JUDITH
That bitch called you, didn't she?

EXT. LINCOLN CENTER/LINCOLN RESTAURANT - DAY

Establishing shot of the Lincoln Center complex and the restaurant LINCOLN that sits between Avery Fisher Hall and Juilliard.

INT. LINCOLN RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Margot is lunching with Mark, her lawyer. She barely eats.

MARGOT
When can I get my things?

MARK
Anderson is leaving for London tomorrow. He said anytime between then and the 15th.

MARGOT
And will there be someone to let me in since my key doesn't work?

MARK
I'll be there to make sure. You're getting all your jewelry. The alimony isn't what we hoped because of when we signed, but it's certainly enough to live comfortably.

MARGOT
If I move to Brooklyn. What about CCB? Is it a lost cause?

MARK
In the entertainment industry all you need is an idea. They're re-inventing channels all the time.

MARGOT
But I need time. I need some inside assistance. In the FCC. I need a politician. Find me one.

Mark nods as he writes this down.

INT. THE NOBLE - RESTAURANT - DAY

Philip pulls out a chair for Corena as Cecelia rushes in having just removed her make-up. She has a pure, natural beauty. She is out of breath.

CECELIA
Oh, God. I'm so hungry. Did they make that butternut squash soup today?

PHILIP
No, but I can easily make them. Have you eaten here before?

CECELIA
Yes, Anderson brought me.

PHILIP
But he's not a member.

CECELIA
No, we were with other people.

Philip is satisfied his plan will still work. They all sit as a Waiter appears with three menus;

PHILIP
Oh, I'm not staying. They'll be four for lunch.

CECELIA
Well you can join us.

Corena reacts immediately. She doesn't want Philip to stay.

CORENA
He's working, sweetheart.

PHILIP
I can sit with you while you wait.

Philip loves contradicting Corena and making Cecelia smile is the first step of his plan. Cecelia checks her cell.

CECELIA
Anderson said he'd text me but I'm not getting reception.

Philip checks his phone and pretends:

PHILIP
Really? I have reception.

Corena checks her phone. She has none.

INT. THE NOBLE CLUB - FRONT DESK - CONTINUOUS - DAY

ANN BEATRICE WALKER - a different kind of beauty than Margot but nonetheless compelling. A woman of education and breeding who has never used those advantages for power over others. She's genuine, smart, down to earth and stylish in an Audrey Hepburn kind of way. Even in slacks and a blouse, she looks organically elegant.

Ann enters and asks *NIA - a 20's something cold-as-ice velvet rope sentinel:*

ANN
Ann Walker.

Nia checks the list.

NIA
Yes, go right up. Third floor.

Ann exits OS.

INT. SYMPHONY HALL - DAY

An orchestra is preparing to start a rehearsal on stage.

Margot sits in the empty theater. Sitting beside her, is:

KATHERINE STROUP MILLS - 50-60's. A striking woman of talent and intelligence. Artistic, she's let her long hair turn completely grey. Never had surgery. She's lived a full life of highs and lows, which wears proudly on her face. Katherine has a deep understanding of what it means to succeed as a woman in a man's arena. Margot's mentor.

We drop into the middle of their talk. Margot has told Katherine what has happened to her:

KATHERINE
Well, I was lucky. My husband died when I was young enough to know I wasn't meant for marriage. I don't see how you can be surprised by all this. He was a schmuck when you settled for him.

MARGOT
I'm not. It just wasn't on my schedule. How do you always look so well?

KATHERINE
I stay on my feet as long as I can. And I work. When will you realize marrying men for power is not an interesting vocation?

MARGOT
I'm getting there.

KATHERINE
Will you stay and listen for a bit?

MARGOT
Yes. I have some shopping to do. Some things I suddenly need but, I'll stay a while.

KATHERINE
I miss you playing up there. Do you?

MARGOT
I may be many things false and true, Kate, but one thing I'm proud to say I'm not is someone who takes up space thinking they have a gift.

Katherine is disappointed by her response. She touches her hair affectionately as she makes her way up to the stage.

Margot watches A YOUNG WOMAN at the piano who may have been Margot at one time.

KATHERINE
All right, let's take it from bar 16.

Katherine conducts a symphony with a CELLO SOLO.

ON MARGOT: As with the art gallery pictures, Margot is deeply affected by artistic achievement. She is about to knocked out even more when the young male cellist begins his solo:

LUCA BAVARRA - an exquisite Cellist prodigy in his 20's. Luca plays with such feeling, producing an exquisite melancholy only a cello can achieve:

Camera moves in on Margot, as she leans forward on the chair in front of her to watch Luca more closely. She is taken by surprise. She is captivated. Her expression is stone still - but there are tears in her eyes.

INT. THE NOBLE CLUB - FRONT DESK - DAY

Anderson Cole enters and approaches Nia at the first desk.

ANDERSON
Anderson Cole.

Nia once again checks the guest list. She doesn't see it.

NIA
I'm sorry, what's the name?

Anderson is immediately annoyed and insulted.

ANDERSON
Anderson Cole. Would you like me to spell it?

NIA
It's not that difficult a name.

Anderson is irritated further. Nia checks the list again.

NIA (CONT'D)
I'm sorry but I don't have you on the list.

She offers no further help. She stares at him.

ANDERSON
Well there's a mistake. Call my fiance. She is in the restaurant.

NIA
Is she a member?

ANDERSON
No.

NIA
Then how would that help?
(her phone rings)
Excuse me.
(into phone)
The Noble.

Anderson is boiling. He calls Cecelia on his cell.

INT. THE NOBLE - RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS - DAY

Cecelia's cell phone sits by her plate with no sign of Anderson's text or call.

Cecelia, Philip, Ann and Corena are now enjoying their first course. Philip has just made Ann and Cecelia laugh while Corena is agitated.

CORENA
I don't understand where Anderson is. Did you put him on the list?

PHILIP
Yes. With Mrs. Walker.

ANN
Please - Ann.

PHILIP
(smiles)
Ann. I'm a little shy meeting you, I have to admit. The work you and your husband do makes all of this seem so superficial.

ANN
We're just helping people where we can. Nothing more than that. You're giving people a place to eat and enjoy their lives. We're not that different.

Philip is intrigued by Ann's guileless personality.

PHILIP
Well, I'm not being honored at a benefit. Don't you find it funny that charity benefits where tables cost 50,000 dollars will be filled with women who spend 100,000 dollars on clothes, hair and make-up just to attend?

Ann guesses his game. But she's not fazed.

ANN
Depends on your sense of humor I guess. Depends on what you consider worthwhile or a waste of time to even think about.

Philip feels slightly put in his place by Ann. He likes it.

CECELIA
I'm worried about Anderson. He would have called me.

CORENA
Why don't know you go outside and see if your cell works?

PHILIP
No, you stay. I'll go see if there's a problem. Order your lunch. You don't have much time.

CECELIA
Thanks Philip.

PHILIP
(to Cecelia)
And I love the way he's lighting you. You look just stunning.

CECELIA
(charmed)
Oh that's so nice of you.

Philip exits as Corena fumes.

INT. REHEARSAL HALL - DAY

The rehearsal is over. Musicians are leaving the stage. Katherine is speaking with Margot in the audience.

KATHERINE
I thought you had shopping to do.

MARGOT
It was too hard to leave. There's still time, come with me.
(Katherine nods)
What's the cellist name?

KATHERINE
Luca. Luca Bavarra. Even his name is music.

MARGOT
He's just beautiful.

KATHERINE
Yes. Every bit of him. Came from nothing. Scholarships. Worked hard to get here.
(to Margot)
Hands off.

MARGOT
I was just curious.

KATHERINE
The beginning of a fatal cliche. I'll meet you in the lobby.

Katherine exits. Alone, Margot crosses to the stage and steps upon it. She strolls to the piano and strokes it. She sits. Beat.

Margot begins to play. She plays beautifully. We see a different side of Margot, briefly, then--

Luca re-enters to retrieve his cell. Margot stops.

LUCA
Sorry. Don't stop. It was lovely.

MARGOT
Oh, no, I shouldn't be up here.

LUCA
I left my phone. I'm always leaving it.
(finds phone)
Here it is.

MARGOT
You play...
(tries again)
You're an exquisite cellist.

LUCA
Oh. Thank you. Are you a friend of Katherine's?

MARGOT
Yes. Did anyone ever tell you, that when you play, you're absolutely gorgeous?

LUCA
(surprised, laughs)
Uhh, no. Not exactly a word people have ever called me.

MARGOT
My God you're blushing.

LUCA
Well, thank you. Nice to meet you. I have to go.

MARGOT
Nice to meet you. Go on.

Margot watches Luca exit, her mouth practically watering. She murmurs to herself.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
Yes. Go...Before I eat you up.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. THE CIPRIANI WALL STREET - LATE AFTERNOON

The enormous hall is filled with elegant tables, now decorated. Flowers are being arranged. Bars are being stocked. Philip is refereeing Maggie and Judith.

JUDITH
Do you have any idea how many parties and benefits I've given?

MAGGIE
Let's just count the ones in this century, it'll save time.

PHILIP
Mother, I think the color scheme is fine.

MAGGIE
Thank you.

PHILIP
Except for the flowers.

JUDITH
Thank you.

MAGGIE
Why? They go perfectly with the table linens.

PHILIP
That's the problem. The whole place looks like a gay giant vomited violets. I'll call Remi.

JUDITH
I told you he wouldn't like them.

PHILIP
Is Anderson Cole bringing Cecelia?

MAGGIE
You told him!? Corena told me that in confidence.

JUDITH
Maggie, no one trusts you. If anyone tells you anything it's because the Internet isn't fast enough to spread the word.

PHILIP
I would never betray your trust Maggie. You're too dangerous. You manage to be on the inside of everything at safe distance. I don't know how you pull it off.

MAGGIE
That's the nicest thing you've ever said to me. Who are you bringing tonight, Philip?

PHILIP
(lies)
I haven't decided yet.

EXT. WALKER TOWNHOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The Walker townshouse in Chelsea is a warmer but no less impressive version of the Cole Upper East Side townhouse.

INT. ANN WALKER'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - LATE AFTERNOON

Ann is in her bedroom in a mass of clothes and unpacked items from suitcases. She is organizing her closets as she unpacks. Cecelia is on the bed, helping her.

ANN
Oh, I hate this. I'm just going to have to repack in a week. So, tell me everything.

CECELIA
I think he's going to propose. Mom's sure he will.

ANN
And?

CECELIA
I'm excited. Why? You don't think I should?

ANN
Honey, what do you think? What do you want?

CECELIA
I want to marry Anderson.

ANN
Then it's all good.

Ann continues with her organizing as Cecelia, happy, picks up an old dress of Ann's on the bed.

CECELIA
I love this dress. Do you like Anderson?

ANN
I don't know him. What's he like?

CECELIA
He's great. I mean, I know his past. He's told me about his wives and he's very honest, he tells me where he was wrong too, he doesn't just bad mouth them.

ANN
Well that's nice of him.

CECELIA
You know, he's never really felt like he was his own person. His father was terrible. Always made him feel like he couldn't do anything on his own. He says that's why he married so many times.

ANN
The father's dead, right?

CECELIA
(nods)
Then when Anderson expanded the corporation, he felt like he really became his own person. He says he's at a point in his life where he wants to do something else.

ANN
Like what?

CECELIA
Like what you and Franklin do. That's what I want - the life you and Franklin have.

ANN
Sweetheart, listen to me. You don't marry a man for a certain kind of life you want. You marry him because you love him.

CECELIA
I do. I love who he wants to be.

ANN
Do you love who he *is*? Because people don't really change.

CECELIA
I didn't mean it that way. It *is* who he is. He just hasn't had a wife who understood that. Didn't you want the same thing as Franklin from the beginning?

ANN
Oh, well, I never thought about it. I guess I did. But, I'll tell you the truth. Sometimes I wish we could stop. Just for a while. Take a vacation to an island without building a hospital on it. Spend holidays at home with our children.

CECELIA
Are you still trying?

ANN
(nods)
There's nothing wrong. We've had every test. I sometimes wonder if psychological. We can't hold onto a baby because we never stay in one place long enough to call it home.

CECELIA
How long will Franklin stay in Africa?

ANN
Til the end of the month. I'm meeting him in the Philippines on the 2nd.

Cecelia loves Ann. The feeling's mutual.

CECELIA
What are you wearing tonight?

ANN
Well, that Philip Julien got under my skin a little bit. I'm thinking of going in jeans and sandals.

CECELIA
He's very sexy, don't you think? I hear he's bisexual.

ANN
I'm skeptical of people who can't make up their mind. Are you still-?

CECELIA
(nods)
Anderson will be my first. My Only. I hope.

Ann smiles, wondering if the marriage will last.

INT. PHILIP'S OFFICE - NOBLE CLUB - LATE AFTERNOON

Margot is watching the video monitor replay of Anderson losing his shit at Nia who will not let him enter. Leo is playing the video for Margot, MOS.

Anderson flails and screams MOS. He is a perfect fool.

MARGOT
Oh this is the best show ever.

Margot immediately dials her cell.

MARGOT (ON PHONE) (CONT'D)
Margot Cole calling for Maggie Whitmore.
(to Leo)
She'll love this. Can she get a copy?

Leo suddenly takes the phone out of her hands and hangs up.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
(shocked)
Excuse me, sonny?

LEO
Philip insists on the club's privacy. For members and non-members. He wouldn't like it.

Margot sizes up Leo - his loyalty, his beauty. She smiles:

MARGOT
You're very close to Philip, aren't you?
(Leo doesn't respond)
Has he ever told you about me?

LEO
No.

Margot touches Leo's face. She speaks softly.

MARGOT
You're very beautiful. And young...
Don't waste too much time waiting.

Margot exits. Leo is disturbed by her words.

INT. THE NOBLE - PENTHOUSE APARTMENT - EARLY EVENING.

Margot sits at her laptop with an array of NEWLY BOUGHT DESIGNER CLOTHES behind her. She reads:

ANGLE ON LAPTOP: AN E-MAIL FROM MARK.

SUBJECT: *FCC*. MESSAGE; *PICK A SENATOR*.

Margot scans a list of eight names until she comes upon:

SENATOR GERARD FONTAINE.

Margot highlights the name in BOLD, replying to Mark as she sings the recently deceased Tammi's big hit:

MARGOT
"Party, party, party, party"...

EXT. CIPRIANI WALL STREET - NIGHT

A glamorous evening of limousines and wealthy patrons.

INT. CIPRIANI WALL STREET - NIGHT

Guests are formally dressed. Women in jewels that could fund a small country.

Anderson stands by table 3 with Cecelia and Corena, both looking beautiful. They are talking with NY socialites.

Judith Julien is at table 1 with her wealthy guests.

Ann is simply, but elegantly dressed. Not in rags but not in jewels either. She talks with donors and society folk.

Maggie is running around like a chicken without a head. She stops one of her Assistants.

MAGGIE
I'm going to make the announcement. And tell the bartenders to fill the champagne glasses now.

Maggie heads to the podium and speaks into the microphone.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Good evening. If everyone could find their table, we're ready to begin. Thank you.

Music is played as every one moves like sheep being herded.

ANDERSON'S TABLE: Anderson sits between Cecelia and Corena. SENATOR GERARD FONTAINE is seated across from Anderson.

JUDITH'S TABLE: Judith sits with Maggie on one side of her and Katherine on the other. Judith and Katherine are old friends. Maggie joins them and sits down. Though Maggie and Judith may bicker, they are close confidantes in reality.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
I think there's trouble in Raymond's company?

JUDITH
Really? Why? I'm a stockholder.

MAGGIE
He's at table 31. He's never been further away than 12 or 13...

POV: We see a Gentlemen sitting with guests furthest away from the podium.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
And look at Sissy and Brad. I had their place cards near one another and they sitting on opposite sides.

POV: "Sissy" and "Brad" are indeed sitting on opposite ends.

JUDITH
I thought she stopped seeing that chiropractor.

MAGGIE
She couldn't. He was the reason her back kept going out.

KATHERINE
Gossip makes you both even more attractive. If that's possible.

MAGGIE
It's not gossip, Katherine. It's a responsibility. These are our people, our world. I love them all. I keep their real secrets. I tell what needs to be told to keep things moving. I have no malice. Truly. I'm the witness. I'm necessary.

KATHERINE
(impressed, aghast)
What a piece of work is you.

JUDITH
Did you invite Margot too?

MAGGIE
No, I couldn't. Anderson bought the table when they were separated. She understood. Did you hear Anderson locked her out of the townhouse?

KATHERINE
Maggie, stop it!

MAGGIE
Everyone knows, Katherine.

KATHERINE
Judith didn't.

MAGGIE
Which is why I told her. Why are you not understanding this?

They look at Anderson and Cecelia.

JUDITH
He's a pig. Look at them. Thirty year difference. It's disgusting.

KATHERINE
I recall you had a thing with a man in his thirties?

JUDITH
I didn't marry him. I had my thing, bought him a real estate office and said goodbye. Why anyone would want to be in bed for life with someone who ages you the second the lights turn on is beyond me.

Suddenly a HUSH begins to spread across the room. All heads are turning towards the exit. Judith and Maggie look:

JUDITH (CONT'D)
(upset)
Oh my God.

MAGGIE
(enjoying this)
Ha.

POV: Philip enters with Margot on his arm, for all to see.

Margot is a knockout - dressed to kill, attracting every eye. Margot makes eye contact with Anderson and smiles.

Anderson pales. Cecelia feels immediately uncomfortable. Corena is angry at Philip.

Ann feels badly for Cecelia, knowing how sensitive she is.

Philip and Margot enjoy the silence and shock of their entrance as they reach Judith's table.

PHILIP
Mother. You look beautiful. You all know Margot.

On Maggie and Katherine.

MAGGIE
(loving the drama)
See Katherine. The world keeps moving.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

INT. CIPRIANI WALL STREET - NIGHT

A VOICE ON THE SOUND SYSTEM INTRODUCES THE SPEAKER:

VOICE
Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome Senator Gerard Fontaine.

Applause throughout. Except for Philip and Margot.

SENATOR FONTAINE IS THE A HOST FOR THE EVENT.

SENATOR FONTAINE
Thank you. Thank you for coming and being apart of this wonderful evening, honoring two very extraordinary people...

Fontaine begins to give a speech in front of a screen showing all the philanthropic successes of the Walkers, as he explains the event is to raise money for the Walker Foundation. What the Senator says is not important as it is far OS.

But as images of Ann and *FRANKLIN WALKER - a robust, collegiate looking man in his forties* - in various locations around the world, helping the poor...

We focus on the conversation at Judith's table.

JUDITH
Have you ever met Ann Walker, Margot?

MARGOT
I think a long time ago in the Hamptons. Does she know the Burtons?

MAGGIE
Yes. Charlie Burton and Franklin went to school together.

Philip looks across the room at Ann who listens to the Host. Margot notices Philip looking at Ann.

MARGOT
Are they for real? I'm asking sincerely.

JUDITH
What do you mean?

MARGOT
As a couple? Is it real?

PHILIP
We met at lunch today. I think it is real. At least, she is.

Margot is surprised by Philip's comment.

MAGGIE
They do incredible work. They created self-sustaining water systems for African villages that were literally dying.

MARGOT
How nice of them.

Katherine's whispers to Margot:

KATHERINE
Is there a game plan in place tonight or have we already seen the main event?

Katherine just glares at her. Margot knows what she means.

APPLAUSE. Everyone looks OS.

The Host has introduced Ann who walks up to the podium. As she reaches it, the Host makes her pause.

SENATOR FONTAINE
Before we hear from Ann Walker, we have a surprise for her. Ann flew in just for the event because her husband Franklin was unable to accompany her. If you know these two as I do, whatever is required of them comes before what they require of each other....

Philip and Margot exchange a look.

SENATOR FONTAINE (CONT'D)
But Ann, tonight you can have it all. May I introduce Franklin Walker.

Ann is genuinely surprised as the audience applauds.

Franklin Walker enters from the stage wearing travelling clothes, khaki pants, sticking out amidst the formally dressed guests.

Ann teary-eyed, embraces him as they kiss. The audience stands as they applaud.

Margot whispers to Philip, referring to Ann and Franklin;

MARGOT
True love in Khakis. Sounds like a Lou Reed song.

Philip smiles slyly. Margot then looks across at table 3, glaring at Anderson, who is watching her. She smiles. He turns to the podium.

FRANKLIN
I just couldn't let her face all of you alone. Forgive my clothes. I literally just got off the plane. I want thank you all for coming, for supporting the Walker Foundation...

We focus on Philip and Margot, listening but their minds planning.

FADE TO:

SAME LOCATION: LATER IN THE EVENING.

The ceremony and dinner are over. People are making their way out. Philip strides right up to Anderson, Cecelia and Corena:

PHILIP
Cecelia, you look so beautiful.

CECELIA
Hi. Anderson, do you know Philip?

PHILIP
We've met once or twice over the years. I'm so sorry there was a mix up at the front desk today.

ANDERSON
(fuming but cool)
It was nothing.

PHILIP
I'm so embarrassed. I'd love to offer you a free membership.

ANDERSON
No, thank you. I'm already a member of the Brook Club.

PHILIP
The Brook, yes. It's nice to belong somewhere, isn't it? Good for you.

Anderson feels patronized. Philip focuses on Cecelia:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
How did the photo shoot go?

CECELIA
I think OK. I never know.

PHILIP
I'd love to see the prints.

CECELIA
I'm going on Thursday. You want to come with me? Mom can't make it.

CORENA
Cecelia, I don't think--

PHILIP
I'd love to. Maybe we can have lunch too.

CECELIA
Great.

Philip kisses Cecelia's cheek as Anderson and Corena stand by, helpless to stop his charms. Cecelia is unaware.

Philip moves on to Ann Walker, who is surrounded by well wishers. He waits his turn.

As Ann speaks to the people around her, she can't see Philip waiting for a moment - his eyes preying on her.

On the other side of the room, Margot crosses paths with Senator Fontaine.

MARGOT
Senator Fontaine.

SENATOR FONTAINE
Hello.

MARGOT
Margot Cole. I believe my lawyer Mark Tubbs called you.

SENATOR FONTAINE
Ah, yes. Something about the FCC.

MARGOT
Yes. We have many people in common. I know you and Anderson are old friends.

SENATOR FONTAINE
Yes, I'm so sorry about everything.

MARGOT
Oh, it's all right. A new chapter in all our lives. I believe you also know my oldest friend. Philip Julien. He told me you were a guest at the Noble recently.

Senator Fontaine's expression darkens.

SENATOR FONTAINE
Oh. Yes. Not very long. I was in town just for the day.

MARGOT
I'm at the Noble now. In the penthouse apartment.

The Senator tries to hide his fear of exposure. He knows Margot knows his "TAMMI" story.

MARGOT (CONT'D)
I'd love to get together. I need some help and I wonder if you could point me in the right direction. And please don't tell Anderson. Things are complicated enough.

The Senator nods. He is at her mercy. Margot smiles.

BACK TO PHILIP AND ANN: Philip finally makes it to Ann's side.

ANN
Mister Julien.

PHILIP
Philip, please.

ANN
(jokes)
I dressed down just for you. Did you notice?

Philip laughs, then whispers in her ear, his lips almost touching her:

PHILIP
You're still a knockout.

Ann is surprised by the intimacy of his remark. And without missing a beat, Philip simply walks away, never turning back. Ann is slightly flustered. She eyes him walking away.

AT JUDITH'S TABLE: Philip and Margot meet back at table 1. They are the only two people seated at the table, watching the guests saying goodbye to each other.

They watch Anderson leave with Cecelia and Corena.

MARGOT
So, has it begun?

PHILIP
Cecelia?
(Margot nods)
It's going to be too easy. It's almost not worth the trouble.

MARGOT
It has to be public knowledge.

PHILIP
Yes. Whatever you want.

Philip keeps looking at Ann. He seems distracted, almost disinterested in their bet. Margot gets his attention:

MARGOT
But if it's too easy, then the bet isn't really fair, is it?

Philip turns to Margot. He loves when she makes things more interesting.

PHILIP
What are you thinking?

MARGOT
Well, whatever it is you're going to ask of me, should be equal to the challenge you accept. I should be worth more than an easy virgin, don't you think?

PHILIP
How much more?

Beat. Margot looks to Ann and Franklin, arm in arm, exiting:

MARGOT
Ann Walker.

PHILIP
Why?

MARGOT
I have a morbid fascination with true love. You've had your eye on her all night.

PHILIP
My own morbid fascination.

MARGOT
Is the real thing a real thing?

PHILIP
A question asked for centuries.

Beat. Philip looks back to Ann and Franklin in the midst of friends and patrons. A perfect couple. Ann seems to hang on her husband's every word to the audience. Philip smiles:

PHILIP (CONT'D)
Yes. I accept. Ann Walker, it is.

MARGOT
Will true love survive, I wonder?

PHILIP
My guess is no.

Philip turns to Margot. She grabs Philip's face and kisses him hard. Philip is genuinely surprised by Margot's force.

MARGOT
Don't ever forget what you're really playing for, Philip.

Margot has a power to overwhelm Philip when she chooses. Philip and Margot are eye to eye. Their attraction, their "love", their bond - is dangerous. And they love it.

THE END