

MEN IN TREES

“Pilot”

written by

Jenny Bicks

**Warner Bros. Television
Treeline Films**

**Writer’s First Draft
Second Revision
January 12, 2006**

FADE IN:

INT. A DARK BEDROOM - DAY

Light peeks around pulled shades. On top of the expensive sheets, a silhouetted COUPLE makes love.

MARIN (V.O.)
(slight mic reverb)
Finding a good man is about as easy
as finding a cab...in a
snowstorm...on New Years Eve.

The WOMAN'S EYES go to the digital clock. The MAN notices...

MAN
Hey--

She looks back at him, all his.

WOMAN
Hey--

And she kisses him hard...

MARIN (V.O.)
That's what my mother used to say.
You know what I say?

MARIN FRIST, 33, confident, smart, maybe too optimistic for her own good, rolls off her fiance GRAHAM and smiles.

MARIN (V.O.)
Bull crap.

LAUGHTER echoes from a group of unseen women. Marin gets up.

MARIN
Sorry. Late.

GRAHAM
You just got here--

MARIN
That clock is slow.

Graham sits up and smiles.

GRAHAM
Thanks for lunch, you slut.

Half-way to the bathroom, Marin turns and poses sexily.

MARIN
You kiss your fiancee with that
mouth?

GRAHAM

Oh and just wait til we're married.

Marin smiles and shuts the door. SMASH CUT:

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET - EARLY EVENING

Marin walks with purpose, checking out the women around her.

MARIN (V.O.)

Look, I get it. Some days it feels like full-on planet of the females out there.

Camera picks up WOMEN of all types, walking, talking on cel phones, sitting at cafes. They all check each other out.

MARIN (V.O.)

A literal no-mans land...

Even the STORE MANNEQUINS are women...

MARIN (V.O.)

There are like a grillion women for every man, and you're smart--you've done the math--that one man is never going to be your man...

Marin pauses in front of a Barnes and Noble and we see a large display of books around an 8x10 of Marin. CLOSE ON the books, titled: "I'm happy and single--and so are you! (After reading this book)" and "I'm dating--and so can you!"

MARIN (V.O.)

You know what we call that, ladies?

Marin turns and keeps walking...

INT. 92ND STREET Y AUDITORIUM - EVENING

CLOSE on the rapt faces of rows and rows of SINGLE 20, 30 and 40-something women who chant in unison:

WOMEN

Stinkin' thinkin'!

ANGLE ON: STAGE. Marin lectures to the group. She is dynamic, friendly, real. Your best friend.

MARIN

Yep. I got news for you--there are plenty of guys out there. They're not the problem, ladies--we are.

Looks of concern from the audience.

MARIN

How many of you think that finding
"the one" is gonna make you happy?

Many tentative hands go up.

MARIN

Wow. When did we decide someone
else was in charge of our
happiness? We don't even trust
someone else to order our soy
lattes!

Laughter from the audience. Standing in the back, we pick up
JANE, 28, Marin's hard-driving editor. She smiles.

INT. A CHURCH HALL - NIGHT

Now the women look more ethnic. Marin is mid-lecture...

MARIN

Your happiness is your own
responsibility. You have to learn
to drive before you can let some
guy take your wheel. We want men.
We don't need men. Where are we
driving to, ladies?

The ladies all chant in unison:

WOMEN

Happiness!

MARIN

And remember--you wouldn't drive
with a blindfold on, so stop dating
with one. You gotta watch for the
signs!

INT. LEARNING ANNEX - NIGHT

Different women, exact same issues...Jane stands in back
again. Marin holds up a "**stop**" **sign**.

MARIN

Is he married? A cheater? Watches
gay porn "just for variety"?
They're not changing, ladies--keep
moving!

(now a "**detour**" **sign**)

Detours! The 24-year-old kid who
sells sandwiches in your office...
the very hot ex-boyfriend who's
never gonna commit...lose 'em!

(MORE)

MARIN (cont'd)
 Especially the ex--you can't drive
 forward if you're looking in the
 rear view mirror! You're not going
 to be able to...

She holds up a **"Merge" sign...**

MARIN
 If he's...

She holds up a **"Slippery When Wet" sign.** A hand goes up.

MARIN
 Yep. In the back--

INT. 92ND STREET Y - AGAIN

A 40-SOMETHING WOMAN rises from the back.

40-SOMETHING WOMAN
 Yeah, you say there are all these
 good guys out there, but I've met
 like two guys in the last year and
 they're schmucks. Men suck.

MARIN
 Come on. Not all of them--

20-SOMETHING GIRL
 Yeah! Marin found a good one!

The crowd goes wild as Marin soaks it in.

INT. 92ND STREET Y - LATER

Marin signs books as Jane watches. A FAN, late 20s, steps up
 to the table. Marin smiles, not surprised to see her.

MARIN
 Hey, Annie.

ANNIE
 Hi.

MARIN
 So I'll make it out to--

ANNIE
 Me.

MARIN
 Right.
 (then)
 Annie, just curious--how many
 copies of my books do you own now?

ANNIE
I like to keep some at work.

MARIN
Don't you want to stalk someone a
little groovier--like Bruce
Springsteen or something?

ANNIE
You make me feel better.

Marin is touched.

MARIN
(signing)
"To Annie--stop stalking, start
dating. Have Hope, Marin."

ANNIE
When is your next book coming out?

Jane raises her eyebrows to Marin. She'd like to know, too.

MARIN
Soon--

EXT. UPTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Jane and Marin walk. Jane has her blue tooth in her ear.

JANE
So, hypothetically, how "soon" is
"Soon"?

MARIN
Are you asking as my editor or as
my friend?

JANE
Which one is gonna get me a rough
draft faster?

MARIN
Do you have any idea how much work
it is to plan a wedding?

JANE
No, I've been too busy planning
other people's meteoric careers.

MARIN
Excuse!

JANE
Bite me!

Marin stops and looks at Jane in disbelief. Jane points to her blue tooth ear piece and mouths:

JANE

On a call.

Marin shakes her head. Unbelievable.

JANE

(on call)

With a capital B. And you can tell Stephen King's lawyers that verbatim.

(then, to Marin)

Sorry.

MARIN

I'm beginning to think that under your tough exterior is just...a tough interior.

JANE

It's a man's world, my friend. And I'm with the bitter women--men are schmucks, so we can't let 'em win.

MARIN

Jane, I get that the break-up with Silas was rough on you--

JANE

You know the rules. No coaching the editor!

MARIN

When I was an editor I still made time to go on dates.

JANE

And come up with an idea that made you America's Sweetheart. Hard act to follow.

MARIN

I just want you to be happy.

JANE

Then finish the third book.

MARIN

Bite me.

Jane laughs as they walk down the block and into the crowd.

INT. SPINNING STUDIO - MORNING

Marin and her friend LIZA, 33, sexy, vibrant divorcee with too much alimony money and time on her hands, sit on bikes in the back of a spin class. While others in the class are spinning away, these two are on their own slow "bike ride".

MARIN
I can't believe I traded cigarettes
for this.

LIZA
If you can't smoke, at least you
can have a smokin' ass.

MARIN
Graham hates smoking. What are you
gonna do?

LIZA
Marry someone else?

Marin shoots her a look.

LIZA
Spit balling.

A SPINNER next to them SHUSHHES them loudly.

LIZA
Oh shush yourself.

INT. GROOVY SOHO BRIDAL STORE - AFTERNOON

Marin stands in her bridal gown staring at herself in the mirror. A SHOPGIRL fluffs out her skirt. Marin smiles, letting herself get excited...

MARIN
(to a dressing room)
Come on. Lemme see.

Liza emerges in A WHITE BRIDAL DRESS AS WELL. Amanda reacts.

MARIN
Nice. Nothing says "maid of honor"
like a wedding dress.

LIZA
I just wanted to try one on again.
I still want to give this getting-
married thing another whirl.

MARIN
Even after two weddings and three
divorces?

LIZA
 (off shop girl's look)
 One was a do-over.
 (off her look again)
 He was very wealthy. Both times.
 (then)
 What is your Mom gonna wear?

MARIN
 A pained expression when she sees
 my Dad.

LIZA
 I think it's nice you invited them
 both.

MARIN
 Yeah. Let them see that someone in
 our family can actually get this
 coupling thing right.

LIZA
 I'm proud of you.

MARIN
 Y'know what? I'm proud of me, too.
 Graham's good. He's really good.

The DESIGNER, RUMI, an exotic Indian woman, approaches.

RUMI
 Stunning. I'd like you to have the
 dress. Gratis.

MARIN
 Oh no. No, no--

RUMI
 Marin, I'm a businesswoman. New
 York's favorite single is getting
 married--your photo will be all
 over the Times...and my dress will
 be on every dining room table in
 the city.

MARIN
 Well alright, thank you.

RUMI
 Good. And you'll come in next week
 for your last try-on?

MARIN
 Oh I can't. I'm going on the road.

RUMI
We'll get your itinerary from Jane
and send it to you. Not a problem.

LIZA
(re: her dress)
Maybe we could have this one as
well? I'm donating dresses for
hurricane relief.

MARIN
To be auctioned?

LIZA
Silly, to be worn. Those people
need to feel pretty too.

RUMI
No.

LIZA
Alrighty, then.

INT. A BOOK PARTY - NIGHT

Literati mingle. On every table are paperback copies of
Marin's book, "I'm dating--and so can you". Marin is
accepting well-wishes.

Jane "clinks" on a glass with a spoon. The room silences.
Graham puts his arm around Marin.

JANE
Welcome. As you know, we are here
to celebrate the paperback release
of relationship-coach Marin Frist's
blockbuster second book, "I'm
dating, and so can you". For those
who've been under a rock, the
hardback edition was on the New
York Times best seller list for
over a year!

Applause from the crowd.

JANE
And tonight I am thrilled to
announce that Marin has received a
huge advance--no, I am not
divulging figures, you cretins!--
(crowd laugh)
For her third book--"I'm getting
married--and so can you!"

"Hear, hears" from the crowd.

JANE

According to the Observer, Marin is responsible for over twelve hundred marriages...and now we can count her and Graham in there as well!

Glasses raised to Marin and Graham.

JANE

Enjoy the free booze and take a book!

The crowd goes back to talking. KIKI IRVING, 38, urbane, New Yorker columnist, approaches Graham and Marin.

KIKI

Congratulations!

MARIN

It didn't hurt that a New Yorker columnist gave me a great review.

KIKI

You can thank me by finding me a someone like Graham, here.

GRAHAM

Sadly, I broke the mold.

Marin laughs.

MARIN

Your humility is very sexy.

KIKI

This being-single thing is getting very tired. Most of the time I can forget about it, but then it's the end of a book party, and you have to hail a cab alone--

MARIN

Graham, go hail her a cab.

KIKI

You're a life-saver.

Kiki smiles a thank-you to Marin as Graham ushers her through the party and out the door. A waiter pours more champagne into Marin's empty glass as Jane grabs it.

JANE

You have a seven a.m. to Alaska tomorrow, so ix-nay on the third drink-ay.

MARIN

Only you would get me a speaking engagement in Alaska.

JANE

Oh no honey, they requested you. I had nothing to do with it. But the lecture the next day in Seattle? All me. Oh and fingers crossed-- Oprah's people called.

MARIN

Seriously? Oprah would be huge.
(then)
Three o'clock. Daily News reporter. Eyeing you.

JANE

Would you stop if I told you I was a lesbian?

MARIN

Lesbians deserve love, too.

JANE

I think we just found the title of your fourth book.

INT. GRAHAM AND MARIN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Graham and Marin lie in bed. Graham is drifting off as Marin stares at the ceiling.

MARIN

Stavros Kolidarkos.

GRAHAM

Who?

MARIN

My old neighbor. For Kiki. That could work--

GRAHAM

Most people count sheep. You count singles.

MARIN

It calms me down.

(then)

Jim Friedman.

He rolls over and puts his arm over her.

GRAHAM

Go to sleep. You have to wake up in five hours.

Marin sighs and rolls over. Graham whispers...

GRAHAM

You go away too much.

MARIN

I know.

OVER BLACK an ALARM CLOCK BLEEPS. A LIGHT goes on, revealing Marin's bed table and the time: 6:15.

INT. GRAHAM AND MARIN'S BEDROOM - MORNING - CONTINUOUS

Marin takes in the time, leaps out of bed.

MARIN

Late!

Graham, half asleep, mutters:

GRAHAM

Light...

Marin turns the light out and turns the bathroom light on. In the dim light, she grabs a laptop off the dresser and shoves it into her bag as she throws her shoes on.

INT. PLANE - MORNING

Marin opens the in-flight magazine to the route map and finds New York. Unfolding the page once..twice...she finally finds Alaska. No small distance.

MARIN

Wow.

She closes the magazine, reaches into her bag and pulls out her laptop, opens it and turns it on.

ON COMPUTER SCREEN--the registration screen comes up:

Registered to Graham L. McCarthy.

MARIN

I'm an idiot.

The OLD LADY sitting next to her looks over, concerned.

MARIN

I took my fiance's computer by mistake. I overslept. Nevermind.

Icons appear on the screen. One is labelled "my girl". Marin smiles and clicks on it. A PHOTO of her and Graham fills the screen. She turns the screen to show her seat-mate.

MARIN
That's him. Graham. And me.

It's a SLIDE SHOW. Another one of her alone fades up.

MARIN
(proudly)
Me again...

And then...a PHOTO OF KIKI.

MARIN
(confused)
Kiki Irving...

AND THEN...A PHOTO OF KIKI AND Graham KISSING...Graham' HAND HOLDS AN UNSEEN CAMERA.

OLD LADY
Oh, Lordy.

Marin gasps and slams the computer shut. The stewardess walks by. The old lady stops her.

OLD LADY
She'll have a whiskey. Straight up.

END OF ACT ONE

INT. A SMALL TURBO PROP PLANE - DAY

A shell-shocked Marin now sits on a ten-seater plane, gripping the lap top as the plane bounces up and down.

PILOT (O.S.)
Please keep your seat belts
fastened. We're heading into some
pretty heavy turbulence--

Off Marin. Truer words were never spoken.

INT. AIRPORT LOUNGE - DAY

Marin sits on a plastic chair in the tiny Alaskan airport. Next to her sits her luggage emblazoned with the ironic sentiment: "ASK ME HOW I GOT HAPPY!" She is leaving a message for Graham on her cel phone.

MARIN
Hi. Okay, I have your computer and
some pictures of you and Kiki and
I'm gonna go ahead and assume
there's a really good explanation
except what kind of good
explanation could there be for you
kissing Kiki Irving except you felt
sorry for her kinda like when you
hail her cabs? Except kissing and
cabs, in my book? Totally
different.
(hearing herself)
This is why I tell people not to do
this over the phone. Okay. So we
should talk. Yeah.

At a loss for how to end this, she clicks off to find a 20-something guy with long hair loping towards her, excited as a puppy dog. This is PATRICK.

PATRICK
Hey ho!

Marin looks confused. Patrick back-tracks.

PATRICK
I mean, not like you're a "ho", I
meant like...
(trying again)
"Hey ho"!

MARIN
Who are you?

PATRICK

Oh man. So psyched I forgot to
introduce myself--Patrick Bachelor--
don't hold the name against me--
I've got both your books--gettin'
my learner's permit to love!

(taking her in)

Marin Frist. Huge!

MARIN

Patrick, you got a cigarette?

PATRICK

(proudly, realizing it's a
test)

No, I do not!

(then)

Chapter 3, first book. Who's gonna
love your body if you don't?

Marin sighs. He's right and she's screwed.

PATRICK

Thought you had me, huh?!

EXT. ALASKAN WATERWAY - DAY

Patrick at the outboard-motor end of a small water taxi.
Marin sits uncomfortable and cold on a bench in the skiff as
Patrick navigates it into the town dock. We notice, she does
not, this place is Alaskan edge-of-the-world beautiful.

PATRICK

I'm kinda a Patrick-of-all-trades--
water taxi driver, inn keeper,
lover of women--

(then, still in awe)

Marin Frist. This is huge. Huger
then when Tom Selleck was up here
shooting that Carnival Cruise Lines
commercial. And that was pretty
darn huge.

MARIN

(too herself)

Idiot.

PATRICK

Yeah I thought so at first, too.
But you should hear the dude
karaoke.

EXT. MAIN STREET - ELMO, ALASKA - DAY

Over a Jeep as it drives past the four stores that comprise
Main street. Patrick honks the horn, leans out the window.

PATRICK
I got Marin Frist in here! Marin
Frist!

MARIN (O.C.)
Where am I?

EXT. THE ELMO INN - DAY

The Jeep pulls up in front of a small, clapboard Inn. Patrick gets out, opens Marin's door for her.

PATRICK
"Chivalry isn't a dirty word."
Chapter Five.

Marin slides out of the seat and THWOP--her Prada heels slide into six inches of mud. Marin lifts one foot out of the mud and stares at it.

PATRICK
Looks like someone forgot their
mukluks.

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - DAY

Patrick puts her bags down as Marin takes in the odd Victorian furnishings of a seen-better-days B and B.

PATRICK
(proudly)
The Presidential Suite.
(off her look)
Check it out--Lincoln.

He points to a bad lithograph on the wall of Abe Lincoln.

PATRICK
I was gonna give you the "Hang in
There, Kitty" suite, but it was
booked.
(then)
You need anything, I'll be
downstairs. Catch some zzzs--you
got a big night.

He exits, leaving Marin alone. Suddenly things are very quiet. Too quiet. Marin sinks down onto the bed. Digs into her purse and finds her cel phone. She opens it up to a screen saver photo of Graham and stares at it. Lost.

She quickly hits her "phone book" button and scrolls to "Liza". Hits "send". Busy signal--no reception. She paces across the room, still no bars...holds the phone up, down...

MARIN

Come on...come on...yes...

She finds a "hot spot" low down by the bathroom door. She crouches down awkwardly by the door. Hit's "send". Her head tipped all the way over to keep the signal.

LIZA'S VOICE MAIL

Hi, this is Liza's voice mail. I'm either out or home sleeping it off. Leave a message, Sweets!

MARIN

Liza, you gotta call me. Graham... this is really bad...call me.

Right by her head we see an EYEBALL looking through the bathroom keyhole...and she does too...she leaps up.

MARIN

Aaahhhhh!

The bathroom door opens to reveal SARA, a young Parker Posey type in a tight, short skirt fixing her lip gloss. Behind her, ajar, is the door to HER bedroom.

SARA

You may want to keep your side of the bathroom locked.

MARIN

My side--?

A BEARDED MAN peeks into the bathroom from Sara's room.

BEARDED MAN

Sara, I only got an hour before my shift--

Sara shrugs to Marin, who quickly slams the door and locks it with the deadbolt.

Marin opens drawers and closet, looking intently for something. She finds "Field and Stream", a Bible, 2 old hangers.

INT. "LOBBY" ELMO INN - LATER

Patrick stands behind the desk.

PATRICK

Oh yeah, we don't have mini-bars. But we got a full-size one down on Front street.

Marin looks a bit worse for wear.

MARIN

There's a woman dressed kinda like
a hooker in my bathroom.

PATRICK

At least she was dressed. When
Selleck met her she was naked as a
husky in shedding season.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON Marin's muddied Prada pumps. Walking, defeated.

EXT. MAIN STREET - ELMO, ALASKA - LATE AFTERNOON

Marin pulls her ruffled Yves Saint Laurent coat tightly
around her and rounds a corner to find...

MEN. HER POV: Everywhere she looks are MEN. This should
look like a mirror to our first vision of Manhattan women.
MEN walking, MEN talking, MALE mannequins in the store
windows...She can't avoid them. They stare, she quickly looks
away. She passes a guy operating a WOOD CHIPPER next to a
sign reading "**Men In Trees**"...we PAN UP to find three men in
the pine trees hacking at branches...

INT. POTLATCH BAR - NIGHT

A small-town bar full of men in flannel and denim. Marin
enters. Everyone turns to look at her. She quickly heads to
the bar.

MARIN

Vodka Negroni please.

The bartender, BEN, 40, kind, quiet--turns to her.

BEN

Refresh my memory.

MARIN

Do you have Campari?

BEN

Nope.

MARIN

Triple Sec?

BEN

Out.

MARIN

I'll take the vodka.

BEN
Coming up.

Marin sits down at the bar as he pours the drink. She drinks it down, wincing. Holds up empty shot glass...

MARIN
Make it a double.

A DRUNK GUY next to her(40s) stares.

GUY
I know you.

MARIN
(used to it)
Yeah, I'm Marin Frist.

GUY
You ever sell pelts out at a stand
on route 11?

MARIN
No...

GUY
Yeah. Don't know you.

Marin, chastened, shoots her double vodka. THERESA, 30, sexy but tough bar cook hits the guy on the back of the head.

THERESA
Jerome, leave her alone.

MARIN
He's not bothering me.

THERESA
He will if you let him.

She drops a basket of fries in front of Ben.

THERESA
Thought you'd be hungry.

Ben smiles at her--a smile that says he really likes her. Theresa gives him a wink. Marin notices.

MARIN
(to Ben)
That's nice. That's nice that
people still like each other. And
don't have affairs on each other
four weeks before their wedding.

Ben, understanding, pours her another shot. She nods a "thank you" and downs it. This stuff is starting to work on her. A guy--a very sexy Sam Shepherd-type guy--JACK, nudges into the bar next to her. She notices him. How could she not?

JACK

Sorry.

MARIN

Well that's original.

JACK

What?

MARIN

The yee-oldy pick-up line. Could use a little sprucing up, if you know what I mean.

(imitating him)

"Sorry".

Marin cracks up. The vodka is making her loose and cocky.

JACK

(smiling)

I'm not trying to pick you up.

MARIN

Uh, trust me, you are. I know men. I'm a professional.

JACK

You work with Sara?

MARIN

No! I'm a relationship coach.

JACK

Coach? Like you have a ball team?

MARIN

No, I do not have a ball team.

JACK

Well you got balls.

MARIN

Oh you're one of those.

JACK

One of what's?

MARIN

A lookie-loo. You put yourself on cruise control and flirt with women but never stop and get out of the car.

JACK

Name's Jack and I'm not trying to pick you up. I'm trying to get a napkin.

He reaches past her for a napkin. Marin is totally mortified.

JACK

Need one, Coach?

MARIN

No, I don't. And if I did need one I could get it for myself. I don't need a man to get me a napkin. In fact, I don't need a man, period.

Jack takes her in, a bit intrigued, even more amused.

JACK

Nice meeting you too.

Marin slams her glass back down.

MARIN

One more for the road.

EXT. ELMO GRANGE HALL - NIGHT

Establishing. Parked cars fill the parking lot. It's a big night at the Grange Hall.

INT. GRANGE HALL BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Patrick stands with a now-plastered Marin who is peering out of the curtains. HER POV: men fill the folding chairs.

PATRICK

Okay, show time.

MARIN

Where are the women?

PATRICK

We were hoping you could help us with that.

Marin looks at him, confused.

PATRICK
 And then tell us what to do once we
 find 'em!
 (pushing her out)
 Break an antler!

INT. GRANGE HALL STAGE - NIGHT

Marin, very drunk, is trying her best to stay on-script.

MARIN
 Hi. Okay. Okay. Okay, so how many
 of you guys think finding "the one"
 is gonna make you happy?

All the men raise their hands.

MARIN
 When did we decide someone else was
 in charge of our happiness? We
 won't even let someone else order
 our soy lattes!

Silence from the crowd. Marin is perplexed.

MARIN
 (trying again)
 Soy lattes!

Patrick stands up from his seat.

PATRICK
 It's a coffee drink!

The men get it now.

MARIN
 The point is, don't cheat!

The men nod--good advice.

MARIN
 Oh and you gotta read the signs.
 Which I didn't. Even though it's my
 job.
 (pointing at a guy)
 Yes, you!

GUY
 (confused)
 I don't have a question.

MARIN
 Good. Cuz I do! Let's say you're a
 guy.

GUY

Okay--

Jack has entered the back of the auditorium.

MARIN

Okay. And you get engaged to this girl after dating for a year, during which time she's laughed at all your jokes, some of which? Not so funny...she's agreed that your boss was wrong when really he was right--twice--she's pretty successful, she's kind, she's not half bad in the sack--so, why would you not want to marry her?

GUY

Because she sounds kinda scary?

From her PURSE on the side of the stage we HEAR the muffled sound of "Native New Yorker" played on a cel phone ring. Marin lurches to her bag and pulls out her phone.

ON CEL SCREEN as it FLASHES: GRAHAM...GRAHAM...

Marin tries to answer it--

MARIN

Hello?

No reception...she moves to the other side of the stage, now oblivious to the confused audience...

MARIN

Graham? Hold on, no bars--

She races to the another spot and then teeters to one side.

MARIN

Are we sinking?

She lurches off stage and we hear the unmistakable sound of a woman vomiting her guts out. Ben turns to Patrick.

BEN

She's no Selleck.

END OF ACT TWO

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - MORNING

TAP.TAP TAP. TAP. Marin's eyes blink open. At the window, a bird incessantly taps on the glass. Marin sits up, grabs her head as she feels the hangover coming on. TAP. TAP TAP.

MARIN
(to bird)
Go away. Shoo.

More tapping. She looks at her watch. 11:46.

MARIN
Great.

She goes over to the window and stares down the bird. It stares back. Then flies off.

She lets the reality of yesterday settle back in. She picks up her cel phone, taking her odd position by the bathroom again and dials.

GRAHAM (O.S.)
Hey.

INT. GRAHAM AND MARIN'S LIVINGROOM - CROSSCUT - MARIN'S ROOM

Graham, in running clothes, talks on his cel.

MARIN
I missed my flight.
(deep breath)
Are you having an affair with Kiki Irving?

Graham slides onto the couch, silent.

MARIN
Just say it. I saw the pictures.
Nice slide show. Very artistic.

GRAHAM
(almost whispering)
Yes.

MARIN
Yes, artistic or yes, affair?

GRAHAM
We shouldn't do this on the phone--

MARIN
You're right. How bout we wait 'til, say--the Best Man's speech??

GRAHAM
When we met I told you I wasn't the
"marrying guy"--

MARIN
Oh see, you threw me with the
proposal part.

GRAHAM
I wanted to propose. But then we
went into hyper-speed. It was all
going too fast. You, me, the
wedding. I needed to get off--

MARIN
With Kiki Irving.

GRAHAM
(heartfelt)
Don't you ever just need to
breathe?

MARIN
No. I thought I'd do that after we
were married. Which--going out on
a limb here--isn't gonna be
happening.

Marin slides down further against the wall. The enormity of
how bad this is settles in.

MARIN
Is she "it" for you?

GRAHAM
I don't know. I thought she was
just going to be a speed bump...

MARIN
You're using my words to break up
with me?!

Kiki ENTERS THE APARTMENT, also in running clothes.

KIKI
You ready to go?

Graham gestures to her to shut up...She didn't see he was on
the phone...but Marin heard her...

MARIN
She's there. In my living room.
There.

GRAHAM
Marin--

KIKI
(realizing)
Oh my God.

Marin slumps down further and loses her cel phone signal. The phone goes dead. She stares into space, stunned.

Marin goes to the window and opens it for air. She looks down on the table where his laptop lies. She picks it up, and in one decisive move, throws the laptop out the window. She stares out into space, letting the cold wind blow over her.

INT. ELMO INN "LOBBY" - MORNING

Marin faces Patrick who is behind the desk.

MARIN
I need a spinning class.

PATRICK
Spinning what?

MARIN
Spinning bike. A spinning bike class. Y'know, you sit on stationary bikes and bike to music.

PATRICK
But you don't go anywhere.

MARIN
Right.

PATRICK
Yeah, don't have 'em. Why would you wanna go for a bike ride and not go anywhere? What's the point? That's like riding a legless horse...or a pogo stick with no stick or...

MARIN
I get it!

PATRICK
Wowza.

MARIN
I'm sorry. And I'm sorry about last night. But just so you know--I'm not a matchmaker. I just give my opinion. Which, right now, is worthless.

PATRICK
I think I got something for you.

EXT. ELMO INN - MORNING

Patrick wheels an old three-speed bike towards Marin.

PATRICK
The front brakes don't work. And
you'll need this--

He pulls a canister out of his holster.

PATRICK
Bear spray.

Marin reacts, then sprays it into the air and walks through it like perfume.

PATRICK
Actually, you spray it on the bear.
But that'll work.

EXT ELMO STREET - DAY

Marin pedals tentatively down the street. A whole new feeling to be going somewhere. And then she almost CRASHES into three guys walking in the street.

She peddles faster, almost losing her balance as she flees.

EXT. LOGGING ROAD - DAY

Marin pedals up the side of a glaciated mountain. Pumping hard, trying to exorcize her demons. A rogue tear comes down her face and she swipes it away. We HEAR the faint sounds of her cel phone ring. She stops and pulls her phone out of her jacket.

MARIN
Hello?

INT. PLASTIC SURGEON'S OFFICE - SAME - CROSS-CUT

Liza is getting botox shots from a young INDIAN DOCTOR.

LIZA
Are you alright? I heard about
everything.

MARIN
What did you hear?

LIZA
I'm with Doctor Jay. Suzanne
D'Angelo was in before me and Kiki
told her and Suzanne told him.

DR. JAY shakes his head in pity.

LIZA

Dr. Jay says he's sorry.

He points to under his eyes.

LIZA

And maybe you should come in for that eye lift.

MARIN

How could I not have seen this? Seriously, Graham started hailing cabs for her back at your fourth of July party--

LIZA

I think it was Christmas.
(then)
Honey, are you okay?

MARIN

No. I'm angry and confused. And cold.

LIZA

I'm feeling all those things for you. I just can't move my forehead.

MARIN

I'm supposed to be the savior of the sad, single girl...and now--now I am one!

LIZA

You are not sad.

Marin looks up for the first time and takes in the majesty of the mountains around her.

MARIN

(lost in the beauty)

Wow.

(back to it)

And you know the worst part? This town is full of men! They're all over like a bad rash. I can't take it. They're even in the trees!

LIZA

Take advantage! You're in lumberjack heaven!

MARIN

I'm done with men. I'm getting out of here. I'm going to Hawaii and just sit on a beach.

(MORE)

MARIN (cont'd)
Hawaii, which is where I wanted to
go on our honeymoon. Not Turkey.

LIZA
Want me to meet you?

MARIN
Nah, thanks though.

LIZA
Okay but you call me if you change
your mind, okay?
(beat)
And he's an arrogant loser.

MARIN
You always know just what to say.

LIZA
Love you.

Liza closes her phone. Marin takes in the scenery again.

MARIN
Wow.

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - LATER

Marin exits the bathroom post-shower, in a towel. She opens her roller bag on the bed to start packing. She opens the closet door...HER POV: a HUGE RACCOON sits on her shoes. It SHRIEKS at her. She SHRIEKS BACK a la E.T. She slams the door, practically hyperventilating.

MARIN
(through the shared
bathroom)
Sara!
(beat, nothing)
Oh so now you're out.

She leans out the door.

MARIN
Patrick?! Hey! Anybody?!

From inside the closet, the raccoon SHRIEKS again. Marin jumps. She picks up the rotary dial phone...

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - LATER

She sits on the bed, still in her towel. There's a knock at her door. She opens it and comes face to face with JACK.

JACK
Hey, Coach. Hear you got a 911.

Marin pulls the towel around her.

MARIN
So what, you're a cop?

JACK
Fish and game biologist. Sheriff
called me. That what they're
wearing in New York these days?

MARIN
All my clothes are in there with
the--
(beat)
What is it?

Jack opens the door a crack.

JACK
Very big, possibly rabid raccoon.
(then)
You're gonna want to step outside
for this.

MARIN
I'm not leaving that animal alone
with my Chanel ballet flats.

JACK
(putting on work gloves)
Could get dangerous.

MARIN
I'm fine.

JACK
(starting to exit)
They go for the neck.

MARIN
Fine. Whatever. Get all macho.

EXT. ELMO INN HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Marin steps into the hallway and shuts the door. Almost immediately we HEAR an insane amount of BANGING and THUDDING and YELPING. Marin recoils against the wall, afraid.

And then, silence. The door opens. Jack holds the raccoon in a tight grip. As he walks past her he hands her a mangled CHANEL BALLETT FLAT...

JACK
The deceased.

And a half-destroyed POWER BAR.

JACK
 You can't leave food out. Or
 whatever this is.

He walks off.

MARIN
 (re:power bar, defensive)
 These are very tasty!

INT. THE POTLATCH - LATER

Marin stands at the bar negotiating with BUZZ, 50s, Ed Harris type, who drinks a beer.

BUZZ
 I only do one round trip flight
 tomorrow. To Sitka.

MARIN
 Fine. I'll go to Sitka.

BEN
 You don't want to go to Sitka.
 Wrong direction. Anchorage gets you
 to Hawaii.

Marin looks to Buzz.

MARIN
 Six hundred.

BUZZ
 I don't know.

MARIN
 Buzz, I'm desperate and apparently
 you're the only pilot who can fly
 me tomorrow. So what's it gonna
 take?

BUZZ
 Buy me another beer and I'll think
 on it.

MARIN
 Do you see the irony of my getting
 a pilot drunk?

BUZZ
 One person's irony is another
 person's common sense.

MARIN
 Ben, another beer for my alcoholic
 friend.

Ben sets up another beer as a frustrated Marin crosses the bar looking for a cigarette machine...she peeks through the pass-through window into the KITCHEN where Theresa is cooking.

MARIN
(to Theresa)
Do you have cigarettes?

Theresa looks up.

INT. POTLATCH KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Theresa and Marin stand at the counter, with an open can of chaw between them. Marin picks up a pinch.

THERESA
Cigarettes come in first of the month on the ferry. By the end of the month, we're down to chaw.

MARIN
(putting down the pinch)
I'm not that desperate yet.

THERESA
The guy's love it. They can dip while they fish.

MARIN
I can't stand fishing. Or guys.

THERESA
You came to the wrong town.
The ratio's like 10 to 1 here.

MARIN
Where are the women?

THERESA
It's hard up here. Most of them can't hack it.

MARIN
So men run the place.

THERESA
You kidding? We're the one's with the power. They're lonely, we're the prize...it's like a candy store.

MARIN
Here I was telling single women to go to sports bars when I shoulda been telling them to go to Alaska.

THERESA
Yeah well, the odds are good but
the goods are odd.

Marin looks through the pass-through window at Ben laughing
with Buzz.

MARIN
Ben seems nice.

Ben looks up and smiles at Theresa.

MARIN
And very into you.

THERESA
He better be. He married me.
(off Marin)
We're separated. He wants to get
back together. I wanna play the
field.

MARIN
So up here, women get to be men.

THERESA
Everyone gets to be who they wanna
be. We get a lotta lost folks.
People with secrets. You know Wet
Naps?

MARIN
Sure.

THERESA
Ben invented them. He's worth about
a hundred million. Couldn't take
everybody in Seattle wanting a
piece so he came up here and opened
a bar. Never been happier.

MARIN
No kidding.

THERESA
He's the J.D. Salinger of the pre-
moistened towelette industry.

Buzz pops his head through the window.

BUZZ
Okay, I'll take you. Noon sharp.

MARIN
Great. Great.
(then)
(MORE)

MARIN (cont'd)
How 'bout we lay off the sauce til
then?

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Marin's bags are packed. She sits up in her bed engrossed in "I'm dating--and so can you". HER POV: The chapter heading is "Break Ups: How To Hammer The Dents Out and Get Back on The Road".

MARIN
(reading)
You can either lie in bed and mope
or get back out there. I say take
a shower, and go out and smile! Cuz
the next guy's not gonna notice you
unless you have your brights on!
(putting the book down)
I am totally full of crap.

ANGLE ON her forgotten cel phone. It silently blinks "JANE...
JANE..."

INT. A SEATTLE LECTURE HALL - SAME TIME

Jane is on her cel phone in the wings of a packed lecture
hall of women. They chant...

WOMEN
Marin! Marin! Marin! Marin!

JANE
(into phone)
Marin, unless you're dead, I'm
gonna kill you! I'm in Seattle with
500 anxious women and I am not the
woman they paid to see! Where are
you?! I've left like 5 messages.
(beat, realizing)
Oh my God. Maybe you are dead. Oh
that would suck. If someone else
hears this, I am very sorry.

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

TAP. TAP TAP. TAP. The bird is back. Marin wakes up, feeling
better. She gets out of bed and grabs her clothes. TAP TAP.

MARIN
Goodbye annoying bird. I'm going to
Hawaii. That's right. Hawaii. Where
it's warm. And where there are
cigarettes. Goodbye.

The bird just stares. She enters the bathroom with her
clothes and we HEAR the shower turn on.

EXT. ELMO AIRSTRIP - DAY

It's snowing. A small piper cub lands.

INT. ELMO AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Marin peers out at the plane expectantly. Buzz gets out of the plane and goes to open the side door. Marin rushes out with her bags.

EXT. ELMO AIRSTRIP - DAY

Marin trudges through the three-inch deep snow to reach the plane. As she gets to the stairs, JANE appears in the doorway.

MARIN

What are you doing here?

JANE

Yeah, that's my line! You were supposed to be in Seattle!

MARIN

I missed my flight.

JANE

Well that's why I'm here. To make sure you get on a flight tonight to Chicago.

BUZZ

There's no Chicago flight tonight.

MARIN

But you're welcome to come with me to Anchorage. And then Hawaii.

BUZZ

There's no Anchorage flight either.

MARIN

There isn't?

BUZZ

Nope. We're snowed in.
(to Jane)
Wanna go for a beer?

Off the ladies as they get blanketed with snow...

END OF ACT THREE

INT. POTLATCH - NIGHT

Jane and Marin sit at the bar. Men drink and check them out.

JANE

So...ask me why we're going to Chicago.

MARIN

Don't you have anything to say about Graham?

JANE

Bad guy. And I'm glad you learned it now before you did the deed.

(then)

I booked you on OPRAH!

(beat)

This is the part where you jump for joy.

MARIN

I can't do Oprah.

JANE

All you've done for a year is talk about going on Oprah!

MARIN

I can't pretend I know how to find a good man when I can't do it myself!

JANE

Stinkin' thinkin'.

MARIN

Everyone needs to stop quoting me to me!

Ben puts a napkin down.

BEN

What'll it be?

JANE

(as if talking to a child)

I would like a char-do-nay. It's a white wine.

BEN

If you like white, I have a 2001 Jolivet Pouilly-Fume that'll knock your boots off.

He uncorks a bottle and pours her a glass. Jane reacts.

JANE

You just have to get back on the horse. You'll start writing the book again and it'll be okay.

MARIN

Oh and what is that book gonna be called now? "I'm not getting married in four weeks cuz he cheated on me and you can too?!"

Buzz leans in from a nearby stool.

BUZZ

It's a little long.

The women react.

JANE

So you're gonna let one relationship ruin your career.

MARIN

It wasn't "one" relationship. It was Graham. I loved him.

JANE

I came all the way to freakin' end-of-the-world Alaska. That's love.

(off Marin)

Hey, this is me. I'm not gonna be the cry-on-my-shoulder type. But I know this sucks for you.

MARIN

You build this whole future together and it's gone just like that. No more mornings fighting over the arts and leisure section, no more summers in Nantucket...

JANE

There's your next book! "I got over him and so can you!"

MARIN

Man, you're good.

JANE

Lemons into lemonade, Baby.

Marin finishes her drink.

MARIN
Ben, your species is a total
mystery.

BEN
I don't know. Sometimes we're
pretty obvious.

MARIN
Lay it on me.

BEN
Okay. What kind of underwear did he
like?

MARIN
Uh...I had this red Christmas pair
with light-up reindeer--

BEN
No, for him.

MARIN
Oh.

BEN
Boxers or briefs?

MARIN
Boxers. Well, except about six
months ago he started wearing
tighties.

BUZZ
Bingo.

JANE
Bingo?

BEN
We don't change our underwear for
anyone but a woman.

BUZZ
If we wear underwear.

JANE
Didn't need to know that, Buzz.

BUZZ
(re:Marin)
Oh and she can talk about her
Christmas undies?

MARIN

See! I don't know jack! When he was over there helping her put up her flat screen, she was apparently helping him out of his underwear!

MAN 2 joins in now...

MAN 2

Putting up a flat screen?

MARIN

Oh come on.

MAN 2

I don't screw something into a girl's wall unless I'm screwing something else.

MARIN

Wow. Okay.

BEN

So you spent all this time learning about women and you never talked to men.

MARIN

Men don't need my help.

BUZZ

You think it's easy for us? You women are the Queens of mixed messages.

JANE

Are you guys going to talk about your feelings now? Cuz fellas? Not an aphrodisiac.

BEN

Dirty Harry syndrome.

MARIN

What?

JANE

All I heard was "dirty".

BEN

Every woman thinks she wants the tough guy--Dirty Harry. The guy with the gun, y'know, strong, silent. But really you ladies want Clint Eastwood. The guy who played Dirty Harry.

BUZZ

The guy with the gun who will sit through "When Harry Met Sally" with you and make you dinner.

BEN

But if you make too many dinners then you're a push-over.

BUZZ

And if you watch "When Harry Met Sally" too many times you get really fixated on Billy Crystal's hairline.

BEN

Women want it all. And we can't live up to it.

MARIN

So you guys are kinda screwed.

BEN

You got it.

Jane smiles.

JANE

Yes, she does.
(to Marin)
See, you still got it.

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - MORNING

Marin sleeps. TAP. TAP TAP. TAP. Her eyes open. The bird is back. She sighs, resigned. She may never get out of here.

INT. ELMO INN "LOBBY" - MORNING

Patrick is behind the desk. Marin is in her bathrobe.

PATRICK

Green neck?

MARIN

Yeah.

PATRICK

Tap. Tap tap. Tap?

MARIN

Yep.

PATRICK

You got a wigeon.

MARIN

A pigeon?

PATRICK

A wigeon. Must have gotten lost.
They migrate south but some of them
don't make it and they end up here.

MARIN

So when is it going away?

PATRICK

Spring?

Marin reacts as Jane walks down stairs.

JANE

Hey Sad Sack, slap some lipstick
on. You have a book signing.

MARIN

Here?

JANE

Apparently you missed the one you
were supposed to do after your
lecture--

PATRICK

You also owe us 22 bucks for dry
cleaning the drapes.

INT. ELMO BOOKSTORE - LATER

A warm place that sells books and coffee. The snow is letting
up. Marin sits alone at a table surrounded by her books. No
one will come near her. Jane stands behind her.

JANE

It's official. No one in Alaska
reads.

Jack comes around a corner with three books and puts them
down on the counter. He nods to Marin as the STORE GIRL rings
him up.

JACK

How you doing, Coach?

JANE

Sir, perhaps you'd like to add
Marin Frist's best seller to that
stack?

MARIN

Jane, it's fine.

JANE
She is a world-renowned dating
expert--

JACK
Yes I know, I was at her lecture.

JANE
Then you know how amazing she is.

JACK
Well I know she can't hold her
liquor.

Jack puts 20 bucks on the table.

JACK
Here. I'll take one.

MARIN
Don't buy my book 'cuz you pity me.

JACK
(picking up the money)
Okay.

And he walks out with his books.

MARIN
I'm officially pathetic.

JANE
No you're not. You're going on
Oprah.
(re: blue tooth)
Once I get reception on this thing
and get them to push a day. Hold
down the fort.

Jane exits the store. Marin busies herself intently adjusting
her pen and her books on the table.

Her cel phone blinks "LIZA...LIZA..." She angles around to
find bars...ending up UNDER the table.

MARIN
Hello?

INT. ST. REGIS BAR - NEW YORK - EVENING - CROSS-CUT

Liza stands at the bar having a drink.

LIZA
Make me jealous. How tan are you?

MARIN

We got snowed in. I'm stuck in Alaska.

LIZA

Oh honey. Maybe I should just come up there and keep you company.

MARIN

Why? New York has everything and this place has nothing but wigeons.

LIZA

Pigeons?

MARIN

Nevermind.

LIZA

You have real men up there. I'm sick of metrosexuals and heteroflexibles. I want a man's man. A man that smells like flannel and...man scent.

She turns away from a sleazy guy wearing a chain who is leering at her.

LIZA

When did man-jewelry come back?

A HOT YOUNG WAITER walks by and eyes her.

LIZA

(whispering)

The only hot guy here is the waiter, and he probably can't even legally drink.

MARIN

Please don't go home with the waiter.

A VOICE comes from above Marin's desk...

WOMAN (O.S.)

Marin?

MARIN

Just a second!

(to Liza)

Gotta run.

She clicks off, clumsily gets up from under the table to find:

MARIN
Annie? What are you doing here?

ANNIE
I heard about what happened with
your boyfriend.

MARIN
Of course you did.

ANNIE
I had to take a bus from Vancouver.

MARIN
There's a bus out of here?

ANNIE
Once a week.

Marin's face falls.

ANNIE
"Have Hope".

MARIN
What?

ANNIE
That's what you wrote in my book.
"Have Hope". You gave me hope, and
now I want to give you some.

MARIN
Annie, that's really sweet and
really extreme of you.
(then)
You deserve a great guy.

ANNIE
Well, he'll show up, right? I mean,
I'm still getting my "learner's
permit to love"--

Marin is reminded of something. She gets an idea.

MARIN
Annie, come on.

She grabs her coat and Annie's arm and pulls her out.

EXT. AN ELMO STREET CORNER - SAME TIME

Jane stands on corner, desperately trying to get reception on
her blue tooth.

JANE
Hello...can you hear me...hold
on...

She stands up on a snow bank at the curb.

JANE
How bout now? Okay, so I think I
can get her out tomorrow so if you
can re-book her on Thursday that
would be--

She is interrupted by the HUGE WAIL of a snow plow horn. Next
to her, the plow pulls up with DAVE (a bit portly but
adorable) at the wheel.

DAVE
Lady!

JANE
(on call, ignoring him)
So do we have a deal?

HONK HONK. Jane turns, annoyed.

JANE
I'm on the phone here!

DAVE
You gotta move! I gotta plow!

JANE
I'm not giving up the one corner
that has reception.

A stalemate. Then he honks the horn for emphasis.

JANE
You're being very rude!

DAVE
Doing my job.

JANE
So am I, Buster!

Dave smiles, he likes this girl's moxie.

DAVE
Name's Dave. What's yours?

JANE
Not moving.

DAVE
Suit yourself.

He puts the truck into gear, then leans out one last time.

DAVE
 Hey--if you took that thing outta
 your ear for a minute you might
 actually hear that someone likes
 you.

He drives off, throwing a WAVE OF SNOW up against her. She
 watches him drive off, thrown.

INT. ELMO INN - CONTINUOUS

Marin walks in with Annie. Patrick is at the desk.

MARIN
 Annie, Patrick. Patrick, Annie.

PATRICK
 Hey ho.

ANNIE
 Hi.

Marin starts to go upstairs.

PATRICK
 (to Marin)
 Oh hey--something came for you
 today with Ben's napkin shipment. I
 put it in your room.

MARIN
 Thanks.

Patrick smiles at Annie.

PATRICK
 No Doc, thank you.

Marin exits upstairs. An awkward beat of silence between
 Patrick and Annie.

PATRICK
 She's a crack pot, but I dig her.

ANNIE
 Yeah, me too.

PATRICK
 Her web page is a mess. I keep
 writing in, offering to re-design
 it--

ANNIE
 Alaska Dude 123?

PATRICK

Yeah--

ANNIE

City Fannn. Three 'n's.

They share an awkward smile. A spark...

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Marin opens her door to power bar wrappers and...THE RACCOON. In his mouth...HER WEDDING DRESS, just arrived, in a clear travel bag. It growls.

MARIN

Oh no. Not this time, Mister.

Marin goes left. The raccoon goes right and straight out the door, dragging her dress. Marin chases after.

INT. ELMO INN "LOBBY" - CONTINUOUS

Marin chases the raccoon down the stairs and past Patrick and Annie.

MARIN

Yeah, that's right! Let's take it outside!

EXT. INN - CONTINUOUS

Marin chases the raccoon down the driveway. 100 feet down the road, he drops the dress and runs with the plastic into the woods. Marin picks the mangled dress up and sees the hand-written note attached:

So sorry about everything...Rumi. Below this:

AMOUNT DUE: \$9,570.00

It's the last straw. Marin throws up her hands.

END OF ACT FOUR

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Marin, wearing her completely trashed wedding dress, stares at herself in the mirror. She pulls up one ripped arm and sighs.

SARA (O.C.)
Yeah, that's pretty much what it looks like.

Marin turns to find Sara watching her from the bathroom.

SARA
The door was open--

Marin shrugs a "come in".

MARIN
What what looks like?

SARA
Marriage. It's got a lot more dirt and holes than the fairy tale dress they sell you.

Marin stares at herself, lost.

MARIN
I don't know how to be single.

SARA
We're all single. Even when we're with someone.

Marin sits down on the bed.

MARIN
Sara, can I tell you something I've never told anyone?

SARA
I pretty much have dirt on everyone in this town, so shoot.

MARIN
All these years I've sold myself as "the single girl". It's a lie. I've always had a guy. Since I was 16. I've never actually been alone.

SARA
Well I've never been able to be with someone.

MARIN

So you're not married anymore.

SARA

Divorced. I have a kid. His dad went awol to the lower 48 so I try and make ends meet. However I can.

MARIN

Right.

SARA

Go ahead, judge me.

MARIN

I'm not gonna judge you.

SARA

I judge me. I wanna get out of the hospitality business--meet a nice guy who wants to settle down, buy a little cabin out at the lake... it's hard to find a guy who just likes me for me.

MARIN

Yeah. Dating was impossible for me once the guy found out I was a relationship expert. So I would lie and say I was a computer technician.

SARA

Yeah? How'd that work?

MARIN

Pretty good til I had to fix their hard drive.

SARA

(a smile)
Thanks for the advice.

MARIN

Oh I'm out of that business.

SARA

Is it that easy to leave the business?

Marin takes this in.

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - LATER

Marin is folding her wedding dress as Jane enters.

JANE
Start packing, sister. Buzz is flying tomorrow and Oprah pushed a day.

Marin stops folding and turns to her.

MARIN
Three hundred and seventy two.

JANE
No, I gave him 500 plus a six of Bud.

MARIN
Three hundred seventy two. The number of days I was on the road in the last three years.

JANE
Nice. You beat Grisham and Didion.

MARIN
Jane, that's over a year of book tours and lectures.

JANE
You say that like it's a bad thing.

MARIN
Maybe it is.

JANE
Work is what's gonna keep your mind off that jerk. And allow you to buy a lovely summer home in the Hamptons.

MARIN
Maybe if I had gotten off the tour just once, I would have had time to save my relationship with that jerk!

JANE
Are you blaming me for your success? 'Cuz that's hugely screwed up.

MARIN
No, I'm hugely screwed up.

JANE
Are you blaming yourself for your break up? 'Cuz that's even more screwed up--

Marin throws her coat on and starts to walk out.

JANE
Hey, hold up there--

Marin turns to her, overwhelmed.

MARIN
Don't. No pep rallies. No getting
back on the horse. I shot the
horse. I'm done.

She walks out, slamming the door behind her.

EXT. A DARK ROAD - NIGHT

Marin marches away to nowhere. Her back is illuminated by the headlights of an old Ford pick-up truck which slows down when she sticks her thumb out. An OLD TLINGIT WOMAN sticks her head out.

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN
Where you headed?

MARIN
Anywhere that can sell me a
cigarette.

The Tlingit woman nods her head--"get in". Marin climbs in and they drive off.

INT. PICK-UP TRUCK - NIGHT

Silence. Windshield wipers. The crush of wheels on snow.

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN
What are you running away from?

MARIN
Everything.

The woman takes in Marin's city attire.

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN
You started running before Elmo.

Marin stares out the window. She's right.

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN
When you are lost, you must look to
the skies for answers. Our
ancestors are there. In the stars,
the clouds...

MARIN
What if there are no answers?

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN

If you don't believe, you will end up like The Frozen Girl. She kept walking. Never looked up. They found her frozen to death up on Naknek Mountain. 300 years old. Alone, no teeth. Fat.

MARIN

She was still fat after 300 years?

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN

That's how fat she was.

Marin takes this in.

EXT. A SMALL LOGGING BAR - NIGHT

The truck pulls up in front of a bar. Marin gets out.

MARIN

Thank you.

OLD TLINGIT WOMAN

Sometimes you are not running away from something, you are running towards it.

Before Marin can respond, the woman and her truck are gone.

EXT. THE BAR - MINUTES LATER

Marin emerges with a pack of cigarettes and starts walking. She tears at the wrapping like it was Christmas morning. She pulls out a cigarette and looks at it. Finally. She puts it to her mouth and lights it, still walking. Inhales. Oh my God, so good.

She lets herself exhale slowly as she walks, savoring. And then she hears something...CRACKING. ICE CRACKING. OH SHIT.

SPLASH. She has FALLEN THROUGH ICE. She has been walking ON A LAKE. Her arms flail as she screams, her cigarette still firmly clenched in her mouth. She's not letting it go.

MARIN

Cold! Cold!

A ROPE is thrown to her, the throwee out of view.

MAN (O.C.)

Grab the rope.

Marin peers into the darkness towards a flash-light beam along the ice...to...JACK.

MARIN
You.

JACK
You need to grab the rope. And
don't move.

Marin grabs the rope as Jack begins to pull her out.

MARIN
Wait! My shoe!

And she twists back to retrieve her now-gone shoe--CRACK. The
ice cracks between them and Jack LANDS IN THE FRIGID WATER
WITH HER...

END OF ACT FIVE

INT. AN OBSERVATION HUT - NIGHT

Small, bare. A very wet and cold Marin and Jack sit on opposite ends of a cot.

JACK
 Didn't you see the "thin ice"
 signs?

MARIN
 No, and p.s.--seeing signs is not
 my strong suit. Now what.

JACK
 It's too dark to walk across the
 ice safely.

MARIN
 So we're stuck in this--
 (looking around)
 What is this?

JACK
 Observation hut.

MARIN
 What are you observing?

JACK
 I was looking for nocturnal bear
 but instead I found a relationship
 coach.

Marin fishes in her pocket and finds the water logged pack of cigarettes. She squeezes the water out of it.

MARIN
 Almost as dangerous.

Jack rubs his wrist.

JACK
 I think you dislocated my wrist.

MARIN
 Sorry.
 (then, shivering)
 I'm freezing.

JACK
 You're getting hypothermic. So am
 I. There's only one way we're gonna
 make it to morning.

MARIN
Light a fire?

INT. OBSERVATION HUT - LATER

In the half-darkness we make out Marin and Jack, now naked, holding each other awkwardly. Their coats are around them, their heads turned away from each other. Both would rather be anywhere but here.

MARIN
You're elbow's in my--

Jack adjusts.

MARIN
Thank you.

A beat of silence.

MARIN
How long do we--

JACK
'Til day break. Pace yourself.

MARIN
This "getting naked for body warmth" thing better not be some sad attempt to get sex.

JACK
I don't want to have sex with you.

MARIN
I know all about you lonely Alaska guys.

JACK
Maybe you should stop thinking in stereotypes.

Silence, then...

MARIN
It's not you. It's all men. I just don't want to be around them right now.

JACK
That's working well for you.
(then)
So you really think you don't need men.

MARIN
Yes, Cave Man, I do.

JACK
Salmon swim hundreds of miles back to where they were born, to spawn. The one's that don't make the trip, die. Species exist because they procreate. They need each other to survive. We need each other.

MARIN
Well then we'll agree to disagree.

JACK
And you'll wash up down river bloated and smelly.

MARIN
Shut up.

JACK
My pleasure.

INT. OBSERVATION HUT - DAWN

Marin opens her eyes to find Jack still asleep. She studies his very handsome face inches from hers. Intrigued, she pulls away enough to look at his body. Nice. She studies a SCAR along his rib cage...He wakes, catching her.

JACK
Everything in the right place, Coach?

Before she can come back with a retort, an ANIMAL GRUNT interrupts. Jack slaps his hand over her mouth.

JACK
Shhhh.

He opens the door to reveal an AMAZING ALASKAN SUNRISE over the iced-over lake. He points down to animal paw prints in the new snow.

JACK
Caribou.

They look up to see, on the horizon, a majestic, long-antlered caribou. Marin is in awe.

MARIN
Beautiful.

Another caribou comes to join him.

JACK
That one's a female.

The female rubs up against the male.

MARIN
They're mating--

JACK
No, she's rubbing her crap into his fur. But maybe after that they'll get busy.

EXT. A DIRT ROAD - MORNING

Jack and Marin walk up to his parked Jeep.

JACK
You're gonna have to drive, Coach.
You screwed up my shifting wrist.

MARIN
I can't.

JACK
You have to.

MARIN
No. I can't drive.

INT. JACK'S JEEP - MORNING

Jack drives Marin back to town.

MARIN
I'm supposed to be teaching people how to drive to happiness and I don't even have a license. I know. It's totally lame. And until now, a total secret.

JACK
Up.

Marin grabs the gear shift and yanks it up.

JACK
This is a good place to learn. Plenty of open space. Just a few stop lights and no one around to see you when you hit a tree--

Marin looks sideways at him. Is he a little interested?

JACK
Fourth.

She jerks it down. The car makes a high whine. Jack adjusts the gear shift.

JACK
That was second.

MARIN
So, what's your secret?

JACK
What you see is what you get.

Off Marin. She knows he's hiding something, but lets it go.

MARIN
Can you drop me at the dock?

EXT. TOWN DOCK - MORNING

Marin gets out of Jack's truck.

MARIN
That whole naked thing? It didn't mean anything.

JACK
You're welcome.

And he drives off revealing Jane waiting with her luggage on the dock. Marin walks up to her slowly. Jane sees where this is going...

JANE
You're not coming with me.

MARIN
I'm not. I'm sorry.

JANE
I can't tell you this is a good idea.

MARIN
I know.

JANE
So you're going to Hawaii.

MARIN
Hawaii's kinda over-rated. And New York has Graham and man-jewelry--

JANE
What're you gonna do?

MARIN

Breathe.

Jane grabs her in a big hug.

JANE

Oh Marin. You are such an idiot.

They pull away. Marin walks up the dock, giving Jane a small loving wave as she goes.

JANE

If you change editors I'll hunt you down and kill you!

INT. ELMO INN "LOBBY" - MORNING

Patrick and Annie both have their well-worn copies of "I'm Dating and So Can You" open by the fire.

ANNIE

What'd you put for question 4?

PATRICK

D?

ANNIE

Same here.

A smoldering look between them. Annie leans over and kisses him. Patrick pulls away.

PATRICK

You're chewing gum--

ANNIE

(apologetic)
I am--

PATRICK

Same here! Kismet!

And they start kissing again while Marin enters.

MARIN

Don't mind me. Go back to your poop rubbing.

ANNIE

Marin?

Marin turns back.

ANNIE

Thank you.

Marin lets this gift sink in.

MARIN
Those who can't, teach. Right?

Marin heads up the stairs.

INT. MARIN'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Marin enters to find her wedding dress still lying across the bed. She gets an idea, grabs it, heads back out the door.

EXT. ELMO INN - MORNING

Marin grabs the 3-speed bike, parked up against the wall of the inn and shakes the snow off it. Dress in one hand, she gets on and starts pedaling, wobbly but sure.

EXT. ELMO MAIN STREET - MORNING

Marin peddles past the Elmo book and coffee shop. We see Sara through the window and stay on her.

INT. ELMO BOOKSTORE - CONTINUOUS

Sara is looking through the pastries on the counter when LEN (shy, late 20s) approaches.

LEN
How you doing?

SARA
I'm off, okay?

LEN
(thrown)
Off what?

SARA
(beat)
Sugar. Makes me crazy.

LEN
Then I'd steer clear of the coconut
upside-down squares.

Sara laughs. This guy is sweet.

SARA
You're not from here.

LEN
Nope. Work for the ferry line.
What about you?

SARA
I'm a computer technician.

Len smiles at her.

LEN
Ah, a smarty pants.

CLOSE ON a MAN'S HAND putting one of Marin's books-on-tape into a CD player. He hits "play".

MARIN
(on tape)
The truest thing I know about relationships is that sometimes we don't know anything at all.

INT. MARIN'S NEW YORK LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Graham sits back on the couch and listens to the CD. Missing Marin.

EXT. ELMO STREET - MORNING

Marin bikes past the bar, still balancing the dress. We stay on the bar...

INT. THE POTLATCH - CONTINUOUS

Ben watches Theresa load sugars into table containers as he wipes down the bar. Missing her.

MARIN (V.O.)
You can't always get the one you want.

Theresa looks up, and then quickly looks away.

INT. LIZA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The WAITER pulls his pants on as Liza lies in bed, watching.

MARIN (V.O.)
And sometimes the one you get isn't the right one at all.

He walks out, leaving Liza alone and empty.

INT. ELMO INN - CONTINUOUS

Patrick and Annie continue to alternately chew gum and kiss.

MARIN (V.O.)
But if you have hope, the universe has a funny way of showing you exactly what you need.

INT. ELMO BOOKSTORE - DAY

Len and Sara talk animatedly over coffee.

EXT. ELMO STREET - CONTINUOUS

Marin bikes, still holding the dress.

MARIN (V.O.)
The challenge is to let yourself be
alone until the right one shows up.

INT. JACK'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jack pulls off his wet shirt and puts it in the hamper.
Inside he sees something and pulls it out--

MARIN (V.O.)
But you can't hide either.

It's a WOMAN'S SKIRT. He quickly stuffs it into the trash.

INT. ELMO AIRPORT - CONTINUOUS

Jane gets ready to board her plane back to New York.

MARIN (V.O.)
Heart break sucks. But not having
heart break sucks more.

She pauses, then takes her blue tooth out of her ear and puts
it in her pocket. She walks onto the jetway and is gone.

INT. MARIN'S NEW YORK LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Graham still listens to the book. Behind him, Kiki has
entered. She watches Graham, concerned.

MARIN (V.O.)
Trust the process. If you get
yourself happy, you'll find the
right one.

Kiki walks out, never seen.

EXT. ELMO MOUNTAIN - CONTINUOUS

Marin has reached the scenic overlook we saw earlier.

MARIN (V.O.)
I believe this because against all
odds, I am an optimist.

She climbs off the bike and walks to the edge of the cliff.

MARIN (V.O.)
And until every one of you finds
the person you really want, I will
be that optimist for you. I know
it's hard.

She peers over the edge.

MARIN (V.O.)
Some days you'll want to kill
yourself.

She takes a step back and then in one strong motion, she
HEAVES the dress over the cliff. We watch it go, twisting and
turning in its descent. She turns back to her bike and looks
to the sky...

EXT. ELMO USED CAR LOT - DAY

Marin pays a DEALER cash for an old pick up truck and climbs
inside.

MARIN (V.O.)
But that's the thing about love...

Marin puts the car into gear and swerves out of the lot.

MARIN (V.O.)
...if it were that easy, everyone
would have it.

We watch her tail lights become small as she lurches her way
into her future, alone, in fits and starts.

Across the screen, the wigeon flits behind...

THE END