





(Hilma af Klint, The Swan, No. 1, Group IX/SUW)

by Tanya Everett
tanya.everett@gmail.com
Insert Bad Ass Agent here.

Characters:

Abbie Jenkins, late 30s, black female, grew up in the Lower East Side, raised by a single mother, public school principal. Her father owned a bar, but was pretty absentee until she was in her teens. Abbie went to charter and magnet schools, but has lived most of her life in New York. Charming with an edge. Loves fully, sometimes has trouble accessing her feelings. Manages “The River.” Secretly, would like to be toy designer.

Beatriz Luz, late 30s, grew up in in a small village in Colombia. At the beginning of their relationship, she is an undocumented immigrant. She has had to do terrible things to be able to come to this country. She fears for her safety, and is looking for refuge. Sends money back to her family. Is afraid to be alone. Beatriz is the glue—the level headed one, the one who always considers others feelings—she has a sensuality and a passion that inspires Abbie to do her best work. She sometimes feels alienated by disparities in wealth.

Arden Zheng, Chinese or Filipino (Open to ethnicity for this production), late 40s, early 50s. An alcoholic marketing director, fashionable but also deeply unhappy. Feels like she has run aground. Regular at the River. Has the hots for Beatriz. We discover that she is loyal to a fault.

For my grandmothers: how their imperfect love stories always inspired me to create my own.

“It seems to me that one ought to rejoice in the fact of death--ought to decide, indeed, to earn one's death by confronting with passion the conundrum of life. One is responsible for life: It is the small beacon in that terrifying darkness from which we come and to which we shall return.”

– James Baldwin

“We love because it's the only true adventure.”

– Nikki Giovanni

Lights up on a basement dive bar. The stools are on the bar upside down, and the garish light streams through the windows, reveal a layer of grime that hasn't been touched behind the bottles. The bar otherwise is handled with love, and above the bottles are the initials A and B in cursive lettering and bulbed lights.

Though the bar is dingy, it has a charm—there are certain accents that have been recently added—a new coat of paint, maybe some new chairs—it has the appearance both of being very old and being brand new. It lives in the space that New York bars live in—equal parts joy and jizz, depravity and depression, beginnings and endings.

Enter Abbie Jenkins, black, late 30s, absentmindedly smoking a joint, trying to calm her nerves. A knock at the door. Abbie scrambles to find an ashtray—they're in the dishwasher. She finds a random glass and stamps it out. Hides the glass. Smells her breath, and her clothes. Shrugs...another knock, louder this time.

ABBIE
COMING!

Abbie checks the mirror behind the bar. Looks at her eyes—bloodshot, but from lack of sleep. She approves. Thrusts open the door.

ABBIE
HEY! Sorry—we uh—we don't open till noon...?

In barges Arden, sunglasses, a Fendi Bag—a little bit downtown chic, just drying out from a bender. She has a kind of a sloping walk, and looks as if she's judging—everything!

ARDEN
YOU OPEN WHEN I SAY YOU OPEN!

ABBIE
Oh Jesus! This what we doin'?

Arden helps herself to a chair—hoists it expertly.

An awkward pause.

ARDEN (Sucks her teeth)
OK. Yeah. Needed to see it for myself.

ABBIE (Defensive)
What?

ARDEN
You! You look like shit.

ABBIE (Smug)

And a hearty good morning to you too, Arden.

...

...

ABBIE

What?

ARDEN

You gonna offer me a drink or something?

ABBIE (Salty)

Wasn't my first thought.

ARDEN

Good. You *should* be thinking about you—and this...place...

ABBIE

Right.

...

...

ARDEN

You were doin' better...before I left?

ABBIE

Yeah (Shrugs) Walls started closing in.

ARDEN

Again?

ABBIE

Yeah. (Beat) Can't think. Start to think and then—poof! I read—or maybe I just heard—but that it like—it like impairs your mental capacities—like I mean (grief) it makes you um...stupid. (Laughs) I mean...ain't that a bitch?

Arden goes behind the bar, starts pouring herself a something complicated—and gets very into it, all the while surveying Abbie.

ARDEN (Sniffs)

Have you...bathed recently?

ABBIE

Yeah. (Beat) Yessss....You're one to talk!

ARDEN

Baaaaby?! ... I'm just coming offa thirty-six hours! And a red-eye—there was a tiki theme on first class! (Beat) But *you* gotta keep yo shit togethah!

ABBIE

Yeah. Uh huh. Yeah....

Abbie starts absentmindedly cleaning the bar—but maybe she just circles the same spot with a rag....

...

...

ABBIE

Damndest thing. I mean—just a moment ago, really? She was right here. And I felt her—warm hand on mine...she was bitching at me about something—(tries to remember) I over spent on the...ice?? Or limes...Somethin' with a long I sound...(get lost) And I knew that I was...safe? Ya know? Ya know what I mean?

ARDEN (Quiet)

Listen, kid—I'm not much for empathy! I just haven't found out how to get into the seams of my fancy fabrics! Dudhn't fit! (A breath) But this--sucks...I mean it just totally (blows)....

Arden utterly lost...maybe reaches out a hand, or starts pouring her a drink...

ABBIE

Ya know anything about swans?

ARDEN

Nah. Should I?

ABBIE

Swans mate for life. Did you know that? (Beat) I knew her, Den. Like I knew myself. And she knew me. We did this whole thing? Together. (Breaking) I dunno who I am now...I dunno where I end and where she...(began). A and Bea. A and Be...A and ??

A silence falls over them...Arden puts a hand over Abbie's.

ARDEN

I mean...listen—I've got all day...I can just sit here and sit here and sit here...

ABBIE (Weakly)

Okay. (A breath) Okay.

...

...

...

ARDEN (Laughs)

You remember that one time—when she snorted beer out of her nose??

...

...

ARDEN (Con't)

And uh... I mean...I thought she'd shit herself—...meanwhile—you guys were busy—I mean—packed—but her laugh---this intense laugh—and then—like a fountain—all over this one dude—who had no sense of humor—and did not like that...At-all. You'd a thought she'd flashed him or sumthing!

...

...

ARDEN

I mean—and you're apologizing—offering him free beer—shots—but he's not having it—

With a surge of energy...Abbie picks up one of her favorite stories--

ABBIE

He's not having it—he doesn't give a shit. I mean at all. And Bea is still mortified. But somehow she snaps out of it. And in that instant—I saw her eyes like—I dunno—do what they do. And—well, everybody saw it.

ARDEN

She leaned over to him—got UP on the bar—leaned over him, and gave him a Big. Wet. Kiss. Straight on the mouth. First kiss he ever got from a lady-- that was clear.

ABBIE

Yeah. And he loved it. I mean—he was beaming—ear to ear after that. (Beat) He came in for *months*, just to see her. Sat right there. And waited til she had a moment. It was sumthin...

ARDEN (a little teary)

Yeah...

...

...

ABBIE

Wait...what?

ARDEN (Covers)

Huh? Nuthin'.

ABBIE

What is that—in your...what is that in your eye?

ARDEN (Defiant)

No-thing...

Abbie takes a finger and wipes Arden's eyes—then tastes it. Laughs, a little sullenly.

ABBIE

Wowww... (To the sky) You won!

Abbie shakes a fist at the sky!

ARDEN

Hmm?

ABBIE

Ehhh—Nuthin...

ARDEN

Not nuthin'---I hate that—I actually do---

ABBIE

Ok-ok. Me and Bea—we had a bet—that you couldn't cry...or if you did...it was like Vodka or somethin'...

ARDEN (Fake stern)

Eww. I do not like that. (Beat) And this is not a tear—that is eye-sweat...

ABBIE

Ah. Well—then my eyes have been running marathons.

ARDEN

Me too, kid. Me too. (Beat) You want one?

Abbie stares for a moment, then shakes her head. Arden gets up and pours herself another, while Abbie continues to clean the bar....

{A projection: An awkward Abbie sits cross-legged, nursing a beer, while Beatriz adjusts her skirt, looking in the opposite direction. Their physical distance is palpable.}

{And the scene transforms to 20 years prior. Abbie and Beatriz at the River. It is late, and they both nurse warm beers. All that can be heard is the hum of freezer, and the occasional sound of a bum outside singing "Born To Be Wild!" They find it hard to make eye contact.}

ABBIE

This is...(nasty).

BEA

Yeah...

ABBIE

I um...I could make us....make us something else?/ Something—like a...

BEA

No-no-no...don't make to any (trouble).

ABBIE

It's not—/I don't think of it as...

BEA

Yeah. But—it is late. And probably someone will come in. Or something.

...

...

ABBIE/BEA

I don't/What I wanted to say—

ABBIE/BEA

You go/Oh my bad!

ABBIE

You...?

BEA

Oh. I um...(Beat) I'm uh—what happened the other night?

ABBIE (Beaming)

Yeah!

BEA (Darkening)

No!!

ABBIE

What?

BEA

Yeahhhh. Nooo... I uhh...I don't...(makes a swinging motion—and an awkward sloppy laugh). I was drunk!

ABBIE (Genuine)
You don't...play baseball?

BEA
You is knowing what I mean.

ABBIE
No. No-no-no. I don't. Do not. Know. So—no.

BEA
Awww...please!!! It was fun. We were drunk...Maybe a little high even...we did smoke?
Quizas??

ABBIE
Come on! We're not these people—we don't get drunk and like make out behind the jute
box./We don't—

BEA
I dunno. Maybe...? (Shrugs) Anyways. That's what I wanted to say.

ABBIE (Pissed)
Good.

BEA
Que?

ABBIE
Well. You said it. Feel better?

BEA
Yes?!

ABBIE
Unsure?

BEA
You weird.

ABBIE
Am I?

BEA
Si! Yes. You be weird. Sometimes. You are to be acting weird—sometimes.

ABBIE
Hmmm. I see.

BEA

And only speaking in short sentences. Como se dice, de-clarative sentences.

ABBIE

Oh! Good word. (Slowly) Dec-clarative.

...

...

BEA

I can't...to read minds. You have to be using words.

Abbie makes a swinging motion.

ABBIE

Huh.

BEA

Wow. This really is a lot worst than I thought.

ABBIE

How so?

BEA

Oh—that was a thought that I probably should have said in my head, or something. But um—you know how somethings are like worst in your mind? Well this is like that—but actually in real life, it is worst.

Abbie stares at her and then laughs.

BEA

What? Why is that funny?

ABBIE

I dunno. Cause it is.

Abbie continues laughing, and then grabs her up. Bea stiffens. Abbie backs up, reeling over the simple beauty of her lover.

ABBIE

I wish you could see what I see...

BEA

It was jus'—jus' a stupid—

Abbie grabs Bea and kisses her, passionately. The kiss is something that Bea cannot deny.

ABBIE
Stupid?

Bea laughs, mournfully.

BEA
So stupid.

...
...

ABBIE
Stupid? (Laughs) When I met you—I felt like—well, do you know that moment when you’ve been trying, unsuccessfully to get a match to light? And then—you know it’s about to do whatever chemistry it has and it’s gonna—finally—catch? That’s what it was. it was (Beat)—nah, this is stupid—

BEA
What? No-no...tell me....

ABBIE
Oh, now you wanna know?

BEA (Gentle)
Si.
...

ABBIE
I just—that’s what it was...for me...I kind of felt like you held all the lights in Times Square in your sternum....and somehow you, however briefly, shared them with me...

BEA
Oh.

ABBIE
Yeah.

BEA (Sincere)
What’s...a sternum?

ABBIE (Laughs)
Oh! (takes her hand to Bea’s chest) Here. Right here.

BEA

That's....uh... (Sighs) I don't think that...

ABBIE

No. Shhh...It's fine. It's normal. To have these—

Beatrice backs away from her, with a shrug.

BEA (Firm)

No. No one I know—I don't think “normal”...is what I call this.

A painful beat between them...

ABBIE

You ever think of yourself as normal anyways?

BEA (Laughs)

I guess not. (Beat) Should we um....close up? Maybe? There's nobody gonna come in at this hour...

ABBIE (Sigh)

Yeah...But Mr. Jay doesn't like it...he's always gettin' on us about that shit...(Beat) You know something? You got sparkly eyes!

BEA (Blushes)

WHAT?! You say the...most confusing things...?

ABBIE

Yeah. But maybe they're also...true?

BEA (Hides her smile behind her hands).

Anyways. I'm gonna start re-stocking....

Bea and Abbie lock eyes. Something has changed between them.

Present. Abbie is sitting on the bar, smoking a joint. She's got the insides of their wedding photo spread across the bar. She stares at each of them. Picks up one: shows the audience...

{Projection: Bea is in her wedding dress, her back exposed, looking back at Abbie, who is cracking up}

ABBIE

This? This is where she was stressing about the zipper on the dress—she had always envisioned this—long flowing situation, with these pearl buttons down the back—the kind

of dress her mother wanted her to wear...and when we couldn't find one in our price range (free-99!), she just got really quiet and sullen for a day. It was that kind of thing—the moments when she showed me her dark with her light—I got to learn how to fall even more in love with her...

Abbie looks at another picture.

{A Projection: Abbie and Bea, exhausted, leaning on each other in their party clothes half asleep.}

This was it....me and Bea. Leaning on each other. Holding each other up...most of the time...(Beat) The space between me and another human being? Most of the times...that space feels...well, unimaginably large. But also, when I was with her—I could make that space feel tinier. In all honesty, it didn't mean that I understood humans better. I felt maybe like—well, maybe I understood myself better. And that was enough. But I was kind of always this unbearable cunt, really. I mean I'm sure there were days that I was like unreasonably bad.

{A Projection: The River Bar, Abbie and Bea stand off in a corner together, a little drunk}

Fifteen years prior, a few months after the previous scene. The River. Abbie is mopping the floor, singing loudly. (Maybe its a few months later).

ABBIE

I been really tryin' baby....tryin' to hold back these feelin's for SO long...and if you feel... like I feel sugar...come on... AY!!! Let's get it on....OOOh baby...let's get it on... (keeps singing, ad-libbing—having a good ole time)...

Bea stands and watches for several moments. A turns around, finally in a twirl with the broom, a little clumsily and with abandon.

ABBIE (Embarrassed)

Oh. Ohhh. How long...?

BEA

A—while?

ABBIE

Uccch...Announce yourself!! It's—creepy.

BEA

How you say? My bad. I didn't—didn't mean anything. (Beat) It was kind of cute?

ABBIE (Dark)
Oh yeah? “Cute?”

BEA (Sigh)
I dunno. I liked it. And I’m not gonna—(a strong gesture)

ABBIE
What?

BEA
It’s like this—I say “It’s cute.” Then you say something—and it’s—sarcastic? And then I apologize. And then you’re salty. But you don’t say why. And then—we start the whole thing again. And I say—I’m not gonna. Not today. Ok?

ABBIE
What’s eating you, Gilbert Grape?

BEA (Strong)
That?! What is...I definitely don’t understand that reference. And you know this. (Beat) I think um...maybe immigration maybe called my house today. So...I just—I can-not...

ABBIE
Oh?

BEA
Yeah. And I mean—I’m doing this under the table. All of the right things. But—(shrugs). So—yeah. (Best Anglo impression) Not. In. The. Mood. Me entiendes?

ABBIE
I loooove it when you speaka the Guacamole-y??!

BEA
Uhhh...you sound like such a gringita—or I dunno, those awful old white men that sip maaahagritas in Punta Cana... (Sucks her teeth, and looks out the window). I should be on a beach right now.

...
...

ABBIE
Why don’t we go?

BEA
Are you crazy? I can’t travel...

ABBIE

Or maybe we could take a road trip....to....Miami?

BEA

A mi me encanta Miami....Pero no...it's too dangerous. I jus'—wait it out. I wait—for the judge—I wait—for my sentencing.... (she wilts into tears...)

ABBIE

No-no-no—It's not—don't—please don't cry...I literally can't handle crying—if you could just—like NOT do that....

BEA (sobers)

What? You CAN'T handle crying? What that fuck does that mean...?

ABBIE (to herself)

Doesn't know the word for sternum but can drop a F bomb like nobody's business (A breath) You real cute when you mad, you know that?

BEA

Ha. You do—you do always seem to make this all about you. Tu lo sabes, no?

ABBIE (Seductive)

Yeaah...but I mean—it's kind of like...my charm, no?

BEA (Gentle)

I hate you. I mean I really do.

ABBIE

Naaaah. You may want to. You may stare in the mirror at night saying: “La odio. La ODIO!” But what you're really saying—is “I love that bitch. So much. I mean in ways I don't know how to describe.”

BEA (Sucks her teeth).

In ways that make me wish I'd never laid eyes on you...

ABBIE

In ways that make I dunno—cliches seem really very appropriate—time stopping and shit....

BEA

Fucking birds? I was walk into work today, and birds were like doing a bee bod melody—

ABBIE (Softly)

Bee bop.

BEA
Huh? Ohhhh! Bee bop.

ABBIE
Asi. Asi lo es. (Beat) I don't how (I lived life before)...

BEA
Si. Lo mismo.
....

ABBIE
I don't uh...know how to help. I feel a little like that time that I visited the redwoods—they're these GIANT trees on the West Coast, and I put my arms around them. And I felt impossibly small. That's what I feel when I'm with you—but I'm gonna...try? That's all I can do...

BEA
I think that maybe is all that there is. Ya know?

The lights fade as they put their heads together...

{Projection: Bea is curled up in Abbie's arms, quiet ease.}

The River. Abbie stands at the bar, as she cuts up fruit, making it into concentric circles.

BEA
You're wasting it...look at all this??

ABBIE
Yes. But it's beautiful.

BEA
What is beautiful about waste?

ABBIE
I mean—the aesthetic? (Beat) Here (shoves a clementine piece into her mouth).

BEA
Mmmm...that is—that is (so delicious...)

ABBIE
See? So that's worth it...the waste...

Bea disappears into another room with a small canvas bag—holds it out.

BEA

Listen...I know that it doesn't mean this to you...but when I left my country—this is all I had. All that I could take. And I can't just do what you do. It's...we're not the same....

ABBIE

We don't have to (be the same.) I mean, I get it—that I don't—

BEA

No. You don't. And I'm not—being dramatic right now. I'm just—I know that you don't. (Beat) When I see what you throw away? I mean...every day...and not just you—the River, the people on our block—perfectly good items...things... that my family? We would have killed for...and that's—

ABBIE

I'm—(sighs) I just wanted to have a nice morning...ya know? Sit here, and eat our avocado toast and fruit and... I dunno...read the paper, or some shit?

A beautiful moment between them...

BEA

Fucking avocado toast...(laughs)...really?

ABBIE

I mean—it's delicious...seriously...

Bea curls into Abbie's arms...

BEA

I didn't know that it could be like this. Back then? It was so hard to think about anything but...the next meal, and just the—I dunno..the basics...

ABBIE

Shh...you're here now...that was then...that was....

Bea stiffens...

BEA

Maybe it still is...in my bones...in my skin—are the memories, of having done without... maybe its not so easy to shake...

ABBIE

I get that...that I get. (Beat) But hold onto me...and it's gonna be alright...just hold onto me...

{A Projection: Abbie breaking up a fight, Arden is half-naked, and wildly thrashing!}

A silent hum over “The River,”. Arden sits at a stool, waiting on her drink.

ARDEN

I’m not trynna be paranoid or whatever...

Abbie emerges from the back....

ABBIE

I think I hate when you start a sentence like that...I mean I think I really hate that...

ARDEN

Well, not to be paranoid, or whatever, but I really do think that they’re watching us... everywhere...

ABBIE (Flat)

You’re right. That doesn’t sound paranoid at-all....

ARDEN

Listen—I don’t like to think this way. It doesn’t make me feel—I dunno, fulfilled or whatever, but this is real shit, and that’s all I’m saying...I mean—when you look at all the things that are already happening...they’ve got chips in our cards and that-that fuckin’ X-ray shit? I mean—what is that? I don’t need some TSA worker looking up my cooter...

ABBIE (laughs)

Probably wise to not have any TSA worker looking up your cooter, Arden! Ya never know what you might find up there!

ARDEN

Ehhhh! You don’t know (Affects an accent) There’s diamonds up in that-there mines! Look! There’s no privacy. Phones are bugged! I mean what is Siri? What is *Alexa*? The other day—I’m having a conversation with a colleague about—I dunno—*douching*?

ABBIE

Right. As one does.

ARDEN

And then—just like that—all the ads are “Feminine care products,” and “Feminine hygiene”. *Also*—where is the “Masculine care product” aisle?

ABBIE (Sighs)

And all that I’m saying is—what the hell are we gonna do about it? Look around...I didn’t ask for this to be my life—I don’t have any tech knowledge—I get my news from the

Facebook and the Twitters—if there’s some plot on my life—I’ll probably miss it, just like I miss most hours of daylight!

ARDEN

You got a real bleak outlook, you know that?

ABBIE

I do. But you wanna know the truth? I’m good with that. (Beat) Plenty of fuckin’ optimists die young, never having done half of what they set out to do. I’m just a realist.

ARDEN

But I don’t you want more?

ABBIE

The fuck is more, Arden? Every fucking day—they tell us—its the END OF THE WORLD. I mean actually. “The Ozone layer,” the phones cause cancer, eating causes cancer, not eating causes cancer, fucking—well fucking—man! I mean, that shits for the birds. You can’t drink, you can’t smoke, you can’t travel, you can’t plant—Soils shit. Just try being a farmer! The only people making anything—making a hill of anything, are the people who make money offa this “doomsday” mentality, and I can’t do it. (Beat) Ya know what I do? I sell alcohol—meaning I sell...drugs...I am a drug dealer.

ARDEN

Nooo...

ABBIE (Snaps her fingers)

Arden? Ar-den? What time is it?

ARDEN

Noon? Is it?

ABBIE

Exactly. It is noon. And you—are here. In this dive bar. To get your fix.

ARDEN

I could drink at home....

ABBIE

You could! But you don’t. You come here. Nearly every day. To see my ugly mug, and to get a drink. And that—makes me your dealer...

ARDEN

I don’t—I don’t like that.

ABBIE

It is what it is. You are on my rounds. (Sighs) The whole thing. It's such shit. Ya know? And I mean—she's the only thing—the only thing that makes it even...bearable...

ARDEN

Yeah. Yeah. You gotta have that.

Pause. And in the silence, Abbie makes Arden a drink.

ABBIE

On me.

{A Projection: Bea lying in the snow, making a snow angel wearing a goofy red hat}

*Abbie at the bar, in some pajamas, eating ice cream.—where Abbie gives Bea the hat...
Bea comes and disappears...*

ABBIE

Time did actually stand still when I met her. I mean—I know. That shit is dumb. And the worst thing is—she barely remembers it. All these years ago—nada. But not me: it coulda been yesterday. (Beat) So, she was in the line ahead of me at this discount department store? And she had on this goofy red hat. The kind you get on the street carts—the cheap ones. And she was just—wild....in a way that you can only tell when you're imagining someone from behind... (What? You don't do that... I definitely do that) And I was seeing her...I mean— she was dropping shit and had too much stuff in her hands and she couldn't find her credit card. In a word: mess. But I just kept laughing. It was out of body—seeing the love of my life for the first time. And I swear—we fight about this—but I swear, and I stand by it. I picked up like some cheap lotion, and I gave it to her. And she said, real soft, like—like a prayer? “Gracias.” And that was it. And I really just wanted to be there next to her. I mean: that was just...enough.

{Projection: a very young Beatriz is sweeping, and Abbie is hoisting a crate over her head}

Abbie is taking the stools off the bar—prepping to open. She hoists one over head a little too swiftly, almost knocking herself over. Bea walks in at the perfect moment, and keeps her and the stool from falling. They stabilize each other.

ABBIE

Uhhh. Wow. Thanks! (Covering) I mean—I do that all the time. It's not something that (happens).

At this point, Bea's English is still thickly accented and a little slow. She works hard to understand and be understood.

...
...

ABBIE
Sorry. (Beat)

BEA (Slow)
No. These are berry heaby...

ABBIE
Huh?

BEA
Hea-by...these are...ber-ry—Hea-by...

ABBIE (Not getting it)
Oh. Yeah. Sure! (Beat) What's your name?

BEA
Beatriz Luz.

ABBIE
Oh! *Luz*. Like...light?

A weak smile from Bea.

BEA
Si. Uh...pero people—they call me...Bea.

ABBIE (Genuine)
Huh. Oh uhh...

BEA
Que?

ABBIE (Points to herself)
Nothing—people—they call me—*A?* (*Laughs*).

...
...

ABBIE
So *usually*, we try to have folks on the books—I mean—it's protocol, ya know?

BEA
I know. Pero, I hear—my friend, she say...

ABBIE

Morales...yeah...she worked here...(lowers her voice) *like this...*for several...well, for a long time...but the city...they're getting tough on us and...

BEA

I see.

ABBIE

It's—it's not my policy?

...

...

ABBIE

I mean—they are—they are gettin'—tougher right now. And I don't—I don't wanna get in trouble—my boss? Mr. Jay—he's an asshole! It's not good for (anyone). And I just—

BEA (Solemn)

Si.

A takes a deep breath...

ABBIE

OK. O-K. We'll see...we'll see how it goes. I'm not gonna make any promises—but we'll just...See?

Bea lights up, and gives her an exuberant hug...then falls back.

ABBIE

Allright. Come back tomorrow. We'll start training.

Beatriz beams, and then unexpectedly throws her arms around Abbie, which totally unnerves and delights her. Without a word, she exits—Abbie reeling in her wake.

{Projection: Arden on the bar, dancing—everyone is cheering her on. Bea and Abbie are laughing with their crazy friend}

Abbie, Arden and Bea at the River. Arden has her head down, trying to ward off the spins.

ABBIE

Here. Drink.

Arden gestures over her head...

ARDEN
I don't wanna...

BEA
Arden?...Agua. Bebe!

ARDEN (Aggressive)
I'm not your baby!!! I am NOT your baby!!!

BEA
Lo se...girl, just...drink!

ARDEN
I don't—I don't—I'm jus'—a BLOB!

ABBIE/BEA
No!/Stop.

ARDEN
No-no-no. You're being nice. But I am. I am just a blob and I can't...I can't be less a blob and and that's what I am—so—so...

Arden raises her arms triumphantly. And then slumps back down. Maybe she almost slips off the chair, and they help her back up.

ABBIE (To Bea)
We should get her a cab. It's late....

BEA
I dunno. We should send her home like this?

ABBIE
I mean—we gotta lock up. So...

BEA
But—she's our friend?

ABBIE
Uh huh. She's also a raging alcoholic baby. She'll be OK. She does this—several times a week...

BEA
Several?

ABBIE
I mean...not every week. But...yeah.

BEA
I've never seen....

ABBIE (Dry)
We're not her only stop.

BEA (Sighs)
I dunno—what if I uh...take her home?

ABBIE
What? Why?

BEA
She's not far. Meatpacking?

ABBIE
How do you know that?

BEA
I've had tea at her place...

ABBIE
Oh. You've had tea. Huh.

BEA
Come on? This isn't news...

ABBIE
Oh! Isn't it though? I mean—

BEA
Noooo. It's not—the other day. I was in the West Village and I messaged you. And you thumbs-ed it up. I mean—how you say that—you put the thumbs up on it!??

ABBIE
I liked it. Yeah. OK. I don't (recall).

BEA
I see that. AND I have the messages. (Beat) I'm gonna take her home. It's the right thing to do.

ABBIE
'Kay.

...
...

ARDEN

Are you still there?? ARE YOU THERE??

ABBIE

Yeah, Ardy. Just—just keep it down. It's late.

ARDEN

Or early.

They all laugh.

ABBIE/BEA

Or early./ Or early, baby.

Abbie softens, takes Bea in her arms.

ABBIE

Take her home. But keep the meter running and drop her off in front her spot, Okay??

BEA

That is...very medieval.

ABBIE

Nah. It's just—it's just what my dad used to do with the bums. (Beat)

ARDEN

I'M NOT A BUM!!!

ABBIE

NOOOO...Not you Arden. YOU: are Class Act. (To Bea) And...maybe need a little stint up-state, if you know what I mean??

BEA

I'm gonna take her. I'll call you when I'm on the way back. Yes??

ABBIE (In her best Telemundo voice)

Si, mama...a la proxima vez!!!

Bea nudges Arden to wake up. Arden stirs, and then puts her head back down.

ARDEN

I just stay here? I. Just. Stay. Here.

ABBIE

Nahhh. You gotta go home baby. If you don't go home—you don't have the pleasure of walking BACK into the bar. In daylight. You'll think the days have just stopped cause you never saw the sun come up again. That could be really freaky...ya know?

ARDEN

I dunno. I hate the sun. I block it out.

BEA

You hate the sun?

ARDEN

Yeah. Target has these—these curtains...they're called "Sunblock Curtains." (Beat) They work!

ABBBIE

I'm sure they do. (Mouths to Bea) "Only alcoholics have "sunblock curtains." But let's help you up, OK?"

ARDEN

"Let's help you up, OK?" You sound like you're talking to a todd-e-ler. "Let me help you tie your shoe, lil guy. Awww..you're so...cute!"

ABBIE

Well, when you're...under the influence—you kind of retard you're intelligence...

ARDEN

Don't call me names!

ABBIE

A verb. It's a...you're just a bit slower. Is all... (To Bea) Get her arm.

Abbie and Bea hoist Arden up off the bar. They wobble a bit, but they get her to the door. Arden seems to steady, and bounds out the door like Bambi finding her new legs.

ABBIE

Jesus. She's taking the downsizing hard.

BEA

Downsizing?

ABBIE

She didn't say? She got fired last week. From her big cushy job, that she absolutely hates. She's got a good package. But she basically doesn't know what to do with herself now. She's drifting.

....
....

ARDEN (O.S.)
I CAN'T STAND UP!!!

BEA
Jesus y Maria. Okay (Gives Abbie a kiss) See you soon. (To Arden) I'm coming!!

{Projection: Bea is six months pregnant, Abbie is looking a little pensive}

Apartment. Abbie and Bea are playing Charades with each other. B is making a big belly with her hands.

ABBIE
Fat!! Santa Clause....Umm-uhhh...Buddha! Uh...Full!? Uh...Fiddler on The Roof...?

BEA
Fiddler on the Roof?? Y que?

ABBIE
I mean... "If I were a rich man...?" He talks about having a (big belly). Never mind...

BEA/ABBIE
It's obvious/You can't talk.

BEA/ABBIE
But you're not even trying/You just—that's the rules, and you can't (talk.)

ABBIE
Fine.

Bea tries one more time, this time acting it out more specifically...going into labor...

ABBIE
Pushing...Uh...struggle....uh...? BABY!?? Preg-nant??!!

Bea is exasperated and elated!!! Maybe she jumps!

ABBIE
Hmmm...Wait what?

BEA
Yeah. I think...I want to um...I want to have your baby? (Beat) No. Question Mark.

ABBIE
Ah. Ohhhh.

...
...

BEA
That is...not the reaction that I expected.

ABBIE
No—no-no-no. Don't. Please don't get me wrong. I love this—I want this—you KNOW I want (this). And—I mean—I work crazy hours—and I just...it's (expensive)...

BEA (Shrugs)
I know the realities...we all know the realities of...living? Pero—I mean, what are we gonna do, just not do it? I mean just—like crawl into a hole and die there? I don't want to (do that). I want to LIVE. I mean—what else is there?

ABBIE
It's not that (easy). We can't just—roll around in the hay and get pregnant, ya know?

BEA
I've been doing my research....we could get a donor...we could figure it out...! We could...

Bea goes to embrace Abbie. Abbie dodges her.

ABBIE
Yeah...but then we gotta kid, right? And its not just you and me, anymore. Right?

Bea embraces Abbie ...

BEA
Yes, it will always be you and me. Just—and then some...eh?

ABBIE (Lost)
And then some...

BEA
You don't have to make this decision right now. Not right this minute...

ABBIE
Right.

BEA
And...I mean...we could um...table it, for the now. We could—come back to it... ?

ABBIE
Of-course....

Another prickly silence.

BEA
Unclench your jaw.

ABBIE
Oh. Ohhh. I wasn't um (aware).

BEA
Right. (Beat) Uhhh...I'll go grab those cases and bring 'em up.

ABBIE
Good. That sounds (good)...

Bea goes to exit, and Abbie catches her by the arm.

ABBIE
It's not—you...I just—there are...risks? And I don't um...I don't—I just have a lot of—there's a lot at (stake). Ya know?

Bea takes her in, holds her head—kisses her forehead. Exits. Abbie stares after—and after a moment punches a wall/kicks a box/throws something in frustration.

Background Info: (Abbie's sister has had a miscarriage that ended her marriage.)

A and Bea's: Abbie is stuffing her face with some sandwich—she's eating her feelings...

ABBIE
There were some days that she was an utter mystery to me. I thought—you know I did really think most of the time—that we'd met in like, a past life or something. (You can't make this shit up.) I thought that there was something—extraordinary that linked us—but then there would be these pockets when she was completely unrecognizable to me? I felt a little like I was on the Titanic—and it was a really beautiful big ole ship that was headed for disaster.

{Projection: Bea crumpled on the rug, Abbie with her back to her.}

Abbie sits in her living room, in the dark. Bea comes in, wasted. The light gets turned on.

ABBIE
Enjoyed yourself?

BEA
MIERDA! How long (have you been there?)

ABBIE
I asked you a question.

BEA
I did. Not that it's any of your business.

ABBIE
Oh?

BEA
No. I'm a—goddamn grownup...and this isn't—isn't about you...(for once)..

ABBIE
Finally got something right. Not about me—it's about you...about your selfish, inconsiderate, asshole-ish behavior...and how you don't/ give a shit about anyone but yourself, under any circumstances...

BEA
What I think is so crazy—is you have this—tiny field of vision—there's no other ANYTHING...and everything else is less than, SMALL and I think...well I think that is very limiting—to be around...

ABBIE
Oh, now I'm limiting you? Now I'm somehow getting in the way of some grand VISION you have for yourself?

BEA
No. Oh no. I LOVE being looked after like a child and waited on, and—how you say—babied?? Who wouldn't love that shit!

ABBIE
No-no-no, don't worry your pretty little head about being babied. Cause that stops right here, right now. I'm good...we are free to leave at any time...

BEA
Yeah...but I'm—I'm trapped, now! Cause—cause I owe you and shit—right? I mean this whole thing? This whole thing—

ABBIE

That's what this is to you?

Bea takes a big step back...

BEA

I am—trash—this—this was a mistake...

ABBIE

A mistake??

BEA

Not—not (gestures) this...? Coming home tonight...

ABBIE

Where else would you have gone? Tonight?

BEA

Anywhere. Somewhere where I wasn't going to have to defend myself...I just—just wanted to chill...

ABBIE (Laughs)

You just want things to be *easy*. Well, I have news for you. Nothing is ever easy. Life has a way of being impossibly hard. Most of the time.

BEA

Are you kidding me? With this...lecture-bullshit about life being hard? What about your life has ever been hard?

ABBIE

What haven't I paid for in blood and sweat and—

BEA (deepens her voice)

You know NOTHING about blood. You know nothing about pain. If you ever: E-ver, try to pass off your little delicate life as anything less than that—I will. I will walk out that door, and you will never lay eyes on me again. Do you hear me?

A pensive beat. Abbie flops down on the sofa.

ABBIE

How are we here? What is happening?

...
...
...

BEA
We're drifting.

ABBIE
But...why?

BEA
Maybe...maybe people need to drift sometimes...(Laughs) I had...a boyfriend once. And I asked him..."where are we going? I mean..this thing of ours? Where is it headed?" And he said—"we're on a raft."

Bea gathers her things, gets ready to leave.

ABBIE
Don't...don't go...

BEA
I have to...(leans into kiss Abbie) But I will come back.

{Projection: Bea is curled up in Abbie's arms, quiet ease.}

The River. Abbie stands at the bar, as she cuts up fruit, making it into concentric circles.

BEA
You're wasting it...look at all this??

ABBIE
Yes. But it's beautiful.

BEA
What is beautiful about waste?

ABBIE
I mean—the aesthetic? (Beat) Here (shoves a clementine piece into her mouth).

BEA
Mmmm...that is—that is (so delicious...)

ABBIE
See? So that's worth it...the waste...

Bea disappears into another room with a small canvas bag—holds it out.

BEA

Listen...I know that it doesn't mean this to you...but when I left my country—this is all I had. All that I could take. And I can't just do what you do. It's...we're not the same....

ABBIE

We don't have to (be the same.) I mean, I get it—that I don't—

BEA

No. You don't. And I'm not—being dramatic right now. I'm just—I know that you don't. (Beat) When I see what you throw away? I mean...every day...and not just you—the River, the people on our block—perfectly good items...things... that my family? We would have killed for...and that's—

ABBIE

I'm—(sighs) I just wanted to have a nice morning...ya know? Sit here, and eat our avocado toast and fruit and... I dunno...read the paper, or some shit?

A beautiful moment between them...

BEA

Fucking avocado toast...(laughs)...really?

ABBIE

I mean—it's delicious...seriously...

Bea curls into Abbie's arms...

BEA

I didn't know that it could be like this. Back then? I didn't believe, to be honest...It was so hard to think about anything but...the next meal, and just the—I dunno..the basics...

ABBIE

Shh...you're here now...that was then...that was....

Bea stiffens...

BEA

Maybe it still is...in my bones...in my skin—are the memories, of having done without... maybe its not so easy to shake...

ABBIE

I get that...that I get...(Beat) But hold onto me...and it's gonna be alright...just hold onto me...

{A Projection: Bea in the bathroom mirror of the bar. Abbie stands behind her—they look lost}

A and Bea's. Abbie is cleaning up, after a long night. She's going off on one of her rants...she's half in the bag. Bea sips a seltzer, bored.

ABBIE

Dating is kind of like a rug. You look at a hundred rugs. And none of them really stands out. No diss. Just: meh. And you wait and you wait- and you think...nah...not gonna happen. And sometimes you see someone else's rug--and that rug FEELS perfect. Cause: shaggy and soft, and nestles the parts of your feet that hurt. But: nope. That's not your rug.

But we keep going out day after day. Searching for the rug that is gonna bring it all together. That's gonna off set the fact your furniture don't match. It's gonna make you feel stuff about your home you ain't never felt before. You gonna be moved to sit by that damn rug day after day with a new found patience-even if stains stay in that mug.

Love is like that. It's got you on stains and burn marks. It makes up for your lack of taste. It just: keeps showing up.

BEA

You just compared me...to a rug??

ABBIE

See. That's it--that's how you do me...reducing stuff...!!

Abbie sits in the bar, in the dark—a red light behind her—space filled with smoke.

ABBIE (A hush)

Oh Bea? Don't leave me...don't leave me...don't leave me...don't leave me...

Bea cries out in the darkness—an anguished scream.

{Projection: Abbie and Bea standing at the top of some majestic hill, sweaty and happy—arm in arm.}

A and Bea's. Bea is making sandwiches. Packing them neatly. She is humming a song from her home. A comes in, and grabs a sandwich....

BEA

No-no-no—these—these are for later....

ABBIE

Pero...why? I don't want later. I want now.

BEA

And I don't care...I made them for not now...I made them...for later...I want to do this later...

ABBIE (Stubborn)

I'm hungry—now. I want to eat...now.

BEA

But that's—there's other things—there's other things (to eat).

ABBIE (Shrugs)

What's the difference (now or later).

BEA

The difference is that I want to make this for later. I want this to go on the hike with us, so that we don't I dunno...starve, or whatever on the trail, and if I can make this snack for us, then we have something to eat...for later. Is why. That is why.

ABBIE

And I get that...but maybe I don't like...I dunno rules...or whatever. (Beat) I'll be hungry later, then. I'll just—cause I ate it now, I'll just suffer.

BEA

Don't. Do not come crying to me when you want to eat, and there's nothing to eat, because I'm telling you—I will not feed you. I do not care. I will not.

ABBIE

Yeah. I hear you. (Beat) Heard.

BEA

Que no pienses en nadie, que no importa nada excepto de ti. Desgracia (continues insults...)

ABBIE

The thing is, I do kind of understand you...you know that, right?

BEA

I do. And I really don't care. Same as you.

ABBIE (hurt)

OK. Well—I'll be outside. When you're done prepping for our voyage to Mecca... (Beat) Forget it...

Abbie exits. Bea continues to sulk and make the sandwiches.

{A Projection: Bea pale, in a hospital gown, a large bump, and bright red exotic flowers. She is remarkably vibrant}

Abbie and Arden are cleaning up the bar...there are boxes everywhere.

ABBIE

I didn't...want that much. Just her. Is that too much to ask?? I mean—I manage a bar? A dive bar. I mean you want to know about this triumphant story, this fucking epic tale of two people who were destined to be together? Well—I dunno....I dunno if I have that. But when somebody's life force is slipping away...when the woman you love is closing her eyes for the last time—you wish—you wish you could erase every little squabble, and delete every time you said the shitty-thing-that-you-didn't-actually-mean-both-you -knew-you-had-to-say-because-it-would-kill-you-if-you-didn't-say-it. I didn't know that that would be the end, and when it was the end..I was holding on saying... MORE TIME!! I mean....really...just... GOD...more time! And its like all I have left are these fragmented moments—these snapshots of time...like film—you remember film, right? And there's just these stills? These photo negatives of a time that I hardly even remember—it's all—just distorted...

Abbie tries to lift a box—can't do it—Arden grabs it from her, they take a moment.

ARDEN

You don't have to finish today...we can finish this tomorrow.

ABBIE

Yeah...there's always tomorrow. (Beat) Until there isn't.

...
...
...

ARDEN

Abbie, get some rest, eh? There's nothing to do now. OK?

ABBIE

Yeah. Yeah, thanks.

Arden gathers her things. On her way out—

ARDEN (Soft)

You done good today, A. You're doing alright.

Abbie receives this with a gesture. Arden exits.

A sits in the bar alone. Only the A and Bea sign are lighting her. She moves rhythmically. She is drunk, and free. She finds an ease to her free movement...and then maybe it's erratic, and maybe it's erotic. And then she falls down, exhausted. Panting, looking up at the sign. The sign glows brighter.

Black out.

Abbie watches from inside. Then shuts the door slowly behind her, and locks it.

{A Projection: Bea sits by herself at a tea shop looking out the window, content.}

A and Bea's, is strewn with white lights, and boxes all around, preparing for the grand opening. Bea and Arden have been up for hours, working on the decorations. They've also been "celebrating."

BEA

I can't believe it! It isn't real. It doesn't feel (real).

ARDEN

Well if it ain't real now, wait til you get those bills coming in...it'll feel real then! *Real as fuck.*

Maybe Bea slaps her hand.

BEA

OK-OK. But—it's a big thing— we thought—sure—old man croaks...leaves the bar—up for grabs!?! But did we really—really know?

ARDEN (Mimics)

Can you ever really—really know??

...

...

BEA (Laughs)

I dunno. All these years—and this—little shit hole—is gonna be *our* little shit hole!

...

...

...

Bea goes behind the bar, and pours champagne.

BEA

A TOAST! To all of our hard work, and sweat and tears all of these—years! (A drunken giggle) This shit hole has held all of my memories—all my hopes and—(a little sad) It's been—everything—this—place....?

...

...

ARDEN

What's wrong?

BEA

Nothing.

Arden moves her chair into the bar, takes Bea's glass.

ARDEN (sweet)

Not nothing.

BEA

I don't know if I can (do this).

ARDEN

What?

BEA

I came here to get away from danger and *estrés*. This is not less stress. And Dios knows we will never make a lot of money. So...then what?

ARDEN

Yeah. But you'll have this place? It's yours—and A's?

BEA

Maybe it isn't—it isn't mine? You know? (sighs)

ARDEN

Listen, nena. You're gonna love it. It's gonna be—yours together... (Beat) But...?

BEA

But?

ARDEN

You haven't gotta just—stay—if you don't wanna.

BEA (Scoffs)

Y que?

ARDEN
You know? (Beat) You got options.

A quiet knowing grows. And Abbie emerges from the downstairs, and hovers, watching.

BEA
Options? (Beat) Please. Not now.

ARDEN (A little sullen, a little salty)
Riiiiight. (beat) You in *love* and shit. Pero?

BEA (Stern)
I don't know what you're talking about. (Lowers her voice) Drop it.

Abbie clears her throat—enters with a case of beers, and slams them down on the bar.

ABBIE
Ar-den?

...
...

ARDEN
I should (go).

BEA (Covers)
We were just—finishing up the favors.

Abbie fervently shakes her head. Sighs.

ABBIE
Hmmm. You were just finishing up.

A cold stare between them. Arden gives Bea a quick kiss on the cheek. Arden gathers her things. Exits. Lights fade, on A and Bea, in an uncomfortable stare.

{Projection: Bea holding her naturalization certificate, like a flag, beaming!}

The River. Abbie stands up on the bar, giving an imaginary speech. She's dons her blazer, ceremoniously, adjusts her mic—she also has a pad that she jots things down in. At some point, Bea sneaks in from the back stairs, unannounced.

ABBIE
I stand here before you...so proud and humbled by this experience. I didn't know who I was, or who I could be before (writes)—this moment—I have been a tumbleweed...(con-

siders) I have been a tumble *weave*...rolling in the wind, picking up tracks and debris along my my travels...travails? Toils?? (Jots the words down). All these years, most people know me as one thing—this thing...and yet—I am not that...I am a...well—I am—a maker...a (writes) creator! A creat-tress! (Drops the act). I've been slinging drinks since long before it was legal for me to do it. My dad felt sorry for me (and for himself) and gave me a job when I was fifteen. But all these years—I just knew—I had something left in me, something else that I knew I had to do, and that's the one thing I know—the one thing I know is—I'm here for something. I mean. Really. I am here. For something. And these little figures—these little creations of mine? They're the first tangible something that I've ever had. I can feel them in my hand. I can mold them. I can share them. I can watch kids play...? So that's—that's something. Ya know? That is some-thing.

Bea claps, wildly!!

BEA
ENCORE!!! ENCORE!!!

ABBIE (Bashful)
Always. Sneaking up on me.

BEA
Yes. (Playful mocking) “That is some-thing!” I didn't know you were such a speak-er!

ABBIE
Oh. You dunno a whole buncha things about me, baby.

BEA
Is that right?

ABBIE
Yes ma'am.

Abbie and Bea playfully box, flirt. Meanwhile, a strange woman walks into the bar. She maybe has sunglasses on, and is seemingly incognito.

WOMAN
Beer. IPA?

Abbie and Bea stare at him a beat. And then, Abbie climbs down off the bar.

ABBIE
Goose Island work, son?

WOMAN
I ain't your son.

ABBIE

Sorry. You just barely look old enough—can I see some ID? (Beat) It's protocol these days. They're cracking down.

BEA

We card everyone.

Woman begrudgingly fishes out his ID. Looks around.

...

...

WOMAN

Empty.

ABBIE

2:00 pm on a Wednesday. Gonna get the Happy Hour crowd shortly.

WOMAN

Yup.

...

...

ABBIE

Ain't seen you around here? You new to the neighborhood?

WOMAN

No. I just um—I usedta work around here. It felt—familiar? Like somewhere I had been. Before.

ABBIE

Yeah. I mean—ya know—New York isn't what it used to be. It's—well, even around here its fancy. Or fanci-er. Other day? I seen a crackhead with a credit card!

Woman cracks half a grin.

WOMAN

You lie.

ABBIE

Cross m' heart! And I known this dude—long time. Since I was knee-high. But I did. I seen him literally swipe his card at a cashier—no maybe it was the chip situation, or whatever, but it was—it was this totally bizarre moment. I said to him “Peanut?” (That's what folks call him. His real name is Jacob. Which I learned from his card!) “Peanut... they gave you bank account?” Peanut say: “Aww, A...you know they jus' about giving these things away now. You can't tell me nothing about Donald Trump. First time in my

life a bank look at me twice!” (Laughs). That’s what it is—we living in new days and times...

WOMAN (Dark)

Mmm. I wonder about pointing fingers.

ABBIE

Ohh—kay. Sorry, didn’t mean to get—(political.)

WOMAN

Right. (Raises his beer) Another?

ABBIE

You wanna start a tab?

WOMAN

Yeah. Sure. (Beat) I’ll leave you my card.

Woman gets up, head to the bathroom.

ABBIE (Whispers)

She weird or something?

BEA

Yeah. I don’t have a good feeling.

ABBIE

Yeah. I’ll um...I’ll tell her to (go)...

Woman reappears, as she’s saying this.

ABBIE

Dunno what I was thinking—gettin’ alla this seasonal ale...terrible seller—

WOMAN (Direct)

You don’t gotta make conversation. I just—wanna sit and finish this.

ABBIE

Oh—kay....

Abbie goes back to her speech writing. Bea is stocking the bar, checking the inventory.

...

...

...

WOMAN
I like you...

BEA
What?

WOMAN
Yeah. I mean...I seen you..around...and I—well I like you. I find you—interesting...
what'd you say your name was?

BEA
I didn't say...

ABBIE
Listen...we don't wanna have any issues...

WOMAN
I know...we don't have any.
...
...

BEA
I think you should go.

ABBIE
Yeah. I think so too.

...
...

Woman finishes her beer. Takes a greedy look at both of them. Waits.

ABBIE
Yeah?

WOMAN (Flat)
The tab.

ABBIE
Oh!

Abbie grabs the card---thrusts it into her hand...the woman grabs it and licks it. Abbie pulls a way—maybe a second too late...

ABBIE

GET!!!!

The woman slinks out, satisfied. The door slams behind her.

ABBIE

What the hell was that?

...
...

BEA

She...licked you?

ABBIE

Yeah—I'm washing my hands—with alcohol—over and over.

BEA

I dunno.

ABBIE

What?

BEA (Laughs)

Nothing.

ABBIE

What??! That was...totally bizarre.

BEA

I think...I think you kinda dug it...maybe?

Abbie laughs, puzzled.

BEA

Hmm....OK. O-K.

...
...
...

Bea turns off the water. Dries her hands.

BEA

She's gone. Yes?

ABBIE

Yes.

Bea leans her head on Abbie's chest.

BEA

I really did like your speech.

ABBIE

Ha.

BEA

No. I mean—it needs work! But—I think—its got heart. Just like you! (Beat) And I'm excited to play with your toys....

ABBIE

Ohhh yeaah???

BEA

Oh yeaaaah!!

They have a moment of ease.

ABBIE

Lock the door.

BEA

What?

ABBIE

If you want her to come back then go ahead and leave it....!

Bea sticks her tongue out at her, but goes ahead and locks the door seductively...

ABBIE

Now come here. Slowly. And take off an item of clothing, with each step.

Bea giggles, and begins to do her strip tease.

ABBIE

Ah-ah-ah—I want each item to be removed. As if you were moving through molasses...

Bea slows down, taking off a watch, a shirt, a belt...her bra drops down her waist. Abbie can't resist, and hoists her up on the bar...she lays her out...and looks at her...

ABBIE

A most perfect thing. (Beat) The most...perfect thing...

Abbie then begins at her neck and goes down her body with kisses...lights fade...

Abbie and Bea have bought the bar, and are setting it up. They are treating it like a newborn—establishing how they want it to look and feel, and customizing it to themselves.

BEA

I think this is where it goes...I think so, yes.

ABBIE

OK. Then that's where it goes...

BEA

Pero, I dunno...maybe not, also. I mean—it could go there—or there...I kind of like it like off center, maybe? It's kind of cute.

ABBIE

I mean...it's good anywhere, baby. It's really...fine.

BEA (irritated)

Fine.

ABBIE

Oh Jesus—it's not—it's—it's lovely. It's masterful—its—

BEA

No-no-no. You said it. You said fine. So what is it? Is it fine? Is it?

ABBIE

Babe? What's...what's happening right now?

BEA

I dunno, I Just...I dunno...it's not—I mean—if were put it anywhere. Maybe if er put it anywhere—it won't be—I mean—we can't jus put things—anywhere. There has to be a certain...a kind of an order...or to it. Or maybe—it's just—well—then nothing matters. At. All!

ABBIE

Right.

...

...

BEA

You think I'm crazy.

ABBIE

No. (Beat) You're fine.

At this Bea cannot help but laugh.

ABBIE

No. I mean it, gurrll...you are foooine. (Grabs her around the waist). Baby. We can do this ting.

BEA

It's so—BIG.

ABBIE (Taking it in)

Yeah. Yeah it is. (Beat) And so are we. We are big. And it is big. And maybe we are big enough. For it. Eh?

BEA

Si. Si...you—you're right.

...

...

BEA

It needs to go right in the center. Dead center. So that when you come in—and some one, I don't know—they come up to us and they ask for a...what do they ask for?

ABBIE

Slippery nipple...six slippery nipple shots...

BEA

Yes: they say—well that! (A face) They ask for that. And they look at us, but between us—they see this. They see our names. And they know that we are here. And they are here. In this place with us. And that's—definite. Like there's nothing to question, or whatever. Yes?

ABBIE

Yes! Yeah.

They kiss, a synergy of something new. Beatriz is elated, mesmerized by her work.

ABBIE (Gentle)

Can I keep working on this now?

BEA (Surprised)

Oh! Yes. Yes of course.

{A Projection: Bea twirls in a new dress, at the grand opening of the bar, as a suited Abbie cuts the ribbon, a proud grin}

ABBIE

Maybe—love doesn't end?? I mean...maybe it continues—it's like—like a—line? It just goes on indefinitely. Maybe there's this thing that connects us all forever and ever—and it isn't just—*fixed*. (A breath) I had a friend? May, she was having a a terrible fucking time during her divorce—just shit...couldn't eat, couldn't sleep. Picking up the kids late. And I said to her: "May—ya gotta cut this shit out." And she said—I'll never forget—she said—"the love? Is suffocating me. I mean—I have so much love in my heart—that's it's bursting out of me and I can't do anything else. I don't know what to do. What would you have me do?"

If swans mate for life—then maybe I did too. I mean—maybe I'll always be her "A." (Holds her arms out to the sky). Always be....hers. I dunno...maybe.

I've been sitting here with my maybes. Maybe if I hadn't—maybe if she hadn't. Maybe if those fucking doctors—had. Ya know? Maybes. And mmmm—those little devils can eat you alive. Maybe things just are what they are.

Maybe.

Ya know what I think? I just want to sit here—and imagine that she's coming back in. That it's just another day. That I don't have to—shovel my insides into my stomach and try to pretend right now. That I can just---be easy again. Can I do that...for a while??

END OF PLAY

Timeline of the Love of A and Bea.

2003: (Bea, 16 and Abbie, 18)

Beatriz comes to America as an undocumented immigrant, in 1998. She is housed in Miami, and then finds her way to New York. She has to sell her body and transport drugs to make it this far. When she arrives in New York, she has to stay in close quarters and struggles to find work.

Abbie begins working for her father's friend's bar, The River. She is underage, but bar-backs and waitresses.

2005: (Bea, 18 and Abbie, 20)

Beatriz moves to Hells Kitchen, is working as a maid in a sketchy hotel. Abbie's father passes away.

2007 (Bea, 20 and Abbie, 22)

Beatriz is looking for a job, her friend Morales gives her the name of The River. Abbie is in charge of hiring the cleaning staff. Abbie and Bea meet.

2008 (Bea, 21 and Abbie 22)

Bea and Abbie have their first kiss. They begin casually dating, though Bea resists.

2009 (Bea, 22 and Abbie 24)

Abbie and Bea start discussing living together. Bea starts having issues with immigration again. Abbie becomes the manager of the River.

2011 (Bea, 24 and Abbie 26)

Gay marriage passes. They get married, in a small ceremony. Arden officiates.

2014 (Bea, 26 and Abbie 28)

The owner of the River dies. They consider what it might be like to own the bar. Things feel easy.

2015 (Bea, 27 and Abbie 29)

Arden starts to flirt with Bea. Abbie turns a blind eye, pretending it isn't there. They save for the bar.

2017 (Bea, 29 and Abbie 31)

They buy the bar—and rename it A and Bea.

2018 (Bea, 31 and Abbie 33)
Arden and Bea begin their affair.
Abbie pretends its doesn't exist.

2019 (Bea, 32 and Abbie 34)
Abbie finds a picture of Arden and Bea together.
It threatens to tear them apart.

2020 (Bea, 33 and Abbie 35)
Bea and Arden end their affair.
Bea and Abbie attend therapy.

2021-2022 (Bea 34-35, Abbie 35-36)
Bea wants to have a baby. Abbie is skeptical,
and wants to hold off.
They begin researching IVF, and all of their options.

2023 (Bea 36 and Abbie 38)
They try several rounds of IVF. It finally takes,
even though they are emotionally exhausted from the process.

2024 (Bea 37, Abbie 39)
Bea's water breaks, and they rush to the hospital.
They wait for hours to be seen, and Beatriz has complications.
Bea dies of neglect in the hospital, bleeding out in front of her wife.

2025 (Abbie 40)
Abbie is faced with what to do with the bar and the remnants of her life.
Arden is also facing the loss of a partner, love and friend.









