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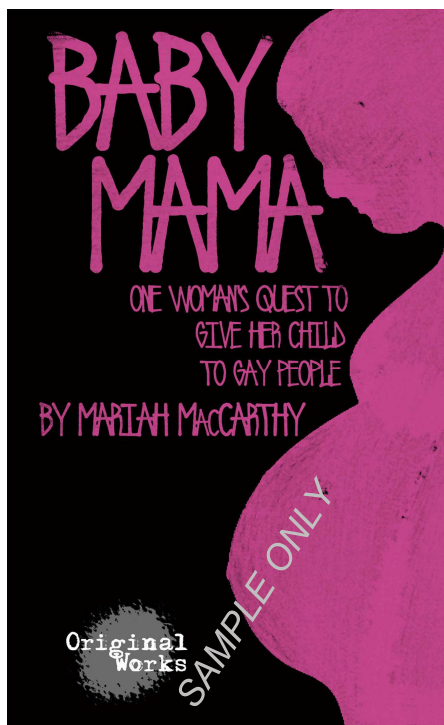
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Magic Trick
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*Also Available By
Mariah MacCarthy*



**Baby Mama: One Woman's Quest to
Give Her Child to Gay People**

Synopsis: *Baby Mama: One Woman's Quest to Give Her Child to Gay People* tracks one birth mother's true adoption journey, from conception to placement with the gay couple of her dreams—while still living her life, dating, and attending the occasional orgy. From adoption agencies to vaginal discharge, from burlesque to good-byes, this intimate journey is up close and personal.

Cast Size: 1 Female

Magic Trick

by Mariah MacCarthy

SAMPLE ONLY

Characters:

BANA, 20s, female, any ethnicity. Paralyzed from the waist down, uses a wheelchair. Someone everyone falls in love with.

CLARA, 20s/30s, female, any ethnicity. Performs and teaches burlesque. Someone who enjoys stirring pots.

ERIC, 30s, male, any ethnicity. Has a trust fund he doesn't call a trust fund. Someone who feels things strongly, especially when he feels disrespected.

Setting:

New York City, various points in time within the past two years. Five major settings: two different studio apartments, a burlesque stage, a bar, and a bathroom/dressing room area.

Note:

You'll need at least one stage kitten—someone to take the clothes offstage after the performers have removed them. You are encouraged to incorporate this person (or people) into the action as much as possible. For more information on stage kittens, see: <http://burlesquedaily.blogspot.com/2011/08/stage-kitten-guidelines.html>

You are also encouraged to display the scene titles/timestamps somewhere, via projections or placards.

You are also encouraged to reflect the diversity of New York City in your casting, and to seek a wheelchair-using actress for the role of Bana if possible.

A slash (/) means the next character starts their line.

A beat is a breath, a thought.

A long beat is longer than that.

A silence is longer than a long beat.

A long silence is longer than that.

If you do not choreograph your transitions like a ballet, your audience will suffer.

This play may NOT be done in a wheelchair-inaccessible venue.

Magic Trick was first presented in August 2012 as part of the New York International Fringe Festival at HERE Arts Center.

Director: Christina Roussos
Clara: Kim Gainer
Bana: Diana Oh
Eric: Nic Grelli
Stage Kitten: Lindsey Austen

Set/Props Design: Tim McMath
Light Design: Lois Catanzaro
Sound Design: Gerry Marletta
Costume Design: Orli Nativ
Burlesque Guru: Jonny Porkpie
Production Manager: Tzipora Kaplan
Stage Manager: Cliff Moller

It was then fully mounted by Caps Lock Theatre, with Jack Sharkey, Executive Producer, at Theatre Row from August-September 2015.

Director: Christina Roussos
Clara: Kim Gainer
Bana: Chet Siegel
Eric: Ethan Hova
Stage Kitten: Gina Doherty

Set Design: Tim McMath
Light Design: Lois Catanzaro
Sound Design: Gerry Marletta
Costume Design: Allison Dawe
Choreography: Sidney Erik Wright
Fight Choreography: Jesse Geguzis
Production Manager: Tzipora Kaplan
Stage Manager: Laura Hirschberg
Assistant Stage Manager: Julia Veeh
Producers: Leta Tremblay and Mariah MacCarthy
Associate Producers: Sarah Matteucci and Daniel John Kelley

MAGIC TRICK

Part 8: The Thwarted Threesome.

(Groundhog Day, 10:00 pm.)

(Clara is performing a shit-kicking, rock-and-rolling explosion of a burlesque routine. She's having an awesome time, and it's contagious. By the end of her routine, as often happens in these situations, she wears only pasties and a g-string.)

(At the bar. Eric and Bana drink. Bana uses a wheelchair.)

BANA: She's *totally* checking us out. You didn't see?

ERIC: No.

BANA: I'm gonna wave.

(Bana waves.)

ERIC: Why?

BANA: 'Cause she's looking at us.

ERIC: Is she weirded out?

BANA: No, she's waving back.

ERIC: She probably thinks you know her.

BANA: She's coming over.

ERIC: No she isn't. She's just—oh. Cool.

CLARA: *(Approaching them, still just wearing pasties and a g-string.)* Hi.

BANA: Hi!

CLARA: Do we know each other?

BANA: No, I just wanted to congratulate you. On your performance.

ERIC: Yeah. Really extraordinary.

CLARA: Oh, you guys are so sweet! Is this your first time here?

BANA: Yup.

CLARA: Well thank you so much for coming.

ERIC: Oh, our pleasure.

CLARA: What are your names?

BANA: I'm Bana, and this is my boyfriend Eric.

ERIC: Hi.

CLARA: Nice to meet you. I'm Miss Clara T.

BANA: Can we buy you a drink or something, Clara?

CLARA: Oh, I drink free here—I could actually get *you* guys free drinks if you want...

ERIC: Oh, twist our arms!

CLARA: What are you having?

BANA: Gin and tonic.

ERIC: Jameson's on the rocks.

CLARA: You got it.

BANA: Thank you, Clara.

CLARA: Of course! You guys are so sweet!

(She exits.)

ERIC: Wow.

BANA: You were saying?

ERIC: You are *smooth*.

BANA: What do you think? Of her?

ERIC: She's nice. It's a little...unreal.

BANA: She wants us.

ERIC: I hope you're right.

BANA: She does. I can tell.

(Clara re-enters.)

CLARA: Gin and tonic for the lady...

BANA: Danke.

CLARA: ...and Jameson's for the gentleman.

ERIC: Thanks so much.

CLARA: Cheers, you two.

BANA AND ERIC: Cheers!

(They all clink and drink.)

BANA: So Clara. Tell us about yourself.

CLARA: Well what do you want to know?

BANA: How you got into taking your clothes off for strangers,
what you do the rest of the time...

CLARA: Usually taking them off somewhere else. I do this all
over the city.

ERIC: Well hey, if you've got it, flaunt it...

BANA: Where do you go to learn this stuff? The burlesque?

CLARA: I just kinda make it up as I go.

BANA: There are classes, right?

CLARA: Yeah, you can learn the basics in a class, but then what you do with it—that's up to you.

BANA: I'd like to go.

CLARA: Go to—?

BANA: To a class.

CLARA: Oh! Oh, you totally should.

ERIC: A burlesque class?

BANA: Yeah, why not?

CLARA: It's a—well sure! I mean it's, you'd have to find the right instructor.

BANA: What do you mean?

ERIC: Is it because there's, I mean she wouldn't exactly be doing the "bump and grind"...

CLARA: Well, you just need someone to jive with you and see where you're coming from, y'know? To work with what you've got and really pay proper attention to you.

ERIC: Like private lessons?

(Clara and Bana exchange a look.)

CLARA: ...Um, yeah! Yeah, that's a thought.

BANA: Why private lessons?

ERIC: So you don't end up sitting through a bunch of stuff that's not gonna apply.

BANA: Well I plan on sitting through it anyway...

ERIC: Right. I didn't mean—sorry. (*Beat.*)

CLARA: How are you guys doing on your drinks?

ERIC: I'm good.

BANA: (*Gulping hers down.*) I'm just about done.

CLARA: You want another one?

BANA: Yes, thanks.

(*Clara exits.*)

BANA (Cont'd): Why'd you say that about private lessons?

ERIC: What? Should I not have said that?

BANA: ...No. Never mind.

ERIC: Are you annoyed or something?

BANA: No. I'm fine.

ERIC: For the record, it'd be crazy hot if you did burlesque.

BANA: Thanks.

ERIC: Are you sure you're OK?

BANA: Yes! Stop asking me.

ERIC: OK. (*Beat.*) I'm gonna use the men's room.

BANA: OK.

(Eric kisses her and exits. Bana suddenly starts to seem a bit panicked. Clara returns.)

CLARA: How you feeling, sweetie?

BANA: I'm OK.

CLARA: Cheer up. This is supposed to be fun.

BANA: I am having fun.

CLARA: Good.

BANA: He's cute, right?

CLARA: He is.

BANA: Toldja. Do you want to sit?

CLARA: I don't wanna take Eric's seat.

(Bana pats her lap. Clara sits on her lap.)

CLARA (Cont'd): Now this is more like it.

BANA: Hi.

CLARA: Hi.

(She kisses Bana's forehead.)

CLARA (Cont'd): We're gonna have fun. OK?

BANA: OK. He just came out of the bathroom.

CLARA: OK.

(She gives Bana a long kiss. Behind Clara's back, Bana gives Eric a thumbs-up. Eric watches for a beat before approaching the two women.)

ERIC: Hope I'm not intruding.

CLARA: Not at all.

ERIC: (*Fumbling for something to say.*) Can I...get you two... anything...?

(*Clara kisses him.*)

CLARA: You can get us that.

ERIC: OK.

BANA: He's good at that.

(*Clara and Eric kiss again.*)

ERIC: You always make out with your patrons?

CLARA: For free? Rarely.

ERIC: Ha.

CLARA: But you two are special.

ERIC: Well. We're honored.

CLARA: Me too.

BANA: I propose a toast. To the naked lady.

CLARA: To new friends.

BANA: Cheers.

ERIC: So, I'm gonna propose something, and I want you both to trust that I'm trying not to be the pushy douchebag guy...

BANA: He's not a pushy douchebag.

ERIC: And I'm perfectly happy to just stay at this bar and make out, but. Clara. Do you get high?

CLARA: I do not. I stick with alcohol.

ERIC: OK. Well. If you had said yes, I was going to propose that you come to our place and get high with us, but since you don't, I propose that you just...come over.

CLARA: Come over and...

ERIC: And, whatever. If you made out with us some more, that'd be cool, or just listen to some vinyl and have drinks, or you could take your clothes off again, or we could all take our clothes off, or not, or...Just, whatever.

CLARA: Just whatever.

ERIC: But no pressure.

CLARA: Can I think about it?

ERIC: Sure! Take your time.

BANA: But you totally should.

CLARA: You guys do this often?

ERIC: No. This is a first for us too.

BANA: We're threesome virgins.

ERIC: Well we haven't yet established that that's what's happening tonight.

BANA: Yet.

(Bana starts softly singing something like Christina Aguilera: "Come on over, come on over baby...")

CLARA: She's incorrigible, isn't she?

ERIC: Can't talk her out of anything.

CLARA: ...I would love to come over.

ERIC: Really?

CLARA: Yeah. Let me get my stuff.

ERIC: OK. Really?

CLARA: Yeah. Just gotta get, y'know, dressed.

ERIC: ...OK.

(Clara leaves for the dressing room.)

ERIC (Cont'd): Is this really happening?

BANA: I think so.

ERIC: I just never figured it would actually happen.

BANA: Oh come on. Give us a little more credit.

ERIC: You're cool with this, right?

BANA: Fuck yeah.

ERIC: And you know it's not 'cause I'm not satisfied with you or anything, right?

BANA: I know.

ERIC: OK. Good.

(Clara reappears, still not wearing clothes.)

ERIC (Cont'd): You sure you won't be cold?

CLARA: You know what, I think I need to just pack my stuff up and go home.

BANA: What?

CLARA: I've just, I've had kind of a long day, and I think I need to just hit the sack.

BANA: Really?

CLARA: Yeah, it was super nice meeting you guys, and some other night I would totally come over, just, tonight is not a good night. For this. *(Beat.)*

ERIC: No worries, I mean, like I said...no pressure, you know?

CLARA: Thanks for understanding. *(Beat.)* Bana, it was really nice meeting you.

BANA: Nice meeting you.

CLARA: OK. Ciao.

(She leaves. Beat.)

ERIC: So that was weird, right?

BANA: Yeah.

ERIC: I mean, I still get to go home with the hottest woman here. *(Beat.)* I'm talking about you.

BANA: Thank you.

ERIC: You OK? You look sad.

BANA: I'm not sad. Why would I be sad?

ERIC: Are you sad that we got rejected?

BANA: I'm not sad!

ERIC: OK. *(Beat.)* Want me to get you another drink?

BANA: Yes please. Thanks.

(He goes to the bar.)

Part 1: Eric Bana, for the first time.

(Two summers ago.)

(Bana at a bar, alternating between checking her phone and watching the door. Eric approaches her.)

ERIC: Sucks to get stood up, huh?

BANA: Hi, sorry, I'm waiting for someone.

ERIC: Oh, I know that. I mean I see that. I just see that you're waiting for someone who's very late and probably not coming. Which sucks.

BANA: I don't really think it's any of your business.

ERIC: OK, fair. That's fair. I just, I've been there and wanted to say hi in case you felt like commiserating.

BANA: There's nothing to commiserate about. I'm waiting for someone.

ERIC: It's not a pity thing—

BANA: Never said it was.

ERIC: OK look. You've clearly got game, right? I mean, you're in here on the weekends all the time, always with someone different, clearly they're lining up around the block to go out with you, right? I just, I've noticed you here and, girlfriend, you've got game.

BANA: You're creeping me out a little, dude, not gonna lie.

ERIC: I'm sorry. Just wanted to congratulate a fellow artist, maybe buy her a drink. While she "waits for someone." But if I'm creeping you out, I'll go. *(Starts to go.)*

BANA: Gin and tonic. Tanqueray.

(Eric flashes her a thumbs-up and proceeds to the bar. Bana shuts her phone off; it makes a happy “turning-off” phone sound. Eric returns with their drinks.)

ERIC: L’chaim.

BANA: Cheers.

(They clink.)

BANA (Cont’d): So you’ve been keeping tabs on me.

ERIC: No, no.

BANA: Are you stalking me?

ERIC: I am definitely not stalking you.

BANA: You’ve got like a camera in my apartment...

ERIC: Nooo...

BANA: Should I go Google “Bana livestream”? See what comes up?

ERIC: What’s a Bana livestream?

BANA: Hi. I’m Bana.

ERIC: Eric. Nice to meet you.

(They shake.)

BANA: So together we are... Eric Bana.

ERIC: What?

BANA: The actor. Eric Bana. Eric Bana.

ERIC: Oh! That’s funny. That’s good. Um, but no, I’m not stalking you.

BANA: You just keep track of my dates.

ERIC: I watch people. I'm a people-watcher.

BANA: Don't have anything better to do, huh?

ERIC: Youch. You're going all-out with the "negging," aren't you?

BANA: What's a negging? Is that like jeggings?

ERIC: Jeggings?

BANA: Jeans, leggings? Jeggings?

ERIC: No, neg, short for negative, like insulting someone as a way of hitting on them.

BANA: What makes you think I'm hitting on you?

ERIC: And now playing coy. Switching it up. You're good.

BANA: So you don't have anything better to do than come here and watch people? Alone?

ERIC: Sure I do. Masturbating, for one.

BANA: Uh-huh.

ERIC: But there's only so many you can rub out in one night, you know?

BANA: That was good. Self-deprecating, casually bringing sex into the conversation. Ballsy. But smart.

ERIC: Well. Apparently neither of us can get away with any of our usual tricks.

BANA: Apparently not.

ERIC: Should we skip the part where we ask about each other's interests and just make out?

BANA: No, ask me about my interests. I like that part.

ERIC: Well, why don't you tell me about your interests?

BANA: I have all *kinds* of interests.

ERIC: Fascinating.

(They make out. It's good. Really good.)

ERIC (Cont'd): You know what would be funny?

BANA: What?

ERIC: If your date walked in right now.

BANA: I hope he does. Fucker.

(They make out some more.)

BANA (Cont'd): So what happened to that blond chick you were here with last weekend?

ERIC: Ah-HA! You've seen me here too!

BANA: Of course I've seen you. I'm paralyzed, not blind.

ERIC: You've been checking me out.

BANA: Maaaaaybe.

ERIC: Good to know.

BANA: But Blondie?

ERIC: Um, Blondie was, shall we say, not the greatest company.

BANA: So I don't have to worry about some other girl waltzing in here and kicking my ass.

ERIC: No more than any other night, I think.

BANA: That's good.

ERIC: What about this douchefuck you're waiting on? Blind date?

BANA: Kinda. Tinder?

ERIC: Tinder! Love me some Tinder.

BANA: Yeah, we've been talking for awhile, and I don't always tell people about the chair because then sometimes they don't show, but our conversation was getting kind of deep, you know? Like, I felt bad withholding that. So I told him. And now he's not here.

ERIC: That guy's a fucking idiot. I'm not just saying that.

BANA: I agree.

(They make out some more.)

ERIC: You are insanely hot.

BANA: Thanks.

ERIC: I'm going to be very forward here, but I would kind of like to take all your clothes off. Could I do that?

BANA: We'll see.

ERIC: All right, back to coy, that's cool. I'm patient.

BANA: Your drink looks a little low. You want another one?

ERIC: Sure. Uh, Jameson's on the rocks.

BANA: Be right back.

(She kisses him and wheels over to the bar.)

Part 9: I'm Sorry I Smell Sometimes

(Groundhog Day, 11:59 pm.)

(Eric and Bana come in the door of their Chelsea studio. She's sobered up more than he has.)

ERIC: Ladies' room or men's room?

BANA: Men's room.

(He goes to the bathroom. She pulls her phone out the minute the coast is clear and starts texting furiously. When the response comes, her reaction is a non-verbal kind of "Really?" She shakes her head and puts her phone away. He comes out of the bathroom and they both strip down to their bedtime outfits, which for him is just boxers and for her is a little cotton cami and briefs. He flops down on the bed face-down in that way that feels really good when you're kind of drunk. She climbs into bed with a book and tries reading for a moment, but can't concentrate.)

BANA: Come here.

(He cuddles up to her. Long beat.)

BANA (Cont'd): I'm sorry I smell sometimes.

ERIC: What?

BANA: I mean, I think I've gotten a lot better, but showering is just such a pain in the ass, and some days I just don't feel up to it and—I'm sorry. I know it's gross.

ERIC: You don't smell.

BANA: No, it's OK. I do sometimes.

ERIC: But you don't.

BANA: I do, though.

ERIC: Where is this coming from? (*Beat.*) Hey. You really don't smell. OK?

BANA: OK.

ERIC: Are you OK?

BANA: No, I just—you don't have to stay with me, you know.

ERIC: What the hell are you talking about?

BANA: If you thought you had to, or thought you'd look like an asshole if you left—

ERIC: Are you insane?

BANA: I just want you to know you don't have to stay. If you don't want to.

ERIC: But I want to! More than anything.

BANA: OK, but if that ever changed, you could leave. I'm a big girl.

ERIC: But I don't wanna leave.

BANA: OK. Good to hear. OK.

ERIC: Do you want me to leave?

BANA: No. No, not at all.

ERIC: (*Beat.*) Is there anything you need to tell me?

BANA: No.

ERIC: So this is all just...

BANA: Just insecurity.

ERIC: Don't scare me like that, OK?

BANA: OK.

(They kiss.)

ERIC: Is it just me, or have we not had sex in awhile?

BANA: It's been a few weeks.

ERIC: We should do that.

BANA: Not right now, honey.

ERIC: No, just in general. *(Beat.)* Though that girl Clara got me really excited.

BANA: I'm sure we'll fantasize about her together later.

ERIC: Mmm.

(He makes some kind of cuddly/sexual move on her, which she tolerates but does not encourage. He backs off.)

ERIC (Cont'd): Would you hand me my pills, please?

BANA: Sure.

(She hands him his pills. He takes them.)

BANA (Cont'd): You about to pass out?

ERIC: Yeah. You?

BANA: I'm gonna finish this.

ERIC: You're done already?

BANA: 15 pages left.

ERIC: You read so fast. You're like a cyborg.

BANA: Good night honey.

ERIC: Good night my love.

(He cuddles up to her. She keeps reading for a bit, then puts her book down and prods him. He doesn't move.)

BANA: Honey? *(Beat.)* Honey?

(Nothing. Super slowly and super carefully, she extricates herself from his grasp—slowly, slowly, slowly—then sits apart from him and watches him sleep for a long moment.)

SAMPLE ONLY

Part 3: Compliments at Gunpoint.

(Last summer, I am.)

(Bana and Eric in bed after a failed seduction attempt on Eric's part. Awkward. Silence. Finally:)

ERIC: So obviously, I mean, you don't have to do anything you don't want to...

BANA: Yeah I know.

ERIC: Just, um...next time, could you just...like, it'd just be nice if you could tell me, you know. That you still...are attracted to me, or, that you like my body, just, something nice. To offset... You know?

BANA: No. What are you asking me to do?

ERIC: Just, it's kind of bruising, you know? Rejection? And I mean, if you don't want to then obviously we shouldn't, but just, if you could compliment me or something. That's all.

BANA: Honey. I love you and I'm very attracted to you and I think sex with you is awesome, but...I'm not gonna tell you that every time we don't have sex.

ERIC: Why not?

BANA: It's not really honest, you know? If I'm just doing it because you want me to and not because it's occurring to me spontaneously in the moment.

ERIC: Right, but I'm the rejected party, and that's a bad situation, and you should make the situation right, is all.

BANA: I just don't think I should have to apologize for being tired—

ERIC: No, not an apology, I'm just in a really vulnerable position—

BANA: I know, but honey—your every boner is not my problem.
(*Beat.*)

ERIC: Wow.

BANA: I mean, it's not.

ERIC: You think of it as a problem?

BANA: Only because you're making it one.

ERIC: How am I making it a problem?

BANA: You're giving me an ultimatum: "Fuck me or compliment me."

ERIC: Why should you mind doing either of those things?

BANA: Those things are a gift, not an obligation.

ERIC: But why should it feel like an obligation? You're supposedly in love with me.

BANA: I *am* in love with you, but a compliment at gunpoint is not a real compliment, sweetie.

ERIC: At *gunpoint*?

BANA: That's what it feels like.

ERIC: Do you hate me?

BANA: OK, drama queen—

ERIC: Are you just trying to hurt me now?

BANA: No, I am not out to get you. Just 'cause I'm not on the edge of my seat, waiting to deliver an aria on the beauty of your body, does not mean I am on a mission to hurt your feelings, OK princess?

ERIC: Why are you being such a bitch? (*Beat.*)

BANA: Right.

(She starts to get up.)

ERIC: Where are you going?

BANA: Out.

ERIC: Don't go out.

BANA: Don't tell the bitch what to do.

ERIC: I'm sorry I said that, OK? I'm sorry.

BANA: Well you did. You said it.

ERIC: I know. And I'm sorry. Just don't go out. *(Beat.)* I compliment your body all the time.

BANA: I know.

ERIC: I'm always complimenting your ass, and telling you you're beautiful—

BANA: I know.

ERIC: Do you just not find me attractive? Is that why you feel like you're at gunpoint?

BANA: I wouldn't be with you if I didn't find you attractive.

ERIC: Then just tell me that when you're rejecting me!

BANA: But I hate feeling like I *have* to.

ERIC: Well if making me feel good is such an inconvenience then, I'm just at a loss. I don't know what to do.

BANA: I don't either.

(Silence.)

BANA (Cont'd): I hated that thing you said about my ass, by the way.

ERIC: What?

BANA: That thing you said.

ERIC: About how I love having a girlfriend with such a great ass?

BANA: About how you love that my ass is yours alone and no one else knows what a great ass I have and how my ass is the best-kept secret in New York.

ERIC: What's wrong with all that?

BANA: It's like, "Hey, remember how your legs don't work? Oh well, at least it means I'm the only one who knows about your ass!"

ERIC: No, no, you're twisting my words around to make something really nice sound shitty—

BANA: What you meant is that you're the only one who knows I have a nice ass. And you like that.

ERIC: Yeah...?

BANA: I would *love* people to know what a great ass I have. I would *love* to have people check out my ass when I leave a room, or at least see something besides the back of my fucking chair. I hate it that they can't. (*Beat.*) You really didn't think of that?

ERIC: No, I thought I was just saying this nice thing.

BANA: Well it's not nice. It's shitty.

ERIC: OK, I won't say it again.

BANA: OK. Thanks.

(*Silence.*)

Part 11: If You're At the Bagel Place...

(The morning after Groundhog Day, 10:12 am.)

(Eric wakes up alone. He checks his phone, checks his computer. He calls to the closed bathroom door.)

ERIC: Hey honey?

(No response. He keeps on with his laptop.)

Honey, can you bring some Advil from the bathroom?

(A song like Patsy Cline's "Leavin' On Your Mind" comes on. Somewhere, on a burlesque stage, soft blue light comes up on Clara, dressed like a widow. She starts performing a striptease of mourning.)

Honey? *(Beat.)* Honey, you OK?

(He tries to keep on with his computer, but keeps looking at the closed bathroom door. The dance continues. Finally he gets up and knocks on the bathroom door.)

Honey?

(He puts his ear to the door and listens. Knocks again. The dance continues.)

Bana?

(He opens the door. No Bana. Weird. The dance continues. He grabs his phone from his bedside table and makes a call.)

Hey honey, it's me. Um, you appear to be not here, so just wanted to see where you were at, if you're out getting breakfast or something...Um, and if you're at the bagel place, could you get me a cinnamon raisin bagel with plain cream cheese and a black hazelnut coffee, please? Thanks honey—text me when you get this? Love you bye.

(He hangs up, gets back on his laptop. The dance continues. Time passes. He calls again.)

Hi, me again. It's been a little over two hours, and I'm trying to remember if you had something going on today that I forgot about...just starting to worry a little bit, so if you could please call me as soon as you get this. Thanks. Bye.

(He hangs up. Jittery. The dance continues. Time passes. He calls again.)

Hey. It's me. Sorry to leave so many voicemails, just I haven't heard from you all day, and I don't know where you are, and, um...

(He notices for the first time that an entire row of books is missing from a bookshelf. Long beat.)

Sorry. Um. Just noticed that, uh, some stuff of yours appears to be, um, missing. So I, uh, I would very, very much like to know what's going on, and that you are OK and all that. Please, please call me. Bye.

(He hangs up. Walks around. Notices more things missing: DVDs. Clothes. In fact, all of Bana's belongings have disappeared. As he realizes this, Clara's dance concludes.)

Part 4: Chicken Shitty.

(Last fall, 4 pm. Eric and Bana's apartment.)

ERIC: So you're giving up.

BANA: I am *not* giving up.

ERIC: You don't take this thing seriously.

BANA: I *do* take it seriously. That's why I think I should move out. To save it.

ERIC: No. Bullshit. You want to move out 'cause it's not "convenient" for you to stay. 'Cause apparently what's convenient for me doesn't matter. And then you'll say, "Well it's not really *convenient* for me to be monogamous anymore, we should see other people," and then, "Well since we're already seeing other people it'd be more *convenient* if we just broke up." What about what I want? What about my convenience?

BANA: If you wanted me to stay here, you should've taken better care of the place.

ERIC: Uh-uh. No. Don't you make this my fault. You're the one deciding to leave me. That's all you.

BANA: I keep telling you, I'm not leaving you, I'm leaving the apartment.

ERIC: There's no difference.

BANA: There's a world of difference. I still want to be with you.

ERIC: Apparently you don't. 'Cause you don't want to be here.

BANA: Why would I say I want to be with you if I didn't?

ERIC: 'Cause you're too chicken shit to admit it.

BANA: Me. Chicken shit.

ERIC: I think this whole thing is very chicken-shitty. I think it's cowardly and dishonest.

BANA: I asked you from day one to keep this place in better shape. I asked you to keep the floor clear so I could get around. I said repeatedly that I couldn't live in a space where I can't get around. You said OK and then you did nothing. I said I'd give it six months. It's been six months.

ERIC: I *told* you I was gonna clean it! I was even gonna clean that nasty shit off the walls in the shower and set up that entertainment unit!

BANA: But you didn't.

ERIC: So that's it? That's the whole reason you're leaving? 'Cause I'm a little messy?

BANA: I think that's plenty.

ERIC: But that's it, that's the only reason? (*Beat.*) No. No, there's something else.

BANA: You know we've been fighting more.

ERIC: Yeah, I know, Bana, I'm not fucking stupid.

BANA: So, there's that.

ERIC: Yeah, well I didn't really think of upsetting our whole living situation as the best way to resolve that.

BANA: Then how were you planning to resolve it?

ERIC: Not like this. Not by giving up.

BANA: If you keep accusing me of giving up, I *will* give up.

ERIC: No. Sorry. You can't threaten to do something you've already done.

BANA: ...Fine.

(She rolls over to the coat tree, grabs her coat.)

ERIC: What are you doing?

BANA: You say I'm giving up, fine. I give up.

(She starts to put her coat on.)

ERIC: See, this is what I'm talking about. This is exactly what I'm fucking talking about! You do whatever you want, then the whole thing is my fault. It's my fault you're a selfish cunt.

BANA: Go fuck yourself.

(He grabs a book and throws it at her. It hits her. Long beat.)

ERIC: Oh fuck.

(She picks up her purse and starts to head for the door.)

ERIC (Cont'd): No. Nonononononono. What are you doing?

(She doesn't answer, keeps going. He kneels in front of her and holds onto her chair.)

BANA: Please let go.

ERIC: I'm so sorry.

BANA: Let. Go. Of my chair.

ERIC: Please don't go. I'm so sorry. That was so wrong of me. Please forgive me.

BANA: Move, Eric.

ERIC: I fucked up. I really really really really really fucked up. I know. Just don't go. Please.

(He buries his face in her lap. Long beat. She gently, gently puts a hand on his shoulder and gently, gently, pushes him off of her lap. They look at each other.)

BANA: I'm going to go now.

(Beat. She starts to go, but then he grabs her wheelchair again.)

BANA (Cont'd): Eric.

(He picks her up out of the wheelchair.)

BANA (Cont'd): Eric.

ERIC: Just for a second.

(He sets her down on the bed.)

ERIC (Cont'd): Just stay for like five minutes. OK? *(Beat.)* Are you shaking? *(Beat.)* Do you want some water? *(Beat.)* Do you want me to hold you?

BANA: No.

ERIC: OK.

(Silence.)

SAMPLE ONLY

Part 12: Not a Creepy Kinda Guy

(A week after Groundhog Day, 9:35 pm.)

(Another burlesque venue. Eric enters. He has been drinking. He sees Clara. He waves; she doesn't see.)

ERIC: Clara. *(Beat. A little too loudly for an indoor voice:)* Clara!

(Clara sees him, waves. He approaches her.)

CLARA: Hi... Eric, right?

ERIC: She's gone.

CLARA: Sorry?

ERIC: Bana. My girlfriend. With the wheelchair. She's gone.

CLARA: Oh...?

ERIC: I wake up, and she's not there, no note, and I wait, and I wait, and I leave voicemails, and I wait all day, and then I realize all her stuff's missing. Poof. Gone. Magic.

CLARA: Oh. I'm sorry.

ERIC: Yeah.

CLARA: So...can I help you with something?

ERIC: Like what?

CLARA: Um, are you here to see the show, or?

ERIC: No. I guess?

CLARA: Well the cover is ten bucks.

ERIC: OK?

CLARA: So are you staying?

ERIC: Yeah. Sure.

CLARA: OK. It's ten bucks.

ERIC: OK, so who do I pay?

CLARA: You can pay Desi.

(She beckons offstage, and Desi, the stage kitten, enters. Eric gives her his \$10. She stamps his hand and exits.)

CLARA (Cont'd): That'll get you discounted drinks at the bar.

ERIC: Perfect. I'm gonna get one of those.

CLARA: Have fun.

(He exits. Clara, as quickly and discreetly as possible, pulls out her cell phone and sends a text. She puts it away just as Eric returns.)

ERIC: Do you mind if I sit with you?

CLARA: Not at all.

(He sits. Awkward beat.)

ERIC: Is it weirding you out that I'm here?

CLARA: No. No. *(Beat.)* Although, of all the places you could be right now...

ERIC: I don't wanna blow up my spot here, but I have consumed alcohol this evening, Clara.

CLARA: You're not blowing up your spot.

ERIC: And so I was drunk Facebooking because that's what you do when your girlfriend leaves, and I find your fan page and I start thinking, this whole thing makes no sense, right? I mean, we were going to go home with you. And then we didn't, and then she disappears the next morning. With all her shit. Does that make any sense to you?

CLARA: Not really, no.

ERIC: So you're the last person we saw. And, I dunno, when you lose something you're supposed to retrace your steps, right?... And I thought some naked girls might take my mind off things.

CLARA: Yeah, naked girls help everything.

ERIC: When do you go up?

CLARA: I've already gone.

ERIC: Oh. I've missed you.

CLARA: Yeah, sorry.

ERIC: I just don't get it. It's not like we had a fight or anything.

CLARA: Does she have friends you could call, or?

ERIC: I called everyone I know. No one knows anything.

CLARA: Family?

ERIC: Just a crazy brother in California.

CLARA: Crazy how?

ERIC: Um. Long story but. He's kind of the reason she's in the wheelchair?

CLARA: I see. *(Beat.)*

ERIC: I called the cops and they laughed at me.

CLARA: Why?

ERIC: 'Cause her stuff's missing. And this very condescending guy on the phone was like, "Well, *sir*, how exactly do you suppose that the 'kidnapper' knew whose DVDs were whose, *sir*?" So I called him a prick and hung up on him. *(Beat.)* Don't drunk dial the cops.

CLARA: Duly noted.

ERIC: I just don't understand how she did it. I mean moving all that shit on her own. Was someone helping her?

CLARA: Were you asleep?

ERIC: Dead to the world. I take Ambien, so. *(Beat.)* Fuck. *(Beat.)* I'm sorry. You don't know me at all and I just barged in and started venting and I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

CLARA: You're retracing your steps.

ERIC: Right.

CLARA: So can I help with that at all?

ERIC: I mean did anything seem weird about her that night?

CLARA: I wouldn't know what's weird for her, I don't know her.

ERIC: Right. *(Beat.)* So why didn't you come home with us?

CLARA: Is that really relevant?

ERIC: No, I'm just curious. Why didn't you?

CLARA: I just didn't feel comfortable with it. Nothing personal.

ERIC: Is it 'cause she's in a wheelchair?

CLARA: Excuse me?

ERIC: No I didn't mean it like that. I mean, 'cause you thought you wouldn't know what to do, that you might fuck something up? 'Cause that's what I thought. The first time.

CLARA: No. I just didn't feel comfortable.

ERIC: Do you usually lean more towards girls?

CLARA: That's not really any of your business.

ERIC: I'm sorry. Just—You're right. Sorry. (*Beat.*) Should I go?
You can tell me to go.

CLARA: If it seems necessary, I will.

ERIC: I'm not a creepy kinda guy or anything. I'm just a little
messed up right now.

CLARA: OK.

ERIC: I don't usually do this.

CLARA: OK.

ERIC: Should I be buying you a drink or something?

CLARA: ... You know what, I think you should. Get me a glass of
Shiraz.

(He heads off to the bar.)

SAMPLE ONLY

Part 5: How Do You Throw Up From a Wheelchair?

(Last fall, 1:35 am.)

(A woman's bathroom in a dive bar. Vomiting sounds coming from the handicap stall. Clara enters, starts touching up her makeup in the mirror. Notices the gross sounds. Knocks on the door.)

BANA: *(from stall.)* It's gonna be awhile!

CLARA: Are you OK?

BANA: ...Huh?

CLARA: Just wanted to see if you're OK.

BANA: I'm fine.

CLARA: You want some water or anything?

BANA: ...Do I know you?

CLARA: No. Probably not, no.

BANA: So why are you talking to me?

CLARA: Just, you sound like you're throwing up so I wanted to see if you needed some water.

BANA: Why?

CLARA: Never mind.

(Goes back to her makeup.)

BANA: Could you bring me some seltzer please?

CLARA: OK.

BANA: Thanks.

(Clara exits. A flush. Bana emerges, a mess, drunk. She examines her face in the mirror.)

BANA: Blegh.

(Clara re-enters with the seltzer.)

BANA (Cont'd): Oh, thank you.

(She holds her hand out for the seltzer. It takes Clara a moment to register the wheelchair and realize that Bana was the one she was talking to earlier. Bana notices but says nothing. Clara gives her the seltzer. Bana drinks it down.)

BANA (Cont'd): The bubbles help.

CLARA: Yeah.

(Bana rinses her mouth out.)

CLARA (Cont'd): Do you want a toothbrush?

(She takes an unopened toothbrush from her purse, hands it to Bana.)

BANA: Why do you have an unopened toothbrush?

CLARA: It's silly, um, I always bring one when I go out. I'm a germophobe, a little bit, so I...yeah, I always just buy a new one.

BANA: You're weird.

CLARA: Here.

(She hands Bana a small tube of toothpaste.)

BANA: All right, seriously, what the fuck.

CLARA: I know. I'm weird.

BANA: You, like, go around to bathrooms preying on drunk throwing-up girls and giving them toothbrushes?

(She starts brushing her teeth.)

CLARA: Not usually, no.

BANA: S'just fucking weird is all. Nice. But fucking weird.

CLARA: Yeah. I am. *(Beat.)* Can I ask a really dumb question?

BANA: What?

CLARA: How exactly do you throw up from a wheelchair without getting it all over your lap?

BANA: Do you want a fucking tutorial?

CLARA: No. Sorry. Dumb question. *(Starts applying lipstick.)*

BANA: You're that dancer I just saw.

CLARA: Yup, that's me.

BANA: Didn't recognize you with your clothes on.

CLARA: I get that a lot.

BANA: You're fucking *good*. That part where you took the tassels off your boobs and put 'em on your butt and spun 'em around? That was awesome.

CLARA: Thanks.

BANA: Don't you have, like, a dressing room or something?

CLARA: This place is kind of...

BANA: A shithole?

CLARA: Something like that.

BANA: It's a total shithole. Do I look OK?

CLARA: Your eyes are a little smudgy.

(Bana tries to wipe the makeup from under her eyes but she's not doing a very good job.)

CLARA (Cont'd): Here...

(She gets a face wipe from her purse.)

BANA: I can do it, I can do it...

CLARA: Here, hold still.

(She kneels in front of Bana and gently wipes away the smudged makeup.)

CLARA (Cont'd): There.

(Bana leans in and kisses Clara.)

CLARA (Cont'd): I'm gonna get lipstick all over you.

BANA: I don't care.

(She kisses Clara again and they fall into each other and kiss and touch and kiss. Someone bangs on the bathroom door.)

ERIC: Bana?

(Bana and Clara break away. Beat. More banging.)

ERIC (Cont'd): Bana?

CLARA: *(yelling.)* Sir, you can't come in here.

ERIC: I'm just looking for my girlfriend. Is there a girl in a wheelchair in there?

CLARA: *(yelling.)* I don't know who's in the other stall, sir, I'm not a pervert.

ERIC: Bana?

CLARA: (*yelling.*) Sir, you can't come in here.

ERIC: Can you just knock and see if there's a girl named Bana in the next stall?

CLARA: (*yelling.*) Sir, please stop pounding on the women's bathroom, you're making me very uncomfortable.

ERIC: Sorry. I'm sorry. Can you just—OK sorry. (*Beat.*)

CLARA: You gonna go out there?

BANA: I don't wanna.

CLARA: Pretty sure there's no other way out of here.

BANA: I don't wanna.

(*They kiss some more.*)

CLARA: Do we not like him?

BANA: No, we do. That's what sucks.

CLARA: Why does that suck?

BANA: If I didn't like him I could leave.

(*She kisses Clara again.*)

CLARA: He's gonna send a bartender in here soon. Or a manager.

BANA: Yeah.

CLARA: So you need to wash the lipstick off your face.

BANA: OK.

(*Looks in the mirror.*)

BANA (Cont'd): Fuck. You weren't kidding.

CLARA: Told you.

BANA: Can you get me a paper towel?

(Clara gets her another face wipe. Bana starts wiping off her face.)

CLARA: Um. So I'm gonna go.

BANA: Where you going?

CLARA: Different bar. Swankier.

BANA: OK. Have fun.

CLARA: If you want...

(She sticks her card in Bana's pocket, or bra.)

CLARA (Cont'd): You seem cool. We should hang out.

BANA: Listen, lady, I'm spoken for.

CLARA: Just to hang out. If you want.

BANA: K.

CLARA: OK. Night.

BANA: G'night.

(Clara leaves.)

Part 13: Circles.

(A week after Groundhog Day, 11:10 pm.)

(Same burlesque bar where we last left Eric and Clara. They're both drunk-ish.)

CLARA: It's not just girls. There's some great boylesque dancers out there.

ERIC: Boylesque!

CLARA: Yeah! There's this one guy who comes out as "Death" and kills someone in the audience, and then a factory whistle blows and he strips to "Just Got Paid."

ERIC: That's the greatest thing I've ever heard.

CLARA: You could do it, even.

ERIC: No. No-no. Not I.

CLARA: Sure you could! Why not?

ERIC: I will leave the sexy dancing to you lovely, lovely ladies.

(He clinks her glass, whatever number glass this is for both of them.)

ERIC (Cont'd): But tell me more about the circles.

CLARA: See, this is the thing. Burlesque at its core is just smoke and mirrors. A set of fancy movements that make us all look a little hotter than we really are.

ERIC: Like circles.

CLARA: Yes. Circles make everything look sexy. Like, shoulder circles look bad on no one.

(Demonstrates.)

CLARA (Cont'd): Come on. Let me see your shoulder circles.

ERIC: I am not quite drunk enough for this.

CLARA: Yes you are. Come on. No one's looking.

(Eric shows Clara his best shoulder roll.)

CLARA (Cont'd): That's actually great. And then get some hip circles in there.

ERIC: I am not standing up.

CLARA: Come on, I'll do it with you. Come on. Come on.

(He gets up. They practice hip circles.)

CLARA (Cont'd): Nice! You're not bad at this.

ERIC: I'm pretty sure I'm very, very bad at this.

CLARA: No, no, you're doing great.

(His hip circles throw him off balance and he stumbles. Clara steadies him.)

CLARA (Cont'd): Whoa, you OK tiger?

ERIC: I'm great. This turned out to be a much lovelier evening than I anticipated.

CLARA: It was my pleasure.

(He hugs her. It becomes a potentially sexual hug.)

ERIC: So what do you say we hit the road?

CLARA: Where do you wanna go?

ERIC: Home. My home.

CLARA: I really don't think that's a good idea.

ERIC: Why's that?

CLARA: I don't want to go home with you.

ERIC: Why not?

CLARA: I don't have casual sex.

ERIC: What makes you think this is casual?

CLARA: I don't know you.

ERIC: Sure you know me. You know I look ridiculous doing hip circle whatever's.

CLARA: That's not the same thing.

ERIC: Y'know who're great lovers? The grieving. Honestly. Let me tell you something. My dad died when I was 25, and my family's Orthodox Jewish so I sat shiva for him, right? You know what that is?

CLARA: Yeah, I know what that is.

ERIC: OK, so I had this girlfriend at the time, and I had to sit shiva and she said, "I think we're gonna have great sex when you're done sitting shiva," and I said, "I think you're right." And so that night, after I was done, I went over there and she just came to the door and...how do I put this...She came eight times. Eight. And I know there are those girls that can just do that, where that's, like, Tuesday for them, but Jenna was not one of those girls. I came four, which Bana would tell you if she were here is highly unusual for me, but that's neither here nor there. The point is. Happy, sad, whatever, I am a fantastic lover. But when I'm grieving—which I most certainly am right now, in case you couldn't tell—I'm a golden god, Clara. I don't even have to exaggerate. I am just that good. (*Beat.*) Tell you what. I'm gonna go use the little boys' room. If you're gone when I get back, I'll understand, no hard feelings. If you're here...both of us will probably have a very pleasant night.

(He claps her on the shoulder and leaves. Clara sends a text, laughing to herself. Just as she's putting her phone away, the response comes back. She looks at the response for a long beat, surprised. She finally puts her phone away just as he's coming back.)

ERIC: Ready?

CLARA: Yup.

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