As tough as it is tender, and shot through with aching authenticity, Good People is a rare play that is timeless and keyed into a specific moment of American life, without the need to grasp topicality...Bringing the same clear-eyed emotional observation that distinguished his Pulitzer Prize-winner Rabbit Hole, Lindsay-Abaire has crafted another penetrating drama about deeply relatable issues.

—DAVID ROONEY, HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

Lindsay-Abaire’s wrenching Good People is the most substantial new play since August: Osage County...It has a quality rarely seen on Broadway—it seems necessary.

—ABAM FELDMAN, TIMEOUT NEW YORK

Lindsay-Abaire’s complex characters illustrate the difficult choices people will make to achieve their ambitions or retain their own sense of pride, along with the importance of luck in escaping poverty. By the end of the play, the near impossibility of always being ‘good people’ is seemingly apparent.

—JENNIFER FARRAR, ASSOCIATED PRESS

If Good People isn't a hit for Manhattan Theatre Club, there is no justice in the land. Lindsay-Abaire pays his respects to his old South Boston neighborhood with this tough and tender play about the insurmountable class divide between those who make it out of this blue-collar Irish neighborhood and those who find themselves left behind.

—MARILYN STASIO, VARIETY

With his signature humor, Lindsay-Abaire explores the struggles, shifting loyalties and unshakeable hopes that come with having next to nothing in America. Set in Boston’s Southie neighborhood, where a night on the town means a few rounds of bingo, where this month’s paycheck covers last month’s bills, we meet Margaret Walsh, who is facing eviction and scrambling to catch a break. When a friend from the old neighborhood, who is now very successful, moves back to town, Margaret hopes he may be the ticket to turning her life around.

DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE is the Pulitzer Prize-winning author of Rabbit Hole, which was made into a feature film. He is the author of Fuddy Meers, Wonder of the World, A Devil Inside and Kimberly Akimbo, as well as the book and lyrics to Shrek the Musical. He has written the screenplays for Rabbit Hole and the upcoming Rise of the Guardians and Oz: The Great and Powerful. Born in South Boston, he now lives in Brooklyn.
Good People

David Lindsay-Abaire
Production History

*Good People* received its world premiere by Manhattan Theatre Club (Lynne Meadow, Artistic Director; Barry Grove, Executive Producer) on Broadway at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, on March 3, 2011. *Good People* was commissioned by the Bank of America New American Play Program. The production was directed by Daniel Sullivan. The set design was by John Lee Beatty, the costume design was by David Zinn, the lighting design was by Pat Collins and the sound design was by Jill BC DuBoff. The dialect coach was Charlotte Fleck, the production stage manager was Roy Harris and the stage manager was Denise Yaney. The cast was:

- Margaret: Frances McDormand
- Stevie: Patrick Carroll
- Dottie: Estelle Parsons
- Jean: Becky Ann Baker
- Mike: Tàité Donovan
- Kate: Renée Elise Goldsberry
Characters

MARGARET: white, about fifty
STEVIE: white, late twenties
DOTTIE: white, mid-sixties
JEAN: white, about fifty
MIKE: white, about fifty
KATE: African American, early thirties
VARIOUS OFFSTAGE VOICES: probably prerecorded

Place

The play is set in South Boston’s Lower End, and in Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts.

Notes

A slash (/) in the dialogue indicates the start of the next spoken line.

The name “Margie” is pronounced with a hard “g” in the middle, not a “j.”

Act One

Scene 1

South Boston, Massachusetts. The alley behind the Dollar Store. There’s a dumpster back there, a rusty chair, and a door labeled DOLLAR STORE—DELIVERIES ONLY. The back door opens and Margaret, about fifty, comes out with Stevie, her manager, late twenties. Stevie carries a folder.

MARGARET
Did she ever tell you the turkey story? Up at Flanagan’s?

STEVIE
No.

MARGARET
When I worked up there, and she came in? She never told you that turkey story?

STEVIE
I don’t think so.
MARGARET
She was pregnant with you. No, Jimmy actually—she was pregnant
with Jimmy—because it was near Christmas, and your father was
locked up in Walpole again, so she didn’t have any money for
anything.

STEVIE
(Offers her the rusty chair) You wanna sit down?

MARGARET
She had nothing. Except Saint Vincent de Paul’s. Thank god for
them. They used to give out toys at Christmas to the ones who
couldn’t afford it.

STEVIE
Margaret, listen for a / second—

MARGARET
(But she keeps going) I don’t think they did Christmas dinners
though. And your grandmother had passed by then, so there was
no dinner to go to. So your mother comes into Flanagan’s, and
she’s out to here. (Indicates belly) When’s Jimmy’s birthday?

STEVIE
January.

MARGARET
Right, so she’s out to here, and in this big coat. Remember that
blue coat she always wore?

STEVIE
Yeah.

MARGARET
And she’s walking up and down the aisles, slipping things in the
pockets—potatoes, and cans of cranberry sauce, cookies, because
you guys gotta eat, right? So she comes waddling up to my
register. And I’m like, “Hey Suzie, how are the kids?” And she
doesn’t wanna talk obviously, she’s just trying to push through
the line: “Oh, they’re good, I was just looking for something, but
you don’t have it, so I’m gonna try someplace else.” And then the
turkey falls out of her coat. It hits the floor right between her legs.
A turkey. Boom.

And I swear to god, she didn’t miss a beat. She looks up, real
mad, and yells, “Who threw that bird at me?!”

(Really laughing now) Oh, we died. Everybody there. Ya had to
laugh. “Who threw that bird at me?!” She was a funny sonofabitch.
Pardon my French.

STEVIE
Look, Margaret—

MARGARET
God, she was funny. I think about her all the time. Your mother
was a good lady. It’s a lesson though. You’re lucky you don’t smoke.
Too young, your mother.

STEVIE
Can we do this?

MARGARET
(Beat) Sure. (Moves to the chair) You gotta make them give you a
real office, Stevie. Because these alley conferences? No way to run
a business. It smells back here.

STEVIE
I know you don’t wanna talk about why I brought / you out here—

MARGARET
No, I know. I was late, I’m sorry.
stevie
It's just, the district manager /comes in—

margaret
I know. It was my Joycey again. You know I can't leave her alone when she gets outta sorts. And I pay Dottie Gillis a little bit to keep an eye on her, but Dot's not the most reliable.

stevie
Right, but the district manager comes down on me about it.

margaret
No, I know, that guy's an ass—pardon my French.

stevie
Maybe, but he's also my boss. And he looks over those punch cards.

margaret
Okay.

stevie
No, not okay. You're late every day. Twenty, thirty minutes. Yesterday it was almost an hour.

margaret
It's not every day.

stevie
Pretty much it is, and that reflects badly on me. He wants to know why I can't keep my employees in line.

margaret
You have to explain about Joyce. She's in a program, thank god, but that's only so many hours a week. I can't / always—

Good People

stevie
I explained it to him, but there's only so much / I can—

margaret
It's not just me, Stevie. Karen calls in sick every couple days.

stevie
Yeah, well, I'm talking to Karen next.

margaret
Well, while you've got her out here, you should ask her why she tells everyone you're gay.

stevie
(Beat) What?

margaret
She says you're gay.

stevie
(More bemused than offended) I'm not gay.

margaret
I know.

stevie
So why does she say that?

margaret
Because you go to bingo.

stevie
That makes me gay?
MARGARET
I'm just tellin' ya what Karen says to people. You go to bingo a lot.
More than I do. More than Karen does.

STEVIE
I like bingo.

MARGARET
Obviously.

STEVIE
Plenty of men go to bingo.

MARGARET
I wouldn't say plenty, but yeah.

STEVIE
Freddy Gleason goes to bingo.

MARGARET
Yeah.

STEVIE
Frank Moore.

MARGARET
Yeah. A few old-timers, but yeah, that's what I've been telling her.

STEVIE
Okay, it doesn't matter.

MARGARET
Are you gonna bring it up with her though?

STEVIE

MARGARET

STEVIE

MARGARET

STEVIE

MARGARET

STEVIE

MARGARET

STEVIE

MARGARET

STEVIE

Good People

STEVIE
No, I'm going to say to her exactly what I'm saying to you. The
district manager came in—

MARGARET
She's late a lot more than I am.

STEVIE
Okay.

MARGARET
And she says you're gay.

STEVIE
Margaret—

MARGARET
I know you're not gay, and I tell her that, because you're dating
what's her name. I don't know if that's supposed to be a secret, or
whatever, but everybody knows that. Not Karen, obviously, but
everybody knows that.

STEVIE
Can you listen to me, please? The district manager came in—

MARGARET
Okay, I understand. I've been late, and I won't be anymore. You
can tell him I got the warning. *(Heads back inside)*

STEVIE
*(Stops her)* No, this isn't a warning. You've *bad* warnings. I've given
you seven warnings in the last two months.

MARGARET
You know I can't leave Joyce alone. You know that. She's like a
baby. And Dottie doesn't always show up when she's supposed to.
So what am I / supposed to—?
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

STEVIE
It's not like I have a choice in this. If I don't let you go then I get fired.

MARGARET
(Beat) What do you mean, let me go?

STEVIE
I told you it could happen.

MARGARET
Now, come / on—

STEVIE
Every week the district manager comes in to look at those punch cards.

MARGARET
I won't be late again. Tell him I promise.

STEVIE
I cover for you all the time, and he won't have it anymore. He wants me to let you go.

MARGARET
I'll get somebody else to look after Joyce.

STEVIE
That's what you always say.

MARGARET
(Beat) This is about the Chinese girl, isn't it.

STEVIE
No, and she's not Chinese.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
She might be a little faster at the register, but she makes more mistakes.

STEVIE
First of all, she doesn't make mistakes. / Secondly—

MARGARET
She lives two blocks away! It's easier for her to get here on time!

STEVIE
Margaret, stop.

MARGARET
No, that guy comes in, and looks over your books, and who's getting paid what per hour—!

STEVIE
That's not what this is.

MARGARET
And because I've been here three years, I make a little bit more than the other girls, which costs the company a little bit more money—

STEVIE
You're not reliable.

MARGARET
You can't say that. I might be late once in a while but—

STEVIE
They don't want unreliable employees.

MARGARET
This is a Dollar Store. Who do they think is gonna work here?
STEVE
Is that what I should tell them?

MARGARET
What they don’t want is someone making nine-twenty an hour. And you know that’s what this is.

STEVE
I’ll talk to my brother. Maybe he can get you something down at Gillette.

MARGARET
Gillette?

STEVE
I’ll call him this afternoon.

MARGARET
That’s just your way of getting me out the door.

STEVE
I’ll call Jimmy, I swear to god.

MARGARET
He’s not gonna call me in there. Besides, I’ve been to Gillette, it’s all line work. I can’t work a line, I’m too old for that. I can’t keep up.

STEVE
I’m trying to help you.

MARGARET
You wanna help me, let me go back to my register.

STEVE
It’s not my choice!

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
(Beat) I’ll take a pay cut.

STEVE
No. A pay cut? Margaret, listen to yourself.

MARGARET
I know the Chinese girl gets eight-sixty an hour, I can make do on that. It’ll be tight, but I can do eight-sixty.

STEVE
It’s not about what you get paid.

MARGARET
That is bullshit. Pardon my French. But that is bullshit and you know it. I never asked for those raises. I only got them because you were required by law to give them to me. It wasn’t much, god knows—a nickel here, fifteen cents one time—but I knew when I went over nine dollars, you were gonna start looking for an excuse to get rid of me.

STEVE
You know that’s not true.

MARGARET
Well if not you, then the district manager was. Or whoever adds up the numbers. Why pay me when you can give minimum wage to Chow Fun?

STEVE
That doesn’t help your case, you know. The racist stuff—

MARGARET
What racist stuff? That’s her name.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

STEVIE

(Writes something down) You know that’s not her name.

MARGARET

You gonna put that in my file now? How I’m a racist?

STEVIE

You wouldn’t even be out here if you weren’t late.

MARGARET

And I wouldn’t be late if I didn’t have to beg someone to watch my daughter! And I wouldn’t have to beg someone if I could pay someone, but you’re making that very difficult, Stevie! *(Kicks the chair)*

STEVIE

Margaret—!

MARGARET

*Please.* Last time I got fired it took me seven months to find something, and that was when things weren’t so bad. Now? Forget it. I won’t be able to find *anything*.

STEVIE

Of course you will. You start asking around / and—

MARGARET

Eight-fifteen. You can lower me to eight-fifteen. That’s what I started at. It’s what you’d pay a new girl. Just pretend I’m a new girl. I can do eight-fifteen.

STEVIE

I can’t. I can’t do that. I’m sorry. It’s just not working out.

MARGARET

*(Beat)* You’re lucky your mother’s dead.

GOOD PEOPLE

STEVIE

*(The discussion is over)* All right.

MARGARET

We grew up together, me and your mother. If she knew what you were doing right now . . .

STEVIE

You know what, Margaret? I do actually remember that story about her stealing the turkey. But you know what you forgot? The part where you called the cops. You forgot how she spent Christmas Day down at Station Six. That was always how I heard it. You should ask my sisters how funny that story was.

MARGARET

*(Beat)* I didn’t call the cops. Pat Moody called the cops.

STEVIE

*(Moves to go back in)* Okay.

MARGARET

I would never do that to your mother. Pat Moody called the cops. And they made her store manager. Because she was tough on shoplifters.

STEVIE

It doesn’t matter.

MARGARET

Don’t fire me, Stevie.

STEVIE

I have a job! What do you want me to do! I have to do my job!

MARGARET

*(Beat)* I know.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRe

STEVIE
All right then. And stop with the: “You’re lucky your mother’s dead.”

MARGARET
I was talking about you dating a Chinese girl. That’s all. I don’t think she’d approve.

(Stevie takes her in, then heads back inside, slamming the door behind him. Margaret is left alone. Lights out.)

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Scene 2

Margaret’s kitchen, the next morning. It’s small, and rundown. Her friend Jean, about fifty, and her landlady Dottie, mid-sixties, are here. Margaret, in the middle of a story, comes in from the next room with dirty dishes.

MARGARET
So he was on me as soon as I walked in. (Puts dishes into the sink)

DOTTIE
Who’s this now?

JEAN
Stevie Grimes. At the Dollar Store.

DOTTIE
He works there?
JEAN
He’s the young guy. He stands in the back of the store. He’s up at bingo all the time.

DOTTIE
I can’t picture him.

JEAN
He’s the kid who stands in back of the store.

DOTTIE
The Dollar Store.

MARGARET
Yeah, the Dollar Store.

DOTTIE
Oh, I never go in there.

JEAN
Then you’re not gonna know him, Dottie.

DOTTIE
That store’s got nothing but shit in it.

MARGARET
Okay, well, that’s who fired me.

(A TV suddenly blares from the next room.)

(Calls off) Turn it down, Joycey!

(The TV volume goes down again.)

JEAN
I always thought that was peculiar. Stevie at bingo.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET

(Call off) Stop playing with those buttons, Joycey!

(The volume goes down again. Margaret makes them all instant coffee over the following.)

DOTTIE
It's not gonna be easy finding something, Margie. My Russell's been looking for work almost a year now.

JEAN
Yeah, well.

DOTTIE
What.

JEAN
Russell.

DOTTIE
What's that mean?

JEAN
Nothing. Just... Russell.

(The TV blares.)

MARGARET
Can you go in and turn that down for her, Dot?

But Dottie doesn't move. The volume lowers anyway.

DOTTIE
Russell's a good worker. He's just having trouble findin' somethin'.
dottie

And?

jean

And he's missin' half his face, Dottie! Whadya mean, "And?"

margaret

He was such a good-lookin' kid too. Remember his mother passing around those pictures of him in his uniform?

jean

Then they sent him home with half a face.

margaret

Sad.

jean

And still he got a job at Jordan Marsh.

dottie

Remy Hayes got a job because people feel bad for him. That's how he got a job. Russell didn't go to Iraq. Russell's not missing half his face. Nobody feels bad for Russell.

jean

You got that right.

(TV blares yet again.)

margaret

I'm gonna put her headphones on. (Heads off to the next room)

dottie

(Regarding Margaret) And who's gonna hire her? I'm supposed to get rent at the end of the month. You think she's gonna give it to me?

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good people

jean

Well if you had showed up to watch Joyce.

dottie

So it's my fault?

jean

She relies on you.

(The TV is silenced in the next room.)

dottie

I don't have to watch her. I do it as a favor.

jean

What favor? She pays you fifty dollars a week.

dottie

Like that's anything.

jean

You take it.

dottie

Of course I take it. I'm watching her kid.

margaret

(Reentering) When you show up, you mean.

dottie

Don't blame this on me, Margie. You know I have trouble getting up in the morning. I work nights after all.

jean

(Scoffs) You work nights.

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DOTTIE
I do work nights.

JEAN
You're upstairs.

DOTTIE
Yeah, working. I make my crafts.

JEAN
Gimme a break, those stupid rabbit things—

DOTTIE
That's my work.

JEAN
You glue Styrofoam balls onto flowerpots.

DOTTIE
I get five bucks a pop for those rabbits. People like 'em.

JEAN
Then they're morons.

MARGARET
I think those rabbits are cute.

JEAN
Five bucks for forty cents of crap.

DOTTIE
It's not crap.

JEAN
I hate to break it to ya, Dottie, but anything with googly eyes is crap.

GOOD PEOPLE

DOTTIE
Oh fuck off.

MARGARET
She sells a lot of those rabbits up at bingo.

DOTTIE
And with Easter coming up, this is kinda my high season.

JEAN
(Laughs) High season.

DOTTIE
It is! So watching Joyce all day, then working on my crafts all night, yes sometimes I have trouble getting up in the morning, but Margie knew that.

MARGARET
It's not your fault, Dottie.

JEAN
Of course it is! Don't let her off the hook like that!

MARGARET
Let it go.

JEAN
No, you're too nice. That's why you don't have anything.

MARGARET
Oh, is that why?

JEAN
Yeah, you have to be a selfish prick to get anywhere.
MARGARET
I hate when people say that. You know it's not true, Jean.

JEAN
No? Look at Dottie.

DOTTIE
What do you mean look at Dottie?

JEAN
You think she cares about you? No. I bet if you threatened to not pay her that babysitting money, she would've showed up on time. That's what she would've done to you. Maybe you should start acting like her.

MARGARET
That's not who I am.

JEAN
No I know, you invite her in for coffee instead: "Hey, thanks for gettin' me fired."

DOTTIE
I did not get her fired!

MARGARET
She's right, Jeannie. Now stop stirring / the shit.

DOTTIE
If you wanna get someone else to watch Joyce—

MARGARET
I don't.

Good People

JEAN
Why not? I'll do it. All you do is sit and watch TV. How hard is that? To sit in there with her and watch soaps.

DOTTIE
That's not all it is.

JEAN
No, I know, you put her to work sometimes, too.

DOTTIE
What are you talkin' about?

JEAN
Making those rabbits. Margie told me.

MARGARET
Joyce likes doing that.

DOTTIE
I let her put on the heads, that's all. It's fun for her.

JEAN
Oh, okay.

DOTTIE
And I have to redo most of 'em because she puts them on lopsided! So don't / act like—

JEAN
You got your own little sweatshop down here.

DOTTIE
Why don't you go home?
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

JEAN
Because Margie made me coffee. I wanna enjoy it.

DOTTIE
Then stop causin’ trouble. Talkin’ about sweatshops and tryin’ to tell me how easy it is to watch Joyce. Have you ever tried to give her lunch, Jean? She’s worse than a baby! The mess—

MARGARET
She’s right.

DOTTIE
And if she gets mad, or upset about whatever, she has a fit. I can’t just leave her here, she’d hurt herself.

MARGARET
I appreciate you looking out for her.

DOTTIE
It’s not fun. I could be upstairs in my own apartment watching TV, I don’t need to be down here. I got punched last week.

MARGARET
By accident.

DOTTIE
Accident or no, it didn’t tickle. She’s as big as a grown man, and when she starts throwing those arms around—

JEAN
All right, Dottie.

DOTTIE
Well you started it, trying to tell me how easy my job is. Saying Margie got fired because of me. You think I wanted her to lose her job? How am I gonna get my rent if she don’t have a paycheck coming in?

JEAN
You’ll get your rent. She’ll find a job / and you’ll—

DOTTIE
Where? You think everybody can get a job! Not everybody is Remy fuckin’ Hayes!

MARGARET
All right.

DOTTIE
Not everybody had half their face blown off!

JEAN
Well then maybe she should start making rabbits!

DOTTIE
(Pointed) She better not. (After a beat) You can go down Gillette, Margie. Have you tried down there?

MARGARET
Gillette’s not gonna hire me. Lorraine Feeney went down there last month, and they hardly looked at her application. And she’s ten years younger than I am.

DOTTIE
Lorraine Feeney’s got a record. They don’t like to hire people who’ve been in prison.

JEAN
What are you talking about? Half the Politos work down there. Do you know how many of them did time?
MARGARET
I'm not going to Gillette. (To Jean) You think Chucky might have something for me?

JEAN
He just cut me down to two shifts a week. I'm looking to pick up something myself. You don't wanna work banquets anyway. Not with your back. Those platters? Forget it.

MARGARET
I'm gonna be the next Cookie McDermott.

JEAN
God forbid.

MARGARET
(Laugh) I am. The way I'm headed.

DOTTIE
Who's that?

JEAN
Cookie. The one up by the bank. She's got the granny cart.

MARGARET
We went to school with her.

DOTTIE
The wino in the sun hat?

MARGARET
That's what happened after her husband died. Left her with nothing. Now she sleeps against that wall.

DOTTIE
That's no life.

GROD PEOPLE

MARGARET
(Laughing) Maybe me and Joyce can move in next to her.

JEAN
Stop it.

MARGARET
“Scoot on over, wouldja, Cookie?”

JEAN
Poor thing.

MARGARET
Don't say poor thing. Me and Cookie are gonna have a grand ol' time, passing that bottle back and forth.

DOTTIE
They should get her outta there. That Cookie lady. It's not right. Her sleeping on the sidewalk. It makes the neighborhood look bad.

JEAN
(Beat. Trying to sound offhand) You know who you should ask for a job?

MARGARET
Who.

JEAN
Mikey Dillon.

MARGARET
(Beat) What?

JEAN
Yeah, why not?
David Lindsay-Abaire

Margaret
Why would you mention him of all people?

Jean
You just reminded me. All that Cookie talk. They were buddies, right?

Margaret
Not really.

Jean
He hung out with her brother though.

Margaret
So?

Jean
So I ran into him. Didn’t I tell you?

Margaret
(Beat) No.

Jean
Yeah, Mikey Dillon. I shoulda told you—That’s who you should hit up.

Margaret

Jean
Who’s this now?

Margaret
Just a kid we grew up with.

Jean
Kevin Dillon?

Dottie

Margaret

Jean
No—Mikey Dillon. He lived down Old Harbor.

Dottie
His wife works up the clinic?

Jean
That’s Kevin Dillon. It’s no relation.

Margaret
Where’dya see him?

Jean
At the hotel. One of the luncheons we did.

Margaret
Oh yeah? He was a guest?

Jean
It was for the Boys and Girls Clubs. Every year they give these medals to the kids for being good, or not killing each other, or whatever. And he was one of the speakers.

Margaret
No shit.

Jean
Yeah, him and one of the Bruins. Because they were in the Clubs when they were kids, so they’re like the success stories. And they tell the kids to work hard and stay in school, or whatever. Be all you can be.

Margaret

Dottie

Jean
Mikey Dillon.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABRAIRE

JEAN
Yeah. I saw the name tag, and did a double take. I wasn’t sure it was him, it’s been so long.

MARGARET
He got old?

JEAN
Not really. He looks good. He was shocked to see me though. I was like, “Ya remember me, Doctor?” Ya know he’s a doctor, right?

MARGARET
I heard that.

JEAN
Yeah, that’s why he was there. As an example for the kids. They only cared about the hockey player though. He’s downtown, he said. He does something with babies.

MARGARET
A baby doctor?

JEAN
No, something else. I wasn’t really listening to tell ya the truth. I didn’t want to get in trouble for talking to the guests, so . . .

MARGARET
Wow, Mikey Dillon. (Process that) Did he ask about me?

JEAN
It was just a quick talk. He looks good though. You should go down there. Tell him you need a job.

MARGARET
(Laughs) Right.

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GOOD PEOPLE

JEAN
I’m serious.

MARGARET
How am I gonna get a job in a doctor’s office?

JEAN
I don’t know, answering phones or something. Ask him what he’s got available. Southie pride, right? Maybe he’ll cut ya a break.

DOTTIE
Was this the kid who stole the bread truck?

JEAN
No, that’s Kevin Dillon. Would you shut up? We’re talking about a totally different person. You don’t know him.

MARGARET
He was always good people. Mikey.

JEAN
Uh-huh.

MARGARET
He was.

JEAN
Okay.

MARGARET
I thought he was living in Pennsylvania or someplace.

JEAN
D.C., he said. He’s been back a while though.

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David Lindsay-Abaire

MARGARET

Dr. Dillon.

JEAN

I know, right? Southie doctor. That must be a first.

DOTTIE

Peggy Ford's daughter is a doctor.

JEAN

No she's not. She's a vet's assistant. She holds the dogs down when they're put to sleep.

DOTTIE

Oh.

JEAN

Now there's a job Russell should look into.

DOTTIE

Killing dogs?

JEAN

He'd be perfect for that.

DOTTIE

You're an asshole.

MARGARET

Mikey Dillon, huh?

JEAN

You should call him.

Good People

MARGARET

I haven't seen him in a hundred years.

JEAN

You should call him anyway, just to see what he says.

MARGARET

He's not gonna hire me.

DOTTIE

(Heads for the door) Someone better. You can't stay here for nothin', Margie. You know I like you and Joycey both, but—

MARGARET

Can you stop, please? I said I'd pay you, so shut up about it.

DOTTIE

(Beat) I'm upstairs if you need me. (Exits)

JEAN

You should call him, Margie. Ya never know.

(Lights out.)
Scene 3

Lights up on Dr. Michael Dillon's office. Tastefully decorated. A couple of family photos on a shelf behind his desk. Mike, about fifty, handsome, is working at his desk. After a couple beats Margaret peeks in.

MARGARET

Mike?

MIKE

(Comes to the door) There you are!

MARGARET

How you doin'?

MIKE

Come on in!

(She comes in. He gives her a hug.)

Good People

Holy Jesus. Margie Walsh.

MARGARET

Hi, Mike.

MIKE

From Prehistoric Times.

MARGARET

Just about.

(He's a little too amiable. She's a bit uncomfortable.)

MIKE

Sorry you had to wait out there, I was on the line with the caterer.

MARGARET

It's okay.

MIKE

My wife's throwing this party, so there are all these questions about / the menu.

MARGARET

I hope it's okay that I came in without an appointment or / anything.

MIKE

It's fine. I had some cancellations, which never happens / so—

MARGARET

Yeah, they said.

MIKE

You got lucky.
MARGARET
Is the party for you?

MIKE
The party?

MARGARET
You said your wife was / throwing a party.

MIKE
Oh, yeah, it's my birthday this weekend—

MARGARET
March 22nd.

MIKE
(Beat) That's right. Anyway, she lives for that stuff. Any excuse to throw a party.

MARGARET
That's nice.

MIKE
I'm really sorry you had to wait.

MARGARET
I wouldn't have come down, but I called a few times on Monday, and then again yesterday, but they wouldn't put me through.

MIKE
They do that if I'm with patients.

MARGARET
I didn't want to be a pest about it.

MIKE
It's totally fine. How you doin'?

MARGARET
I'm okay.

MIKE
Still in Southie?

MARGARET
Yeah, down on Tudor Street.

MIKE
The Lower End.

MARGARET
Lower End.

MIKE
Same as always.

MARGARET
I guess.

MIKE
This is crazy. Look at you.

MARGARET
I'm fat.

MIKE
You are not.

MARGARET
Well, I'm not seventeen.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
No, nobody's seventeen. How's Gobie?

MARGARET
Oh, he's, uh, down in Virginia somewhere.

MIKE
Oh yeah?

MARGARET
Or Georgia, I guess. Somewhere down there. Last I heard.

MIKE
Well say hi to him from me.

MARGARET
Okay. We haven't heard from him in / a while.

MIKE
Did you ever marry him?

MARGARET
Oh god, no.

MIKE
You were together a while though.

MARGARET
Not really.

MIKE
Well tell him I say hello. (Laughing) I think he owes me a few bucks.

MARGARET
We don't really—He could be / dead for all I know.

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE

(Laughing) That deadbeat was always—What'd you say?

MARGARET
I said he could be dead for all I know.

MIKE
Oh.

MARGARET
We've lost touch.

MIKE
That's too bad.

MARGARET
Not really.

MIKE
Oh, okay.

(Silence.)

MARGARET
So Jeannie said she ran into you. At the luncheon thing.

MIKE
Yeah, she's the same, huh?

MARGARET

MIKE
Mouthy from Southie.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABRAIRE

MARGARET

(Little chuckle) Yeah.

MIKE

I would've known her anywhere.

MARGARET

I heard you were a doctor, but I didn't know if it was true or not.

MIKE

It's true.

MARGARET

That is awesome.

MIKE

Oh, thanks.

MARGARET

I never would've guessed that.

MIKE

No?

MARGARET

I mean, I knew you were smart. Everybody knew that, but I would never have pictured you delivering babies.

MIKE

I don't actually deliver the babies.

MARGARET

You don't?

MIKE

I mean, I have in the past but— I'm a reproductive endocrinologist.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

I don't know what you just said, but I just got a little excited.

MIKE

(Chuckles) Okay.

MARGARET

Was that even English?

MIKE

I do fertility stuff.

MARGARET

You should've just said that.

MIKE

And I help with high-risk pregnancies.

MARGARET

I only went to Southie High after all. You can't be using those five-dollar words on me.

MIKE

Sorry.

MARGARET

I'm just playin' with you.

MIKE

You asked what I did.

MARGARET

I know, I was kidding.

MIKE

Okay. I mean, I went to Southie High, too.
MARGARET
Yeah, and U-Penn, and wherever else.

MIKE
Right.

MARGARET
I didn’t go to U-Penn.

MIKE
No, I know.

MARGARET
(Chuckles) I didn’t go to U-Anywhere. (Pause) A doctor, though. I think that’s awesome.

MIKE
Thank you.

MARGARET
You’re the only doctor I know. In real life, I mean.

MIKE
Real life?

MARGARET
Not somebody I go to, in other words. You know what I mean.

MIKE
Yeah. Personally.

MARGARET
Personally. Exactly.

(Silence.)

MIKE
So, are you pregnant, / or—

MARGARET
No. God. Am I / pregnant?

MIKE
I’m just pulling your leg.

MARGARET
Oh. I thought you were really / asking me.

MIKE
Although, we’ve had some older moms in here. You’d be surprised. Almost fifty, some of them.

MARGARET
I’m not pregnant.

MIKE
No, I know.

MARGARET
(Beat) So you got the messages then?

MIKE
Yeah, the receptionist played them for me.

MARGARET
Then you know why / I—

MIKE
Yes, I was just—

MARGARET
I didn’t mean to bug you about it.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
No, I should've called you back. This is the first slow day we've had.

MARGARET
It's just, my landlady's tapping her foot for the rent, / so—

MIKE
No, I know.

MARGARET
I wouldn't have come, but I didn't know if you were getting the messages.

MIKE
No, I got them.

MARGARET
So Jeannie said I should just come down here.

MIKE
The trouble is, Margie, I don't have anything open right now.

MARGARET
(Beat) No, I figured.

MIKE
And you saw, we don't have a lot of people out there.

MARGARET
No, I know.

MIKE
Just a couple girls answering the phones.

MARGARET
Right.

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GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
Have you even worked one of those systems? You have to know / how to—

MARGARET
It wouldn't have to be answering the phones. I just mentioned the phones because I didn't know what you might have.

MIKE
I see.

MARGARET
I could do whatever. Janitorial stuff or—

MIKE
We have a service that does that. A cleaning service. They come at night.

MARGARET
Oh, I couldn't do nights I don't think. Not with my Joyce.

MIKE
(Beat) I have nothing to do with the cleaning folks anyway. They hire their own people.

MARGARET
That's okay, I couldn't do nights. I just didn't know what the jobs are in a doctor's office. I don't know if there's filing or whatever?

MIKE
That's what I'm saying, I don't have anything.

MARGARET
Right.

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DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
I'm sorry. I should've called you back.

MARGARET
I knew it was a long shot. I only came down because Jean said she ran into you. I told her it was stupid.

MIKE
Have you tried Gillette?

MARGARET
(A wry chuckle) Yeah.

MIKE
Back in the day everybody worked down Gillette. Is that place still open?

MARGARET
Oh, yeah, they're open.

MIKE
I'm sorry, Margie.

MARGARET
That's okay.

MIKE
If I hear about anything, I'll definitely call you. I have your number now.

(This is probably the time she should leave. But she doesn't.)

MARGARET
(Regarding a photo over his shoulder) Is that your family?

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
Yeah.

MARGARET
Can I see?

MIKE
(Slightest pause) Sure.

MARGARET
You don't want to show me?

MIKE
(Hands her the photo) Of course. I don't care / if—

MARGARET
(A little laugh) I'm not gonna stalk them.

MIKE
It's just an old photo, that's all. That's in D.C. We were there for a while, so . . .

MARGARET
(Pause as she takes in the photo) Your wife is beautiful.

MIKE
Thank you.

MARGARET
And young.

MIKE
Oh. Not really. Like, I said it's an old picture.

MARGARET
How old?
I don’t know. Three years.

So, it’s not *that* old. She’s still young.

Younger than me, yeah. A little bit.

(A little chuckle) “A little bit.” Okay.

I waited a while. To settle down.

Well she’s beautiful. Your daughter, too.

Thank you. She’s six now.

Your wife?

You’re funny.

(Hands the photo back) She is beautiful though. They both are. Everybody’s beautiful.

Thank you. (Beat) How’s your little girl?

Little girl. Now who’s funny? My little girl’s older than your wife.

Not quite.

Well she’s not a little girl.

No, I know. (Beat) You know, my sister-in-law had a premature baby. Not as premature as . . .

Joyce.

Joyce, right, but she had some troubles, too. She’s doing better though.

That’s good. Mine’s not.

Sorry. And Gobie doesn’t help out?

No.

That surprises me. He always seemed like a stand-up guy.

Well he’s not. Honestly, though? It’s better he’s not around. Or it would be, if I had a job.
MIKE
I'm sorry, Margie. I wish I had something. *(Puts on his doctor's coat)*

MARGARET
I know. Nobody does. I went up and down Broadway, and put applications in *everywhere*. Nobody's calling me though. I even went online. Up at the library. You can apply for jobs online now.

MIKE
Oh yeah?

MARGARET
*I think* I did it right, but I don't know. I'm always so stupid when it comes to computers. And those librarians won't help. They're *supposed* to but—Anyway, I think I did it right. Nobody's calling though.

MIKE
You gotta give it time. Just keep putting yourself out / there.

MARGARET
You know it doesn't have to be full-time, right? I could fill in, like if somebody gets sick or whatever. Or if you need somebody to work weekends?

MIKE
That's not how we do it, Margie.

MARGARET
Okay. I figured. That's fine.

MIKE
I swear, I'm not holding out on you.

MARGARET
No, I know. *(Beat)* I wouldn't fit in here anyway.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
She's also very good at her job...

MARGARET
I guess. If her job means being rude to people. She was all suspicious, asking me these questions.

MIKE
Well, when you walk in off the street / like that—

MARGARET
I told her we were friends though.

MIKE
I know.

MARGARET
What I wanted to say is, "Mind your business, bitch."

MIKE
It's probably good you didn't.

MARGARET
She really didn't want me coming back here.

MIKE
Well, you got back here anyway. It was / good to see you.

MARGARET
Anyway, that's what I meant. She and I wouldn't have gotten along, I don't think, so it's probably for the best you don't have a job for me. I'm not fancy enough for this office. You're all lace-curtain Irish now.

MIKE
(Beat) What?

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
You are, it's great. I'm happy for you.

MIKE
What do you mean, "lace-curtain."

MARGARET
What do you call it? "My wife is throwing me a party."

MIKE
What, you don't throw parties?

MARGARET
Not really. Not catered.

MIKE
It's a special— It's not like we do it all the time.

MARGARET
You don't have to get defensive. I was just saying. You're not...

MIKE
What.

MARGARET
Southie at all.

MIKE
Ouch.

MARGARET
You wouldn't know that that's where you're from, I'm saying.

MIKE
So I've lost my street cred.

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MARGARET
No, I think it's awesome.

MIKE
Yeah, you keep saying that, but I'm starting to not believe you.

MARGARET
I do think it's awesome. You're like someone on a TV show.

MIKE
Uh-huh.

MARGARET
You are. You know what I mean. Professional.

MIKE
All right, professional I don't mind, but lace-curtain . . .

MARGARET
It just means you did good.

MIKE
No it doesn't. I haven't been in the neighborhood for a while, but I remember what lace-curtain means.

MARGARET
It's a good thing, Mike.

MIKE
No it isn't. It means I think I'm better than other people.

MARGARET
That's not what it means.

MIKE
Yes it does.

MARGARET
Well, that's not how I mean it.

MIKE
The old-timers called the Kennedys' lace-curtain: "Aw, they don't care about us. They're all lace-curtain now."

MARGARET
Well, I don't know anything about that.

MIKE
Or when a union boss or whoever moved out to Wellesley.

MARGARET
Where do you live?

MIKE
(Beat) Not Wellesley.

MARGARET
Brookline?

(No response.)

Weston?

MIKE
(Beat) Chestnut Hill.

MARGARET
(Laughs) You're not lace-curtain though. Kid grows up in the Old Harbor Projects—

MIKE
Okay.
MARGARET
—moves to Chestnut Hill.

MIKE
Okay.

MARGARET
Chestnut Hill!

MIKE
I'm still a Southie kid at heart though.

MARGARET
Are ya?

MIKE
Yes.

MARGARET
Chestnut Hill. That's nice. Not that I've ever been there. But it sounds nice. Chestnut Hill. Big house?

MIKE
It's all right.

MARGARET
Humble. I bet it's awesome. That's all I ever wanted—a big house somewhere. You got trees?

MIKE
A couple.

MARGARET
Sounds nice. Ya got a guest room?

GOOD PEOPLE

(They sort of laugh.)

MIKE
Mikey Dillon. You're rich!

MARGARET
You are! You're rich!

MIKE
I'm not rich.

MARGARET
Well what would you call it?

MIKE
I don't know.

MARGARET
Wealthy?

MIKE
We're just... comfortable.

MARGARET
Oh, comfortable.

MIKE
Yeah.

MARGARET
You're comfortable. Okay. I guess that makes me un-comfortable then. Is that what you call us lowly folk? Un-comfortable?
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE

Nope.

MARGARET

You're comfortable. I like that. It's nicer than rich. And you look comfortable.

MIKE

Funny, I don't feel comfortable at this particular moment.

MARGARET

I'm sorry. It's not polite to talk money, is it. Us Southie kids forget that sometimes.

MIKE

Right.

MARGARET

(Beat) You ever get back there at all? Walk the Sugar Bowl? Grab a clam roll at Sully's?

MIKE

Not really.

MARGARET

How come?

MIKE

(Beat) My parents moved to Florida, so there was never a reason to . . .

MARGARET

Go back?

MIKE

I don't know. I should though. I miss those clam rolls.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

Huh. Well they're still there.

MIKE

I've been doing some work with the Boys and Girls Clubs though. I'm on the board, so . . .

MARGARET

(A little laugh) You're on the board.

MIKE

And I still have cousins in Southie.

MARGARET

The Feeneys?

MIKE

Yeah.

MARGARET

(Knowing) Close to them, are ya?

MIKE

Well . . .

MARGARET

They gonna be at your party?

MIKE

(Chuckles) You know I was never tight with the Feeneys. But that's my father's fault.

MARGARET

You still have ties though. You're still Mikey Dee from Old Harbor.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
If I was close to the Feeneys they would come to the party.

MARGARET
Oh, yeah? You'd let the Southie rats in?

MIKE
What are you doing? Do you think I'm lying about the job?

MARGARET
No.

MIKE
Then why are you being so passive-aggressive?

MARGARET
Okay, Big Words.

MIKE
I think you're deliberately needling me.

MARGARET
What I say?

MIKE
Did you get mean, Margie?

MARGARET
(Beat) No.

MIKE
Southie girls could be so mean. I remember how hard they were. Your friend Jeannie? Forget it. She could beat the shit out of me.

MARGARET
Still could.

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GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
You were never like that though. I hope you're still nice, Margie.

MARGARET
You think I'm not? Because I called you lace-curtain?

MIKE
I can't tell.

MARGARET
Because I asked if you invited the Feeneys?

MIKE
If the Feeneys wanna come, they can come.

MARGARET
I'll let 'em know. (Beat) Can I come, too?

(A nervous laugh) Ha.

MARGARET
Is that a yes?

MIKE
You don't wanna come to this party, believe me. You'd be bored out of your mind. Bunch of stuffy doctors and their stuffy wives.

MARGARET
Sounds like you need me to liven things up.

MIKE
You'd certainly do that.

MARGARET
Any of these people hiring, ya think?

67
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
Aw, and here I thought you wanted to celebrate my birthday.

MARGARET
Well that, too.

MIKE
I'm just a Job Fair to you.

MARGARET
You know I'm not fussy, Mikey. I'll clean their pools if that's what they got. No shame in an honest job.

MIKE
I don't think I know anybody with a pool.

MARGARET
You just don't want me minglin' with your buddies. You afraid I might embarrass you?

MIKE
Is that who you think I am?

MARGARET
I don't know.

MIKE
You're actually starting to offend me a little bit with all this lace-curtain stuff.

MARGARET
Come on, I'm just playing.

MIKE
You wouldn't embarrass me.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
No, I know. You're a good guy, Mikey. I'm just bustin' balls. You're good people. I always said that about you. (Beat) You are good people, right?

MIKE
I like to think so.

MARGARET
Of course you are. Helping these babies in here. The nervous parents. Volunteering at the Boys Club, or whatever it is you do. Donate money?

MIKE
(Beat) A little bit.

MARGARET
See, that's a good guy. Giving money to these kids who you don't even know. That's good people. I know you'd help me if you could. I know you would.

MIKE
(Beat) You know you're welcome to come, Margie. If the party's that interesting / to you—

MARGARET
Oh, now I get to come.

MIKE
I never said you couldn't come.

MARGARET
What I do, bruise your pride?

MIKE
Yeah, actually, but I'm gonna overlook that and invite you anyway.
David Lindsay-Abaire

Margaret
No, not if I have to guilt you into it.

Mike
You’re not. I’ll tell Denise to give you directions right now.

Margaret
The Spanish girl with the boobies?

Mike
She’s Dominican, but yeah.

Margaret
Nah, that’s okay. I’ll let ya off the hook.

Mike
(Beat. Realized) I see what this is.

Margaret
What.

Mike
You don’t actually want to come. You just want me to feel bad.

Margaret
Why would I want that?

Mike
I don’t know. But it’s weird how you suddenly don’t want to come to the party after all. I know Chestnut Hill’s a scary place—

Margaret
You got that right. All that money in one town?

Mike
Suddenly you don’t want to hang out with my boring friends.

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Good People

Margaret
I’ll hang out, I don’t care. So long as they wanna gimme a job. They gonna gimme a job?

Mike
Somebody might. A couple of those guys have done stupider things. But you don’t wanna come now.

Margaret
You think I won’t?

Mike
No, I think you’ll say you will, then call the next day, and leave a message saying your kid got sick or something.

Margaret
Hey, I just wanted a job, Mikey. But if you wanna play a game a chicken that’s fine, too.

Mike
I’m not playing anything.

Margaret
Stop fucking with me.

Mike
I’m not.

Margaret
’Cause you’re very close to hurting my feelings.

Mike
Hurting your feelings? Seriously, Margie, if you want to come you should come, but stop trying to make me out to be this jackass who’s forgotten where he’s come from.

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DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET

(Beat) When is it?

MIKE

Saturday night.

MARGARET

I happen to be free Saturday night.

MIKE

I'm not surprised.

MARGARET

Now why don't you buzz your girl and tell her I'd like directions.

MIKE

(Slightest pause) You're not gonna come.

MARGARET

I am now.

MIKE

Okay.

(He reaches for the phone and dials Denise's extension.)

MARGARET

You don't want me to.

MIKE

I just invited you, didn't I? (Into phone) Hey Denise, could you print out directions to my house for Miss Walsh? She'll be coming to the party on Saturday. (Denise says something funny, he chuckles) No, you cannot.

MARGARET

I'll be taking the T.

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GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE

(Into the phone) T directions... yeah. Thank you. (Hangs up) Hope you like salmon.

MARGARET

Never had it.

MIKE

Well, you're gonna.

MARGARET

(Moves to go) All right. This was fun, Mike. Thanks for letting me in.

MIKE

Like I had a choice.

MARGARET

(Laughs) Yeah.

(She beads for the door, then turns back.)

If you hear of anything in the meantime, call me though, okay? About work? I'll do whatever.

MIKE

Okay.

MARGARET

See you Saturday.

MIKE

Will I?

MARGARET

Oh yeah. You're in deep now, Doctor.

(Margaret goes. Mike is left alone.

Lights out.)

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Scene 4

Margaret, Jean and Dottie are at a folding table in the basement of a church. They're playing bingo. We hear the murmur of the crowd, and the voice of a priest calling the bingo numbers over a cheap sound system.

The women, bingo daubers in hand, play their cards. The cards are on rip-off sheets. Margaret has one sheet of three cards. The others are playing twelve or fifteen cards at a time. They'll be playing and daubing their cards through much of this scene. Dottie has several of her crafted rabbits on display in front of her. They are for sale.

VOICE OF PRIEST

I-17. I...17.

(They play.)

B-11.

Good People

DOTTIE

They gave me shit cards.

VOICE OF PRIEST

B...11.

DOTTIE

(Leans over to Jean) You got anything?

JEAN

Are you kidding?

DOTTIE

They always give me shit cards.

MARGARET

I'm down to two numbers.

DOTTIE

You're down to two?

JEAN

Oooh, Margie's got a little heat under her.

DOTTIE

I find it awful strange that someone with no money can afford bingo.

MARGARET

Jean treated me. If I win, we're splitting it.

DOTTIE

Huh.

JEAN

It's just a few cards.
David Lindsay-Abaire

VOICE OF PRIEST

O-70. O . . . 70.

JEAN

He looked good, right?

DOTTIE

Who did?

JEAN

Mikey Dillon. (To Margaret) You did good, Margie, going down there.

MARGARET

Tell me that after the party.

JEAN

It's gonna go great.

DOTTIE

Or it won't.

VOICE OF PRIEST

B-3. B . . . 3.

DOTTIE

Who's with Joyce?

MARGARET

Ruthie.

DOTTIE

Ruthie? How ya payin' her?

JEAN

You think she's hiding money from you, Dottie?

Good People

MARGARET

I'm not paying Ruthie anything. Her TV fried, so her kids are goin' nuts. I said she could come over and use mine if she watched Joyce.

JEAN

Ruthie's kids are animals.

MARGARET

Joyce likes 'em.

DOTTIE

Joyce likes everybody, god love her.

VOICE OF PRIEST


MARGARET

You think we jinxed her?

JEAN

Who.

MARGARET

Cookie McDermott.

JEAN

Oh my god, would you quit with that?

MARGARET

You don't think it's spooky though? That we were making fun of her?

JEAN

We weren't making fun of her.
MARGARET
Then a few days later she dies up there?

JEAN
I'm surprised she lasted as long as she did actually. Lying on the ground months at a time, exposed to the elements like that. Cookie was a fuckin' wreck.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N-31.

JEAN
Way before she lived on that wall even.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N... 31.

MARGARET
You don't think it's spooky though?

DOTTIE
I do. I think it's spooky. I think you people are witches.

MARGARET
Sissy said she was layin' there for two days before anyone did anything. They thought she was sleepin'.

VOICE OF PRIEST
O-74.

MARGARET
Two days, and nobody noticed. That's pretty sad.

VOICE OF PRIEST
O... 74.

Good People

DOTTIE
These cards are terrible. I think they see me comin' and say, "Oh here comes Dottie, give her the shit cards."

MARGARET
I'm waiting now.

JEAN
You are?

MARGARET
G-53.

JEAN
Come on, G-53.

MARGARET
If I hit tonight, I'm gonna buy a nice party outfit.

DOTTIE
What do you need a new outfit for? Those people aren't gonna hire you.

JEAN
Why are you so negative all the time?

VOICE OF PRIEST
G-59.

DOTTIE
I'm not negative, I'm realistic.

VOICE OF PRIEST
G... 59.
David Lindsay-Abaire

MARGARET
He said somebody might be hiring.

DOTTIE
Who?

MARGARET
He didn’t say who.

DOTTIE
Which means nobody. You’re gonna go all the way out / there—

JEAN
What do you care where she goes?

DOTTIE
I don’t, I’m just saying it sounds unlikely.

MARGARET
I wanna see his house anyway. I’m curious. I bet it’s nice. And if somebody wants to give me a job while I’m there, so be it.

DOTTIE
And what if they don’t?

VOICE OF PRIEST
I-20.

JEAN
I know what I’d do.

MARGARET
What.

VOICE OF PRIEST
I . . . 20.

Good People

JEAN
I’d say Joyce wasn’t premature.

MARGARET
(Beat) What are you talking about?

JEAN
Joyce. If she wasn’t premature then the math almost works out.

MARGARET
Jesus, Jeannie.

JEAN
That’s what I’d do. Pull a Maury Povich on his ass.

DOTTIE
What does that mean?

JEAN
It means she whips out a picture of Joyce and tells him he has a long-lost daughter.

VOICE OF PRIEST
O-63.

JEAN
You say, “Hey, Mike, you remember that summer we dated?”

VOICE OF PRIEST
O . . . 63.

DOTTIE
You dated?

MARGARET
No, we / didn’t—
JEAN
Yes you did, right before Gobie.

MARGARET
Just a few weeks, Jean. Don't be stupid.

JEAN
That's all it takes! If Joyce wasn't premature—

MARGARET
But she was.

JEAN
I'd walk her right up to the front door.

VOICE OF PRIEST
I-16.

MARGARET
(Laughs) You would, too.

VOICE OF PRIEST
I...16.

JEAN
Damn straight, I would. You gotta start thinking like other people do. Get him to pay some of that child support Gobie refuses to cough up.

MARGARET
(Laughs) You are too much.

VOICE OF PRIEST
G-51.

GOOD PEOPLE

JEAN
Jesus. He's calling all around you, Margie.

VOICE OF PRIEST
G...51.

JEAN
53, Father! We're looking for 53!

MARGARET
Don't do that, you're gonna get these old biddies mad.

JEAN
We gotta buy this girl an outfit!

MARGARET
Shut up.

DOTTIE
You know Helen Feeney did something like that.

JEAN
Like what?

DOTTIE
That Maury Povich thing. She made Bob Swanson believe those boys were actually his.

VOICE OF PRIEST
B-13.

DOTTIE
Why he'd ever believe her is beyond me.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

VOICE OF PRIEST

B...13.

DOTTIE

You take one look at those boys, and you know they're Mexican. And I said that to him, too. Up at the VFW one night.

MARGARET

No, you didn't.

DOTTIE

Yes I did. I said, "Bob, those boys are Mexican." And he said, "Shut up, Dottie. They don't look like no Mexicans," and I said "Well you've never seen a Mexican then. Because those kids are straight off the taco truck." And then he got crazy mad, and I was asked to leave.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N-41.

JEAN

(To Margaret) Well there ya go.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N...41.

JEAN

Worked on Bob Swanson, it could work on Mikey Dillon.

MARGARET

Let's just stick with the job.

DOTTIE

What job? Nobody goes to a fancy party lookin' to hire an unemployed cashier.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

Ya never know, Dottie. People have wanted crazier things.

JEAN

Yeah, those stupid rabbits for example.

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-55.

VOICE OF OLD LADY

Bingo!

(A collective groan from the crowd.)

DOTTIE

Sonofabitch.

MARGARET

Damnit all.

JEAN

Motherfucker.

VOICE OF PRIEST

Check that card, Helen.

JEAN

Win the next one, wouldja Margie? So you can give this nut her damn money.

VOICE OF PRIEST

That's a good bingo.

(Stevie from the Dollar Store wanders over with a fistful of bingo sheets, looking for a seat.)

JEAN

Well, look who it is.

(Stevie sees Margaret. He wants to turn around, but it's too late.)
David Lindsay-Abaire

Margaret

Hi, Stevie.

Stevie

Oh, hey.

Jean

We thought you might be here.

Margaret

You can sit here if you want.

Stevie

That's okay, I was just looking / for—

Margaret

There aren't any seats up front. We looked already.

Oh yeah?

Margaret

It's fine, sit down. We don't have to be weird.

You sure?

Margaret

Like you said, you didn't have a choice.

Stevie

Okay.

Margaret

Not that I believed that, but sit down anyway. It'll be fun.

Good People

(Stevie joins them at the table. Reluctantly.)

Dottie

Who's he?

Jean

Stevie Grimes.

Dottie

Suzie's kid?

Jean

Yeah.

Dottie

(Leans over to Stevie) Your mother was a funny bitch. (Laughing now) "Who threw that bird at me?" You know that story?

Stevie

Yeah.

Dottie

So funny: "Who threw that bird at me?!"

Margaret

He doesn't think it's funny.

Dottie

How is that not funny? "Who threw that bird at me?!"

Voice of Priest

Next game: Inside Square. No B's, No O's. And we're starting with . . . I-17. I . . . 17.

Jean

Hey Stevie, Karen Finch is telling everyone you're gay.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

STEVIE

I heard that.

JEAN

Doesn’t that bother you?

STEVIE

Not really.

JEAN

Because you’re gay?

STEVIE

No, because I don’t care.

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-46.

JEAN

It is peculiar though.

VOICE OF PRIEST

G . . . 46.

JEAN

You coming here all the time?

MARGARET

Leave him alone, Jean.

JEAN

Why? You want me to be nice to the guy that fired you? (To Dottie)
She’s too nice.

MARGARET

No, I’m not. Mike said I turned mean.

GOOD PEOPLE

DOTTIE

How were you mean?

JEAN

Who cares? It got her invited to that party, that’s all that matters.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N-41. N . . . 41.

STEVIE

(To Jean) So how is coming to bingo peculiar?

MARGARET

Aw, Jesus. See what ya did?

JEAN

Well you don’t see too many young guys in here. Bingo’s a funny
pastime for a young guy.

STEVIE

But not a young gay guy?

JEAN

No, you know what I mean.

STEVIE

Not really.

MARGARET

Well, look around, there’s a bunch of old ladies.

STEVIE

Speak for yourself.

MARGARET

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-58.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

JEAN

He knows what I mean.

VOICE OF PRIEST

G...58.

STEVIE

I would if this place was full of gay guys. Is it?

JEAN

No.

STEVIE

Then how is it gay?

JEAN

I don't know.

STEVIE

I'm just trying to win a little money, like everybody else. I don't see how that's gay.

JEAN

Well it is, so I don't know what else to tell ya.

VOICE OF PRIEST


DOTTIE

(Turns to Stevie) Stevie? You want a rabbit?

STEVIE

What?

DOTTIE

I made these rabbits. (*Indicates her wares*)

90

GOOD PEOPLE

STEVIE

Oh.

DOTTIE

Five bucks each.

STEVIE

They're nice.

DOTTIE

You want one?

STEVIE

No thank you.

JEAN

Don't like rabbits, Stevie?

DOTTIE

Of course he does. Who doesn't like rabbits?

JEAN

Gay guys.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N-36. N...36.

DOTTIE

I'll give you three for twelve.

STEVIE

I have nowhere to put them.

DOTTIE

Nowhere to put 'em?
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

STEVIE
I have a lot of clutter in / my—

DOTTIE
They're just little rabbits. "Nowhere to put 'em." You talk like I'm trying to sell you a fridge.

STEVIE
I just don't want them. They're not my taste. I don't care for that sort of thing.

(Silence as Dottie stares at him.)

VOICE OF PRIEST

DOTTIE
I think maybe you are gay.

MARGARET
He's not gay. He's dating that Chinese girl up at the store.

STEVIE
She's not Chinese! She's from / Thailand!

DOTTIE
What Chinese girl? At the Ho Toy?

MARGARET
I said store, not restaurant. The Dollar Store.

DOTTIE
Oh, I thought you meant like Chinese food.

MARGARET
No.

GOOD PEOPLE

DOTTIE
Like she works at Ho Toy Chinese.

MARGARET
No.

DOTTIE
The Chinese restaurant.

JEAN
No, she works at the Dollar Store! Jesus Christ, Dottie!

DOTTIE
Why are you getting mad?

JEAN
Because you're like fuckin' Aunt Clara sometimes! It pisses me off!

DOTTIE
Whose Aunt Clara are you talking about?

JEAN
Nobody's! The show with the witch!

DOTTIE
You don't make any sense, ya know it?

DOTTIE
Aren't you glad you sat here, Stevie?

MARGARET

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-60. G . . . 60.

DOTTIE
Hey, you know who else got fired?

MARGARET

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-60. G . . . 60.
JEAN
Who?

DOTTIE
Franny. (To Stevie) That's my Russell's wife. Do you know my son Russell? Russell Gillis?

STEVIE
(There's a story here) Yeah, I know Russell Gillis.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N-32.

JEAN
Why'd Franny get fired? She's been at that shop forever.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N ... 32.

DOTTIE
I guess she got talking to one of the customers, and forgot about another one, and left something in somebody's hair too long, and clumps of it fell out, or I don't know, some crazy story.

VOICE OF PRIEST
G-52.

DOTTIE
But I guess the owner got mad, and Franny got mouthy, and so out she went.

VOICE OF PRIEST
G ... 52.

GOOD PEOPLE

DOTTIE
So now neither of 'em are workin'. Her or Russell, and they got nothin' saved up because of her and those stupid scratch tickets.

JEAN
What are they gonna do?

DOTTIE
I don't know. You hiring at the Dollar Store, Stevie?

STEVIE

MARGARET
Franny does good work though. She can go into any salon. She's got a following now.

VOICE OF PRIEST
I-30.

DOTTIE
What following?

VOICE OF PRIEST
I ... 30.

DOTTIE
A bunch of cripple old ladies with walkers. They can hardly get to her now. Where are they gonna follow her to?

MARGARET
Russell will be okay.

DOTTIE
I don't know, their apartment ain't cheap. I might have to help them out, if it comes to that.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

JEAN

Comes to what?

DOTTIE

If things get bad, and they need someplace to live.

MARGARET

That's what I thought.

JEAN

You'd give them Margie's apartment?

DOTTIE

I'm not saying it's gonna happen.

MARGARET

Funny, how it comes up just as I'm having trouble paying the rent though.

DOTTIE

That's not how it is.

VOICE OF PRIEST

I-28.

JEAN

Jesus, Dottie.

VOICE OF PRIEST

I...28.

DOTTIE

He's my son. What am I supposed to do, let him go homeless?

JEAN

Hey, fuck you, Dottie.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

Easy.

JEAN

No, fuck her. She pretends to be your friend.

DOTTIE

I am her friend.

JEAN

Yeah, you're a real pal.

MARGARET

It doesn't matter. Dottie, you're right, Russell's your kid. If he needs a place to stay—

JEAN

It's gonna be fine, Margie. Something's gonna come up for you. Despite these assholes.

VOICE OF PRIEST

I-22.

JEAN

Something always comes up. You'll be okay.

VOICE OF PRIEST

I...22.

MARGARET

Maybe somebody at Mike's party will have something.

JEAN

That's right. You make an impression. People like you. Who knows, you might even find a husband there.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET
Oh yeah, that's exactly what's gonna happen.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N-45.

JEAN
It could.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N... 45.

MARGARET
Right. 'Cause what guy can resist a middle-aged lady in an outfit from Goodwill?

JEAN
You'd be surprised.

MARGARET
"Oh you're single and rich. How lovely, because I'm up to my tits in credit-card debt."

(Jean laughs.)

"Oh, you like that? Good, 'cause I'm also in need of major dental work!"

(A little chuckle from Jean.)

"And did I mention that I come with an adult daughter! Not only is she severely retarded, but she still occasionally pisses the bed..."

(And for just a moment, Margaret is overcome with emotion. She stops before she embarrasses herself though. It takes everyone by surprise, especially her. Silence. Then Jean turns to Stevie.)

GOOD PEOPLE

JEAN
See what you did?

VOICE OF PRIEST
G-47.

(Margaret's cell phone starts to ring. She rummages in her bag for it.)

MARGARET
That's my phone.

VOICE OF PRIEST
G... 47.

MARGARET
It might be Ruthie. I gave her this number in case something happened to— (Answers phone) Hello? ... Yeah ... Oh, hi. (Whispers to Jean) Do my cards.

(Jean watches Margaret's bingo cards for her.)

(Into the phone) What's goin' on? ... Uh-huh ... No, I'm here with Jean.

DOTTIE
(Whispers to Jean) Who's she talking to?

JEAN
Mind your business, Dottie.

MARGARET
(Into phone, confused and disappointed) Uh-huh ... Oh. Why, what happened?

DOTTIE
(Again to Jean) Something happened.
MARGARET

(Into phone) Is she okay? ... No, of course ... Is she okay, though? ... All right ... No, it can come on quick like that. If she's sick there's nothing you can—

DOTTIE

Sounds like somebody's sick. Maybe it's Joyce. (Whispers to Margaret) Is it Joyce?

(Margaret gestures that it's not.)

Oh, good.

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-56.

MARGARET

No, you can't have a house full of people if she's throwing up like that ... 

VOICE OF PRIEST

G ... 56.

MARGARET

No, don't be sorry. Don't be. Your daughter's sick ... I mean, she is sick, right? ... No, I know, I'm just bustin' balls again. That's how I do ... Hey, whadaya gonna do ... Yeah, if you reschedule let me know ... No, I'm saying if you do. Okay. Bye.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N-40. N ... 40.

(Margaret hangs up. She goes back to her bingo cards.)

JEAN

Everything okay?

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

I just got uninvited.

DOTTIE

To what?

MARGARET

Mike's party. He said it's canceled. I guess his kid's sick.

JEAN

So? It's not the kid's party.

MARGARET

I'm just telling you what he said.

VOICE OF PRIEST

I-19. I ... 19.

JEAN

You think he's lying?

MARGARET

Oh yeah.

JEAN

How do you know?

MARGARET

I could just tell. His voice. He chickened out, he doesn't want me there.

JEAN

 Didn't I say he was an asshole?

DOTTIE

You think his wife made him do it?
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET
How should I know?

DOTTIE
I bet he told her you went out.

JEAN
I bet he didn't.

MARGARET
I'm gonna go anyway.

DOTTIE
What?

MARGARET
I'm gonna go to that party.

JEAN
(Smiles) You are?

MARGARET
You think I shouldn't?

JEAN
No, I think you should. You definitely should.

DOTTIE
Don't take advice from ber, Margie. She likes trouble.

MARGARET
He said his friends might have something for me. He said that. I think it's rude. To invite someone like that, and then say it's canceled. That's rude.

GOOD PEOPLE

JEAN
It is rude.

VOICE OF PRIEST
N-33.

MARGARET
Besides, I really wanna see that house.

STEVIE
(Raises his hand) Bingo!

JEAN
Cocksucker!

(Lights out.)
Act Two

Scene 1

Lights up on a beautiful home. Tasteful and suburban. The living room takes up most of the space. Up and left we may see part of a foyer that leads to the front door. Doorways and corridors lead off to other parts of the house—the kitchen, the dining room, maybe we see a staircase that leads up to the bedrooms. It’s a beautifully decorated space. Obviously people with money live here.

It’s early evening, say around seven or so. Mike is reading the newspaper when Kate enters with her datebook open. Kate is attractive, pleasant, African American, early thirties.

KATE

What about next Thursday?

MIKE

I can’t do Thursday.
Friday then.

You know what my Fridays are like, Katie.

Well she leaves for Saint Barts on the 12th and she really wants to meet before that.

Of course she does. That's how she pays for these trips to Saint Barts. We miss a couple sessions, and she might not be able to swing the bar tab.

What about Tuesday morning? Can you go in late?

Aren't we done?

No, Michael, she thinks it's important that we keep—

No, I know she does, but that's what they do. They string you along forever, and make you think you need their counsel—

We do need her counsel.

Yes, and we got it. For many months. But are we learning anything new? Every week we go in / there—

I know.

She says the same stuff, and then we say the same stuff, and then we write her another check.

I know.

It's become this security blanket.

Well maybe I need a security blanket.

(Beat) Okay. If you want to keep going to her, I'm fine with that. I just thought I'd bring it up. I'm fine either way. I can go in late on Tuesday if that's what you wanna do.

That's what I want to do.

Okay. Do you notice how quiet Ally is?

I do.

What'd I tell ya?

She's asleep?
Good People

MIKE
It'll take me one minute. I won't wake her up.

(He heads upstairs. The doorbell rings.)

KATE
There they are. I told you they'd come.

MIKE
If you wake her up, we'll never get her back down.

KATE
I won't wake her up.

(He's gone upstairs. Kate crosses to the foyer to open the front door.)

MARGARET
(Off) Hello.

KATE
(Off) Hi.

MARGARET
(Off) I'm Margaret.

KATE
(Off) Hi Margaret, come on in.

(Margaret enters the foyer.)

MARGARET
I didn't know if I was supposed to use the side door or the front door, or what I was supposed / to do.

KATE
I told Wally the side door, but it doesn't matter. It's just easier with the driveway right there, but this is fine.

MICHAEL—
(They move into the living room.)

MARGARET

Am I early?

KATE

Not at all. I thought you'd be here sooner actually. You all must be busy.

MARGARET

Not really.

KATE

Oh. Okay. Well the kitchen’s this way. Did you bring anyone with you?

MARGARET

No. I threatened to though. (Chuckles) Did he mention that? I was gonna bring the Feeney’s.

KATE

I’m sorry?

MARGARET

No, I didn’t bring anyone.

KATE

(Stops) You’re not going to carry this stuff yourself, I hope?

MARGARET

What stuff?

KATE

The glasses, and the— It’s pretty heavy. There are some folding tables that have to go, too. Wally usually sends a couple guys to pick it all up.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

Oh yeah?

(Margaret stares at her, confused. There’s obviously been a mix-up.)

KATE

You’re not with the caterers.

MARGARET

No.

KATE

Oh my god. I am so sorry.

MARGARET

That’s okay.

KATE

(Laughing now) I can’t believe I did that.

MARGARET

I was wondering why you kept saying Wally.

KATE

I’m sorry.

MARGARET

I’m like, “Who the hell’s Wally?”

KATE

(Laughing) I just assumed he sent one of the waitresses. Which doesn’t even make sense really, but it’s been so crazy here today.

MARGARET

That’s all right.
David Lindsay-Abaire

KATE
(Still laughing) I just escort you right in without—

MARGARET
Mike invited me. I’m Margaret. (Off her blank look) Margie Walsh? From Southie?

KATE
(Realizing) Jesus. Oh my god, I am so sorry.

MARGARET
It’s okay.

KATE
You must think I’m a crazy person.

MARGARET
It’s fine.

KATE
It didn’t even occur to me that you might be here for the party.

MARGARET
Am I the first? I should’ve come a little later.

KATE
Did Michael not call you?

MARGARET
No, he did, but—

KATE
We canceled. We canceled the party last night.

MARGARET
(Beat) Oh.

Good People

KATE
Yeah, Michael was supposed to call you. Our daughter got sick / so—

MARGARET
Oh my god.

KATE
That’s why I thought you were with the caterer. They dropped off a bunch of stuff yesterday, and then we canceled last night, so they said they’d send someone to pick things up.

MARGARET
You canceled.

KATE
Michael said he called everyone / but—

MARGARET
No, he did, but—I misunderstood.

KATE
Oh.

KATE
I didn’t understand what he was—

KATE
It was probably the way he said it.

MARGARET
Yeah.

KATE
He does the same thing to me all the time.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

(Mike comes downstairs.)

MIKE
Mission accomplished. I was like a magician with a table cloth.

(Mike enters the living room. Silence as he takes in Margaret.)

MARGARET
Hello.

KATE
Margaret didn't get your message.

MARGARET
No, I got it, I just misunderstood it.

MIKE
You did?

KATE
He can be so confusing sometimes.

MARGARET
No, it's my fault, I wasn't listening or—

KATE
Honestly, don't worry about it.

MARGARET
I feel so stupid.

KATE
Why don't you take off your coat?

MARGARET
No, I'm gonna go.

GOOD PEOPLE

KATE
Don't be ridiculous.

MARGARET
No, there's no party, your daughter's sick—

KATE
She's asleep now. Let me take your coat.

MARGARET
That's okay.

KATE
Come on, you're here now, you might as well have a quick glass of wine.

MARGARET
No, you don't have to do that.

KATE
We're just about to open a bottle.

MARGARET
Still, I feel dumb, barging in / when—

KATE
We were just sitting here waiting for the caterers to pick / up the—

MARGARET
I know, but—

KATE
One drink. You can have one drink.

MIKE
Well don't force her, Kate. If she doesn't / want to—

114
DAVID LINDSAY-ABRAIRE

KATE
I'm not forcing her, I'm just saying if she drove all this way—

MARGARET
I took the T.

KATE
You took the T?

MARGARET
Yeah.

KATE
No, you have to stay then.

MIKE
You don't *have* to.

KATE
But we would *like* you to.

(Pause. Margaret finally relents.)

MARGARET
Okay, but only for a minute.

MIKE
There ya go.

KATE
Let me take your coat.

(Margaret unbuttons her coat. Kate glances at the coat, but doesn't betray what she thinks of it. She just brings it to the hall closet to hang up. Margaret wears the nicest dress she could afford.)

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
This is so stupid. I don't know how I did this.

KATE
Stop. It's fine. Have a seat, don't be shy.

MIKE
Oh she's not shy, are ya, Margie.

MARGARET
She thought I was with the caterer.

MIKE
She what?

KATE
They were supposed to come pick up the tables, that's why I thought—

MARGARET
It's okay.

KATE
If it's any consolation, people always think I'm the nanny, so . . .

MARGARET
(Beat) The nanny?

KATE
If I'm out with Ally, or at the park? They assume I'm her nanny. Because she's so white.

MARGARET
I see.
I actually had a woman offer me a job. She said, “I don’t know if you’re looking for a new family, but we pay really well.” Oh, it made me so mad.

I bet.

(Beat) I’m sorry, Margaret.

No, you were expecting the caterers. Who else is gonna ring the bell?

Anyway, you settle in, I’m gonna get some cheese together.

You don’t have to do that.

I do actually. I was able to cancel the caterers, but the cheese guy was a complete ass. He wouldn’t take anything back.

The fridge is packed with the stuff.

You’re not lactose intolerant, I hope.

I don’t think so.

Oh good, because all day I’ve been saying, “What are we gonna do with all this cheese?!” You ringing that bell was the best thing to happen to us.

Oh yeah?

Now you’re trapped here until that cheese is gone.

(A polite laugh) Okay.

I’ll be right back. Michael, get her some wine.

We have beer if you’d rather have beer.

(Wine is fine.

Red?

Sure.

(He goes to the glassware cabinet and gets a wine glass, opens a bottle and pours her some wine over the following;)

I’m sorry, Mike. I misunderstood.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
How do you mean?

MARGARET
About the party. I didn’t realize / that—

MIKE
Right, I’m not sure how you could’ve done that.

MARGARET
I know.

MIKE
I thought I was pretty clear when we talked.

MARGARET
No, I know.

MIKE
I said Ally was sick, and so my wife wanted to cancel.

MARGARET
I thought you were lying though.

MIKE
(Beat) Ah.

MARGARET
I thought you were just making up an excuse / to—

MIKE
Why would I lie?

MARGARET
I don’t know. I just thought you didn’t want me to come. It seemed suspicious. To cancel at the last minute like that.

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
Ally got sick. Kate thought it’d be better if we called it off.

MARGARET
No, I know that now.

MIKE
You’re paranoid.

(He hands her the wine. Margaret looks around a bit.)

MARGARET
So you found it okay.

MIKE
No problem. That receptionist of yours gives good directions.

MARGARET
I’ll let her know.

MIKE
I was early though, so I walked around the block a few times.

MARGARET
And you lived to tell the tale.

MARGARET
I should’ve figured out there was no party. Your driveway was empty. Most of your lights were off.

MIKE
Yeah, well.

MARGARET
The house is beautiful.
Thanks.

MARGARET  
I knew it would be. (Beat) I pictured pillars though.

MIKE  
Pillars?

MARGARET  
On the outside? Like columns?

MIKE  
Like Tára?

MARGARET  
Tára?

MIKE  
*Gone with the Wind?*

MARGARET  
I don't know, I guess. Yeah.

MIKE  
That's funny.

MARGARET  
It's still nice though.

MIKE  
But you would've preferred pillars.

MARGARET  
I don't know.

Good People

(They drink.)

Should I go?

MIKE  
No, you can't go now, Kate's getting cheese. You can't leave when she's getting cheese. She'll think I chased you off. (Beat) Besides, she wanted to meet you.

MARGARET  
(Beat) She did?

MIKE  
Yeah, she doesn't believe I grew up in Southie. You're my evidence.

MARGARET  
Oh.

MIKE  
You'll have to tell her what a hoodlum I was.

MARGARET  
What do you mean?

MIKE  
She only knows me as Mr. Doctor-Man.

MARGARET  
Oh, I see.

MIKE  
You gotta set her straight.

MARGARET  
You want me to mention the Irish mob? How you ran with Whitey Bulger? How many bodies should I tell her you buried?
All right. If you’re gonna make fun / of me—

Well, I don’t know what you told her.

I didn’t lie to her.

Well, you said hoodlum.

You know what I meant.

You were just a kid from the projects.

Exactly.

So that means hoodlum?

No. I didn’t mean to say it like that. Forget it. How’s the wine?

How the fuck should I know?

(Silence as they drink.)

What’d you tell her about me?

I just said you might come to the party.

(Beat) That’s not very interesting. You must’ve said something else. Otherwise why would she want to meet me?

No, just that we ran in the same crowd when we were kids. And how you came by the office.

Looking for work.

Yeah.

Okay. (Beat) You didn’t mention we used to go out?

Oh god no. No, I didn’t men— No.

How come?

I don’t know. That was such a blip.

Huh.

A couple months.

No, I know.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
We were friends for so long before that. I just said we were friends.

MARGARET
(A little chuckle) Okay. So she won’t be weird about me at all?

MIKE
No.

MARGARET
Good.

MIKE
I mean, so long as you don’t mention it.

MARGARET
(Beat) Okay.

MIKE
I just said we were friends.

MARGARET
Right.

(Pause as they drink.)

MARGARET
So she might get weird? If she knew?

MIKE
No. I don’t think so. (Beat) I don’t know. It’s just...we’re in a really good place right now, and I don’t wanna...

MARGARET
Stir anything up?

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
Exactly.

MARGARET
(Beat. Smiles) What’d you do?

MIKE
Nothing.

MARGARET
“We’re in a really good place right now.”

MIKE
We are.

MARGARET
Which means at some point you weren’t.

MIKE
Margaret—

MARGARET
What’d you do?

MIKE
Nothing.

MARGARET
It involves that Dominican receptionist doesn’t it?

MIKE
Jesus. No.

MARGARET
(Laughs) I’m just bustin’ balls.
MIKE
Can you just... not mention we dated?

MARGARET
All right.

MIKE
We were practically kids after all.

MARGARET
I'm not the one making a big deal out of it.

MIKE
I'm not making a big deal, I just wanna...

MARGARET
Keep it secret.

MIKE
Well don't make it sound dirty.

MARGARET
You did that, not me.

(Kate comes in with a tray loaded with cheeses and crackers.)

KATE
Okay, here we go.

MIKE
Wow. That's a lot of cheese, Katie.

MARGARET
Look at that.

GOOD PEOPLE

KATE
And this is only half of them. There's plenty more if you don't find what you like.

MARGARET
You can smell them.

KATE
Yeah, some of them are pretty pungent. I try not to inhale.

MIKE
The worse the smell the better the cheese.

KATE
(Places cheese down) What do you like, Margaret?

MARGARET
Oh, I don't know. Which one's the Cracker Barrel? (Off Kate's look) I'm kidding.

KATE
(Laughs) Oh, good! I was afraid you were seri— (Catches herself) Not that there's anything wrong with— I actually love Cracker Barrel. I lived on it in grad school.

MIKE
Okay, you can stop.

KATE
What, I did.

MARGARET
I'm sure these are all great. You wanna gimme a tour?

KATE
A tour?
MARGARET

Of the cheese?

KATE

Oh, I thought you meant the house.

MARGARET

That'd be nice too, but I meant the cheese. I don't know what's what.

MIKE

You don't want a cheese tour.

MARGARET

Sure I do. (Indicates cheese) What's this one?

KATE

Um, that's Humboldt Fog, which is a goat. Cheese.

MARGARET

Okay, and this one?

KATE

Epoisses. Which is a French cow's milk. It's very good. If you want something a little / nutty—

MARGARET

(Indicates Epoisses) Whoa. You got anything mild?

MIKE

(Indicates a cheese) Do this one, Margie.

KATE

That's Wensleydale. (Cuts her a piece)
DAVID LINDSAY-ABRAIRE

KATE
They don’t think that’s funny, Michael.

MIKE
Yes they do.

KATE
I think they’re slightly offended actually.

MIKE
You’re crazy. They love me in there.

KATE
I don’t think they do.

MARGARET
(Eating cheese) This one’s very good.

KATE
Wensleydale.

MARGARET
Wensleydale. Good to know.

KATE
(To Mike) Guess I get to throw you a party after all. (To Margaret) He was adamant we cancel when Ally got sick.

MARGARET
(Beat) He was?

MIKE
No, we both were. We discussed it.

MARGARET
Huh.

GOOD PEOPLE

KATE
I said she would’ve been perfectly fine with the babysitter and a DVD upstairs, but—

MIKE
Kate, come on—

KATE
No, you were right, I know. I’m bad. (To Margaret) It killed me to cancel. I love to throw parties. Just like my mama. You can take the girl out of Georgetown but you can’t take Georgetown out of the girl.

MARGARET
We say that in Southie, too! “You can take the girl out of Southie but . . .”

KATE
Oh yeah.

MARGARET
Same thing.

KATE
Same thing.

MARGARET
(They all eat cheese.)

KATE
So how’d you meet?

MARGARET
My father introduced us.

KATE
Really.

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KATE
Michael worked under him at GU Hospital in D.C.

MARGARET
Huh. The boss’s daughter.

MIKE
It was an arranged marriage.

KATE
(Laughs) It was, practically. The way he kept dragging you out for those barbecues? “Katie, you remember, Michael.”

MIKE
He was a wise man.

KATE
Yeah, the jury’s still out on that one. I think he was just sick of me bringing home puppeteers. And djembe players.

MIKE
(Chuckles) Djembe players.

MARGARET
Is that a sports thing?

KATE
It’s a drum.

MARGARET
I see. Well you did good then. You don’t wanna marry the drummer.

KATE
No, I guess not.

(Margaret takes them in for a moment.)
KATE
That is so cute.

MARGARET
I thought your daughter might like it.

MIKE
She definitely will. Thank you.

KATE
The eyes move.

MIKE
I saw that.

MARGARET
Never come to a party empty handed. Isn't that what they say?

MIKE
We'll have to find a spot for that.

KATE
Right over here.

(Kate takes the rabbit and puts it in a prominent spot on a bookshelf.)

MARGARET
The head's a little lopsided.

MIKE
No, it looks nice.

MARGARET
You like it?

KATE
It's very cute.

MARGARET
My friend Jeannie hates those things.

MIKE
No, it's cute. Ally's gonna love it. We'll show her in the morning. Thank you.

(They eat cheese.)

KATE
So, are you going to tell me all of Michael's secrets?

MARGARET
You bet.

MIKE
Uh-oh.

KATE
You were in the same class?

MARGARET
No. I repeated a grade, and he skipped a grade. So he got ahead of me. Smarty.

(To Mike) You never told me you skipped a grade. (Back to Margaret) He hardly tells me anything. You know, he's met all of my childhood friends, and I've met none of his.

KATE
Yes, you have.
Good People

KATE
What, I’m joking. (To Margaret) Really though, you have to be my bullshit meter, because when he talks about growing up, he makes himself out to be this Upton Sinclair character.

MARGARET
I don’t know what that means.

MIKE
Nobody does, Margie. Don’t listen to her. (To Kate) What are you—?

KATE
What.

MIKE
Upton Sinclair. (To Margaret) Kate teaches literature.

MARGARET
Oh, wow.

MIKE
Novels, and . . .

MARGARET
Yeah, I know what literature is.

KATE
I teach at BU.

MARGARET
Harvard wasn’t interested?

KATE
(Beat) What?
I'm just kidding. That's great.

(To Kate) Ya see what she did there? She zotzed you a little bit.

I know.

I was kidding.

“Harvard wasn't interested?”

It was like my mother was here for a second.

They hiring over there?

At Harvard?

No, BU. I'm talking about myself now.

Oh.

Didn't Mike tell you I was looking—

Looking for work, yeah, he said. Um, no I don't know. You'd have to go to personnel, I guess. I don't know how that works.

That's why I came to the party. Mike said one of his friends might have something.

He did?

That's not exactly what I said—

He said a friend had a job?

Not a specific friend. Just... someone might—She said if she mingled, could she ask around.

But of course nobody's here. Which is why I was asking about BU.

I see.

So, who's Upton Whatever?

He's a writer. He wrote about... you know, the city...

Poor people?

Upton Sinclair's a bad comparison.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

KATE
Not the way you talk. You make it sound so dire. With the violence and drugs and rats—

MARGARET
(Chuckles) Oh, the rats. What've you been telling her?

MIKE
Just that it was rough. It was a rough neighborhood.

MARGARET
It wasn't that rough.

MIKE
You didn't live in Old Harbor. The projects were a little rougher.

MARGARET
You had a nice apartment.

MIKE
My mother kept it nice, but still—

MARGARET
She did keep it nice. That's probably where you got those lace-curtain ideas.

MIKE
(To Kate) See? Lace-curtain?

MARGARET
He told you about that?

KATE
You hit a nerve.

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
Well you mentioning Upton Sinclair doesn't help my argument.

MARGARET
You lost the argument when the cheese came out.

KATE
Oh I hope not.

MARGARET
You want Mike's big secret? Here it is: he didn't have it so bad.

MIKE
Come on, Margaret.

MARGARET
Not compared to other people.

MIKE
The way my father worked?

MARGARET
Let's start with the fact that you had a father, and he worked.

MIKE
The clothes from Morgan Memorial? The food stamps? The Welly Cheese?

MARGARET
You seemed like a pretty happy kid. You have some nice memories.

MIKE
Of course I do / but—

MARGARET
You obviously like to reminisce. So it couldn't have been too bad. Least you managed to get out.
MIKE
Because I worked my ass off. That’s the only way out of there.

(MARGARET
(Beat) Right.

MIKE
I didn’t mean you don’t work your ass off.

MARGARET
No?

MIKE
Obviously you work hard.

MARGARET
Hey, thanks.

MIKE
Don’t take it the wrong way. I was talking about scholarships and what / I had to—

MARGARET
No, you worked hard, you’re right. You escaped. I didn’t. (Beat)
You had a little help, but you did it.

MIKE
What does that mean? What help did I get?

MARGARET
You were luckier than most people, that’s all. You were smart. You had a dad that pushed you. You had some advantages. So I don’t know if I’d be complaining if / I were you.

GOOD PEOPLE
MIKE
I’m not complaining, I just said we struggled. Which we did. Life wasn’t easy.

MARGARET
Of course not. So? That’s normal. To struggle. For most people, it’s normal. Most people I know at least. That’s just how it is. Just because we weren’t comfortable doesn’t mean we were miserable. (A little laugh) I mean, I am now, but . . . Back then wasn’t so bad, Mikey.

(Silence.)

KATE
We can find a job for her, can’t we? Somebody has to have a job for her.

MIKE
Like who?

KATE
What about Tom? He’s gotta have something down / at the—

MIKE
Tom just laid off half his staff.

KATE
Well Bernie then?

MIKE
At the lab? How is she gonna work at a lab?

KATE
I’m gonna think of something for you, Margaret. Now I got my thinking cap on.
Okay.

KATE
The wheels are turning.

MARGARET
Great.

KATE
But in return you have to tell me some Mike stories.

MARGARET
Okay.

MIKE
Oh, I don’t think I like that deal.

KATE
He said he got into fights.

MARGARET
What fights?

MIKE
Just... schoolyard stuff. Or up at the Boys Club.

MARGARET
With who?

MIKE
Everybody. Danny Turpin, Dominic Vecchi...

MARGARET
The only fight I remember was in the Old Harbor courtyard.

MIKE
Oh, that was— You don’t remember the thing with Danny Turpin?

MARGARET
No, I remember Old Harbor. Right down your way. And even that didn’t really count.

KATE
Why didn’t it count?

MARGARET
He was just trying to prove something. He was trying to be one of the hard guys.

MIKE
Come on—

MARGARET
You were. It was you and Marty McDermott, and Gobie jumped in, and the Burke brothers... Who else?

MIKE
It was so long ago, I don’t—

MARGARET
Johnny Dugger was there I think. You were all playing basketball.

MIKE
You know, that Danny Turpin story is pretty funny—

MARGARET
And we were on the front stoop watching. Me and Jeannie. Suzie Grimes and Sheila Sheen. Remember her? She was a whore, huh? Pardon my French.
KATE
Was this a gang fight?

MARGARET
(Cheekles) Gang fight. No. Some kids came over from Columbia Point.

MIKE
Come on, Margaret—

MARGARET
Old Harbor was right on the Dot border, so Columbia Point was like right there. I don’t know what they were thinking / but—

MIKE
One of ’em threw a bottle.

KATE
Who did?

MIKE
One of the kids. One of the guys from Columbia Point. That’s how it started.

MARGARET
I don’t remember that.

MIKE
Yeah, it almost hit Marty. That’s what started the whole thing.

MARGARET
Huh.

MIKE
One of them chucked a bottle, and so we chased them off.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
(To Kate) Except one of the kids fell, running away, and smashed his face into a mailbox. His friends kept running, and Mike beat the shit out of him. Pardon my French.

MIKE
Not just me.

MARGARET
No, everybody did. They all—

KATE
They beat him up?

MARGARET
Yeah. It was a mess. His face was . . . I was scared. We all were, I think.

MIKE
He chucked a bottle.

KATE
Still. Six guys on one.

MIKE
It wasn’t six.

MARGARET
I think it was. At least six. I think I’m forgetting a couple people. If your father hadn’t come out to break it up, I don’t know what would’ve happened.

KATE
Jesus.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRED MARGARET

(Beat) You wanted to hear about fights.

KATE
That's not a fight.

MARGARET
No, you're right. It wasn't much of a fight.

(Silence.)

MIKE
(Off Kate's look) What. Everyone's an idiot when they're seventeen.

KATE
(Referring to her wine) Does this taste corked to you? A little bit?

MARGARET
I don't know.

KATE
Something tastes . . . I don't think I like this. I'm gonna switch to white. Would you rather have white, Margaret?

MARGARET
Doesn't matter.

KATE
I'm gonna get some white.

(The side doorbell rings.)

And that's the caterers picking up.

MARGARET
Are ya sure?

GOOD PEOPLE

KATE
(A polite chuckle) I'll get confirmation this time.

MARGARET
(To Kate) Good thinkin'.

MIKE
Want me to help deal with them?

KATE
(As she goes) No, I got it.

(Mike and Margaret are left alone. After a moment, Margaret grabs a piece of cheese.)

MARGARET
She seems nice, Mikey.

MIKE
She is nice.

MARGARET
Gonna put her thinking cap on for me.

MIKE
She's got a big heart.

MARGARET
I can tell. (Beat) And she's black.

MIKE
(Beat) Yes. That is true. She is black. (Beat) You seemed surprised by that.

MARGARET
No, I don't care. I was just saying.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
You did seem surprised though.

MARGARET
When?

MIKE
Back in the office. When I showed you the photo.

MARGARET
Oh, no that / wasn’t—

MIKE
Your eyebrows went up.

MARGARET
Because she was so young.

MIKE
Okay.

MARGARET
I was like, “Holy shit, she’s so young.” Not ’cause she was black.

MIKE
All right. My mistake.

(They drink in silence for a couple beats.)

Why did you tell her that story?

MARGARET
She was begging me for a fight story.

MIKE
She wasn’t begging.

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GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
(Chuckles) I think she was expecting something out of the Bowery Boys though.

MIKE
Well, you didn’t give her that.

MARGARET
You ever hear from any of those guys? From the neighborhood?

MIKE
Not really.

MARGARET
I didn’t think so. I bump into Johnny Dugger every once and a while. He owns that variety store down the rotary. He’s doing okay. But you know Sheila Sheen’s dead, right?

MIKE
No.

MARGARET
Yeah, she OD’d a few years back.

MIKE
That’s too bad.

MARGARET
I don’t know where the Burkes ended up. Nowhere good, I don’t think. Marty McDermott’s in prison. And remember his sister Cookie? She was living on the street. She’d sit outside the bank and ask people for money. She died last week. Right on the sidewalk. My age.

MIKE
Jesus.

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DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET

It's good you got out, right?

MIKE

I guess.

MARGARET

(Beat) Do you ever wonder what would've happened if you hadn't though?

MIKE

What do you mean?

MARGARET

If you hadn't left for U-Penn? You think we would've stayed together?

MIKE

Oh. Christ, Margie, let's not do that. She's coming right back, and I don't want her to——

MARGARET

You haven't wondered?

MIKE

That was just a summer thing. Kids have those. I'm sure you had them after me.

MARGARET

Not really.

MIKE

Only because you were with Gobie. You jumped in with him right after I left. That went on, right? For a long time.
MIKE
You know what I mean.

MARGARET
Yeah. (Beat) Well you made the right choice.

(Kate reenters with two glasses of white wine.)

KATE
(Referring to the caterers) They’re taking the stuff out the back. (Referring to the wine) This is much better. Margaret, gimme your glass. Switch to this. (Swaps Margaret’s red for the white) You’ll like this better. I prefer white anyway. Which is why I married Michael actually.

MIKE
Wow, that is a / terrible joke.

KATE
I know. I’m just being / stupid.

MARGARET
(Referring to an ornate crystal vase on a bookcase) What is that?

MIKE
The vase?

MARGARET
Is that what that is?

KATE
That was my push present.

MARGARET
Your what?

Good People
MIKE
Kate, don’t call it / that.

KATE
I know, as soon as I said it, I realized how obnoxious it sounded. (To Margaret) It was a gift from Michael, when Ally was born.

MARGARET
Push present?

KATE
That’s what he called it.

MARGARET
For pushing out the baby?

MIKE
I didn’t make up the phrase. A lot of people use it.

MARGARET
I’ve never heard of that.

KATE
Obviously the baby was gift enough, but it was nice after twenty hours of labor.

MARGARET
He gave you a vase?

MIKE
I know, it’s gross. (To Kate) Why did you tell her that?

KATE
She asked what it was. (To Margaret) A lot of husbands do it.
MARGARET
Give push presents?

KATE
Usually it's jewelry, but yeah.

MARGARET
I never heard of that. It's nice. (Beat) I'd be a nervous wreck though, having something that nice with a kid in the house.

KATE
Oh, she knows not to touch it. And it's insured anyway.

MARGARET
Oh. Good.

(Silence.)

KATE
Do you have any children?

MARGARET
I have a daughter. She's a grown-up though.

KATE
Oh yeah? And what does she do?

MARGARET
Not a lot.

(An awkward pause.)

KATE
But you like kids?

MARGARET
Sure. I mean, I don't want to be a grandmother or / anything, but——

GOOD PEOPLE

KATE
Because I was thinking, if you really need work, we're always looking for someone to watch Ally. For when we go out. Michael's always got these events he's dragging me to. Dinners and . . . auctions, or whatever.

(Pause as Margaret and Mike both look to her.)

MARGARET
You want me to babysit?

KATE
It's not a full-time job obviously, but it's something. At least a few times a month. How much are we paying Sarah now?

MIKE
I don't know.

KATE
We just gave her a raise last month. She's up to fifteen dollars, I think.

MARGARET
For babysitting?

KATE
It's not a lot but——

MARGARET
Fifteen dollars an hour?

KATE
Not a lot of hours. I mean, but if you can't find something it would at least give you a little money.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
Wait a minute.

KATE
What.

MIKE
You can't just fire Sarah.

KATE
It wouldn't be firing her, she's not on salary. She's a babysitter.

MIKE
Still.

KATE
And it's not like she needs the money.

MIKE
How do you know she doesn't?

KATE
She drives a Beemer.

MIKE
That's not hers.

KATE
Yes it is. It's her car.

MIKE
That her father bought. She didn’t buy it with her own money.

KATE
Why are you arguing? You honestly think Sarah Katzman needs the money more than Margaret?

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
Of course not.

KATE
All right then.

MIKE
But Margaret can’t work nights.

KATE
Oh.

MIKE
Isn’t that what you said? When I mentioned the cleaning crew?

MARGARET
You said you couldn’t get me a job with the cleaning crew.

MIKE
No, I couldn’t, but when it came up you said you couldn’t work nights.

MARGARET
Well, they wouldn’t have paid me fifteen dollars an hour. For fifteen dollars I can work nights.

MIKE
How? You pay someone to watch Joyce while you watch Ally? That’s a wash.

MARGARET
No it isn’t. I don’t pay my babysitter no fifteen bucks an hour. Trust me, I’d definitely come out ahead.

KATE
Who’s Joyce?

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MARGARET
Joyce is my daughter. She was born premature.

KATE
Oh.

(This really confuses Kate.)

MIKE
The thing is, Ally knows Sarah, and she's comfortable with her. We can't just change everything up. That's not fair to Ally.

MARGARET
I see.

KATE
Ally won't care. She sees Sarah for half an hour, and then it's time for bed. Ally hardly sees Sarah.

MIKE
But she knows her. She doesn't know Margaret.

KATE
So we'll introduce them.

MIKE
This isn't about you, Margie.

MARGARET
No?

MIKE
It's about Ally, and what she's used to.

KATE

GOOD PEOPLE

KATE
Ally's asleep the whole time. Sarah just sits down here and reads. You talk like they're best friends.

MIKE
Come on, Katie, this is— Margaret doesn't want our charity.

MARGARET
Sure, I do.

KATE
It's not charity, it's a job.

MIKE
Plus Sarah is CPR certified, and she knows all the phone numbers god forbid something goes wrong.

KATE
What phone numbers?

MIKE
The pediatrician, poison control—

KATE
Those numbers are on the fridge, Michael!

MIKE
I know but—

KATE
They're all on the fridge!

MARGARET
He doesn't want me to babysit.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
No, that's not it.

MARGARET
He wouldn't feel comfortable.

MIKE
Not just me. Ally wouldn't. Ally knows Sarah.

KATE
You're ridiculous, you know it? It's just a couple times a month.

MIKE
What about the Foleys? Aren't they always looking for a babysitter?

KATE
I'm not gonna send her to the Foleys.

MIKE
Why not?

KATE
They're lunatics.

MARGARET
How much do they pay?

KATE
You say you want to help her. "Hey, come to my house, Margaret. I'll introduce you to my buddies."

MIKE
That's not what I said.

KATE
"Lemme find you a job."

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GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
That's not what I said.

MARGARET
Yes it is.

MIKE
Margaret—

MARGARET
That's what you said.

MIKE
No, that's what you heard.

MARGARET
Oh, okay.

MIKE
It's not what I said, it's what you heard. Just like I said the party was canceled, and you heard that it wasn't.

MARGARET
(To Kate) Well so much for your thinking cap.

KATE
I still don't understand what the problem is.

MARGARET
He obviously doesn't want me working here.

MIKE
Don't say it like that.

MARGARET
Well do you? Do you or don't you?

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DAVID LINDSAY-ABRAIRE

MIKE

(Beat) No, I don’t.

MARGARET

There. End of discussion.

KATE

No, he doesn’t get to decide / what—

MARGARET

No, I understand. You can’t force him. He thinks Ally wouldn’t feel safe with me watching her.

MIKE

I didn’t say safe, Margie, I said comfortable. And I don’t have to justify why I don’t want you watching my child.

MARGARET

No, you don’t, because it’s obvious. I’m not babysitter material.

MIKE

Margaret—

MARGARET

I’m not smart enough to watch a kid sleep.

MIKE

It’s not just—

MARGARET

I don’t know the right things. Or how to use a phone—

MIKE

Okay—

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET

—and I might also be a racist.

MIKE

Now come on, nobody said you were a / racist.

MARGARET

You might as well have (Turns to Kate) I mentioned you were black, so—

KATE

How does that make you racist?

MARGARET

Ask him.

MIKE

It doesn’t!

MARGARET

All I know, is that I’m not the one who chased down that boy at the Old Harbor Projects.

MIKE

(Beat) All right, now you’re just causing / trouble.

KATE

What boy?

MARGARET

The one we talked about. That’s the part he didn’t mention.

MIKE

What does this have to do / with—?
MARGARET
Nobody threw a bottle. That fight he was talking about, in the courtyard? Nobody threw a bottle at anybody. Those kids came over from Columbia Point, which was a black part of Dorchester. That’s the part he didn’t mention.

MIKE
Because it wasn’t relevant.

MARGARET
Oh, is that why?

MIKE
Yes.

MARGARET
There was no bottle. Marty McDermott saw those kids and yelled, “What are those niggers doing over here?” and that’s when everybody went running.

MIKE
Look, you’re obviously trying to bait my wife.

MARGARET
I’m what?

MIKE
Or get her mad at me, or something, but she knows what Southie was, okay? The forced busing and everything else, and she knows that that’s not who I am. I’ve been very honest with her.

MARGARET
He told you that fight story?

KATE
No, not that story. That story’s pretty shitty.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

KATE
You told her not to mention it?

MIKE
No, that's / not—

MARGARET
Yes you did. You said to keep it secret.

MIKE
Margaret—

MARGARET
That's what you said. Or maybe it's just what I heard.

MIKE
Okay.

MARGARET
You said to not mention it because she might get weird.

MIKE
Why are doing this? Because I won't let you babysit?

KATE
Why would I get weird?

MIKE
Look, I didn't tell you because it's not how— I don't even think of Margaret like that, as an ex— We were friends for so long. I just think of her as a friend.

KATE
So what's the big deal?

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE
There is none.

KATE
Then why not mention you dated?

MIKE
Because you're sensitive about that stuff, for obvious reasons, and I didn't want to rock the boat.

KATE
So you thought lying to me was better?

MIKE
I didn't lie. I just didn't . . .

KATE
Tell the truth?

MIKE
Kate—

KATE
Are we actually having this conversation again?

MIKE
No, I— Can we / not—

KATE
And you wonder why I don't wanna stop seeing / the counselor.

MIKE
I said I'd see her! I was just asking whether we— (Turns on Margaret) Why did you come here! I told you there was no party!
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET
Why are you getting angry?

MIKE
I've tried to be nice to you, Margaret.

MARGARET
You have been nice.

MIKE
I tried to be a good sport, even though I haven't seen you in thirty years. I don't really know you, but I invite you out here . . .

MARGARET
Oh, you don't know me?

MIKE
Not anymore, no. Neither of us know each other. And I'm sorry if / that—

MARGARET
You don't know me. / Okay.

MIKE
That's what happens! When you don't see each / other for—

MARGARET
You asked me to come out here, by the way, so don't make it seem / like I—

MIKE
You obviously turned into some kind of a troublemaker, / or—

MARGARET
Is that what I am?

Good People

MIKE
Yeah, you don't get your way so you have this tantrum.

MARGARET
What tantrum? Who's having a tantrum?

MIKE
Not literally! A figurative tantrum! Stop being so simpleminded!

MARGARET
KATE
Wow.
Michael—

MIKE
I don't return your calls, so you push your way into my office!

MARGARET
I'm simpleminded now.

MIKE
I don't let you babysit, so you start stirring the shit. You're punishing me for not giving you what you want.

KATE
Okay, Michael.

MIKE
But I'm the asshole. Because I don't want a stranger watching my kid. Because I have a nice house. Because I buy my wife gifts. That makes me an asshole.

MARGARET
No, that makes you lace-curtain.

MIKE
You know what? I think we should probably call it a night. Because you are really starting to piss me off.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MARGARET
You kicking me out, Mikey?

MIKE
(To Kate) Can you get her coat, please?

MARGARET
You’re kicking me out.

KATE
Nobody’s kicking anyone out. Margaret—Michael, relax.

MIKE
You wanna take some of the cheese, Margie? Kate can bag it up if you like it.

MARGARET
I didn’t even want to come here. You invited me.

MIKE
No, you kinda invited yourself!

KATE
Would you—

MARGARET
I only came here because I needed a job.

MIKE
Well it’s not my fault you can’t find one!

KATE
Ally’s asleep.

MIKE
I’m sorry that you made some bad choices in your life, but that is not my fault.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
Oh, I had choices?

MIKE
Yeah. And if thinking you didn’t makes your life a little more bearable, that’s fine. But it isn’t true.

MARGARET
What choices did I have?

MIKE
All the way back. The things you did, the people you hung out with.

MARGARET
The people I—? We hung out with the same people!

MIKE
Plus you never applied yourself. Not at school or anywhere else.

MARGARET
I didn’t have someone checking my homework like you did, Mikey. My mother was too busy killing herself at that box factory.

MIKE
Oh poor you.

MARGARET
And you’re right, I did drop out of school. Was that a choice though?

MIKE
Of course it was. Girls have babies, and still stay in school.

KATE
Are you serious?
MIKE
They do!

MARGARET
Well I chose to take care of the baby instead. Because that’s what people did. I got a job. I got a bunch of jobs in fact. And every one of them sucked, because what other job could I get? Not much of a choice there either, I’m afraid.

MIKE
And you lost most of those jobs?

MARGARET
As a matter of fact, I did.

MIKE
Why?

MARGARET
Usually because I was late.

MIKE
Well there’s a choice.

KATE
Would you stop it?

MIKE
What, she chose to be late.

MARGARET
I didn’t choose to be late. Shit happened, that made me late! Sometimes it was Joyce. Sometimes it was the T.

KATE
You don’t have to explain / yourself to him.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
One time I got my car taken. Why’d I lose the car? Because I missed a payment. Why’d I miss a payment? Because I had to pay for a dentist instead. Why’d I have to pay the dentist?

MIKE
We don’t need the / sob story—

MARGARET
No, I’ve done this a hundred times in my head, Mikey. I think you should hear it, too. Why’d I have to pay the dentist? Because I didn’t have insurance, and I cracked a tooth and ignored it for six months, until an abscess formed. Why’d I crack a tooth?

MIKE
I don’t / care!

MARGARET
Because one night I thought I’d save a little money, and skip dinner! But I got hungry and decided to snack on a piece of candy brittle. And that’s all it took—a piece of fucking candy brittle, and I was out of a job again.

And that’s how it always is. And if it’s not the candy brittle then it’s Joyce’s medication, or my phone getting cut off, or Russell Gillis breaking in and stealing my goddamn microwave! And you wanna tell me about choices? While you sit up here practically breaking your arm patting yourself on the back for all you accomplished. Lucky you. You made some wise choices. But you’re wrong if you think everyone has ’em.

In fact, the only real choice I ever did make was dumping you. And yeah, I’ve thought about it a million times since: “What woulda happened if I hadn’t dumped Mikey Dillon?” Maybe I wouldn’t have ended up with Gobie, or maybe I woulda finished school, or maybe this coulda been my house.
(Silence. They look at her, confused.)

Maybe it coulda been. All of this. Maybe it coulda been mine.

**Mike**

Jesus, Margie, what does that even mean? We dated for two months!

**Kate**

Be nice.

**Mike**

(To Kate) Two months! And you heard her, she dumped me! (Back to Margaret) Which you didn’t seem all that upset about at the time. You were with Gobie like three days later.

**Margaret**

And why do you think that was?

**Mike**

Because I didn’t mean anything to you!

**Margaret**

Wrong!

**Mike**

Honestly, you’ve made up this thing in your head!

**Margaret**

Joyce wasn’t premature.

(Silence. Kate looks from Margaret to Mike.)

**Kate**

What does that mean?

**Good People**

**Mike**

What are you doing, Margie?

**Kate**

What does that mean? “Joyce wasn’t premature.”

**Margaret**

Don’t say you didn’t have help getting out of Southie. You had help. And not just your dad. If I hadn’t let you go, you’d still be there right now.

**Mike**

If you hadn’t let / me go?

**Margaret**

You’d be working down at the variety store with Johnny Dugger. I let you go.

**Mike**

All right, Margaret. I knew you were having trouble, but I didn’t realize you were pathological.

**Margaret**

Joyce didn’t have all those problems because she came early, she just had those problems. She was full-term. Late, in fact. I just said she was premature so Gobie would think she / was his.

**Mike**

You know this is bullshit, Katie.

**Kate**

No I don’t.

**Margaret**

(To Kate) I’m sorry. I wasn’t gonna say anything but—
MIKE
Was this the idea? You thought you’d come here / and—

MARGARET
I could’ve kept you there, that’s all I’m saying. If I wanted to.

MIKE
How’d you come up with this? Were you watchin’ General Hospital one day and think, oh, here’s an angle.

MARGARET
You wanna do a blood test?

KATE
What the fuck, / Michael?

MIKE
No, I don’t want to do a blood test, because that is not my / child!

MARGARET
Why would I lie?

MIKE
Why? To squeeze me for money! To pay your rent! To do everything that you can’t get Gobie to do! There’s a hundred reasons / for you to lie!

MARGARET
I could’ve trapped you. That’s what girls did, you know. They’d get pregnant to trap guys.

MIKE
Is that what you’re trying to do now? Because you’re a little late.

MARGARET
I didn’t do that to you. But I could’ve. I let you go.

MIKE
And why would you do that?

MARGARET
Because you were going off to college! Because I didn’t want to be the thing that ruined your life! BECAUSE I WAS NICE!

MIKE
Oh yeah, you’re a sweetheart. Shoving your way in here, making up these bullshit / stories—

MARGARET
They’re not bull / shit.

MIKE
You know what, Margie? It wouldn’t have mattered. Even if any of this were true, which it isn’t, it still wouldn’t have mattered. You didn’t do me any favors breaking up with me. I was gonna do it myself, but you beat me to it. You think I wanted a girlfriend when I was heading off to college? Do you know how many women were at U-Penn? We wouldn’t have stayed together. Baby or no baby. I wouldn’t have stayed.

MARGARET
Don’t say that.

MIKE
I wouldn’t have. No way. I’m sorry. I would’ve taken off anyway.

MARGARET
No you wouldn’t have. That’s not who you were.

MIKE
Are you kidding? I knew Southie was a black hole before I was thirteen. I wouldn’t have stayed there for anything. Not for you. No way. Not for some retarded baby.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

KATE

Jesus, Michael.

MIKE

I'm sorry. But self-preservation. I would've been one of those deadbeats that take off. Just like your father took off. Just like Gobie took off. That would've been me.

MARGARET

You're just saying that.

MIKE

Why?

MARGARET

I don't know why, but I don't believe you.

MIKE

(Lurking at her) AND I DON'T BELIEVE YOU!

KATE

( Blocking his way) STOP IT, MICHAEL!

(Silence.)

MARGARET

There he is. There's still a little Southie in there.

MIKE

Too far, Margie. I know you're desperate but this is too far.

MARGARET

( After a beat, more to herself) You were gonna dump me anyway.

( Beat) That's a mean thing to say, Mikey.

GOOD PEOPLE

MIKE

Why?

MARGARET

Because it means that nothing woulda been different. That there really was nothing I coulda done to get outta there. (Beat) It's a pretty fucking depressing thought. That's why.

(Margaret gets her coat on.)

(To Kate as she goes) I'm sorry, I didn't mean to—I shouldn't have come here.

KATE

(Stops her) Why didn't you come find him earlier? (Beat) If the baby stuff is true—

MARGARET

It is true.

KATE

Then why didn't you come find him?

MARGARET

I told you. Because...I didn't want—Because...

KATE

Because it was the nice thing to do. To let him go.

Yeah.

KATE

(Beat) But that doesn't sound nice to me. Not for your daughter, at least.
MARGARET

My daughter?

KATE

You talk about how hard it's been and how you've struggled with her all these years—

MARGARET

I have.

KATE

Why? If you didn't have to struggle, why would you? Because you didn't want to inconvenience Mike?

MARGARET

No, that's not—

KATE

I'd do anything for my daughter. If there was something—

MARGARET

So would I.

KATE

Then your story doesn't make any sense.

MARGARET

No of course not. You gotta stand by your man, so—

KATE

No, I don't actually.

MARGARET

Well I don't know what to tell ya.
Isn't it?

(Beat) No.

Yes it is, Margaret. Which I could understand if you said, well I was scared, or stubborn, or I didn't know how to get out of the situation, or I couldn't be / bothered to—

Which is all true!

But that's not what you said! You said you did it because you're a nice person! Which, I'm sorry, is a stretch. Especially when you start pitting me and Michael against each other. When you already know we're having trouble.

I don't know anything about / that.

Yes, you do! Jesus, everyone knows! Ya spend five minutes with us / and—

That's not / true.

Not now, Michael. (Back to Margaret) The point is, you knew what you were doing. And I'm sorry this isn't your life, Margaret, but that's not my fault. And it's not Ally's fault. We didn't do anything to you.

Of course not.

This is our life. And I'm not gonna let you come in here and deliberately try to sabotage us. That is just spite.

That's not what I was doing.

Well it's what you did. And I don't know if any of the other stuff is true or not, but I can tell you one thing—you are not nice. You are not. (Beat) Is it true, by the way? The stuff about your daughter? Because if it is, Michael will just have to man up / and provide.

Katie, stop.

We'll write you a check right now. If it's true. (Beat) Is it, Margaret?

(After a pause) I told her it was stupid. Jeannie. I told her it was a stupid idea. "Just say Joyce wasn't premature." She thought it'd be funny. (Beat) You're right, it wasn't nice. (To Mike) But you pissed me off with that babysitting thing. You could've let me watch her, Mike. It wouldn't have been any skin off your nose.

You see, Katie? She made it up.

I'm sorry.
MIKE
People go to jail for this kinda thing, you know. What you just did?

MARGARET
You gonna call the cops, Mikey?

MIKE
(To Kate) And she wants to say she doesn’t make choices.

MARGARET
I’m gonna go.

MIKE
(Grabs the flowerpot rabbit) Take this too, wouldja?

MARGARET
That was a gift.

MIKE
I don’t want it.

MARGARET
Come on, it’s a gift.

MIKE
And every time I look at it, I’m gonna think about what you just pulled. Take the rabbit.

MARGARET
It’s for your daughter.

MIKE
Margaret—

MARGARET
I don’t want it.

(Mike burrs it against a wall. It smashes to pieces.)

MARGARET
I paid for that.

MARGARET
(A little laugh) Okay.

MIKE
I PAID FOR IT!

MARGARET
(He shrugs. Margaret, seething, rushes to the crystal vase.)

KATE AND MIKE
No-no-no-no-no-no!

(She’s about to throw it to the floor, but she stops.)

MARGARET
What’s the point? (Hands it to Mike) It’s insured.

VOICE OF ALLY
Dad? ... Daddy?

KATE
It’s okay, honey. Daddy just dropped something. I’ll be right up.

(Kate beads up the stairs. Margaret and Mike are silent for a few moments.)
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

MIKE
Are you all right?

MARGARET

(A wry chuckle) Am I all right.

MIKE
What'd you think was gonna happen, Margie?

MARGARET
I don't know. I just wanted a job. That's all. I just wanted a job.

MIKE
You can't blame me for your life, you know.

MARGARET
I don't. I just think you got lucky. That's all I was trying to say.

MIKE
I wouldn't call it luck, but okay.

MARGARET
What if your father hadn't come out to stop that fight with the black kid? (Beat) You would've killed that boy.

MIKE
No, that... You make too much out of everything. It never got close to that.

MARGARET
Yes it did. You know it did. You could be sitting up in Walpole right now, bunkin' with Marty McDermott.

MIKE
That wouldn't have happened.

GOOD PEOPLE

MARGARET
If your father wasn't watching from the kitchen window it would've.

MIKE
But he was.

MARGARET
Which is lucky, that's all I'm saying. I never had anyone watching from a window for me. You got lucky. One hiccup, and it could've been you looking for work instead of me. Or you dying up on that sidewalk instead of Cookie. That could just as easily have been you, Mikey.

MIKE
I don't think so.

MARGARET
No?

MIKE
No.

MARGARET
(Beat. Referring to the house) Then all this is wasted on you. (Beat) And it wasn't my job to come looking for you, by the way. Not when you knew. You should tell that to your wife.

MIKE
Are you actually starting/ that again?

MARGARET
And if you didn't know, you must've suspected at least, that she could've been yours. That at least. The thought must've crossed your mind. (Beat) Did it?
(Silence. He just stares at her.)

It wasn’t my job to find you. Not when you knew where we were.

MIKE
Margaret—

MARGARET
And there was no way I was gonna beg. I can get damn close. Obviously. But I won’t beg. Not even for Joyce. And if that makes me a bad mother, then I guess I’m a bad mother.

MIKE
You’re not.

MARGARET
I know I’m not.

(Kate comes down the stairs and back into the living room.)

KATE
She wants her dad.

MIKE
All right.

MARGARET
Sorry we woke her up.

KATE
That’s okay. I’m more upset about the rabbit actually. I think she would’ve really liked it.

MIKE
I’m gonna go up and see her.
Scene 2

Church basement. Margaret, Jean, Dottie and Stevie are at their folding table playing bingo. We hear the voice of the priest, and the murmur of the crowd. The women are mid-conversation.

JEAN

(To Margaret) Why didn’t you tell me? I gotta hear it from Dottie of all people?

DOTTIE

What’s that mean?

JEAN

(Still to Margaret) Finally some good news.

MARGARET

It’s not good news.

Good People

DOTTIE

Of course it is.

MARGARET

It’s no news. It’s nothing.

DOTTIE

You’re nuts.

JEAN

It came in the mail?

DOTTIE

It came in the mail. A stack of bills, with a note: “Margaret’s rent.”

MARGARET

That’s not my rent, Dottie.

DOTTIE

Hell it ain’t. It said right on it: “Margaret’s rent.” Can’t get much clearer than that.

MARGARET

I’m gonna mail it back to him.

DOTTIE

No you’re not. Not this money. You find it somewhere else, ’cause that money is ear-marked.

VOICE OF PRIEST

First up is B-12.

JEAN

Just take it and forget it.
DOTTIE
You're lucky, Margie. My Russell was all set to move in. I told him I couldn't do that to you. I told him I wanted to give you a little more time. Good thing that envelope arrived when it did. Ya made it in under the wire. I said, sorry Russell, there's no room at the inn.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N - 33.

DOTTIE
Which is lucky. I would've missed Joyce.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N ... 33.

JEAN
(To Margaret) Did Mikey say he was gonna send money?

MARGARET
No.

JEAN
Did you ask for it?

MARGARET
No, Jean, of course not. Did I ask for it?

STEVIE
Maybe he just wanted to help out.

MARGARET
Yeah, I don't think so.
David Lindsay-Abaire

MARGARET
He's not paying my rent.

DOTTIE
He already has.

VOICE OF PRIEST
O-61.

JEAN
Maybe the wife sent it.

VOICE OF PRIEST
O . . . 61.

JEAN
You think the wife sent it?

MARGARET
I don't know. I don't care. I'm sending it back.

JEAN
I swear to god, Margaret, the first break you've gotten since I've known you, and you want to toss it back in. It's not like you don't deserve it.

MARGARET
I don't want that money.

DOTTIE
It's already been deposited.

MARGARET
What are you talking about? It's not your money to deposit, / Dottie.

Good People

DOTTIE
The envelope was / addressed to me!

JEAN
You're being awful hardheaded, / Marg—

MARGARET
I'm not taking his money.

STEVIE
Jesus! It's not his money!

(Silence. He looks up at them.)

He didn't send the money. And neither did the wife.

MARGARET
(Beat) Stevie . . .

STEVIE
You make everything so difficult, you know it? Don't you know what a gift horse is?

MARGARET
I assumed Mike sent it.

STEVIE
Well he didn't.

MARGARET
You don't have money to be paying my rent.

STEVIE
I won last week. It wasn't much, but it was enough. And I never win at bingo.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRe

MARGARET

Stevie—

STEVIE

You needed it more than I did.

MARGARET

Still, you can’t—

STEVIE

Can you stop? You’ll pay me back when you can.

(Pause.)

MARGARET

Okay.

VOICE OF PRIEST

B-5. B . . . 5.

MARGARET

Thank you.

VOICE OF PRIEST

N-43. N . . . 43.

MARGARET

You’re welcome.

STEVIE

(DOTTIE) So what are you gonna do next month?

(Beat. Jean slowly turns to her.)

JEAN

What is wrong with you?

DOTTIE

What. It’s a logical question.

GOOD PEOPLE

VOICE OF PRIEST


JEAN

You didn’t mention Joyce?

MARGARET

No, I did. He didn’t believe she was his. (Beat) I always thought you didn’t know about that.

JEAN

(Looks at her) Everybody knew.

VOICE OF PRIEST

DOTTIE

Did he like my rabbit, Margie?

MARGARET

He threw it against a wall.

DOTTIE

(Beat. Confused) Well why would he do that?

VOICE OF PRIEST

O-72. O . . . 72.

MARGARET

I’ll try Gillette this week. See if I can get something down there. Can you call your brother, Stevie? See if he can get me in there?

STEVIE

(Beat) Sure. I’ll talk to him.
DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE

Thanks.

JEAN

It's something at least.

MARGARET

Yeah, it's something.

JEAN

And if not Gillette, then something else.

MARGARET

Yup.

JEAN

Something'll come up.

MARGARET

I hope so.

VOICE OF PRIEST

G-53.

(Bingo daubers raised, they scan their cards searching for the number. Nothing.)

G...53.

(They continue to search their cards as the lights slowly fade.)

END OF PLAY

DAVID LINDSAY-ABAIRE is a playwright, screenwriter, lyricist and librettist, whose play Rabbit Hole premiered on Broadway, and went on to receive the 2007 Pulitzer Prize for Drama, the Spirit of America Award, and five Tony nominations (including Best Play). His previous play Kimberly Akimbo was commissioned by South Coast Repertory Theatre, premiered at that theater, and received the L.A. Drama Critics Circle Award for playwriting, three Garland Awards and the Kesselring Prize. The play went on to a sold-out New York run at Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC), where it was hailed as “The Comedy of the Year” by the New York Times. David’s play Wonder of the World premiered at Washington, D.C.’s Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company, where it was nominated for a Helen Hayes Award as Outstanding New Play of the Year, and also went on to a sold-out New York run at MTC. His play Puddy Meers premiered at MTC in the fall of 1999, and later transferred to The Minetta Lane Theatre for a commercial run. Puddy has since received more than five hundred productions around the country and abroad, including London’s West End. David was most recently nominated for a Grammy Award with Composer Jeanine Tesori (Best Musical Show Album).
and two Tony Awards (Best Book of a Musical, and Best Score) for their work on *Shrek the Musical*. Prior to that, David was awarded the 2008 Ed Kleban Award as America’s most promising musical-theater lyricist. In addition to his work in theater, David’s film credits include his screen adaptation of *Rabbit Hole* (Academy Award—nomination for Nicole Kidman), as well as the upcoming features *Rise of the Guardians* (Dreamworks) and *Oz: The Great and Powerful* (Disney). David is a proud New Dramatists alum, a graduate of Sarah Lawrence College and the Juilliard School, as well as a member of the Writers Guild of America and The Dramatists Guild Council.