

RICHARD LOVELY

"Pilot"

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - MORNING

RICHARD LOVELY -- age 49, fastidious and pristine -- sits sketching. WE SEE he's sketching a mouse in a sport coat, picking apples. Suddenly he spies a MOM down the path whispering to her LITTLE BOY, who looks like he's seen Santa.

RICHARD

Oh, no...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. FAIRWAY MARKET - DAY

Richard inspects apples. Suddenly he spies a LITTLE GIRL down the aisle excitedly asking her DAD a hushed question.

RICHARD

Oh, god...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. SHUBERT THEATRE - BROADWAY - DAY

An usher shows Richard to his aisle seat at "To Kill a Mockingbird." He looks to his right to see a group of kids, including a NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY who's staring up at him in awe.

RICHARD

Oh, Jesus.

(NOTE: The following is INTERCUT so it PLAYS as one continuous conversation.)

LITTLE BOY

Are you Mr. Mouse?

LITTLE GIRL

Do you write the Mr. Mouse books?

NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY

You're Richard Lovely!

RICHARD

He's actually much taller.

MOM

Would you take a selfie?

DAD

Can we get a picture?

NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY

Can I interview you for my podcast?

RICHARD

I'd love to but I'm not sure now is--

As the Mom forces Richard to take a selfie with her son:

MOM

Say cheese! Bet you get that a lot.

As the Dad forces Richard to take a picture with his daughter:

DAD

Smile in this one, Caitlin!

As the Nine-Year-Old Boy holds a microphone up to Richard:

NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY

My guest today is noted children's book author, Richard Lovely--

Off Richard shaking his head...

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - LATER

LINDSAY, age 35, fraying just a bit around her J. Crew edges, waits for the elevator with her adorable kids, RUBY (age 7) and REX (age 6), who can't stop pressing the elevator button.

LINDSAY

I pressed it.

Ruby and Rex continue pressing the button. Lindsay loses it:

LINDSAY (CONT'D)

I pressed it stop pressing it!

The elevator doors open and off steps a traumatized Richard with his "To Kill a Mockingbird" Playbill. The kids brighten:

RUBY AND REX

Hi, Richard!

RICHARD

(hurrying past them)
No, thank you.

RUBY
Mommy, ask him!

RICHARD
(continuing to his door)
I'll take a box of Thin Mints, bye.

LINDSAY
No, Ruby's class is doing a little play version of "Mr. Mouse Catches the Train," I was supposed to see if you could come. Is your email richard69420@aol.com? I found it online and wasn't sure--

Richard stops in his tracks:

RICHARD
A play version?

LINDSAY
Yeah. Her teacher wrote it. Ruby's playing The Hen with the Pen.

RICHARD
But The Hen with the Pen isn't in "Mr. Mouse Catches the Train."

LINDSAY
I guess it's sort of a mash-up. Like Rick Astley and Avicii!

RICHARD
(annoyed)
What?

LINDSAY
(instantly regretful)
It's a song. I don't know.

RICHARD
Just tell me when and where.

Richard enters his apartment and slams the door behind him. Lindsay and her kids get on the elevator. As the doors close:

RUBY
Does that mean he's coming?

LINDSAY
He had the same reaction about Mrs. Chan's memorial service. But he came! To make sure she was dead. But he came!

INT. THE FULTON SCHOOL - HALLWAY - A FEW DAYS LATER

Crying kids in costume run into their parents' arms. Ruby runs to Lindsay as MOM #2 comforts her daughter nearby.

LINDSAY

What happened?

RUBY

We can't do the play!

LINDSAY

What? Why not?

MOM #2

They got a cease and desist letter
from Richard Lovely.

LINDSAY

Of... course they did.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - A FEW DAYS LATER

Richard is on the sofa on his laptop, trying to write. His agent, HOWARD, age 45, paces in front of a Warhol of Mr. Mouse looking enigmatic while smoking a cigarillo.

HOWARD

How could you do this?

RICHARD

Stop the illegal exploitation of my intellectual property? Easy.

HOWARD

They're children.

RICHARD

Who now know a little bit about copyright law. I await their poorly written thank you notes.

His publicist, KELLI, age 25, enters, scrolling on her phone:

KELLI

Well, you've hit the mom blogs.

HOWARD

Great.

RICHARD

Oh, in a few days, a celebrity will come out as an anti-vaxer and those moms can blog about that.

Kelli sits down on the sofa right next to Richard.

KELLI

Until then, they're calling for Random House to fire you.

RICHARD

You are way too close to me.

Howard sits down on the other side of Richard and reaches across him for Kelli's phone, which he scrolls through.

HOWARD

Moms with weaponized free time are a corporate nightmare. This is why you have to be nice to your fans.

RICHARD

I am nice to my fans. I take pictures with them, I do their web series. Know what I get in return? Boogers on my clothes!

KELLI

That reminds me, a little boy named Georgie keeps calling, he has some follow-up questions.

RICHARD

Tell Georgie I'm busy. Finishing "Mr. Mouse Goes Apple Picking." Now, if you'll excuse me, the Braeburn are too tangy, the Winesap are too tart, Mr. Mouse needs to find the apple that's right for him.

HOWARD

How 'bout a crab apple?

RICHARD

He tried those, he found their texture abhorrent.

HOWARD

We need damage control here, Richard. Proof that you're nice to children.

RICHARD

Well, sadly, I can't give you proof--

INT. PLAZA HOTEL - LOBBY - A FEW DAYS LATER

The Nine-Year-Old Boy from "To Kill a Mockingbird," Georgie, is continuing to interview Richard for his podcast.

NINE-YEAR-OLD BOY/GEORGIE

Now, you published your first book when you were ten.

RICHARD

Uh-huh...

Richard stares daggers at Howard, who's holding out Georgie's microphone, encouraging Richard to smile. A REPORTER and a photographer from The New York Times -- and Kelli -- look on. The photographer snaps candid.

GEORGIE

How did that happen?

RICHARD

Well, it was my mother, actually.
And Truman Capote. They shared a
drug dealer -- it was the seventies.
And my mother showed him a story I
wrote about this imaginary friend I
had named Mr. Mouse -- showed Truman
Capote, not her drug dealer.
Although she probably showed her
drug dealer, too, they were close.
And Truman got it published! My
fairy godfather. Literally!

(to Howard)

Let's remember to cut all this out.

GEORGIE

Is your mother still alive?

RICHARD

She sure is. She currently tells
people she's 49, which is
fascinating because I'm 49.

GEORGIE

My mother's dead.

RICHARD

(thrown)

Oh.

GEORGIE

And I have no other family so I'm
currently in the New York City
foster system.

RICHARD

Well, this took a turn...

REPORTER

How has that been for you, Georgie?

GEORGIE

Hard.

An awkward beat. Howard mimes for Richard to make nice with
Georgie in front of the Reporter. So Richard tries:

RICHARD

But you had great seats at "To Kill
a Mockingbird."

That's it. Howard calls it:

HOWARD

I'm afraid that's all the time we
have for today.

RICHARD

(instantly getting up)
Aw, that's too bad.

KELLI

(to Reporter, re: Richard)
He has a packed day.

GEORGIE

But I had a few more questions.

KELLI

You can email them to me, pumpkin.

GEORGIE

We don't always have internet at
the group home I'm in right now.

(to Richard)

If I could just ask you one more--

Georgie wipes his nose, then goes for Richard's sleeve.

RICHARD

No boogers!

Richard puts his arm out to stop Georgie and inadvertently
knocks him backwards, sending him flying. Everyone's stunned
except the Times photographer, who keeps snapping pictures.

HOWARD/REPORTER

Oh, my god./Are you okay??

GEORGIE (O.S.)

OWWWW!

SMASH TO:

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - A FEW DAYS LATER

CLOSE ON an iPad open to a nytimes.com article headlined "Mr.
Mouse Teaches When Push Comes to Shove" with an action shot
of Georgie falling to the ground. REVEAL Howard and Kelli
are scrolling through the article with Richard:

RICHARD

But I didn't push him!

HOWARD

(as he scrolls)

Oh, good, there are more pictures.
OF YOU PUSHING A FOSTER CHILD!

RICHARD

This is all your fault. Saying I had to be nice to kids.

HOWARD

You do have to be nice to kids!

RICHARD

Not all kids! Some kids need to be pushed! Which I did not do!

Kelli's phone RINGS. She checks it:

KELLI

It's Random House. Guess they have some thoughts on this child pushing thing.

HOWARD

Oh, god.

Howard's phone RINGS.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Now they're calling me. To fire you, no doubt.

Richard grabs both ringing phones and runs out of the room.

HOWARD (CONT'D)

Richard!

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Richard comes flying out his front door and onto the elevator, from which Lindsay and her kids are exiting.

LINDSAY

We are not speaking to you.

RICHARD

(to Rex)

Is that true?

REX

Yes!

RICHARD

Well, you failed! Ha!

The elevator doors close on Richard.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

Richard struggles to silence the phones.

RICHARD

How is this happening to me??

Suddenly Richard hears the Voice of a THESPIAN IN CRISIS:

THESPIAN IN CRISIS (O.S.)

Me, me, me. What about ME?!

REVEAL that grand voice belongs to MR. MOUSE, who's come to animated life in his usual sport coat and no pants.

RICHARD

AHH! Why am I seeing you?!

THESPIAN IN CRISIS/MR. MOUSE

I don't know, but you better get our jobs back because I am not about to start auditioning at the age of I'd rather not say!

RICHARD

(pinching himself awake)

This is a dream, that's why I can see my old imaginary friend again.

MR. MOUSE

You're old, dentures! And if this were a dream, I'd be wearing pants. Because that's what I dream about, Richard: pants!

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Richard rushes off the elevator, Mr. Mouse hot on his tail.

MR. MOUSE

The real tragedy here is you're a children's book author, you should be welcoming interactions with kids not literally pushing them away.

RICHARD

Leave me alone!

Howard and Kelli come charging out of the fire stairs.

HOWARD

Richard! Stop!

MR. MOUSE

Ask if his agency has room on its roster for an actor of unspeakable depths.

RICHARD

AHHHH!

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Richard runs down the sidewalk, followed by Howard and Kelli.

HOWARD

You can't run away from this!

RICHARD

Seems like I can!

KELLI

Oh, god! Richard! Look out!

Richard gets hit by a halal cart.

SMASH TO BLACK,
THEN FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Richard blinks awake in bed, Howard and Kelli at his bedside.

RICHARD

What happened? Am I fired?

KELLI

Nope. Not at all.

RICHARD

Really? What did you do?

HOWARD

It's not what we did. It's what you're gonna do.

RICHARD

What am I gonna do?

HOWARD

You're gonna foster that little boy.

Off Richard's horror...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - A WEEK LATER - NIGHT

Richard anxiously peers out the window. From his POV, WE SEE a FEMALE SOCIAL WORKER getting out of a cab with Georgie.

RICHARD

I can't foster a kid...

REVEAL Mr. Mouse is also anxiously peering out the window.

MR. MOUSE

I know, I've never played a daddy before. Unless you parse "Mr. Mouse Makes a New Young Friend" the way the gay community would like us to.

As Howard and Kelli go through cabinets and throw out food:

HOWARD

Random House only calmed down after my stroke of career-saving genius.

RICHARD

Why can't you be like my last agent and have a regular stroke?

MR. MOUSE

Or like mine and ski into a tree!

KELLI

It's just for a few weeks and we're taking care of everything.

RICHARD

All you seem to be doing is throwing out my crunchiest foods.

KELLI

Georgie has a nut allergy. Or would you rather he died?

RICHARD

Well, let's do the math on that...

The doorbell RINGS. Kelli crosses out to answer. Howard throws out a jar of peanut butter and starts to follow:

HOWARD

The kid needs a home, Richard. And you need some good publicity.

RICHARD

Can't I just go to rehab? Doesn't
that wipe the slate clean?

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Richard and Howard enter as Kelli greets a timid Georgie and his wary Social Worker, SEEMA -- 50s, Lebanese. Seema holds a totebag and Georgie's pulling a suitcase.

KELLI

Thank you so much for doing this.

SEEMA

Don't thank me yet.

MR. MOUSE

(sniffing Georgie)
I smell Cheerios and fear.
(then, sniffing Richard)
No, wait, that's you.

HOWARD

Richard, isn't it nice to see
Georgie again?

RICHARD

Of course. Hello, Georgie.

GEORGIE

Are you gonna push me again?

RICHARD

We'll play it by ear.

Howard and Kelli both instantly turn to Seema:

HOWARD

He's kidding obviously.

KELLI

He has a legendary sense of
humor.

Seema gets right in Richard's face:

SEEMA

Listen to me, Mr. Lovely. I don't
usually lend kids to celebrities
looking to fix their image. But I
happen to love Mr. Mouse--

MR. MOUSE

I like this gal. I like her a lot.

SEEMA

And Georgie's been stuck in the system for too long. So I'm willing to bend some rules here for the greater good, because that's the only ExLax in our constipated bureaucracy and Georgie's willing to give it a try. But if one thing goes wrong, I will yank this sweet boy out of here faster than I yank the hairs from my mother's Lebanese chin. Do I make myself clear?

RICHARD

You paint a picture, yes.

SEEMA

Good. I'll be back tomorrow to start your MAPP training.

RICHARD

My what?

SEEMA

Parent training. In the meantime...
(re: totebag she holds)
This bag has everything: Georgie's EpiPens, my phone numbers, my mother's phone numbers--
(hugs Georgie, overcome)
It's like that scene in "Mr. Mouse Looses a Tooth" where Mr. Mouse realizes he can't always hold on to the things he loves!

RICHARD

(sotto aside, to Howard)
I can't do this.

HOWARD

(sotto aside back)
You can 'til the Times crowns you "Foster Father of the Year."

SEEMA

(to Howard and Kelli)
Let's go. They need to bond.

HOWARD

(to Richard)
I'll call you in the morning.

RICHARD

I'll fire you and hang up.

KELLI

Bye, Georgie...

Georgie waves, at her and then Seema, who waves back. They exit. Then Richard and Georgie are alone for the first time.

RICHARD

Well. I guess I should show you around. This is the living room.
(points to antique chair)
That chair's just for show.
(points to lamps)
Those lamps are on a timer.
(points to rug)
That rug is off limits. You know what? Minimize your time in here.

Richard starts to cross off. Georgie walks across the rug that's off limits, sits down in the chair just for show and turns off one of the lamps on a timer. Richard stops:

RICHARD (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

GEORGIE

Making myself at home.

RICHARD

But I just said--

GEORGIE

(loudly)
Ow, stop hitting me!

RICHARD

I'm not hitting you.

GEORGIE

(calculating)
My social worker doesn't know that.
The Times doesn't know that.

RICHARD

Why do I suddenly feel like I'm trapped in the cut scenes from "Escape at Dannemora?"

GEORGIE

I don't know what that is. But I know you need me and I need a nice place to live and this place seems pretty nice. But if you think I'm just here for a few photos and then it's "So long, Georgie," think again.

RICHARD
I... didn't think that.

GEORGIE
You've taken a child's life in your
hands. That's a serious commitment.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - DEN - LATER

Surrounded by Mr. Mouse items -- a giant stuffed Mr. Mouse, a
pillow embroidered with Mr. Mouse embroidering a pillow, a
Lego bust of Mr. Mouse's head -- Richard is on his cell:

RICHARD
This kid's a psycho!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. HOWARD'S BEDROOM - SAME

Howard is in bed on his cell, half asleep:

HOWARD
He is not...

RICHARD
You have to come get him.

HOWARD
I can't.

RICHARD
Then I'm putting him on the curb!

HOWARD
No, you aren't. Where is he now?

RICHARD
I don't know, smacking some mooks
around for his cut?

HOWARD
What? Let's talk tomorrow, I
already took a Lunesta...

RICHARD
No, Howard--

Howard hangs up, ENDING INTERCUT. Georgie enters.

GEORGIE
I'm going to bed--

RICHARD

AH!

GEORGIE

(looking around)

Weird room.

Georgie exits. Off Richard...

INT. RICHARD'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Richard is in bed, under the covers, wide-awake:

RICHARD

I'm supposed to fall asleep with
Keyser Söze in my house?

WIDEN TO REVEAL Mr. Mouse next to him, also under the covers:

MR. MOUSE

I'm scared. More scared than when
your mother took your third grade
birthday party to a cockfight and
then Hooters for cake.

RICHARD

As I recall, you thrived in both
environments.

MR. MOUSE

Well, the gamecocks were sweet guys
and Hooters had surprisingly good
cake.

RICHARD

Why are you back?

MR. MOUSE

I don't know. You must be lonely.

RICHARD

I'm not lonely.

MR. MOUSE

You were a lonely little kid when I
first appeared, you must be lonely
now that I'm back. Or maybe you
need help with "Mr. Mouse Goes
Apple Picking." Here's a pitch: I
hate apples.

Richard hears Georgie GIGGLING O.S., and then a WOMAN
LAUGHING O.S. A look of terror descends over his face:

RICHARD
Oh, no. It can't be.

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Georgie's on the sofa watching "Bob & Carol & Ted & Alice" with ALANA LOVELY, age 69, a glamorous nut, drinking a Tab.

RICHARD
Uh, hi, Mom.

WOMAN/ALANA
I'm not speaking to you.

RICHARD
Great!

ALANA
Georgie told me what you said about me.

RICHARD
And what did I say about you?

ALANA
That I had a drug dealer in the seventies. That I'm not 49.

RICHARD
You did. And you're not.

ALANA
He was an herbalist, and one is as young as one feels!

GEORGIE
I agree.

There's a DING from the kitchen. Alana turns to Georgie:

ALANA
Our brownies are ready.

GEORGIE
I'll get 'em!

Georgie skips to the kitchen. Alana puts her can of Tab down on the coffee table. As Richard puts a coaster under it:

RICHARD
Haven't you left enough unerasable marks on my life?

ALANA

Shouldn't you have told me you bore
me a son?

RICHARD

He is not my son.

ALANA

Maybe not biologically but he is
exactly like you.

RICHARD

That is the worst thing you've ever
said to me and you once told me I
looked like Dr. Ruth Westheimer!

ALANA

You do when you're angry. Like
right now.

Georgie reenters with a half-eaten brownie, wheezing:

GEORGIE

Do these have nuts in them?

ALANA

Of course they do, they're brownies--

RICHARD

Oh, my god! He's allergic to nuts!

Richard finds the bag Seema brought and rummages through it
as Alana coaches Georgie through his allergic reaction:

ALANA

Breathe. Reclaim your body.
Visualize your well-being...

RICHARD

He doesn't need transcendental
meditation, he needs an EpiPen!

Richard finds an EpiPen and preps it.

GEORGIE

I can do it...

Richard stabs Georgie in the ass with the EpiPen.

GEORGIE (CONT'D)

OWWWW!!!

Georgie punches Richard in both knees and runs out.

RICHARD
OWWWW!!!

INT. GEORGIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Georgie runs through, near tears:

GEORGIE
I do the EpiPen! I do it!

He enters his bathroom and slams the door. Richard enters, limping from pain in both knees, followed by Alana.

RICHARD
Ow-- Georgie, are you-- Ow.

Richard tries the door. It's locked.

RICHARD (CONT'D)
Georgie, open the door. Georgie?

ALANA
You used to lock yourself in the bathroom all the time.

RICHARD
Get out of my apartment!

Alana exits. Mr. Mouse pops back up:

MR. MOUSE
The bathroom, the pantry, every dressing room at Saks.

RICHARD
Out!

Mr. Mouse disappears. Off Richard, wondering what to do...

INT. LINDSAY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

There's a KNOCK at the door. Lindsay answers. It's Richard.

LINDSAY
What do you want?

RICHARD
I... I need your help.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

INT. GEORGIE'S BEDROOM - A SHORT TIME LATER

Lindsay is talking to Georgie through the bathroom door:

LINDSAY

So maybe we can talk out here?

Ruby and Rex, eating from a bag of Fritos, investigate the room. Richard watches them closely:

RICHARD

Don't touch that. You're making crumbs. See with your eyes.

LINDSAY

...Or I can come in there?

GEORGIE (O.S.)

No! You can't come in!

Rex comes over and presses his face to the bathroom door:

REX

Hey. Hey, kid. I have Fritos.

The door cracks open and Rex slips in, followed by Ruby who re-locks the door behind her. Richard turns to Lindsay:

RICHARD

I feel like we should've been able to stop at least one of them from going in there.

LINDSAY

They move pretty fast...

She and Richard wearily slide down the walls on either side of the bathroom door, breaking the ice between them.

RICHARD

God, what am I doing?

LINDSAY

What are you doing? What am I doing? A cease and desist letter?

RICHARD

I'm sorry. All I do is apologize for things I shouldn't have to apologize for.

LINDSAY

You kind of have to apologize for that.

RICHARD

Well, I just did.

LINDSAY

Well, thank you. Now I probably should have led with this but who's the little boy in your bathroom?

RICHARD

His name is Georgie.

LINDSAY

From the Times?

RICHARD

Yes. I'm fostering him.

Lindsay bursts out laughing. As she tries to stop:

LINDSAY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to...

RICHARD

It's okay. My life has taken a hilarious turn.

LINDSAY

Well, I know from those...
(off Richard's blank look)
My husband and I...
(off Richard's blank look)
We just got divorced.
(off Richard's look)
You didn't notice he was gone.

RICHARD

I don't remember him, no.
(then)
Look, I'm sorry I dragged you into this, you can go.

LINDSAY

I can't actually, I need my kids back.
(knocking on door)
Everything okay in there?

The door opens and Ruby and Rex emerge with a long piece of toilet paper, which Ruby holds.

RUBY

Georgie has a list of demands.

RICHARD

Of course he does...

LINDSAY

Okay. Let's hear it.

RUBY

(clears throat then reads)

"Richard doesn't do the EpiPen, I can do it myself."

LINDSAY

Georgie, I think you're a little young to--

GEORGIE (O.S.)

I am not!

LINDSAY

Maybe you guys can do it together?

GEORGIE (O.S.)

No!

RICHARD

(to Lindsay)

I can just move. He can live here, I can move.

LINDSAY

(to Ruby)

What's the next one?

REX

I want to read it!

Ruby gives Rex the toilet paper. Rex looks at it.

REX (CONT'D)

I can't read.

Ruby takes it back and reads:

RUBY

"I need a TV in my room--"

RICHARD

Well, you're not getting one.

RUBY

(continuing)

"It's the only way I can fall asleep after all the noisy foster homes I've been in."

RICHARD
(not buying it)
Oh, please. Fine, you can have a
TV in your room! Next.

RUBY
(reading)
"I want to see Alana all the time."

RICHARD
I'm afraid Alana Lovely doesn't do
"all the time." She didn't even
stick around for this--

The bathroom door opens and Georgie emerges... with Alana.

ALANA
Hello, son.

RICHARD
What? How'd you get in there?

ALANA
When you went next door, I knocked
and he let me in.

RICHARD
Pardon me, I have to just...

Richard locks himself in the bathroom; Lindsay turns to Alana:

LINDSAY
Why don't you, um, take the kids...

ALANA
Was it something I said?

LINDSAY
Nah, couldn't have been...

INT. GEORGIE'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Richard is staring at himself in the mirror. REVEAL Mr.
Mouse perched atop the toilet tank.

MR. MOUSE
Well, here we are again, barricaded
inside a small space. Funny how the
figurative boxes we lock ourselves
into eventually become literal.

RICHARD
Leave me alone.

MR. MOUSE

There's that word again: alone.

RICHARD

Go away!

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. GEORGIE'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lindsay's at the bathroom door, as when Georgie was inside.

LINDSAY

I'm not going anywhere until you
let me in.

MR. MOUSE

Let someone in, Richard. Please.

RICHARD

I can't. I can't handle this kid
and I can't handle my mother.

LINDSAY

She's a lot. And he's a lot. But
you're a lot.

Richard unlocks the door and opens it, ENDING INTERCUT:

RICHARD

What is that supposed to be mean?

LINDSAY

There was this horrible mom in my
moms group when I used to go and I
hated it so I stopped. But she
said one thing I thought was
interesting: you get the kids you
can handle.

RICHARD

But I can't handle this kid.

LINDSAY

He had an allergy attack and you
stopped it. He locked himself in
the bathroom and we got him out.

RICHARD

But I'm not a "we." I'm an island.

LINDSAY

I am, too, now, I guess. Maybe we can string our islands together and make an archipelago.

Richard is touched. Mr. Mouse is less impressed:

MR. MOUSE

Jesus, no wonder her husband left.

Georgie enters with a drink; Lindsay and Richard share a look.

LINDSAY

I'll let you guys talk.
(to Georgie)
What are you drinking?

GEORGIE

Alana made us coffee milkshakes.

LINDSAY

She gave my kids coffee milkshakes at ten o'clock at night?

RICHARD

She gave me a shot of Wild Turkey and a cigarette before my PSATs, so it could have been worse.

Lindsay exits; Richard and Georgie share another awkward beat.

GEORGIE

I'm sorry I hit you.

RICHARD

I'm sorry my mother sent you into anaphylactic shock.

GEORGIE

It happens.

RICHARD

Look. You're right. I'm doing this for the publicity. But I wasn't planning on, "So long, Georgie."

GEORGIE

You weren't?

RICHARD

Well, no, I was. But you don't want to stay here. Do you?

GEORGIE

I don't know. Maybe.

(then)

My mom used to read the Mr. Mouse
books to me.

RICHARD

She did?

Georgie nods. In the background, Mr. Mouse pulls out a hanky:

MR. MOUSE

(teary)

I'm about to ugly cry.

GEORGIE

I recognized you from your picture
on the back of the book.

RICHARD

It's a good picture.

(then)

If you stay, you have to listen to
me.

GEORGIE

If I stay, you have to listen to
me.

MR. MOUSE

God, he's just like you.

RICHARD

I know.

Richard takes Georgie's milkshake from him and takes a sip.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

She put cognac in this.

GEORGIE

Should I ask that nice lady from
the Times what cognac is?

RICHARD

How big a TV do you want?

GEORGIE

How big do they come?

RICHARD

I'll find out.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - THE NEXT MORNING

Richard stares at his laptop. WE SEE he's typed, "Maybe I'll get another bucket and put my apple picker back to work."

MR. MOUSE

The world waits with baited breath:
will I pick additional apples??

Richard waves him off, annoyed. A bed-headed Georgie enters.

RICHARD

Good morning.

GEORGIE

'Morning. You have any cereal?

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Richard opens a cabinet: it's empty. He gets an idea.

INT. HALLWAY - LINDSAY'S FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Lindsay hands Richard a box of Grape Nuts but he's dubious:

RICHARD

But it says nuts.

LINDSAY

It also says "grapes."

INT. RICHARD'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - A SHORT TIME LATER

Richard and Georgie sit at the island, eating Grape Nuts.

GEORGIE

You're writing a new book?

RICHARD

Yup.

GEORGIE

What's it about?

RICHARD

Well, I like to use what's
happening in my life.

(MORE)

RICHARD (CONT'D)

A friend forced me to go apple picking in a horrible town upstate, so Mr. Mouse is going apple picking, somewhere nicer. I just have to figure out the ending.

GEORGIE

(burps, then)

It better be fun!

Georgie puts his bowl in the sink and exits. Richard notices Georgie's totebag on the counter. Suddenly he gets an idea. He opens his laptop and starts typing.

MR. MOUSE

You have an idea! What is it?? I burp. I do dishes. I burn the orchard down!

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN STATUE - LATER

Richard approaches the statue with Georgie and the Reporter. Howard, Kelli and Seema hover nearby. Howard encourages Richard to smile for the Photographer taking pictures.

REPORTER

And this isn't just a publicity stunt to help your career?

RICHARD

Well, Georgie has helped my career: he found the ending to my new book. Mr. Mouse goes apple picking, but none of the apples taste right. I couldn't figure out why until Georgie had an allergy attack, and then it came to me: Mr. Mouse is allergic to the pesticides they use on the apples!

GEORGIE

Yeah, because pesticide allergies, that's fun.

RICHARD

No, but it is fun when Mr. Mouse realizes he doesn't need his bucket or his apple picker. Because he has his friend, "Ken Garoo," to hold apples in his pouch and Ms. Giraffe to reach the high branches.

REVEAL Mr. Mouse riding the duck at the foot of the statue:

MR. MOUSE

I love the spotlight as much as the next guy but it's with other actors that I truly shine. Except Glenn Close, she gives nothing.

REPORTER

You like your new home, Georgie?

GEORGIE

I guess I can get used to it.

RICHARD

I've gotten worse reviews.

Howard and Kelli have to interject:

HOWARD

That's not true--

KELLI

Richard's books are generally very well reviewed.

Alana walks up to the Reporter licking an ice cream cone:

ALANA

I'm the reason the books exist at all. Are you aware of my story?

RICHARD

(pointing to something)
Oh, look, a pond I can walk into.

SEEMA

Um, excuse me, no, we need to start your MAPP training...

As Seema follows Richard off, PAN OVER TO Mr. Mouse climbing into Hans Christian Andersen's lap:

MR. MOUSE

Will he drown? Perhaps, he can't swim. But that's where we come in--

Suddenly the screen gets smushed and chyroned for the credits:

MR. MOUSE (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm acting here! Who do you think you are, Glenn Close?

(reading the credits)

Wow, how many nerds does it take to make a television show? What's a "Script Coordinator?" Can she give me pants?

END OF SHOW