


PUSHING DAISIES

"Pie-Lette"

Written by
Bryan Fuller

Directed by
Barry Sonnenfeld

FINAL DRAFT 
October 3, 2007

WARNER BROS. TELEVISION
4000 Warner Boulevard, Bldg. 133
Burbank, CA 91522
(818) 954-6341

© 2007 Warner Bros. Television, a division of WB Studio Enterprises Inc. This script is the property of Warner Bros. Television, a division of WB Studio Enterprises Inc. No portion of this script may be performed, reproduced or used by any means, or disclosed to, quoted or published in any medium without the prior written consent of Warner Bros. Television.

ACT ONE

DIRT

CAMERA MOVES up through the earth finding the gnarled tips of perennial weeds. We RISE out of the soil REVEALING a beautiful blooming daisy. In fact, it's an entire...

EXT. FIELD OF DAISIES - DAY - FLASHBACK

CAMERA FLIES OVER the "Welcome to Coeur d'Coeurs" sign at the field's edge to FIND a bright, carefree boy of about 10 (YOUNG NED) racing through the flowers, sending petals flying as he chases his dog, DIGBY, an adorable golden retriever as bright and carefree as Young Ned. Our OMNISCIENT NARRATOR begins:

NARRATOR

At this very moment in the town of Coeur d'Coeurs, Young Ned was 9 years, 27 weeks, 6 days and 3 minutes old.

Young Ned is only a few feet behind his dog, three sets of legs speeding through the field. He reaches out trying to make contact, but Digby is just out of touch. Closer... closer... closer, still...

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

His dog Digby was 3 years, 2 weeks, 6 days, 5 hours and 9 minutes old. And not a minute older.

EXT. ROAD NEAR FIELD OF DAISIES - DAY - FLASHBACK

WHAM. Out of nowhere, Digby is HIT BY A PASSING SEMITRUCK. A BLUR OF BIG RIG obscures the impact. Ned stops, horrified.

TIME SLOWS TO A CRAWL. FUR SAILS THROUGH THE AIR, as if Digby were taking flight by his own propulsion. ALL SOUND DROPS OUT.

He approaches the unmoving body of his dead dog Digby.

Ned kneels down beside Digby and as he reaches out to stroke the dog's matted fur... CAMERA JUMP CUTS TO:

AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP OF NED'S FINGER

The ridges of his fingertip look like circular troughs. As Ned touches his dog, we see a small STATIC POP OF ELECTRICITY between his finger and Digby's fur.

CAMERA JUMPS WIDE

TIME RESUMES TO NORMAL as Digby inexplicably scrambles to his feet with a happy dog smile on his face and runs off into the field of daisies.

Young Ned watches in amazement as Digby disappears over the horizon. He stares at his finger, not sure exactly what just happened.

NARRATOR

This was the moment Young Ned realized he wasn't like the other children. Nor was he like anyone else for that matter.

Ned runs off after Digby.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Young Ned could touch dead things and bring them back to life.

Behind him, a squirrel suddenly falls from a tree, dead, hitting the ground with a THUNK.

CLOSE ON - A FLY

It lands on a windowsill and SMACK. A FLY SWATTER ends its life in one abrupt movement. We are...

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

The dead fly lands on the countertop. Young Ned's MOTHER sets the fly swatter down and returns to lovingly preparing a pie.

NARRATOR

This touch was a gift given to him, but not by anyone in particular. There was no box, no instructions, no manufacturer's warranty.

Young Ned peers over the edge of the counter, reaching in and touching the dead fly. There's a small ELECTRIC POP.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

It just was.

The fly flies up and out the open window.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The terms and use weren't immediately clear, nor were they of immediate concern. Young Ned was in love.

CAMERA FOLLOWS THE FLY and Young Ned's gaze to:

EXT. NEIGHBOR GIRL'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

A girl named CHUCK, pigtails, etc., plays in the backyard.

She's making a small village out of mounds of dirt and cardboard boxes with Play-Doh people and toy cars as her FATHER waters the lawn in the background.

NARRATOR

Her name was Chuck. At this very moment, she was 8 years, 42 weeks, 3 hours and 2 minutes old.

She squeezes a little people head out of the Play-Doh Fun Factory and places it on the body she's already constructed.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Young Ned did not think of her as being born or hatched or conceived in any way. Chuck came ready-made from the Play-Doh Fun Factory of Life.

She makes the final few touches on her village and it COMES TO LIFE THROUGH THE MAGIC OF IMAGINATION.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

In their imaginations, Young Ned and a girl named Chuck conquered the world.

CHUCK'S POV - IMAGINATION REALIZE

Large as life, TOY CARS drive through tiny streets, and TOY PEOPLE mill about on tiny sidewalks.

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. The ground SHAKES. The TOY PEOPLE react to the strangeness... then a GIANT REPTILIAN LEG STOMPS into the cardboard building, crushing it.

CAMERA REVEALS A GIANT PIGTAILED GODZILLA stomping through the village, sparing no one as PLAY-DOH PEOPLE SCRAMBLE. And just when we think a lone TOM CRUISE-ESQUE PLAY-DOH PERSON has escaped... SQUISH. A GIANT RODAN-ESQUE WINGED DINOSAUR, looking as much like Ned as the Godzilla looks like Chuck (wearing the same clothes, etc.), stomps him good.

SMASH BACK TO REALITY

EXT. NEIGHBOR GIRL'S HOME - DAY - FLASHBACK

Chuck and Ned are stomping through the remains of her small village, having an absolute ball and getting very dirty.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - FLASHBACK

Ned's mother is sweeping dirt off of him with a broom. He stares across the fence as...

NED'S POV THROUGH WINDOW

Filthy Chuck is getting hosed off in her own backyard by her FATHER.

NARRATOR

Long after their playdate was over, Young Ned remained under Chuck's spell...

BACK TO NED IN THE KITCHEN

In the background, we see his mother abruptly DROP OUT OF FRAME mid-sweep and fall back into the kitchen.

NARRATOR

...until a blood vessel in his mother's brain burst, killing her instantly.

Young Ned turns to find his mother dead on the linoleum floor.

Young Ned slowly approaches and touches his mother's cheek just below the eye. A BOLT OF STATIC ELECTRICITY. Ned's mother blinks, alive.

NED'S MOTHER

I must've slipped. Clumsy. Did the timer go off?

Young Ned stares as his mother gets to her feet, brushes off her apron and checks the pie in the oven.

ON NED

He slowly backs away.

NARRATOR

Young Ned's random gift that was came with a caveat or two...

Ned sits at the kitchen table, stunned, unable to look away as his mother pulls a pie out of the oven.

ON CHUCK IN HER YARD (POV FROM WINDOW)

She runs inside as her father continues to water the lawn.

ON NED AND HIS MOTHER

Ned watches as his mother tends to her pie.

INCLUDE THE KITCHEN WINDOW, on the sill the timer DINGS. And through the window we SEE Chuck's father drop dead.

NARRATOR

It was a gift that not only gave... it took.

Young Ned sees Chuck's father drop and his mouth hangs slightly ajar.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Young Ned discovered he could only bring the dead back to life for one minute without consequence.

Ned's mother looks up and GASPS as she sees Chuck's father dead in the yard. SMASH, the pie plate she's holding shatters to the ground.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Any longer and someone else had to die.

INT. NED'S CHILDHOOD HOME - NED'S BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Horrified, Ned stares out the window at an AMBULANCE slowly pulling away from Chuck's house without its lights on.

NARRATOR

In the grand universal scheme of things, Young Ned had traded his mother's life for Chuck's father's.

NED'S MOTHER

Come on, big daddy, into bed.

Ned's mother pulls up the blankets so Ned can slide into bed. She draws the blanket up to his chest, never touching him directly.

NARRATOR

But there was one more thing about touching dead things that Young Ned didn't know. And he learned it in the most unfortunate way.

She moves to kiss Ned on his forehead.

As her lips make contact with his forehead, we see a STATIC POP OF ELECTRICITY.

Ned's mother drops dead right then and there.

Ned kneels next to his dead mother, poking her cheek, waiting for her to open her eyes again. She doesn't.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

First touch, life. Second touch, dead again forever.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - LATE DAY - FLASHBACK

An expansive hillside graveyard filled with headstones.

ON ONE SIDE

Young Ned and his FATHER look into an OPEN GRAVE as a PRIEST reads from a prayer book.

PRIEST

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters...

NARRATOR

After a brief mourning period, Young Ned's father would hustle him off to boarding school, never to be seen again.

ON THE OTHER SIDE

Two funerals are taking place near each other, on opposite sides of the graveyard.

Chuck is flanked by 30-something Grey Garden-esque AUNTS VIVIAN and LILY, looking into an OPEN GRAVE as a RABBI reads in Hebrew from a prayer book.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Chuck was fostered by aunts Lily and Vivian. A renowned synchronized swimming duo, they shared matching personality disorders and a love for fine cheese.

CAMERA POPS WIDE

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

At their respective parent's funerals...

EXT. GRAVEYARD - SUNSET - FLASHBACK

The peak of the cemetery hill. Young Ned and the Neighbor Girl ENTER FRAME from their respective side, silhouetted by the sun.

NARRATOR

...dizzy with grief, curiosity and hormones, Young Ned and a girl named Chuck had their first and only kiss.

She kisses him on the lips, then turns and walks away.

GRAVEYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Young Ned watches the Neighbor Girl head back down the hill.

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK...

NARRATOR

After his mother's death, Ned avoided social attachments, fearing what he'd do if someone else he loved died.

The setting sun shining bright and round MORPHS INTO A GOLDEN BROWN strawberry pie on a cloud-print, multi-tiered pie stand.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And he became obsessed with pies. It's 19 years, 34 weeks, 1 day and 59 minutes later, heretofore known as now.

We are:

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - PRESENT

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON the back of the PIE-MAKER as he works, placing freshly-baked pies on the cloud-print stand.

NARRATOR

Young Ned has become "The Pie-Maker."

CAMERA REVEALS NED'S FACE

Simultaneously handsome and awkward, about 30 years of age.

EXT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

A charming Parisian (in tone)/American (in style) googie-esque bakery. The front of the business is rounded and given the façade of a giant pie wedged into the ground floors of an ADJACENT APARTMENT BUILDING, complete with pie-crust roof. A sign reads: The Pie Hole.

NARRATOR

And this is where he makes his pies.

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - NIGHT - PRESENT

Ned rolls dough as Digby happily lies on the floor at his feet.

NARRATOR

The peaches never brown...

A dead strawberry is lovingly picked from a bowl and it spontaneously engorges with juice, ripe and tasty, in Ned's hand.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

The dead fruit in his hands becomes ripe with everlasting flavor -- as long as he only touches it once.

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

Rich and textured, like the inside of a pie. Tufted booths and a rounded counter bar (with spinning stools) that curves parallel to the pie façade exterior. Right out of the '40s. The place is dappled with customers and a single WAITRESS.

CAMERA FINDS OLIVE waiting on regular customer EMERSON COD, an African-American man in a suit.

OLIVE

Every day I come in, I pick a pie and concentrate all my love on that pie. 'Cause if I love it, someone else is gonna love it. And you know what? By the end of the day, I've sold more of those pies than any other pie in the bakery.

EMERSON

Yeah? What pie do you love today?

CAMERA PUSHES IN:

OLIVE

Rhubarb.

EMERSON

I'll stick with three plum. À la mode.

NARRATOR

Emerson Cod was the sole keeper of the Pie-Maker's secret.

EXT. CITY - ROOFTOP - FLASHBACK

Emerson chases a RUNNING MAN across a rooftop.

NARRATOR

And this is how he came to be the sole keeper of the Pie-Maker's secret.

The chase continues as they jump to the next building.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

A private investigator, Mr. Cod met the Pie-Maker when his Pie Hole was on the verge of financial ruin.

The running man jumps to make it to the next building and misses, plunging several stories to his death. Emerson looks over the ledge to see...

THE ALLEY

The running man HIT a trash bin with a BONE-CRUNCHING WHAM that most definitely killed the man. But he BOUNCES into a SLIGHTLY-YOUNGER NED, who happened to be emptying the trash at the time.

On impact we SEE the POP OF STATIC ELECTRICITY.

The dead running man OPENS HIS EYES and takes off again. Slightly-younger Ned gives chase.

NED

Whoa. Hey.

THE ROOF

Emerson watches as...

NED IN THE ALLEY

Touches the running man again and he goes limp.

NARRATOR

Mr. Cod proposed a partnership.

THE ROOF

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Emerson staring, slack-jawed.

NARRATOR

Murders are much easier to solve when you can ask the victim who killed them. The Pie-Maker reluctantly agreed.

INT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

It's after hours and the bakery is closed, the lights are dim. Olive is finishing up in the kitchen. CAMERA FINDS Ned and Emerson sitting at a booth, speaking in hushed tones. Ned, forever the handsome, articulate recluse, fidgets a bit, uncomfortable in his own skin. Digby's nearby listening to their hushed conversation:

NED

I asked you not to use the word "zombie." It's disrespectful. Stumbling around, squawking for brains. That's not how they do. And "undead"? Nobody wants to be un-anything. Why begin a statement with a negative? It's like saying, "I don't disagree." Just say you agree.

EMERSON

Are you comfortable with "living dead"?

Ned shakes his head.

NED

You're either living or you're dead. When you're living, you're alive. When you're dead, that's what you are. But when you're dead and then you're not, you're alive-again. Can't we say "alive-again"? Doesn't that sound nice?

EMERSON

Sounds like you're a narcoleptic.

NED

I suffer from sudden and uncontrollable attacks of deep sleep?

EMERSON

What's the other one?

NED

Necrophiliac.

EMERSON

Words that sound alike get mixed up in my head.

Olive approaches, placing a sugar dispenser on a nearby table.

OLIVE

Me, too. I used to think masturbation meant chewing your food.

(off their looks)

I don't think that anymore.

NED

Can you lock the door behind you?

She was hoping for more. She EXITS. After she's gone:

EMERSON

So you want in on this opportunity or not?

(off Ned's hesitation)

A dog is involved.

Digby reacts.

NED

(glances at Digby)

What kinda dog?

EMERSON

It's gonna be a dead dog. A dead dog named Cantaloupe. They're putting her down. Allegedly killed her owner.

NED

When you say "allegedly"--

EMERSON

Cantaloupe was framed. Someone put a part of the victim in her mouth.

NED

Huh.

EMERSON

Hey, docile as a kitten, says the family.

Emerson holds up a picture of a dog, a chow.

NED

Despite it being a chow -- the breed most likely to turn on its owner.

EMERSON

Hey, hey. That's racial profiling. Looky here, if the dog is innocent, then it's murder. And if it's murder, then there's a reward.

AN OIL PAINTING - LEONARD GASWINT AND HIS DOG, CANTALOUPE

NARRATOR

The facts were these: one Leonard Gaswint, 39 years, 42 weeks, 5 days, 3 hours and 26 minutes old, was found mauled to death in his home office.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL WE ARE--

INT. GASWINT STUDY - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

A chow named Cantaloupe cleans herself next to a desk which partially obscures Leonard Gaswint's corpse.

NARRATOR

His dog Cantaloupe was the sole witness and only suspect in the murder.

INT. POUND - DAY

Cantaloupe sits alone in her cell, awaiting execution.

NARRATOR

Convinced of her innocence, the Gaswint family offered a significant reward...

A REWARD SIGN

There's a photo of Leonard Gaswint with text that reads: "REWARD \$20,000."

NARRATOR
...to find the real killer.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Ned and Emerson stand outside the morgue. The CORONER sits at his desk with a series of forms on a clipboard.

CORONER
You the dog expert?

NED
Uh-huh.

CORONER
Already had a dog expert.

NED
I'm the, uh... other one.

CORONER
Uh-huh.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - MORGUE - DAY

Emerson and Ned approach a sheet-covered body on a pull-out drawer. Ned peeks under the sheet and Emerson steps back.

EMERSON
How's he look?

NED
Fine, but my threshold's pretty high so you have to take what I say with a grain of salt.

Emerson takes a peek under the sheet himself.

EMERSON
That ain't a grain of salt. That's one of them blocks they give cows to lick.

NED
He can't help how he is.

EMERSON
That don't make it any less traumatic.

NED
For who?

EMERSON

Me. And I'm sure him. But mainly me. I'm gonna wait outside.

Ned watches as Emerson quickly disappears out the door. Ned sets the alarm on his watch. As Ned's about to touch dead Leonard Gaswint... CAMERA JUMPS TO...

AN EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP

And we see the FAMILIAR POP OF ELECTRICITY.

BACK WIDE

Leonard Gaswint sits up. He couldn't be nicer.

LEONARD GASWINT

Hello.

NED

Hi. Uh, sorry to disturb you, Mr. Gaswint. Or Leonard. Do... do you prefer--

LEONARD GASWINT

Leo.

NED

Leo. Um, your current condition...

Ned indicates the missing part of Gaswint's face.

LEONARD GASWINT

Do I have something right here?

NED

No. There's nothing right there.

LEONARD GASWINT

Damn dog.

NED

Cantaloupe?

LEONARD GASWINT

No, no. Cantaloupe's docile as a kitten. It's that Rottweiler. My secretary sicced her dog on me. She's been upset since last year's Christmas party. You know, it's a funny story, I--

Before Gaswint can start, Ned touches him and life slips from his body instantly. Ned quickly covers the body with a sheet.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - DAY

The coroner sits behind his desk, as before, while Emerson leans against the back wall. Ned steps out of the morgue.

CORONER

Was it the chow?

NED

The secretary. With her Rottweiler.

CORONER

Hmm.

INT. POUND - DAY - SLOW MOTION

Cantaloupe bounds out of her kennel and down the aisle, her fellow kenneled dogs barking MOS in support.

NARRATOR

Her good name cleared and her execution stayed, Cantaloupe was freed.

EXT. SECRETARY'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

SECRETARY and the ROTTWEILER are escorted out of her apartment building, surrounded by MEDIA and POLICE.

NARRATOR

And the secretary and her Rottweiler were hauled to justice.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL the image is on the TV. We are--

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING BACK TO REVEAL Olive sitting on her couch, Digby lying across her lap. They're watching the evening news.

NEWSCASTER #2

An anonymous tip led to solving the murder of a Michigan entrepreneur thought to be mauled to death by a family pet. The truth, however, is much more sinister...

As CAMERA PUSHES IN ON Olive...

NARRATOR

Olive Snook enjoyed her time with Digby. He was a surrogate for the human connection she wanted with the Pie-Maker. Her desperate attempts to connect to someone so disconnected, it terrified him...

KNOCK-KNOCK. Someone's at the door.

INT. LIBERTY APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Olive opens the door to her apartment to find Ned standing outside. Digby pokes his head up in the background.

NARRATOR

But that didn't stop her from trying.

OLIVE

How was your convention?

She draws close to him, flirtatious and almost slightly desperate for him to seduce her. He doesn't engage.

NED

Conventional. How was Digby?

OLIVE

Neurotic. He's a very needy dog. Do you pet him? Maybe if you pet him once in a while he wouldn't be so neurotic.

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ned steps inside and around Olive.

NED

I pet him. I'm allergic so I can't actually touch him. But I pet him.

OLIVE

With a stick? How do you pet him?

NED

A stick is involved, but it's more like a handle to a, um... petting device.

OLIVE

The dog needs to be touched. We all need to be touched.

NED

You touch him. Other people touch him.

OLIVE

He's your dog. Do you touch anything?

NED

Of course I, uh... I... I touch lots of things.

OLIVE

With affection?

She reaches out and touches his shoulders, holding her hands there an uncomfortable beat. Ned innocently averts his eyes.

OLIVE (CONT'D)

When was the last time someone touched you with affection?

NED

I get touched.

She holds his gaze for another uncomfortable moment.

NED (CONT'D)

Can you get Digby's leash now?

Deflated, Olive goes to get the leash.

NED (CONT'D)

(to Digby)

You don't mind I don't touch you, do you?

He doesn't.

NARRATOR

And then came the event that changed everything.

Ned's attention is drawn to the TV. A newscaster reports:

THE TV

NEWSCASTER #2

In other news, the body of a young woman allegedly murdered aboard a cruise ship has been recovered from the sea. The victim's identity is being withheld...

A LIMP, LIFELESS WOMAN is hauled out of the water and onto the deck of a cruise ship.

NED

Watches...

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker listened intently to the news, unaware that he stopped breathing. He was haunted by the nameless woman who met her end on the high seas.

OLIVE

Approaches with Digby's leash in hand. She wraps it around Ned's neck.

OLIVE

Okay, well, here's your leash.

NARRATOR

But he didn't know why.

OFF Ned, totally rapt, ignoring Olive...

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ned watches the small television set in the corner of his kitchen.

NEWSCASTER #1

Her name still withheld, very little is known of the victim, who was reportedly traveling alone when...

Ned gives Digby a scratch with the petting device.

NEWSCASTER #1 (CONT'D)

...murdered aboard a passenger ship that was returning from a tropical cruise sailing between the United States and Tahiti. The ship's captain initially dismissed the death as an accident, suggesting the victim likely returned from a late night out, hurt herself...

There's a KNOCK on the front door. Ned looks up to see Emerson outside the window. Their eyes connect.

INT. PIE HOLE - DINING AREA - NIGHT

It's after hours and the bakery is closed. Ned and Emerson sit at the counter, each with a cup of coffee.

EMERSON

Been watching the news lately?

NED

Yeah, but doesn't seem like much's going on in the world besides a dead girl on a boat.

EMERSON

A lot going on with that dead girl.

NED

That so?

EMERSON

Mmm-hmm. 50,000 dollars worth of that so.
You interested in a conversation?

NED

I could be persuaded.

EMERSON

Well, you better be persuaded quick 'cause the
dead girl's about to go in the ground.

NED

They just pulled her out of the water.

EMERSON

Jewish. Christians leave 'em laying around.
Jews gotta get 'em buried.

NED

Where we going?

EMERSON

Coeur d'Coeurs. You ever been there?

NED

I grew up there. Sort of.

(lost, then:)

This dead girl from Coeur d'Coeurs. Does she
have a name?

EMERSON

Charlotte Charles.

POW. He might as well have punched Ned in the stomach.

A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS FROM NED'S POV:

(A) Young Chuck stomping through the dirt city in her yard.

(B) Young Chuck and Young Ned at Halloween. She's Godzilla,
he's Rodan, they hold their candy bags out for goodies.

(C) Young Chuck and Young Ned kissing in the graveyard.

RESUME - PIE HOLE - EMERSON AND NED, AS BEFORE

NED

Chuck?

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

EXT. BUS - DAY

A bus drives by a sign welcoming us back to Coeur d'Coeurs.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker never returned to Coeur d'Coeurs after being sent away to school. But he thought of Chuck everyday.

INT. BUS - DAY

Ned and Emerson sit next to each other.

EMERSON

You know this girl?

NED

I know of her.

EMERSON

Know of her in the biblical sense?

NED

I haven't thought of her since I was 10.

EMERSON

Think of her a lot when you were 10?

NED

Don't remember anything when I was 10.

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker remembers everything.

EXT. OCEAN - UNDERWATER - FLASHBACK

CAMERA IS ANGLED UP at the undulating surface of the water.

NARRATOR

The facts were these: Charlotte Charles, 28 years, 24 weeks, 3 days, 11 hours and 51 minutes old...

SPWOOSH. A BODY breaks the surface in a cloud of bubbles.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...was found floating in the ocean moments after her body was discarded there.

The silhouette of dead Charlotte Charles floats in the surf.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

*Discarded by whom seemed to be a question only
Charlotte Charles could answer.*

EXT. SCHATZ BROTHERS FUNERAL HOME - DAY

Ned and Emerson approach the front door.

INSIDE LAVISH COFFINS - 3 QUICK POPS

-- The FUNERAL DIRECTOR, a chain-smoking man, opens the coffin lid and pulls the NECKLACE off a DEAD WOMAN's neck.

-- ...pulls the WATCH off a DEAD MAN's wrist.

-- ...pulls the SIZEABLE RING off a DEAD WOMAN's finger.

NARRATOR

*The funeral director, always eager to
supplement his income...*

INT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The funeral director watches Ned and Emerson approach. Emerson begrudgingly slips the funeral director some cash. He quickly pockets it and indicates a door directly off the lobby.

LAWRENCE SCHATZ

Gentlemen...

NARRATOR

*...was more than happy to grant the deceased
an audience.*

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

A gaudy, white casket decorated with seashells in the middle of the room. The afternoon sun shines through the window -- a light on the casket. Emerson and Ned ENTER.

NED

Um, I just wanna... I wanna... Can I do this one alone? On account of, you know, the whole historical context?

EMERSON

You got something personal you need to say?

NED

No. Okay, maybe. But I have nothing to gain but a small amount of closure.

EMERSON

And wha'cha got so open it needs closing?

NED

Um, I just wanna... say I'm sorry for something. One of those stupid things kids do they don't know they're doing.

EMERSON

Yeah, well, you ask who killed her first.

NED

Okay.

EMERSON

You only got one minute.

NED

I know.

EMERSON

60 seconds.

NED

I know.

EMERSON

A'ight.

Emerson walks out eyeing Ned and closes the door behind him. Alone in the room, Ned takes a deep breath. Gulp. He slowly approaches the casket. Ned runs his hand over the frame, then lifts the lid, bathing the body of Charlotte Charles, aka CHUCK, in sunlight.

NARRATOR

Only Prince Charming could know how the Pie-Maker felt upon looking at her.

Even in death she's beautiful, a woman yet very much the girl he once knew. Even if she's wearing an ugly dress.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Great thought was taken as to where to touch her. The lips too forward, the cheek... the cheek.

Ned's finger closes in on Chuck's alabaster cheek and CAMERA JUMPS TO EXTREME-EXTREME-EXTREME CLOSE UP of his slow caress. A CRACKLE OF ELECTRICITY between finger and cheek.

Chuck opens her beautiful eyes and blinks. Ned can only stare back at her, expecting a warm smile in return but instead... WHAM. She grabs him by the tie and SLAMS HIS HEAD on the coffin lid.

NED

Ow. Oh. Oh, ugh.

Chuck stumbles out of her coffin as Ned stumbles back in a daze. She grabs a chair and raises it to hit him again.

NED (CONT'D)

Chuck! Wait.

CHUCK

Who are you?

NED

Do you remember the little boy who lived next door to you when your dad died?

Chuck stares at him a moment... confused... then:

CHUCK

Ned? Oh my god. Hey. How are you?

She finally puts the chair down.

NED

Good. Uh, you look great. Um, do you know what's happening right now?

CHUCK

I had the strangest dream. I was being strangled to death with a plastic sack.

NED

You were... strangled to death with a plastic sack. That's probably an odd thing to hear, but I wasn't quite sure how to sugarcoat it.

She glances at her coffin and the viewing room.

CHUCK

Oh. Oh.

NED

You only have a minute. Less.

CHUCK

What can I do in less than a minute?

NED

You can tell me who killed you so... you know, justice can be served.

CHUCK

Well, that's really sweet, but I don't know who killed me. I went to go get ice and I dropped my room key in the ice maker and as I was thinking "that was dumb"...

INT. CRUISE SHIP - CORRIDOR - MEMORY FLASHES - VERY QUICK ACTION

Chuck stands at the ice machine perplexed with a bucket of ice under her arm. A PAIR OF VERY SHINY SHOES step behind her, the person wearing them OUT OF FRAME.

NARRATOR

As she was thinking "that was dumb," Chuck was strangled to death with a plastic sack.

FWIP -- a bag is thrown violently over her head. She sucks air and it shrink-wraps to her face. The ice tumbles to the deck in the FOREGROUND as Chuck is murdered in the BACKGROUND.

RESUME - FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

CHUCK

...and then you touched my cheek.

Emerson RAP-RAP-RAPS on the door.

EMERSON (O.S.)

What's goin' on in there?

NED

Just a second.

Chuck reacts.

CHUCK

Is my time up?

NED

I'm sorry.

And Chuck was just starting to get used to being alive-again. It's weird and sad, but all she can think to say is:

CHUCK

Well, thanks for calling me Chuck. D'you know, no one's called me Chuck since... since you.

He stumbles on his words, trying to speak but overwhelmed:

NED

I used to... when I lived next door to you... I had a cru... I was in... You... were my first kiss.

CHUCK
(smiles, touched)
Yeah? You were my first kiss, too.

A moment as they stare at each other. This is all very odd.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
You wanna be my last kiss? First and last?
Or... is that weird?

NED
That's not weird. It's symmetrical.

NARRATOR
Chuck's minute of life was nearly over.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - OUTSIDE VIEWING ROOM

Emerson checks his watch.

RESUME - NED AND CHUCK

Ned looks at her and slowly moves in for the kiss. She closes her eyes. Their lips are about to connect.

NARRATOR
The Pie-Maker's lips went as far as they would go. He couldn't will them to go any further.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - BATHROOM - DAY

The funeral director scoots into the stall, pulling down his pants, sitting on the toilet and striking up a cigar.

NARRATOR
And as a consequence, the funeral director would go no further.

A beat, then THUNK -- we HEAR the funeral director's lifeless head hit the stall door. Then the smoking cigar drops.

RESUME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned slowly pulls away from Chuck. He let her live and someone else had to die, the weight of it all is clearly on Ned's face when he looks back at Chuck.

CHUCK
If you don't wanna kiss me, it's okay. I thought it might be--

NED
No. I want to, I do... I... What if you didn't have to... be dead?

CHUCK

Well, that would be preferable.

NED

Nobody can know.

(indicating her coffin)

Hop in.

Chuck laughs.

NED (CONT'D)

I gotta think of a way to get you outta here.
Can you lie really still until I get back?

CHUCK

Mm-hm.

Chuck lies in her coffin and Ned carefully closes the lid.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - OUTSIDE VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned emerges from the viewing room, quickly shutting the door behind him. He's nervous and a little sweaty.

NED

Doesn't know. Didn't know.

EMERSON

So somebody just threw her carcass off a boat
and ju-- Why are you sweating?

NED

I'm-- it's warm in there. What?

EMERSON

Your eye's twitching.

NED

My eye?

EMERSON

Your eye is twitching. When people aren't
being honest, their eye twitches. Right
there. Like yours did, just now.

NED

It's nerves. Aggravated by a stomach thing.
It's like acid reflux, but in my eye. I
think I'm gonna stay for the service.

EMERSON

Is that so?

NED

Just feeling nostalgic. Do you remember how to get back to the station? It's down the, uh... I'll catch a later bus.

Emerson EXITS to the front door as Ned heads back to the viewing room.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - VIEWING ROOM - DAY

Ned opens the door and STARTLES at where Chuck's coffin was but no longer is. He bolts from the room. OFF Ned's "oh, shit" of it all...

EXT. FUNERAL HOME - DAY

The HEARSE is pulling away as Ned BURSTS out of the doors of the funeral home in PANICKED HOT PURSUIT.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. CEMETERY ROAD - DAY

A small procession of cars follows Chuck's hearse.

INT. COFFIN - DARK

The small amount of light coming through the joints of the coffin barely illuminates Chuck, who lies there, patiently.

NARRATOR

Lying in the dark, Chuck considered how she came to be lying in the dark.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY - FLASHBACK

The yard is overrun with growth and the paint is peeling.

NARRATOR

She considered the life that was with Aunts Lily and Vivian.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY

Chuck is moving through the house opening curtains and windows and allowing fresh air to flow.

VIVIAN (early 50s) and LILY (early 50s, dressed in a kimono and an eyepatch) sit on the couch.

NARRATOR

Their personality disorders blossomed into incapacitating social phobias.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL... they're surrounded by DOZENS AND DOZENS of CAGED BIRDS.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

Which made it difficult for them to leave the house. Which, in turn, made it difficult for Chuck to leave them.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - FRONT YARD - FLASHBACK

Chuck is wearing a beekeeper's outfit and holding jars of honey.

CAMERA PULLS BACK TO REVEAL a HOMELESS MAN sitting next to a banner reading: "HONEY FOR THE HOMELESS."

NARRATOR

She served her community by harvesting honey for the homeless. She never strayed far from home.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - CHUCK'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

As Chuck sits in an armchair reading a novel, the empty shelves in the room FILL WITH BOOKS until the walls are "literally" covered.

NARRATOR

She read about people she could never be, on adventures she would never have.

RESUME - CHUCK IN HER COFFIN

NARRATOR

Life was good enough until one day... it wasn't.

EXT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - FLASHBACK

Chuck crosses the street, headed toward the travel agency.

NARRATOR

Chuck wanted more...

INT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE

Chuck ENTERS. She approaches the smiling manager, DEEDEE, next to a STANDEE advertising a TAHITIAN CRUISE.

NARRATOR

...but at Boutique Travel travel boutique, she got more than she bargained for.

EXT. GRAVEYARD - LATE AFTERNOON - THE PRESENT

CAMERA FINDS a large mound of earth next to a hole in the ground. TWO GRAVEYARD WORKERS are about to take their first shovelful of dirt and sling them into Chuck's grave. Disheveled Ned runs up to the graveyard workers, out of breath.

NED

Hey, I think somebody's truck's on fire.

They look over his shoulder to see their work truck CONSUMED IN FLAMES. The workers GASP and run to put out the fire.

GRAVEYARD WORKER

Oh, jeez.

Ned makes sure they're not looking and jumps into the grave, pulling the lid off the coffin.

NED

Sorry I'm late.

Chuck looks up and smiles at the sight of her Prince Charming.
He returns the gesture.

NARRATOR

*Only Sleeping Beauty could know how she felt
at this moment.*

EXT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

Chuck sits at the counter. Ned stands behind it.

CHUCK

I can't even hug you? What if you need a hug?
A hug can turn your day around.

NED

I'm not a fan of the hug.

CHUCK

Then you haven't been hugged properly. It's an
emotional Heimlich. Someone puts their arms
around you, and they give you a squeeze and all
your fear and anxiety comes shooting out of
your mouth in a big, wet wad and you can
breathe again.

NED

That's fine for someone else to do if I'm
choking. On something other than emotion.
But you can't touch me.

CHUCK

So a kiss is out of the question?

This question comes out innocently enough. Ned can only stare.

NED

(then)

I've lost my train of thought.

CHUCK

How long have you been thinking about this?

NED

Like thinking-thinking? It wasn't
premeditated. I wasn't lying in wait. More
like I was musing on the idea. Not, you know,
dwelling. There were times I did dwell on
you... about you. A little. But...

(MORE)

NED (CONT'D)

I wasn't seriously considering until the exact moment I did it. Or, um, didn't do it.

Chuck stares at him a moment -- this is all overwhelming.

CHUCK

I always wondered if you'd come back. I guess you came back when I needed you most. Well, that would've been before I was killed, but this worked out.

NED

You understand you can't go back, right? You can't see your aunts.

CHUCK

They'll go off their rockers without me. Besides, they're shut-ins, it's not like they talk to anybody.

NED

People aren't used to this sort of thing. Issues of morality, "How come she's not dead anymore?" It'd be a disaster.

CHUCK

Well, I suppose dying's as good an excuse as any to start living.

EXT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

CAMERA pans from the front of the Pie Hole, up the side of the Liberty Apartment Building and we see a light click on inside Ned's apartment.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned and Chuck stand in front of Digby, who lies on the floor. It's clear from Ned's slouching that he's exhausted.

NED

Uh, this is Digby.

CHUCK

Wasn't your old dog named Digby?

NED

This is him.

CHUCK

Did you...? And now he's...?

NED

Yeah.

CHUCK

You seem to do that a lot. Why do you do that a lot?

NED

It's just the two of you. I hate to be a bad host but I'm sort of exhausted from chasing your coffin.

CHUCK

Oh, yeah, of course.

Ned crosses to the couch to lie down, dirt and all.

NED

I'm gonna sleep here, you take the bed. I insist. Ah... my eyes are rolling back into my head. I'm laying down now.

But Ned is already sound asleep.

CHUCK

(softly)

I'd kiss you if it wouldn't kill me.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck sits up in bed, watching the TELEVISION NEWS. A candid "while living" PICTURE OF CHUCK'S smiling face looms over NEWSCASTER #1's shoulder as he recites the news:

NEWSCASTER #1

28-year-old "Lonely Tourist" Charlotte Charles was laid to rest earlier today--

CLICK.

NEWSCASTER #3

She is survived by her aunts, Vivian and Lily Charles, a world-renowned synchronized swimming due...

NARRATOR

In a strange bed watching her own funeral on the evening news, Chuck was struck by the undignified nature of celebrity.

Every time she CLICKS the remote, the NEWSCASTER changes but her haunting "while living" picture stays the same.

NEWSCASTER #3

A passenger heard a commotion just moments before the victim's body fell past his window--

CLICK.

NARRATOR

No one wants to be famous for the way they died.

NEWSCASTER #2

Boutique Travel travel boutique has offered a 50,000 dollar reward in the murder of Charlotte Charles.

Chuck reacts, no one said anything about a reward.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned sleeps on the couch. Chuck is crouched on the floor beside him.

CHUCK

Ned?

NED

Hmmm?

CHUCK

Would I be alive right now if I knew who killed me?

NED

Of course. Don't be silly... That's a-- Something in the news about the reward?

CHUCK

You said you wanted to know who killed me so that justice could be served. See, I don't think that justice was on the menu. Maybe as a side dish. But not an entree.

NED

It was most certainly an entree. It was a special of the day. Can we drop the metaphor? I wouldn't have known you had died if it weren't for the reward.

CHUCK

When were you gonna tell me?

NED

In the morning, or when it came up. Whichever didn't come first.

CHUCK

50-thousand dollars? That makes a lotta pie.

NED

25 thousand. I have a business partner.

CHUCK

What, it's a business?

NED

Uh, not in the traditional sense.

CHUCK

You touch murder victims, you ask who killed them, you touch them again, they go back to being dead and then you collect the reward?

NED

That's it in a nutshell.

CHUCK

So... are you after my reward? I'm not mad at you, I just wanna know. I'll be mad at you if you lie to me, though.

NED

I don't want your reward.

CHUCK

I'll be so mad if you're lying. You'll have me scratching the drapes.

NED

I'm not lying. Please don't attack the window treatments.

CHUCK

Okay. Go back to sleep.

Chuck stand and returns to the bedroom, satisfied that Ned isn't after her for financial gain. Ned lies on the couch, unable to shut his eyes.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck in bed, facing the living room. She closes her eyes and reaches out and puts her palm to the wall.

CAMERA RISES TO AN OVERHEAD ANGLE FINDING NED

...on the other side. He reaches out and touches the wall. He and Chuck appear to be holding hands side by side.

INT. NED'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Chuck opens her eyes to find a note taped to the lampshade. It reads: "Please do NOT leave this apt!"

INT. LIBERTY APARTMENT BUILDING - HALL - MORNING

Chuck, in long coat, scarf and sunglasses, turns and is surprised to see Olive standing outside her apartment surprised to see a woman coming out of Ned's.

CHUCK

I'm a friend of Ned's.

Olive sizes her up for a moment, then out of curiosity:

OLIVE

Does he touch you?

INT. PIE HOLE - MORNING

Emerson sits opposite Ned in a booth before the bakery is open.

EMERSON

So how was the service?

NED

You know, just paid my respects.

EMERSON

You weren't looking to get paid?

NED

Hmmm?

EMERSON

Might see a dead woman speaking to you in confidence as an opportunity to make a whole lot of money by your lonesome. Regardless of prior arrangements.

NED

There's no opportunity here.

With that, Chuck slides into the booth next to Emerson. Olive stands nearby, taking off her coat.

CHUCK

Are you the business partner?

EMERSON

Yes, ma'am.

OLIVE

Found her upstairs. Doesn't she look a lot like that dead girl?

EMERSON

She looks exactly like that dead girl.

OLIVE

You should take that as a compliment. She was pretty.

NED

(indicating the kitchen)

Pie time.

OLIVE

Pie time.

Olive moves off to the kitchen. After she's gone, Chuck speaks in hushed tones:

CHUCK

I've been ruminating. And by ruminating I mean pondering, not chewing cud. How about we solve my murder and collect the reward. Wouldn't that be poetic? It's certainly an anecdote.

EMERSON

She's supposed to be in the ground.

NED

(to Chuck)

I thought you didn't want the reward.

CHUCK

No. I wanted you not to want the reward. 50-thousand dollars, that's a lot of money. Three-way split? 30/30/40?

(off Emerson's reaction)

It's only fair I get more. I did die for it.

NED

I'm not a detective. I make pies.

CHUCK

You can't just touch somebody's life and be done with it.

NED

Yes, I can. That's how I roll.

Emerson glances at Ned, then back to Chuck:

EMERSON

I can do 30/30/40.

NED

She's supposed to be dead.

(to Chuck)

You're... you're supposed to be dead. This is pushing your luck.

CHUCK

Yeah, well, luck pushed me first.

OFF Chuck's determination...

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

INT. PIE HOLE - KITCHEN - DAY

Emerson and Ned confer.

EMERSON

It's just so shockingly stupid I have a hard time believing you did it.

NED

You just agreed to be her partner.

EMERSON

Oh, I intend to profit from your stupidity. Are you in love with her? 'Cause it's that level of stupid.

NED

I'll admit to being confused. It's a very confusing time. Childhood issues. Diggin' in the dirt...

Digby reacts.

NED (CONT'D)

It's all coming up.

EMERSON

You know what? We all have childhood issues, okay? Believe me, I got the full subscription, okay? Horror stories.

NED

I kinda killed her dad when I was 10.

EMERSON

Maybe not "horror" stories.

NED

She doesn't know. But I wanted to make it better or different than what it was because what it was was her dead and I didn't want that to be my fault, too.

EMERSON

Well who died instead?

Ned hands him the folded newspaper from his back pocket.

NED

It's a random proximity thing.

EMERSON

Bitch, I was in proximity.

NED

I wasn't thinking.

Emerson glances at the obituaries and a circled picture of the now-deceased obese, chain-smoking funeral director, Lawrence Schatz.

EMERSON

I wondered what happened to him.

NED

He was a very, very bad man. He stole stuff off dead people and sold it on the Internet. It's all in the obituary.

EMERSON

Oh, that's nice. The fact that he was a very, very bad man makes you feel better about what you did?

NED

Yes. Immensely. I would've felt horrible if it was... you, for example.

Emerson slaps Ned upside the head.

NED (CONT'D)

I'm not proud.

EMERSON

You know what, I'm glad you did it. It makes the worst thing I ever did seem insignificant.

NED

Listen to you, all judgey-judge.

EMERSON

"Judgey-judge"? Look -- you don't know anything about this girl except she got herself killed.

As Ned takes that in...

Off camera, Chuck clears her throat. Ned and Emerson turn to see her standing at the entrance to the kitchen.

CHUCK

I'm not who you think I am.

Emerson gives her a sidelong glance.

EMERSON

Who does he think you are?

CHUCK

The small-town girl who never saw the world, only to have her first time out be her last. Well, that is who I am, but... I was hoisted by my own petard.

NED

What's a petard?

CHUCK

In my case, the petard is that Tahitian getaway. It was a devil's bargain.

EMERSON

Who's the devil?

CHUCK

DeeDee Duffield. Manager of Boutique Travel travel boutique. She offered me a high-seas adventure at no cost. All I had to do was pick up a package.

NED

Are you a drug mule?

CHUCK

No. I'm a... monkey mule.

A BRIEFCASE

A stainless steel Halliburton molded in an alligator print. CAMERA LOOKS THROUGH THE EXTERIOR OF THE BRIEFCASE TO REVEAL a pair of PLASTER MONKEY STATUES.

NARRATOR

And these are the monkeys in question.

RESUME - PIE HOLE

NED

You died for a pair of plaster monkeys?

CHUCK

DeeDee said they weren't worth much. Their only value was sentimental.

EMERSON

Those must've been some emotional monkeys.

CHUCK

Well you should ask DeeDee about all of this.
I'm very curious as to what she has to say.

EXT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - DAY - PRESENT

NARRATOR

*Boutique Travel travel boutique manager,
DeeDee Duffield, hoped the 50,000 dollar
reward would catch a killer before a killer
caught her.*

Ned's car pulls up in front of the building.

INT. BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE - DAY - PRESENT

Ned and Emerson open the door. They step inside and a bell
CHIMES. They stop at a strangled-to-death DeeDee sitting at her
desk with a plastic bag over her head.

NARRATOR

*The reward fell short of achieving its
desired goal.*

NED

Oh.

TIME CUT TO:

MOMENTS LATER

Chuck carefully pulls the bag off DeeDee's head.

CHUCK

Well, I guess I can't be too mad at her. Is
that how they found me? That's humiliating.

NED

I wonder how long she's been here.

EMERSON

Touch the poor bitch and ask her.

Ned sighs.

NED

(hesitates, to Chuck)

I'm... I'm sorta embarrassed to do it in front
of you.

Chuck covers her eyes with her hand, but still manages to peek
rather conspicuously as Ned starts his watch and touches DeeDee.
A familiar POP OF ELECTRICITY. DeeDee opens her eyes, gasps,
blinks and sits up.

She glances around, more than a little confused -- wasn't she just murdered? She locks eyes with Chuck.

DEEDEE

Hey, Charlotte.

CHUCK

Hey, DeeDee.

DEEDEE

Now how'd I know you'd be the first person I'd see when I got to... is this...? Which one is this?

CHUCK

This isn't either. Well, maybe it's both. But listen, this is the deal: You get to talk for like a minute? We're gonna catch up. And then you're not talking anymore.

DEEDEE

Does everyone get to do this? 'Cause, girl, we gotta break it down.

CHUCK

Did you know I was gonna get killed?

DEEDEE

I thought there might be the possibility, yes. I'm real sorry about that. I probably should have said something. But to be honest, and really? Why not, at this point? If it was safe, I would've done it myself. God, this is fantastic! Being honest is fun.

Chuck is stunned.

EMERSON

(sotto, to Chuck)

Ask her who killed her. And you. And what's with the monkeys.

DEEDEE

(re: Ned and Emerson)

Who are those people?

CHUCK

That's Emerson. I don't really know him. And this is Ned. He was my first kiss.

DEEDEE

Oh, you're adorable. Look at your--

DeeDee reaches over and pinches Ned's cheek and THUNK! Her head hits the table as she goes back to being dead INSTANTLY.

EMERSON

You couldn't have... scooted back a little?

NED

I didn't know she was gonna touch my cheek.
Who does that?

CHUCK

Actually, she... does that a lot.

EMERSON

All right. Well why would whoever killed you kill her when he already got his monkeys?

CHUCK

I dropped my key in the ice maker. He couldn't get into my room.

INT. CRUISE SHIP - CORRIDOR - FLASHBACK

The SHINY SHOES KILLER, his face covered in a ski mask, stands outside a cabin door holding dead Chuck slumped over his arms, as he tries the handle, it doesn't open. He fumbles through her bathrobe for her room key.

SHINY SHOES KILLER

Ah, for pete's sake. This is a nightmare.

RESUME - BOUTIQUE TRAVEL TRAVEL BOUTIQUE

NED

He doesn't have the monkeys.

CHUCK

When you get murdered on a boat, where do they send your things?

EMERSON

Your next of kin.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CAMERA PULLS BACK FROM Lily and Vivian, surrounded by birds, reading on the couch.

CAMERA PULLS BACK OUT THE LIVING ROOM WINDOW until we are:

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

CAMERA CONTINUES BACK REVEALING the SHINY SHOES KILLER standing in the yard watching Lily and Vivian from outside.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER

Ned's VINTAGE MERCEDES screeches to a halt in front of Chuck's aunts' house. Ned, Emerson and Chuck prepare to hop out.

NED

You stay here.

CHUCK

I just wanna look in the window.

NED

You can't. You can have your pie, but you can't eat it. That's the way it works.

EMERSON

You're making me hungry.

CHUCK

I was supposed to keep them sane and I left. I'd just die if anything happened to them. I mean, I'd die... again.

NED

We'll make sure your aunts are safe, and then we'll call the police.

(off Chuck's concern)

I wish I could give you an emotional Heimlich so you could cough up that wad of fear and anxiety, but... I can't.

Ned stares at her, his heart swells.

NED (CONT'D)

(to Emerson)

Give her a hug.

Emerson gives Chuck a hug. It's awkward for both of them.

NED (CONT'D)

That was from me.

Chuck watches them approach her aunts' house.

NARRATOR

*Aunt Vivian and Aunt Lily were all Chuck had.
And before Chuck, all they had were each other.*

EXT. POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK

CLOSE ON a billboard advertising the Darling Mermaid Darlings.

NARRATOR

While still in their teens, they made a name for themselves as the "Darling Mermaid Darlings."

PULL BACK TO REVEAL BLEACHERS FULL OF FANS watching Teen Vivian and Lily loll underwater, rolling over and over languidly in seashell bikini tops and mermaid-fin bottoms. Teen Vivian and Teen Lily dive, pivot, shoot out of the water and flip, perfectly synchronized. The crowd goes wild.

EXT. POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK - 15 YEARS LATER

The same billboard is worn and faded. 30s Vivian and Lily loll underwater, rolling over and over more-or-less gracefully, their mermaid fins intact.

NARRATOR

Many, many, many years later, still holding onto their fading glory as underwater artistes, their lives were changed forever...

CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - PATIO - FLASHBACK

30s Lily cleans the litter box and accidentally flips dirty cat sand in her own face and recoils.

NARRATOR

...when Lily, while cleaning the litter box, got dirty cat sand in her eye.

LILY

Oh, my!

EXT. POOL - DAY - FLASHBACK

The pool and bleachers are now rundown and empty.

NARRATOR

Not only did she lose her eye, but the Darling Mermaid Darlings lost their careers.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT - PRESENT

Ned and Emerson stand on the front porch.

NARRATOR

They retreated behind a fence and made sure the world stayed on the other side.

Ned KNOCKS on the front door with the ornate brass knocker.

VIVIAN (O.S.)

Hello?

NED

Hi. My name is Ned. I lived next door 20 years ago. I'm a... was a friend of Chuck's... Charlotte's, rather.

Vivian opens the door, Lily beside her.

VIVIAN

Please, come in. Please.

Ned turns, gives Chuck surprised look.

ON CHUCK

She returns the look and watches as Emerson and Ned disappear into the house.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned and Emerson sit opposite Lily and Vivian, they're surrounded by CAGED BIRDS of all varieties.

An impressive cheese and cracker plate has been put out for the guests, as Lily prattles on:

LILY

Charlotte was a firecracker. Always trying to get us out of the house, threatened to bake antidepressants into our food. Got to the point I was scared to eat anything she cooked.

VIVIAN

She was a good cook. And a nice girl. Do you like girls?

NED

Yes, ma'am.

VIVIAN

Charlotte was a nice girl.

LILY

With the exception of puberty.

VIVIAN

Which was unfortunately when Lily was going through her change of life.

LILY

Impolite to discuss a person's menopause in mixed company.

VIVIAN

It nearly killed me.

Lily turns the subject back to Charlotte.

LILY

Horrible the way Charlotte died. On a cruise. Last days spent surrounded by middle-aged, overweight women who wear sweatshirts with things sewn to them.

VIVIAN

Usually kittens made of felt.

LILY

The food is perfectly atrocious. Unless she enjoyed vomiting and diarrhea, I can't imagine she had a good last meal.

EMERSON

A good last meal can go a long way. Our penal system makes a point of it.

NED

It's nice she had a little glimpse of the world before she died.

LILY

Meh, the world isn't that great.

VIVIAN

Well at least she had the sense not to fly. Airplanes fall out of the sky every day.

(to Emerson)

Cheese? I would recommend the pure goat with blue ash. It has a grassy flavor.

Emerson takes a bite.

EMERSON

It does have a grassy flavor.

VIVIAN

It's delicious with Charlotte's honey. You haven't lived until you've tasted her honey. The homeless love it.

Overcome with emotion, Vivian can't bring herself to finish. Ned reacts as he catches Chuck peering through the window. He tries not to lose his focus and keep on task:

NED

Not to change the subject, but has the cruise line returned her belongings? Specifically a stainless steel briefcase?

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Chuck sneaks around the side of the house.

NARRATOR

Chuck couldn't remember why she was so desperate to leave this life behind.

She eyes the stacks of beehives.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

She missed her aunts, she missed her bees. She missed everything she was...

Chuck climbs the rose trellis to the second floor.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - 2ND STORY - CHUCK'S BEDROOM

A lone parrot is on its perch in its cage in the corner.

PARROT

Wah, hello!

Chuck opens the window, climbs inside, finds the bed with the briefcase on it. Chuck opens the briefcase to reveal the twin PLASTER MONKEYS.

NARRATOR

Smuggling monkeys put an end to her life. Chuck didn't want to be remembered as the "Lonely Tourist." She wanted to be remembered as something sweeter.

She pulls the monkeys out of their briefcase and examines them. She HEARS footsteps coming up the stairs.

UPSTAIRS LANDING - NIGHT

Lily walks up the stairs.

CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chuck snaps the briefcase shut and moves toward the window. She stops and takes a look around and slips outside.

Lily ENTERS, narrowly missing Chuck. Lily crosses to the window and pulls it shut, yanking the curtains closed.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LEDGE - NIGHT

Chuck stands on the ledge out of sight, the two plaster monkeys under her arm.

INT. CHUCK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lily moves to the bed and picks up the briefcase. Behind her, silhouetted in the door, a MAN wearing a ski mask that obscures his identity quietly ENTERS the room.

Lily turns around and FWIP -- a bag is thrown violently over her head. She sucks air and it shrink-wraps to her face.

The parrot SQUAWKS.

CUT TO BLACK.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Establishing.

NARRATOR

Unaware of Lily's fate upstairs...

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ned, Emerson and Vivian in the living room.

NARRATOR

...the Pie-Maker did his best to comfort Vivian.

VIVIAN

Charlotte always wanted to get away. Got away further than any of us thought.

Ned reaches over and holds Vivian's hand...

NARRATOR

In a rare moment of sensitivity, he reached out and touched her...

...but she stiffens at this touch. They sit there an awkward beat as if a social taboo has been broken.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...not realizing she didn't like being touched.

Ned is finally unable to take it anymore and gets up to excuse himself.

NED

I'll go see if she needs any help bringing it down.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LEDGE

Chuck inches along the ledge, still holding the plaster monkeys.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Ned climbs the stairs to the second landing. It's eerily quiet upstairs. He takes a few steps down the hall.

He sees the stainless steel briefcase in the middle of the hall when FWIP -- a bag is thrown violently over his head, as well. He sucks air and it shrink-wraps to his face.

Ned struggles with the Shiny Shoes Killer, who tightens his grip, pulling Ned off his feet.

WHAP -- Chuck comes out of nowhere and SLAMS THE STAINLESS STEEL BRIEFCASE upside the Shiny Shoes Killer's head. WHAP! He drops Ned with a plop.

Ned scrambles back, pulling the sack off his face, gasping for air. The Shiny Shoes Killer spins around just as Chuck is taking another swing with the briefcase--

TWAP. The Shiny Shoes Killer catches the briefcase before it hits his head, snapping it out of Chuck's hands. A tense beat, then:

SHINY SHOES KILLER

Didn't I kill you?

CLICK.

LILY (O.S.)

I can hold my breath for a long time.

The Shiny Shoes Killer turns to see Lily, still alive, standing at the other end of the hall aiming the shotgun she just cocked.

BLAM! The impact of the SHOTGUN BLAST knocks the Shiny Shoes Killer off his feet and THROUGH THE WINDOW BEHIND HIM, the stainless steel briefcase clamors to the floor.

UPSTAIRS LANDING

Chuck and Ned stand with the gaping window between them, staring at each other. Holy shit. Did that just happen? They look down the other end of the hall where Lily is staring directly at not only Ned, but more importantly Chuck, her dead niece evidently returned from the grave.

NARRATOR

The jib appeared to be up. Aunt Lily was looking directly at her niece. Her niece who wasn't supposed to be alive. And if she possessed two good eyes...

LILY'S POV - HALL

The corridor is partially obscured by her eyepatch and she doesn't see Chuck at all, only Ned.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...she would have seen her.

ON CHUCK

She slinks around the corner and out the open window.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - NIGHT

Chuck emerges from the second story and climbs down the rose trellis. She turns back to see:

SECOND STORY WINDOW

Ned's looking out the window at Chuck.

NARRATOR

A rush of warmth washed over the Pie-Maker.

NED'S POV - YARD

Chuck runs across the yard and stops at the dead Shiny Shoes Killer and kicks him.

NARRATOR

He would later describe this feeling as "delight." The girl he rescued from death had returned the favor.

INT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - LANDING - NIGHT

Ned continues to watch as Chuck disappears into the night. Emerson, Vivian and Lily appear behind him looking down into the yard -- only they're too late to see Chuck. Ned smiles.

INT. OLIVE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Olive is again sitting on her couch, Digby squeezed up next to her. They're watching the evening news and sharing a bowl of ice cream. On the TV, Newscaster #2, seen earlier, reports breaking news:

NEWSCASTER #2

Former Darling Mermaid Darlings Vivian and Lily Charles defeated a deadly home invader who may have some connection to the smuggling-related murder of their niece, "Lonely Tourist" Charlotte Charles.

Digby enjoys ice cream from Olive's spoon.

NEWSCASTER #2 (CONT'D)

When asked about a Darling Mermaid Darlings reunion, the sisters mentioned a benefit performance to support "Honey for the Homeless" was in the works.

EXT. PIE HOLE - NIGHT

CAMERA MOVES FROM THE NEON SIGN ON THE ROOF TO FIND Ned and Chuck sitting on a bench near the front door.

CHUCK

Was this really an act of kindness? Me. Here. Were you really trying to do something good for no other reason than to help me?

NED

(shakes his head)

I was being selfish. I'd love to tell myself I was being unselfish but I know deep down in my primal sweet spot I was being unselfish for selfish reasons.

(beat)

I just thought my world would be a better place if you were in it.

The most romantic thing she's ever heard.

CHUCK

Is there anything else I should know?

NARRATOR

The Pie-Maker wanted to tell Chuck about that fateful afternoon when he inadvertently killed her father, but instead he said:

NED

No.

Chuck picks up one of the plaster monkeys from beside her.

CHUCK

Well, I figured since it cost me my life I should get to keep at least one. And seeing as I wouldn't be alive if it weren't for you, I want you to have the other one.

NED

It's like those little half-heart pendants. Except with monkeys.

CHUCK

Thank you for brining me back to life.

The word "life" hangs there. Chuck stares at Ned a moment. The attraction is palpable, but is it love or fascination? Not even Chuck could tell you. Ned smiles.

NED

You're welcome.

Chuck takes her monkey and presses its face against Ned's monkey. Ned smiles bigger, returning the kiss with his monkey. He feels the weight of the plaster statue.

NED (CONT'D)

Oh, these are heavy.

Ned and Chuck look at each other, realizing...

Then: SMASH.

THE MONKEYS

Chuck smashes her monkey against Ned's. The plaster shatters revealing SOLID GOLD MONKEYS underneath.

NARRATOR

The monkeys' value was significantly more than sentimental. They were golden.

EXT. CHUCK'S AUNTS' HOUSE - DAY

The flowers in the yard are blooming and a fresh coat of paint has been applied to the house.

Lily and Vivian emerge and walk down the path to the gate, stepping out.

NARRATOR

The man who killed Chuck was killed by Aunt Lily. After collecting the 50,000 dollar reward, Vivian and Lily had a renewed interest in the world on the other side of their fence. They retreated from their retreat... and took the plunge.

INT. COUNTY CORONER'S OFFICE - MORGUE - DAYS LATER

Ned, Emerson and this time Chuck stand inside the morgue.

NARRATOR

Emerson Cod was plunged into something else altogether. A three-way split.

CHUCK

You know, this whole thing is sort of like reincarnation, but more immediate.

NED

Sort of.

CHUCK

Do you believe in reincarnation?

EMERSON

Hell, no. The planet's falling apart. Right now it's the children's problem. If we reincarnate, it's our problem.

The same coroner seen earlier in Act One approaches.

EMERSON (CONT'D)

Afternoon.

CORONER

You the toxicologist?

CHUCK

Yes.

The coroner eyes Ned.

CORONER

Aren't you the dog expert?

NED

No.

CORONER

Uh-huh.

OFF the coroner's look...

MOMENTS LATER

Ned opens the drawer and slides out a tray with a covered corpse.

NARRATOR

The facts were these: One Matthew Miltenberger, a PADI-certified SCUBA professional, 37 years, 6 hours and 45 minutes old, was found dead in the lobster tank of a franchise steak-and-lobster house. Before Mr. Miltenberger could get into the specifics of his demise...

Ned and Chuck stand over the corpse of a clean-cut man. Ned touches him and we see the FAMILIAR POP OF ELECTRICITY. His eyes open.

Ned sets the alarm on his watch. Matthew Miltenberger takes in his "now alive" status.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

...Chuck thought it would be nice to ask:

NED

Hi.

CHUCK

Do you have any last words or thoughts or requests?

Ned reacts, glancing at Chuck and loving her for asking.

CHUCK (CONT'D)

What?

NED

Just something I never thought to ask.

Ned stares at Chuck, his heart swelling. He reaches behind him and holds his hands behind his back.

NARRATOR

As he stared at her, he reached around his back and held his own hand, pretending he was holding hers.

Chuck winks at Ned and reaches behind her back.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And at that very moment, she was pretending to be holding his.

OFF Chuck and Ned holding their hands behind their backs... The morgue background MORPHS into a field of daisies.

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW