# THE GREAT STATE OF GEORGIA

a pilot

written by Jeff Greenstein and Jennifer Weiner

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#### COLD OPEN

#### SCENE A

INT. SAKS DRESSING ROOM - DAY

WE PAN DOWN A LINE OF STALL DOORS. THE FIRST OPENS AND A SKINNY, PRETTY GIRL EMERGES, MODELING HER TIGHT JEANS. THE SECOND OPENS AND HER ATTRACTIVE, SKINNY FRIEND COMES OUT, BUTTONING THE CUFF OF A CLINGY BLOUSE. THE THIRD OPENS AND YET ANOTHER GIRL STRUTS OUT, ADJUSTING A FITTED JACKET. AND THEN WE ARRIVE AT THE FOURTH DOOR... WHICH STAYS SHUT. AFTER A MOMENT, THE OTHER THREE GIRLS CROWD AROUND.

GIRL #1

Cassie? You coming?

GIRL #2

We were going up to Five to try on

dresses.

CASSIE (O.S.)

You guys go. I'll meet you down here

later.

#### GIRL #3

(BRIGHTLY) Okay!

THE THREE OF THEM RUN OFF.

INT. STALL - CONTINUOUS

INSIDE IS CASSIE, A BIG GIRL IN A SHAPELESS, FRUMPY OUTFIT. BESIDE HER ARE STACKS OF CLOTHES SHE'LL NEVER FIT INTO. SHE LOOKS AT A PAIR OF JEANS RUEFULLY AND TUGS AT THE HEM OF HER SHIRT.

SUDDENLY THE DOOR FLIES OPEN AND THE STALL IS FILLED WITH LIGHT. GEORGIA STANDS IN THE DOORWAY, BIG, CURVY, CONFIDENT AND GORGEOUS. CASSIE LOOKS UP, SURPRISED.

CASSIE

Hey, these are private.

## GEORGIA

Not for the girl with the employee key. Listen, I've got to leave for an audition in five minutes, which gives me just enough time to save your life.

DURING THE FOLLOWING, SHE HELPS CASSIE INTO A BELT, APPLIES SOME LIPSTICK, ETC.

## GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Way I see it, you got two choices: fit in or stand out. I suggest standing out. It's not always easy, but it's always interesting, and you get to eat dessert, not just rent it. For you, I recommend low-cut everything, heels as high as you can stand 'em, pencil skirts that hit right at the knee, and a smile that says "Everything in my world is delicious -how'd you like to be next?"

SHE TOSSES CASSIE AN ARMLOAD OF CLOTHES.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Try these on. I'll be out here if you

need me.

SHE CLOSES THE DOOR AND FLOUNCES AWAY, LEAVING CASSIE WONDERING WHAT JUST HIT HER.

CUT TO:

#### MAIN TITLES

#### ACT ONE

#### SCENE B

#### INT. CASTING OFFICE - HALLWAY - LATER

WE TRACK DOWN A LONG HALLWAY LINED WITH ACTRESSES SITTING IN FOLDING CHAIRS. GIRL AFTER GIRL AFTER GIRL, RANGING FROM SIZE ZERO ALL THE WAY UP TO SIZE TWO, EACH CLUTCHING HER SCRIPT PAGES, EACH PRIMPING NERVOUSLY.

ONE REAPPLIES HER LIPSTICK. THE ONE NEXT TO HER ADJUSTS HER WONDERBRA. THE ONE NEXT TO HER REFASTENS THE STRAP ON HER SANDAL. ANOTHER FUSSES WITH HER EARRING. ALL ARE DRESSED TO SHOW OFF THEIR BODIES -- FOR IT IS AN AUDITION, AFTER ALL -- BUT CLEARLY EACH IS WORRIED SHE DOESN'T QUITE MEASURE UP.

AND THEN WE LAND ON A GIRL WHO DOESN'T LOOK LIKE ANY OF THE OTHERS, WHO SPRAWLS IN HER CHAIR PERFECTLY AT EASE. YES, IT'S GEORGIA.

#### GEORGIA

Well, this is it. I have arrived.

NEXT TO HER IS YET ANOTHER SIZE TWO STUNNER -- BUT AGAIN, THIS IS A GIRL WHO DOESN'T FIT WITH ALL THE REST. SHE WEARS NO MAKEUP, HER HAIR'S A MESS, ALL HER CLOTHES ARE SOMEWHAT WRONG, AND HER NERVOUSNESS ISN'T BECAUSE OF AN AUDITION -- IT'S HER NATURAL STATE OF BEING. THIS IS JO.

JO

Great. Now can we leave? I think

someone in here's eating peanuts, and my

throat's closing up.

SHE MAKES SOME UNPLEASANT NASOPHARYNGEAL NOISES.

#### GEORGIA

Don't do that. We talked about that.

Just <u>behave</u>.

#### JO

I'm worried about work. We have to get back. I don't like lying to people.

## GEORGIA

Relax. I took care of all that.

JO

Yeah, I don't like how you "took care of

all that."

FLASH BACK TO:

#### SCENE C

## INT. SAKS PERFUME COUNTER - EARLIER THAT DAY

GEORGIA AND JO ARE STATIONED BY THE DOORS. AS CUSTOMERS ENTER, THE GIRLS APPROACH THEM WITH PERFUME SPRITZERS.

#### GEORGIA

Would you like to sample Curious by

Britney Spears? New fragrance? Curious?

JO

(TO ANOTHER CUSTOMER) Try Magic, by

Celine Dion? New fragrance? Magic?

## GEORGIA

(HISSES TO JO) We have to get out of here.

## JO

(HISSES BACK) We're working.

#### GEORGIA

I have an audition. And this is not what

I meant when I said I was coming to New

York to find my destiny.

ANOTHER SPRITZER PASSES BY.

#### SPRITZER

Try Destiny, by Elizabeth Arden? New fragrance? Destiny?

#### JO

Our break's at three. We can go then.

## GEORGIA

Someone else will have gotten my part by then. We have to go to Plan B.

JO

No no. Not Plan B.

## GEORGIA

Come on. You fake an allergy attack, and I'll say I have to take you to the emergency room.

JO

No.

## GEORGIA

Do you not understand how important this is? Trent Pierce is Broadway's top heterosexual casting director. And Lola in *Damn Yankees* is my signature role. When I did it back home, people cried -- and it was a comedy! We're going to Plan B!

## JO

I hate Plan B! I hated it when we did it to get you out of gym class, I hated it when we did it to get you out of bad blind dates... You're the actress -- why can't you pretend to suffer?

#### GEORGIA

Because as gifted as I am, I cannot act a rash. Now be a team player and start coughing!

JO

No.

## GEORGIA

Well, then you leave me no choice.

SHE GRABS A LARGE PERFUME BOTTLE OFF A NEARBY COUNTER AND SPRITZES JO FULL IN THE FACE. JO'S EYES GO WIDE.

JO

Okay, you have just killed me. You've killed me with Lovely by Sarah Jessica Parker. Soon my airway will close, and there will no longer be enough oxygen for me to choke out these final words.

## GEORGIA

Speaking as a professional actress, I am totally buying this.

JO

I'm dying!!

GEORGIA WAVES TO A SUPERVISOR.

#### GEORGIA

(RE JO) Emergency. We're just gonna run

to the hospital. Shouldn't be more than

an hour -- unless there are call-backs.

AS GEORGIA LEADS JO TOWARD THE DOOR, JO PULLS SOMETHING OUT OF HER PURSE.

JO

Epi-Pen -- please --

GEORGIA TAKES IT AND STABS JO IN THE THIGH.

GEORGIA

You are such a good friend.

CUT BACK TO:

#### SCENE D

INT. CASTING OFFICE - HALLWAY - CONTINUING

GEORGIA AND JO ARE AS WE LEFT THEM.

JO

Yeah, thanks again. I still can't feel

my fingertips.

#### GEORGIA

Oh, would you hush. (RUBBING JO'S

FINGERS) Plan B always has a few

lingering aftereffects. That doesn't

mean it's not a good plan.

RESET TO:

#### INT. CASTING OFFICE - SAME TIME

TRENT PIERCE, A THIRTYISH GUY IN JEANS AND A REALLY EXPENSIVE SHIRT, WATCHES AS AN ACTRESS READS WITH A FEMALE CASTING ASSOCIATE. AS MERCILESS AS SIMON COWELL BUT JUST AS PERCEPTIVE, TRENT IS BROADWAY'S PREMIER CASTING DIRECTOR.

#### ACTRESS

(FLIRTATIOUS) "Joe, would you like to

take Lola someplace tonight?"

#### FEMALE CASTING ASSOCIATE

(AS JOE, FLAT) "Gee, I sure would like

to, but you know what Mr. Van Buren would

say."

#### ACTRESS

"He'd say, 'You lucky boy --'"

#### TRENT

Okay, I'm going to stop you.

ACTRESS

But I'm --

#### TRENT

I know what you are.

HE STANDS UP AND WALKS IN A SLOW CIRCLE AROUND THE ACTRESS.

## TRENT (CONT'D)

You're desperate. You've been in the city, what, a year and a half, two years? Made the big move 'cause your boyfriend told you you look a lot like Anne Hathaway? Now all your tips from the steakhouse go to pay for improv classes, you sold your best boots to get that Rhode Island boob job... And in all that time, you've only gotten one call-back: Woman with Heavy Flow in a tampon ad. Well, your years of struggle are over, Miss (CHECKS NAME ON HEADSHOT) Mother'smailenname Namefromaromancenovel, because I'm about to say the words that will change your life forever: (LEANS IN; WHISPERS) You don't have it! Thanks for your time.

HE OPENS THE DOOR FOR HER. SHE LEAVES, SHAKEN. TRENT PICKS UP A PLASTIC CUP OF ICE WATER, SLURPS THE LAST OF IT THROUGH A STRAW AND EXHALES HARD.

TRENT (CONT'D)

Hah! She wasn't bad. Let's get in

another one.

HIS GIRLFRIEND NATALIA -- ALL LEGS, VAGUELY EUROPEAN -- ENTERS.

#### NATALIA

Can you take a little breakie? I brought

your Zone lunch.

SHE OFFERS A SMALL PAPER BAG. HE TAKES IT AND EMBRACES HER.

## TRENT

Thanks, babe. Ever since my morning egg wedge, these two ounces of chicken breast are all I can think about. (REACHES IN

BAG, OFFERS) You want my walnut?

#### NATALIA

Are you sure you can spare it?

## TRENT

I'm into denial. Keeps me sharp.

#### NATALIA

(REVERENT) You're amazing. (TAPS HIS

NOSE) Now don't work too late, okay?

#### TRENT

I won't.

HE GIVES HER A PERFUNCTORY GOODBYE KISS. SHE EXITS. TRENT KNOCKS BACK HIS MINUSCULE LUNCH AND, MOUTH FULL, ADDRESSES THE ROOM.

## TRENT (CONT'D)

Just gotta find a Lola. No biggie.

Devil's right-hand girl from hell who

makes strong men weak. Anybody got that?

HE EXITS THE OFFICE.

RESET TO:

## INT. CASTING OFFICE - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

JO'S ENGROSSED IN A BOOK. GEORGIA BLITHELY SINGS TO HERSELF:

## GEORGIA

Whatever Lo-la wants, Lo-la gets...

SHE NOTICES ANOTHER ACTRESS WATCHING HER.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Yeah, you heard me. Take a lesson.

That's how it's supposed to sound.

TRENT STALKS DOWN THE ROW OF GIRLS LIKE A HYENA STALKING ITS PREY. HE PAUSES IN FRONT OF JO, TUCKS A FINGER UNDER HER CHIN AND TILTS HER FACE UP SO HE CAN GET A LOOK AT IT. SHE BLANCHES.

TRENT

You, come with me. I need something

pretty to look at.

JO

But -- I, uh --

GEORGIA

(WHISPERS) It's okay. Go with it!

## TRENT

(FINGERING JO'S HAIR) What is this? Is

this a wig? Have you been in a fire?

HE LEADS JO TOWARD THE CASTING OFFICE. GEORGIA'S RIGHT BEHIND. RESET TO:

#### INT. CASTING OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

JO BEGINS BLABBING NERVOUSLY AS TRENT LEADS HER IN. GEORGIA FOLLOWS.

JO

Actually, I suffer from Uncombable Hair Syndrome, also known as *Pili trianguli et canaliculi*, a rare structural anomaly of the hair shaft. In some cases it's associated with certain neurologic or mental abnormalities; in my case it's associated with high IQ and social awkwardness. I'm currently awaiting entrance to the physics program at Columbia. (BURPS; THEN) There's the awkwardness. I burp when stared at. (RE GEORGIA) My friend is the actress.

SHE INDICATES GEORGIA, WHO STEPS FORWARD, SMILES, AND HANDS TRENT HER HEADSHOT.

#### GEORGIA

Georgia Chamberlain. Very nice to meet you. Where would you like me -- here?

## TRENT

Is this a joke?

#### GEORGIA

It most emphatically is not, my dear casting director. This is your lucky

## GEORGIA (CONT'D)

day. I've only been in New York a week, and now you have the chance to discover me. (RE HEADSHOT) As you can see, I've played Lola before.

#### TRENT

Where? At the all-you-can-eat dinner

theater in Patched Britches, Mississippi?

#### GEORGIA

In... college. I got excellent reviews.

## TRENT

How? Did your daddy own the paper?

## GEORGIA

Well, yes. And the theater. And the

college. But I was good.

## JO

(NODS) People cried.

## GEORGIA

Would you like to hear me read now?

#### TRENT

No.

#### GEORGIA

But I --

## TRENT

<u>No</u>. Get them out of here. (CALLS) Next! GEORGIA'S SHOCKED AS THE CASTING ASSOCIATE HERDS THEM OUT.

#### SCENE E

#### INT. TRENT'S CAR - LATER

TRENT GETS IN, DEPOSITING A LARGE STACK OF HEADSHOTS ON THE PASSENGER SEAT. HE SIGHS -- IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY. AS HE PUTS THE KEY IN THE IGNITION, HE HEARS FROM THE BACK SEAT:

#### GEORGIA (O.S.)

I always get what I aim for... (RISING

UP) And your heart 'n' soul is what I

came for...

#### TRENT

(STARTING TO TURN) Oh, for God's --

SUDDENLY JO POPS UP, PULLS HER TOTE BAG OVER HIS HEAD AND USES THE HANDLES TO YANK HIM BACK AGAINST THE HEADREST.

JO

#### (THREATENING) She's singing.

GEORGIA THROWS HER ARMS WIDE, PLAYING TO THE ENTIRE CAR.

GEORGIA

Give in... give in... give innnnnnnn!

BEAT. JO SLOWLY RELEASES TRENT AND REMOVES THE BAG FROM HIS HEAD. HE TURNS TO GEORGIA, WILD-HAIRED.

TRENT

You have a wonderful voice.

GEORGIA

Thank you.

## TRENT

...Just like every girl who reads for me. Every girl I saw today was the superstar sensation of whatever dinky burb she came from. Light of her mother's eye, lead in

TRENT (CONT'D)

every play ... But there's a difference

between those girls and you.

## GEORGIA

(BEAMS) There sure is.

## TRENT

<u>You're two of them</u>! Listen, honey: No one will ever buy you as a seductress. 'Cause in *Damn Yankees*, when they talk about the big seduction scene, they don't mean the size of the actress.

GEORGIA LOOKS AT HIM FOR A MOMENT, STUNG. THEN:

## GEORGIA

What do the girls do when you talk to them like that? Are they scared? Do they cry? Not me, sir. See, you may have a talent for casting, but I've got a talent for <u>talent</u>. And you ought to be ashamed of yourself, speaking to a lady that way. Oh, and it's not "honey." It's Georgia. Like the state. Capital G. Georgia.

SHE BLINKS BACK A TEAR AND CLIMBS OUT OF THE CAR. JO FOLLOWS. FADE OUT.

#### END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

#### SCENE H

#### EXT. NEW YORK STREET - LATER

GEORGIA AND JO WALK HOME. GEORGIA'S STILL DOWNCAST AND PREOCCUPIED.

JO

Are you okay? (NO RESPONSE) Come on, you haven't said a word for eight blocks. Does someone need a little cheering up? (SEEING A CART) Oo-ooh, roasted pistachios. Just the smell of them is making my lips swell, but I know they're your favorite.

#### GEORGIA

(SMALL) Not hungry.

## JO

Do you need to go buy some shoes?

Handbag? (WITH RELISH) Estate jewelry?

## GEORGIA

Leave me alone.

THEY WALK IN SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN JO NOTICES SOMETHING.

## JO

Oh, look. Big line outside the Virgin Megastore. Sign says Vanessa Williams is signing Ugly Betty DVDs. I'll bet there's a few gay men in <u>that</u> line. Oh, but you probably don't feel like being adored at a time like this. GEORGIA LOOKS UP. A LIGHT COMES INTO HER EYES. THE GIRLS CLASP HANDS AND RUN OFF.

RESET TO:

#### EXT. NEW YORK STREET - MINUTES LATER

THEY WALK BACK INTO FRAME. GEORGIA LAZILY TOSSES HER HAIR, A SMILE ON HER FACE, CLEARLY ON THE ROAD BACK TO FABULOUS.

## GEORGIA

Ahh, that was just what I needed. Thank

you so much. You always know what to do

for me.

JO

So you're okay now?

## GEORGIA

I'm getting there. Just... the way that

casting director talked to me... But I'm

not giving up. This isn't over.

THEY STOP AT A CROSSWALK. NEARBY IS A FIFTYISH PROFESSORIAL TYPE IN A TWEED JACKET. SEEING HIM, JO'S EYES GO WIDE. SHE HIDES HER FACE AND TRIES TO EDGE AWAY. GEORGIA NOTICES.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

What's going on?

JO

Nothing. Can we walk home a different

way? I've always wanted to see that big

red number 9 on West 57th.

GEORGIA

What is it? Is it that guy?

JO

No. Definitely not.

## GEORGIA

Do you like him? Does someone have a

li'l daddy thing goin'?

JO

No. And don't you dare --

## GEORGIA

(CALLING TO HIM) My friend likes you!

THE GUY TURNS.

## PROFESSOR

What are you -- (THEN, RECOGNIZING JO)

You're Jo Pye, aren't you?

JO

No. No, I'm not.

## GEORGIA

She is. And she likes you.

## PROFESSOR

(TO JO) I remember your picture. Your hair is very memorable.

#### GEORGIA

She has a syndrome. (ASIDE TO JO) Did you meet this guy on the Internet? In that game you play where you're, like, an elf with superpowers?

JO

Shhh!

## PROFESSOR

I thought you were coming in for your final interview. I'd hoped to have you in my seminar.

## GEORGIA

I'll bet you did. (ASIDE TO JO) Seminar's code for something dirty, right?

#### JO

(TO PROFESSOR) Yeah, I -- I'll be in

touch. We have to go.

SHE GRABS GEORGIA AND HUSTLES OFF. GEORGIA TEASES JO GLEEFULLY.

## GEORGIA

(SINGSONG) Jo's got a boy-friend!

JO

You've got this all wrong.

#### GEORGIA

He wants her in his semi-nar!

JO

Cut it out!

#### GEORGIA

(SINGING) There were nerds / On a hill / But I never heard them singing / No, I never heard them at all / 'Til there was the old guy with the seminar...

THEY WALK OFF.

#### SCENE J

## INT. GEORGIA AND JO'S APARTMENT - LATER

GEORGIA IS STILL SINGING AS SHE AND AN INCREASINGLY ANNOYED JO ENTER.

## GEORGIA

Why do nerds suddenly appear ...?

JO

Stop it. It's not funny now, and it

certainly wasn't funny in a crowded

subway car.

## GEORGIA

People threw money. What was I gonna do?

JO

I don't have a crush on that man, okay?

It's nothing like that.

## GEORGIA

Well, then what is it?

JO

He's the head of the physics department at Columbia. I applied to be in his graduate program, I was supposed to go in for an interview, and...

## GEORGIA

And what?

JO LOOKS UNEASY.

FLASH BACK TO:

#### SCENE K

## INT. COLUMBIA PHYSICS DEPARTMENT - A FEW DAYS AGO

AS IN OUR OPENING SCENE, WE TRACK DOWN A LONG HALLWAY LINED WITH PEOPLE IN FOLDING CHAIRS -- ONLY THIS TIME THEY'RE PHYSICS STUDENTS AWAITING THEIR INTERVIEWS. ALL SEEM SUPERINTELLIGENT, HIGH-POWERED AND CONFIDENT.

#### STUDENT #1

...Well, yeah, it is kinda cool having a

beta particle named after you...

STUDENT #2

... Truthfully, by the third time you're

published in the Journal of High Energy

Physics, you're a little over it...

#### STUDENT #3

... I almost died when I saw that

headline, 'cause the MacArthur people

hate when you call it a "Genius Grant"...

WE LAND ON JO, WHO'S BEEN LISTENING TO ALL THIS, BECOMING INCREASINGLY SELF-CONSCIOUS, ITCHY AND BLOTCHY. FINALLY, UNABLE TO STAND IT ANOTHER SECOND, SHE GETS UP AND RUNS OUT.

CUT BACK TO:

#### SCENE L

#### INT. GEORGIA AND JO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUING

GEORGIA AND JO ARE AS WE LEFT THEM -- JO SHEEPISH, GEORGIA SHOCKED.

## GEORGIA

That's it?? You just ran out of there?

JO

Yes! Everyone had these Ivy League degrees, and they've all been published, and their hair is clearly combable...

#### GEORGIA

So what? You're smarter than any of them.

#### JO

It's not about that. You know, when I was a kid, I saw a picture in a magazine. All these physicists with lab coats and thick glasses and dandruff. And I thought... these are my people! They talk the way I talk, they care about what I care about...

#### GEORGIA

Leptons?

#### JO

(TOUCHED) You remembered! So I swore to myself: someday I'll go on a quest to find those people, and they'll accept me as one of their own, and I will live

## JO (CONT'D)

among them. But... maybe I'm <u>not</u> one of them.

## GEORGIA

Are you kidding? The guy was begging you! He stopped you on the street! My God, you see what I have to do just to get a foot in the door -- the humiliation, the insults -- and here's a man who wants to roll out the red carpet for you, and you can't even do a fiveminute interview?

JO

I'm not like you, Georgia!

## GEORGIA

You're damn right you're not!

#### JO

I can't believe you're talking to me like this. I found you gays!

#### GEORGIA

Oh, congratulations! "Single Woman in Manhattan Finds Gays" -- stop the presses! For God's sake, Jo, this is why you came here. Yes, you're going to piggyback on my fame. Yes, you're the founding member of my entourage. Yes, you keep me real. But you have your own

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

goals, and damn it, you're going to

achieve them!

AUNT HONEY, A SOUTHERN GRANDE DAME IN A SILK ROBE AND FUR-TRIMMED MULES, EMERGES FROM THE BEDROOM.

## AUNT HONEY

What is all this shouting? Modulate, ladies, modulate.

#### GEORGIA

Aunt Honey. What are you doing here?

AUNT HONEY

Sorry to pop in like this. I would never want you girls to feel like your landlady doesn't respect your privacy. But I had an eventful evening, and I thought it best to give my gentleman caller a little time to himself.

JO

It's four o'clock in the afternoon.

#### AUNT HONEY

I know. The instructions on the package say this is right around the time you're supposed to call the emergency room. (POURING HERSELF A DRINK) Eh, twenty more minutes. How was your audition, dear?

## GEORGIA

Awful. The casting director was such a pill. Does it ever occur to these people that maybe eating carbs makes you nice?

## AUNT HONEY

Well, we'll have to go over his head. Let me call some of my Jewish friends. Ten minutes and I'll find the Bergstein who's bankrolling this thing.

#### GEORGIA

Thanks, but this is Trent Pierce we're talking about. He may be tough, but no one knows more about actors than he does. So if he says I'm never going to make it.... well, am I just fooling myself?

## JO

Oh, this is not a good color on you.

## AUNT HONEY

No, it is not. Now you listen to me, young lady. You are a Chamberlain, and Chamberlain women do not fall apart at the first sign of adversity. Did I fall apart when I dropped my baton in the Miss Georgia Peach pageant? Did your mama fall apart when your daddy didn't take her to the Magnolia Cotillion? Did your grandma fall apart when FDR went back to

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AUNT HONEY (CONT'D)

Eleanor? No, they did not! So wipe that self-pitying look off your face and think about the wonderful gifts God gave you!

Use them!

GEORGIA THINKS. THEN HER FACE BREAKS INTO A SMILE.

GEORGIA

You're right. You are absolutely right.

I know just what to do.

THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. GEORGIA CALLS TO JO.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Would you get that? I have to go change.

SHE EXITS TO THE BACK. JO CROSSES TO THE DOOR AND OPENS IT TO REVEAL LUKE -- HANDSOME, CLEAN-CUT, A SOUTHERN-BOY SUPERHERO. HE STRIDES IN, INTENSE AND SINGLE-MINDED -- FOR LUKE'S MIND CAN REALLY ONLY HOLD A SINGLE THOUGHT AT A TIME.

LUKE

Okay, where is she? Where's Georgia?

JO

She's --

LUKE

Never mind. Doesn't matter now, 'cause she's coming with me. Does she have bags? If I know my girl, she's got lots of bags. Let's get 'em packed.

AUNT HONEY

I really don't think she's going to go home with you, Luke.

LUKE

Oh, she will. She just doesn't know it yet. I don't know how she talked me into letting her leave --

JO

I think she got you drunk.

#### LUKE

You may be on to something. But it was a mistake, and I'm here to undo it. 'Cause when two people belong together, it's like a force of nature. It's elemental. And it's against the laws of God and man for anyone to try and tear those two people apart. Do you understand what I'm saying?

HE LEANS VERY CLOSE TO JO AND STARES AT HER, FIRE IN HIS EYES. SHE  $\underline{\mathrm{BURPS}}$  .

LUKE (CONT'D)

Sorry. I forgot you do that.

ON THIS, GEORGIA COMES OUT OF HER BEDROOM IN SOMETHING BREATHTAKINGLY LOW-CUT.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Good. You're dressed for travel. Let's

go.

## GEORGIA

Luke, my God. What are you doing in the

city?

## LUKE

Well, I'll tell you, Georgia. When two people belong together, it's like a force of nature --

## JO

(TO GEORGIA) He wants to take you home.

## LUKE

Can I finish my "force of nature" speech,

please? I worked a long time.

## GEORGIA

Luke, we already did this. We said goodbye.

## LUKE

Well, I don't accept it. Did you get it

in writing? No.

GEORGIA PULLS A SCRAWLED-ON BAR NAPKIN OUT OF HER PURSE.

## LUKE (CONT'D)

I was drunk. That doesn't even look like my signature. Come on, don't our three years together mean anything to you?

#### GEORGIA

More like two and a quarter -- or have you conveniently forgotten "Coach says I can't have sex during football season"?

#### LUKE

Okay, first of all, we won State. And second -- I love you.

BEAT. GEORGIA SOFTENS, PUTS A HAND ON HIS SHOULDER.

## GEORGIA

Aw, sugar... I have to do this. The last thing my mother ever said to me was, "You go to that city, and you make a big star of yourself." And I am not going to cross my mama.

#### LUKE

But you don't belong here. HEARING THIS, GEORGIA TAKES A BEAT.

#### GEORGIA

You know what? You're the second guy to say that to me today, and you're the second guy who's wrong. Now, I appreciate you making the trip, but I'm afraid I'm going to have to disappoint you. Kindly excuse me.

SHE EXITS TO THE HALL. JO CHASES AFTER.

RESET TO:

## INT. GEORGIA AND JO'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS JO PULLS GEORGIA BACK.

#### JO

What are you doing? Don't leave me alone

with him. Where are you going?

#### GEORGIA

To see Trent.

JO

## That horrible casting director?

## GEORGIA

Oh, he wasn't that bad. He only plays at being mean. Maybe he just needs his mind opened a little.

SHE UNBUTTONS A BUTTON.

JO

Hey, come on. Don't do anything crazy.

## GEORGIA

I'm just going to bring him some dinner.

Poor boy is starving.

SHE UNBUTTONS ANOTHER BUTTON.

JO

What, do you have dinner in your bra?

## GEORGIA

Enough for two men. (THEN) Take care of

Luke, willya? I gotta go.

SHE EXITS. JO SIGHS AND HEADS BACK INSIDE.

RESET TO:

#### INT. GEORGIA AND JO'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

LUKE IS NOW ALONE IN THE APARTMENT. HE SITS ON THE COUCH, DESPONDENT -- IT WASN'T SUPPOSED TO BE THIS HARD. JO EDGES TOWARD HIM.

JO

Are you okay? Can I get you anything?

```
LUKE
```

Can you get me my girl back? Can you do that?

JO

I was thinking like some juice.

## LUKE

You don't understand. I'm a wreck. I can't sleep, I can't eat... My golf game's falling apart... I just... you're looking at a broken man.

HE GAZES AT JO. SHE IS TOTALLY, TOTALLY IN LOVE WITH HIM.

JO

("I LOVE YOU") I like your watch. Shiny.

## LUKE

What am I gonna do? What am I gonna do? Well, I'm not going back, I'll tell you that. I'm not going back 'til I can take my girl with me.

JO

(RE WATCH) It's a nice... strap, too.

#### LUKE

(ON A ROLL) I'm just gonna stay in this horrible, godforsaken place, where it's cold, and dirty, and everyone talks too fast... Do you know I saw a whole line

LUKE (CONT'D)

of gays out on the street today? Whole

line, just right there on the street.

JO

Sure you don't want some juice?

LUKE

(GETTING UP) You tell Georgia what I

said. Tell her, please, Jo. She listens

to you.

JO

(WEAKLY) Okay...

LUKE EXITS. JO STARES AFTER HIM FOR A MOMENT. THEN AUNT HONEY EMERGES FROM THE KITCHEN WITH A FRESH DRINK IN HER HAND.

## AUNT HONEY

You love that boy, don't you?

JO

I -- what? No! No, I do not.

AUNT HONEY

Oh, please, girl. I've known you since you were six. When you look at him, you get that same look in your eye you get when *Nova* comes on. You love him.

JO

That's impossible. He's Georgia's

boyfriend.

## AUNT HONEY

Lots of men out there are someone's boyfriend. You know what we call them?

(MORE)

AUNT HONEY (CONT'D)

Low-hangin' fruit. Besides, Georgia didn't look all that taken with him just now. I say pick it, and <u>devour</u> it.

JO

I -- ghee --

HER STAMMERING DEVOLVES INTO A SERIES OF NASOPHARYNGEAL NOISES.

## AUNT HONEY

He's vulnerable. You heard him -- he's a broken man. This is the moment when a Southern gal makes her living.

JO

I don't want to hear this. There will be no picking, there will be no devouring. Luke is a friend, nothing more. My life is perfectly full without him. Now if you'll excuse me, there's an elf with superpowers who's needed at the Council of Elrond.

SHE EXITS TO THE BACK.

CUT TO:

#### SCENE M

#### INT. TRENT'S APARTMENT - LATER - NIGHT

TRENT SITS ON THE FLOOR, DOZENS OF HEADSHOTS SPREAD OUT AROUND HIM. HE PICKS ONE UP, STUDIES IT -- THEN SCOWLS AND TOSSES IT ASIDE. CLEARLY, HE HASN'T FOUND HIS LOLA YET.

THERE'S A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. TRENT OPENS IT TO FIND GEORGIA, BEAMING, A PICNIC BASKET LOOPED OVER HER ARM.

## GEORGIA

Hey there! Hope you haven't eaten yet.

SHE BREEZES IN, TRAMPLING ON THE OTHER GIRLS' HEADSHOTS.

#### TRENT

Oh, man, again? How'd you find out where

I live?

## GEORGIA

Your assistant. (CONSPIRATORIAL) The

gays love me.

#### TRENT

That woman's a man? (THEN) Look, we have security in this building. I know because I buy a large black man a bottle of expensive Scotch every Christmas. So unless you want me to pick up that phone...

#### GEORGIA

Relax, I don't have a gun. I have a picnic. SHE SETS THE BASKET ON THE TABLE AND BEGINS UNPACKING IT.

## GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Hard-workin' man like you deserves a nice dinner, and I found this adorable

## GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Southern-style restaurant right in my neighborhood. We've got fried chicken, biscuits, sausage gravy...

#### TRENT

Great, NASCAR in a bag. I'm just going to throw all that away.

## GEORGIA

I wish you wouldn't. My mama always taught me, never waste food.

#### TRENT

(EYEING HER) Yes, I can see that.

## GEORGIA

Ooh, snap. I'll bet the gays love you,

too. (THEN) I'll just set a place.

SHE OPENS A CONTAINER AND INHALES DEEPLY.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Mmm, that smells good. (WAVING AROMA

TOWARD TRENT) Doesn't that smell good?

TRENT

(WEAKENING) It's okay...

## GEORGIA

Let me fetch some proper silverware.

AS SHE MOVES TO THE KITCHEN, SHE PASSES SEVERAL FRAMED PICTURES ON THE SIDEBOARD AND PICKS ONE UP.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Oh, is this your girlfriend? She's pretty. That bikini's kind of wearing

# GEORGIA (CONT'D)

<u>her</u>, but I'm sure she's got a lovely personality. Have you ever felt a real breast before?

#### TRENT

What?

# GEORGIA

I'm sorry, never mind. Sometimes I say inappropriate things when I'm hungry, and that aroma is driving me wild. (RE BISCUIT) Mind if I take the teensiest

little nibble?

#### TRENT

Go ahead.

#### GEORGIA

(NIBBLING) Mmm, that is good. I am

sorry, I'm just going to have to eat this

whole thing.

SHE EASES THE BISCUIT INTO A BOWL OF GRAVY, BRINGS IT TO HER LIPS AND TAKES A LINGERING BITE. TRENT WATCHES HER RAPTLY. TO A STARVING MAN, THIS IS LIKE PORN.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

(OFFERING) You want a taste?

### TRENT

I... I can't.

SHE MOVES TOWARD HIM, OFFERING THE BISCUIT.

# GEORGIA

Come on. When was the last time you had

a proper meal? (SULTRY) Eat.

# TRENT

No -- You don't understand...

# GEORGIA

I do understand, baby. Better than

anyone. And one biscuit isn't going to

turn you back into that butterball you

were in third grade.

TRENT MELTS. NO ONE HAS EVER READ HIM SO COMPLETELY.

TRENT

How did you...?

### GEORGIA

(FINGER TO HIS LIPS) Shhh.

THEY ARE NOW VERY CLOSE, TRENT ACUTELY AWARE OF HER BISCUIT... AND HER BISCUITS. HE FIGHTS FOR CONTROL.

TRENT

(BREATHLESS) No... You...

HE WATCHES, HYPNOTIZED, AS GEORGIA DIPS AGAIN AND TAKES ANOTHER BITE. A BIT OF GRAVY DRIPS ON HER WRIST. SHE LICKS IT OFF, FEELING HIS EYES ON HER.

TRENT (CONT'D)

(UTTERLY POSSESSED) Now the chicken.

GEORGIA SMILES, PICKS UP THE PLATE AND TAKES TRENT'S HAND.

# GEORGIA

Let's finish this in the bedroom.

SHE LEADS HIM IN, A WICKED GLINT IN HER EYE.

FADE OUT.

#### END OF ACT TWO

# ACT THREE

#### SCENE P

#### INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - LATER

THE BEDCLOTHES ARE TANGLED AND ASKEW; PILLOWS HAVE BEEN THROWN CARELESSLY ASIDE. TRENT COMES UP FROM UNDER THE COVERS, OUT OF BREATH, RACKED WITH HORROR AND PANIC.

### TRENT

Oh my god!!

GEORGIA COMES UP FROM UNDER THE COVERS, SERENE AND QUITE PLEASED WITH HERSELF.

### GEORGIA

Now do you buy me as a seductress?

TRENT

How did I -- What just happened??

### GEORGIA

Well, do you really want me to run it

down? 'Cause it gets a little filthy.

#### TRENT

It was the chicken! It made me do stuff

I didn't wanna do!

#### GEORGIA

That didn't stop you from rubbing my boobies like you were trying to make a genie appear. (SETTLING BACK) You're fun. I like us as a couple.

### TRENT

We are not a couple! I have a girlfriend!

Eh, for now. But take it from me: (RE HER BODY) Once you go round, you never come down.

# TRENT

Oh my god --

# GEORGIA

Yes, you keep saying that.

# TRENT

-- what time is it?

### GEORGIA

Candied yam time?

# TRENT

No, it is not "candied yam time"! It's nine-thirty. Natalia's going to be home any minute!

# GEORGIA

Shall <u>I</u> tell her about us?

### TRENT

(SNIFFS HIS CHEST) Oh, no, I smell like you! And -- and sausage gravy! I'm like a tablecloth in a cheap Southern diner!

# GEORGIA

Is this a bad time to ask when I can read for the part of Lola?

TRENT

What??

I don't want any special treatment 'cause I'm your girlfriend. I just want the same fair hearing you'd give any other actress.

## TRENT

(SPUTTERING) I -- You're just -- I

have to shower!!

# GEORGIA

Do you want some company?

SHE COYLY STARTS TO SLIDE THE SHEET DOWN.

TRENT

No! Do not show me those again! I can't

be responsible for what I might do!

HE GATHERS THE BEDCLOTHES AROUND HIM AND WOBBLES OUT. GEORGIA FLUFFS HER HAIR AND BEAMS AT A JOB WELL DONE.

A MOMENT LATER, THE INTERCOM <u>BUZZES</u>. GEORGIA LOOKS AROUND AND FINDS THE CALL BUTTON.

# GEORGIA

(HUSKILY) Trent's place.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TRENT'S APARTMENT - LOBBY - SAME TIME

JO IS THERE, TAPPING HER FOOT URGENTLY.

JO

Georgia! Thank God.

### GEORGIA

Jo? What do you want?

JO

I want you to give Luke another chance. Everything I know about love I know from watching you guys. And if you could've heard the way he talked about you... Don't throw that away. Please.

# GEORGIA

Yes, Luke's great, but you're talking about the past. We're in the future now. Black presidents, laser hair removal. Wake up.

JO

You know how you always want me to tell you when you're acting terminally narcissistic? You're doing it now. You're doing it a <u>lot</u>. And you -- you're not even there, are you? You're gone. JO CLICKS OFF. THEN HEARS A VOICE OVER HER SHOULDER:

### NATALIA

Excuse me. Why were you calling my boyfriend's apartment?

JO SLOWLY TURNS TO FACE NATALIA, TRYING TO PLAY IT COOL.

### JO

Well, hello there... tall... scary...

beautiful lady... legs.

# NATALIA

You were calling my boyfriend. Why?

JO

Why? 'Cause I -- am -- fumigating! I am an exterminator -- and you guys have a huge ant problem up there!

# NATALIA

(NARROWS HER EYES) I've seen you before. You were at that audition today, weren't you?

JO

Well, yes. But I wasn't auditioning, I was -- again, fumigating! I'm starting to see a pattern here. Maybe this boyfriend of yours is -- is an ant carrier! That is a known thing!

NATALIA JUST STARES AT HER. JO BURPS TWICE.

# NATALIA

Why don't I believe you?

### JO

Your suspicious and untrusting nature?

NATALIA TURNS AND HEADS FOR THE ELEVATOR.

#### NATALIA

Let's see what Trent has to say about

# this.

SHE PUSHES A BUTTON -- AND THE DOORS CLOSE IN JO'S FACE. JO LOOKS AROUND FOR A BEAT, PANICKED, THEN DASHES TO THE STAIRWELL.

CUT TO:

### SCENE S

### INT. TRENT'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

WE FOLLOW NATALIA TO TRENT'S DOOR... WHERE JO STANDS, OUT OF BREATH, HAVING JUST SPRINTED UP FIVE FLIGHTS TO BEAT HER.

JO

(PANTING; FAUX CASUAL) Hi.

# NATALIA

Get out of my way.

JO

Look, you really don't want to go in

there. It's like Ant Armageddon.

Twisted ant bodies lying around... We

had to burn the village in order to save

it. It's an ugly scene.

NATALIA LOOKS AT HER FOR A BEAT, THEN LEANS IN MENACINGLY.

## NATALIA

Now you listen to me. I date a casting director. You think I haven't met a million girls who'll do anything to get a part?

CUT TO:

#### INT. TRENT'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

WE HEAR THE SHOWER RUNNING. GEORGIA STANDS OUTSIDE THE BATHROOM DOOR AND CALLS IN:

# GEORGIA

Honey? You want me to soap your back?

TRENT (O.S.)

Get out!!!

#### CUT BACK TO:

INT. TRENT'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - CONTINUING

NATALIA AND JO ARE AS WE LEFT THEM.

# NATALIA

I know that because you're gorgeous, you think you own the world --

JO

(EYES WIDE) No, I don't -- I really

don't --

# NATALIA

-- but if you think you're going to take Trent away from me... I will wreck you. I can ruin people. I've done it.

JO

You've got it all wrong! I'm not an

actress! I don't want a part! It hurts

me even being looked at!

NATALIA SLAPS HER. THEN TURNS AND RINGS THE DOORBELL.

JO (CONT'D)

Ow! That hurt, too!

A MOMENT LATER, TRENT AND GEORGIA ANSWER THE DOOR, FULLY DRESSED, MID-CONVERSATION, VERY COOL AND BUSINESSLIKE.

TRENT

...And hey, thanks for coming tonight. I appreciate you making time in your schedule.

(EQUALLY COOL) That's okay. No trouble at all.

# TRENT

(TO NATALIA) Hey, babe. Come on in. There's chicken on the counter.

### NATALIA

What's going on here??

# TRENT

This is Georgia. She's an actress. She flew in this morning for an audition, I didn't get to her today, so she had to come to the apartment.

## JO

Which was refreshingly ant-free, thanks to me.

A BEAT AS NATALIA CONSIDERS THIS.

### NATALIA

Oh. Well, I hope she was good.

# TRENT

She was fantastic.

### GEORGIA

I was fantastic.

SHE SMILES. JO TRIES TO MASK HER HORROR.

### TRENT

May I walk you to the elevator, Miss Chamberlain?

Thank you.

AS THEY WALK DOWN THE HALL, GEORGIA LEANS IN TO TRENT.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

That was a nice thing you said.

TRENT

(UNDER HIS BREATH) Don't ever call me

again.

# GEORGIA

Honey, I think you're gonna be calling

<u>me</u>.

SHE SLYLY FLASHES HIM A LITTLE CLEAVAGE. HIS BREATH CATCHES IN HIS THROAT. GEORGIA SMILES AND STEPS ONTO THE ELEVATOR.

MEANWHILE, NATALIA'S STILL STARING AT JO, PUZZLED. JO STOMPS ON HER FOOT --

JO

Ant.

-- AND RUNS TO JOIN GEORGIA ON THE ELEVATOR. GEORGIA GIVES TRENT A SWEET LITTLE WAVE AS THE DOORS CLOSE.

FADE OUT.

# END OF ACT THREE

### ACT FOUR

#### SCENE T

### INT. SAKS PERFUME COUNTER - THE NEXT MORNING

AS JO AND GEORGIA REFILL THEIR SPRITZERS FOR THE MORNING'S WORK, GEORGIA TALKS ON HER CELL PHONE.

### GEORGIA

...Eleven-thirty? That's great. We can have lunch after. ... Oh, you're still doing that Zone nonsense? Well, I'll just pack a little something. You seem to get hungry when I'm around.

SHE HANGS UP AND TURNS TO JO, BEAMING.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Got the audition. And so the new day begins as the prior day ended -- in triumph.

JO

Interesting. Wanna hear about <u>my</u> day? It started when I was poisoned by a friend, and ended when I was slapped by a supermodel.

# GEORGIA

Hey, you met the old guy. The old guy with the seminar. (SINGS) The nerds are singing / For Jo and Dr. Physics...

JO

Don't remind me.

When are you going in for that interview? The universe is waiting for you to understand it. That's kind of a big deal.

### JO

(SIGHS) I don't know... Those people weren't just smart, they were frighteningly smart. (COWED) I think they may have been nerds. What if I'm not good enough?

# GEORGIA

Hey, Eeyore. Hey, li'l Eeyore. How about some self-confidence? I mean, you don't have to go to terminally narcissistic, but... Let my journey inspire you. We can't just sit around and wait for our dreams to come true. We have to chase them. We have to chase 'em, and hunt 'em down, and tie 'em to the bedposts with their bathrobe belts, and make love to 'em three times in a row until they're whimpering and screaming our names...

# JO

Really, less details about the evening...

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# GEORGIA

You go to that guy, and you say, "I'm Jo, I'm here, and I'm what you want." And if he doesn't listen, you just stay in that

room with him 'til he changes his mind.

JO CONSIDERS THIS FOR A MOMENT. THEN HER EYES NARROW WITH RESOLVE.

JO

You're right. I'm gonna do it. Cover

for me, okay?

SHE THRUSTS HER SPRITZER BOTTLE INTO GEORGIA'S HAND AND RUNS OUT. GEORGIA CALLS AFTER:

# GEORGIA

Well, I didn't mean <u>now</u>...

BUT JO'S GONE. GEORGIA RETURNS TO HER SPRITZING STATION.

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

(TO A CUSTOMER) Try Fancy, by Jessica

Simpson? New fragrance? Fancy?

CUT TO:

#### SCENE V

### EXT. NEW YORK STREET - LATER

A STEELY-EYED JO WALKS PURPOSEFULLY DOWN THE STREET.

CUT TO:

#### INT. SUBWAY - LATER

JO JUMPS ONTO A SUBWAY CAR JUST AHEAD OF THE CLOSING DOORS. AS THE TRAIN PULLS AWAY, HER JAW IS SET WITH DETERMINATION.

CUT TO:

# EXT. ANOTHER NEW YORK STREET - LATER

STRIDING ALONG THE SIDEWALK, JO QUICKENS HER PACE ...

CUT TO:

### INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATER

JO RUNS UP THE STEPS... APPROACHES A DOOR... RINGS THE BELL... THE DOOR OPENS --

-- AND IT'S LUKE.

LUKE

# Hey, Jo. What's up?

A LONG BEAT AS JO STARES AT HIM -- THIS IS THE MOMENT SHE'S BEEN WAITING FOR --

BLACKOUT.

# END OF SHOW