UNTITLED COUPLES PROJECT

“Pilot”

Written by

Shana Goldberg-Meehan
FADE IN:

INT. TAXICAB - NIGHT (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, MADDIE)

A COUPLE HOPS IN -- MADDIE AND BEN -- IN THEIR THIRTIES, ATTRACTIVE, STYLISH, AND CLEARLY IN LOVE.

BEN

(TO CABBIE) India's Grill on 2nd Ave. at 6th. And can you crank up the heat? She gets a little cold.

MADDIE

And I'm sorry but could you turn off the sports radio? They'll say something bad about the Giants and then he'll have to call in and yell at "Bill from Trenton".

BEN

(OPEN WOUND) They just started so strong...

MADDIE

(SYMPATHETIC) I know, baby, I know.

CHYRON: MADDIE AND BEN -- TOGETHER NINE YEARS.
INT. ANOTHER TAXICAB -- SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(CASEY, MIA)

ANOTHER COUPLE IS IN THE BACK SEAT -- MIA (20'S, CHIC, STRONG-WILLED) AND CASEY (20'S, LAID BACK, BOYISH).

MIA

(TO CABBIE) India's Grill on 2nd.

CASEY

Oh, we're having Indian?

MIA

Yeah, is that okay?

CASEY

It's just there's this spice that's in every Indian dish that makes me --

MIA

("I'M WITH YOU") Overeat?

CASEY

Go into anaphylactic shock.

CHYRON: MIA AND CASEY -- TOGETHER SEVEN AND A HALF WEEKS.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXICAB - SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, MADDIE)

MADDIE

My sister's crazy about this guy -- says he's totally different from guys she's dated before.

BEN

I got a real good feeling about him. He's a keeper.
MADDIE
You're just sick of being saddled with her every time we go out.

BEN
Do you know how hard it is to try and buy concert tickets for three people? It can't be done!

MADDIE
I know you want this to work but don't come on too strong and scare him off. Do you think you can play it cool?

BEN
How do you think I got you?

MADDIE
You hounded me day and night until I agreed to go out with you.

BEN
(WINKS) But in a cool way.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER TAXICAB -- SAME TIME (NIGHT 1) (CASEY, MIA)

CASEY
I know how close you are with your sister. I hope she likes me.

MIA
Oh, just be your normal, wonderful self. It's how you got me.
CASEY
(A BIT SURPRISED) Did I get you?

MIA
(SMILES) Big time.

HE LEANS IN TO KISS HER.

CUT TO:

INT. TAXICAB - SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, MADDIE)

MADDIE
I really feel for Mia. Those awkward first few weeks when you're hoping you've found someone, but you're terrified they'll turn out to be a creep, and you can't relax because you want to seem perfect. Nothing but worry and stress.

BEN
I'm so happy to be done with that. New relationships suck.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER TAXICAB -- SAME TIME (NIGHT 1)
(CASEY, MIA)

MIA AND CASEY ARE NOW PASSIONATELY MAKING OUT.

CASEY
Complicated bras suck.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER
ACT ONE

SCENE B

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NIGHT 1)
(BEN, CASEY, MADDIE, MIA, WAITRESS)

MADDIE AND BEN CHECK IN WITH A WAITRESS.

MADDIE

Hi, reservation for four, under the name Coles for eight o'clock?

WAITRESS

The rest of your party is at the bar. The table will be ready in a few minutes, Mrs. Coles.

MADDIE

Oh. (RE: BEN) No, he's Mr. Coles, but I'm not Mrs. Coles. We're not married.

WAITRESS

(MORTIFIED) Oh my God, so sorry.

MADDIE

(GENUINE) No, no, don't be.

THE WAITRESS MAKES A FACE, STILL WORRIED SHE'S STEPPED IN SOMETHING.
MADDIE (cont'd)
For real. There's no need for the "sad eyes". Neither of us wants to be married. But we love each other, we're committed, very happy. Let me see your eyes again.

THE WAITRESS LOOKS AT HER.

MADDIE (cont'd)
Still sad. Show me your "happy for the committed couple who made a choice" eyes.

WAITRESS
(AWKWARD) It will just be a minute.

THE WAITRESS MOVES OFF.

BEN
That'll teach her for not having a table ready.

MADDIE
(OFF CELL PHONE) I just got a text from Mia. (READS TEXT) "Here. Where R U?" Why does that need to be texted? We said we'd meet at 8. I don't get this generation's need for constant communication.

BEN
You're only six years older.
MADDIE
But it's a big six years. None of
the famous people her age wear
underwear.

THEY MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE BAR.

MADDIE (cont'd)
Okay, so remember you're gonna be
cool and for my part, I'm not gonna
say anything critical.

BEN
(PULLED UP) You're not? Then what
are you gonna say?

MADDIE
I will admit that in the past I
have been guilty of... overstating
my opinion as it relates to my little
sister's choices. But I have decided
that I am going to be supportive.

BEN
("YEAH, RIGHT") Great. Then I am
going to be a black woman.

MADDIE
(LOOKS AROUND) I don't see them.
Let's just grab this booth.

THEY SIT ON ONE SIDE OF A BOOTH. AFTER A BEAT, A COUPLE
POPS UPS FROM UNDERNEATH THE TABLE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF
THE BOOTH, MAKING OUT AND OBLIVIOUS. IT IS CASEY AND
MIA.
MADDIE (cont'd)

(SCANDALIZED) Mia!

MIA AND CASEY BREAK APART, A LITTLE EMBARRASSED.

MADDIE (cont'd)

Um, hello? This is a public place!

MIA

You two, coatroom, cousin Beth's wedding? Your impressionable baby sister walked in?

MADDIE

You were twenty-three.

MIA

Our brains are like sponges at that age. (DEEP BREATH) Okay, I'd like you to meet -- (NOTICES CASEY HAS LIPSTICK ON HIS NECK) after I give him a quick bath.

SHE DABS A NAPKIN IN HER DRINK AND CLEANS HIM UP.

MIA (cont'd)

This is Casey! This is Ben and my sister, Maddie.

EVERYONE SHAKES.

CASEY


BEN LAUGHS, EMBARRASSED AND FLATTERED.
BEN
("AW, SHUCKS") Tough? I'm not
tough. I mean I work out a little.
(TO MIA) I love this guy.

MADDIE
(TO BEN, SOTTO) Way to play it
cool.

BEN PULLS HIMSELF TOGETHER. THE WAITRESS APPROACHES
WITH MENUS.

WAITRESS
Your table is ready. Right this
way... people whose situation is
very, very good.

THE WAITRESS STARTS TO LEAD THEM AWAY. MIA AND CASEY
FOLLOW. MADDIE HOLDS BEN BACK.

MADDIE
(QUICKLY, RE: CASEY) His hair's
too long, way too much cologne, and
that leather bracelet? (EXHALES,
RELIEVED) Okay, just had to get
that out.

THEY FOLLOW THE WAITRESS AND WE...

CUT TO:
SCENE C

INT. MADDIE'S LAW OFFICE - NEXT DAY (DAY 2)
(MADDIE, CLIENT, ASSISTANT, CASEY)

WE ARE IN MADDIE'S FANCY CORPORATE OFFICE. SHE IS USHERING A CLIENT OUT THE DOOR.

MADDIE

It's complicated but I think this may be the best will I've ever drawn up. I think you'll be very happy when you drop dead.

THE CLIENT EXITS. MADDIE'S ASSISTANT POPS HER HEAD IN.

ASSISTANT

Your sister is on the phone.

MADDIE

(PICKS UP PHONE) Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. RETAIL STORE -- CONTINUOUS
(MIA, SALESWOMAN)

MIA

Hey, I'm so busy with work but I'm dying to know -- what did you think?

MADDIE

Oh my God! Loved him! Four and a half stars!
MIA

Why not five stars?

MADDIE

(FIRM) Five stars is reserved for Prince William. (THEN) I'll be honest: I went in trying not to be critical, which was a little difficult given certain leather wrist accessories --

MIA

(KNOWS ALL TOO WELL) Please, that Wonder Woman piece of crap is so getting thrown out.

MADDIE

But then I really got him. I like him. Ben likes him too.

MIA

That I got.

WE SEE MIA IN A WIDER SHOT. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT IS SHE IN FACT SHOPPING. AN UPBEAT SALESWOMAN APPROACHES, CARRYING A DRESS.

SALESWOMAN

Found your size!

MADDIE

Where are you? You said you were working!

MIA

I telecommute, Maddie. I can work from anywhere.
MADDIE

Three years of law school, six years trying to make partner and yet you get paid while you shop -- there is no justice.

MIA

Look, if you didn't want to be tied to a desk you should have invented something like me.

MADDIE

(DRIVES HER CRAZY) You didn't invent anything! You and your friends just copied the idea of Evite!

MIA

(CORRECTS HER, BY ROte) Paper Free Post features stylish custom online stationery and offers a hip alternative to first generation invite websites.

SALESWOMAN

Ooo, that sounds nice.

MIA

Thank you. It is. (THEN, INTO PHONE) I'm so happy you like Casey. (MORE)
MIA (cont'd)
I feel much better now that I've
gotten your "sister stamp of
approval". You'd know how much
that meant if you ever asked my
opinion about relationship stuff.

MADDIE
Mia, you were fifteen when I started
dating Ben. I asked your opinion,
you were impressed that he could
drive at night. (THEN) But really,
really happy for you. Casey seems
great.

MIA
And you normally think the guys I
date are crazy!

MADDIE
He doesn't seem crazy at all.

JUST THEN CASEY POKES HIS HEAD IN. MADDIE'S ASSISTANT
GESTURES, "SHOULD I LET HIM IN?"

MADDIE (cont'd)
(SHOCKED) Oh my God!

CASEY GESTURES THAT SHE SHOULDN'T SAY HE'S THERE.

MIA
What?

MADDIE
(COVERING)
(MORE)
MADDIE (cont'd)

Oh my God, it's 11:34 and nothing
happened. Something usually happens
at this time but it didn't. Weird,
huh? Love ya bye!

SHE HANGS UP AND WAVES CASEY IN. END INTERCUT.

CASEY

Nice work -- you could get a job
with the CIA.

MADDIE

Hi!

MADDIE GOES TO GREET CASEY. THERE'S AN AWKWARD BEAT
WHERE THEY AREN'T SURE WHETHER TO SHAKE HANDS OR KISS.
THEY SETTLE FOR A HALF-HUG.

CASEY

Sorry about that. I didn't want
anyone to know I was here. I, uh,
want your advice about Mia. See, I
want to propose.

MADDIE

Huh. Guess you are crazy.

AND WE...

CUT TO:
SCENE D

INT. MADDIE AND BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT 2)  
(BEN, MADDIE, MIA, CASEY)

THEIR LOFT IS AN INVITING, LIGHT-FILLED SPACE WITH A SMALL TERRACE. BEN'S HAVING A BEER. MADDIE ENTERS.

BEN

Hey babe, how was your day?

MADDIE

Well, let's see.... I just got back from ring shopping with Casey.

BEN

Is that to distract from the bracelet?

MADDIE

Engagement ring shopping. He came to my office and wanted my advice on the best way to propose.

BEN

What?! 

MADDIE

I know! It's crazy right?!

BEN

Getting married after two months?

What is she, famous?
MADDIE
It makes no sense -- so impulsive.
(SHAKES HEAD) These kids today.

BEN
"These kids today"? You should go on facebook and update your status to "old".

MADDIE
I know I said I'd just be supportive, but I have to step in.

BEN
I don't know... when you butt in... it only makes her do the opposite. Remember when she was in college and you told her not to take that Spanish class, what did she do?

MADDIE
Major in Spanish.

BEN
And?

MADDIE
Go to Spain for a year.

BEN
And now how does she pronounce the name of the co-host on "The Today Show"?
MADDIE
(EXAGGERATED ACCENT, ROLLED R'S)
MerrrrreDith Vie-rrrrra.

BEN
Exactly. How did you leave things with Casey?

MADDIE
I just tried to stall. I suggested ideas for the proposal that would take a while to happen. Like I said it's always been Mia's dream to get engaged during the summer Olympics but unfortunately they aren't until 2012. Stuff like that.

BEN
(CHUCKLES) That's so lame.

MADDIE
It was not my best work. But I just needed to buy some time. (THEN) I have to talk to her. Before somebody does something rash.

THERE'S A KNOCK. MIA AND CASEY BURST IN, EXCITED.

MIA
Casey just proposed! We're engaged!

BEN
(EXAGGERATED ACCENT) Dios mio.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE
FADE IN:

INT. MADDIE AND BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER (NIGHT 2)  
(BEN, CASEY, MADDIE, MIA)

EVERYONE IS AS WE LEFT THEM.

MADDIE

Wow. (TO CASEY, SLIGHTLY ACCUSATORY)
You proposed.

CASEY

I know, I'm sorry. I so appreciated
all your great ideas but I couldn't
wait for "the perfect moment." I
couldn't wait another second.

MADDIE

(FROZEN SMILE) See? The one time
I'm not critical and such wonderful
things happen.

MIA

Do you want to know how he did it?

CASEY

(TO MADDIE) I used your stuff -- I
could re-enact it if you want.
MADDIE

Oh, no, that's really okay.

BEN

(CAN'T HELP HIMSELF) I'd kinda like to see.

CASEY DROPS TO ONE KNEE. MIA STARTS TO GIGGLE.

CASEY

Mia, baby, I know it is not the summer Olympics, or an election year or even a census year.

BEN SHOOTS MADDIE A LOOK. ASHAMED, SHE HANGS HER HEAD.

CASEY (cont'd)

And I don't have a fancy Australian Opal or the rare Sri Lankan Kadupul flower that only blooms once every seven years but I hope you will take me anyway. I love you and I can't wait to start our life together. Will you marry me?

MIA

Yes! (SHE POINTS UP AND DOWN HER ARM) Third time you did it and I still got chills. (THEN, TO OTHERS) I made him do it in the elevator. (THEN) Isn't this great?

MADDIE

It is just such a surprise!
MIA

Not to you. I know you helped and I can't tell you how much I appreciate that. Though some of your ideas were a little wacky. Why did you say I thought the Olympics and census were romantic?

MADDIE

(INVENTING) 'Cause you're a red-blooded American woman.

MIA

Well, anyway, I'm so glad you're on board. Next up: Mom and Dad. I really want them to like him but I'm nervous. I mean, you know Casey...

MADDIE/BEN

Not really. Nope.

MIA

I mean I love the way he looks at the world, but he can be a bit of a...

CASEY

(UNFAZED) Oddball.

MIA

(GRATEFUL) Yes. (TO BEN) (MORE)
MIA (cont'd)
I was wondering if you'd consider
giving him a few pointers. Coach
him a bit? Mom and Dad love you so
much.

BEN
Oh, I don't know --

MIA
C'mon, you owe me -- the first summer
you visited us at the house we'd
rent in Maine? I cleared out of
the bedroom so you two could be
together. I slept in a rowboat!
(MASSAGES AN IMAGINARY PAIN) My
neck still hurts.

BEN
Fine. This is the fortieth time
you've called in that favor, though.

MIA
(PLAYS IT UP) It was just so cold.

BEN
(TO CASEY) I'm free for breakfast
tomorrow.

CASEY
Great. How's three o'clock sound?

BEN
It sounds late. (THEN) How's eight?
CASEY
Ouchie. Two?

BEN
(FIRM) Nine.

CASEY
Okay, dude. But you owe me.

MIA
Thank you, Ben. This is gonna go great -- you work with Casey a little, then tomorrow night we go out to a nice dinner, Maddie says how much she loves him --

MADDIE
Me? How did I get involved?

CASEY
Hey, at least you don't have to wake up at nine for your thing.

BEN
To be clear, we're meeting at nine.

MIA
Maddie you have to come. You want this to go well, right? You like Casey, you're happy for us --

MADDIE
Yeah, about that --
MIA
I need you there. They listen to you -- you're so obviously their favorite.

CASEY
I'm sure that's not true.

BEN/MIA/MADDIE
No, it's true. It is. Yeah.

MADDIE
(DEEP BREATH) Look, I do like Casey, but you might not want me making the case for you --

MIA
You have to. You know how tough they can be.

MADDIE THINKS. SHE GETS AN IDEA.

MADDIE
You're right. They are tough.
(BEAT) I'll be there.

MIA
Really? Yay! Okay! This is exciting! (THEN, TO CASEY) Ooo, we can get started on wedding planning. Gotta pick a date and a dress and I can start designing our email invitations on (POINTED TO MADDIE) my invention!
MADDIE ROLLS HER EYES. MIA AND CASEY AD-LIB GOODBYE'S AND EXIT.

BEN
What just happened? I thought you were against this. Now I'm having two meals tomorrow with this guy.

MADDIE
I'm being supportive.

BEN
(ONTO HER) Nah, that's not it.

MADDIE
Okay, you think I'm critical? She's telling my parents tomorrow. They're way more critical than I am. They once made one of her boyfriends cry.

BEN
(FONDLY) I miss that guy. He made me seem tough.

MADDIE
The point is they're gonna raise all the right objections so I won't have to. This is perfect -- I make her happy. My parents tell her what she's doing is crazy. (THEN, LESS SURE) They are the crazy ones, right?
BEN
What do you mean?

MADDIE
It is just... my little sister is... engaged. It feels a little weird
being leapfrogged by her like this.

BEN
You're the one who said you never
needed to get married.

MADDIE
I didn't. In the beginning we were
too young, then we wanted to get
out of debt, establish our careers,
then all our friends got married,
then all our friends got divorced,
and after a point what we had was
so good, why rock the boat? But I
don't know, are we missing something?

BEN
Look, I love that we wake up every
day and make the decision to be
together -- not because some piece
of paper tells us to. I think it's
very romantic.

HE LEANS IN CLOSE TO HER TO MAKE HIS POINT.

MADDIE
You've got food on your face.

SHE WIPES AWAY A CRUMB.
BEN

No matter what your sister is doing, what we have is special. Anybody who knows us, knows we're a great couple. Everybody is out there looking for what we have.

MADDIE

I know.

BEN

(THEN) And hey, what we're doing is very "in" right now. We're like Brad and Angelina except I don't have to grow weird facial hair for my movie roles.

MADDIE

That is the main difference.

AND WE...

CUT TO:
SCENE H

INT. COFFEE SHOP - NEXT DAY (DAY 3)
(BEN, CASEY)

BEN AND CASEY ARE IN A BOOTH.

BEN
Alright, we don't have a lot of
time. I've got a thing at 9:45.

CASEY
(AMAZED) You got two people to
meet you this early?

BEN PRODUCES A PURPLE INDEX CARD FROM HIS JACKET POCKET.

BEN
I have a list of the things you
need to know about the Putneys.
It's gleaned from screw-ups I've
made and a lot of the tragic errors
that I've watched Mia's boyfriends
make over the years. (HANDS HIM
THE CARD) Many good men have died
to bring you this information.

CASEY
(SOMBER) I understand. (LOOKS AT
CARD) Wow, this is a lot of stuff.
BEN
Well, I own a hotel. And it's successful because I'm good at picking up on people's wants and needs. I treat Maddie's parents like a couple of clients. You should do the same. Like, what do you do?

CASEY
I play in an avant garde metal band that has a performance art component.

BEN
(TRYING) So pretend you own a hotel. (OFF CARD) Let's see... their dad is a huge grammar snob. Try not to end a sentence on a preposition. Do you ever say "comprise" when you mean "compose"?

CASEY
Those aren't really the kind of words I use. (THEN) Hey, does your hotel ever have events where they need a band?

BEN
No. Never. (THEN) Oh, and do yourself a favor. Don't give Mrs. Putney your email address. (MORE)
BEN (cont'd)

That woman has never met a cutesy email she hasn't forwarded. What else? They'll say you can call them by their first names but they don't mean it. Compliment her scarves -- she considers them her signature accessory. Don't bring up cruises -- they had a bad buffet experience once.

BEN'S BLACKBERRY DINGS. HE CHECKS IT.

BEN (cont'd)

And it's another email from Mrs. Putney. This one is dogs and kids napping together. (CAN'T HELP IT, SMILES) It's actually pretty cute.

HE PUTS THE BLACKBERRY AWAY AND RETURNS TO HIS LECTURE.

BEN (cont'd)

Safe topics are wine, theater and the Yankees. Topics to avoid include the Supreme Court and any movie made after 1960.

CASEY

Wow. This sounds like a lot of work.

BEN

(PLEASED SOMEONE NOTICED) It is!
CASEY

(HANDS INDEX CARD BACK) I think
I'll just be myself and hopefully
they will like me and if not...

BEN

If not, what? What's the end of
that sentence?

CASEY SHRUGS, "WHAT CAN YOU DO?"

BEN (cont'd)

(FASCINATED) You really don't care
if they like you?

CASEY

I mean I hope that's not the case
but what can you do? It doesn't
really affect my life. Mia is the
one I am marrying.

BEN

So you just go through life not
worried about what people think,
not scared of saying the wrong thing?
How do you do that?

CASEY

(SHRUGS) Dunno. Just do.

BEN

If you ever figure it out could you
put it on an index card?

AND WE...

CUT TO:
SCENE J

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT (NIGHT 3)
(BEN, CASEY, JOEL, MADDIE, MIA, VICKY)

MADDIE, BEN, MIA AND CASEY ARE AT A TABLE. THERE ARE TWO FREE SEATS BETWEEN MADDIE AND MIA. MIA FIDGETS.

CASEY

(TO MIA)  Babe, you seem nervous.

MIA

I just want this to go well. I love you -- I want them to love you, too.

MADDIE

And they probably will. But let's be realistic -- you can't expect everyone to be a supportive as I am.

MIA

When they come, let Mom sit next to you. I want her to be in a good mood.

THE PARENTS, JOEL AND VICKY PUTNEY (50'S-60'S, WELL-GROOMED, A BIT INTIMIDATING) APPROACH.

MIA (cont'd)

Oh God, here they are. (TO CASEY)
(MORE)
MIA (cont'd)
Just be yourself. (BLURTS) But
better! I'm sorry! But I mean it!

MADDIE
(TO BEN, RE: HER MOM) Aw, she's
wearing that scarf you got her.

MIA
(TO BEN) Suck up.

BEN
Jealous.

MIA
(HATES HERSELF) I am!

JOEL AND VICKY ARRIVE AT THE TABLE.

VICKY
Sorry we're late. It took us forever
to get here. Your father is on a
huge walking jag.

JOEL
No, I'm on a huge "not paying for
taxi" jag because our net worth
went on a huge "losing seventy five
percent of itself" jag. And you're
on an "acting like it didn't happen"
jag.

MIA
Well, if it helps dinner is on us
tonight.
VICKY
That's for sure. He's started
"forgetting" his wallet at home.

JOEL
(BAD ACTING, PATS HIMSELF) Oh son
of a gun, you're right. I don't
have it.

MIA
(POINTS) Mom, I thought you'd sit
there.

VICKY
(GIDDY) Next to Maddie!

CASEY
(SOTTO, TO BEN) Wow, you weren't
kidding.

BEN NODS.

MIA
Okay. Mom, Dad, this is Casey.

CASEY GETS UP AND SHAKES THEIR HANDS.

CASEY
Great to meet you, Joel. Victoria.

SURPRISED, THEY SHARE A LOOK. BEN SHAKES HIS HEAD AND
SLIDES HIS PURPLE INDEX CARD OVER TO CASEY.

BEN
(JUMPING IN) Mr. and Mrs. Putney!

JOEL/VICKY
How are you, Ben? Great to see
you.
BEN
Nice to see you getting some use out of that scarf.

JOEL
It really is beautiful. I was shocked no one on eBay wanted it.

VICKY
Oh, before I forget, Casey -- let me get your email. I find it is the best way to communicate.

CASEY
It is facehumper, one word --

MIA
(JUMPING IN) He doesn't have an email.

A WAITRESS DELIVERS SOME CHAMPAGNE TO THE TABLE.

VICKY
Oh, this is nice. What's the occasion?

MIA NUDGES MADDIE FOR HELP.

MADDIE
Um, Mia has news.

MIA TAKES A GLASS AND STANDS TO MAKE HER ANNOUNCEMENT.

VICKY
(GASPS, SUPER-EXCITED) Maddie and Ben are getting married!
MADDIE

What? Why would that be Mia's news? That doesn't even make sense!

MIA

Yeah, like I don't have anything of my own going on?

MADDIE

And all of a sudden you're desperate for us to get married?

CASEY

Wait, you guys aren't married? Why not?

BEN

Not the time, buddy.

VICKY

I'm sorry. I guess I misunderstood.

JOEL

Can we please hear the news that I walked eighty-five blocks for?

MIA

Well, this is not the exact mood I wanted to strike but I'm getting married.

VICKY

To who?

JOEL

(CORRECTING) Whom.

CASEY STANDS.
CASEY

To me!

HE HOLDS OUT HIS ARMS FOR A HUG. NO ONE RESPONDS. BEN STANDS AND HUGS HIM.

BEN

(IN THE HUG) Sit down now.

CASEY, BEN AND MIA SIT.

MIA

So that's the news. I am settling down... man of my dreams... (OFF THEIR NON-RESPONSE) Thoughts?

MADDIE

(PROMPTING) Pretty crazy, huh?

VICKY AND JOEL LOOK AT EACH OTHER FOR A BEAT. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHICH WAY IT IS GOING TO GO. THEN...

VICKY

It's wonderful.

JOEL

I'm so happy for you, pumpkin.

MIA

Yay!

SHE KISSES CASEY.

MADDIE

(FLOORED) Heh?

VICKY

What a wonderful surprise! You found love!
MADDIE
(WITH JUDGMENT) Yeah, like last Tuesday.

MIA
Sis, what are you doing here?

MADDIE
(REELING) Reacting to a shocking lack of parental... mate-vetting. Where are the parents who made the boyfriend cry? This doesn't seem insanely fast to you?

JOEL
Well, not everyone is gonna wait fifteen years.

VICKY
(CHUCKLES) Darling, stop.

MADDIE
Is that directed at me?

JOEL
No, it's directed at Kurt Russell and Goldie Hawn.

THE PARENTS CHUCKLE.

MIA
Hey, guys, this is my moment. I just got engaged. Make fun of Maddie when she gets engaged. In 2044.

JOEL AND VICKY LAUGH. CASEY JOINS IN.
MADDIE

You're new -- you don't get to laugh!

VICKY

Don't be so sensitive, dear. We've come to accept your choices.

MADDIE

I'm sorry is our not being married something you talk about?

MIA, JOEL AND VICKY NOD.

MADDIE (cont'd)

You've never put any pressure on us at all.

VICKY

Well, the therapist said --

MADDIE

Therapist? Therapists have been consulted?!

JOEL

I think we are getting off track. We're losing sight of the fact that our little Mia is gonna walk down the aisle... in what I trust will be an intimate, modest affair in keeping with the financial realities of the day.

MADDIE

Okay, well great. Then let's just celebrate. (RAISES GLASS) To haste!
BEN

(WARNING) Honey.

MADDIE

I'm sorry but I can't understand why we're being mocked. Call me old-fashioned but I think it's appropriate to apply a little thought before making huge life choices. But you? You get an idea in your head and you need to jump immediately. There's no patience anymore. Everybody needs instant gratification. I blame the internet!

MIA

Where is this coming from? You helped Casey plan the proposal.

MADDIE

I didn't want to be the bad guy but I thought (RE: PARENTS) somebody would have the sense to say this is crazy. I mean you haven't even been together long enough for you to feel comfortable telling him how much his leather bracelet sucks.

CASEY

(HOLDS UP WRIST, INCREDULOUS) This?

BEN

Nah, can't be that one.
MIA
We may not have been together long, but we know each other.

MADDIE
Really? What's his favorite movie? Favorite color? Flavor of ice cream?

BEN
Hey, we've been together nine years and we don't even know stuff like favorite ice cream.

MADDIE
I absolutely know your favorite ice cream.

BEN
How? I don't even have a favorite.

MADDIE
Mint chip.

BEN
(REALIZES, AMAZED) It is mint chip.

MIA
This is so insulting. Does it make you feel better to use your lawyer logic and grill us like some kind of (EXAGGERATED ACCENT) Gerrrrraldo Riverrrrra?

CASEY LOOKS AT MIA, "WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?"

MADDIE
(TO CASEY) Yeah, get used to that.
VICKY
Girls, please. We don't fight in
front of company.

MADDIE
"Company"?! You mean my brother-in-
law?!

BEN
Okay, let's just calm down.

MIA
(TO MADDIE, RILED UP) This is what
I want.

MADDIE
So then you have to have it, right
away. Why does it have to be now?

BEN
(FIRM) Honey, stop.

MADDIE
No, I'm sorry, why in the world
does she have to get married right
now?!

BEN
(EXASPERATED BLURT) Because she's
pregnant!

EVERYONE STARES AT BEN. FOR THE GUY WHO IS USUALLY SO
CAREFUL IN FRONT OF THE PUTNEYS, HE'S BLOWN IT BIG TIME.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO
ACT THREE

SCENE K

INT. RESTAURANT -- MOMENTS LATER (NIGHT 3)  
(BEN, CASEY, JOEL, MADDIE, MIA, VICKY)

EVERYONE IS AS WE LEFT THEM.

VICKY

I can't believe this.

MADDIE

You're pregnant?

MIA

Yes, I'm sorry I didn't mention it earlier -- I was trying to think of the perfect way for Ben to say it.

CASEY

Yeah, dude. Maybe put, "Don't blow the big secret," on your card.

BEN

I don't know what came over me.

MADDIE

(TENTATIVE) Well... this is good news. Right? Are you happy?

VICKY

I'm ecstatic.
MADDIE
Well, sure. You just loooove everything.

MIA
Yes, I'm happy! Very happy! Over the frickin' moon -- (TO CASEY, RE: BEN) I can't believe you told him!

CASEY
I'm sorry! We were bonding... he was giving me all this advice... it was real early in the morning.

JOEL
(TO CASEY) So you knocked up one daughter (TO BEN) and you won't marry the other. A couple of princes here. Does one of you want to hold me down while the other kicks me in the stomach?

MIA
Wonderful. (TO CASEY, BEN, MADDIE) Thank you, and you, and you for orchestrating this precious moment.

MADDIE
Would I have said anything if I'd known you were pregnant? Why didn't you tell me the truth?
MIA
Because I was worried you would be judgmental and not supportive -- exactly how you've been tonight! Of course you didn't really think us getting married so soon was a good idea -- it's not exactly what you've done, so it must be wrong!

CASEY
(TO THE PARENTS) You guys should know, marrying, having a kid... it's all stuff we know we would have done eventually. This just speeds things up a little.

JOEL
(SOFTENING) Well, if there's one thing our reversals of the last year have taught us, it's that life is short, and you should grab all the joy you can find when you find it. That and how depressing powdered milk tastes.

VICKY
And this truly is joyous. There's so much to look forward to. I wanna talk about the wedding and (MELTS) a grandchild! Maddie, switch seats so Mia can sit next to me.
CASEY
(SOTTO, TO BEN) That seems major.

BEN
(SOTTO) Huge. Never happened.

MIA
(STILL UPSET) You know what, mom? Another time. (POINTED) Maybe someplace where I'm not feeling so judged.

SHE GETS UP AND HEADS FOR THE EXIT.

CASEY
Do I follow?

THE OTHERS
Yes.

CASEY CROSSES OFF AFTER MIA.

MADDIE
(STANDS) Well, I guess we should --

BEN STANDS AS WELL.

JOEL
Sorry, kids, but we still haven't ironed out the matter of the bill.

ANNOYED, MADDIE DROPS SOME CASH ON THE TABLE.

JOEL (cont'd)
(COUNTS MONEY, TO VICKY) Ooo, I think we'll be able to take the subway home!

MADDIE AND BEN HEAD OUT AND WE...

CUT TO:
INT. TAXICAB - LATER (NIGHT 3)  
(BEN, CASEY, MADDIE, MIA)

BEN IS IN THE FRONT SEAT OF A CAB. CASEY IS IN THE BACK, SANDWICHED BETWEEN THE TWO SISTERS WHO STARE OUT THEIR RESPECTIVE WINDOWS, NOT TALKING.

CASEY

Wow, this is tense.

NO ONE RESPONDS.

CASEY (cont'd)

Sometimes when you say "this is tense" it breaks the tension. (BEAT) But clearly not in this case.

ANOTHER BEAT.

MIA

(STARTLED GASP) Ahhh! The baby just kicked!

CASEY/BEN/MADDIE

Oh my God! What? Really?!

BEN

Has that ever happened before?

MIA

No, it's the first time.
MADDIE

(BREAKING DOWN) It's because you're upset with me -- I did this. (TO BELLY) I'm sorry, baby. I'm not usually like this. I just felt so attacked -- everyone was judging our relationship and I had no idea and I'm no longer the favorite which of course doesn't matter but sadly does. Don't judge me, baby. I need you on my side.

SHE LOOKS AT MIA.

MADDIE (cont'd)

I'm so sorry I ruined your big night. Who am I to say what's right for you? I clearly don't know anything.

MIA

That's not true. You're very smart.

MADDIE

(WEEPY) I just test well. (THEN) I think part of it is -- it feels weird you doing something first. I normally blaze the trail for you. I'm your big sister. That's my job.
MIA

But you've done that -- what you
two have -- that's what I've wanted
for years.

A BEAT AS MADDIE ABSORBS THIS.

MADDIE

Can I...?

SHE REACHES ACROSS AND PUTS HER HAND ON MIA'S STOMACH.

MIA

(SHEEPISH) Yeah, I lied. It's way
too soon to feel the baby kick. I
was just trying to stop the fight.
You're just touching my Spanx.

MADDIE

(IMPRESSIONED) Manipulative but
effective.

MIA

Be honest with me. Having all this
happen at once -- a marriage, a
baby -- do you think I'm making a
mistake?

MADDIE

I think one of the best things about
you is that you are fearless. You
just go for it. I wish I could be
more like that instead over-analyzing
every decision to death. (THEN)
Do you think I am making a mistake?
MIA

(VERY TOUCHED) You want my opinion?

Oh my God -- I've dreamed of this day. You want to know what I think!

MADDIE

So what do you think?

MIA

(STILL THRILLED) No idea!

MADDIE

You know we never got to eat. Wanna grab some food and we can talk about your wedding dress?

MIA

Fun! I would love that. I think I'll probably just end up altering mom's dress. (OFF HER FACE) What? You look judgmental again. You hate that idea?

MADDIE

No, I love it. That's why I always said if I got married that's what I would wear.

IT GETS TENSE AGAIN.

CASEY

Oh, we were so close. (GETS AN IDEA, HAND ON MIA'S STOMACH) Hey, I think the baby's kicking again.

FADE OUT.
FADE IN:

INT. MADDIE AND BEN'S APARTMENT - LATER
(BEN, MADDIE)

MADDIE AND BEN ARE SNUGGLING ON THE COUCH, WATCHING TV.

BEN

You know what I realized tonight?

You say the wrong thing, it's not

the end of the world. Maybe in the

future I worry a little less about

offending your parents. (PATS

HIMSELF) I think I can throw out

that stupid -- (HIS FACE DRAINS OF

COLOR) Oh no.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - EARLIER THAT NIGHT
(JOEL, VICKY)

VICKY AND JOEL GLARE AT BEN'S PURPLE INDEX CARD.

JOEL

(READING) He thinks he's funny?

VICKY

(READING) She's a little bit racist?

FADE OUT.

END OF SHOW