

HOMECOMING QUEEN

"PILOT"

Written by

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Registration #: 1549154

COLD OPEN

INT. GREG AND HOPE'S APARTMENT - DAY

HOPE MERRIMOORE (27) holds a letter while GREG (28) packs.

HOPE
(disbelief)
Greggers, it's a break-up letter.

GREG
And an eviction notice.

HOPE
This is a really bizarre proposal.

GREEK CHORUS GIRLS 1 & 2, female back-up singers in matching evening gowns, spy through the window. They snack on concessions.

GREG
I indulged your marriage talk to
buy time until the lease was up.

EXT. GREG AND HOPE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3 joins. The other two stare on.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3
(gasps)
They're breaking up!?

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2
I knew about his Peter Pan syndrome
the 2nd time he gave athletic socks
for Valentine's Day.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1
(to Greek Chorus Girl 3)
Excuse me. Who are you?

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3
I'm here to help. Things are about
to get ugly.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2
Ugly is a senior citizen with a
botched face lift. He just served
her a break-up letter after four
years. It's far uglier than ugly.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3
 Sorry, I'm really not up to speed.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1
 And you're here to help?

Greek Chorus Girl 3 nods.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1 (CONT'D)
 Are you more rational than Miss I-
 cry-at-fabric-softener-commericals?

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2
 (teary)
 It's the puppies not the product.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1
 (to Greek Chorus Girl 3)
 Okay, Greggers here doesn't believe
 our darling, Hope, will amount to
 anything except student loans.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2
 Hey, not everyone could get that
 much financial aid in eight years.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1
 Now you're up to speed. Popcorn?

The Greek Chorus crams in the window.

INT. GREG AND HOPE'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

HOPE
 We share so much. We're... We're
 both allergic to strawberries...

GREG
 And I really enjoy the way you sing
 in the shower, but I can't marry
 someone with your debt. We'd never
 be approved for a boat.

HOPE
 You're dumping me for a future
 boat?

GREG
 Hope, just read the letter.

HOPE
 Are you having a panic attack? You
 have your father's anxiety.

GREG
New tenants move in Thursday.

HOPE
(in disbelief)
Greggers.

GREG
Don't call me that. I hate it.
That's also in the letter. I'm
taking the job in Miami.

HOPE
I'll just stay with Tammy and Sam
until you calm down.

GREG
Don't go over there. Tammy sided
with me. So did Sam.

HOPE
Side? Alright, if you're playing
like that, I'll be with Anthony.

Hope grabs her purse.

GREG
Don't think so.

HOPE
You wrote him a letter too?

GREG
It was an ecard, Paperless Post.

HOPE
You ecard slandered me?

GREG
It's actually ecard libel, slander
isn't written--

HOPE
Why now? I'm nailing my research,
and my grant is reviewed on
Tuesday. I'm on a roll.

GREG
Rolling downhill.

Greg hands her a letter.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3
He's just hitting her with tomato
after tomato.

HOPE
You opened it?

Greg shrugs. Hope reads.

GREG
The university isn't renewing your
grant. In fact, they're fining you.

Hope's face drops. A tomato hits her.

EXT./INT. HOPE'S CAR INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - EVENING

It's snowing. Hope drives past a sign: WELCOME TO HELL, MI.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1 (V.O.)
I knew if she lost it all she'd
drive herself straight to hell.

END COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAYDREAM

Hope in a medical gown. Greek Chorus Girl 2 as a Doctor slaps up an x-ray.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2

Ms. Merrimooore your heart is broken in several places. Your chart says you're allergic to strawberries and love songs. I'm prescribing 18 hours of *The Odyssey*. One a day for three days. That should get you to Hell.

EXT./INT. HOPE'S CAR INTERSTATE HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Hope LISTENS to *The Odyssey* audio book. The Greek Chorus hangs out in the backseat.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1

That's it. I can't take another hour of oral tradition.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2

She's unleashing her anger with poetry. It's poetic.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3

She could cry to Adele like a normal person.

EXT. GAS STATION - LATER

Hope, dressed for a warmer climate, pumps gas. The trunk is held shut by a bungee cord. A sweatshirt sticks out.

GREEK CHORUS

(singing The Rolling Stones)

You can't always get what you want.

HOPE

(muttering to herself)

A boat. Ha. You're a terrible swimmer.

Hope tugs on the sleeve.

GREEK CHORUS

You can't always get what you want.

HOPE

Aye aye, Captain! Head straight for that typhoon.

GREEK CHORUS

You can't always get what you want.

Hope tugs harder.

HOPE

What debt? I'm priceless.

GREEK CHORUS

But if you try sometimes,

The bungee cord pops, the trunk explodes. Hope loses the sweatshirt to the wind.

GREEK CHORUS (CONT'D)

You just might find,

Hope stands defeated in the middle of all her stuff. The sweatshirt blows back in her face.

GREEK CHORUS (CONT'D)

You get what you need!

The Greek Chorus dances. Hope falls to the ground, giving up.

EXT. THE CHIPPED TOOTH TAVERN - LATER

Hope hastily approaches, slips and falls on the ice.

INT. SPEED SKATING RINK - DAYDREAM

Hope, in a speed skater uniform, lies on the ice. Other SKATERS fly past her. The Greek Chorus plays commentators in an announcer booth.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1

Quite a spill in the last lap.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2

That's gotta hurt, but she's getting up. What a fighter.

Hope slowly gets up.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3
 Obviously, she was not prepared for
 this race.

Hope skates to the door of The Chipped Tooth.

INT. THE CHIPPED TOOTH TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

BENNY GUSEZEK (GOOS-AK 27, Hope's HS classmate) tends an
 empty bar. Hope stumbles in. Benny looks up, huge smile.

BENNY
 (calling O.S.)
 Jenny. I'm seein' that ghost again.

HOPE
 Benny, you dirty, Polish bastard.

BENNY
 You nerdy, sneaky bitch.

Benny hops over the bar. He gives Hope a bear hug.

BENNY (CONT'D)
 What's it been? Two or three
 Christmases?

JENNY GUSEZEK (27, Benny's wife, also Hope's classmate)
 enters. She balances her son, DENNY (4), on her hip.

JENNY
 I'm already gettin' back-billed
 from that exorcist, I don't need
 sass from you, too.

She stops in her tracks when she sees Hope.

JENNY (CONT'D)
 Ho-ly road kill! Hope?! I didn't
 know your were home. Now I have to
 cancel my hunting trip.

HOPE
 Sorry I didn't call.

JENNY
 Don't be. Don't be, I'm the only
 one without a tractor. You hungry?
 It's Perogie Wednesday!

CUT TO:

INT. THE CHIPPED TOOTH TAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

They sit at the bar, Denny too, with drinks and perogies.

BENNY

Polka Thursday, Lumpky Friday, and
Taco Tuesday.

HOPE

Why do Mexican when you do sausage
so well?

JENNY

Benny dated that Perez chica, ya
know.

BENNY

The best carnitas ever.
(sotto to Hope)
It's our biggest night.

Hope takes a bite.

HOPE

Better than these nuggets from
heaven? There's one thing a Pollack
does well--

BENNY

Hey, not in front of the kid.

Denny plays with a pocket knife. Hope gives Benny a look.

HOPE

Outdoor's man or street fighter?

JENNY

Thank god we're finally through
terrible twos. And the threes--

BENNY

Now that he's old enough we're
gonna dump him on my folks and go
on a real honeymoon.

JENNY

Cancun baby! All inclusive. There's
a swim up bar.

BENNY

And she's got the boobs for the wet
t-shirt contest.

JENNY

Benny!

BENNY

Hope, another?

Hope nods.

JENNY

How many drinks is it gonna take
for you to tell us why you're home?

Hope pauses.

HOPE

A couple more strong ones.

JENNY

Do you have the big C?

HOPE

No!

JENNY

You need oral surgery, do you?

BENNY

Your dad is a great dentist. I'd
come back for that gentle touch.

HOPE

I didn't drive all the way here to
get my teeth cleaned.

JENNY

You drove here? From California?

Hope nods.

JENNY (CONT'D)

It's big. I can sense these things.
(she "senses")
Greggers finally proposed.

HOPE

You were closer with oral surgery.

JENNY

Where's he hiding?
(calling O.S.)
You can come out now. Greggers?!

HOPE

Don't call him that.

JENNY

Benny, get us some shots!

Jenny gets up and does a celebratory "salmon" dance. The Greek Chorus backs her up.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Salmon dance, salmon dance, salmon--

HOPE

No. Jenny. Stop.

JENNY

Dance, Salmon dance!

HOPE

Stop. We broke up.

JENNY

Benny, shots.

HOPE

He wrote me a letter.

JENNY

A dear john?

HOPE

I know. It's so hipster.

BENNY

He is kind of a Nancy. He can't even start a fire.

HOPE

It was my mistake bringing a Jewish guy to Hell for Christmas anyway.

JENNY

He's Jewish? I thought he was a lawyer?

HOPE

A great lawyer. If I had a better credit score I'd still be with him. Should've majored in finance. Then I'd be pretty instead of smart, we'd be getting married...

(her head hits the bar.)

On a boat.

JENNY

A boat? I thought he couldn't swim?

HOPE

He needs time. I'll call him in a few weeks. He'll forget about the boat.

JENNY

There are plenty of bucks in the forest. You don't need to gut your first shot.

BENNY

You don't need Greggers. You have a higher masters plan education.

HOPE

I have a masters in the psychology of classic greek literature.

BENNY

You sure do.

JENNY

And if that thing doesn't work out, you've got lots of other skills.

HOPE

I don't.

INT. HOPE AT VARIOUS PART TIME GIGS - FLASHBACKS

HOPE (V.O.)

I was a Barista who couldn't make a latte. A go-go dancer without rhythm. A test subject, but I got really sick. I even KJ-ed until I was fired for critiquing the singers.

INT. THE CHIPPED TOOTH TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

BENNY

See. You can sing.

Benny pours shots. Jenny takes hers.

HOPE

Sorry to come here with my problems.

BENNY

This is a bar, problems keep me in business.

JENNY
Professional pity committee.

HOPE
Shoot. I forgot to text Grams.

JENNY
G-money!

Hope gets her phone out.

BENNY
Does she still think you're on the
Disney Channel?

HOPE
I worked one summer at Cinderella's
Sing-Along Castle, now she thinks I
have my own TV show.

BENNY
Cara and the Crazy's. You look just
like her.

HOPE
Her eyesight's really going, and
now I'm wondering about yours.

Hope waves her phone in the air.

HOPE (CONT'D)
There isn't any service in this
town--

Hope gets on the floor. She crawls into someone's feet.

NEIL BARONEY
Hopeless? I've been fantasizing
about you in this position for at
least ten years.

Hope looks up to see NEIL BARONEY (27, another HS classmate).
A tomato hits Hope in the face.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. THE CHIPPED TOOTH - CONTINUOUS

Hope still on her knees. Greek Chorus plays pool in the BG.

NEIL BARONEY

Remember me?

HOPE

(feigning recollection)

Sure I do. Chemistry, sophomore year, we shared Pop-tarts?

NEIL BARONEY

No wonder you're back, you aren't a very good actress.

HOPE

I'm not an actress.

NEIL BARONEY

Spare me. I follow your grandma on twitter.

HOPE

Leave my Grams out of it.

NEIL BARONEY

Look at you, crawling back home, on your knees, hoping daddy will pay for it and make it better.

Hope is speechless.

NEIL BARONEY (CONT'D)

Maybe you'd remember me if I put a pickle in your face.

HOPE

Whoa, wow. Seriously? I've had dozens of jobs, studied in four different countries. I'm sorry if I don't remember every little weasel I sat next to in High School. There is no need for your pickle.

NEIL BARONEY

Welcome back, Hopeless. Sounds like I'll be seeing you around.

Neil waves to Benny and exits. Hope gets to her feet.

HOPE

I have a masters degree!

Hope saddles back up at the bar.

BENNY

You really showed him. Masters degree, scary.

HOPE

It's all I got.

BENNY

You just insulted the biggest business owner in Livingston County. That guy opened three gas stations right off the highway and owns the Bloated Goat Saloon.

HOPE

The Springers own the Bloated Goat, that place is divier than this.

JENNY

Watch it, Hollywood!

BENNY

I'm practically a therapist.

HOPE

Whoa, guys. Just tell me who's the new Barron of Hell.

JENNY

Neil Baroney.

HOPE

Neil Baroney?
(remembering)
Ugh. Neil Baroney.

BENNY

We called him Dodgeball. He was a bully so we just threw stuff at him, banana peels, number 2 pencils-

HOPE

Pickles, I threw pickles at him in economics.
(beat)

What? It was after lunch.

BENNY

I strongly suggest you apologize.

HOPE

For what? He's the jerk. It's not
like need a job at his gas station.
I'm gonna wait tables here.

Benny and Jenny exchange looks. Greek Chorus Girl 3 breaks
loudly at the pool table, the other hush her.

BENNY

I hate to bring it up, but Jenny
wants me to.

(beat)

You missed our wedding.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1

Uh-oh. Horrible subject.

HOPE

I've told you, I couldn't make it
to Vegas. I had finals. I thought
you guys would eventually pick a
different date. You aren't supposed
to fly in your third trimester.

JENNY

I knew you thought it was tacky.
You were supposed to sing.

CUT TO:

POOL TABLE - GREEK CHORUS

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3

Is Hope a singer?

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2

Is she a singer? She's better than
Broadway. She'd A-minor those brats
from *Glee* outta the water.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1

She's got some pipes. But she gave
it up for academics.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3

So she's a community theater hero?

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2

How dare you, her rendition of
Memories would make you sob.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1
 (sotto to GCG 3)
 It was a magical time, but we try
 not to bring it up. She gets upset.

BACK TO:

BENNY, JENNY, DENNY & HOPE

JENNY
 You can't work here.

BENNY
 Honestly, we can't afford anyone
 else. Peewee hockey is expensive.

JENNY
 Your parents will help you, Hope.

HOPE
 My dad'll go all Aristotle on me,
 compare me to Junior, the golden
 child. And you know my mom, I told
 her about the break up, she told me
 to smoke some grass.

BENNY
 Maybe you should.

She starts waving her phone looking for service again.

HOPE
 I need to get a hold of Grams.

JENNY
 Good luck getting service in here.
 That ghost took the cell signal
 when he left.

BENNY
 Stand on top of Ms. Pacman and hold
 a spoon.

Hope mounts the arcade game with Benny's help.

JENNY
 I'll get you a box for your
 perogies.

Jenny exits. Hope balances with the spoon.

HOPE
 She's still mad about your wedding?

BENNY

Naw. She's just upset you don't visit more.

HOPE

I visit your Facebook house all the time. I swear, it's like I fed Denny that cupcake on Labor Day.

BENNY

I knew it, you're a spy.

HOPE

Benny, don't start that rumor. I'm already a tween starlet.

Jenny returns with a container of Perogies, a scarf and hat.

JENNY

Buck up, Hope. It's hockey weather.

Hope's phone light's up.

HOPE

Oh smash! Grams fell?

Hope jumps down.

JENNY

G-money, is she okay?

HOPE

I don't know. All it says is, PLZ help. Fallen. Can't get up.

JENNY

You should go. The nursing home took her fallin' old lady beeper away. Abuse of privilege.

Off Hope's Look--

CUT TO:

INT. NURSING HOME - LATER

GRAMS (80s, Hope's paternal grandmother) HOLLERS at the tv wearing a headset playing *Call Of Duty*. A NURSE enters.

NURSE

Mrs. Merrimooore, there's someone special here to see you.

GRAMS

(without looking)

If it's my son, I'm not speaking to him until he gives back my Netflix.

Hope appears in the doorway behind the nurse.

NURSE

No, it's your famous granddaughter.

HOPE

I'm not famous.

Grams looks up at a poster of *Cara and the Crazy's*, turns around, huge smile.

GRAMS

Hopey! My sweetheart!

HOPE

Grams! You fell? Is it your hip?

GRAMS

(to Nurse)

Schedule us for the next round of Wii tennis.

HOPE

I don't think that's a good idea.

The Nurse exits. A few patients sneak up to peek at Hope.

NURSE

Nothing to see here, clear out.

GRAMS

You didn't comment on my facebook post, so I thought I'd get your attention. I'm surprised that one holds up.

HOPE

So you didn't fall?

GRAMS

I did L-O-L off my chair when I saw you were moving back to Hell.

HOPE

I can't be in San Diego anymore.

GRAMS

I know. I got the ecard.

HOPE
 Seriously?

GRAMS
 What can I say, I'm connected.

EXT. CLIFF - DAYDREAM

Hope hangs off a cliff. Greg lifts her fingers off one by one. The Greek Chorus watches as she falls.

HOPE
 AAAAHHHHH!

INT. NURSING HOME - CONTINUOUS

GRAMS
 How's the TV show?

HOPE
 Grams, that's not me.

GRAMS
 You're being modest.

An elderly crowd flashes disposable cameras, a regular mob of paparazzi. The Nurse acts like a bodyguard.

GRAMS (CONT'D)
 Your father canceled my Netflix.
 Your mother says it's not green. Of
 course it isn't green, it's red. He
 didn't have his thinking cap on
 when he married her.

Grams uses an iPad with ease.

GRAMS (CONT'D)
 I'm live tweeting your visit.

HOPE
 About your twitter account--

GRAMS
 Get with it, girlfriend. What
 brings you back to town? In 140
 characters or less.

HOPE
 How many followers do you have?

GRAMS

Three thousand six hundred forty-two. So what happened? I'll paraphrase.

HOPE

I accidently gave 30 homeless people food poisoning.

Hope pauses. Greek Chorus is on the TV.

GREEK CHORUS

(singing Tom Petty)

Hey! Don't come around here no more

HOPE

I was framed. One of the research assistants poached my project.

GREEK CHORUS

Whatever you're looking for

GRAMS

So it was salmonella? Twit-pic!

Grams takes a picture on her phone.

HOPE

It was chili. We were recreating ancient Greek theatre with beach bums then testing morale. They got a meal for participating.

GREEK CHORUS

Hey! Don't come around here no more

GRAMS

You're in Hell now. It's better to be in a small pond if you're a big salmonella.

GREEK CHORUS

I've given up, stop.

HOPE

My degree isn't worth anything anywhere. My dad always said, "mind plus masters equals success."

GREEK CHORUS

I've given up, stop.

GRAMS

You should take my puffy vest. It's freezin' out there like Windows Vista. I told your mother it makes me look Michelin manish.

HOPE

That's it? You give me an ugly vest? Where's the wise advice?

GRAMS

Hopey, always do what you think is smartest and while you're living with your parents...

Hope leans in.

GRAMS (CONT'D)

Never take the last piece of cheese.

HOPE

Cheese?

GRAMS

Your father loves his Gouda.

HOPE

It'll be like finding out Bill Gates dropped out of Harvard all over again. Don't tell him, Grams. Please?

GRAMS

Don't worry, he doesn't follow me on twitter.

HOPE

How can I even bring it up?

GRAMS

You know those people who go swimming in the dead of winter?

HOPE

The Canadian Polar Bear Club?

GRAMS

Yes, that's it. Do you think they tip toe to the water? Sometimes you have to buck up and jump on in.

HOPE

I'm not really a swimmer.

GRAMS

So buck up.

HOPE

I don't--

GRAMS

Buck up!

HOPE

You're right. I'll buck up.

Grams holds up a fist. They bump.

EXT./INT. HOPE'S CAR - MERRIMOORE'S DRIVEWAY - LATER

Hope is stuck in a snow bank on the driveway. Tires spin.

HOPE

No, smash! No, no, no, no.

Greek Chorus pushes the car.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3

She's a mess of bad luck.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2

Break-up, debt, banishment--

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1

It's not luck, it's life. Box of chocolates, so she bites into a strawberry cream and has a bad reaction. It'll pass. Might be gross, but it'll pass.

Hope bangs her head on the steering wheel. A tomato hits her.

INT. MERRIMOORE FAMILY HOME - LATER

MRS. MERRIMOORE (59) knits, DR. MERRIMOORE (60) watches tv. Hope's very large kid brother, MOOSE (18), eats. Hope enters stamping her feet free of snow.

MRS. MERRIMOORE

There's my little bundle of sage!
I've been meditating since you called.

Mrs. Merrimooore gives Hope a tight hug.

MRS. MERRIMOORE (CONT'D)
I love this vest, but don't you
think you shoulda worn a jacket?

HOPE
Shoulda done a lot of things.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
How's the heartbreak? I got the
ecard.

Hope shrugs.

DR. MERRIMOORE
If you want money, you're in the
wrong house.

Pregnant pause. The Greek Chorus hangs on Moose.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3
She's so busted.

DR. MERRIMOORE
I'm just pullin' your leg. Come
here, scholar, let me see those
choppers.

Dr. Merrimoore sticks his fingers in Hope's mouth.

HOPE
(opening wide)
Daaaaaaaaaad!

END ACT TWO

BEGIN ACT THREE

INT. MERRIMOORE FAMILY HOME - MOMENTS LATER

The family sits in the living room.

DR. MERRIMOORE
I'll have Beverly get you in for a
cleaning tomorrow.

HOPE
I deserve that.
(beat)
Moose, how's school?

Moose GRUNTS.

HOPE (CONT'D)
And football?

Moose GRUNTS.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Getting your license soon, gotta
have a driver's ed story?

Moose GRUNTS again and goes back to his food.

HOPE (CONT'D)
Nice chatting.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
My dear sunshine day, I know your
guts are ripped out,
metaphorically. I don't want to
pry... how do you feel?

Hope GRUNTS.

MRS. MERRIMOORE (CONT'D)
Just promise me you aren't going to
let yourself dry up down there.

HOPE
Mom?!

MRS. MERRIMOORE
You're in your late 20s, rainbow
girl. You have to keep the engine
oiled--

HOPE
Taken care of.

Uncomfortable pause.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
Are you hungry? I'll heat up some
pot pie. It's vegan.

Mrs. Merrimooore exits into the kitchen.

DR. MERRIMOORE
She's doing all sorts of hippie
things to my food now.

Mrs. Merrimooore comes back in with a heaping plate of food.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
It's vegan.

HOPE
You mentioned that.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
I'm finding vegan cooking
complements my practice at the
Wistful Tiger.
(off Hope's look)
My yoga club.

DR. MERRIMOORE
She's fulfilling desires
surrendered in her youth. I'd be
more youthful if she let me eat
cheese.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
There are other benefits.
Eliminating processed foods really
helps the aroma in this house.

She looks at Moose who FARTS loudly. Awkward pause.

MRS. MERRIMOORE (CONT'D)
Yes. I'm the manager at the flower
shop now, and I'm teaching a botany
class at the high school. I even
have a homeroom.

HOPE
And I'm a star on the Disney
Channel.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
You'd be surprised how many
students want to learn to grow.

HOPE
Grow what, mom?

EXT. SNOWY LAKE - DAYDREAM

Hope drops her robe and tip toes painfully to the water.

INT. MERRIMOORE FAMILY HOME - CONTINUOUS

HOPE
Listen. Mom. Dad.

The Greek Chorus holds hands in the BG.

GREEK CHORUS
(singing "Under Pressure")
*Mm ba ba de, Um bum ba de, Um bu bu
bum da de, Pressure, pushing down
on me, Pressing down on you no man
ask for...*

HOPE
I'm so ashamed to be coming home
like this. I don't even know how to
ask. I really...

GREEK CHORUS
(singing)
*Under pressure, that burns a
building down, Splits a family in
two, Puts people on streets...*

HOPE
I really need--

The doorbell RINGS.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 1
Seriously?

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 2
We're about to have a moment here.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
I'm sorry, sweetpea. That must be
Moose's economics tutor.

Mrs. Merrimooore gets up.

MRS. MERRIMOORE (CONT'D)
He's your age, Hope, if you need
someone to check under your hood.

Mrs. Merrimooore exits. Hope rolls her eyes.

DR. MERRIMOORE

Smart young man, didn't go to grad school, but he's successful. He's free on Thursday.

HOPE

I'm sure he's a great mechanic, but mom wasn't talking about my car.

DR. MERRIMOORE

Neither was I.

(beat)

He'll come by for a beer. We'll go in the basement to do some wood work. He can make a very impressive bird house.

HOPE

(sarcastic)

Bird houses? Total swoon.

DR. MERRIMOORE

You said you might stay a few weeks.

HOPE

Yeah. We should-- We should talk about that.

GREEK CHORUS

Under Pressure.

DR. MERRIMOORE

Wasn't your grant up for review?

HOPE

It was.

DR. MERRIMOORE

It's great to see your degree starting to pay off as much as your brother's. Junior was able to pay off his college debt in two years with his new position in Chicago. At this rate, Moose will get an athletic scholarship. You'll be the only Merrimooore with student loans. Education is a powerful thing, Hope. Your mind is the money maker.

EXT. ANCIENT TOWN SQUARE - DAYDREAM

Hope is held in a pillory. The Greek Chorus throws tomatoes.

GREEK CHORUS GIRL 3

For not bucking up, for tip toeing
across the ice, for throwing
pickles, Hope Merrimooore is
sentenced to a night in the
pillory.

The last tomato hits her in the face.

INT. MERRIMOORE FAMILY HOME - CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Merrimooore enters the room.

MRS. MERRIMOORE

Moose, get your books.

Moose BELCHES. Hope looks up to see Neil Baroney.

NEIL BARONEY

Hi Hopeless.

HOPE

Dodgeball.

MRS. MERRIMOORE

Neil, can I get you some pot pie?
It's vegan.

NEIL BARONEY

No thanks, Mrs. Merrimooore. I have
a bit of an upset stomach. Must
have been the chili I had.

Hope's face drops.

NEIL BARONEY (CONT'D)

Doc, I guess we'll have to move the
wood shop to my house now that
Hope's back.

DR. MERRIMOORE

She's just passing through.

Neil shoots a knowing look at Hope.

NEIL BARONEY

Oh, before I forget, there's
someone stuck in your driveway.

DR. MERRIMOORE
Hope! How long were you going to
wait to tell me?

HOPE
Sorry.

NEIL BARONEY
Once Moose gets started, I'll help
shovel her out.

Neil and Moose retreat to the kitchen table.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
Isn't he just a satchel of
wholesome grain?

HOPE
I wouldn't agree.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
I know you're hurting. Okay, let me
have it, what did you need to ask?

HOPE
It can wait. I'm tired and sad. I
just wanna curl up with stuffed
animals and wait for the Acme anvil
to finally smush me.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
Why don't you get some rest?

HOPE
We'll talk about it tomorrow.

MRS. MERRIMOORE
Okay, but I get up early. I know
you Californians like to sleep
late.

HOPE
Pacific time is 3 hours--
nevermind.

Hope exits to the basement. Dr. Merrimoore looks up, he's
been watching TV, tuning everything out.

DR. MERRIMOORE
Is she going to sleep down there?

MRS. MERRIMOORE
She's emotionally exhausted, her
heart was ripped out.

DR. MERRIMOORE
 She better not touch any of my
 stuff.

INT. HOPE'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Covering the bed is a plethora of handmade bird houses. Hope
 is dumbfounded.

DR. MERRIMOORE (O.S.)
 Hope, get your boots on. We gotta
 get that car out before the snow
 drifts.

The Greek Chorus crawls out from under the bird houses.

GREEK CHORUS
Under Pressure.

EXT. HOPE'S CAR MERRIMOORE'S DRIVEWAY - LATER

Hope, Neil, and Dr. Merrimooore shovel Hope's car out.

NEIL BARONEY
 Hell a little colder than you
 remember?

DR. MERRIMOORE
 Hope hasn't been home for a winter
 since that Christmas she brought
 the Jewish boy.

Dr. Merrimooore sees Hope react.

DR. MERRIMOORE (CONT'D)
 Sorry to bring it up.
 (beat)
 I'm gonna go get some salt.

Dr. Merrimooore exits. Hope stops shoveling to stare daggers
 at Neil.

NEIL BARONEY
 What? He's the one talkin' about
 your ex, not me.

HOPE
 Why are you all up in my business?

NEIL BARONEY

I assumed you told your father you lost your grant and moving back for forever.

HOPE

I'm back indefinitely, there's a difference.

NEIL BARONEY

We're all here indefinitely, don't feel so special.

HOPE

It's a delicate conversation I'd rather not have in front of the help.

NEIL BARONEY

I've been tutoring Moose for 2 years.

HOPE

That doesn't make you family.

NEIL BARONEY

Sorry, Hopeless.

HOPE

No you're not, you're enjoying this. You know what they call someone who enjoys the misery of others?

NEIL BARONEY

A sadist?

HOPE

An asshole!

NEIL BARONEY

Fine. I'm an asshole and you're hopeless.

HOPE

Well, you're still an asshole, dodgeball.

Neil collects his thoughts.

NEIL BARONEY

I understand you need a job. I need a clerk at the gas station.

HOPE

Gas station?! Must I remind you, I have a masters degree.

NEIL BARONEY

I also got a radio spot. Can you and your masters degree sing a jingle?

HOPE

I don't sing anymore.

NEIL BARONEY

That's too bad. I need an alto and the jingle pays 2000.

HOPE

You don't even know what an alto is.

NEIL BARONEY

Take the shift at the gas station and maybe I'll consider you for the jingle.

Hope thinks about this.

NEIL BARONEY (CONT'D)

Come on, no one's paying you to direct Oedipus at the senior center.

HOPE

And you keep your mouth shut about my... Personal matter.

NEIL BARONEY

That's collateral.

HOPE

This is extortion.

NEIL BARONEY

Think of it as an opportunity.

HOPE

Grave yard?

NEIL BARONEY

Morning.

HOPE

So I get to reconnect with the class of 06 on their way to work?

NEIL BARONEY

Get past your vanity. Think of it
as a reunion. You get to wear a
name tag...

HOPE

(sotto)

Okay, fine yes.

NEIL BARONEY

What's that?

Dr. Merrimooore enters.

HOPE

(louder)

Okay, fine. Yes.

NEIL BARONEY

She's gonna do it!

DR. MERRIMOORE

Do what?

NEIL BARONEY

Hope is going to let me take her on
a date Thursday.

Hope's eyes get wide.

DR. MERRIMOORE

I told ya she needed a tune up.

NEIL BARONEY

Oh, um, I have to check with the
body shop to see if they'll fit her
in, but--

HOPE

Not about the car.

Neil is confused. They resume shoveling. After a beat.

GREEK CHORUS (V.O.)

(singing)

You can't always get what you want.

HOPE

I'm freezing. I'm going inside.

MR. MERRIMOORE

You know Hope, happiness belongs to
the self sufficient.

HOPE

Yes, Dad, but the aim of the wise
is not to secure pleasure, but to
avoid pain.

DR. MERRIMOORE

That's my girl. Go on in.

GREEK CHORUS (V.O.)

You can't always get what you want.

Hope drags her shovel up the hill.

HOPE

Thanks Neil, I'll see you Thursday.

NEIL BARONEY

Actually, Hopeless, tomorrow at
4am.

GREEK CHORUS (V.O.)

If you try sometimes,

NEIL BARONEY

And wear make-up.

Hope gives a no-look thumbs up.

GREEK CHORUS (V.O.)

you just might find...

HOPE

(to herself)

Home sweet hell.

A tomato hits her in the face.

FADE OUT.

GREEK CHORUS (V.O.)

You get what you need.

END ACT THREE

TAG

INT. THE CHIPPED TOOTH TAVERN - NIGHT

Benny stands on top of Ms. Pacman trying to get cell service.

BENNY

Whoa, G-money just tweeted that
Hope gave 3000 people food
poisoning. Hashtag Buck up.

Jenny dries glasses behind the bar.

BENNY (CONT'D)

And an awful twit-pic.

JENNY

Benny, It's really dead in here.

BENNY

I know, Jen. It'll pick up when I
get those TVs installed.

JENNY

No Benny, it's really dead in here.
Like, I see dead people.

Benny ignores this, intent on his phone, he waves a spoon.

BENNY

Come on, all I want is the score.

JENNY

I have the chills. We have a
spiritual visitor.

BENNY

Jenny, the only draft in here is
Miller Genuine. Relax.

Denny in a booster seat exhales wide-eyed. He can see his
breath.

END OF SHOW