

DR. BAUM'S AMAZING ELIXIR

by

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INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD HOME OFFICE - DAY

MICHAEL DESMOND, 37, unshaven and dressed in running pants and a t-shirt, is sitting at his computer. His bare feet are propped up on the edge of the desk. He is having a hard time staying awake.

He closes his eyes then snaps to attention before tapping out a few words on the computer. The next time he closes his eyes his head tilts back and he nearly falls from the chair.

He hears the SOUND of a car door SHUTTING and heads to the opened second floor window to have a peek. A red Toyota pickup truck sits in the driveway.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - DAY

Michael's wife, MELISSA, is sitting at the kitchen table with her friend JACKIE BRADFORD. Both women are in their mid-thirties. They are attractive and can still turn a few heads when the mood strikes.

Michael enters the kitchen and heads for the pantry.

MICHAEL

So, where are you two headed off to today?

MELISSA

We're going to the estate auction. I told you about it yesterday.

MICHAEL

Oh, yeah, the garage sale.

MELISSA

It's not a garage sale. It's an estate auction.

MICHAEL

What ever. It's all just somebody else's junk.

Michael grabs some cereal from the pantry and pours some into a bowl. He opens the fridge to grab the milk. He sits down at the kitchen table and begins to shovel down the cereal.

He looks over the two women the way a prosecutor might look at a witness he was about to cross examine.

MICHAEL

(to Jackie)

I see you brought the truck.

Jackie and Melissa exchange glances.

JACKIE

This place is all the way up in Santa Monica. And the Toyota gets good gas mileage.

MICHAEL

(not buying it)

Uh, huh. As I recall, the last time the two of you went to a garage sale in that truck you came back with an old beat up dresser that's still sitting in the basement.

MELISSA

That dresser is an antique. It's worth a whole lot more than what I paid for it. And we're not going to a garage sale.

Jackie heads off an argument by changing the subject.

JACKIE

So where's Amber?

Melissa looks at her husband for the answer.

MICHAEL

(defensively)

She's in her room playing with her dolls. I checked on her before I came downstairs.

JACKIE

Is she coming?

MELISSA

No. Michael is supposed to be watching her today. It was part of our agreement for me going back to work. Wasn't it, honey?

MICHAEL

Hey, no problem. I think I can handle a three year old.

MELISSA

I certainly hope so.

Melissa gets up from the table and presses the talk button on an intercom system.

MELISSA

Amber, honey, Jackie's here and wants to see you.

AMBER

(over the intercom)

Okay, mommy.

JACKIE

(to Michael)

So how's the telecommuting working out?

MICHAEL

Can't beat it. No bosses looking over my shoulder. No useless meetings. I make my own schedule. As long as I get the stuff in on time they don't care what hours I work.

Amber strolls into the kitchen carrying a Dorothy doll from the Wizard of Oz. She runs over to Jackie who smothers her in her arms.

JACKIE

Can I see your doll?

MELISSA

It's Dorothy from the Wizard of Oz.

Amber hands over the Dorothy doll.

JACKIE

Isn't this the cutest thing? Looks just like her.

AMBER

You wanna play Wizard of Oz?

JACKIE

Sure. What do I have to do?

AMBER

You can be the Wicked Witch of the West.

JACKIE

Why can't I be the Good Witch?

AMBER

Because mommy's the Good Witch, silly.

Melissa grabs Amber and hugs her.

MELISSA

And you're my little princess.

The Desmond's black Labrador can be heard BARKING outside. Melissa lets him into the kitchen.

JACKIE

Hello, Marcus.

Jackie leans over to pet the dog.

AMBER

That's not his name. His name is Toto.

JACKIE

How stupid of me.

(beat)

How about I play the Good Witch from the South.

AMBER

(thinking)

You're the Wicked Witch of the West.

JACKIE

Okay then.

Jackie crunches up her nose in preparation for her Wicked Witch of the West imitation.

JACKIE

(to Amber)

I'll get you my pretty.

(to Marcus)

And your little dog, too.

Amber's eyes widen. She pauses for a second then bolts from the room. Marcus runs after her.

JACKIE

Oh, I'm sorry. I think I scared the poor thing.

MICHAEL

I don't know about her but you sure scared the hell out of me.

EXT. ESTATE AUCTION - DAY

Melissa and Jackie pull up to an old Victorian style house that overlooks the Pacific. There are lots of cars and people. A large circus like tent is set up in the back yard.

INT. OLD VICTORIAN HOUSE - DAY

All of the furniture in the house is tagged with a number. Melissa spots an old rocker.

MELISSA

Isn't this beautiful? This would be perfect for the guest bedroom.

She jots down the item number.

EXT. ESTATE AUCTION - DAY

Melissa and Jackie take their seats. There are at least a hundred folding chairs lined up in rows. The auctioneer is standing on a makeshift stage. Several spotters are positioned in front of the stage.

MELISSA

(to Jackie)

This ain't no garage sale.

ESTATE AUCTION - LATER

The next item up for bid is a humidior. A spotter holds it over his head as he displays it for the crowd. It catches Jackie's eye.

JACKIE

Oh, would you look at that.

In an instant Jackie's hand goes up as she signals her bid.

MELISSA

Why would you want that thing?

JACKIE

It's gorgeous. Look at the detail
in the trim.

MELISSA

Do you know what a humidor is?

JACKIE

No, why?

MELISSA

It's a fancy cigar box. You don't
smoke cigars do you?

Jackie is fixated on the humidor. Her hand goes up again.

JACKIE

But it's so pretty. I was thinking
I could use it as a jewelry box.

Jackie's hand goes up once again. But this time there are
no more bidders.

AUCTIONEER

Going once, going twice... Sold to
the pretty young lady in the
fourth row.

JACKIE

Uh, oh. I think I just bought it.
What was my bid?

MELISSA

You don't want to know.

ESTATE AUCTION - LATER

Melissa's rocking chair is finally brought up on stage.

AUCTIONEER

Okay folks this next item is a
real beauty. Item number 7305.

MELISSA

That's the rocker I liked.

Melissa raises her hand as the bidding starts.

AUCTIONEER

We got seventy-fi, seventy-fi,
seventy-fi, looking for eighty,
eighty, eighty..

A SNOOTY-NOSED OLD LADY raises her hand.

AUCTIONEER

I have eighty. Do I hear ninety?
Looking for ninety.

Melissa raises her hand.

AUCTIONEER

We have ninety. Looking for one
hundred. Do I have -

Another hand goes up.

ESTATE AUCTION - LATER

The rocking chair is still on the stage.

AUCTIONEER

Okay, folks, looks like we have
some knowledgeable bidders out
there today. This rocking chair is
obviously an antique. The bid is
280 dollars. Do I hear 290? I'm
looking for 290...

MELISSA

(to Jackie)

What do you think? Should I keep
going?

JACKIE

It's a nice rocker but \$290 is a
bit high, don't you think?

The snooty-nosed old lady pushes the bid to \$290.

MELISSA

I have a good feeling about that
chair. It's calling me.

Before the auctioneer can ask for a new bid Melissa stands
up.

MELISSA

Three hundred!

Everyone is looking at Melissa. The snooty-nosed old lady turns away. The auctioneer tries for a higher bid but there are no more bidders.

AUCTIONEER

Sold! Three hundred dollars.

Melissa takes her seat. She has a weak smile.

MELISSA

Michael's going to kill me.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD HOME OFFICE - DAY

Michael is standing in front of the computer gripping a golf club. He's still wearing his running pants. He waggles the club then starts a full backswing, knocking over a picture frame in the process.

He retrieves the now broken picture frame and stuffs it into the sock drawer. He hears Marcus BARKING downstairs and decides to investigate, stopping first in Amber's room to check on her. She's not there. He looks down the hallway.

MICHAEL

Amber!

He searches a few rooms downstairs before heading to the kitchen. He finds Amber standing on a chair by the kitchen sink. The water is running and Amber is soaking a towel.

MICHAEL

Amber, what are you doing?

AMBER

Marcus got me dirty.

MICHAEL

How did Marcus get you dirty?

AMBER

He was playing in the mud and he knocked me down.

MICHAEL

I'm sure Marcus didn't mean it.

He lifts Amber from the chair and takes the wet towel and starts to wipe Amber's dirty face. Marcus strolls in from

the laundry room. His snout, belly, and paws are covered in mud.

MICHAEL

Marcus, sit!

The dog doesn't budge.

MICHAEL

Marcus, I said sit!

(to Amber)

Amber, why don't you go upstairs
and change while I try to clean up
Marcus.

Amber walks up to the dog and points an accusing finger.

AMBER

Bad dog.

Marcus doesn't take the admonishment lightly. He bolts for the living room.

MICHAEL

Marcus, no!

Both Amber and Michael try to corral the dog. But Marcus thinks it's a game and dashes from one side of the house to the other.

When Michael finally gets hold of the dog the damage is already done. Muddy paw prints cover the light colored carpet.

MICHAEL

Melissa's going to kill me.

EXT. ESTATE AUCTION - DAY

The crowd has thinned.

JACKIE

I'm hungry. And I have to pee. Are
you ready to go?

MELISSA

Yeah, I've done enough damage for
one day.

As the two women make their way out of their row the auctioneer takes center stage once more.

AUCTIONEER

(raspy voice)

Okay, folks. We have just one more item left for today. And as always we saved the best for last.

He signals to the spotters to bring up the final item. To add a touch of drama, the item is covered by a dark cloth. Melissa and Jackie stop and stare as the item is brought up on stage.

AUCTIONEER

Folks, what I have here is something you don't see very often. In fact, I've been doing this for twenty years and I know I've never come across anything quite like this next item.

Melissa and Jackie sit back down.

AUCTIONEER

Now I know a lot of you out there are treasure seekers. And when the family of the deceased brought this item to my attention I couldn't help but get excited about what they were proposing.

He signals to the spotters to remove the cloth. Beneath the cloth is a treasure chest, or at least something that resembles a treasure chest. A padlock dangles from the center of the chest.

AUCTIONEER

Now this is what the family told me about this particular item. They were going through the estate when they came across this hope chest down in the basement. Since they didn't have a key and they had no way of cutting off the padlock at the time, they decided to let it go until later. Well, they had completely forgotten about it until two days ago when we came here to set things up. They asked me what I thought about auctioning off the item as is, unopened. I said hell yeah. This

is the kind of thing bargain hunters dream of. Now it might be that there's nothing but a bunch of smelly old blankets in here or it might be something more valuable. The hope chest itself is an antique. So here it is folks. Not even the family knows what's inside.

MELISSA

(to Jackie)

What do you think? You want to stay?

JACKIE

Are you kidding? I wanna see what's inside that thing as much as you do.

BIDDING BEGINS

The bidding for the hope chest is fast and furious. The starting bid of \$200 is quickly pushed to \$400. From there it inches up to the winning bid of \$500. The winning bidder is the snooty-nosed old lady who Melissa out bid on the rocker.

The old lady is invited up on stage and handed a bolt cutter. She grabs the bolt cutter with both hands and positions it over the padlock.

CLOSE ON THE PADLOCK

Just as the bolt cutter is about to cut through the padlock the woman backs away.

The woman whispers something to the auctioneer. The auctioneer reluctantly steps forward.

AUCTIONEER

Sorry, folks. But the buyer has informed me that she would prefer to not open the chest on stage.

The crowd voices their disappointment.

AUCTIONEER

I know, I know, but it's her item and she can do with it as she pleases. Thank you all for coming.

JACKIE

Now I really have to pee. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm going to use the Porta Potty.

MELISSA

Okay. I'll go pay for the rocker. I'll meet you out front.

IN FRONT OF THE ESTATE AUCTION HOUSE - LATER

Melissa is sitting in her rocking chair waiting for Jackie when she spots the snooty-nosed old lady arguing with two men. The two men are trying unsuccessfully to fit the hope chest into the woman's small trunk.

SPOTTER

I'm sorry, ma'am. But this just ain't gonna fit.

OLD LADY

It has to fit. Try it the other way.

The two men reposition the hope chest lengthwise, but it's hopeless.

SPOTTER

You can pick it up tomorrow. I'll make sure that it's put aside for you.

OLD LADY

No. That won't do.

The old woman tries shoving the chest into the trunk but gets nowhere.

OLD LADY

I want my money back. I don't want this stupid thing anyway.

SPOTTER

Ma'am, I don't think that's possible.

OLD LADY

What do you mean that's not possible? I don't see why -

Melissa approaches the old woman and the two spotters.

MELISSA

Excuse me. I couldn't help but overhear the problem you're having. Maybe I can help.

OLD LADY

How's that?

MELISSA

Well, you remember that cute little rocker you were interested in. I'm sure that these two young men could fit that into your trunk.

ESTATE AUCTION - LATER

The two spotters load the hope chest into the back of Jackie's pickup truck. The dejected old lady drives by with the rocking chair dangling precariously from her trunk.

JACKIE

I can't believe you talked her down to \$400.

MELISSA

Well, I still owe you a hundred.

JACKIE

No hurry. It was worth it just to see her face.

(beat)

I have an idea.

MELISSA

What?

JACKIE

How about instead of you paying me back the \$100 you agree to give me one fourth of whatever's inside.

MELISSA

But what if it's just some smelly old blankets like he said?

JACKIE

I'm willing to take the chance. You only live once, right?

The two women jump inside the truck and close the doors.

JACKIE

Good thing we brought the truck.

EXT. JACKIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jackie backs the truck into the driveway. They exit the truck and together start pulling and shoving the hope chest toward the tailgate. A NEIGHBOR, washing his car, looks on curiously.

NEIGHBOR

Need some help?

JACKIE

We got it, thanks.

Jackie and Melissa struggle to carry the hope chest into the garage. Jackie scrounges through a tool chest until finding a crow bar. She tries to pry open the lock on the hope chest with the crow bar but is unsuccessful.

MELISSA

Got a hammer?

Jackie returns to the tool chest and retrieves a hammer. She starts pounding away on the lock. The nosy neighbor hears the POUNDING and walks up to the open garage.

NEIGHBOR

Everything okay?

JACKIE

Yeah, we're fine. Thanks. Just about got it.

NEIGHBOR

All right. Let me know if you need anything.

The neighbor walks away, looking back over his shoulder.

MELISSA

Let's shoot it off. Doesn't Drew own a gun?

JACKIE

If he did I would have shot him by now.

A car pulls into the driveway and Jackie's husband DREW gets out. Drew is solidly built. He's wearing a baseball cap.

DREW

What's that thing and how much did it cost?

JACKIE

It's a hope chest. Melissa bought it at the estate auction. We're trying to get the lock off. Any suggestions?

Drew goes to the tool chest and pulls out a bolt cutter.

DREW

I'll open it, but I get a third of the loot if there's any money inside.

Jackie grabs the bolt cutter from her husband.

JACKIE

I'll do it myself.

Jackie snaps the lock off with the bolt cutter.

DREW

(to Melissa)

So how much did you pay for this thing anyway?

JACKIE

That's none of your business.

Jackie removes the lock and steps away.

JACKIE

(to Melissa)

It's all yours.

Melissa approaches the hope chest cautiously. She reaches to open the lid. The three of them stare at the hope chest as if it had just washed ashore on a deserted beach.

MELISSA'S POV

As the lid is raised a doll can be seen sitting atop a quilt.

JACKIE

What is it?

Melissa removes the doll.

MELISSA

Looks like one of those GI-Joe dolls.

JACKIE

Let me see.

Melissa hands Jackie the doll.

JACKIE

Amber would love this.

MELISSA

But this is a toy for a little boy.

JACKIE

It's a doll. I don't think it would make any difference to her.

MELISSA

Maybe you're right. This was a pretty expensive doll, though.

JACKIE

Look and see if there's anything else inside.

Melissa reaches into the hope chest.

MELISSA

Looks like a quilt.

She tugs on the quilt, which takes up a good portion of the hope chest. As she removes the large quilt they all hear the distinct SOUND of GLASS HITTING GLASS.

Melissa carefully unfolds the quilt to reveal several small amber colored bottles about the size of a bottle of cough medicine. She picks up one of the bottles and reads from the label.

MELISSA

Dr. Baum's Amazing Elixir.

(beat)

Cures the following ailments:
consumption, diseases of the
blood, Bright's disease,
dysentery, dyspepsia, scrofula,
and colds. Can also be used for
women's complaints and male
weakness. Directions: Take a
teaspoonful thrice daily or
oftener as an effectual cure.

JACKIE

Let me see.

Jackie examines the bottle.

JACKIE

Look, there's more at the bottom.
(reading)
Walbridge Company, Dunsmuir,
California 1906.

Jackie picks up another bottle.

JACKIE

This one is dated 1906, too. These
might be worth something.

MELISSA

If they're worth anything it can't
be much.

Drew grabs one of the bottles from the hope chest. He
unscrews the cap and takes a whiff.

DREW

Smells like alcohol.

He dabs some on his finger and tastes it.

DREW

Tastes like alcohol. If this
stuff's authentic it could be
worth a hell of a lot.

MELISSA

Really!

Drew waves the opened bottle under the noses of Melissa and
Jackie.

JACKIE

You know, Drew might be right. This is patent medicine. I've seen bottles like these at antique shops, but I've never seen any with the medicine still inside the bottle.

MELISSA

What do you think we should do?

JACKIE

We need to show this to someone who can tell us if it's worth something. Like a collector.

MELISSA

I don't know anybody like that.

JACKIE

I might know someone.

MELISSA

Who?

JACKIE

Give me a couple of days.

Melissa removes the remaining bottles from the hope chest and lines them up. Drew places the cap back on the bottle he's holding and puts it with the others. There are a total of twelve bottles.

MELISSA

We agreed that you would get one fourth of whatever was inside the hope chest for your \$100 contribution, right?

JACKIE

Yeah, but are you sure?

MELISSA

I'm sure. These three bottles are yours. I hope you're right about these being worth something. Michael is always complaining about me buying junk. I'd love to prove him wrong for once.

JACKIE

I wouldn't get too excited just yet. They might not be worth that much.

Drew picks up one the bottles.

DREW

(reading from the label)

Well, if nothing else you discovered a cure for scrofula and the common cold...

(beat)

and Bright's disease whatever the hell that is.

INT. DESMOND KITCHEN - DAY

Amber is standing on a chair leaning on the kitchen counter, staring at the toaster. Her mom looks on. Two waffles emerge from the toaster.

Amber grabs the tub of butter and the syrup from the counter top and smothers the waffles with both.

AMBER

All done.

MELISSA

Amber, you're going to get sick eating your waffles with all that gunk on it.

AMBER

But I like it this way.

She takes a bite of her waffles. Syrup runs down the corner of her mouth, which she then wipes with her sleeve. She eats a couple more small bites.

AMBER

I'm not hungry anymore. Can I make waffles for you and daddy?

MELISSA

Okay, sweetie. Put some waffles in the toaster then go and wake up your father.

Amber reaches into the box for two more waffles. Marcus jumps onto the countertop with his two front paws to have a look around.

MELISSA

Marcus, off!

Marcus spots the open tub of butter and starts to lick it before Melissa is able to stop him.

MELISSA

Marcus, you stupid dog. Now look what you did. We're going to have to throw this away because of you.

Melissa hands the tub of butter to Amber. Amber holds the tub away from her in outstretched arms as she carries it to the trash can. Michael walks into the kitchen.

MICHAEL

What smells so good?

AMBER

I made waffles.

MICHAEL

You did?

AMBER

Yep. All by myself.

MICHAEL

That's pretty good, baby doll. I'm proud of you.

He grabs Amber and lifts her high into the air then drapes her over his shoulder so that she's hanging upside down.

MELISSA

Come on, Michael, put her down. You're going to make her sick.

Michael complies.

MICHAEL

Okay, where's my breakfast?

AMBER

I'll get it for you.

Michael picks up the morning paper from the table and squints at the fine print.

MICHAEL

Have you seen my reading glasses?

MELISSA

Did you look in your office?

MICHAEL

I looked everywhere.

He glances around the room. His eyes finally come to rest on his wife. She is wearing a dress and heels.

MICHAEL

You look nice.

MELISSA

Thanks. I have three showings today.

(beat)

So what do you two have planned for today?

MICHAEL

I thought we'd go for a bicycle ride.

Amber grabs the waffles from the toaster.

AMBER

Can we go to the park?

MICHAEL

Yep. And maybe we'll take a ride down to the ice-cream parlor after that.

AMBER

Can I get a chocolate ice-cream cone?

MICHAEL

You bet.

Michael reaches for the syrup. He scans the table and then the kitchen counter.

MICHAEL

Where's the butter?

AMBER

I threw it away.

MICHAEL

What!

He goes to the trash to retrieve the butter.

MICHAEL

There's still butter in here,
Amber. You shouldn't throw food
away like this. You need to learn-

AMBER

But -

MICHAEL

I don't want to hear any excuses.

Melissa signals to Amber to hush. Michael grabs a knife and
spreads the butter over his waffles.

MICHAEL

You don't throw food away. Is that understood?"

AMBER

Yeah, but Marcus-

MICHAEL

(sternly)

Amber.

Marcus strolls into the kitchen.

MICHAEL

Marcus, sit.

Marcus sits next to his master, tail wagging. Melissa
smiles as Michael wolfs down his waffles. Amber stares at
her dad as though he might get sick at any second.

MICHAEL

(to Amber)

These are great waffles, honey.

(to Melissa)

Want some?

MELISSA

I'll pass thanks.

Melissa grabs her purse. She hugs Amber and starts to walk
out of the room when she notices the GI-Joe doll sitting on
top of the bread box.

MELISSA

Oh, I almost forgot.

She hands the doll to Amber.

MELISSA

I got this for you. You were
asleep when I got home.

Michael looks suspiciously at the toy. Amber examines every square inch of her new toy.

INT. BRADFORD HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - DAY

Jackie is holding one of the medicine bottles up to the light.

JACKIE

You think this stuff does
anything?

DREW

It's patent medicine. There's no
such thing as a cure-all. If it
did just one thing that was listed
on that label, I can assure you
that it wouldn't have been locked
away in some hope chest.

She picks up one of the other bottles and holds it up to the light.

JACKIE

That's what I don't understand.
Why did he have the stuff locked
up?

She puts the bottle down and faces her husband.

JACKIE

You know, there were other bottles
there at the auction. I saw some
on one of the tables inside the
house. They were all empty. There
must have been twenty of them.

DREW

Maybe the guy was a collector.

Drew picks up a bottle and looks it over.

DREW

This stuff could be worth a lot of money. It has to be pretty rare to find actual patent medicine from the 1900s.

JACKIE

I thought I'd stop by the antique shop tomorrow. If they don't know what the bottles are worth, maybe they can help me find out.

DREW

(reading the label)

Cures the following ailments: consumption, diseases of the blood, Bright's disease, dysentery, dyspepsia, scrofula, and colds. I ain't heard of half the stuff that's on here.

(reading further)

It says here that it can also be used for women's complaints. Maybe you oughta give this stuff a try. You complain all the time.

Jackie grabs the bottle from Drew.

JACKIE

I wouldn't complain so much if I didn't have to put up with you.

(reading)

It also says it can be used for male weakness.

DREW

Yeah, well I'm just having a temporary problem that a lot of guys my age experience.

JACKIE

(reading)

Take a teaspoonful thrice daily or oftener as an effectual cure.

She unscrews the cap of one of the bottles and grabs a teaspoon from the drawer. She looks at her husband.

JACKIE

I'm game if you're game.

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

A for sale sign is in the front yard. Melissa pulls into the driveway. She exits the car along with a young couple.

MELISSA

I think you're really going to like this one. Wait 'till you see the kitchen.

EXT. DESMOND DRIVEWAY - DAY

Michael peddles his bicycle up the driveway. Amber is sitting in a child seat directly behind him. They both wear helmets. Michael helps Amber from the bike and removes his helmet. Amber grabs her GI-Joe doll from a saddle bag.

AMBER

I'm thirsty.

MICHAEL

I'll get you something to drink as soon as we get inside.

AMBER

Can I have chocolate milk?

MICHAEL

I guess.

AMBER

Can I have some cookies, too?

Michael opens the front door.

MICHAEL

You need to eat something other than cookies.

AMBER

But that's what I want.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD LIVING ROOM - DAY

As soon as Michael gets the door open Marcus is there to greet them. The dog slobbers all over Amber's arm.

AMBER

Marcus, stop it.

She wipes her arm on her pants.

AMBER

Daddy, Marcus licked me.

Michael lets Marcus outside then heads for the kitchen. He opens the Fridge.

MICHAEL

How about a sandwich and some potato salad?

AMBER

I want chocolate milk and cookies.

MICHAEL

But you've already had ice-cream and a candy bar, Amber.

AMBER

(whiny)

I don't want a sandwich. I want chocolate milk and cookies. Then I wanna watch cartoons.

Michael relents and gives Amber the milk and cookies.

MICHAEL

I'm going upstairs to take a shower. Do me a favor and put your toys away, and let Marcus in when he comes to the door.

MONTAGE

Michael in the shower

Amber picks up her toys and throws them into the hope chest, which is now serving as a toy chest.

Michael toweling off

Amber sits in front of the TV watching cartoons. Marcus is lying beside her. She is holding her GI-Joe doll and sitting only inches from the screen.

LIVING ROOM

Michael walks into the living room.

MICHAEL

Amber, you need to have a bath before your mother gets home. And don't sit so close to the TV.

Amber scoots away from the screen. Michael plops down on a recliner. He watches a few seconds of cartoons and then falls asleep.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Michael awakes to the SOUND of Amber MOANING. He finds her curled up on the couch clutching GI-Joe.

MICHAEL

Amber, what's wrong?

AMBER

I don't feel good.

Michael touches her forehead.

MICHAEL

You have a tummy ache?

AMBER

Uh-huh.

MICHAEL

Do you know where mommy keeps the medicine?

AMBER

I think I'm gonna throw up.

MICHAEL

Hold on, Amber. Hold on. I'll get you something to make you feel better.

Michael heads upstairs to the master bedroom. He searches through the bathroom medicine cabinet. He finds cough medicine, cold medicine, diarrhea medicine, but nothing for a stomach ache.

He runs downstairs and starts rummaging through the shelves where they keep extra food and cleaning supplies. He finds an unmarked box and looks inside.

He picks up one of the bottles from inside the box. He doesn't have his reading glasses on and has to squint at the small type.

MICHAEL

(reading)

Dr. Baum's Amazing Elixir.

MICHAEL'S POV

The fine print on the rest of the label is a blur.

AMBER (O.S.)

Daddy!

Michael runs back upstairs with the bottle. He grabs a teaspoon from the kitchen and runs to his daughter's side. He pours the medicine into the spoon and has Amber swallow it. He gives her a second teaspoon full.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Michael is asleep on the recliner when Melissa walks in. She kicks off her heels, waking up Michael.

MELISSA

So, spending all day with a three year old isn't as easy as it looks, is it?

MICHAEL

No, it isn't. She got sick.

MELISSA

Sick from what?

MICHAEL

I don't know. I guess she had too much junk food. I shoulda known better.

MELISSA

Where is she now?

MICHAEL

She's fine. She's upstairs sleeping. I gave her some of that medicine from downstairs and she went right to sleep.

MELISSA

What medicine?

MICHAEL

That stuff you keep in a box downstairs. That elixir.

MELISSA

Oh my God!

MICHAEL

What?

Melissa runs upstairs. Michael follows close behind.

MICHAEL

What's wrong?

Melissa doesn't answer. She bursts into Amber's room.

MELISSA

Amber!

Amber doesn't respond. Her eyes are closed. Melissa leans over the bed and shakes Amber's arm. Melissa turns toward her husband who is still standing there looking dumbfounded.

MELISSA

Call 911! I think she may have been poisoned.

Michael disappears and returns seconds later with a phone in his hands. Amber wakes up before he can dial.

AMBER

Hi, mommy.

MICHAEL

What should I do?

Melissa examines Amber closely. She feels her forehead.

MELISSA

Amber do you feel all right?

AMBER

Uh-huh.

MELISSA

You sure? Daddy said you were sick.

AMBER

I'm not sick anymore.

MELISSA

(to Michael)

She's all right. You don't have to call.

MICHAEL

What was that all about?

MELISSA

It's my fault. I should have told you.

MICHAEL

Told me what?

INT. DESMOND HOME OFFICE - DAY

Michael is reviewing a thick stack of laser printed pages. He makes a correction on one page then goes to the computer to make the correction there. He does this a few more times until reaching the last page.

He puts the stack of papers on his desk then heads downstairs. He finds Amber sitting inches away from the television.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

On screen is an old WWII movie.

MICHAEL

Amber, what are you watching?

AMBER

GI-Joe.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION

A soldier is in a firefight.

MICHAEL

I don't think you should be watching this. And didn't I tell you to not sit so close to the TV?

Amber scoots back away from the TV.

MICHAEL

Aren't there any cartoons you can watch?

AMBER

Why can't I watch GI-Joe?

MICHAEL

This is a show for grown-ups.

Michael grabs the remote and turns off the TV.

MICHAEL

Why don't you go upstairs and change.

AMBER

Can I play on the computer?

MICHAEL

For a little while. I have a lot of work to do today.

HOME OFFICE

Amber is on the computer.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER

An ANIMATED CHARACTER wearing a sombrero is on the screen.

ANIMATED CHARACTER

(software program)

Que es su nombre?

AMBER

Mi nombre es Amber.

Michael peeks through the open door and watches undetected. Amber clicks something on the screen with the mouse.

ANIMATED CHARACTER

Como antiguo hay su?

AMBER

Tres.

Amber uses the mouse and seconds later her voice is replayed.

COMPUTER

(Amber's recorded voice)

Tres.

Michael smiles proudly. He heads down the hall to the master bedroom. He starts shaving with an electric razor when he hears the phone ring. He runs back to the office.

AMBER

(on the phone)

I don't know where he is. I think he's sleeping.

Michael rushes to get the phone away from his daughter.

MICHAEL

Thanks, honey. I got it.
(composes himself)
Hello.

ANIMATED CHARACTER

Buenos Dias.

MICHAEL

(to Amber)

Amber could you please not do that while I'm talking on the phone.

Amber grabs her GI-Joe doll and leaves the room.

MICHAEL

(on the phone)

Sorry about that. Uh huh. I'm almost finished. I should have it by the end of -

ANIMATED CHARACTER

Como esta usted?

MICHAEL

Just a second.

Michael grabs the mouse and tries to close out of the program

CLOSE ON COMPUTER

All of the buttons are in Spanish. He clicks on one at random.

SOFTWARE

Muy Bueno.

He tries another.

SOFTWARE

Adios

MICHAEL

Sorry about that, Charlie. Like I was saying -

AMBER (O.S.)

Nooo!

Marcus runs into the room; GI-Joe dangles from his jaws. Amber is right behind him. She grabs hold of the doll.

AMBER

(to the dog)

Let go of it!

The dog growls.

AMBER

Give it to me!

Amber and Marcus play tug-of-war with the GI-Joe doll. Amber smacks Marcus on the nose. Marcus lets go of the doll then starts barking.

MICHAEL

Marcus, stop barking!

Marcus is still upset and barking up a storm.

MICHAEL

Charlie, can I get back to you. I've got to... Yeah, I can come in today. Is there a problem? Okay. I just need to get someone to watch my daughter.

EXT. HOUSE FOR SALE - DAY

Melissa exits the front door of a house with a for sale sign in the front yard. She carefully locks the realtor lock then gets in her car.

She straps the seatbelt across her chest and puts her cell phone on the front passenger seat. As she's backing out of the driveway the phone rings.

The ringing phone distracts her. There is a loud SCREAMING sound as a car rams into the back of Melissa's car.

Melissa's air bag deploys. The car pivots before coming to a stop.

EXT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD - DAY

A tow truck pulls into the driveway and Melissa gets out. She thanks the driver before he leaves.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Melissa finds the house empty.

MELISSA

Michael!

(beat)

Amber!

She continues to look for any signs of her family.

MELISSA

Marcus!

The phone rings.

MELISSA

(picks up the phone)

Michael?

JACKIE

(filtered)

What'd he do now?

Intercut during the phone conversation.

MELISSA

He left with Amber and didn't leave a note. I've been trying to get a hold of him all day.

(beat)

I wrecked the car today.

JACKIE

(filtered)

Are you all right?

MELISSA

Yeah, I'm fine but the car is another story.

JACKIE
(filtered)
What happened?

MELISSA
I was backing out of a driveway. I took my eyes off the road for a second. The next thing I remember is the air bag going off.

JACKIE
(filtered)
You have insurance don't you.

MELISSA
We only have liability insurance. Michael didn't want to pay for full coverage.

JACKIE
(filtered)
Well, I might have some news that might cheer you up.

MELISSA
I doubt it.

Melissa goes to the fridge to look for something to eat.

JACKIE
(filtered)
I took one of the patent medicine bottles down to the antique shop this afternoon. I showed it to Antonio, the shop owner.

MELISSA
Yeah? What'd he say?

JACKIE
(filtered)
He said he didn't know what it was worth but that he'd take the bottle on consignment to see if there was any interest.

MELISSA
Did he suggest a price?

JACKIE
 (filtered)
 Eighty dollars.

Melissa is now scrounging through the pantry looking for anything edible.

MELISSA
 Does he really think it's worth that much?

JACKIE
 (filtered)
 You haven't heard the best part. He sold it an hour after I left.

MELISSA
 You're kidding!

JACKIE
 (filtered)
 He said the lady was so excited to get the bottle she probably would have paid twice that amount. I'm taking another bottle down there tomorrow.
 (beat)
 I knew you'd want to know about it. Hope everything works out with your car.

MELISSA
 Thanks.

The doorbell RINGS and Melissa heads for the front door. Amber and Marcus come bounding through the door. Her mother-in-law, LORETTA, 63, with short gray hair and spectacles, is close behind.

AMBER
 Hi, mommy.

Melissa wraps her arms around Amber and lifts her up. Loretta walks in carrying a shopping bag.

LORETTA
 Amber and I went shopping. I hope you don't mind.

MELISSA
 Not at all.

(to Amber)
So what'd grandma buy you?

AMBER
Clothes.

Melissa puts Amber down.

MELISSA
Can I see?

AMBER
I'll put them on for you.

Loretta hands Amber the bag. Marcus sticks his nose in the bag, forcing Amber to yank it away. She runs upstairs with Marcus in close pursuit.

LORETTA
(apologetically)
I hope you don't mind.

MELISSA
You can buy her things if you want to.

LORETTA
Well, your daughter has a strange taste in clothes.

MELISSA
I'm sure they'll be fine.
(beat)
Have you eaten?

LORETTA
Amber and I stopped by McDonald's on the way over. I'm sorry.

MELISSA
Will you stop apologizing. Geez. I should be apologizing to you. You're the one who had to babysit. Which reminds me, what happened to Michael?

LORETTA
He called this afternoon. Said he had to go in to work.

MELISSA
(concerned)

Oh.

INT. BRADFORD HOUSEHOLD MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Drew walks in on his wife who is standing over the bathroom sink fixing her hair. He walks up behind her and starts to kiss her neck and shoulders.

DREW
How come your necklace smells like a cigar?

JACKIE
If you're trying to get lucky, you might want come up with a better line.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Melissa and Loretta are watching TV. Michael enters the living room carrying fast food bags.

MICHAEL
Where's the car?

MELISSA
It's in the shop. I had an accident this morning. I've been trying to call you all day.

Michael checks his cell phone.

MICHAEL
I guess I forgot to turn it on. How bad is the car?

MELISSA
I'm feeling fine. Thanks for your concern.

MICHAEL
I'm sorry. But you obviously don't look like you were hurt. And we can't afford to be without a second car.

(to his mom)
I didn't know you were going to be here. I would have brought you something.

LORETTA

I ate.

AMBER (O.S.)

Close your eyes.

MELISSA

Amber and grandma went shopping today. She wants to show us what grandma bought her.

(beat)

Okay, honey. Our eyes are closed.

Marcus comes barreling down the stairs. Amber saunters into the room wearing green army fatigues, or at least something resembling green army fatigues. She's wearing a green t-shirt and camouflage pants.

She's beaming as she strikes a pose as if she is ready for hand to hand combat.

AMBER

Okay, you can open your eyes now.

Michael shoots his mom a quizzical stare. Even Marcus is stunned.

MICHAEL

You bought that?

LORETTA

It's what she wanted. I didn't -

MELISSA

The clothes are fine.

(to Amber)

You look great, honey. That color matches your eyes. Why don't you go upstairs and change into your old clothes now so you don't get these dirty.

AMBER

Okay.

LORETTA

I guess I should be going.

MICHAEL

Why would you buy -

MELISSA

Thanks for helping out.

They walk to the door.

INT. BRADFORD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jackie and Drew are having sex. Jackie is on top. Nothing graphic. Just shapes and sounds in dim light. Jackie has an orgasm and collapses by her husband.

JACKIE

That was incredible.

DREW

I haven't felt like that since my first year of college, and even then it was never that good.

JACKIE

Maybe it's something you ate.

DREW

It's not anything I ate.

Drew gets up from bed and puts on some long pajama pants. He enters the master bathroom.

BATHROOM

Sitting on the counter is one of the medicine bottles and a spoon. Drew picks up the bottle and examines it against the light.

DREW

Maybe you should call that guy down at the antique store and tell him that you changed your mind about selling that second bottle.

MELISSA (O.S.)

Come on. You don't really think that that stuff helped you, do you?

DREW

You have a better explanation?

INT. DESMOND MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Michael and Melissa are both in bed. Michael is under the covers and wearing a sleeping mask. Melissa is wearing

flannel pajamas and sitting on top of the covers, leaning against a stack of pillows.

She is reading a magazine by the light of a table lamp.

MELISSA

I don't believe this.

MICHAEL

What?

MELISSA

There's an ad here for a company selling natural supplements. They've got pills to help you sleep, diet pills, pills that improve your cholesterol, immune system boosters, and a natural supplement to improve your focus.

MICHAEL

Did you say there was a pill to help you go to sleep?

MELISSA

Listen to this. Here's a supplement that's supposed to make your breasts larger. Can you believe that?

MICHAEL

I guess it's possible.

MELISSA

You're kidding, right? Do you really think that you can have bigger breasts just by taking a pill?

MICHAEL

I don't know. Maybe it helps produce more lactose or something.

MELISSA

Excuse me Doctor Desmond. I should get a bottle just to prove to you that it doesn't work.

MICHAEL

Maybe you should.

MELISSA

So what are you saying? You think my breasts are too small?

Michael lifts the sleep mask off his eyes.

MICHAEL

There's nothing wrong with your breasts. They're perfect.

MELISSA

No they're not. You're just saying that to shut me up. They're small. Admit it. There are ten year olds running around with bigger breasts than me.

MICHAEL

I still love you.

MELISSA

See. So you do think I have small breasts.

MICHAEL

Okay, so you have small breasts. I was never into breasts anyway. Besides, you have killer legs.

MELISSA

Really. You think I have killer legs?

MICHAEL

Well, what I can remember of them. I haven't seen them for a while.

Melissa rolls her pajama pants up revealing her calves.

MELISSA

You mean these?

Michael reaches over and rubs Melissa's bare legs. She abruptly jumps out of bed before things go any further.

MELISSA

Maybe you'd like me even more if I had bigger breasts.

MASTER BATHROOM

Melissa goes to the bathroom to freshen up.

MELISSA

You kill me.

(imitating Michael)

Maybe it helps produce more
lactose or something.

While she's in the bathroom spritzing on some perfume she examines her breasts. She sticks out her chest and views her breasts in profile.

MELISSA

You know, I wouldn't mind having
bigger breasts. It'd be kind of
nice to be able to fill out a
sweater for a change.

She lifts her breasts and forces them outward to give the appearance of bigger breasts.

BEDROOM

MICHAEL

You fill out a sweater just fine.
Trust me.

There is no response from the bathroom. There is no sound at all coming from the bathroom.

MICHAEL

You all right in there?

After a brief moment of silence Melissa exits the bathroom with a worried look on her face.

MICHAEL

What's wrong?

MELISSA

I felt a lump.

MICHAEL

A lump?

MELISSA

Yeah, on my left breast.

She climbs into bed with her husband. She unbuttons her top then guides his hand to where she felt the lump.

MELISSA

Right there. Do you feel that?

MICHAEL

It's probably nothing. But maybe you should have it looked at.

She rests her head on his chest.

INT. DESMOND HOME OFFICE - DAY

Michael is staring at the computer screen and working the mouse. Melissa comes to the door wearing an above the knee robe, her hair is rolled up in a towel.

MELISSA

Shower's open.

MICHAEL

Come here. Look at this.

MELISSA

What?

She walks in but keeps a safe distance from her husband.

MICHAEL

Come closer. You need to see this.

MELISSA

Okay, but don't try anything. We don't have time to fool around.

MICHAEL

I promise.

Melissa slides up next to her husband and leans over to view the computer screen.

CLOSE ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN

A bottle of Dr. Baum's Amazing Elixir fills the screen.

MELISSA

Is that my medicine bottle?

MICHAEL

I think so.

MELISSA

He has an internet site?

MICHAEL

Yeah, and by the looks of it he must be doing pretty good.

MELISSA

Are you thinking what I'm thinking?

MICHAEL & MELISSA

(in unison)

Ebay.

MICHAEL

How many bottles do you have left?

MELISSA

Let's see. There were twelve bottles in the hope chest. I gave three to Jackie and I took five bottles to the antique shop. So that leaves four.

MICHAEL

Just say the word.

MELISSA

Go ahead. Do it. Maybe we should start with just one bottle and go from there.

MICHAEL

Consider it done.

Michael looks up at Melissa who is still leaning over looking at the computer screen. He reaches up and starts to untie her robe. She slaps his hand away.

MICHAEL

What? I was just trying to tighten it for you.

He grabs his wife and pulls her toward him. She falls across his lap. He unties the robe.

MELISSA

Michael, stop it. We don't have time. You have to drive me to the doctor's office.

Melissa puts up a half hearted defense, letting her robe fall partially open. Things are getting hot and heavy when Amber walks in.

AMBER

What are you guys doing?

Melissa re-ties her robe and gets up from Michael's lap. Amber is looking at her parents suspiciously. She has her GI-Joe doll in one hand and the lion doll from her Wizard of Oz collection in the other.

MELISSA

You're father was just helping me get ready for work.

Melissa spots the GI-Joe and the lion.

MELISSA

I see you got your lion doll. Are you playing Wizard of Oz again?

AMBER

No! I'm playing GI-Joe in the jungle. GI-Joe just shot the lion

Michael rolls his eyes. Melissa crouches down to eye level with Amber.

MELISSA

That wasn't very nice. I liked the lion.

Melissa puts on her pouty face.

AMBER

He's not really dead. I'm taking him to the animal hospital to get fixed.

Melissa scoops Amber up in her arms.

MELISSA

Well, I'm certainly glad to hear that. Let's go see if we can't fix up Mr. Lion.

(to Michael)

Will you go take your shower? I don't want to be late.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Melissa is wearing an opened hospital gown. A nurse is with her as she has an x-ray taken of her left breast.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD HOME OFFICE - DAY

Michael is busy again at the computer. This time he is inspired as he types away at a furious pace. Melissa enters the room. A battery operated Weedwacker sits on the computer desk.

MICHAEL

Here listen to this and tell me what you think.

(reading off the screen)

The battery operated Yardman trimmer is lightweight yet durable. A fully charged unit will provide up to forty-five minutes of environmentally friendly trimming. It is also quieter than comparable gas operated trimmers.

MELISSA

(sarcastic)

That's good. Makes me wanna go out buy one.

MICHAEL

Shut up. You try finding something interesting to say about a weedwacker.

MELISSA

I'm just teasing you

.

She leans forward to read the screen herself.

MELISSA

How do you know it's quieter? Did you test it?

MICHAEL

It's electric. It has to be quieter. Here watch.

Michael picks up the trimmer and turns it on. The SOUND is deafening.

MELISSA
 (yelling)
 Yeah, that's definitely quieter.

MICHAEL
 That wasn't a fair test. We'd have
 to run a gas trimmer to compare
 the two.

MELISSA
 No thanks. I believe you.

Michael leans the trimmer against the desk and takes his
 seat.

MICHAEL
 So how you doin'?

MELISSA
 Fine. A little nervous.

MICHAEL
 Don't worry. We'll get through
 this. Hopefully it will turn out
 to be a cyst like she said.

The phone rings and Michael picks up.

MICHAEL
 Hello...yeah, just a second.

He hands Melissa the phone

MELISSA
 Hello...yes...all five?
 (incredulous)
 That's great. Thanks for calling.
 (to Michael after
 handing the phone
 back to him)
 That was the antique shop. They
 sold all five medicine bottles.

MICHAEL
 How much?

MELISSA
 Our take after his commission is
 \$675.

Michael contemplates the good news.

MICHAEL

I take back everything I ever said
about garage sales.

MELISSA

It wasn't a garage sale.

(beat)

Look, have you set up that auction
on Ebay yet?

MICHAEL

Yeah, why?

MELISSA

Can you stop it?

MICHAEL

Stop it. Why would I want to do
that?

MELISSA

Don't you think it's a bit unusual
for those medicine bottles to sell
so quickly?

MICHAEL

No.

MELISSA

I do. What if the people who
bought the medicine bottles
weren't buying them as
collectibles?

MICHAEL

Whadda you mean?

MELISSA

I talked to Jackie this afternoon.
She told me that she and Drew had
taken some of the medicine on a
dare.

(beat)

I'm not supposed to tell you this,
but she said that she and Drew had
been having problems in the
bedroom. She said that after they
took the medicine they had the
best sex they ever had.

MICHAEL

So what are you saying? That this medicine is some kind of liquid Viagra?

MELISSA

No.

Melissa turns the bottle around so she can read the label.

MELISSA

It says right here on the label that it can also be used for women's complaints and male weakness.

MICHAEL

I'm not following you.

MELISSA

Okay, Drew takes the medicine and he becomes super stud in the bedroom. You give Amber some of the medicine and she feels better. Here's what it says on the bottle.

(reading)

Cures the following ailments: consumption, diseases of the blood, Bright's disease, dysentery, dyspepsia, scrofula, and colds.

Melissa hands the bottle to Michael so he can read it for himself.

MELISSA

Do you know what dyspepsia is?

MICHAEL

Not a clue.

MELISSA

It's a fancy way of saying indigestion. I looked it up.

MICHAEL

All right let me see if I got this straight. You want me to believe that the stuff in this bottle actually works?

MELISSA

No. But what if the people who bought the bottles purchased them not because they were antiques but because of what was on this label?

MICHAEL

That's ridiculous.

MELISSA

I know it sounds ridiculous, but Drew and Jackie tried it. All I'm saying is that we need to be careful about this. What if someone takes the medicine and gets sick or, God forbid, dies. We could be held liable.

MICHAEL

I don't think you have to worry about that. The auction is for a patent medicine bottle. I think it's pretty clear what the intent is.

MELISSA

Maybe so. But do me a favor and don't put the other bottles up for auction just yet. I want to do a little more research.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Melissa is carrying a stack of children's books. She has Amber sit down at a table and puts the books in front of her.

MELISSA

Here, Amber. Go through these and pick out the books you want to take home.

Amber happily starts paging through the books. With Amber occupied for the moment, Melissa heads to one of the reference computers.

CLOSE ON COMPUTER

Melissa pulls up the subject search dialogue and types in the words Patent Medicine.

She jots down the reference numbers for a few books then heads to the library shelves to find the books. After selecting two books, she heads to a microfiche.

CLOSE ON MICROFICHE

Melissa pulls up an obituary page and jots down some information.

Melissa returns back to the table where she had left Amber. The books are there, but Amber isn't.

MELISSA'S POV

Melissa looks in every direction but finds no trace of Amber. She starts walking, looking between the rows of book shelves. Finally, she spots Amber talking to a LIBRARIAN at the reference desk. Amber is holding a book.

MELISSA

Amber, you had me worried. I was looking all over for you.

LIBRARIAN

She just wanted me to find a book for her.

MELISSA

Thank you. She's hasn't gotten to the shy stage just yet.

(to Amber)

So what book did you get?

Amber hands the heavy book to her mom.

CLOSE ON BOOK

A GI-Joe action figure is on the cover. The title of the book is GI-Joe Collectibles.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - DAY

Melissa and Amber approach the front door of an old row house. Amber is holding her GI-Joe doll in one hand. Melissa knocks and an elderly man answers the door.

MELISSA

Mr. Grevin, hi. I'm Melissa Desmond and this is my daughter Amber.

JOHN GREVIN, mid eighties with just a wisp of hair framing a weathered face, smiles.

JOHN GREVIN

I don't get many visitors these days, especially ones as pretty as you two. Come on in.

INT. THE LIVINGROOM OF JOHN GREVIN'S HOUSE

Melissa and Amber sit on an old, plaid love seat. The room is dimly lit by a single lamp. A thick green carpet soaks up what little light is able to wend its way around the opaque ivory curtains.

John Grevin enters the room carrying a plate of cookies and a TV tray. He unfolds the TV tray and places the cookies on the tray before sitting down in an oversized recliner. Amber and Melissa both grab a cookie.

JOHN GREVIN

So you bought dad's hope chest.
Can I ask what was inside?

Melissa starts rummaging through her purse.

MELISSA

Well, yes. That's why I'm here.

She pulls out one of the medicine bottles and hands it to him.

MELISSA

There were twelve of these inside.

He examines the bottle briefly before handing it back to Melissa.

JOHN GREVIN

Doesn't surprise me. Was this all you found?

MELISSA

Yes...well, no. There were some blankets and a doll. Nothing else. I wanted to know what you could tell me about the medicine bottles?

John Grevin gets up from his chair.

JOHN GREVIN

Just a second. I'll be right back.

Amber takes the opportunity to help herself to another cookie. John Grevin returns holding three empty medicine bottles.

JOHN GREVIN

There's more where these came from.

He places the bottles on the TV tray.

MELISSA

I don't understand.

JOHN GREVIN

My dad renovated old buildings. One of the buildings he was renovating was an old drug store. That's where he found the medicine bottles.

MELISSA

When was this?

Grevin grabs a cookie before continuing.

JOHN GREVIN

Probably 1941 or 42. It was right before the war. Anyway, this stuff was outlawed back in 1906. So it had to have been locked away for thirty plus years before my dad stumbled across it.

MELISSA

How many bottles were there?

JOHN GREVIN

I have no idea. It had to be in the hundreds. He's been giving away bottles to family members for as long as I can remember. Anytime he heard that someone was sick he'd send a bottle. He's been sending me a bottle every year or so for the past twenty years.

MELISSA

So did you take the medicine?

JOHN GREVIN

(chuckles)

No, I don't know of anyone who actually used the stuff, except for my dad.

MELISSA

Your dad took the medicine?

JOHN GREVIN

He claims that it cured him of a bad case of dysentery. From that point on he'd take a teaspoon or two anytime he felt something coming on. Since he didn't seem to have any ill effects, I never pressed the issue.

MELISSA

What did you do with the bottles that he would send you?

JOHN GREVIN

At first I would just throw them out. As time went on, though, they became somewhat valuable as collectibles. So I'd empty the bottles and sell them to antique stores.

MELISSA

But aren't they worth more with the medicine still in the bottle?

JOHN GREVIN

That might be. But I would never sell something that could potentially be harmful.

He smiles at Amber who is munching away on her cookie.

JOHN GREVIN

We wouldn't want some curious youngster to get a hold of it now, would we?

MELISSA

Are there any more bottles other than what we found?

JOHN GREVIN

I found a few bottles at my
father's house. I emptied them and
sold the bottles at the auction.

John spots the GI-Joe doll sitting on the couch next to
Amber

JOHN GREVIN

(to Amber)

Can I see your doll?

Amber hands him the doll.

AMBER

His name is GI-Joe.

JOHN GREVIN

Yes, I know. I used to sell this
toy when I was a young man.

(to Melissa)

I was a salesman for Hasbro for a
short time.

Grevin examines the doll, pulling and tugging at the
uniform as if he were looking for some identifying mark. He
hands the doll back to Amber.

JOHN GREVIN

(to Melissa)

Is this the doll you found in the
hope chest?

MELISSA

Yes, why?

JOHN GREVIN

There's no manufacturing imprint?

MELISSA

So what does that mean?

JOHN GREVIN

It means it's a prototype.

MELISSA

I don't understand.

JOHN GREVIN

Prototype dolls were given to the
salesmen to show to the store

buyers before the line was officially released. If I were you, I'd hang on to this. It could be worth something.

Melissa gets up and extends her hand.

MELISSA

Yes, I will. Well, Mr. Grevin, thank you for your time.

INT. BANK - DAY

Jackie Bradford sits at her desk. On her desk is a name plate with the title Assistant Bank Manager. She is entering something into a computer when a BANK EMPLOYEE enters the office.

BANK EMPLOYEE

You have someone here to see you.

Jackie looks through the clear glass of her office and spots a BANK CUSTOMER standing nearby. It's a woman in her mid fifties. She is well dressed.

JACKIE

Did she say what she wanted?

BANK EMPLOYEE

She just said she had to speak to you.

JACKIE

Okay, could you show her in, please?

The bank employee signals to the woman. The woman takes a seat in front of Jackie's desk.

JACKIE

How can I help you?

BANK CUSTOMER

I came here to thank you.

JACKIE

Thank me for what?

BANK CUSTOMER

I'm not sure where to begin.

She digs into her purse and pulls out one of Jackie's medicine bottles.

BANK CUSTOMER

I bought this down at the antique shop last week.

She puts the bottle on the desk. The bottle is half full.

BANK CUSTOMER

When I read what was on the label, I just had to give it a try. I was desperate.

(beat)

You see I have a tumor in my left breast. I started taking the medicine that very first night. Today my doctor told me that the tumor had shrunk; he said that it was nearly fifty per cent smaller. He couldn't believe it. And neither could I.

JACKIE

Couldn't it have been something else?

BANK CUSTOMER

I was scheduled for a mastectomy. There is no other explanation.

JACKIE

How did you track the medicine to me?

BANK CUSTOMER

The owner of the shop gave me your name. He wouldn't give it to me at first. But when I told him why I wanted to see you, he finally relented. Your husband told me that you would be here at the bank.

JACKIE

Did you tell him your story?

BANK CUSTOMER

No. I just told him that it was important that I talk to you.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD KICTHEN - DAY

Melissa is loading dishes into the dishwasher when Michael walks in carrying a shopping bag.

MICHAEL

Where's Amber? I bought her something.

MELISSA

She's upstairs playing on the computer.

He removes a large baby doll from the bag. Melissa crosses her arms.

MICHAEL

Here watch this.

Michael pushes on the doll's belly.

DOLL

My name is Jessica. Do you want to be my friend?

Michael laughs then presses the doll's belly again.

DOLL

My favorite color is pink. What's yours?

MICHAEL

Whaddaya think? There's like a hundred different sayings. Did you see how the lips moved when she talked?

MELISSA

Yeah, I saw.

Melissa grabs the doll and presses the belly.

DOLL

Can you show me something soft?

Melissa puts the doll on the counter.

MELISSA

I don't believe you.

MICHAEL

What? I can't buy my daughter a present without it being some special occasion?

MELISSA

Oh, come on. You know as well as I do why you bought this doll.

Melissa picks the doll up once again and examines it more closely.

MELISSA

She isn't going to play with this.

MICHAEL

Why not? She likes dolls. How many dolls have you seen where the lips move?

MELISSA

I told you it's just a phase. It will pass. You're wasting your money buying something like this.

MICHAEL

Look, you may think it's okay for Amber to run around wearing army fatigues and watching John Wayne movies, but I don't. She needs to start acting like a little girl again.

The conversation is interrupted by the doorbell followed by Marcus barking. Melissa heads for the front door, Michael follows close behind.

MICHAEL

I'm not the one who gave her that stupid GI-Joe doll.

(to Marcus)

Marcus, stop barking.

Melissa opens the door to find Jackie standing on the front porch.

LIVING ROOM LATER

Jackie, Melissa, and Michael are having a discussion in the living room.

MELISSA

It's called the placebo effect.

Melissa is standing as she talks, pacing back and forth.

MELISSA

Say you have two groups of people who all suffer from arthritis. One group gets arthritis medication; the second group gets a sugar pill. Thirty percent of the group getting the sugar pill will report some improvement in their arthritis; ten per cent will claim that their arthritis was cured.

JACKIE

This isn't someone claiming that their sore knee feels better. This woman says she had a tumor shrink. That doesn't sound like some placebo effect to me.

MICHAEL

Melissa is right. I've read about this. There are cases where people in clinical trials who had been given sugar pills demonstrate the same benefits as those taking the actual medication. It's the power of the mind over the body.

JACKIE

I don't know. I find it hard to believe that someone can cure themselves of a serious illness with just positive thinking.

MELISSA

It's more than that. Taking the pills gives them a sense of control. That combined with their belief that what they are doing will help them is what makes the difference.

JACKIE

Okay, but what about Drew?

Jackie glances over at Michael and realizes that she probably shouldn't have brought Drew up in the conversation.

MICHAEL

I know about you and Drew.

Jackie shoots Melissa a glaring stare.

MICHAEL

Maybe he was just experiencing performance anxiety. It happens. I haven't had that kind of problem, but -

There is a commotion in the kitchen. There is the SOUND of GLASS SHATTERING. All three rush to the kitchen to find Marcus looking back at them. The doll Michael bought for Amber is in his mouth. The doll has been torn to shreds.

DOLL

(sounding wounded)

My name is Jessica, what's yours?

INT. MACDONALD MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY AT UCLA - DAY

Melissa is patiently sitting in a waiting area. STUART JENKINS, 43, slightly disheveled, enters the room. He is wearing a white lab coat.

STUART JENKINS

(extends his hand)

Mrs. Desmond?

MELISSA

Yes.

Melissa retrieves a medicine bottle from her purse and hands it to him.

MELISSA

This is it.

Stuart takes the bottle and reads from the label.

STUART

Dr. Baum's Amazing Elixir. I have to admit, this isn't something you see every day.

He holds the bottle up to the light.

STUART

So what exactly are we looking for?

MELISSA

I need to know if there's anything in this bottle that could be harmful.

STUART

Harmful in what way?

MELISSA

Well, I plan to sell the bottles over the internet. In fact, we've already sold a few bottles. I just want to make sure that there is nothing poisonous inside.

STUART

I don't think you have to worry about that. I'll have to run it through the mass-spectrometer to find out the exact chemical makeup. But I have a pretty good idea what we'll find.

MELISSA

You do?

STUART

Tinctures like this were normally made from powdered herbs, alcohol, and water. They don't break down easily; they remain stable for long periods of time. Chances are good that the stuff inside this bottle is in the exact condition it was the day it was made.

He opens the bottle and takes a sniff.

STUART

There's also a pretty good chance that we'll find opiates.

MELISSA

Opiates? As in the drug?

STUART

Opiates were a popular ingredient in patent medicines. More than likely we'll find an opium derived alkaloid like morphine or codeine.

Melissa appears stunned as Stuart recaps the bottle.

STUART

It's not as bad as it sounds. Morphine was and still is an effective pain killer. Back then it served many purposes, some good some not so good.

MELISSA

Tell me about the not so good.

STUART

Well, other than relieving some pain. These medicines did little else. People became addicted to the medicines due to the drugs and the high alcohol content. It's what eventually led to the creation of the Food and Drug Administration. But you don't have to worry about that. It's not like someone is going to actually use this stuff.

Melissa gives him an unconvincing smile.

MELISSA

How long before you know anything?

STUART

I might be able to have some preliminary results by tomorrow afternoon.

MELISSA

That'd be great. Thank you.

INT. DESMOND KITCHEN - DAY

Melissa and Amber are in the kitchen. Marcus is curled up in a ball on the floor. A pot of spaghetti is cooking on the stove. Amber is working a coloring book. GI-Joe is standing guard. Michael enters the kitchen

MICHAEL

I'm hungry. How much longer?

MELISSA

Sit down. It's almost ready.

Michael sits down next to Amber. He looks over Amber's artwork.

CLOSE ON COLORING BOOK

Amber has used a rainbow of colors none of which have managed to stay inside the lines.

MICHAEL

(to Amber)

I'm liking it, Amber. Sort of has an impressionistic feel to it. You must get your artistic talents from your mother.

AMBER

It's Nemo and his dad.

Michael squints at the page.

MICHAEL

I see a job at Pixar in your future.

(to Melissa)

I heard back from the auto shop today.

MELISSA

And.

MICHAEL

Twenty-five hundred dollars.

MELISSA

Twenty-five hundred. The car isn't worth that much.

MICHAEL

That's what the mechanic said. He said you might be able to get a couple hundred in salvage for it.

MELISSA

Great. So what are we going to do now?

MICHAEL

I have an idea. Just hear me out on this.

Melissa takes the spaghetti from the pot and drains it into a colander. She then sits down at the kitchen table to hear Michael's plan.

MICHAEL

The auction on the medicine bottle ended today.

MELISSA

Yeah.

MICHAEL

It sold for \$750.

MELISSA

You see. That's not right. There's no way anyone would have paid that much for a collectible.

MICHAEL

But this guy is a collector. I checked him out. He's got a half dozen auctions going on for patent medicine bottles.

MELISSA

Did any of those bottles have medicine in them?

MICHAEL

Not that I could tell. But that just proves the point that this is a rare item.

MELISSA

I don't know.

MICHAEL

There are three bottles left, right?

MELISSA

Two. I took one to the lab, remember?

MICHAEL

Okay, two bottles. If we sold each for \$750 we could have another \$1,500 towards a car. Maybe more.

MELISSA

You sure this guy was a legit collector?

MICHAEL

Yes.

MELISSA

Okay, go ahead and put another bottle up for auction. Just make sure you emphasize that you are selling a collectible.

INT. UCLA LAB - NIGHT

Stuart Jenkins is sitting at a cluttered desk. He is looking at a mass-spectrometer readout on the computer screen and jotting down numbers on a notepad. The medicine bottle is on the desk beside him.

CLOSE ON SCREEN

The mass-spectrometer readout is a chart with a series of peaks and valleys.

A LAB TECHNICIAN walks up to him with his lab coat draped over his arms.

LAB TECHNICIAN

Stuart, I think I'm gonna call it quits for tonight. Need anything?

STUART

No, I'm good. I'm just about finished. See you tomorrow.

(beat)

Hey, do you know where that book is that with all the mass-spectrometer tables?

LAB TECHNICIAN

I think they have one over at life sciences. In research. I can run over there if you want.

STUART

No that's fine I'll stop over on
my way out. Take it easy.

INT. LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT

Stuart enters the lab and heads for a shelf of reference books. He doesn't find what he's looking for. He searches the rest of the lab and notices a bin containing several white mice.

CLOSE ON BIN

The mice all have obvious tumors of varying sizes.

Stuart removes the medicine bottle from his coat pocket. He searches the lab until finding a syringe. He looks around once to make sure he's alone. He fills the syringe with medicine from the bottle.

He reaches into the bin and removes one of the mice. He injects the medicine into the tumor then places the mouse in an empty bin next to the one with the other mice.

INT. LIFE SCIENCES RESEARCH LAB - DAY

An attractive FEMALE STUDENT is standing by a counter entering data into a laptop computer. She is dancing while listening to an iPod with ear buds.

Stuart Jenkins enters the lab. He sees the girl and the bins from the night before but the mice are gone. He taps the girl on the shoulder.

FEMALE STUDENT

(startled)

Professor Jenkins.

STUART

I was here last night and saw a
bin containing some mice. Do you
know what happened to them?

FEMALE STUDENT

They're over at CHS. Why?

INT. CENTER FOR HEALTH SCIENCES (CHS) - DAY

Stuart Jenkins enters the CHS lab and finds a female Asian RESEARCHER, 35, sitting at a desk.

RESEARCHER

Professor Jenkins, how are you?

STUART

Fine, thanks.

RESEARCHER

So what do we owe the honor?

Stuart spots the mice sitting nearby.

STUART

I'm actually here about these mice.

RESEARCHER

Oh?

STUART

I noticed them over at life sciences last night.

RESEARCHER

Yes. They're part of a research project for a genetically engineered cancer drug.

STUART

And how is your research going?

RESEARCHER

Actually quite well. I'm still going over the data, but we're seeing some promising results. I'd say that we had tumor reductions in about seventy-five percent of the mice we treated.

STUART

Really.

Stuart looks over the mice in the bin. He notices one mouse with no tumor at all.

STUART

What about this one here?

RESEARCHER

That's one of our biggest successes. We couldn't find any sign of the tumor.

STUART

Really.

(beat)

Last night I noticed that there was a mouse in a bin all by itself. Could this be that mouse?

RESEARCHER

I wouldn't know. It could have fallen into the bin accidentally. Industrious mice sometimes find ways to climb out of their bins, usually on the backs of their roommates. I'm sure whoever picked up the mice from the lab spotted him and put him in with the others.

STUART

Right. Well, thank you for your time and good luck with your research.

INT. DESMOND KITCHEN - DAY

Melissa and Jackie are sitting at the kitchen table. Marcus sits nearby, looking bored.

JACKIE

If I were you, I'd be taking that medicine right now. I wouldn't be waiting for any test results.

MELISSA

Regardless, of what the test results show. I don't plan on taking some hundred year-old medicine.

JACKIE

But why not? That woman at the bank claimed that her tumor shrunk.

MELISSA

It could have been any number of things. Besides, I have complete confidence in modern medicine. If my doctor says I need radiation treatments, then so be it. If I have to do chemo, then I'll deal

with it. There's no reason to
worry myself -

Their conversation is interrupted by a phone call.

MELISSA

Hello...he's not here right now, can
I take a message?

(beat)

I'm afraid you have been given the
wrong information. My husband is
selling a collectible. Sorry I
can't be any more help.

Melissa hangs up the phone.

JACKIE

What was that all about?

MELISSA

Some guy just offered me \$1,000 to
buy the medicine bottle. He said
that he read about it on some
blog.

JACKIE

A blog?

MELISSA

Yeah. I knew this eBay auction was
a bad idea.

JACKIE

Can Michael stop the auction?

MELISSA

I don't know. I don't think so.

Melissa rubs her temple.

MELISSA

How did he get our number?

JACKIE

I don't know, but if he was able
to get your number then he surely
can get your address.

The conversation is interrupted by Marcus who picks up on
someone approaching the front door.

MELISSA

(to Marcus)

Okay, Marcus. Stop barking.

(to Jackie)

At least we have our security system.

Michael and Amber enter wearing bicycle helmets.

INT. MICHAEL'S HOME OFFICE

Michael, Melissa, and Jackie are huddled around the computer.

MICHAEL

Okay, looks like the highest bid so far is \$875.

MELISSA

Can you stop it?

MICHAEL

The auction?

MELISSA

Yes.

MICHAEL

No. But it only has a few more hours to run. Then that will be the end of it.

MELISSA

But he had our phone number, Michael. I don't understand how this could have happened.

MICHAEL

I don't know.

JACKIE

It's on the label.

MELISSA

What's on the label?

Jackie points to the screen.

JACKIE

Scroll down some. There. See. You typed it out in the description.

MICHAEL

It was too hard to read on the screen.

JACKIE

But read what it says.

MICHAEL

Cures the following ailments:
consumption, diseases of the
blood, Bright's disease -

JACKIE

That's it. Diseases of the blood.
Anyone doing an internet search on
diseases of the blood could
conceivably come across this page.

MICHAEL

It never occurred to me.

MELISSA

(pointing to the
screen)

What's that?

MICHAEL

Messages.

MELISSA

You have 221 messages?

MICHAEL

That can't be right.

Michael clicks on the in box and reads one of his messages.

MICHAEL

(reading)

I recently learned of your auction
in an Internet chat room. Can you
tell me which cancers the medicine
has been successful against? I
have a late stage testicular
cancer. I'm willing to try
anything at this point. I was
hoping to get more information
before placing my bid. Please
respond as soon as possible. Thank
you. Terrance.

MELISSA

Well, there's no doubt now why these people are bidding. They think this is some kind of miracle cure.

Michael clicks on a few more messages.

MICHAEL

(reading)

My son has just been diagnosed with Lymphoma. Can you please...click...Has anyone had success with HIV? ...click...I am a diabetic. I was wondering -

MELISSA

This is not good.

MICHAEL

They can't all be like this.

Jackie tries to console Melissa, putting her arm around her. Michael clicks on yet another message. He reads the message then quickly closes it.

MELISSA

Wait. Go back. What did that one say?

MICHAEL

You're right. It was like the other ones.

MELISSA

I want to read it.

Michael reluctantly pulls up the last message.

MELISSA

If I were you, I'd be careful about making claims that you can't prove. I'd hate to see what might happen if the truth gets out about that crap you're trying to sell.

Melissa covers her mouth in disbelief.

MELISSA

My god. They think we're the ones making these claims. What are we going to do?

MICHAEL

I don't know. I'm sure it's nothing.

MELISSA

No more auctions. Understand?

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Michael, Melissa, and Amber are sitting in a booth at a Bob Evans type family style restaurant. They are looking over their menus when the WAITRESS approaches.

The waitress has short hair spiked like a punk rocker. She is wearing gender neutral clothing that's on the masculine side. She has a piercing in her chin.

WAITRESS

Ready?

MELISSA

Yes. I'll have the salmon with rice and vegetables. Ice tea to drink.

The waitress jots down the order. She turns toward Michael to await his order.

MICHAEL

I'll have the top sirloin. Medium rare.

WAITRESS

Butter and sour cream?

MICHAEL

On the side.

WAITRESS

Salad dressing?

MICHAEL

Ranch.

The waitress faces Amber.

WAITRESS

And how about you sweetie?

AMBER

I want a bowl of ice cream.

MELISSA

Amber, you can have ice cream
after you eat something.

AMBER

But that's what I want.

Melissa smiles at the waitress.

MELISSA

Can you bring her a grilled cheese
sandwich and a side of corn?

(to Amber)

You can have some ice cream if you
eat all of your dinner, okay?

WAITRESS'S POV

The waitress spots Amber's GI-Joe doll sitting next to her.

WAITRESS

Is that a GI-Joe doll? I had one
of those when I was a little girl.
Well, actually it was my brother's
but I'm the one who usually played
with it.

Michael and Melissa look up at the waitress as if they are
seeing Amber's future before them.

EXT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Michael is driving as the car pulls into the driveway. The
garage door opens.

MELISSA

I thought you turned the lights
out before we left.

Several lights are turned on both downstairs and upstairs.
Michael stops the car in the driveway.

MICHAEL

I did turn the lights out.

Michael opens the driver side door and steps out.

MICHAEL

Wait here a second.

Michael walks to the front door. There is broken glass on the front porch. A side-lite has been broken. He returns to the car.

MICHAEL

Someone has broken in. Call the police.

Michael heads toward the garage.

MELISSA

What are you doing?

MICHAEL

Call the police.

Michael enters the garage and heads toward a set of golf clubs. He sifts through the irons as if he can't decide which club to hit next. He finally settles on a pitching wedge.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

Michael is gripping the club with both hands as he enters a hallway.

KITCHEN

Cabinet doors and drawers are opened but nothing is strewn about.

UPSTAIRS MASTER BEDROOM

Michael finds dresser drawers opened as well as the medicine cabinet in the master bathroom.

HOME OFFICE

He finds a similar scene in this room. Drawers have been opened but nothing else is amiss. He turns toward the bookshelf. There sitting next to a picture of Amber is the medicine bottle.

Michael hears Marcus BARKING. The sound is muffled. He heads downstairs gripping the golf club. He follows the sound of Marcus's barking, which leads him to the laundry room. The door to the laundry room is shut.

Michael slowly opens the door ready to swing the golf club in self defense if need be. He finds Marcus with a pillowcase over his head and oven mitts on all four paws.

LIVINGROOM LATER

Michael and Melissa are talking with a POLICE OFFICER.

OFFICER

Are you sure nothing was taken.

MICHAEL

We're sure. They didn't find what they were looking for.

The police officer walks to the front door.

OFFICER

We'll keep an eye out.

MELISSA

Thank you.

Melissa closes the front door. Amber is watching TV oblivious to the danger.

MELISSA

Do you think they'll be back?

MICHAEL

No. Whoever did this wasn't a criminal. They could have ransacked the house but they didn't.

MELISSA

Still, I don't it's safe for Amber to stay here. Could she should stay with your mom for a few days?

MICHAEL

I'll give her a call.

INT. MACDONALD MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY AT UCLA - DAY

Stuart Jenkins is at his desk. The medicine bottle sits beside him. It is half full. He picks up the phone to make a call.

STUART

Mrs. Desmond, hi. This is Stuart Jenkins at UCLA. I wanted to call

you about your medicine bottle.
I've had a chance to run it
through the mass-spectrometer.

Stuart refers to a notebook.

STUART

I was able to identify about 90%
of the compounds. As suspected the
medicine does contain about ten-
and-a-half percent alcohol and
five percent morphine. The
remaining compounds include water,
burdock root, ginseng, mistletoe,
garlic, and cascara.

Stuart picks up the bottle.

STUART

There were a few compounds that I
haven't been able to identify. I
was wondering if it would be all
right to run a few more tests?

He taps his pen on the table awaiting her response.

STUART

Okay, then. I'll let you know what
I find. One more thing..

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER - DAY

Loretta and Amber are walking hand in hand down the pier.
Michael and Melissa are right behind them. Marcus is on a
leash held by Michael. Melissa has a cell phone to her ear.
The call ends and she places the phone in her purse.

MELISSA

That was the UCLA lab. He wants to
run a few more tests.

MICHAEL

Why?

MELISSA

He hasn't identified all of the
compounds. He said he would most
likely use up the rest of the
medicine in the tests.

MICHAEL

Well, if he identifies all of the compounds it doesn't make any difference. Once he knows the ingredients, he can make as much of the stuff as he wants.

MELISSA

Yeah, I guess you're right.

EXT. SANTA MONICA PIER MERRY-GO-ROUND - DAY

Amber is riding a yellow horse. Michael is standing next to her to make sure she doesn't fall off.

LORETTA

Loretta is eating a snow cone as Michael and Amber whirl by. Marcus meanwhile is watching Loretta, hoping that some snow cone might come his way. Loretta sees this and lets him have the rest of it, which he happily gulps down.

MICHAEL'S POV

Michael sees Loretta and Marcus. He scans the crowd looking for Melissa. He spots her leaning against the pier talking on her cell phone.

When the ride stops, Michael, Amber, and Loretta approach Melissa. There is no concealing the concern on her face.

MICHAEL

What's wrong?

MELISSA

It was my doctor. She had the test results.

INT. DESMONDS HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - NIGHT

Melissa is sitting at the kitchen table deep in thought. Marcus trots over and nudges Melissa with his nose, causing Melissa to smile. She strokes him. Michael enters the room and takes a seat, placing the medicine bottle on the table.

MICHAEL

I can't think of any reason why you shouldn't at least give it a try.

Melissa glances at the medicine bottle then up at her husband.

MELISSA

I've been thinking about it too.

She picks up the bottle and examines it with a new perspective.

MELISSA

When I first heard that people were actually using this stuff, I thought they were crazy. Now I think I understand.

(beat)

What do you think? Is this some kind of miracle cure?

MICHAEL

I don't know. I do think there's a reason why this medicine found its way to you. It wasn't an accident.

Melissa grabs a spoon from a drawer and stands by the sink.

MELISSA

You know this is the last bottle.

MICHAEL

Once the lab identifies all of the compounds, it doesn't matter.

MELISSA

But what if they don't identify all of the compounds? What if they need to run even more tests and there isn't enough medicine left to run them?

MICHAEL

You have to think about what's best for you right now.

Melissa unscrews the cap. She hesitates briefly before pouring the medicine into the spoon. As she lifts the spoon to her mouth she is startled by Marcus barking.

The medicine in the spoon is spilled in the sink. Michael and Melissa exchange worried glances then follow Marcus into the living room to see who is at the front door.

LIVING ROOM

Michael and Melissa approach the front door.

MICHAEL
 Marcus, that's enough.

MICHAEL'S POV

Michael glances out the temporarily repaired side-lite and sees a MAN in his early forties, gazing downward, unaware that he is being watched. He looks as if he hadn't slept in days.

Michael cracks open the door.

MAN
 Are you the people selling the
 medicine?

MICHAEL
 We were selling an antique
 collectible, but that auction has
 already closed.

MAN
 But I drove all night to get here.
 I brought money.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handful of hundred dollar bills.

MAN
 There's a little over three
 thousand dollars here. I can give
 you more. Not right away. But in a
 month or two I'm sure-

Michael closes the door a few inches.

MICHAEL
 I'm sorry. Whatever you heard
 about what we were selling was
 wrong.

The man rubs his forehead as he tries to make sense of what he's hearing.

MAN

What am I going to do now? You were my last hope. It was for my daughter.

Melissa pushes forward.

MELISSA

Your daughter?

MAN

She's only three. What am I going to tell my wife?

LIVINGROOM LATER

The man sits on the edge of a chair facing Michael and Melissa.

MAN

We learned about the Hodgkin's when she was just one year old. She's been fighting it now for nearly two years. My wife is the one who found the information about your medicine bottle.

MELISSA

What information?

MAN

I don't remember the details. Only that some man was claiming that he was in remission after taking the medicine.

MICHAEL

Just because someone makes a claim on the internet doesn't make it true.

MELISSA

Can you excuse us for just a minute?

Melissa indicates to Michael that she wants to speak with him in the kitchen.

MELISSA

Well, what now?

MICHAEL

I say we tell him the truth. We tell him that the stories he heard on the Internet were just that - stories. Tell him that the stuff in that bottle can't help his daughter.

MELISSA

How can you say that? An hour ago you were insisting that I take it.

MICHAEL

Okay, what if it is some kind of miracle cure? Do you think giving it away to strangers is what we should be doing?

MELISSA

She's the same age as Amber. We would do the same thing if we were in his shoes.

Melissa sneaks a peak into the living room. Their guest sits bowed over with his head resting in his hands.

MELISSA

Remember what you said about there being a reason why this medicine found its way to me. This is that reason. I've never been more certain in my life.

Melissa grabs the medicine bottle and marches into the living room.

MELISSA

Here. We can't promise anything.

MAN

But I thought you said the auction was closed.

MELISSA

This is not the bottle from the auction.

The man takes the bottle and holds it like it was made of gold.

MAN

I can't tell you how much this means to me.

He reaches into his pocket to get the money. He offers a handful to Melissa.

MELISSA

We can't take your money. Just let us know if it helps your daughter.

He hugs Melissa.

MAN

Thank you.

INT. MACDONALD MEDICAL RESEARCH LABORATORY AT UCLA - DAY

Stuart Jenkins sits at his desk thumbing through a thick book. A stack of thick books sits nearby. He glances up at the computer screen then back at his book, rubbing his eyes.

The medicine bottle is on the desk beside him. It is only about a quarter full. A female student, seen earlier, enters the lab carrying a bin with four white mice. The student is listening to her iPod.

STUDENT

Where do you want these?

STUART

Just put them on the counter over there.

She puts the bin with the mice on the counter. She pulls out a folded sheet of paper from her back pocket. She removes the ear buds from her ear.

STUDENT

You need to sign this.

STUART

Right.

Stuart looks on his cluttered desk for his pen, shoving papers and books aside.

STUART

I seem to have misplaced my pen.

He gets up from his desk to look for his pen. He searches the lab then disappears across the hall.

The student glances at her watch and puts her hand on her hips. Frustrated, she puts the ear buds back in her ear and selects a tune on her iPod. She starts dancing.

She's really getting into it, dancing to the rhythm that only she can here.

CLOSE ON THE MEDICINE BOTTLE

The girl is dancing dangerously close to the edge of the desk where the medicine bottle sits. The SOUND shifts so that we now hear the music that she's dancing to.

Stuart enters the lab carrying a pen. He sees how close she is to the bottle and tries to get her attention, but she can't hear him.

CLOSE ON THE MEDICINE BOTTLE

She turns and her hand swipes the medicine bottle off the desk. It falls in SLOW MOTION, shattering as soon as it hits the floor.

MONTAGE

Melissa getting radiation treatment

Melissa sitting on a park bench while Michael and Amber play Frisbee with Marcus.

Melissa in the kitchen downing several different sized pills, one after the other.

Melissa asleep on the couch. The room is dark except for the flickering light from the TV.

INT. HOSPITAL EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

Michael and Melissa are joined by a FEMALE DOCTOR in her forties. The doctor is carrying two x-rays. She places the x-rays on a light table and switches on the lamp. Michael and Melissa stand to her left and right.

DOCTOR

The x-ray on the left was taken before we started your treatment. The one on the right is the one we took today.

CLOSE ON X-RAYS

The doctor points to the x-ray on the left.

DOCTOR

This gray area in your left breast is the tumor. As you can plainly see, it is much smaller in the most recent x-ray.

MELISSA

So that's good, right?

DOCTOR

It's very good. It means that the radiation and chemotherapy are working.

MELISSA

So no mastectomy?

DOCTOR

No mastectomy. At the rate you're going, it should be completely gone in a few weeks.

MICHAEL

That's great news.

MELISSA

What then?

DOCTOR

Well, assuming that there are no complications, we would have you come in for a checkup every six months. We can't say for certain that we got it all until you have been cancer free for five years.

Michael and Melissa embrace.

MELISSA

Thank you.

EXT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD BACK YARD - DAY

Loretta is sitting in a deck chair reading a book. Marcus is sitting beside her in the grass, snoozing. Amber, dressed in her green t-shirt and camouflage pants, is playing GI-Joe.

CLOSE ON AMBER

Amber is holding a rubber dart gun as she sneaks up the side of the house. When she is sure that she hasn't been spotted, she moves in closer, hiding behind a barbecue grill. She takes aim at Marcus and fires.

The dart flies across Loretta's field of vision and hits Marcus in the side. Marcus lifts his head and sees that it's a dart. He glances back at Amber then gets up and moves to the end of the yard, as far away from Amber as he can get.

LORETTA

Amber, stop that.

Loretta takes the dart gun from her.

LORETTA

You should know better than that.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD KITCHEN - DAY

Michael, Melissa, and Jackie are sitting at the kitchen table going over some paperwork. Loretta and Amber enter the kitchen from outside.

JACKIE

(pointing)

I'll need signatures here and here.

Loretta hands Melissa the dart gun.

LORETTA

You might want to hold on to this. She's been tormenting that poor dog all day.

MELISSA

(to Amber)

Amber, were you shooting Marcus with the dart gun?

Amber remains silent.

MELISSA

Why don't you go upstairs and put some clean clothes on.

LORETTA

Would you like me to go with her?

MELISSA

Could you?

LORETTA

Come on Amber. Let's see if we can't find something pretty to put on.

KITCHEN LATER

Melissa, Michael, and Jackie are still sitting at the kitchen table. Jackie is reviewing the paperwork that Michael and Melissa had signed earlier.

JACKIE

Are you sure this is all you want? I could get you more if you wanted.

MICHAEL

We're just looking to get some basic transportation. We don't need anything fancy.

JACKIE

Well, it looks like I have everything I need.

MELISSA

We appreciate you taking care of this for us.

JACKIE

No problem. Glad I could help. One last thing before I leave.

Jackie picks up her purse and rests it on the table. She reaches across the table and grabs Melissa's hand.

JACKIE

Drew and I talked it over. And..

Jackie removes her medicine bottle from her purse and pushes it toward Melissa.

JACKIE

There's not much left. Drew got kinda carried away, but -

Melissa puts out her hand to stop Jackie.

MELISSA

Thanks for the offer. But there's really no need. The radiation and chemo has just about got it all.

JACKIE

Really? That's great news.

Loretta and Amber enter the Kitchen. Amber is dressed like a princess.

MICHAEL

(to Amber)

Well, looky here? If it isn't our little princess. You look great sweetie. Come here.

Michael hugs Amber as if he hadn't seen her in a year.

LORETTA

She picked it out herself.

MELISSA

(to Amber)

You haven't worn that in months.

AMBER

(not sure what all
the fuss is about)

My other clothes are dirty.

MELISSA

I'm sure they're not all dirty. Mommy's just been a little busy lately. But you look very pretty.

AMBER

Can I have a cookie?

MELISSA

Of course you can. Sit down here next to Jackie and I'll get you a cookie.

Melissa grabs a few cookies from the cookie jar and puts them on a paper plate.

MELISSA
(to Jackie)
Help yourself.

JACKIE
I wouldn't want to be impolite.

Jackie grabs a cookie and shares a sly smile with Amber.

LORETTA
I guess I should be heading back.

JACKIE
(getting up)
Me too. With any luck. I should
have the loan for you as early as
tomorrow.

AMBER
What's a loan?

MELISSA
You remember when I told you that
Jackie works at the bank?

AMBER
Yeah.

MELISSA
Remember how we talked about how
banks are where people go to save
money.

AMBER
Yeah.

MELISSA
Well, banks are also where people
go when they need money. A loan is
when the bank lends someone money
that has to be repaid.

AMBER
How much money?

MELISSA
My, aren't you full of questions
today.

AMBER

Was it more than a hundred dollars?

MELISSA

Yes. It was more than a hundred dollars.

Amber finishes her cookie.

AMBER

You shoulda asked me for the money. I would have given it to you.

MELISSA

You would have? So when did you become miss money bags.

AMBER

You want me to show you?

MELISSA

Sure.

Amber dashes off and returns holding a heavy book. It's the GI-Joe collectibles book. Amber places it on the table and starts thumbing through the pages until she finds the page she's looking for.

AMBER

(pointing)

See. Five Five zero zero. Fifty-five hundred dollars.

Melissa picks up the book.

CLOSE ON BOOK

A nude GI-Joe takes up most of the page.

MELISSA

(reading the caption)

A prototype doll like the one pictured can be worth anywhere from \$3,500 to \$5,500 depending on the condition of the doll.

Michael peeks over Melissa's shoulder.

MELISSA

That guy we talked to, that John Grevin. He said that Amber's doll was a prototype doll.

MICHAEL

How did he know that?

MELISSA

He said he was a salesman for Hasbro. He said something about the doll not having any markings on its bottom.

Melissa thumbs through a few pages of the book.

MELISSA

Here it is.

(reading)

Prototype dolls were used by salesmen to introduce the line to buyers. The dolls had no markings of any kind. Mass produced dolls were stamped with various identifying information on the doll's bottom.

Michael grabs the book to read it for himself.

MICHAEL

Amber's doll didn't have any markings?

MELISSA

I don't think so.

(to Amber)

Amber, where's your GI-Joe doll?

AMBER

I don't remember?

MICHAEL

That doll hasn't left her sight for the past month. And now she can't remember?

LORETTA

She had it earlier today out back.

(to Amber)

Weren't you playing with it this morning in the sand box?

AMBER
(thinking)

Maybe.

EXT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD BACKYARD - DAY

Everyone pours out of the back door and heads for the sandbox. A frantic search through the sand comes up empty handed.

LORETTA
Uh oh.

MELISSA
What?

LORETTA
(pointing)
Over there.

Melissa turns to where Loretta is pointing. Marcus is standing on the opposite side of the yard. GI-Joe dangles from his mouth.

MELISSA
Marcus, no!

As soon as they get close enough to grab the doll, Marcus takes off running. A chase ensues. Finally, Melissa stops running and gives Marcus a command.

MELISSA
Marcus, come.

Marcus stops running but holds his ground.

MICHAEL
Marcus, get over here right now!
I'm not playing around.

Marcus gets down on his front legs and sticks his rear end high in the air, his tail is wagging away. Melissa inches toward him.

MELISSA
Come on, boy. Come on, Marcus. Be
a good dog.

Marcus cocks his head to one side. His ears perk up. Then he shakes his head from side to side as if his only goal is to shred the doll into a thousand pieces.

MELISSA

Amber, go inside and get one of Marcus's treats. Hurry.

Marcus's eyes light up when Amber returns with the dog biscuit. Melissa waves the biscuit tantalizingly in front of Marcus. Marcus sniffs.

MELISSA

I got a nice big dog biscuit here for you, Marcus. All you have to do is let go of Mr. GI-Joe.

The temptation is too great. Marcus releases the doll and grabs the dog biscuit from Melissa, retreating to a shady spot in the yard to enjoy his hard earned treat.

INT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD AMBER'S ROOM - DAY

Amber's room is decidedly feminine with pink colors, dolls, and plenty of stuffed animals. But the GI-Joe influence is also noticeable: the dart gun, the camouflage pants, and a toy tank with the gun barrel aimed at a Barbie doll.

Sitting on a shelf above her bed are the four characters from the Wizard of Oz: Dorothy, the Tin Man, the Lion, and the Scarecrow. Directly above that is another shelf. On this shelf, encased in a plastic case, is GI-Joe.

CLOSE ON GI-JOE

Mounted to the plastic encasing is a plaque that reads: Amber's College Fund.

EXT. DESMOND HOUSEHOLD DRIVEWAY - DAY

Melissa pulls into the driveway in a car with a temporary license plate visible in the dash. She parks the car in the driveway and goes to get the mail.

As she walks back to the house sorting through the mail, she comes across an envelope with a name and address she doesn't recognize.

Her curiosity gets the better of her; she stops to open the envelope.

CLOSE ON ENVELOPE

Inside the envelope is a letter and a thank you card. Melissa reads the letter first. She reads it quickly then turns her attention to the card. Inside the card she finds several photos.

CLOSE ON PHOTOS

The photos are of a little girl in a hospital bed. She is grinning in the photos. The last photo is of the little girl and her father. They are outside and both are smiling broadly. The father is the man Melissa gave the last medicine bottle to.

INT. ANTIQUE STORE - DAY

An elderly man with a duster puts around the shop dusting and rearranging items on the shelves. A lone customer is browsing. The woman, in her thirties, is wearing a head scarf. She looks gaunt.

The old man with the duster looks at the woman sympathetically before continuing on with his chores. He reaches for some bottles on a shelf.

CLOSE ON SHELF

There on the shelf is a bottle of Dr. Baum's Amazing Elixir, turned so that the label isn't readable.

The old man picks up the bottle, which is full, and dusts off the shelf. When he replaces the bottle, he makes sure that the label is facing outward.

The woman continues to browse in the general vicinity of where the medicine bottle is located.

Fade Out: