

HOW TO LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS
FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE

By

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CHARACTERS

POLLY—30's, a pretty, funny, quirky, messy single mom who wants to be the mother she never had.

ELAINE —late 50's/early 60's, Polly's mom. Very attractive, always optimistic and outspoken, Elaine can never say no to herself.

MAX —late 50's/early 60's, Polly's stepfather. Max is always in motion, explosive and owns a successful chain of nightclubs.

JULIAN —late 30's, Polly's "Big Lebowski-esque" ex husband. He doesn't pay his bills unless they are in a red envelope.

NATALIE — a "Little Miss Sunshine", 6 -- she has a special connection with each character and appears to be getting the best each adult has to offer.

GREGG —30's, Polly's best friend and co-worker at Pantry Pete's. Gregg's the kinda guy Polly's been looking for all her life but was too fucked up to attract. And now, he's married.

JENN — 20's, Polly and Gregg's assistant. Cool, fun, single... Polly thinks of herself as Jenn's mentor — whereas Jenn sees Polly as a cautionary tale. They become friends and partners in crime.

Luke — Jenn's brother, 30's, very cute.

EXT. STREET, POLLY'S CAR - DAY

CHYRON: 1 YEAR AGO TODAY. POLLY, wearing a mélange of mismatched clothing, and a 4-YEAR-OLD NATALIE, similarly dressed, DRIVE UP to Elaine and Max's idyllic suburban home.

POLLY (V.O.)
*Exactly one year ago today, my
daughter, Natalie, and I showed up
at my parents' house...*

EXT. MAX AND ELAINE'S OLD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Polly and Natalie outside Max and Elaine's house. Polly rings the doorbell. The door swings open, revealing ELAINE and MAX, both in towels; Elaine's hair all messed up.

POLLY
Mommy, Max, I hope this isn't a bad
time for you, 'cause it is for me.

Polly looks down at Max's crotch. Max grabs "The Corrections" from the armoire and holds it in front of himself. Polly rolls her eyes... "really?"

EXT. FRANK HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Polly, Max and Natalie CARRY BOXES into the house.

POLLY (V.O.)
*Oh, look, there we are carrying
boxes, 'cause we're moving in with
my parents. Yay!*

Elaine mimes helping Max, but lets go when her CELL RINGS.

INT. FRANK HOUSE - ANOTHER DAY

Polly, Elaine, and Natalie are doing the dishes.

POLLY (V.O.)
*My stepfather, Max, is a successful
nightclub owner with an aversion to
traditional workout garb.*

MAX
I'm going for a run.

He exits out the front door wearing his jeans and a sweater.

POLLY
Max should buy sweats. He looks
like he's fleeing a crime scene.

ELAINE
I think it makes him exciting.

POLLY (V.O.)
*He's also the world's most resentful
cancer survivor.*

INT. HOSPITAL - ANOTHER DAY

Max is in bed, his eyes closed. Elaine and Polly stand near.
Max's eyes open. He grabs Elaine's hand.

MAX
Elaine, you let them take my ball.
You were supposed to guard me, like
a sentry...

POLLY (V.O.)
*Most people have a voice in their
head that says, "look before you
leap." My mother's voice says,
"Look at me, I'm leaping!"*

Elaine starts to peak under the blanket.

POLLY
Mom, stop, Mom, stop, Mom, stop...

Elaine ignores her and gets a good look.

ELAINE
(TO MAX) I think you look better with
just the one. More distinctive.

EXT. FRANK HOUSE - PRESENT DAY, (NIGHT 1)

CHYRON: PRESENT DAY. Polly and Natalie drive up to the
house, looking much more together. They get out of the car,
cross to the front door, which Polly opens with her own key.

POLLY (V.O.)
*The school district's great. And I
want to be the mother I never had,
and because of the mother I did
have, I don't know how, so I need
her support. Does that makes sense?
(THEN) I should maybe-probably go
back to therapy...*

INT. FRANK HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT, (NIGHT 1)

Polly makes Natalie dinner, Elaine munches off of what
Polly's making. Natalie sits at the table. She's been
playing dress-up and looks like Eva Gabor.

ELAINE
(TO POLLY) Exciting news: Max's
friend Kenny wants to ask you out.

POLLY
Kenny is sixty.

ELAINE
So? Sixty is the new thirty.

POLLY
Sixty is double thirty.

ELAINE
I'm not a mathematician. I'm a
romantic. And Kenny is a very
tender lover.

POLLY
Thanks. You just ruined Kenny.

Natalie crosses back. Polly gives her dinner.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Look, it may be an unrealistic goal,
but I am determined to be the best
single, working mom in the Universe.
And Natalie would freak if I went out
on a (FOR NATALIE'S BENEFIT) "d-a-t-e."

ELAINE
(TO NATALIE) That spells, "date."

POLLY
Good job. You totally got the
point of that.

Elaine smiles, pleased with herself. Max brings a box inside.

MAX
That sculpture we bought in New
Mexico finally came!

NATALIE
(CROSSING TO HIM) Yay, Grandpa!
What's a sculpture?

POLLY
(STILL ON TOPIC) I don't want
Natalie exposed to the same things
I was, no offense.

ELAINE
I'm not offended, because I don't
know what you're talking about.

POLLY
(LAUGHING) Oh come on...

ELAINE
You had a perfectly normal
childhood.

POP TO:

INT. TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT, (FLASHBACK)

CHYRON: 70's. YOUNGER ELAINE and YOUNGER MAX are dressed for
a night on the town. CHILD POLLY plays with her DOLL.

YOUNGER ELAINE
Polly, we're going to see Marty.

YOUNGER MAX
That's not what I said. I said,
"we're going to a key party."

YOUNGER ELAINE
Oh. Will Marty be there?

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. FRANK HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Polly pulls Elaine out of earshot of Natalie.

POLLY
So it was normal for me to hear
about your orgy?

ELAINE
Orgy, please. It was some half-
hearted groping and then we ate a
wheel of Brie. (THEN) I'm
comfortable talking about sex.
Maybe it's generational, but I'm
very proud of my orgasm.

POLLY
We all are. Obama's gonna mention
it in his next "State of the Union."

ELAINE
After I left your father, I didn't
sit around the apartment boo-hoo-
ing, wearing men's jackets...

POLLY
This is a blazer. I'm going to work...

ELAINE
... I was out there making things
happen for myself. I slept with
every guy in my improv class until
I found Max. Every guy. And Karen.

POLLY

I love our mother daughter talks.

ELAINE

The point is: You have some fantastic things happening under that blazer. And if improv's not your bag, then take a cooking class and sleep with everyone in that. You've been living here a year and haven't had one date. I can't take it. It's driving me insane.

POLLY

Driving? Mom, get out of the car. You've arrived.

Max reveals what's in the box: a colorful, angular, surrealistic, frightening DOG SCULPTURE with SNARLING TEETH.

NATALIE

Aaah! That dog is scary!

Natalie runs to bury her head in Polly's legs.

MAX

No, it's not.

POLLY

Don't tell her she doesn't feel the way she feels. She's afraid of dogs, and that's okay.

ELAINE

It's not a dog, it's a sculpture.

NATALIE

I'm afraid of sculptures.

POLLY

She's afraid of sculptures.

MAX

It's fake! You can hit it, see?

Max hits the dog. Natalie laughs.

MAX (CONT'D)

You can kick it, too!

He kicks the dog again, harder on the DOG'S SHARP TEETH.

MAX (CONT'D)

(BLEEPED) Motherfucker!

POLLY

Now that we've validated the fear of sculptures...

INT. POLLY AND NATALIE'S BATHROOM - LATER

Polly and Natalie brush their teeth, spit in coordination.

INT. NATALIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Polly reads Natalie a story.

INT. NATALIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Polly pulls a cot from under Natalie's bed, and gets into it.

ANGLE ON: Through the door, we see Polly's never used bed.

POLLY (V.O.)
*When Natalie's not afraid to sleep
on her own, I will use my bed.
(THEN) Maybe my mom has a point.*

MAIN TITLES:

EXT. STREET, POLLY'S CAR - DAY, (DAY 2)

As Polly pulls out of the driveway, Julian pulls in.

POLLY (V.O.)
*My relationship with my ex is...
what's that word that sounds like a
good thing but when people say it
they make a judge-y face? Oh,
right, codependent.*

JULIAN
Guess what I got.

POLLY
A checking account?

JULIAN
A life hammer!

As Julian shows Polly a SURVIVAL TOOL from his bag:

JULIAN (CONT'D)
It breaks your car window in case
you get trapped in your car
underwater. I wanna do a test run.
Will you time me? It takes ninety
seconds for a car to fill up with
water...

POLLY (V.O.)
In my defense, when I met Julian he looked exactly like a young Jeff Daniels, and I'm attracted to people who look like younger versions of famous people.

EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Polly SEES Max running in his jeans, trailed by a POLICE CAR.

INT. PANTRY PETE'S - DAY, LATER

The corporate offices of Pantry Pete's are colorful and "homey." CARTOONS of the fictional "Pantry Pete" (a FARMER IN OVERALLS) are everywhere.

POLLY (V.O.)
I'm Vice President of product development at Pantry Pete's, the Midwest's third most popular organic grocery store. Right now, we're rolling out "Pantry Pete's Parmesan Popcorn." Please, hold your applause.

Polly and Gregg, (her best friend and boss), eat POPCORN as they walk down the hall.

POLLY
Do you know what today is?

GREGG
If you say it's my anniversary, I'm going to set myself on fire.

POLLY (V.O.)
That's Gregg, President of product development. In another life he'd be married to me and not Stacey and I wouldn't be talking to you right now.

POLLY
No. Today is the year anniversary of me moving in with my parents. I haven't gone on one date in 365 days, exactly. My mom's getting more action than I am. Doesn't that go against nature, biology and evolution?

GREGG

Totally. At her age she should have cob webs and trolls up there.

POLLY

Trolls?

GREGG

They guard bridges? (OFF HER LOOK) I don't know. I'm on your side.

POLLY

I'm cute, and I like sex, who knows how long those two things will last? (SOTTO) It's very difficult to pleasure yourself when you live with your parents, and your daughter's afraid to sleep alone.

POP TO:

INT. POLLY'S BATHROOM - NIGHT, (FLASHBACK)

Polly, in her pajamas, is washing her face with a VIBRATING BUFF PUFF. After a moment, she looks at the buff puff, looks around, locks the bathroom door. She starts slowly lowering the BUFF PUFF when she hears a KNOCK. She opens the door.

NATALIE

I woke up.

Polly looks at the buff puff longingly, goes with Natalie.

BACK TO:

INT. PANTRY PETE'S CONFERENCE ROOM

Polly and Gregg are as they were.

GREGG

Great story. What's a buff puff?

POLLY

It's a vibrating exfoliator. Diane Lane is in the commercial.

GREGG

Diane Lane, you dirty dog.

POLLY

My mom's right: I shouldn't be boo-hooing, I should be whoo-hooing. Tic-toc, Gregg. Tic. Freakin'. Toc. I've got a lot going on underneath this blazer.

GREGG

Are you sweating?

POLLY

No. I want someone to play with my boobs. (OFF HIS LOOK) Not you. Not now. Not here. (THEN) At night. But it has to be in the dark, at least until I get some sit-ups going. (THEN) Unless I do wind up going out with Kenny. Because who is Kenny to judge? He's sixty. He should be so lucky.

GREGG

Does Kenny work here? Is this an issue for HR?

POLLY

I gotta find somebody. Who would know somebody? Who in this office stays up past nine?

Polly sees her assistant, JENN, 23, pull some underwear out of her purse and put them on under her skirt while texting.

INT. FRANK HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

Max reads the paper. Elaine condenses her mustards. Julian enters, using his own key, kisses Elaine "hello."

JULIAN

Yo, do you have a brick?

ELAINE

A gold brick? A brick of heroin? "Brick" from "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof?"

JULIAN

A "brick" brick to put it behind my wheel. I tore out my parking brake practicing donuts for when I have to do them in real life.

MAX

There's one by the tool shed.

JULIAN

Awesome. Thanks, Dad. Just got a few more things to do so Polly can get her apps wirelessly.

MAX

You mean applications.

JULIAN

No. Apps.

Julian exits. Max crosses to Elaine, urgently.

MAX

(RE: JULIAN) He's making up words!

ELAINE

How inventive.

MAX

He uses that phone installing crap as an excuse to be up here. And now he has his own key? He and Polly are divorced. He should start a new family and invest in a tequila business like a normal person!

ELAINE

Ooo, tequila. Good idea.

She pours tequila as Max crosses and opens the fridge.

MAX

And he's stealing my cream soda. There's one less than yesterday. We need to keep an eye on him to catch him in the act. Then, boom! I don't know what comes after the boom, but something good.

ELAINE

You're just overly sensitive about people taking your things since the testicular cancer.

MAX

Don't patronize me. Let me miss my ball.

INT. PANTRY PETE'S - DAY 2, LATER

Polly is at Jenn's cubicle. Jenn is eating a cheeseburger.

POLLY

Jenn, I know you think of me as kind of a mentor...

Jenn starts laughing, then chokes on the cheeseburger.

POLLY (CONT'D)

... but I was wondering if you know anyone. That I could date.

JENN

Ew, gross.

POLLY

(FAUX AUTHORITATIVE) As your boss, I command you to set me up with one of your hipster friends and not laugh at me.

JENN

Is this, like, the lady version of sexual harassment?

POLLY

No. This is two gals, who are friends. One friend knows hot guys, the other friend knows that the first friend steals fancy coffee under her hoodie. (OFF HER LOOK) Come on, you must know someone! They don't even have to be that great.

JENN

My older brother's in town--

POLLY

I am loving this already--

JENN

But he just got a divorce and he's really fragile right now--

POLLY

Me, too! It's a perfect "meet cute." I always wanted a meet cute -- you know, where you bump into someone 'cause your Burberry trench got caught in a revolving door? All my meets have been clumsy and fueled by anxiety. But now, me and... what's your brother's name?

JENN

Luke.

POLLY

Luke and I will be Chicago's hottest, most fragile couple!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. BOUTIQUE - DAY, (DAY 3)

Polly is inside a dressing room struggling to get a dress on. Gregg and Jenn wait outside -- Gregg trying on hats and looking at himself in the mirror, Jenn texting.

POLLY

(CALLING OUT FROM DRESSING ROOM)
Thanks for helping me find an outfit, you guys. I haven't dated since before Julian. And a little bit while we were together but on a break. And that wasn't really a date so much as a guy I picked up at a club who is now in prison. But, minimum-security, so, yay me.

GREGG

God, everyone's having more fun than me, aren't they?

JENN

And I wouldn't bring up the thing where you live with your parents. That's what made me lose respect for you.

POLLY

Hmm, yes. No way to make that sound sexy. Wow, this is really productive. Jenn take notes.

JENN

Okay.

Jenn "writes" in the air. POLLY ENTERS in the NEW OUTFIT.

POLLY

So? Rockin' it or really rockin' it? (THEN) Please say really rockin' it... I'm terrified.

GREGG/JENN

Really rockin' it.

POLLY

(FIST PUMP) Yes!

With this action we HEAR the dress RIP.

POLLY (CONT'D)

I just need to find a baby-sitter.

Gregg and Jenn look at each other, then at Polly.

GREGG
What about your parents?

POLLY
A whole night? No, no, no. No.
They've never done the whole night.
They've done a long telephone call,
I went to the store once...

GREGG
Come on. How bad can they be?

POP TO:

INT. TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT, (FLASHBACK)

70's PARTY is in full swing. YOUNGER MAX and YOUNGER ELAINE
rock out to Patti Smith's "Because The Night." CHILD POLLY
watches A LONG HAIRE D DUDE roll a JOINT in a NEWSPAPER.

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. BOUTIQUE - CONTINUOUS

Polly, Gregg and Jenn are as they were.

GREGG
Please, all the people that were at
that party are probably dead.

POLLY
But, Natalie is afraid of me dating
and my mother is constitutionally
incapable of censoring herself.

POP TO:

INT. FRANK HOUSE - BRUNCH, (FLASHBACK)

Polly and Natalie are at the table with Max, Elaine, and
ASSORTED GUESTS. Elaine spreads jelly on toast.

ELAINE
I shouldn't say this, but--

POLLY
-- Mom, stop, Mom, stop, Mom --

ELAINE
-- jelly tastes so good on
a penis.

Everyone LAUGHS. Polly is stone faced.

POLLY
You all heard me say, "Mom, stop?"

NATALIE
What does it taste so good on?

Polly looks at Elaine, sternly, then:

ELAINE
A penis.

POLLY
Are you kidding me?!

ELAINE
Though anything viscous that tastes
good on it's own works, too.

BACK TO SCENE:

INT. BOUTIQUE - CONTINUOUS

Polly, Gregg and Jenn are as they were.

GREGG
So just lie to her and say you're
going to a... work related party.
Seriously, what's the point of
living with your parents if you
can't use them as unpaid help?

INT. MAX AND ELAINE'S BEDROOM - LATER, (NIGHT 3)

Elaine and Max are getting ready to go out. Elaine does her
make up at her vanity table. Max tries to decide which
earring to wear. Polly is in her pajamas.

POLLY
... So, I need to go out Thursday.
This Thursday.

ELAINE
You got something fun going on...
cha cha cha?

POLLY
(FAUX BURDENED) No. It's work.
(THEN) I mean, it's a work related
party, so I'll be dressed up as if
it's fun but in reality... blech.

ELAINE
Could be fun... cha cha cha.

POLLY

No fun. No cha. Gregg insists I go. Argh, the ogre. You can call him to confirm how boring it is. (THEN) The point is, I'll be out, like, the whole night. Can you babysit?

ELAINE

We're seeing "Love, Loss and What I Wore"...

MAX

Of course we will.

Beat. They look at each other.

MAX

We'll have to cancel.

ELAINE

But, we can't get a refund on our theatre subscription.

Another beat.

MAX

It's our granddaughter.

ELAINE

We can sell the tickets.

POLLY (CONT'D)

Is that a yes?

ELAINE

Yes.

MAX

I just said yes.

INT. FRANK HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT, (NIGHT 4)

Max makes tea. Elaine takes notes as Polly goes over baby-sitting instructions with them. Natalie plays in the b.g.

POLLY

Okay, here's a list of Natalie's favorite shows... And I made her dinner so it just needs to be heated up...

ELAINE

What about our dinner? (OFF POLLY'S LOOK) I'm joking. Max, she doesn't know when I'm joking.

POLLY

She gets her bath at 7, then she's in bed by 8. And when I say 8, I mean 8. And when I say bed, I mean you have to stay with her till she falls asleep.

ELAINE

Blech.

MAX

This. Is. Endless.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Here are the medicines just in case, but call me first, don't over-medicate.

Elaine looks over the meds.

ELAINE
(DISAPPOINTED) Well these don't look fun at all.

POLLY
Here's the number of the pediatrician. Here's my cell number.

MAX
Do you think we're idiots? I know your cell number. (THEN) Give it to me.

ELAINE
When you say "bath at 7" do I just check the time, or...?

POLLY
You give her a bath.

ELAINE
I've heard people say those words on television, but what does it mean?

POLLY
(LAUGHING) Okay, I admit it. The joking is funny. (OFF ELAINE'S LOOK) Wait. You're serious. Didn't you ever give me a bath?

ELAINE
I don't know. Don't you know? I feel like one of us should remember this...

POLLY
You... turn on the water and make sure the temperature's right... and wash her body and play with her.

ELAINE
This doesn't sound entirely legal.

Polly starts to put the dog sculpture in the closet.

MAX
(STOPPING HER) What are you doing?

POLLY
Uh... putting the scary thing away?

MAX
So we hide things we're afraid of?
This is why we don't win wars anymore.

POLLY
Your generation didn't win any wars. And please, watch the language. And the conversation topics.

Polly exits.

MAX
Everyone's so uptight these days.

ELAINE
What are we supposed to talk about with her? Kids are boring. We're the fascinating ones.

INT. NATALIE'S BEDROOM - LATER

Natalie is in a princess outfit.

POLLY
Sweetie, look, I'm writing down my cell number. See? And your dad's. Do you remember how to use the phone?

NATALIE
Please, I'm not four.

POLLY
And you don't need to tell Grandma and Grandpa I'm doing this. But, if you feel scared in any way... call. Alright?

NATALIE
Alright. You look pretty, mommy.

Polly is overcome and hugs Natalie.

POLLY
Do I? That is so sweet. This night is really important to me. (RECOVERING) I mean, I'm going to a work related party, so I have to be pretty for work related reasons. (THEN REALIZING) Not that women should rely on their looks to get ahead in business... though, let's be honest, it helps... (THEN) Gotta go! Love you!

As she exits, to herself:

POLLY (CONT'D)
Feeling reallly guilty right now...

EXT. FRANK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Polly runs down the street where she's meeting Luke. Her CELL RINGS. It's JULIAN -- wanting to FaceTime with her! She answers, trying to be discreet in case Luke is watching.

POLLY
Julian? Oh my God, I can see you!

JULIAN
(VIA FACETIME) Pretty great, huh?
And did you check out all the cool apps? GPS, voice recognition... and you SEE whatever I'm talking about. So listen, I just found this...

He reveals a SERIOUS LOOKING LETTER WITH BOLD RED WRITING.

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Is a 'summons' the same thing as a 'bench warrant?'

She comes up to Luke's car. He gets out to greet her.

POLLY
(HANGING UP) Okay, bye!

ANGLE ON - ELAINE AND MAX

Watching Polly and Luke shake hands, laugh.

ELAINE
That guy's cute. Oh, look, he's got flowers...

ANGLE ON - POLLY AND LUKE

Through the window, Luke hands Polly the flowers.

BACK TO - ELAINE AND MAX

Max and Elaine look at each other.

MAX ELAINE
She's on a date! Cha cha cha!

*
*

They jump up and down, excited.

INT. ACAPULCO LOUNGE - NIGHT

Polly and Luke sit across from each other, uncomfortable.

LUKE

I wonder if the real Acapulco has
this much house music.

POLLY

The drug war there is out of
control. I just read that this
cartel beheaded a bunch of tourists
outside a shopping mall. (THEN)
Sooo sexy...

Luke looks at his watch.

POLLY (CONT'D)

So.... Jenn says you're fragile?
Which is great, 'cause I'm ready to
lose it, right here. Right now.

LUKE

(RELIEVED) Me, too. Why am I so
nervous? Jenn totally got in my
head about my outfit...

POLLY

Classic Jenn. But let me just say,
you are really rockin' it.

They laugh. He's cute. This could work.

POLLY (CONT'D)

You know what this date needs?
Some cocktails! (SIGNALING)
Waiter!

LUKE

I don't know. I was tense and it
was 5pm, so... I took an ativan
earlier. The bottle says to.

POLLY

But those go great with cocktails.
My mom calls them "ativan-tinis."

INT. POLLY AND NATALIE'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Natalie's in the bathtub. Max and Natalie play with Barbies.

NATALIE

Give me my crown, Bad Princess!

MAX

I can't keep up with this plot! If we're best friends and princesses, why do we fight all the time?

Natalie takes a breath, holds her nose, goes underwater, then pops back up.

NATALIE

I'm a mermaid!

MAX

We're mermaids now? What happened to princesses?

Natalie starts shampooing her head.

ELAINE

Why didn't Polly want us or Natalie to know she was on a d-a-t-e?

MAX

(THEN, TO ELAINE) Who cares? As long as she moves on from J-u-l-i-a-n and I get my soda back. They're so enmeshed, they need to visit a t-h-e-r-a-p-i-s-t.

ELAINE

They need to visit "the rapist"?

MAX

(ENUNCIATING) Ther-a-pist!

ELAINE

I'm not a speller, I'm a dreamer.

Natalie takes a deep breath, holds her nose and goes under.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Is it my imagination? Or are we killing it with this bathtub?

MAX

We are. Best grandparents ever.

They give each other a high five.

ELAINE

Everything's going fantastic. Polly's out on a date, and you know who gets the credit for that? Us. We're getting a second chance, here. Maybe flowers guy will turn out to be Polly's Max.

Max kisses Elaine. Natalie pops up from being underwater. They keep kissing, ignoring her.

INT. ACAPULCO LOUNGE - NIGHT

Polly and Luke finish another drink on the dance floor.

POLLY
You've got some great moves.

LUKE
Really? How's this one?

Luke leans in for a kiss.

POLLY
(STARRY-EYED) Perfect mix of tongue
and hip distance. Is it my
imagination? Or are we killing it
on this date?

Polly flags a WAITER for more drinks.

INT. FRANK HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Natalie follows Max and Elaine into the living room. She's wearing a robe and a towel around her head.

ELAINE
... What say we eat a box of
chocolate truffles and make crank
phone calls to my sister-in-law?

NATALIE
Yay, Grandma! What's truffles?

Natalie bumps into the dog sculpture.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
Ahhh! Bad doggy scared me!

ELAINE
Natalie, have you ever actually
been with a real dog?

Natalie shakes her head, "no." Elaine gets an idea.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
(TO MAX) Are you thinking what I'm
thinking?

MAX
I never know how to answer that.

INT. DOG SHELTER - LATER

A SHELTER WORKER leads Max and Elaine down the hallway. Natalie hides behind Elaine.

NATALIE
I'm scared.

MAX
No you're not.

NATALIE
Yes, I am, you doodyhead!

The DOGS start BARKING.

NATALIE (CONT'D)
I want to call my Mommy!

ELAINE
You can't. Your mom's on a date.
(OFF MAX AND NATALIE'S LOOK)
I mean, "d-a-t-e."

NATALIE
Mommy's on a date? She told me she
was going to a work party.

ELAINE
She doesn't want you to worry about
getting a new daddy.

MAX
Elaine! (THEN) Natalie, look at
this adorable old sheep dog.

Max pets the dog, the dog's tail starts wagging.

NATALIE
He's funny.

ELAINE
Good job, Max. Good teamwork.

MAX
There's nothing to be afraid of--

The dog BITES MAX.

MAX (CONT'D)
(BLEEPED) Motherfucker!

NATALIE
Call Mommy! Call Mommy! Call
Mommy! Call Mommy!

Elaine grabs the Shelter Worker by the collar.

ELAINE
We need a cute puppy, and we need
it now.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. ACAPULCO LOUNGE, PARKING LOT - LATER

Polly drags a now totally wasted Luke out of the club.

LUKE
Ooo, are we gonna have sex?

POLLY
Yeah, like any part of you could
have sex now.

LUKE
Boo. (THEN) There's my car!

Luke tries to unlock his car with the remote, sets off the alarm instead.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Whoops.

POLLY
Wow, ativan-tinis: one. Luke: zero.

EXT. STREET/LUKE'S CAR - LATER

Polly's lost in a sketchy neighborhood. Luke plays with the MUSIC, fast forwarding through each song.

POLLY
I thought this neighborhood was
artsy-fartsy, but it's more gunsy-
knivesy.

Polly sees TWO MALE CLUB-GOERS, rolls down her window.

POLLY (CONT'D)
(BIG SMILE) Hi, hey, we're lost.
How do I get... out of here?

LUKE
(CALLING OUT WINDOW) Yo, homes,
where da party at?

CLUB-GOER #1
You got a problem?

POLLY
(OUT WINDOW) Yes, homes, he has
many problems.

Polly peels away, turns to Luke.

POLLY (CONT'D)
This is no way for a fragile person
to behave! (THEN) I'm totally
lost. (GETTING AN IDEA) Wait a
minute.

She pulls out her cell phone, pushes a button.

POLLY (CONT'D)
(TO PHONE) Please work, please
work, please--

CELL PHONE (V.O.)
Hello Polly, how can I help?

POLLY
It knows my name!

EXT. FRANK HOUSE/INT FRANK HOUSE - LATER

Polly pulls into her driveway, SEES Julian's car drive up.

POLLY
(TO HERSELF) Oh, crap.

Julian sees Polly, starts HONKING. Polly waves, weakly.

LUKE
Who's that?

POLLY
My ex-husband, so maintain.

Julian gets out of his car, as does Polly, trying to cover.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Hey, hi! That GPS thingy on the
phone? Genius. You did good, you.

JULIAN
You look hot.

POLLY
Not really, this is fake leather
that just looks expensive. I was at
a boring work party.

As Luke opens the car door and spills out on the ground:

LUKE
Your ex wife's a great kisser.

POLLY
(MAINTAINING HER DIGNITY, TO
JULIAN) So why are you here?

Julian knows what's going on but chooses to ignore it.

JULIAN
Natalie called me... something
about a dog?

POLLY
Max's damn dog sculpture! That's
it! I'm taking the other ball!

Polly, pissed, crosses to the front door, followed by Julian
and a staggering Luke.

INT. FRANK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They enter. As Natalie runs to Julian, climbs on his
shoulders:

NATALIE
(TO JULIAN) Look, mommy has a
boyfriend.

POLLY
(TO ELAINE AND MAX) Who told her
about the date?

ELAINE
I have no idea.

MAX
She did.

ELAINE
The wheels came off the evening.
Who can say who said what? (TO
LUKE) I'm Elaine, by the way.

Max shakes Luke's hand.

MAX
Max. Nice touch with the flowers.
(URGENT) Julian, what the hell are
you doing on Polly's date?

POLLY
(TO ELAINE AND MAX) All you had to
do was watch her for, what? Five
hours? Six? You couldn't just put
the dog sculpture away. Why do you
insist on confronting people with
things they're afraid of?

NATALIE
But, I'm not afraid of dogs
anymore, Mommy.

POLLY
What? Yes you are.

NATALIE
No, I'm not. Look!

Natalie opens the door. A PUPPY comes racing towards Polly.

POLLY
Aaaaahhhh!!!!

Polly runs into a closet. The puppy BARKS. Max, Elaine, Natalie and Julian gather round as Polly castigates them from INSIDE THE CLOSET. Luke lays down on the floor.

ELAINE
I know what's going on here.

POLLY
(FROM CLOSET) That must be a nice change of pace for you.

ELAINE
You're projecting your fear of dogs onto Natalie.

POLLY
(FROM CLOSET) Gee, I wonder why I have that.

POP TO:

INT. TINY APARTMENT - NIGHT, (FLASHBACK)

CHILD POLLY watches cartoons, nervously glancing to the corner. WIDEN TO reveal a DOG, chained to the radiator. He pulls at his leash and snarls at Child Polly.

BACK TO SCENE

INT. FRANK HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

They are as they were. Polly's still IN THE CLOSET.

ELAINE
I don't see how it's my fault that that dog turned out to have hereditary insanity.

POLLY
(FROM CLOSET) The dog's not the only one!

JULIAN
Polly, come on. It's just a puppy.

POLLY
(FROM CLOSET) An unsanctioned puppy! I am integral to the puppy-buying decision making process! This is a terrible violation of my parental authority as the best, single, working mom in the Universe!

Polly bumps into a shelf causing a bunch of HATS to fall on her. Just then, Natalie looks out the window.

NATALIE
Daddy! Your car! It's driving itself!

JULIAN
Damn! I forgot my brick!

NATALIE'S POV - Julian's car, the brakes having finally given out, starts rolling down the hill.

ANGLE ON - POLLY INSIDE THE CLOSET

POLLY
What? What's happening? I'm trying to make a very valid point!

EXT. FRANK HOUSE, DOWN THE HILL - MOMENTS LATER

Polly, Natalie, Elaine, Max, Julian, Luke, and the puppy, look at Julian's car, CRASHED against the curb.

JULIAN
My car has air bags? Cool.

Luke laughs hysterically for an inordinately long time before abruptly hurling. More BARKING.

INT. LUKE'S CAR - LATER

Max drives Luke's car, Julian in the passenger seat, drunk Luke in the back. Uncomfortable beat.

LUKE
Am I being kidnapped?

JULIAN
We're driving you home, ass hat.

Another beat.

MAX
You've been stealing my soda.

JULIAN

No, I haven't.

MAX

Maybe. But it's totally irresponsible to use a brick as a brake.

JULIAN

I think tonight proves it's way more irresponsible not to use one. Don't make things worse, Dad.

MAX

I'm not your dad. And maybe it's not my place to say, but I don't think it's healthy you're around Polly so much.

JULIAN

I've been setting up her phone, which takes time.

MAX

Does it? Or are you purposefully breaking it to have an excuse to come over?

JULIAN

What?!

MAX

Not consciously! I didn't say consciously!

JULIAN

Dude, that is so uncool.

MAX

You're divorced! Get out there! Screw a college girl! Screw a bunch of them! Do you know how lucky you are to have two working balls? Don't squander them!

JULIAN

I'm not squandering my balls!

MAX

Then why won't you let Polly go!?

JULIAN

I need to be there for her and Natalie 'cause I wasn't before!

Max realizes this is a big admission for Julian.

MAX

I'm sorry if that sounded harsh. I'm just trying to take care of them.

JULIAN

(FIRMLY) So am I.

They come to an understanding.

LUKE

Somebody better take care of me, 'cause I'm gonna throw up again.

MAX

Go ahead and vomit.

JULIAN

Yeah, it's your car.

Luke obliges. Max and Julian share a "Really, dude?" look.

INT. POLLY'S CAR - LATER

Polly drives. Elaine sits in the passenger's seat; Natalie's in the back, in a car seat, distracted with the new puppy.

ELAINE

What an exciting evening. We should do more fun stuff like this.

POLLY

Fun stuff like driving my wasted date home after my ex-husband totalled his car?

ELAINE

I'm not judging it like you are.

POLLY

I can't believe you told Natalie I was getting a boyfriend.

ELAINE

I didn't. I said if she did, it could be fantastic.

POLLY

God...

ELAINE

How is shielding her from the inevitable a good idea? You want her to live in some fantasy world? That's how people go schizophrenic.

POLLY

She can't "go" schizophrenic. It's not covered by my health insurance. (THEN) Look, I want you to be an accent in her life, like oregano in marinara sauce. There's a reason there's no such thing as oregano sauce. Because it's crazy.

ELAINE

I'm not an accent. I'm an entree.

POLLY

You need to pull it back, you. You need to act like other people are watching.

ELAINE

I want them to watch. Everybody knows that about me. (THEN) What is this really about?

POLLY

I'm scared Natalie will turn out like me, okay? I'm a divorced woman, living with her parents, who sells popcorn. There are so many choices I make every day that could screw Natalie up, and I won't know which one was bad until she's grown up and mad at me.

ELAINE

Not even then. Look, you are fantastic. You're a great mother, you're very thin... you're the best thing I ever did, and I once had sex with a Chicago Bull. I won't say which one, because I... don't... remember.

Polly reaches over and squeezes her mother's leg. In the rear view mirror, Polly sees Natalie hug the puppy.

POLLY

I swear she said she was afraid of dogs... now she's just making me look bad...

EXT. JENN'S HOUSE - LATER

Polly and Julian walk Luke inside -- he has an arm over each of them. Elaine, Max and Natalie play with the puppy.

POLLY
I'm sorry I didn't tell you. I was worried it would make things uncomfortable between us.

Luke lets loose a massive drunken belch in Julian's face.

JULIAN
No, come on, this is great...

POLLY
I can't believe my parents got a dog. Again.

JULIAN
You should give them a break. They're just trying to take care of you.

They get to the door, which has a key code. He turns to Luke

JULIAN (CONT'D)
Rock Star, what's your code?

LUKE
My sobriety date which is...

Luke passes out on his shoulder.

JULIAN
Where'd you meet this loser?

POLLY
He's Jenn's brother. He was the only loser I could get.

JULIAN
You? (RAKISH SMILE) You're catnip to losers.

Julian dumps Luke on Polly, grabs his LIFE HAMMER from his pocket and breaks a window. Just then, Jenn opens the door.

JENN
What the hell...?

POLLY
Hey, Jenn! Super date.

As they all help Luke inside:

POLLY (V.O.)
Okay, so I probably won't end up being the best single working mom in the Universe. But that's fine, because I looked on the internet and it's not a recognized competition.

(MORE)

POLLY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*There's no ceremony, no red carpet.
Even so, I did write a little
acceptance speech.*

EXT. FRANK HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Julian leaves a six-pack of Max's cream soda at the doorstep

POLLY (V.O.)
*I'd like to thank my ex-husband.
I'd call him and tell him but the
phone stopped working.*

Julian drives off in his car - THE FRONT BUMPER NOW TIED ON.

INT. ELAINE AND MAX'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Max looks at himself in the mirror, naked from the waist up, wrapped in a towel.

POLLY (V.O.)
*I'd like to thank my stepfather,
Max. I wasn't happy when he showed
up, but I'm happy he stayed.*

Max takes off the towel, looks at himself naked (BLURRED). Elaine comes up behind him. He shrugs a la, "what're you gonna do?" They kiss.

INT. NATALIE'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Polly looks in on Natalie, asleep in her bed with the puppy.

POLLY (V.O.)
*I'd like to thank my daughter for
making me be brave. She better
take of care of that puppy.*

INT. POLLY'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Polly gets into her own bed and turns out the light.

POLLY
*And lastly, I'd like to thank my
mom... for being a romantic, and a
dreamer, and an entree? Is that
what she said? It was a crazy
night.*

REVEAL Elaine looking in on her.

END OF SHOW