

CHATTERBOX

an original screenplay by

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**INT. LISA'S FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Three children sit around LISA's middle class family home in her bedroom. CLOSE UP of LISA (8), PENNY (9) and MAGGIE (8), hovered over a game of FORTUNE TELLER a folded paper game that fits over your fingertips in the shape of cone shape triangles. LISA calls out the colour and number to land on your 'forecast' for the future... *old maid, princess, drunken sailer.*

\*

PENNY yells out orange and then the number 4, quickly LISA maneuvers her hands until it lands on Penny's fortune, '*Arabian Princess*'. Penny gives Lisa her turn, and after saying yellow and 2 the fortune comes up '*Multi-millionaire.*' They scream 'YEAH', as they sit in Lisa's very extravagant home.

Your turn Maggie. Maggie quickly blurts out BLUE and the number 6. Lisa makes the folded triangle paper go at lightening speed and the fortune, '*homeless bum*', comes up. Penny and Lisa howl laughing and Maggie pretends to join in.

MAGGIE

It's just a game. I'll live in a mansion. You'll see.

PENNY

No, you won't!

LISA

Look at your shoes.  
(she cackles with  
laughter)

CLOSE UP reveals Maggie's Nike shoes, weathered, bought at a second hand store and certainly not *this* season's fashion.

LISA (CONT'D)

Look at *my* room. This is the room of a princess. I have a mansion, not you.

They laugh harder.

MAGGIE

(fights back tears  
and blurts back)  
Just you wait. Besides this is *all* your parent's stuff.

PENNY

Our parents give *us* everything. We can have 10 mansions if we want.

LISA

What's theirs is *ours*.

MAGGIE

So. So what. I am smarter than both of you. Than both of you put together.

Maggie goes towards the bedroom door and SLAMS it shut on her way out.

2 **EXT. WHITE ROSE ESTATES NEIGHBOURHOOD- DAY**

Maggie walks home the long way. She sees all the rich family homes, mansion after mansion that mimic LISA'S. Fancy cars, basketball nets in the yard, tennis courts.

MAGGIE

Who has their own *tennis* court?  
(she murmurs)

Up ahead the path cuts over abruptly and the manicured lawns, city path with wooden bridge, and wrought iron railing, shift to pavement with a yellow pipe handrail and barb wire fence.

3 **EXT. PLAYGROUND- DAY**

Maggie kicks the rickety merry-go-round noticing now her Nike shoes are *nothing*. *She's nothing*.

MAGGIE

I'm going to be somebody. I'm going to be tall, rich. Even *pretty*.

Maggie runs with the rickety merry-go-round, hops on board and leans back, her waist and hair fly through the air and sweep the ground below. She is a stalk of wheat against the sun in a field of dry meadow. She is scraggily, some may say feisty. But at any turn things could go horribly wrong and she knows it.

4 **EXT. FIELD - DAY**

Maggie walks through the field reaches in her pocket and takes out the paper 'fortune teller', her eye pulled to the tab that says 'homeless bum'. She quickly works her hands to change the outcome and lands on 'businesswoman'. With her head down she squeaks a tiny smile from her broken face, and SMACKS into an OLD MAN, LEONARD (45), with scraggily beard and torn up clothes. She DROPS the paper game of FORTUNE TELLER after being so startled by the man.

LEONARD

(abrupt)  
Where are you going?  
(pause)  
Young lady.

Maggie is completely shaken.

MAGGIE  
 (trembling)  
 Somewhere. Home. *Home.*  
 (her voice strengthens)

Maggie backs up into the tall grass and when she is at a safe distance makes a run for it through the field as fast as she can. Leonard picks up the paper game 'Fortune Teller', glances at it, and puts it in his pocket.

5 **INT. MAGGIE'S FAMILY HOME - AFTERNOON**

Maggie slams the door leaning against it, out of breath. She scans the inside of her living room that is not in squalor, but shows a piecemeal room with all the furnishings, a mere pittance to Penny and Lisa's 'mansions'.

A Cuckoo clock dangles a brass chain hanging from a broken bird tipping through the hole, coffee tables with scratches engraved on them surround a tattered victorian couch with stuffing oozing from the cushions. Lamps are placed like book ends with cellophane torn to the point it could become pixie dust against the brash dangling light bulbs.

Maggie fixates on the floor and from wall to wall like a swamp that has creeped into their home is a sea of green foam, Tupperware, order sheets and plastic wrap. Maggie's Mom, SUZIE (34), in cut off jean shorts and a halter top beams as if she is a store clerk at MACY'S.

SUZIE  
 The treasures are here! Look at all  
 this stock.  
 (laughs with pride)

MAGGIE  
 It's Tupperware, *Mom.*

SUZIE  
 It's gold, Maggie. Each little piece  
 represents a new life. Money in the  
 bank, cash in *my* hand.

MAGGIE  
 A bird in the hand is worth two in  
 the bush.

SUZIE  
 What the hell does that mean?

MAGGIE  
 Doesn't matter. It's not true.

SUZIE

(ignores her)

I need you to help me package the orders and deliver them. It's by your friend's house.

MAGGIE

No way. I will package them. I'm not delivering.

SUZIE

You're always over there.

MAGGIE

They're not my friends.

SUZIE

They're not?

MAGGIE

I'm like their case study.

SUZIE

(ignores her again)

I'm going to use my grocery cart. Guess I can deliver 8 at a time in that.

Suzie is organized and focused, uses a clipboard, with notes on the order forms. Maggie leans in trying to be impressed, and then the reality horrifies her and her face is stricken with shock about going to White Rose Estates.

6 **EXT. WHITE ROSE ESTATES NEIGHBOURHOOD- DAY**

Suzie leads the way rickety cart in tow, wearing a more respectable mini skirt, just to the top of her thighs. Maggie carries the order forms shifting the paper to cover her face.

Suzie rings the bell, with a spring in her step,.

SUZIE

Mrs. Thompson. Your order is here.  
As promised.

Maggie passes the form, hoping not to get drawn into this.

MRS. THOMPSON

Suzie, perfect. You know, no matter how much you can afford, nothing beats these old brands. I'm sure you know what I mean.

SUZIE

I do. And there's a bonus gift for you with this order.

(she passes over the lemon squeezer)

MRS. THOMPSON

Isn't that sweet. Won't you come in? Is that your daughter, I see her playing with the other girls.

SUZIE

Yes, that's *my* Maggie.

(with pride as if she fits in)

They've been buddies for a while now. It's so nice.

Maggie pushes the forms out from under the stack, barely showing her nose. She smiles to be polite.

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**EXT. WHITE ROSE ESTATES NEIGHBOURHOOD- DAY**

Maggie and her Mom walk side by side, Tupperware in tow.

SUZIE

Next house.

MAGGIE

That was good.

SUZIE

Really. Thanks, Mags.

They walk along and Maggie slowly sees out of the corner of her eye the man she saw earlier in the field. He is gathering a cart of tin can empties and wine bottles from a well-to-do house across the road. She keeps him in her eye-line until they reach the next doorstep.

At the doorstep Maggie can see Lisa and Penny two houses up getting in their Range Rover, with their dance bags. Maggie raises the envelopes higher to cover the front of her face.

LISA

(pretending to be civil)

See you tomorrow in school, Maggie.

PENNY

Have a good afternoon.

Maggie gives a little wave behind the envelopes. No one answers the door for her Mom and they turn to leave.

Suzie and Maggie walk down the step and just as the RANGE ROVER passes by in front of them, their cart gets caught in the walkway and CRASH. Maggie and her Mom are on the ground, her knee is cut, papers flying overhead, and Tupperware bowls roll around the yard. Maggie barely suffers the pain of a cut knee when she catches Lisa and Penny waving from their black 4 x 4, as if in a Queen's motorcade, they sing out from the window.

LISA/PENNY

Have a *nice* day.  
(queen waves and a  
belittling giggle  
come from the car)

Suzie recovers, and as Maggie is still on the ground LEONARD comes toward her leaving his cart parked on the sidewalk and puts out his hand, grimy with filth and dirt, to pull her to her feet.

**TWENTY YEARS LATER:**

8 **EXT. BISTRO MAIGRE - EVENING**

Maggie (28) is sitting at the restaurant with a tall handsome man ERIC (30) leaning over her. Wearing a fashionable black pencil skirt and formal white blouse, Maggie reaches her hand out for Eric to pull her up from her chair and he pulls her close for a loving kiss.

ERIC

You're so beautiful.

MAGGIE

Ahhh.  
(blushing)  
I have to get back to work...

Maggie picks up the tray from the table, resuming waitress duties. She lets her hand trail behind her in Eric's grasp.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Tonight?

ERIC

*Tonight.*

9 **INT. BISTRO BAR STATION - EVENING**

Maggie picks up an order of cocktails from the BARTENDER, ZACK.

ZACK

Table 8.

As Maggie turns to go to the table the BAR PHONE rings. Zack answers and mouths the words to Maggie.

ZACK (CONT'D)

It's your mom. AGAIN.

Maggie waves Zack off, in response, **NO. NO.** And Zack knows to get rid of her mom on the phone.

ZACK (CONT'D)

Sorry, Maggie stepped out. Yes, I will be sure to let her know, it's her *Mom* that's called. Have a good evening.

10 **EXT. BISTRO MAIGRE - EVENING**

Maggie twirls to the table with professionalism, setting the drinks out for the businessmen, PAUL and SEAN, sitting with two other men.

SEAN

Nice place *you've* got here.

PAUL

Already reviewed in La Liste.

Maggie shies away at first, and then owns up. She puts her finger to her lips.

MAGGIE

Shhhh. Not everyone knows I own this place.  
(laughs)

SEAN

Is that a sign of your success?

MAGGIE

It was a great review. Must be the fabulous waitstaff.  
(laughs)

PAUL

You are *intimate* with your customers.

MAGGIE

That's not quite our service, but I like to keep my ear to the ground. It's like being a door-to-door salesperson, ya know.

Maggie notices the man on the inside of the table looking intently across the table. She shudders as if he is familiar, then ignores it.

PAUL

You should be proud, it's quite something to make a name for yourself in this business.

MAGGIE

Thank you, gentlemen. I'll leave you to it.

Maggie walks away, her eye wanders to the man at the end of the table one more time.

11 **INT. BISTRO BAR STATION - EVENING**

Maggie leans against the bar with Zack and sees two very well dressed women come in, standing until they are given 'proper' service.

ZACK

You know that was your mom, she said to remind you she's been calling, several, *many* times.

Maggie ignores Zack's comment and grabs the menu and sparkling water and nods to the other waitress.

MAGGIE

I've got this table.

Maggie approaches with confidence.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Ladies.

The two women look up ready to demand service, and notice it's Maggie.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Lisa and Penny. Lovely to see you both. Can I get you a drink to start.

LISA

How great, you're working at such a trendy spot.

PENNY

We've heard great things. We just finished school.

LISA

Princeton.

MAGGIE

Yes, I've heard great things.

LISA  
 We'll start with Champagne. Champagne  
 Ruinart.  
 (she winces with  
 excitement)

PENNY  
 Why not. It's *all* celebration, now.  
 (laughs)

MAGGIE  
 Champagne Ruinart it *is*.

Maggie returns to ZACK with the order.

ZACK  
 You okay?

MAGGIE  
 Yeah fine, school girls. Never goes  
 away really, does it?

Zack has a blank and yet caring stare.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
 You guys take over here. I'm going  
 to head out. The champagne is on  
 'the house' for the school girls.

Zack smiles.

ZACK  
 Kill them with kindness.

MAGGIE  
 Something like that.

**VIGNETTE:**

12 **EXT. FIELD- DAY - MORNING**

Maggie(28) walks through the field, the grass is taller and taller around her. By the time she gets to the edge of the field to cut up by her house it is almost over her head. She can see the old man Leonard (65) in the distance. He sits on the edge of the steps playing the game of FORTUNE TELLER. The paper looks weathered, as if years have past. He uses his clumsy beaten up hands and counts out 4 as he opens the triangle. Just as he is about to reveal the FORECAST Maggie walks up ahead into the tall grass.

As she walks further she sees a tent Leonard has built for himself to live. A little further down there are two more families in tents, that Maggie has not seen before.

Maggie continues her walk through the field as the grass grows higher and higher above her head.

13     **INT. CONDO - NIGHT**

Maggie (28) walks into her condo tosses her shoes off and starts to change. She can tell Eric has been home and smiles. She turns on music and starts to relax. Eric has left some dinner on the table, and an expensive bottle of wine.

She goes to the bathroom gets a dress from behind the door to get ready for the evening. She notices the vanity cabinet half open and when she looks the cover is off a large bottle of cough medicine, which is half gone.

MAGGIE

*Odd.*

She grabs her phone to meet Eric and he has already text saying: ***There's a great rooftop party, lots of 'industry peeps' and sommeliers. That should peak your interest.***

Maggie texts back: ***Sure, send the address.***

Maggie looks at her phone and grabs the address also noticing 3 missed calls from her mom, Suzie.

14     **EXT. ROOFTOP BAR - NIGHT**

Eric, more than enthusiastic at the party, rushes over and picks Maggie up and swings her around. At first Maggie is smitten with the attention. Then she realizes Eric is high, really high.

ERIC

Let's celebrate.

MAGGIE

Seems like you've already started.  
You smell a little odd. Were you in  
the medicine cabinet.

ERIC

Just putting my chemistry research  
to good use. *Finally.*  
(laughs)

MAGGIE

(not amused)  
Oh yeah. And what did you come up  
with?

Eric takes a plastic pop bottle out of his pocket, as if it's a trophy.

ERIC  
Just made a little *lean*. Wanna try.

Maggie pulls back.

MAGGIE  
No. No, I don't.

ERIC  
Come on, it'll help you relax. We  
can dance the night away.

MAGGIE  
Yeah, I don't need to be more relaxed.  
But thanks.

Maggie starts to turn away.

ERIC  
You're not leaving.

MAGGIE  
Yeah, yeah I am.

Maggie turns abruptly and sees Lisa and Penny coming in. She  
can hear Eric from behind her calling.

ERIC  
Lisa, Penny. Over here.

Maggie as she walks away mutters under her breath.

MAGGIE  
Oh, *pleeeeee*se.

15     **EXT. CITY STREET - EVENING**

Maggie walks home taking deep breaths, heavy steps and her  
pace becomes faster and faster with big strides like an athlete  
on a track but in an urban city street.

**VIGNETTE:**

16     **EXT. FIELD- DAY - MORNING**

Maggie (28) walks through the field. By the time she gets to  
the edge to cut up by her house there are many more tents for  
homeless families. Off in the distance she sees, Leonard  
(65) the homeless man sitting on the steps. Maggie keeps  
walking until the grass is over her head.

17     **EXT. BISTRO MAIGRE - MORNING, NEXT DAY**

Maggie walks up to her restaurant and sees her awning has  
been ripped down.

Zack is inside setting the tables.

MAGGIE

(to Zack)

My awning. Not again?

ZACK

Yup. It's a good tarp if you need shelter.

MAGGIE

Come on. It can't keep you that warm. It's one side.

ZACK

Ever build a *Lean To*, when you were a kid?

MAGGIE

Yea, but that was inside the house.

ZACK

I guess you grew up like the *Champagne Ruinart* Twins.

MAGGIE

Not exactly. My mother made me sell Tupperware door-to-door, to the *Twins*.

ZACK

You may not notice now. But rent is pretty high and so is food, and so is shampoo, and so on and so on...

MAGGIE

You're not saying my food is overpriced, are you?

(laughs)

It's world renowned.

ZACK

Talk to the crowd who stole your canopy sign for a tent tonight.

Maggie starts to make her way to the door.

ZACK (CONT'D)

(bellows after her)

I wasn't being serious.

18 **EXT. CITY STREET - DAY**

Maggie walks out onto the street and continues down the road.

She eyes a young woman, JULIE, waiting for the bus with two big large garbage bags of clothes. Julie sneaks on the bus in the back. The bus waits for the other passengers.

Maggie hears the driver out of the window.

BUS DRIVER

You can't sleep on the bus, Julie.

Julie ignores the driver, until he comes down to her seat and stands over her.

BUS DRIVER (CONT'D)

Julie, I said you can't sleep on the bus. It's for daytime use *only*.

As more passengers get on the bus Maggie also sees her mom Suzie climb onto the bus through the front door, but Maggie does not sing out and just walks past the bus on the other side of the road.

**VIGNETTE:**

19

**EXT. FIELD - DAY**

Maggie (28) walks through the field with the grass tall around her but there are tents covering almost the entire field. People have been sleeping there, cooking, living there. They are homeless. Maggie walks past young families, older people. She sees the same old man off in the distance. Before she arrives to the steps near Leonard (65), she passes by her own Bistro sign being used for shelter, a lean-to. Then she sees another tent and glances inside, it's Eric, Lisa and Penny. Eric looks like he is still enjoying being high, but Lisa and Penny are scrummaging through their purse trying to find cash, cards or anything to help.

A little further on Maggie sees Zack, her bartender, in a 'tidy' lean-to looking like he had just arrived. Julie is off to one side, not even with a tent, just her two garbage bags filled with clothes.

Beyond them both, the BUSINESSMEN who frequent the restaurant sit in tatters with ripped cloths, Sean and Paul and two others.

Amidst all the people Maggie sees families suffer who are helping the newcomers build their tents and settle in with their belongings. The BUSINESSMAN who caught Maggie's eye in the restaurant looks directly in her eyes.

Maggie walks through the last layer of tall grass to get to Leonard, who is still holding the tattered paper Fortune Teller game.

LEONARD  
He's there isn't he?

MAGGIE  
Who's there? They're *all* there.

LEONARD  
The man in the business suit.

Maggie looks out into the field knowing who is referring to.

MAGGIE  
Yes. He's there. Who is he?

LEONARD  
I told him. Slow down. Be careful.

MAGGIE  
Who is *he*?

Maggie looks up at Leonard, scraggily, with a grey beard, and slowly realizes the weather has aged him.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
He's *your* son. Is *he*? He never came to this field. He *never* came to see you.

LEONARD  
He's here.

MAGGIE  
Now.

LEONARD  
You know how it is. People are afraid. If you get too close. It could be you.

MAGGIE  
I grew up in this field.

LEONARD  
But you don't want to *live* here.

MAGGIE  
No. No. I don't.

Maggie gets irritated.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)  
I have to go.

LEONARD  
Saw your sign over there. Looks good.

Leonard starts playing with the paper fortune teller game.

Maggie starts to walk towards her family home, through the field, where her Mom lives.

LEONARD (CONT'D)

Your Mom must be proud. She keeping  
busy?

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Still selling Tupperware.

Maggie continues walking through the field and up the steps of her family home.

20 **INT. MAGGIE'S FAMILY HOME - DAY**

Maggie walks into her family home. It's modest but freshly painted, with department store furniture, not fancy but not torn. Suzie (54) is sorting the Tupperware orders putting them in plastic bags.

SUZIE

Want to give me a hand?

MAGGIE

Love to.

THE END.