

AEROSOL DREAMS

By
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AEROSOL DREAMS

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AEROSOL DREAMS

For my beloved mother, Adele Pandolfo, and my beloved grandmother, Suzanne Pandolfo.

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CAST: 3 Women, 2 Men

MARIA late 20s, W. Her fiancé died in a freak accident and after losing her job and going on a way-too-long Vegas bender, she's living at home in NJ with her mother.

PATTY late 40s, W. Maria's mother. A hairdresser with a lottery addiction.

AMBER late 20s, W. Maria's best friend growing up. Doesn't understand when everyone got so lame.

TOMMY 30s, M. Bartender at Luscious Lou's pub. Was in a band that was almost famous.

B.J./DANNY/ANNOUNCER 30s, M. Local cop with a sweet spot for Camaros. / Maria's ex-boyfriend from high school. / TV Announcer (Voice Over).

TIME: The present.

PLACE: New Jersey.

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SCENE 1

Lights up on PATTY, MARIA'S mother. She's in the kitchen, with a cigarette dangling out of her mouth putting curlers in Maria's hair. Patty sprays tons of aerosol hairspray onto Maria's hair.

PATTY. Hold still. You have to look amazing.

MARIA. Why do I have to look amazing? I'm just going to Lou's. It's like the shittiest dive in town. ...Like in all of New Jersey. ...Like in all of existence.

PATTY. You haven't seen these people for years. Do you want to look good or not?

MARIA. Of course I want to look good. (*Patty continues working on her hair.*) You're making it frizzy.

PATTY. Excuse me. I know what I'm doing. (*Patty sprays some more hairspray.*)

MARIA. Can I borrow some cash?

PATTY. How much do you need?

MARIA. A couple hundred.

PATTY. A couple hundred?

MARIA. Just until I can find a job.

PATTY. Why don't you just use your credit card?

MARIA. They're all maxed out.

PATTY. You're out of money?

MARIA. Bobby never got around to buying life insurance. I got what was in his savings account, but that money's been spent.

PATTY. You know I'm not exactly flush myself.

MARIA. I know. (*Patty digs through her purse and pulls out a wad of cash. She hands it to Maria.*) Thank you.

PATTY. Tomorrow you can go in and talk to Dotti.

MARIA. Mom.

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PATTY. What?

MARIA. I'm not talking to Dotti.

PATTY. You need a job don't you? You can shampoo. I shampooed for 7 years until they let me cut hair.

MARIA. I don't want to shampoo.

PATTY. Well there's no office jobs like you had in the city around here. You don't even have a car- you're gonna have to work in town.

MARIA. I was thinking about seeing if there's an opening at Nino's.

PATTY. You want to waitress?

MARIA. I made pretty decent money when I worked there that summer in college.

PATTY. You were a horrible waitress, remember?

MARIA. No I wasn't.

PATTY. You tripped over the stairs and flung Spaghetti Bolognese all over the mayor. (*Patty pulls hard on the next curl.*)

MARIA. Oww!

PATTY. I already talked to Dotti about it- if you just go in and see her she'll give you the job I know it.

MARIA. But. (*Patty shakes the canister of hairspray.*)

PATTY. Hands. (*Maria puts both hands over her face. Patty sprays an even more obscene amount of hairspray into Maria's hair. Patty admires her work.*) Beautiful. ...Who knows, maybe tonight you'll have some luck. At the bar you never know who will walk in those doors. Could be the love of your life comes right in to get a drink. Could happen anytime. That's why it's always good to have your hair done. Because you never know. (*Just then Patty notices Maria's finger.*) I thought you weren't going to wear that ring anymore? (*Maria pulls her hand away.*) No one's gonna talk to you with that thing on your finger.

MARIA. It's on my right hand.

PATTY. When your dad left me and ran off to Delaware to be with that anorexic blonde who sold him his Ford Bronco, I thought my life was over. I was pregnant with you, working as a cashier at Mr. P's deli, smoking three packs of Virginia Slims a day out of the cigarette vending machine. But in the end your deadbeat dad leaving was the best thing that ever happened to us. All he ever ended up doing was selling life insurance

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door-to-door and fighting off recurrent psoriasis. And look at me, huh. I'm down to one pack a day, I still got my figure, I get to work with all my friends at the salon, I got you. I made out like a bandit. What I mean is you gotta look at the bright side. Think of it this way. Now you don't have to deal with his mother ever again. That's gotta be a load off! And you can meet someone new. Who is NOT married or lives in Vegas.

MARIA. What did I say about bringing up Vegas?

PATTY. All I'm saying is that just because he died and you got evicted, doesn't mean you can't find a way to feel happy about something. Even if it is just not ever having to see his mother again. There's always a silver lining. *(A beat. Patty puts on Elvis.)* Your favorite. *(Maria gets up and goes over to a cabinet and grabs an ibuprofen bottle.)*

MARIA. I had too many screwdrivers on the plane. *(Maria looks in the cabinet.)* Mom. *(Maria fans out several scratch-off lottery tickets.)*

PATTY. So, are you excited to see Amber tonight?

MARIA. Mom. Are you playing the numbers again?

PATTY. Those are just scratch-offs.

MARIA. Are you playing the numbers again?

PATTY. Sue me.

MARIA. You can't keep spending half your paycheck on the goddamn lottery.

PATTY. I don't spend half my paycheck.

MARIA. You still haven't paid down the credit cards from the last time.

PATTY. You can't win if you don't play.

MARIA. You're not gonna win. *(A beat.)*

PATTY. Why would you say something like that?

MARIA. Because it's true.

PATTY. It's my destiny to win the lottery.

MARIA. Mom, you been playing the same numbers since 1984. It's not gonna happen. Stop wasting your money on this bullshit. *(A very long pause.)*

PATTY. You can be cruel. Do you know that?

MARIA. I don't mean to be cruel.

PATTY. That's my dream. And you're demeaning it.

MARIA. I'm not demeaning it.

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PATTY. Not all of us got to go to fancy colleges and live in the big city and get to date sort of famous people.

MARIA. What did I say about bringing up Vegas?!

PATTY. Well think about what words you say before you blurt them out of your mouth. “Never gonna win the lottery.” It’s that kind of losing mentality that I’m trying to avoid. (*Patty, flustered, goes back to Maria’s hair.*) This looks horrible.

MARIA. No it doesn’t... (*Patty unravels what she did and starts over. A long silence hovers over the two of them as Patty works.*)

MARIA. So you were saying you’ve seen Amber?...

PATTY. Yeah.

MARIA. How is she?

PATTY. You can tell she’s a smoker, but she looks good.

MARIA. So can I borrow a few bucks?

PATTY. I thought I should start being more mindful of my money... Of course I’ll always take care of you. (*Patty goes to her purse and pulls some cash out of her bag. The phone rings.*)

PATTY. Ooo- I’ll get that. It might be Francis. You know that Hells Angel I met on eHarmony? (*Patty hands Maria the cash.*) I’ll take it in the bedroom. (*Patty exits. Maria turns to look at herself in the mirror.*)

MARIA. But I want to take care of myself. (*Lights down.*)

SCENE 2

Lights up on Luscious Lou’s bar. The place is not a dump, but not classy either. Maria and AMBER sit at the bar. TOMMY, the bartender, drops two beers in front of them.

AMBER. I wish you would have called me back. I would have been there in a second. I felt so bad for you when I heard about what happened. I really wish you would’ve called me back. (*Pause.*) Do you miss him?

MARIA. Yes.

AMBER. I’ve never had anyone I love die before. Like really die.

MARIA. So the Vegas story really made the paper here?

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AMBER. Yeah. I mean, I got the scoop from your mom, but everyone else found out online. You should have seen the shit people wrote about you on facebook... fucked up... You want to get drunk?

MARIA. Yeah.

AMBER. Yo Tom! Can we get two tequila shots?

MARIA. It's like a goddamn high school reunion in this place.

AMBER. Tell me about it. (*Tommy comes over and pours two shots.*)

Thanks.

MARIA. Who's that?

AMBER. You remember Tommy. He was a year ahead of us. Cheers!
(*They down the shots. B.J., a cop, enters and orders a drink from Tommy at the other end of the bar.*)

MARIA. Oh my God is that B.J.?

AMBER. Ugh yes.

MARIA. He's a cop now?... I think he sold me my first bag of weed. And he's like date raped everyone I know.

AMBER. Speaking of talking shit on facebook, B.J. wrote all kinds of shit about you and that Vegas guy.

MARIA. Seriously?

AMBER. Yeah.

B.J. Hey! Maria!

MARIA. You were talking shit about me?

B.J. What?

MARIA. On fucking facebook?

B.J. Wait, what?

MARIA. You think I wouldn't find out?

B.J. In my defense, everyone was talking shit about you ok. It was like, mandatory to chime in or whatever.

MARIA. Aren't you a cop?

B.J. Yeah.

MARIA. So aren't you supposed to set like some kind of civic example?

B.J. Civic what?

MARIA. Just shut your mouth about shit you don't know about ok?

B.J. Ok, sorry.

MARIA. Cuz you don't know what happened.

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B.J. Alright, ok.

MARIA. I had a really bad year.

B.J. I said I'm sorry. Don't make me feel bad and shit. Let me buy you a drink. Hey Tommy, another round on me. (*Tommy brings the drinks over.*)

MARIA. You're the last person I woulda ever thought would be a cop.

B.J. It's awesome. Get to do whatever I want.

AMBER. B.J. will trade a speeding ticket for a blowjob.

B.J. Only for you Amber. (*He winks.*) But for real, being a cop fucking rules.

MARIA. Do you do detective work or something?

B.J. More like a beat cop- you know patrol town, make sure everything's kosher. That kinda shit.

MARIA. Must get boring considering nothing ever happens here.

B.J. Oh you'd be surprised the amount of vice that goes down in this town. Amber here can attest to that.

AMBER. F-U.

B.J. I'm just messing with you. But I get to beat people up a lot. Which is cool. You see Terry Cutlet's black eye?

AMBER. Yeah.

B.J. That was me.

MARIA. Oh my God I love Terry! Why would you give him a black eye?

AMBER. Yeah Terry is super cool.

B.J. Get this, I pulled him over for a DUI and told him if he gave me a hundred bucks I wouldn't write him up for it. But he didn't want to do it. So I punched him in the face. He drove straight to the ATM, took it out, and gave it to me.

MARIA. He drove even though he was drunk?

B.J. That's the best part. He didn't even blow over the legal limit. I just told him he did. ...Hey, the Camaro ain't gonna pay for itself.

AMBER. Camaro? I've never seen you in a Camaro.

B.J. I just got it. Last month. Sunburst Orange.

AMBER. Then how come I ain't seen it?

B.J. Maybe you're not looking good enough... Oh shit, Billy's here. Ladies, it was great chatting, gotta run. I'll catch you later I'm sure. (*B.J. exits.*)

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AMBER. I gotta pee.

MARIA. Bartender. (*Maria tries to get Tommy's attention.*) Hey! Hello! (*Tommy comes over.*)

TOMMY. What can I get you?

MARIA. Ummm... (*This goes on.*)

TOMMY. I was just about to take my smoke break so want to hurry it up?

MARIA. A cigarette?

TOMMY. Yeah.

MARIA. I need one too. (*Maria exits behind Tommy, joining him outside. She pulls a cigarette out of an exotic looking pack.*)

TOMMY. What are those?

MARIA. Gauloises.

TOMMY. Gaow-wha?

MARIA. Gauloises. They're French.

TOMMY. How do you get French cigarettes?

MARIA. I had a friend in imports. Want to try one? (*Maria hands him one and he lights it.*)

MARIA. Smooth right?

TOMMY. Yeah. (*They smoke a minute, not sure what to say to one another.*) You in town for the weekend or something?

MARIA. I'm staying at my mom's house. She lives on Sycamore Drive.

TOMMY. Oh yeah, I know where that is.

MARIA. I'm just staying there until I find a job in the city. I lived there. I got fired. And then I got evicted.

TOMMY. You got evicted?

MARIA. Yeah.

TOMMY. That sucks.

MARIA. Yeah. (*A beat.*)

TOMMY. It's expensive in New York right?

MARIA. Right.

TOMMY. I played a few gigs up that way. Lower East Side.

MARIA. Oh yeah? (*Tommy nods.*) You in a band or something?

TOMMY. Was. Suicide Vacation. Ever heard of us? (*Maria searches.*) It's alright. We had this one song. Got kinda popular. "Don't Call Me, I'll Call Your Sister." They played it a bunch on MTV2 back in '09.

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MARIA. I really don't know any music made after 1994. (*Tommy takes a long drag.*)

TOMMY. Probably because it all fucking sucks. ...So how come you got evicted?

MARIA. You don't know about me?

TOMMY. No.

MARIA. You must not go on facebook.

TOMMY. Fuck facebook.

MARIA. I got evicted because I stopped paying rent. I stopped paying rent because I was fired. I used to work at this, online ad agency. I did office work, you know. I got the job through my boyfriend. Who then became my fiancé. Anyway, he died and I stopped going to work. For a while. And so they fired me. So then I moved to Las Vegas, and that didn't work out so good either, so now I'm here.

TOMMY. Oh shit. You're the Las Vegas chick?

MARIA. Yeah.

TOMMY. I did hear something about that then. ...How'd your fiancé die?

MARIA. Bobby and me were at a party. Some stupid work thing. This guy I went out with in college was there. We both drank too much probably, and I was just drunk enough to want a cigarette. I made us both quit 6 months before. And seeing my ex and all that shit, I just wanted one. I had to have one. He was pissed that I wanted to go buy a pack and we had an argument about it outside on this fire escape that a few people were standing on. He didn't want me to go. But I went downstairs anyway. And when I got back, there were a bunch of people around. And my friend Ana, from work who was there, she just looked at me with this face that no one's ever looked at me with. (*A beat.*) He fell.

TOMMY. Shit...I'm sorry.

MARIA. Anyway, after he died. I couldn't breathe. Literally, I could not breathe. Could not get the air into my lungs the right way or something. I was sick of people feeling sorry for me about it. People who knew me, kept coming up to me. Like at work. Or even at the bar. Just everyone. Everyone knew too much about it. Knew how sad I was. So I just. I partied. I partied all the way to Vegas for three months. Blew every dollar I had left between me and Bobby. Vegas was great. I don't even know if I

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slept during the day or night because I didn't even look at the clock for three fucking months. I just drank my ass off, partied, wore cocktail dresses. Went home with...whoever. (*A beat.*) Then I met Jason. He owned the Bijou Casino where I was staying. Met him at the pool one afternoon, and we hit it off. And I was out of money. And he gave me a place to stay. And I wasn't so sad when I was with him. Then it turned out that he had a wife and kids in Orange County. But I didn't give a shit. And I know that's fucked up. But then the Vegas Sun heard about it. And the next day I got a letter slipped under my door saying I was no longer welcomed at the hotel and it had a one-way ticket to Newark airport paper clipped to it. (*A beat.*) Still, it was better than being here. (*A beat.*) Except now everybody thinks I'm a slut.

TOMMY. I don't. I was in a band. My threshold for slutty is high. (*A beat.*) So what's next for you?

MARIA. My mom wants me to work at the salon. You know the one in the shopping center? But the thought of working there, next to her, and having to perm all the senior citizens in town, and gossip about how much wine Father O'Fallon drinks at the altar, or any number of the town bullshit I'd be forced to participate in daily makes me want to kill myself. So I thought about maybe seeing if I could get a waitressing gig at Nino's.

TOMMY. The Italian place?

MARIA. Yeah.

TOMMY. They have good Fettuccine Alfredo.

MARIA. Yeah. I worked there one summer in college. But like, it's hard not to feel like things are going backwards for me.

TOMMY. Tell me about it.

MARIA. I used to really want to work with animals. Like horses and dogs and stuff. Before Bobby died I had actually been thinking about going back to school to be a vet tech. Work in a veterinarian's office.

TOMMY. That would be cool.

MARIA. I had actually started applications to programs to get certified. But then Bobby died and I kind of just forgot about it. Forgot about everything.

TOMMY. You should do it.

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MARIA. Yeah maybe. Right now I just need to make some money. I don't know how long I can live home with my mother. Look, I already have a hive. *(She pulls down the neck of her shirt and shows him. Just then Amber bursts out the door.)*

AMBER. There you guys are! I need another drink.

MARIA. Me too. *(They go back inside.)*

AMBER. Two more Jamesons. *(Tommy pours them.)*

TOMMY. It's on me.

MARIA. Thanks. *(Tommy moves to the other end of the bar.)*

AMBER. Ok, do you realize that there are like 8 people that we've slept with in this room right now? *(Amber and Maria scan the room.)*

MARIA. Two for me. No wait. Three. Three for me.

AMBER. Make that three for me too.

MARIA. Wait, Matt Davidson just walked it. Make that four.

AMBER. I fucked Matt too- four for me too. *(Maria thinks a second.)*

MARIA. Oh God, I hope they're not the same four people.

AMBER. I never banged Vito, so there's one that's not. Oh, but my cousin Beth did.

MARIA. Vito. I forgot about Vito. How is he?

AMBER. He just married Kylie Rogers.

MARIA. No shit.

AMBER. More shots. Tommy! Jamesons! *(Tommy drops them over. They down the shots.)*

AMBER. I really hope I don't run into Corey tonight.

MARIA. You guys broke up?

AMBER. Yeah. And now he like, doesn't even acknowledge my existence.

MARIA. What happened?

AMBER. We want different things out of life apparently... Like, all of the sudden he started getting mad about stuff that never bothered him before. Like if I wanted to take a vicodin or two with my beer on a Friday night. He suddenly had a problem with this. It's Friday night! I just worked all goddamn week on the switchboards at DuPont and I want to friggin party. Like who the fuck are you? My dad? Never had one of them before and don't need one now. And other shit like he would get angry if I wanted to

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go out during the week. That never bothered him before, but suddenly he thought we should stay home and relax and watch God damn Dancing with the Stars every night. If I wanted to watch dumb assholes with fake boobs and spray tans act like fucking morons I'd hangout with my mother. He turned 30 and it was like the party had to be over. ...I still need to party. You know?

MARIA. Yeah.

AMBER. He does siding.

MARIA. Oh yeah?

AMBER. On houses. He's really good at it. The best.

MARIA. I bet.

AMBER. He told me he'd get me a gig working in the contractor's office if I want. Doing paperwork, answering phones- that kind of shit. Said it pays decent.

MARIA. You should take it. (*Amber shrugs.*)

AMBER. I don't know if the offer still stands. (*Beat.*) I just really really hope I don't run into him tonight. He comes here a lot. But I hope he doesn't tonight. Like I REALLY hope. I really do not want to see him. At all. Like, for real. (*Amber stares longingly toward the doorway. Tommy comes over.*)

TOMMY. Last call.

AMBER. One more shot.

TOMMY. Hey, if you guys need a ride home... (*Just then DANNY enters.*)

MARIA. Danny?

DANNY. Ho-ly shit. Maria! How you been? (*Danny puts his arm around Maria.*) Yo Tom- can you pour us some drinks or what?

TOMMY. Already gave last call. Sorry.

DANNY. Hey, I got a full bottle of jack at my place. Want to come over?

MARIA. Sure! (*Danny and Maria exit together. Amber downs the last of her drink and exits behind them.*)

TOMMY. I was gonna say if you need a ride, I'll give you one... (*Lights down.*)

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SCENE 3

Lights up. It's the next morning. Maria and Danny are passed out on the couch. He's in boxers and she's got an oversized t-shirt on. She gets up and rubs her back, she rummages around looking for something, and wakes up Danny.

MARIA. Oh sorry. I was looking for some ibuprofen. *(She kisses him passionately, but after a moment he pulls away.)*

DANNY. Ugh. Breath.

MARIA. Riding in your truck brought me right back to junior year. I can't believe you still have it.

DANNY. It's considered vintage now.

MARIA. We took that to prom didn't we? *(She goes to grab a cigarette from her pack of fancy French cigarettes. It's empty.)*

MARIA. You got a smoke? *(Danny throws his pack of Merits towards her.)* Look at all this light. When I lived in the city our apartment got no light. Like, you could sleep all day in bed because you'd have no idea it was morning. We had this plant. This jade plant. I couldn't keep it alive. It couldn't get enough light. *(Danny starts to get dressed.)*

DANNY. Should I drop you at your mom's?

MARIA. Oh. You don't want to hang today? *(A beat.)*

DANNY. Listen...can you not tell anyone about this? Denise would get pissed...

MARIA. I thought you guys got divorced?

DANNY. Yeah. But. She might want to work things out. You know, we got a kid. Dylan. He's ten. Wanna see a picture? *(Danny scrolls his phone and shows her a photo. She doesn't look.)* So, if we can keep this between us that would be great. *(Lights hard to black.)*

SCENE 4

Lights up on Patty's kitchen. Maria is dressed to go out, but slumped over a cup of coffee, ibuprofen is on the table beside her. Patty enters, cigarette dangling out of her mouth.

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PATTY. Have a nice time last night? Don't forget to go over to the salon to see Dotti about that job.

MARIA. Actually, I was thinking about Nino's. They told me I could come in on a trial basis because this one waitress is about to go on maternity leave.

PATTY. You really oughta see Dotti.

MARIA. Mom/

PATTY. Dotti. *(Maria gets up and pours a bowl of cereal and when she turns the milk carton over to pour it in, only a splash comes out.)*

MARIA. You forgot to get more milk?

PATTY. Excuse me, the grocery store is in the same spot it's been since you were born. You can go get it yourself you know. *(Another beat.)* Well did you have a good time last night? I noticed you didn't come home. Who was it?

MARIA. I don't want to talk about it.

PATTY. Who?

MARIA. No one.

PATTY. Come on.

MARIA. Danny. Ok.

PATTY. Danny?

MARIA. My old boyfriend.

PATTY. From high school? What are you doing with him? Let me tell you a life lesson. The past is the past. Don't stir it up with old flings.

MARIA. Thanks for the romantic advice.

PATTY. Anyway, isn't he back with that Denise something-or-other? *(Maria gets up in a huff.)*

MARIA. I'm gonna go out. I need some air.

PATTY. Well, why don't you run to the mall? If you're gonna meet someone you need a dress that's not from 2008.

MARIA. I don't want to meet anyone.

PATTY. Yes you do.

MARIA. No I don't.

PATTY. Of course you do. And take off that necklace with your engagement ring. It sends the wrong signal.

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MARIA. At least it's not on my finger. And I like this necklace.

PATTY. Who's going to ask you out with that thing on?

MARIA. I want to be alone. (*A beat.*)

PATTY. But won't you be lonely if you're alone?

MARIA. I haven't been single since college. Since before I met Bobby. I don't want to date anyone.

PATTY. I've been waiting for 5 days for Francis from eHarmony to call me back. Wanting to be alone... That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard- but suit yourself. (*A beat.*) Your landlord say anything about giving you back your stuff?

MARIA. He still won't call me back.

PATTY. Well, why don't you go ahead and take that trip to the mall. And while you're up there can you pick me up some more hairspray. And actually, can you grab me a packet of nude color pantyhose. You know, but tan. The nude ones that are tan. What is that shade called? The ones that are tan?

MARIA. Tan.

PATTY. Yeah, can you grab me a packet of those? And maybe something sparkly, like a bracelet, or bangle, or earrings if you can find something that I might like. You know what I like. The sparkly. And I really could use another bottle of my perfume... Oh, I guess not just yet... but I definitely need another set of eyelashes from the cosmetics store. Oh and maybe bring home 3 or 4 of those Cinnabon's. The ones I like. The jumbo. And can you pick me up some Mega Millions and Powerballs. Here's a card with my numbers on it.

MARIA. Mom, I can't afford a dress and I know you can't afford any of that shit and you're not supposed to be playing the numbers.

PATTY. I've got one not maxed out credit card.

MARIA. Mom, seriously, it's like enabling if I get this for you.

PATTY. Don't talk to me about enabling. Did I see you pour a splash of Stoli in that coffee cup?

MARIA. I have a hangover! (*Beat.*) Fine, I'll get you all that crap, but I'm not buying you lottery tickets.

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PATTY. Be nice to your mother will ya? Here's the list of my numbers. This is for Powerball, this is for Mega Millions, and you know what, screw it, throw in a Pick Six Quick Pick. And see Dotti ok?

MARIA. I already got a meeting with the manager at Nino's.

PATTY. Just go on in there and see her. I'm buying your dress after all. (*Maria gets ready to exit.*) Hey! You're not alone sweetheart. Even if you want to be. (*Lights down.*)

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