

11:11 AM
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ACT TWO

LIGHTS UP on THE HOUSE. Morning. A pile of possessions: books, CDs, clothes, oddities. NEIL takes things from the pile and tosses them into one of two cardboard boxes. He takes something from one box and puts it in the other. Thinks, then puts it back. There's some kind of system here but it's all breaking down.

START:

ANNIE enters, looking good.

ANNIE

Oh! You're still here.

NEIL

I live here. Remember?

ANNIE

You're usually gone by now. What exactly are you doing?

NEIL

Getting rid of stuff. One box is stuff to save, the other is stuff I never want to see again.

ANNIE watches him tossing things into the boxes.

ANNIE

Which is which?

NEIL

I don't know, it keeps changing.

ANNIE

Did she leave?

NEIL

Twenty minutes ago. Running late, as usual. Flying out of here with wet hair and a bagel.

ANNIE

Neil, do you understand what's going on with her?

NEIL

No. But I'm okay with that because I never did.

ANNIE

Well I used to understand her. Or thought I did.



1/5
ANNIE
"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

NEIL

The longer I live the less I understand. I think I used to be wise. Or did a damn good job faking it.

ANNIE

She's a waitress. Not an actress-waitress or an artist-waitress or a mime-waitress--

NEIL

Thank the good lord for that--

ANNIE

She's a waitress who brings people food. My heart is breaking.

NEIL

She isn't a waitress. That place she goes isn't a restaurant. It's a shelter.

ANNIE

Is that supposed to make me feel better? We failed her. And there's nothing we can do. How did this happen? All the time I spent playing with her when she was little, all those tiresome games and I always let her win because of her self-esteem, even though we both know that's not my true nature. I wanted to win as much as she did. And believe me I could have.

(beat)

Aren't you going to be late?

NEIL

I'm not going in today.

ANNIE

Why not?

NEIL

Why would I?

ANNIE

Well...it's your job.

NEIL

I guess I'm having trouble with that whole concept right now.

ANNIE

What's going on? Are you quitting?

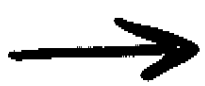
NEIL

I'm just taking it a day at a time. Like alcoholism. See what transpires.

2/5

ANNIE

"THE QUEST OF HAPPINESS"



3/5

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS" ANNIE

ANNIE

Can you do that? Don't they need to know if you're going to be there?

NEIL

You could die in those cubicles. They wouldn't even know till weeks later when they called you in to get fired.

She watches NEIL throwing things in the boxes and changing his mind.

ANNIE

You know what I wish? I wish...

NEIL

What?

ANNIE

I wish we had more money. Then we wouldn't have to think about it.

NEIL

If we had more money we'd think about it more.

ANNIE

I mean a lot more. It would just always be there--a big shiny pile of money smiling down on us. And we wouldn't ever have to think about it. But we'd know in our hearts it was there.

NEIL

Sounds like love.

ANNIE

Well? Wouldn't that be nice?

NEIL

What would you think about if you didn't think about money?

ANNIE

Boy, I don't know, I'd have hours and hours and hours to fill...

NEIL

Well that's what I've been thinking about. The things you don't think about when you think about money. You should try it, Annie.

ANNIE

Maybe you should think about it a little more.

NEIL

Why?



4/5

ANNIE

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

ANNIE

Under the circumstances we need money, Neil. I didn't make up the rules, it's just the way it is. God, I feel like I'm talking to Jodi.

NEIL

The circumstances have changed. I was working to send her to college. If she isn't going then why am I working?

ANNIE

But what about us? To live the way we want to live, we need more than we have.

NEIL

To live the way I want to live I need to get rid of the things that are choking me. I need to breathe. I just need...less.

ANNIE

So I need more and you need less?

NEIL

That's a tough compromise, isn't it?

ANNIE

Maybe you don't want to compromise anymore, Neil.

NEIL

Like I said, circumstances have changed. From the night she was born, it all unspooled like a dream. We lived our lives through her. Well, now I'm waking up.

ANNIE

And you think I'm still asleep?

NEIL

I honestly don't know what you are, Annie.

ANNIE

I'm going out for a while.

NEIL

Why are you looking like that?

ANNIE

Like what?

NEIL

Annie. You look so good.

ANNIE

Thank you.



5/5

ANNIE

"THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS"

NEIL

Too good.

(beat)

Where are you going?

ANNIE

I don't know. I just need to get away. STOP.

ANNIE leaves. NEIL is alone with the boxes, dividing things up.

LIGHTS UP on a FOOD COURT. ANNIE is sitting alone with an enormous drink. Waiting.

SPUD approaches. He has a coat on over some kind of uniform. He also has an enormous drink in hand.

SPUD

Sorry I'm late.

ANNIE

Haven't I been humiliated enough, Spud? Please don't keep me waiting in a Food Court.

SPUD

Crazy day, I couldn't get away. Can I get you something?

ANNIE

(re: drink)

No thanks, I think I'll just work on this for the next few days.

(sudden rage)

How can this be a small drink?

SPUD

God, I've missed you, Annie. Are you alright?

ANNIE

Shut up. I had to leave home, I couldn't take the way they were looking at me. You promised you'd get Jodi into Bowen.

SPUD

I did what I could.

ANNIE

But it just wasn't enough, was it?

SPUD

Actually, it was too much. I got carried away, made a big speech, told'em if they rejected Jodi then they were rejecting me.