

LA MUJER BARBUDA

A full length play

By

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Synopsis/blurb:

2 women. 4 breasts. 1 beard.

Maggie is an American airline pilot and new mother. When she tries to pump breast milk in the cockpit, she almost perishes in a plane crash—and that's not even the worst of it.

Magdalena is a 17th century Italian weaver and new mother. When she suddenly grows a beard and nurses a baby at age fifty-two, she sets off a domestic and civil crisis—and that, too, is not even the worst of it.

*La Mujer Barbuda* is a dark comedy that explores the intersecting lives of two women, separated by time and space, and united in the struggle to thrive as a mother in a man's world.

3W, 3M

Characters:

MAGDALENA / MODEL - woman, early 50s

Magdalena has a receding hairline and a thick, dark beard; Model wears a nondescript mask. The actor playing Magdalena need not be of Italian ancestry, but she should bear a resemblance to the woman in the painting.

MAGGIE - woman, white, early 40s

FELICI / SCOTT - man, white, bearded, early 50s

The two men are similar but not the same.

ANDY / CASTRATO man, white, 30s

Andy is "manly" all-American; Castrato, a commedia dell'arte type, is the opposite.

RITA / ANITA / REPORTER 1 - woman, black, 30s

PACO / FRANCISCO / JUSEPE / REPORTER 2 - man, Latino, 30s

Setting:

17th century Naples, Italy & 21st century USA

Scene locations:

(1) Naples, 1631 - Magdalena & Felici's home

(2) Cockpit of a commercial airliner

---->(3) Naples - Magdalena & Felici's home

(4) Chicago - Maggie & Scott's home

---->(5) Cockpit of a commercial airliner - pre-incident

(6) Naples - a church

(7) Hospital somewhere in Indiana

(8) Naples - home of the viceroy

(9) Naples - piazza outside home of the viceroy

- >(10) Hospital somewhere in Indiana
- >(11) Naples - piazza outside home of the viceroy
- (12) Outside hospital in Indiana

Notation:

- / signifies overlapping dialogue; ditto for dialogue that's formatted in parallel
- *Italicized words* are translations, not to be said out loud.
- [Words in brackets] are unsaid.

Dramaturgical context:

- "La Mujer Barbuda" is indeed a real painting by Jusepe de Ribera, and it's about as weird as it sounds.

- As of 2020, women airline seldom receive paid maternity leave and are sometimes forced to pump while flying.

- "Maverick: I feel the need...

Goose: ...the need for speed!"

(one of the more famous lines from the 1986 movie *Top Gun* starring Tom Cruise)

Directorial suggestions:

- Use an Italian dialect in the early Naples scenes and then gradually drop it. Eventually the Italian characters should sound American.

- Every effort should be made to make the American and Italian worlds visually blend together, particularly as the play progresses. Consider scenic elements, costumes, and props that can serve dual functions.

SCENE 0: PRE-SHOW

The actors playing Paco and Rita enter in flight attendant garb. They are all smiles, eager to serve and gesticulate. We hear Maggie's voice. It is pre-recorded and sounds affectedly masculine and pilot-y.

MAGGIE

(off-stage; pre-recorded; modify as needed)

Good evening [or afternoon], ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking. On behalf of [name of theater], I'd like to welcome you aboard tonight's [or this afternoon's] performance of *La Mujer Barbuda*.

The flight attendants wave and mime with their hands.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Our flight time is approximately 90 minutes, but the weather looks good, and with the tailwind on our side, we can hopefully expect to pick up some time in the air. Please note the safety features aboard this aircraft. Exits can be found here, here, and here.

In the unlikely event of an emergency, please wait for further instruction from the loudspeaker.

At this time, make sure your seat backs and tray tables are in their full upright position, and that your seat belt is securely fastened.

Also, your portable electronic devices must be turned off or set to airplane mode until arrival.

Thank you. Now sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

SCENE 1: NAPLES, 1631

The living room of a modest Neapolitan home.

MAGDALENA sits at a spindle weaving. With her thick beard and loose-fitting robes, she does not appear to be a woman. She sings a lively upbeat version of *Ninna Nanna* (Italian lullaby).

MAGDALENA

*Ninna nanna, ninna oh, Lullaby, lullaby, ooh*  
*questa bimba a chi lo do? to whom do I give this (girl) child?*  
*Se la do all'uomo nero, If I give her to the black man,*  
*me la tiene un anno intero. he will keep her for me for a whole year.*

CASTRATO enters and sings with Magdalena. He sings in a falsetto.

MAGDALENA & CASTRATO

Se la do alla Befana, *If I give her to the Befana (old hag),*  
me la tiene una settimana. *she will keep her for me for a week.*  
Se la do a Gesù Bambino, *If I give her to Baby Jesus,*  
me lo tiene un attimino. *he will keep her for me for just a moment.*  
Ninna nanna, ninna oh *Lullaby, lullaby, ooh*  
Questa bimba me la terrò! *I will keep this baby for me!*

Magdalena holds up a garment she's been weaving.

CASTRATO

Ooh bellissimo!

MAGDALENA

Provalo. *Try it on.*

CASTRATO

Per me?

MAGDALENA

Naturalmente.

He tries it on. He looks feminine and beautiful.

CASTRATO

Lo adoro. Grazie. *I love it, thank you.*

A baby cries from a bassinet in the corner. Castrato gets up and returns with the baby. Magdalena pulls out a breast and starts to nurse.

MAGDALENA

Ninna nanna, ninna oh,  
Questa bimba me la terrò!  
Questa bimba me la terrò!

Castrato moves to exit to allow her privacy.

MAGDALENA (cont'd)

Sono una mama. *I'm a mom.*  
Sono una mama.

CASTRATO

Si...sei una mama. *Yes, you're a mom.*

MAGDALENA

Grazie...d'avvero...gazie mille. *Thank you, really, thank you very much.*

CASTRATO

No...no...

He exits. She feeds her baby and continues to sing and hum. FELICI enters, weighed down by bags and a cart. He startles her.

MAGDALENA

Madonna santa! *Holy mother!*

He stares at her in disbelief.

FELICI

Magdalena?

## SCENE 2: COCKPIT OF A COMMERCIAL AIRLINER

Sound of the fasten seatbelt sign. MAGGIE, ANDY and RITA are in the cockpit. Andy sits in the captain chair flying the plane. Maggie, co-pilot, sits next to him, breast exposed, pumping breast milk with an electric pump. Rita stands behind them.

An awkward beat. Silence except for the sound of the pump and occasional air traffic radio chatter.

RITA

Kevin had me come in for career day last week.  
You ever do that?

ANDY

What?

RITA

Career day. It's like show and tell but with your parents.

ANDY

Oh. No.

RITA

He introduced me like: “My mom’s a flight attendant. Which is a sky waitress. A waitress in the sky.”

And I’m like, thanks Kevin.

So then I show them the safety demo. “In case of an emergency blah blah blah.” No, we don’t get to go down the slides for fun. Yes, I have had to restrain a passenger.

I give them the little Delta Air Lines pins—you know, the wings—and bags of pretzels. Talk about where the...[shit] goes when you flush.

No, it doesn’t fall out of the sky. Yes, people do throw up a lot.

No, the mile high club is not like an actual club.

And then finally some kid goes, so wait, you’re like a sky waitress-slash-security-guard-slash-janitor?

And I’m like...uh, yeah, basically.

MAGGIE

I want to do that. Career day. When my kid’s in school, I mean.

I’ve wanted to be a pilot since I was like ten.

ANDY

Lemme guess: Amelia Earhart?

MAGGIE

Top Gun.

I was like, I want to do that.

But not just be the hot blonde nagging teacher lady who’s like, hey Tom Cruise, stop flying upside down just to show off

but actually don’t stop because I want to bone you  
you know?

ANDY

No.

MAGGIE

I wanted to fly like Maverick. But look like Charlie.

And have babies like...I don’t know...Venus?

No, Mary.

No. Gaia.

Someone fertile well into her forties,  
you know, after she’s established her Maverick bonafides.

RITA

Congrats, I guess?

MAGGIE

Well, I have yet to fly upside down, thank you very much.

ANDY

Charlie's the girl in the movie?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

ANDY

I've never met anyone who fits that description  
no offense.

MAGGIE

Well, Andy.  
My man.  
I feel the need...

ANDY

The need for / speed.

MAGGIE

Deep breaths.

She exhales deeply.

RITA

(singing and humming the Top Gun theme  
song; trying to lighten the mood)

Take my breath aaaawayyyyy...

(a beat)

That movie sucks by the way. I'm just saying, it's corny as hell.  
And remember when Tom Cruise was on The Today Show being all like: actually post-  
partum depression is a myth.

MAGGIE

I thought he just said you shouldn't take drugs for it?

RITA

Listen. I'll take Prozac if I damn well want.

MAGGIE

And I mean, I know I'm not, like, Kelly McGillis-level attractive, / I get it.  
Although she didn't have perfectly white teeth either because the 80s were...better?

RITA

Who?

MAGGIE

The actress. Charlie.

RITA

The Take My Breath Away lady?

MAGGIE

Yeah  
no.  
She doesn't sing the song—  
I don't think?  
I don't sing.  
But...  
but...  
I just had a baby  
you know.

ANDY

I noticed.

MAGGIE

So I'm not some kind of, like, hideous...freak. Some kind of bovine freak.

ANDY

I didn't say you were.

MAGGIE

You're just saying you don't know any good-looking, competent female pilots. They're a freakish commodity.

ANDY

I don't know many female pilots, period.

MAGGIE

No shit.

ANDY

So I don't think I've met any dainty singing / movie star types.

MAGGIE

She doesn't sing!

ANDY

Who can do inversions in an F-14 Tomcat.

MAGGIE

Well, can you?

ANDY

/ I was in the military.

MAGGIE

Don't answer that.  
Duel Wings USA—you ever heard of it?

ANDY

That's that uh, civilian fighter pilot school?

MAGGIE

I'm going. In six months, when I finish nursing, I'm going. I got a scholarship.

ANDY

Congrats.

MAGGIE

Well, I'm going to get the scholarship.  
Over three hundred people apply for it.  
And sure, yeah, there weren't a lot of pregnant finalists. A distinguishing feature, granted.  
But still. I had to do all these crash landing flight simulations. Like, do you know what to do when your aircraft collides with a hot air balloon and there's an ice storm also everyone on board suddenly gets the plague?

ANDY

That's was a scenario?

MAGGIE

... [Okay, no, but you get the idea]

ANDY

Well, I'm sure it'll be just like Afghanistan.

MAGGIE

(sarcastic)

I won't be dogfighting with Afghanistan's world class Air Force, but...

ANDY

(defensive)

The Taliban had anti-aircraft guns.

A few.

MAGGIE

All I'm saying is maybe there would be more women pilots out there doing barrel rolls and wingovers and stuff if we weren't also, you know, perpetuating the species.

/ I'm a good pilot.

ANDY

Sure.

MAGGIE

And I wouldn't be here right now if I weren't crazy fucking dedicated to this job.

ANDY

Well, you got the crazy part right.

MAGGIE

I—Jesus.

You know, you try—

I try—

I wasn't planning / to have to—

ANDY

Alright, easy.

MAGGIE

But then the delay at O'Hare.

There's something called mastitis—okay—if you don't pump. And it's not fun.

Not fun.

And formula's not an option because, well, it's just not, okay? My tits make enough milk.

And I went to college.

no offense.

And I haven't slept in—

God, I haven't slept in...

(she makes an exasperated noise)

ANDY

You haven't slept in how long?

A beat.

RITA

Well anyway, you should do career day.  
Both of you.  
But definitely you. Inspire some girls out there.  
Besides, because pilot probably sounds a lot cooler to third graders than flight attendant.

MAGGIE

Not just third graders  
I mean, no offense.

Knock on the door. Rita opens it and receives water and pretzels from PACO. He stands sandwiched between the cockpit door and a refreshment cart. The heretofore faint sound of a baby crying in the back of the plane suddenly becomes loud.

PACO

Here.

RITA

Finally.

PACO

Yo, someone upchucked in the bathroom again, and it's extra chunky—

Rita closes the door on Paco.

MAGGIE

Fuck yeah.

Maggie grabs the pretzels and pours the whole mini bag into her mouth at once. They watch her.

RITA

Woah  
are you—

MAGGIE

(with food in her mouth)

By the way, how old were Kevin and Kylie—

RITA

Karlie.

MAGGIE

(chewing)

Kevin and Kylie when their stumps fell off?

RITA

What?

MAGGIE

(chewing; barely intelligible)

Their stumps  
the little turd-looking  
umbilical

Maggie coughs between every word.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

umbilical  
cord  
thing a ma  
jigs

RITA

Oh I don't

Maggie is now full on choking.

ANDY

Give her the water.

Maggie pushes it away from Rita. She's keeps coughing.

ANDY (cont'd)

Just drink the  
don't be stubborn  
drink the  
Rita  
Rita  
put it  
put the water  
put it to her  
Rita make her

RITA

I'm trying!

ANDY

Just, here  
Here.  
Give me  
give me that.

Andy grabs the cup of water from Rita and tries to make Maggie drink it. In doing so, he knocks over her breast milk pump and both breast milk and water spill over the control panel. The persistent sound of radio static cuts out. The lights shift.

RITA

Oh no.

The plane dips. Everyone lunges forward. The sound of the fasten seatbelt sign.

### SCENE 3: NAPLES, FELICI & MAGDALENA'S HOME

Magdalena, Felici, and Castrato convene in the main room. Felici touches Magdalena's beard in amazement before she pushes him away.

FELICI

Il diavolo *the devil*. This must be the work of il diavolo.

MAGDALENA

Gesù Cristo.

FELICI

Magdalena! Dio abbi pietà della tua anima. *May God have mercy of your soul*.

MAGDALENA

It's not the work of il diavolo.  
It's menopause.

FELICI

Then how do you explain the bambino?

MAGDALENA

Bambina.  
Dio cracks open the door before he seals it shut.  
You cracked open my door, Felici, do you not remember?

FELICI

That was...

MAGDALENA

About nine months ago.

FELICI

What say ye, Castrato?

CASTRATO

Uh...that's a bambina.

FELICI

I can see that. Dio, you're useless.

MAGDALENA

Not true. Castrato has been very helpful in your absence.

FELICI

Oh?

MAGDALENA

Castrato sings. He watches the bambina, keeps me company.

FELICI

Bene, but does he have to live here?  
I'm back, so...  
arrivederci, grazie mille.

CASTRATO

Do you want to see me juggle? Or hear a song?  
(starts to juggle and sing)

Ninna nanna, ninna—

FELICI

Stai zitto! Cristo. *Shut up! Christ.*  
(a beat)

Can I hold her?

He comes close to touching her before reconsidering.  
Castrato makes playful faces at the baby in the bassinet.

FELICI (cont'd)

Wait, how do I know she's mine?

MAGDALENA

She's balding.

FELICI

Perdio *For God's sake*, what have the neighbors been saying? Why did no one tell me? I knew something wasn't right when I docked and everyone was staring and whispering.

MAGDALENA

How many of them become fathers at your age?  
They're jealous.

FELICI

Jealous?  
Because every man wants a bearded freak for a wife.

The word "freak" hangs in the air.

CASTRATO

Mama mia.

MAGDALENA

Tua madre had a beard.

FELICI

She did not! You take that back.  
She had—they were just—well, she had the good sense to pluck them.  
And she didn't look like a man, that's for sure.

MAGDALENA

And that's a shame.

FELICI

Don't you talk about mia madre like that.

MAGDALENA

Tua madre was a fine woman. But that's just it, she was a woman.  
And being a woman got her where exactly?  
Dead.

Felici blesses himself, not believing what he's hearing.

FELICI

Nel nome del Padre, del Figlio e dello Spirito Santo. *In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit*

She was happy dying in childbirth, I'll have you know.

We're all going to die sometime...and...well, my brother lived didn't he?

MAGDALENA

Until he didn't. But yes.

FELICI

Magdalena, amore mio, have you at least seen a priest?

MAGDALENA

Padre Francisco baptized her.

He said he can baptize her again for good measure when you return.

FELICI

(gesturing to the beard)

And?

MAGDALENA

He said a little olive oil should keep it moisturized.

CASTRATO

I just made some actually. Do you want a little—

FELICI

How can you make light of this?

MAGDALENA

What else am I going to do?

FELICI

Shave! Perdio.

MAGDALENA

And then I'll just have stubble.

Like tua madre, riposi in pace. *Rest in peace.*

FELICI

Stop talking about her!

MAGDALENA

I don't know why you're so ashamed.  
La mia bambina will be proud of my beard.  
Look, no grays.

Felici looks at the baby.

FELICI

She's looks...

MAGDALENA

Angelic.

CASTRATO

Animated.

FELICI

Andalusian!  
Moorish even.  
She's pretty dark.

MAGDALENA

I'm pretty dark.  
She's yours.

FELICI

How old are you?

She mumbles.

FELICI (cont'd)

Hmm?

MAGDALENA

Fifty [mumbled]

CASTRATO

Fifty-two.

FELICI

Fifty-two. And after three still births—*le loro anime riposino in pace may their souls rest in peace*—you finally have a bambina at fifty-two.  
And grow a beard.

MAGDALENA

È un miracolo. *It's a miracle.*

FELICI

Un miracolo I conveniently wasn't around to see.

MAGDALENA

You're here now.

FELICI

Magdalena, amore mio. I thought of you everyday I was gone.

I prayed, Dio, keep her safe, keep her content.

Keep her from the darkness that engulfed her when you took our bambini amati to limbo.

MAGDALENA

Cielo!

They were baptized. I baptized them in the womb.

Before they were born.

Before they died.

FELICI

That's not—

How did you pour water on them?

MAGDALENA

It's all water in there.

And blood.

FELICI

You can't baptize a bambino with—

MAGDALENA

Dio answered our prayers, Felici. He did.

And grazie al cielo *thank heavens*, he threw in a couple extra blessings.

FELICI

A couple?

Magdalena strokes her beard.

FELICI (cont'd)

Magdalena, per favore.

MAGDALENA

Once it grew in—and it grew in slowly and then all at once, like a second puberty—I took my weaving to the textile market in Capua.

FELICI

You traveled all the way to Capua?

MAGDALENA

I rode Delta. It's not that far on horseback.

FELICI

Perdio, you should not be riding by yourself.

MAGDALENA

I was with Castrato.

FELICI

And what's he gonna do? Attack a bandito with a high note.

Castrato demonstrates by hitting a high note.

CASRTATO

(under his breath)

Maybe [like that].

FELICI

What if something happened on the way?

MAGDALENA

What if, what if.

Things got lean when you were gone, and I was not going to just sit around and wait.

But I'll admit, I was scared. I thought: What will the Capuani do when they see me? Will they whisper like our neighbors do?

Or worse, will they throw stones? Accuse me of being a handmaid of il diavolo?

FELICI

Can you blame em?

MAGDALENA

But you know what? They didn't do anything. They just assumed I was a man.

FELICI

Even with your...

He gestures to her breasts.

MAGDALENA

They've never been that big anyway.

CASTRATO

It's all about how you dress them.

MAGDALENA

The beard helped me get what I want.

FELICI

Davvero? *Really?* And what is that?

MAGDALENA

Sono una mama, Felici!  
And you—un papà, at last.

FELICI

I suppose.  
But I don't see how the beard figures in here.  
It's not like the beard made you with child.  
Unless...il diavolo...  
They say il diavolo works in mysterious ways.

MAGDALENA

You're thinking of il Signore.

FELICI

I wouldn't put it past il diavolo to make a beard filled with Satanic seed.  
Demon semen.

Felici touches her beard.

MAGDALENA

Felici, per l'amor di Dio. *For the love of God.*

She pushes him off.

MAGDALENA (cont'd)

I sold my weavings for far more coins as a man than I ever did as a woman.  
There, that's the blessing.  
It's much easier to haggle when you have palle *balls*.  
(testicular gesture)

FELICI

But you don't have palle.  
You don't have palle, do you?

CASTRATO

Me? No. See...

Castrato starts to drop trou.

FELICI

Not you!

A beat while Felici stares her up and down.

MAGDALENA

(sighing)

Madonna ragazzi. *Bloody hell*

With her back to the audience, she lifts up her skirt as evidence.

MAGDALENA (cont'd)

Satisfied?

Felici is now kinda turned on. He makes a move, but she bats him away.

FELICI

Castrato, leave us be.

MAGDALENA

No, stay.

You want to fare l'amore *make love* with—what did you call me?—a bearded freak?

FELICI

I want to fare l'amore with my wife.

MAGDALENA

I'm not in the mood.

FELICI

(referring to Castrato)

But I bet you're in the mood for him!

CASTRATO

Me?

FELICI

Just because he's...doesn't mean...there aren't...other ways to...

MAGDALENA

Felici, santo cielo *for heaven's sake*.  
You are my husband.

A moment of tenderness perhaps

MAGDALENA (cont'd)

But I was not expecting to see you.  
Every time you ship off, I make peace with *vedovanza widowhood*. I have to.

She takes a black piece of lace and places it on her head  
for a moment before Felici rips it off.

FELICI

Then greet me like a lover who's cheated death.  
Like the old days.

MAGDALENA

Like the old days.  
I'm not the same.  
Besides, I'm possessed by *il diavolo*, isn't that right?

FELICI

You jest, but I doubt Padre Francisco would approve of—

MAGDALENA

I donated some of my extra coins to the church, so Padre's quite—

FELICI

Your coins?

MAGDALENA

My coins. I made the weavings, I sold them.

FELICI

Well, there's no need for that anymore. I made a nice profit out East with plenty of stock  
to unload. Won't need to ship out again for at least a year.

MAGDALENA

Buono.

She returns to her spindle.

FELICI

Bene! Don't get too excited.  
Giuro su Dio *I swear to God*, Magdalena.

MAGDALENA

Don't swear.

FELICI

I'll swear if I damn well want!

My wife has turned into a frigid old man, per l'amor di Dio *for Christ's sake!*

MAGDALENA

Shh! You'll disturb the bambina.

Felici approaches the baby, but again, he's too reticent to touch it. The baby starts to cry. He pulls out a knife.

MAGDALENA (cont'd)

Felici

Felici, what are you doing?

FELICI

In the Orient, they have a way to test paternity.

He takes out a bowl.

FELICI (cont'd)

A few droplets of the father's blood.

He makes a small cut in the palm of his hand.

FELICI (cont'd)

And a few droplets of the bambina's blood.

He reaches for the baby's foot, but she throws herself between them and grabs the baby.

MAGDALENA

No

Oddio, no! *Oh God, no!*

They are in a stand off. He holds the knife. Castrato watches, stunned.

FELICI

I wasn't going to hurt her.

MAGDALENA

Just cut her!

CASTRATO

(with regret; sighing)

Getting cut is...

FELICI

I need to see if she's mine.

It's been nine months—perdio—can you blame me?

MAGDALENA

Why were you gone that long? You've never been gone that long.

FELICI

The winds off the Arabian Sea were bad.

(a beat)

And China's nice.

MAGDALENA

China's nice...

CASTRATO

(imagining a better world)

Ah...China...

MAGDALENA

If you could stay in China forever, would you?

FELICI

I can't, I need to trade here in order to—

MAGDALENA

But if you could.

(indicating her beard)

This is my China.

It's a new and exotic country that I'd very much like to stay in for a while.

With my bambina—our bambina.

FELICI

You're mad.

You're mad, that looks nothing like a Chinese beard.

They're very neat and straight and yours is so...thick and scraggly.

MAGDALENA

Speak for yourself.

FELICI

I have an excellent beard!  
You love this beard.  
This beard has kissed you...extensively...and done to your...whatever it is you two may do together...

(alluding to potential sexy times with  
Castrato)

So don't—  
Hand over the bambina, why don't you.  
Hand over the bambina or Dio mi aiuti *so help me God* I'll be the Abraham to her Isaac  
and we'll see what—

MAGDALENA

I'll shave.  
Bene, I'll shave.

CASRTATO

But! But it's your China.

MAGDALENA

Just don't—don't hurt her.

He relents and puts down the knife.

FELICI

Do you want me to—

MAGDALENA

I know what I'm doing.

She puts the baby down and takes the knife.

MAGDALENA (cont'd)

Castrato...

Castrato readies the shaving materials, and she sits, ready to be shaved.

#### SCENE 4: SCOTT & MAGGIE'S HOME

The living room of a modest Chicago home. Maggie sits in a comfy reclining chair playing a game on her phone. The room is dark save for the glow of the screen. She wears pajamas.

The sound of a baby crying in the next room.

MAGGIE

Scott.  
Scott!

She gets up and returns with the baby. She pulls out a breast and starts to nurse. The baby stops crying. Sound of a phone ding.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

You see that? Mommy just leveled up. Mommy is now a Level 4 Covet Fashion stylist. Which means for hairstyle I now get to use the—oh, nice—the Braided Half-Updo and the Medium Dreadlock. Très chic.

(to the baby)

Your hairstyle kinda sucks, no offense.  
But it smells so...fucking—friggin—good.

Maggie inhales the scent of her baby's head and ever so slightly start to cry. Her crying disturbs the baby who also starts to cry. They're crying together now.

SCOTT enters, also wearing pajamas.

SCOTT

Maggie. Honey.

He hugs Maggie and the baby, which makes the baby cry louder.

MAGGIE

You're crushing her.

Scott backs up. He tries to guide the baby's mouth to Maggie's nipple.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I got it.

SCOTT

I'm just trying to—

MAGGIE

I know, but you're not—  
She only latches if I do it just like—

SCOTT  
Sorry  
It just seemed like she's—

MAGGIE (cont'd)  
Please  
Can you just give me some—

MAGGIE (cont'd)  
Thank you.  
(to the baby)  
Come on.  
Latch goddammit—darn it.  
Chomp on the  
on the nipple.  
The nipple! You dum-dum.  
I mean smart girl. The nipple, you smart girl.  
(to Scott)  
Do you mind?

Scott turns away.

MAGGIE (cont'd)  
Come on, come on...  
Aha!

The baby resumes nursing.

MAGGIE (cont'd)  
Atta girl.  
Here, you just earned your wings.

Maggie takes out a pilot wings pin and, like an airplane going in for a landing, she ceremoniously sticks it on the baby's clothes.

SCOTT  
Should you really—?  
Isn't that like a choking hazard or—?  
Never mind.  
It's cute.

MAGGIE  
I like seeing my achievements together in one neat package.

SCOTT  
Are you sure you want to go back today?

MAGGIE (cont'd)  
I'm at Level 4 now.

SCOTT

What?

MAGGIE

The game. The digital fashion thing. It took me like nine months because I didn't spend any real money on it—you're welcome, by the way.

SCOTT

How many levels are there?

MAGGIE

57. But they keep adding new ones. If you submit to enough styling challenges, you get to advance to the next level, and then you get more hair and makeup options to style your model with.

(a beat)

We shouldn't have gotten her ears pierced.

SCOTT

It was your idea.

MAGGIE

She looks Latina. Which is fine except she's not.

SCOTT

She looks like a girl.

MAGGIE

Who's Puerto Rican.

SCOTT

(to the tune of West Side Story's "Maria")

Amelia...

I've just met a girl named Amelia.

She looks like she's going to cry again.

SCOTT

What?

MAGGIE

Tony dies.

Do you remember in West Side Story when Tony dies?

SCOTT

I think you should call in sick.

MAGGIE

No.

SCOTT

Did you even come to bed? How long have you been up playing this game?

MAGGIE

I thought we decided we're gonna call her Mia for short.

SCOTT

(sing-songy)

Mia...

No, see, I need that third syllable for serenading our little Boricua.

(sensing she's not amused)

Sorry.

MAGGIE

Amelia Earhart crashed and died somewhere in the Pacific. Why would we name her that?

SCOTT

It was your idea.

MAGGIE

I have bad ideas sometimes. That's where you're supposed to come in.

SCOTT

Okay, well, then case and point: you should stay home today.

If you get into that Top Gun school or whatever—

MAGGIE

Duel Wings USA. And I'm getting in. Fully-funded. This is the year.

A pregnant finalist-cum-new mother. I mean, come on, the press release writes itself.

SCOTT

Glad I finally knocked you up so you could get into flight school.

Oh yeah and the baby's nice too.

MAGGIE

Don't do that.

Don't mock my ambitions.

SCOTT

I'm sorry.

Well, when you do go to flight school, you're going to be away from her for months. So, why rush it now, you know?

MAGGIE

And take two leaves of absence in a year? Unpaid?

Yeah right.

No, today's the day. I'm ready. I've got a half dozen bottles filled up in the freezer.

And it's just a couple short flights, so I should be able to pump in between at the airport.

So just gotta—gotta go back eventually—just haveta rip off the Band-Aid, get back out there, and—

Her umbilical cord stump is still there, can you believe it?

SCOTT

Two weeks is average, right?

MAGGIE

So it should fall off today.

Do you think we can tell the day care place to save it?

SCOTT

For what we're paying, absolutely.

MAGGIE

It's so gross and yet so...that weird little brown nub was what was connecting me to her for nine months, and now...fuck.

Sorry, fudge

Fucking fudge!

Don't judge.

SCOTT

I can call in sick today.

MAGGIE

No you just started. You can't call in sick when you just started.

SCOTT

Eh whatever, it's worth it for the stump, right?

MAGGIE

That would make me feel worse.

I made the stump, I should be the one to catch it.

And if not me, then someone I'm paying.

SCOTT

Someone we're paying.

MAGGIE

You know you can get it turned into jewelry.

SCOTT

The stump? Ew.

MAGGIE

I know, I'm just saying.

She and I could get matching stump earrings.

She wouldn't look Puerto Rican anymore. More like, a weirdo bougie white lady.

SCOTT

So like you?

MAGGIE

I'm not bougie. I'm just...

SCOTT

Delirious?

You play—what's it called?

MAGGIE

Covet Fashion.

That's just because—I don't know.

Am I ugly?

SCOTT

What? No.

MAGGIE

I feel pretty ugly.

SCOTT

You look a little tired, but—

No, you look good.

MAGGIE

My uniform doesn't even fit anymore.

And it's not like it was all that flattering to begin with. It's like you can't have hips and fly a plane.

SCOTT

Well, maybe that's a sign that you should stay home for a little—  
I mean, whatever. Who cares? You just grew a person.

MAGGIE

I did. I just grew a person.

SCOTT

And I think your pilot uniform is sexy.

MAGGIE

In a manly sort of way.

SCOTT

In a “make way, world! my wife and her hips are coming through” sort of way.  
I'm going to start the coffee.  
What do you want for breakfast?

MAGGIE

Nothing, I'm not feeling well.

SCOTT

See!

MAGGIE

I just mean I'm not hungry.

(to baby)

Do you want coffee filtered through my boobs?

You do?

Mia requests no sugar, heavy on the cream.

And make it decaf.

SCOTT

I thought regular's fine.

MAGGIE

Maybe for some mommies. Right, Mia?

But your mommy actually loves you and wants what's best, isn't that right?

Isn't that right?

#### SCENE 5: COCKPIT - PRE-INCIDENT

Maggie and Andy are in the cockpit of a commercial  
airliner, flying the plane. Maggie is in the captain's seat.  
Sound of the fasten seatbelt sign.

As she talks, Maggie changes into a pilot's uniform that's noticeably too small. Maybe her pants don't button. She takes the pilot wings pin off the baby and pins it on herself. At some point we hear the faint sound of baby crying in the back of the plane, a sound that unnerves Maggie.

MAGGIE

Good after—

Good after...noon—

(restarting; clearing her throat a few times in an effort to find a more masculine register)

Good afternoon—ladies and gentlemen, this is your captain speaking.

(in a calm, deep, pilot-y tone of voice)

On behalf of the rest of the crew, I'd like to welcome everyone aboard Delta Air Lines Flight 104 with non-stop service from Chicago to Naples, Florida.

We apologize for that delay back at O'Hare. When you're waiting for an inbound aircraft...you're waiting for an inbound aircraft.

With the tailwind on our side we can hopefully expect to pick up some time in the air and get you to Naples only

(under her breath)

three hours late.

(peppy, overcompensating)

The weather in Naples is clear and sunny with a high of 87 degrees. The cabin crew will be coming around shortly to offer you a light snack and beverage. In the meantime, please enjoy Delta's in-flight entertainment. I'll talk to you again before we reach our destination. Until then, sit back, relax and enjoy the flight.

A beat.

ANDY

You're friends with Sheila, right?

MAGGIE

Sheila?

ANDY

Sheila Oswald  
my wife.

She used to be Sheila Guerrero.

MAGGIE

Sheila...

Oh

yeah!

We used to commute from Chicago to Atlanta all the time.

How is she? I haven't seen in her forever.

ANDY

She's good

just had our fourth baby.

MAGGIE

No!

ANDY

Yep.

MAGGIE

Boy or girl?

ANDY

Girl

all girls.

Can you believe it?

MAGGIE

Wow

good for you two.

She was the best flight attendant. Seriously, the best. I remember this one time I was flying, and a passenger who was like eight months pregnant started going into labor—

ANDY

And Sheila delivered the baby in the galley.

MAGGIE

So you've heard this one?

ANDY

Everyone's heard this one.

Delta gave her a medal.

MAGGIE

Sheila was just like: what else was I supposed to? Hand her a pack of pretzels?

When ya gotta go, ya gotta go.

ANDY

They named the baby Sheilo.  
A boy.

MAGGIE

Give her my best would ya.

ANDY

Of course.  
She's always looked up to you lady pilots.

MAGGIE

She'd have made a great pilot herself.

ANDY

But she's always wanted to be a mom.

MAGGIE

Ow  
fuck.  
Sorry, fudge.

ANDY

What's the matter?

MAGGIE

Nothing  
nothing.  
It's just—  
my breasts.  
I'm nursing.  
I expressed milk before I left the house,  
but then, that three-hour delay back there, and...  
Ow.  
I'm really engorged again. And I think maybe the cabin pressure is—I don't know.  
(she makes a gesture to convey pressure on  
her breasts )

It's fine,  
I'm fine.

ANDY

You sure?

MAGGIE

Yeah.

Long beat. She looks pained.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

You know when you've really got to pee?

ANDY

Yeah.

MAGGIE

It's like that except worse /  
Way worse.

ANDY

Ha, that's what Sheila—

MAGGIE

It's like imagine the sensation of every square inch of skin on your body being six sizes too small, sunburned, and beaten with a sledgehammer.

ANDY

God you're really flushed—

MAGGIE

It's like my breasts are coconuts that could split open at any moment—

ANDY

Okay what do you wanna—?

MAGGIE

It's like they're overinflated balls with a million bees trapped inside. And the bees are buzzing frantically. Like: get me out of here! / Get me out!

ANDY

Alright, I get it.

MAGGIE

Annnndd I'm leaking

fuck

fudge.

Okay

okay I'm just gonna, I'm gonna go get the pump in my bag  
and you—you got this, right?

ANDY

The...[plane]? Yeah...

Maggie presses a button that dings a bell. Paco knocks on the cockpit door. Maggie signals for Andy to open it.

PACO

Sup?

MAGGIE

I'm going to need you on watch in the cockpit while I pump.

PACO

What?

MAGGIE

(to the radio)

Departure, DL104, captain speaking. I'm going to be indisposed in the restroom for about twenty minutes / while I pump breast milk.

ANDY

Twenty minutes?

MAGGIE

First Officer Oswald—

ANDY

Andy. Please, you can call me /Andy

MAGGIE

First Officer Andy Oswald will be in command till further notice. Flight attendant Paco—

PACO

Francisco.

MAGGIE

Francisco...Vicente will remain in the cockpit per regulation.  
Over and out.

A beat.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

DL104, say again.

MAGGIE

I've gotta pump breast milk.

A beat.

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL

DL104, uh...roger that.

ANDY

Is that necessary?

MAGGIE

You were in the military, right?  
CYA, man. CYA lest mistakes are made.  
Well, hop to it.

Maggie stands and gestures to Andy to switch seats with her. Andy who has been staring at her confused, gets up and moves. She exits. Andy and Paco remain in the cockpit. A beat.

PACO

So, uh, where you from?

ANDY

We don't have to—  
outside St. Louis.

PACO

Cool. Very cool.  
Have you ever...is this like a thing?

ANDY

No  
I mean, maybe  
but...no.

PACO

Where's the coolest place you've flown to?

ANDY

I don't know—Rome?

PACO

Rome's sweet.  
You been to China?

ANDY

No.

PACO

China. That's top of my list.  
You wanna know why?

ANDY

Not really.

PACO

Cause I hear it's like a whole other world there.  
Like up is down, down up is up, that kind of—

ANDY

You mean the words? The...writing?

PACO

Everything, man. Everything.  
I'm going there this weekend.  
I've been saving up my PTO hours for this trip for like, forever.

ANDY

Isn't China not a great place for...you know...? [people like yourself who appear to be gay]

PACO

Puerto Ricans?  
Funny you should say that, I've actually got a...friend there. In Guangzhou.  
So...yeah...  
We met on a flight, actually.  
If all goes according to plan, I'm going to ask him to come back with me.  
Or hell, maybe I'll stay there. I hear good things.  
You know, despite...nowhere's perfect.

Maggie runs in breathless.

MAGGIE

There was a line. And the pump requires an outlet. And I forgot that older A3-30s don't have—

ANDY

Outlets  
in the bathroom.

MAGGIE

(under her breath)

These planes are a real piece of shit.

She sits, takes out a breast, and starts to pump.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Oh don't look so surprised. I'm sure Sheila's pumped before.

ANDY

No  
she breastfeeds  
at home.

MAGGIE

Honestly I haven't left the house for more than a couple hours since Mia was born, so I guess that's why this is catching me off guard.  
And then the inbound delay messed up my schedule—

ANDY

That's why it's best to be home when you're nursing.  
Or at least not be...  
/ Flying a plane

MAGGIE

Flying a plane?  
Hell yeah! But tell that to the union. No paid maternity leave.

ANDY

Or paternity leave.  
What does your husband do?

MAGGIE

What does it matter? I'm the only one who can do this.

ANDY

Yeah, but maybe he could...you know, pay the bills while you stay home for a bit.  
Delta's got some kind of unpaid leave, right?

PACO

I'm gay, so...  
I'm not looking or anything.

MAGGIE

My husband's dead.

ANDY

Oh my god, I'm so sorry. Shiela never—  
/ Really, I didn't—

PACO

Yeah...that...sucks...

ANDY

Paco, can you go get Captain Murphy some water? It helps to stay hydrated, that's what Sheila says.

Paco turns to leave.

MAGGIE

That's actually a myth.

(to Paco)

No you stay right here.  
/ Fluids won't increase milk volume.

ANDY

Shiela's had four babies, so.

MAGGIE

You can't leave. Gotta have two people in the cockpit. Per FAA regulations in case I try to hijack the plane with my tit.

(a beat; joking)

Oh come on.

ANDY

It's impressive, what you're doing  
you know, juggling motherhood on your own and...  
How did he...?

MAGGIE

Die?

He didn't. He sells insurance.

But, interesting that his death changes your opinion of me feeding my child.

PACO

I think it's cool. Very cool.

ANDY

You know, I'm not so sure Shiela would enjoy your company much anymore.

MAGGIE

Oh yeah, why's that?

ANDY

Well, for starters, she doesn't lie about me being dead.

MAGGIE

Not that you're aware of.

A beat. That stings.

ANDY

She's at least got a sense of...decency.

MAGGIE

Decency?

PACO

I think you're decent.  
And kind of badass to be honest.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

ANDY

And Sheila would never put her...you know...ahead of everyone's safety.

MAGGIE

Did you hear that, Paco? First Officer Oswald here feels unsafe at the helm.  
Do you feel unsafe?

PACO

Um, I do now.

MAGGIE

I'm afraid you're not commanding the respect of your crew, Andy.

Andy dings the bell. After a beat, there's a knock on the cockpit door. Paco opens the door to Rita.

RITA

Captain.

ANDY

That would be me right now.  
Switch places with Paco, would ya.  
Paco, go get Captain Murphy some water.

MAGGIE

I don't need water to pump for Christ's sake  
Pete's sake.  
But get me some pretzels or something, I'm fucking starving  
fudging starving  
whatever  
fuck.

Paco exits.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

You don't need to drink water when you're nursing, right?

RITA

What?

MAGGIE

I mean, like extra water.

RITA

Oh I don't know.

MAGGIE

Don't you have kids?

RITA

Kevin and Karlie.  
But they were formula fed.

MAGGIE

Oh.

RITA

It's too bad they're mentally retarded now.

MAGGIE

Oh my—

RITA

Nah they're fine.

ANDY

What?

RITA

I just like saying that sometimes cause you know people think that like, oh formula, poor kid.

MAGGIE

Ha!

Maggie laughs a little, then a lot.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Sorry  
that's...that's good.

ANDY

I don't—  
You guys  
your sense of humor is—  
I'm a father, and I would never—

RITA

Exactly.

Maggie initiates an awkward high-five with Rita.

RITA (cont'd)

I can't believe you're back already.  
I took three months off with both of mine.

MAGGIE

Sometimes I wish I were a flight attendant. You've got way better bennys.

RITA

Well, our union's run by women.

MAGGIE

That's what I'm saying!

RITA

But how many times have you had to clean up puke while you're on the clock?

MAGGIE

Well, when / I had morning sickness...

RITA

It's amazing how many people spew on the bathroom mirror.  
And that's not counting the other fluids you find in there.

ANDY

Can we not?

RITA

Were you in the Air Force?

MAGGIE

Yes. No. Briefly.

ANDY

I was.

RITA

Just wondering. Flight school's so expensive, and...

MAGGIE

I'll still paying off loans.

RITA

I would have done it. Maybe. But I had Kevin young and well, my ex wasn't very supportive that sonofa...

ANDY

At least he's not dead.

What? I'm just—

Being a dad isn't all—it's hard too. Okay?

I'm sorry about your, but—

I'm the sole [breadwinner]—I mean Sheila sells crafts and stuff on Facebook sometimes, but I'm—I'm the one paying the bills, you know, and that's—

I was deployed overseas for nine months at a time and...and—

With my second, I came home and she was already—she was practically a toddler. Do you know what it's like to miss your own kid's birth?

Do you know what it's like when you meet your daughter for the first time and she's old enough that when you ask "Which animal says 'moo'?" she points to a picture of a cow?

She knows about cows!

It's—the regret—it's...

A beat. Silence save for the sound of the pump and occasional air traffic radio chatter.

RITA

Kevin had me come in for career day last week.  
You ever do that?

ANDY

What?

RITA

Career day. It's like show and tell but with your parents.

ANDY

Oh. No.

RITA

He introduced me like: "My mom's a flight attendant. Which is a sky waitress. A waitress in the sky."

And I'm like, thanks Kevin.

SCENE 6: NAPLES, A CHURCH

Magdalena's beard is now short but still thick. She nurses her baby. PADRE FRANCISCO stands next to Magdalena, laying hands on her in prayer in a bored, noncommittal sort of way.

FRANCISCO

(recited breathlessly from a book)

Exorcizámos te, ómnis immúnde spíritus, ómnis satánic potéstas, ómnis infernális adversáarii, ómnis légio, ómnis congregatio et sécta diabólica, in nómine et virtúte Dómini nóstri Jésu Christi, eradicáre et effugáre a Dei Ecclésia, ab animábus ad imáginem Dei cónditis ac pretiósó divíni Ágni sángine redéemptis. Non últra áudeas, sérpens callidíssime, decípere humánum génu, Dei Ecclésiam pérsequi, ac Dei eléctos excútere et cribráre sicut tríticum. Imperat tibi Deus altíssimus, cui in mágna tua supérbia te símile habéri ádhuc praesúmí; qui ómnes hómíness vult sálvos fieri, et ad agnitiónem veritátis veníre.

(a breath)

In nomine Patris et Fillii et Spiritus Sancti.  
Amen.

MAGDALENA

Padre Nostro, che sei nei cieli, *Our father who art in heaven.*

Please send me a sign to confirm that you gave me this beard for a reason.

That it was all part of your divine plan.

That I acted in accordance with your will.

That Amelia was meant to be mine.

That you didn't make me suffer for nothing.

That I acted in accordance with your will.

That my sacrifice will be rewarded in cielo.

That I acted in accordance with your will.

Ma liberaci dal male. *And deliver us from evil.*

Amen.

A beat.

FRANCISCO  
Magdalena?

MAGDALENA  
Si?

FRANCISCO  
(calling off-stage)  
Alright it's done, you can come out now.

Felici enters.

FELICI  
So?

FRANCISCO  
Well, il diavolo isn't inside her anymore.

MAGDALENA  
It never was.

FRANCISCO  
I don't know what to tell you.

FELICI  
It grew back so fast.

MAGDALENA  
No faster than yours.

FELICI  
What do you recommend?

FRANCISCO  
Just...shave more regularly.  
I'm not convinced this is a theological problem.

MAGDALENA  
I told you.

FELICI  
She doesn't want to shave though, Padre.  
Isn't that itself proof of il diavolo?

MAGDALENA  
If God wanted me to shave, he wouldn't have given me the hair in the first place.

FRANCISCO

Hmm.

FELICI

What do you mean hmm?  
You shave your beard, Padre.

FRANCISCO

If the hair starts growing in the shape of 666, see me.  
Otherwise...

FELICI

But the bambina.  
(aside)  
The bambina is rather dark, isn't she?

Felici and Francisco move out of earshot from Magdalena  
who sings/hums the same Ninna Nanna song from earlier.

FRANCISCO

(aside)  
So you think she's a bastard?  
Let me guess, you mixed a drop of the bambina's blood with your own.

FELICI

You know about this?

FRANCISCO

Superstitious mumbo jumbo you merchants bring back from the Orient.  
Now that's il diavolo for you.

FELICI

(sheepish)  
Oh  
well, her umbilical stump bled a little the other day—that's normal, right?

FRANCISCO

Beats me.  
What did the droplets say?

FELICI

They merged in the bowl.  
Which means I'm her father, I guess.

FRANCISCO

You guess.

Magdalena's a fifty-two year old woman with a beard who was barren until very recently. God either interceded on her behalf as he did for Abraham's wife Sarah and Mary's cousin Elizabeth.

Or...

MAGDALENA

Padre Francisco, you baptize many bambini.  
Have you ever seen a bambina this old who still has her stump?

FRANCISCO

And when was she born?

MAGDALENA

About two weeks ago.

FRANCISCO

Hmm

no.

Just...put some olive oil on it.

ANITA enters.

ANITA

Padre, padre.

FRANCISCO

Yes, my child.

ANITA

I come from Capua.

I am traveling from town to town in search of my bambina who was stolen from our convent a fortnight ago by a bearded man.

FRANCISCO

Dio abbi pietà.

They all turn to look at Magdaelana.

#### SCENE 7: HOSPITAL SOMEWHERE IN INDIANA

Maggie wakes up in a hospital bed. She moves and feels a soreness in her breasts.

She reaches for a manual breast pump on the bedside table and starts pumping. Meanwhile, she plays Covet Fashion on her phone.

A Covet Fashion MODEL enters wearing nothing but undergarments and a mask covering her face. She is accompanied by Castrato, her wardrobe assistant, who wheels in a clothing rack.

MAGGIE

“Even though her schedule was packed with banquets and travel, she always made time for her family. Getting her daughter bundled up to stave off the autumn chill, she took her by the hand and went for a walk through the castle grounds. Style a regal, motherly look for a family promenade on the royal estate.”

Maggie taps her phone, and, with Castrato’s help, Model puts on a dress. Maggie changes her mind and Model takes off the dress and puts on a Catholic school girl kilt and a pattern-clashing blouse. She presses another button and Model puts on a coat. Another button and Model puts on heels and a tiara. Her look should be very frilly.

Scott enters holding the baby in a carseat. He gives Maggie a big hug.

SCOTT

Oh my god  
Maggie  
oh my god.

She hugs him back but keeps a hand on the phone and an eye on the Model.

SCOTT (cont’d)

You scared me like—you have no idea. I mean holy shit.  
How are you?

MAGGIE

Perfetto.

SCOTT

Emergency landing!  
I mean, what the—  
and then you passed out?

MAGGIE

Benvenuti a the middle of nowhere Indiana.

SCOTT

A Delta rep drove me here.  
You know you're entitled to counseling when this kinda of thing—

Maggie taps her phone and Model changes some part of her look.

SCOTT (cont'd)  
(referring to the phone game)

Are you serious?

MAGGIE

What? It soothes me.

She taps her phone again and the Model adds an accessory to her ensemble.

Maggie removes the bottle from her breast pump and hands it to Scott.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

For the principessa.

SCOTT

There's no milk.

Maggie suddenly realizes she's been pumping with no milk coming out.

SCOTT (cont'd)

No matter. Here, you can cut out the middle man.

Scott hands Maggie the baby whom she finally notices. She tries to nurse her while Scott and the Model stand watching.

MAGGIE

Her stump is still there.  
Oh thank god, thank god.

(singing; to the same tune as Ninna Nanna  
from earlier)

Ninna nanna, ninna oh,  
To whom do I give this child?  
If I give her to the black man,  
He will keep her for a whole year—

SCOTT

That's a weird song.

MAGGIE

My nonna used to sing it to me.

SCOTT

If I give her to the black man?

MAGGIE

Italians can be...you know...

Maggie taps her phone again, and Model adds a  
diaper/breast pump bag to her ensemble. Maggie studies  
her.

SCOTT

How about we just put the phone down?

MAGGIE

I've had a rough day.  
/ The milk isn't coming out. She's sucking, but it's like...stuck.

SCOTT

You've been having a lot of rough days.

MAGGIE

What's that, Mia?  
Daddy's not very sympathetic to the fact that Mommy just grew you inside her and  
pushed you out and also just saved 155 people from dying in a fiery crash?

Rita enters.

RITA

Knock, knock.

MAGGIE

Hey. That was something else, huh?

RITA

When they listen to the blackbox, they're going to hear me saying "Mommy loves you Kevin and Karlie, Mommy loves you!" over and over.

MAGGIE

It was weird, when we took a nosedive, I remember thinking: Don't let me miss the stump,  
her umbilical doohickey thing.  
And here it is, still gross.

(a beat; to Scott)

And I thought about you too.

SCOTT

Thanks.

RITA

As we were going down and things looked bad, I found myself wishing I could trade places with my ex.  
I'm just saying, if my kids are gonna lose a parent, might as well be him.  
Listen, I just want to say, I got your back so don't worry.

MAGGIE

Oh, thanks.

RITA

A lesser pilot would have crashed us into a cornfield or something. But you kept your cool.  
And what happened to Paco, I mean it's horrible but it's not your fault.

MAGGIE

Paco?

RITA

Oh shit. Did they not—?  
Paco, well, when the plane made a sudden decline, he wasn't strapped in, and...you know how we have to block the cockpit door with the beverage cart when we open it? Because of security or whatever.  
Well, he fell back and hit his head on it and um...

(MORE)

Well, he's dead.  
He died.

A beat. The baby who has been suckling in vain starts crying. In a daze, Maggie hands the baby to Rita and returns to her phone. She taps it, and the Model starts to take off her clothes.

SCOTT

Maggie. Honey.  
Don't—come on, come on, look at me.  
Sorry, she's just—  
Shock, you know.  
I'll take her.

Scott takes the baby from Rita and rocks her back and forth. While Scott sings, the Model attempts to put on a pilot's uniform, complete with a hat, pilot wings pin, and aviator sunglasses, but Castrato violently yanks these items away from her and exits.

SCOTT (cont'd)

There, there. There, there.  
(singing)  
Ninna Nanna, Ninna oh...I don't know the words to—  
(to Rita)  
Have you ever heard of this like Italian lullaby thing?  
Never mind, it's kinda racist.

RITA

What?

SCOTT

Rock-a-bye baby, in the treetop.  
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock.  
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall.  
And down will come baby, cradle and all.

Wearing only underwear and a nursing bra, the Model takes out a single breast. She squeezes her breast and blood comes out. Maggie stares at her in horror.

SCENE 8: NAPLES, HOME OF THE VICEROY

JUSEPE DE RIBERA addresses the Viceroy.

JUSEPE

Buenos Dias, Duke...

...Ferdinand El Segundo de Alcalá, Virrey a Napoli.

You like the full title. Right. Por supuesto.

So let me start off by saying, gracias, señor, for your history of patronage.

Due to your generosity, I have been able to paint many great works, which hang so resplendently in your fine—

[Why am I here?] Um, well, I know you said you found my last painting kind of dull.

Archimedes was an ancient Greek mathematician and—

Pero, bien, so maybe not the most engrossing subject for a painting.

Which is why I come to you to propose a new painting.

An exciting painting. Something more in keeping with my older works.

Like that naked Saint Andrew. Or that naked Roman god.

Or that naked Saint Sebastian—where's he penetrated by a bunch of arrows—that one's your favorite, right?

You know, something sexy, something weird, something...

Have you heard of this bearded mother in town?

SCENE 9: NAPLES, PIAZZA OUTSIDE HOME OF THE VICEROY

Anita and Magdalena glare at each other.

MAGDALENA

You said it yourself, it was a bearded man who stole your bambina. And that's very unfortunate, but—

ANITA

The palle on you to knock on our convent door: "Scusami, sorella, but I noticed that some of your roof shingles are falling off. In the spirit of Christian charity, I would be happy to repair them for you free of charge."

MAGDALENA

What kind of idiot lets a strange man into a convent?

ANITA

I sleep in the attic and the roof leaks, and I've tried to plug the holes with hay but it's not—

Look, I know it was you.

MAGDALENA

Where's your proof? Who else saw this bearded handyman-cum-kidnapper? She's mine, okay.

ANITA

How could you possibly have a bambina? You're old as hell and—

MAGDALENA

Sarah, wife of Abraham, and Elizabeth, cousin of Mary, they were both old and they both had bambini.

ANITA

Did they also have beards?  
And are you really comparing yourself to a saint?

MAGDALENA

We're all called to be saints...

ANITA

You stole a bambina so you're not a saint.

MAGDALENA

And you're a nun so you're not a mother.

ANITA

I'm not a nun. I just work at the convent.  
Women like me can't become nuns.

MAGDALENA

Because you're...?

ANITA

Black.

MAGDALENA

I was going to say because you're a mother. Allegedly.

ANITA

Widowed mothers are fine. Encouraged even.  
But the bishops say a poor Ethiope such as myself is not welcome in the clergy of the Roman Church.

MAGDALENA

Oh.  
But wait, I was taught by a nun who was an Ethiope...I think?  
(an afterthought)  
Actually she might have been Sicilian.

ANITA

(sarcastic)

Wow, good for her.

I can't be a nun, but they've taken me in on the condition that my bambina be raised in the convent as a kind of child novitiate.

Which I'm not crazy about, but you know, we both gotta eat. And her father, a Neapolitan, died in a shipwreck, so.

MAGDALENA

I'm sorry.

ANITA

Don't be, he was terrible.

MAGDALENA

It would be terrible if Amelia were forced to become a nun.

ANITA

Her name's Maria.

MAGDALENA

Amelia Maria sounds okay. I can live with that.

ANITA

(rubbing her breasts)

Oww.

MAGDALENA

But I don't care for Sorella Amelia Maria.

No I don't like that at all.

Unless she wants to be a sorella.

But even then...

ANITA

Well, that's one thing we can agree on.

(in pain)

Dio mi aiuti!

MAGDALENA

What's the matter?

ANITA

You stole my bambina, that's what's the matter! Mia bambina! The only person I love in the godforsaken country.

And to top it off, my breasts feel like rock melons because I didn't get to wean her. Like it feels like there are thistles digging into my nipples—

MAGDALENA

Oh. My. That's—

ANITA

It's like someone keeps banging my finger with a hammer—that's how much it hurts—

MAGDALENA

Alright, I get it. / I've been there.

ANITA

It's like Mount Vesuvius right before she...  
and there she blows! I'm leaking.

Castrato and Felici enter. Felici holds the baby.

ANITA (cont'd)

(flinging herself towards the baby)

Maria! Oh grazie a Dio!

FELICI

So I've spoken with the Viceroy, and I've got good news and bad news.  
The good news is that bambino-snatching isn't a capital offense anymore. You just get tarred and feathered.  
The bad news is, I'm sorry, amore mio, but you're going to be tarred and feathered

ANITA

Can I please—  
Even if just to feed her? Please—

Anita tries to grab the baby, but Castrato keeps boxing her out.

MAGDALENA

But where's the proof?

FELICI

The proof is no one of your age and situation has ever had a bambino who thrives at birth.

MAGDALENA

Says who?

ANITA

Says the world. And my sore, lumpy breasts.

FELICI

And Padre Francisco. And the Viceroy.  
And...me, I'm afraid.

CASTRATO

And me too.

MAGDALENA

Castrato!

FELICI

Oh yeah and him.  
He went to Capua with you and corroborates this woman's story.

CASTRATO

I tried to be quiet, signora, I did!  
But they hit me in the head.  
And promised to take what's left of my [genitals]...mi dispiace. *I'm sorry.*

MAGDALENA

But my breasts! They make milk.  
Does that mean nothing?

FELICI

Magdalena, amore mio.  
You've lost three bambini prior.  
Is it impossible to imagine that you lost a fourth and then stole this one while your breasts were still full?  
No. It is not impossible, I'm afraid.  
Le mie condoglianze, mia cara, condoglianze. *My condolences, my dear, my condolences.*  
But the bambina. Magdalena.  
You've got to admit, she does look like one of her parents could be...Ethiope.

MAGDALENA

We're all part Ethiope!

FELICI

Speak for yourself. I'm Neapolitan del tutto *all the way.*

ANITA

Okay, so can I please just have my bambina back?

Jusepe enters.

JUSEPE

Ah la barbuda!  
And el esposo and la bebe. Just the family I wanted to see!

ANITA

That is not their bambina.

JUSEPE

Allow me to introduce myself.  
I am Jusepe de Ribera, a Spaniard, marked by the cross of Christ, a second Apelles of his own time.  
And I have been commissioned by the order of your very own Viceroy to create an artistic rendering of your...beauty.

Anita scoffs.

JUSEPE (cont'd)

Would you be so kind as to sit for my painting while you nurse your bambina?

ANITA

You mean my bambina.

FELICI

No thank you, sir, but we're not interested in being recognized as freaks.

ANITA

I'd sit for your painting with my bambina. Please, I'll do anything. Anything if I can just—

JUSEPE

It doesn't work like that.

FELICI

I'm sorry, amore mio, but I've been instructed by the Viceroy to bring you to the piazza. Thankfully I've been assured that the tar won't be too scalding.

MAGDALENA

Felici, perdio, I'm your wife.

FELICI

Magdalena, amore mio, if I don't comply, they'll tar and feather me too.

MAGDALENA

But the bambina—if I'm tarred and feathered—can I at least keep the bambina?

FELICI

I'm afraid not.

ANITA

That's right, hand her over.

FELICI

She's to be delivered to the convent in Capua, per the Viceroy.

ANITA

I can take her!

FELICI

You're not welcome back, I'm afraid.

Per the Viceroy: what kind of idiot lets a strange man into a convent?

ANITA

It was a woman, turns out! Strange woman.

And she said she could fix the roof.

JUSEPE

This talk of the Viceroy, I happen to be a close personal friend of his.

Or rather, a servant who caters to his interest in art of questionable taste.

Maybe we can work something out,  
in the service of this portrait.

If I convince him to let you keep the bambina, would you allow me to paint your  
likeness?

MAGDALENA

What would you call it?

FELICI

Magdalena, per favore—

JUSEPE

I don't know, something like La Mujer Barbuda.

La Donna Barbuta. The Bearded Woman.

As a Spaniard, I prefer the first one, but hey, I'm flexible.

MAGDALENA

How about Magdalena and Child?

JUSEPE

Yeah no.

ANITA

You can paint me. I'll sit for whatever if I can just nurse my bab—

JUSEPE

When you grow a beard, sure.

ANITA

Porco dio! *God dammit!* I shall return!

Anita storms off.

FELICI

The tarring and feathering will only last a short while

CASTRATO

Depends, I was tarred and feathered once. In my home village. Took the better part of day.

But it wasn't really that bad, relative to...you know...

(he drops two of his juggling balls)

FELICI

Okay, no one asked—

CASTRATO

The Duke thought me too handsome to be poor. Too likely to cuckold some old rich man, so...snip, snip.

(maybe he drops the balls again)

Feather, feather.

FELICI

That's great.

CASTRATO

I make the most of it.

God blessed me with some pipes, luckily.

And thank you, again, sir, for taking me in as your man-servant.

The troubadour biz ain't what it used to be.

FELICI

Ah thank her.

Apparently women need friends or they go kinda...[crazy].

Maybe Castrato and Magdalena share a moment.

FELICI (cont'd)

Look, this—this painting, it'll be hung in the Viceroy's mansion where it'll be like being tarred and feathered for years and years.

MAGDALENA

But then I'd be remembered as a mother.  
Not a bambina-snatcher.

FELICI

Lots of people have snatched bambini.  
Moses's mother, for instance.

JUSEPE

Just—if I may—that was adoption. You did not, as far as I know, adopt the bambina from a basket in the Nile.

FELICI

And we're sorry about that.

MAGDALENA

I'm not sorry.

JUSEPE

So you admit it?

FELICI

Point is, Magdalena, amore mio, can you think of any bearded women that people—good people—respect and admire?

JUSEPE

Well, there is Hermaphroditus.

MAGDALENA

I'm not a hermaphrodite.

JUSEPE

Bernini did a marvelous sculpture of Hermaphroditus sleeping.  
It's in Cardinal Borghese's collection.

FELICI

Proves my point.  
Isn't Cardinal Borghese a known...?

JUSEPE

Homosexual.

FELICI

I was going to say patron of the arts.

MAGDALENA

I'm not a hermaphrodite.

I'm a woman.

A woman with a beard.

And breasts. And hips.

And palle—but not that kind.

The kind that lets you get what you want.

And I am a mother.

And that is what I want to be.

And if that makes me a freak, so be it.

Anita enters, leading an unseen mob.

ANITA

(pointing, still experiencing visible breast  
pain)

That's her!

That's the bearded woman who stole my bambina!

Be sure to get plenty of tar on her beard!

SCENE 10: HOSPITAL IN INDIANA

Maggie lies in bed, trying to nurse her baby.

MAGGIE

Come on, keep sucking, Mia, keep sucking.

They say if you keep sucking, the milk might descend.

The crash—sorry, not crash—incident.

The incident scared my nips shut or something.

Plane goes tits up, and so does the milk  
go figure.

The baby cries.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Oh forget it, fine.

You're lucky, Daddy brought some of my stash.

Maggie tries to feed the baby with a bottle of breast milk.

The baby won't take the bottle.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

You want the boob, I get it.  
Me too. Cause they hurt like a mother [fucker]—  
right now.  
But it's just not—  
It's just not—

She endures a moment of private hell. Then the baby suddenly takes the bottle and stops crying.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Oh thank Jesus!  
Oh thank you, dear sweet baby Jesus.  
Drink up, Mia.  
What you're eating cost the life of a thirty-three-year-old flight attendant from Miami.  
According to the headline.  
How's it taste?  
Like guilt?  
Cool...very cool...  
Your baptism's coming up, and I've been thinking about christening you Amelia  
Francesca Vincenza Murphy.  
You know, as a tribute to him.  
What do you think?  
Yeah, it does sound really Italian.  
You're part Italian, you know.  
Paco Vicente was...I don't know...he was gay, I know that.  
And Puerto Rican...maybe?  
And part Chinese, I want to say?  
He talked about China a lot for some reason.  
He talked a lot actually.  
I just didn't really...listen...  
Or...care...  
to be honest.

(a revelation)

You know I love you, right?

Scott enters. Note: The baby should whimper and cry at points throughout the scene, forcing Maggie and Scott to try to pacify her as they argue.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Can I have my phone back?

SCOTT

I don't think that's best.

MAGGIE

Says who?

SCOTT

Says the grief counselor. And the Delta union rep.  
And also me.

MAGGIE

I won't play that game anymore.

SCOTT

It's not about the game.  
It's about you shutting down.

MAGGIE

Do you hear that, Mia?  
Daddy's being an asshole.  
Sorry, an a-hole, a fucking a-hole.

SCOTT

I don't care if you swear.

MAGGIE

Yes you do.

SCOTT

The swear jar thing was your idea.

MAGGIE

Because you said your mom never swears.  
And I was like, shit, I'm about to be a mom.

SCOTT

I'm glad you're not my mom.

MAGGIE

But I'm someone's mom so I might as well start acting like it.

SCOTT

I can take her for a while if you want—

MAGGIE

No.  
Her stump hasn't fallen off.

SCOTT

If it falls off, it'll just be in her clothes, you know.  
It's not going to disappear.

MAGGIE

I don't want to take any chances.

A beat. Maggie stares at her baby's torso.

SCOTT

So you're just going to stare at it?

MAGGIE

What else am I going to do? You won't give me my phone. You ripped the newspaper out of my hands.  
The TV won't turn on.  
I'm losing it in here.

SCOTT

I got you this cross-stitch crafting kit from the gift store.

MAGGIE

Alright, let's go.

Maggie gets up out of bed.

SCOTT

What? It's kinda like that game.  
Just maybe not so addictive.  
I asked if they had paper dolls, but they said no, that's not a thing anymore.

Maggie tries to change out of her hospital gown.

SCOTT (cont'd)

Hold on, what's the rush?

MAGGIE

I'm fine, I want to get out of here.

SCOTT

Hey, Indiana's not so bad.  
There's...an RV museum...and...

MAGGIE

...

SCOTT

I just think it's better if we rest here for a bit.  
You lost consciousness for a while there.  
Delta's covering all the bills, so why not, right?

MAGGIE

Oh now they're feeling generous.  
Where were they when I had to go back to work two weeks after giving birth?

SCOTT

I told you you should have taken more time.

MAGGIE

Don't even—

SCOTT

I'm just saying, you didn't have to go back.

MAGGIE

I used up all my sick days with the morning sickness.

SCOTT

We could have figured something out.  
Applied for disability or—

MAGGIE

They weren't going to pay me. Scott.

SCOTT

I could have covered us.

MAGGIE

For how long?  
And besides, that's not the point.

SCOTT

No. It is.  
You really know how to make a guy feel great, don't you?  
Really kick him in the balls.  
I make less than you—fine, but I sell general liability insurance. It's not like I'm hocking  
Chinese bootlegs on the street corner.  
We'd be okay.

MAGGIE

Speak for yourself.

The birth alone is going to set us back at least 5k. Which wipes out our savings, on top of your student loans. And mine. And what if you lose your job again?

SCOTT

Thanks for the vote of confidence.

MAGGIE

It was either time off for the baby or time off for flight school.

Delta was never gonna sign off on both.

And you know how much flight school—

SCOTT

Top Gun, yeah, yeah.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry we can't all be inspired by...Death of a Salesman.

SCOTT

What?

So I should kill myself? That's what you're saying?

MAGGIE

I'm saying as much as I might want to I'm not throwing away my pilot wings for...for a stump.

Not again.

SCOTT

There's actually a baby attached to the stump—don't know if you noticed.

MAGGIE

Daddy's funny, isn't he?

SCOTT

All I'm saying is, if you could stay home for a little longer, wouldn't that be nice?

MAGGIE

Of course, but it's not—

SCOTT

Well, then, look, that might be the bright side to this whole...accident.

MAGGIE

It wasn't an accident. It was an in-flight incident that prompted an emergency landing.

SCOTT

Right...

MAGGIE

And an unintended death. Due to known occupational hazards.

For which I'm not liable. Legally...if not...

(under her breath)

ethically....

SCOTT

It is kind of amazing Delta lets you handle liquids in the cockpit.

But hey, that's why they have insurance...sold by sad sacks like me, amirite?

MAGGIE

I won't be eating pretzels in there anymore, that's for sure.

SCOTT

No...

MAGGIE

I just want to get out of here.

You know I get antsy if I'm grounded for more than a few days.

Although...

There is an upshot to all this...

SCOTT

You get to spend time with Mia.

MAGGIE

No.

I mean, yes, but

also Duel Wings USA's gotta be like: damn, this girl can fly.

Forget flight simulators, let's throw this bitch in the shit.

(singing the Top Gun theme song)

"I'll take you right into the danger zone."

And the PR. Now? Jesus. It'll be a windfall for them. They can't afford not to take me.

Plus, this gives me time to freeze a lot of milk. So I won't have to pump in flight.

Although, I guess there's still engorgement to contend with.

/ Fucking boobs.

SCOTT

Actually I don't think Amelia—

MAGGIE

Mia.

SCOTT

I don't think Mia will be nursing anymore by the time—

MAGGIE

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that all infants be fed exclusively breast milk or the first six months after birth.

SCOTT

Uh-huh.

MAGGIE

And the World Health Org says at least a year. My cousin, she nursed her kid for 18 months, and he's in that Johns Hopkins gifted and talented thing, so.

SCOTT

Good for them.

A beat.

MAGGIE

I didn't, like, choke the flight attendant with my breast milk.  
I didn't make him chug it like a beer keg.

SCOTT

Did I say that you did?

MAGGIE

No I'm just—if people get the wrong idea...

SCOTT

I know...

MAGGIE

Collateral damage is...  
A butterfly flaps its wings in China. And, and...  
Those beverage carts are like metal caskets on wheels, you know. Who makes those?

SCOTT

I don't know. That's a good [question] ...

MAGGIE

I had a miscarriage during basic training a million years ago. Before I met you. A bad one, too.  
Second trimester.

(MORE)

Bloody.

Bled all over my fatigues.

But do you see me blaming America? Do you see me suing the drill sergeant for not noticing the pregnancy I stupidly tried to hide? For letting me goose-step and do upside-down sit-ups when I was four months along?

No.

Shit happens.

Terrible shit. All the time. At inconvenient times.

And it's no one's fault...usually.

You just, you pick yourself up.

And you make do with what you have. And take what you can.

SCOTT

The nurse said your milk supply is—

MAGGIE

It's fine. She's fine.

SCOTT

I know. I know, just stress can—

There's apparently something called milk stasis, and cortisol levels can—

MAGGIE

I'm not stressed.

SCOTT

You experienced a major trauma.

Maggie. You almost—

MAGGIE

And I'm fine!

SCOTT

All I'm saying is the nurse gave me this formula that we could maybe—

Just so you can maybe relax a little and—

MAGGIE

(appalled)

Formula?

SCOTT

Oh did I say formula?

I meant bleach.

(MORE)

I thought we could try feeding our baby some bleach.  
Maggie! Maggie, come on.

MAGGIE

Yuck it up, yeah. Yuck. It. Up.  
Because unlike me, you don't have to deal with nature's perfect bounty curdling in fat  
sacs dangling from your trunk.  
Which, if you don't use, represents, like, a squandering of the essence of life itself and  
the resultant poisoning of you kin.

He laughs a little.

SCOTT

Oh you're serious.

MAGGIE

You fucking bet I am.

SCOTT

You're really leaning into the fucks now, aren't you.

MAGGIE

I cheated death. Scott.  
Fuck. Fuckkkkk  
Look. Look at her. Every atom of her being came directly from me. From my flesh.

SCOTT

Well, except for the—

MAGGIE

Initial sperm cell aside. All the nutrients. All the proteins. The antibodies. All the  
matter—through me.  
Every physical particle—even that disgusting little stump thing hanging desperately from  
her belly button—me!  
And it doesn't stop. It continues for six months to a year at least.  
Which is so beautiful. So. Beautiful.  
And honestly, I kinda never want it to stop. If I could permanently reattach the umbilical  
cord, maybe I would. Really.  
But that desire, that obligation, it's just so fucking unfair.  
It's like, I want to be the font of everything to my child.  
And at the same time. I want to close down the farm forever.  
Goodbye, so long, this body is lactose terminated.  
You know?

(MORE)

God, it makes you...  
It makes you wish wet nurses were still a thing.  
/ But like minus the indentured servitude.  
And the syphilis. And the dead babies.

SCOTT

Maggie. Honey.  
I've been talking to the union guy.  
And, well, he thinks the suspension may last for at least...well, could be a while.

MAGGIE

How long?

SCOTT

The legal process. Just, they've got to do a full investigation, and—

MAGGIE

Scott.

SCOTT

Months. At least. Could be a year or...

A long beat.

MAGGIE

That's okay.

SCOTT

Really?

MAGGIE

This gives me more time to go to flight school.  
And hell, maybe become an instructor there.  
Like Charlie in Top Gun, ha.  
Fuck Delta.  
Fuck the airlines.  
I mean this could be a fresh start.  
A chance to finally do what I want.

SCOTT

It's not just Delta. Maggie.  
Your FAA license, that's...  
That's suspended too.

MAGGIE

...

SCOTT

The sleep deprivation alone might constitute negligence, and..

Maggie picks up the baby and bounces her lightly as she paces back in forth.

SCOTT (cont'd)

Maggie.

She takes the pilot wings pin off the baby's clothes. She snaps it in half and throws it on the floor.

MAGGIE

Fuck the wings.

I gotta—

Where's Andy? Where the fuck is Andy?

He was there—he can tell—

He can explain that I was—

I've gotta get some air, I gotta—

Maggie moves to leave, still holding the baby.

SCOTT

No wait

Maggie

Maggie hold on

Maggie

She exits the hospital, and Scott follows to find a throng of shouting REPORTERS, encircling Maggie. Camera lights flash.

REPORTER 1

Maggie!

Maggie, do you regret putting the lives of 155 people at risk with your breast milk?

REPORTER 2

How well did you know Paco Vicente, and do you have anything to say to his family?

REPORTER 1

Maggie, why do you refuse to you feed your baby formula?

REPORTER 2

Is it true that Paco Vicente died from choking on your breast milk?

REPORTER 1

Is it true that you flew upside down while landing the plane à la Top Gun?

REPORTER 2

Is it true you have quote “a need for speed”? But also maternity leave?

REPORTER 1

Some say breastfeeding is really just an issue that affects affluent white women—care to comment?

REPORTER 2

Does exposing your breasts in front of your co-workers constitute sexual harassment?

REPORTER 1

The flight was only two hours, why couldn't you have waited?

REPORTER 2

Or eaten before the flight?

REPORTER 1

Or slept more?

REPORTER 2

Or been less excitable? Irritable? Defensive?

REPORTER 1

Or slept more?

REPORTER 2

Do you plan on suing Delta?

REPORTER 1

Does Delta plan on suing you?

REPORTER 2

Will you appear in the new Top Gun reboot?

REPORTER 1

Is it true you haven't slept in days?

REPORTER 2

Is it true you're suffering from post-partum depression and/or psychosis?

REPORTER 1

Is it true you haven't slept in days?

REPORTER 1 & 2

Is it true you're a selfish bitch?

REPORTERS disappear. The baby cries.

SCENE 11: NAPLES, PIAZZA

Magdalena stands, literally tarred and feathered. There are lots of feathers in her beard. Despondent, she sings. It's different from the last time, sadder.

MAGDALENA

Ninna nanna, ninna oh,  
questa bimba a chi lo do?  
me la tiene una settimana  
Se la do a Gesù Bambino,  
me lo tiene un attimino  
Ninna nanna, ninna oh  
Questa bimba me la terrò  
Questa bimba me la terrò

Felici and Jusepe enter.

FELICI

I'm so sorry, honey. I'm so sorry.

Felici starts delicately removing the feathers.

JUSEPE

That was really something.  
Let me just—

He studies her.

JUSEPE (cont'd)

I need to remember your expression for later.

FELICI

Beat it, would ya.

JUSEPE  
But I still have to paint you.

FELICI  
Not happening!  
She's suffered enough.

MAGDALENA  
Where's Amelia?

FELICI  
She was taken to the Viceroy.

MAGDALENA  
Don't let her get to sent the convent in Capua, please, Felici. Please!

FELICI  
It's not my call, I'm afraid.

Anita enters, perhaps she massages her breasts as they remain sore.

ANITA  
Looking good.

FELICI  
She's had enough, okay.

ANITA  
Relax.  
I just want to know if you're ready to apologize.

FELICI  
She's sorry, now back off.

ANITA  
I want to hear it from her.

MAGDALENA  
...

ANITA  
Mighty quiet for a dirty bird.

MAGDALENA  
If I admit that I stole your baby, would you help me steal her back from the convent?

ANITA

No!

MAGDALENA

I mean you can have her.

She'll be yours.

I just don't want her being forced into the nunhood.

Do you know they have to clean up the vomit of sick people and paupers?

ANITA

That's the least of it, trust me.

JUSEPE

Just, if I may—

FELICI

What are you still doing here?

JUSEPE

Well, if you recall, I said I could perhaps talk the Viceroy into giving you the baby in exchange for you sitting for my portrait.

But then an angry mob emerged, and that was very exciting.

Lots of passion, lots of great colors.

I must commit that to canvas later.

FELICI

If you can paint from memory, then why do we have to sit for your goddamn portrait?

JUSEPE

Because, good sir, my artistic integrity demands it.

Whenever possible, I must render a subject in its truest, realest form.

To do otherwise, to create based on wanton speculation—for shame, sir, for shame.

I can only imagine what confused historical inaccuracy and overdetermined metaphors might emerge from such an endeavor.

FELICI

Perdio, this guy's insufferable,

Don't you paint dead homoerotic saints?

JUSEPE

Well, yes, but....

MAGDALENA

We'll sit for your portrait.  
Get us the baby from the Viceroy, and we'll do it.

ANITA

But you said the baby would be mine!

MAGDALENA

And she will.  
I just want to be remembered as the mother I was, if only for a short while.

FELICI

But you'll be remembered forever.  
And with a beard, no less!

MAGDALENA

I mean I want to be remembered as a mother even though I was a mother for only a short while.  
You see, I had a baby.  
In fact, I had four of them.  
This last one was born only a few months ago.  
But that one, like his brothers before him, died before he ever even had the chance to suckle.  
I was weaving and then all of a sudden I was bleeding.  
And I was alone.  
No Castrato. No no one.  
I lay on the tile floor screaming, crying: God, help me! Please! Please help me!  
And he came out.  
And he was perfect.  
Except for he was tiny.  
And purple.  
And his head—a web of veins.  
And I saw him take a breath. In my hands, he breathed. He breathed!  
And then he didn't.  
And in those moments I was a mother.  
No one was there to see it, but I was a mother.  
I was his mother.

FELICI

Oh, amore mio.

MAGDALENA

So I'm sorry for stealing your baby.

ANITA

Thank you! Yes!

MAGDALENA

I wasn't in my right mind, I don't think.  
I wasn't sleeping, I had been up weaving for days.  
Dressing Castrato up as a doll.  
A pretty woman, a fancy woman.  
Anyone other than my bearded old self.  
It can be hard to love yourself when you're a freak,  
even when your freakishness is the maybe the thing you love the most.

ANITA

If you say so.

MAGDALENA

So, go, bring me the baby and paint me with her.  
In as faithful a manner as you can.  
Well, minus, the feathers, please.

JUSEPE

Excellent!

FELICI

And maybe you don't have to paint the beard.

JUSEPE

I'm definitely painting the beard.  
Might even make it longer and more pronounced.

FELICI

But I thought your whole thing was accuracy, and—?

JUSEPE

Artistic truth, my good man, trumps all.  
Very exciting!

Jusepe exits, delighted.

MAGDALENA

The beard's kind of the whole point.  
It's how I got Amelia.

ANITA

You mean how you tricked your way into a convent and stole her?

MAGDALENA

Uh, yeah.

ANITA

I'm glad you're giving her back.  
I'm not sorry for the tar and feathers though.

MAGDALENA

It's been a week. I know your breasts are sore, but are they still making milk?

ANITA

I sure hope so. Why?

MAGDALENA

No reason  
except, well.  
I could nurse her if...

ANITA

Are you serious?  
Lady, you stole my baby.  
After this portrait, I never want to see your crazy face again.

MAGDALENA

That's fair.  
But if your supply's dried up, how will you feed her?

ANITA

I don't know, I'll figure it out.

MAGDALENA

I've heard babies should only drink milk from a woman.

ANITA

Yeah I've heard that too.  
But, uh, we don't all have that luxury, now do we?

MAGDALENA

I wouldn't call it a luxury...

Jusepe enters, holding the baby.

JUSEPE

Here she is!  
The Viceroy consented.  
Turns out, he really wants this weird, sexy painting—I mean, this beautiful, classy painting.

Amelia!  
MAGDALENA

Maria!  
ANITA

Amelia Maria.  
MAGDALENA

Magdalena takes the baby to her breast. Anita hovers over them.

Careful, careful.  
ANITA

She is a pretty baby, I'll give you that.  
FELICI

Marvelous, marvelous.  
Let me go fetch my paints.  
In the meantime, wash off and make yourselves pretty-ish.  
JUSEPE

Me?  
ANITA

Everyone but you.  
JUSEPE

Jusepe exits.

Oh look! Her stump just fell off.  
Do you want it?  
MAGDALENA

Ew no.  
ANITA

You sure?  
MAGDALENA

I'm sure.  
ANITA

MAGDALENA

Oh thank you, thank you.  
My other babies never lived long enough—  
Thank you.

Castrato enters, bleeding from the head.

CASTRATO

Ah! Yet another baptism. Never can have too many.

MAGDALENA

No. No, Castrato. What happened?

CASTRATO

Oh, you know, while you were being dressed like a bird, the Viceroy's men beat me up some more.

MAGDALENA

Why?

CASTRATO

I don't remember.  
Oh wait, no. They said it's because I was an accomplice to your kidnapping plot.

MAGDALENA

Oh...

CASTRATO

(sincere)

I just drove Delta and her cart. I didn't want to hurt anyone.  
I just drive the horse.  
But it's fine.  
I'm fine. The berries are gone, but the twig still remains. Thankfully.  
I'm glad you're happy.  
Really.  
Glad you got what you wanted.  
For the most part, that is.  
A near perfect maternal legacy.  
That's...che bella.

SCENE 12: OUTSIDE HOSPITAL IN INDIANA

Andy sits with a head bandage. He is dressed partly like Andy, partly like Castrato. Maggie enters, lights a cigarette and starts smoking.

ANDY

You know you shouldn't smoke when you're breastfeeding.  
Or within 20 feet of a hospital.

MAGGIE

Yeah, well.  
You shouldn't almost crash a plane either.

ANDY

Can you spare one?

She hands him a cigarette.

MAGGIE

Shouldn't you be ratting me out to the press or something?

ANDY

I haven't spoken to anyone.  
Well, other than the FAA investigators,  
who may have...leaked stuff.

MAGGIE

About that, look...  
I'm going to need you to...

ANDY

Sheila say hi by the way.

MAGGIE

Ha I bet.  
Where is she?  
If anyone's gonna bust my balls...

ANDY

With the kids.  
Four kids under five, you can't just pick up and fly to Indiana.

MAGGIE

I guess not.  
Look, I'm sorry about your head thing.  
Does it hurt?

ANDY

Eh, I took shrapnel to the knee in the Sandpit, so...

MAGGIE

And I'm sorry I implied that Sheila might lie about you being dead.

ANDY

You gotta talk to Sheila about that one.  
But...apology accepted.  
That honestly hurt more than the head.

MAGGIE

And I'm sorry if I contributed to you losing your job.

ANDY

I didn't lose my job.

MAGGIE

Suspended. Whatever.

ANDY

No.

MAGGIE

Aw fuck.  
Fuck! But you were technically in control of the aircraft at the time—  
I wasn't—  
I had ceded control to you.  
Called in the order and everything.  
CYA! CYA, man!  
Well, in that case, I'm not sorry.  
I mean, I'm sorry about your head, but—  
Not even suspended?  
Probation? Nothing?  
I didn't chop off your balls up there, you know.  
Whatever the story might be, whatever you told the FAA guys, I didn't—  
My success, my being captain, that wasn't at the expense of your failure.  
Even if my failure is now your...

ANDY

(pointing to his head wound)

Success? You consider this a success?  
I'm still the guy—the war vet—who let a woman nearly take down a plane.

MAGGIE

That's not what—

ANDY

Does it matter?

Scott enters with the baby.

SCOTT

There you are!

(referring to the cigarettes)

Really?

Jesus Maggie.

MAGGIE

I quit the phone game, what do you want from me?

She takes the baby and rocks her.

SCOTT

I might have found us a lawyer.

We could still fight this. Maybe.

He says there's a lot unaccounted for with respect to this Andy guy.

ANDY

First Officer Andy Oswald, nice to meet you.

SCOTT

Oh.

Andy exits.

MAGGIE

Oh look! Scott! Her stump just fell off.

Scott, look!

Look!

I got to be there when...

I'm here...

of all places.

(meaning the hospital, which is not ideal)

But...

I gotta be there when.

At least I gotta be there when...

Light shift. Scott exits. Paco enters in ghostly form.

PACO

Glad you're happy. Really. Badass.

You saved 155 souls on board minus one.

That's...cool....very cool.

Of course I'm dead.

And no one seems to care all that much.

(MORE)

But...you know...  
A stump. And wings.

He hands her the pilot wings she broke in half earlier.

MAGGIE

Actually the wings have been clipped...for now.  
Maybe forever.

PACO

Well, hey, you can't make an omelette without breaking a few skulls on a few beverage carts.  
Ha! Amirite?

MAGGIE

Uh...I guess...

PACO

By the way, breast milk makes the eggs extra fluffy, did you know that?

MAGGIE

I didn't—

PACO

Anyway, glad you're happy.

Anita/Rita enters, holding her baby and humming "Take My Breath Away."

ANITA/RITA

Yep, glad you're happy.  
Kevin, Karlie and Maria almost lost their moms, but...  
Hey, glad you're happy.

MAGGIE

I didn't—

Lights shift. Is Maggie upside down? She's left space and time. Andy/Castrato enters juggling. Felici/Scott enters carrying an empty bottle, which he demonstrates by shaking upside down. Magdalena/Model enters wearing the mask Model had on earlier. The energy is eerie and carnivalesque.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I used to love hanging upside down on the monkey bars at recess.  
Let the blood rush to my head, see the world askew and just...be.  
Thing is, when you do that in a Catholic school girl kilt you wind up showing the  
playground your undies.

Magdalena/Model demonstrates by pulling up her dress  
to reveal a plaid kilt underneath.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

But I didn't care.  
I wear underwear, big whoop. They're clean.

Magdalena/Model demonstrates by pulling up her kilt to  
reveal white underwear underneath.

RITA

What about shorts? Under your skirt.

MAGGIE

Wearing bike shorts under your skirt meant you were a lesbian.

Paco laughs maniacally.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I didn't make the rules.  
And if you're gonna be a human bat, best to be a feminine one.  
Anyway, Sister Whatshername made me wash the chalkboards as punishment. Said I was  
being indecent. And probably killing brain cells upside down like that.  
So I stopped.  
But then I saw Top Gun.  
And I was like, pfft.  
I'mma do me some inversions.

Paco spins around like a sputtering plane.

RITA

What happened?

MAGGIE

I got kicked out.  
But then I went to public school where I could wear pants, so  
win-win.

PACO

The Maverick of flashing.  
Cool...very cool.

MAGGIE

Well, I wasn't trying to flash anyone—  
I didn't—

Magdalena/Model removes her mask and walks towards  
Maggie.

MAGDALENA

I didn't—  
Alright, maybe we did—make mistakes, that is, but...

MAGGIE

I understand why you did it. I mean I wouldn't, but you know.

MAGDALENA

I understand why you did it.  
I mean I wouldn't, but—

MAGGIE

Is this where you tell me that actually you can't have it all? So suck it up, princess.

MAGDALENA

No.  
This is where I tell you I like your beard.

MAGGIE

I like yours too.

MAGDALENA

I feel the need.

MAGGIE

You feel the need.

MAGGIE & MAGDALENA

We feel the need.

MAGGIE

A need among many really.

MAGDALENA

A need among many.

MAGGIE

Because who has only one need?

MAGDALENA

Not me.

MAGGIE

Not you.

MAGDALENA & MAGGIE

Not us.

MAGDALENA

I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

I'm not sorry.

The baby starts to cry. Lights fade.

END OF PLAY