Performance rights must be secured before production. For contact information, please visit the information page for My Own Personal Mermaid

My Own Personal Mermaid

Believe in her.

A one-woman show

Written by

David Steven Simon

June 14, 2024

The inspiration

ACT ONE

We see a projection of a silent black-and-white movie featuring an exquisite mermaid swimming acrobatically in slow motion, as Eric Satie's hypnotic "Gnossiennes No.5 Modere" plays in the b.g.

The stage is bare, save for a comfy chair at center stage and a large piece of oak tag that reads: "Barnes & Noble Sunday Reading Series with NYC's own Mags Prescott."

The lights go down, the music fades and when the lights awake, a most welcoming spotlight discovers Mags Prescott,(to be played by an actress of any age) our evening's storyteller, sitting in the chair holding copy of her novel titled "My Own Personal Mermaid."

She smiles, puts on her glasses, and begins to read.

MAGS
It was a sad time in New York City, especially on Park Avenue where I lived then.

CUE #001: We see a Park Avenue Doorman at his post.

MAGS
My given name was Magritte for Daddy's favorite artist, Rene Magritte, who thought embracing mystery was "as indispensable as snow on Christmas." But as far back as I can remember, everyone always called me "Mags." I was 8, an only child, who was impressively precocious for her age. My favorite authors were Kafka, the feminist Naomi Wolf, and Antoine de Saint-Exupery.

CUE #002: We see the authors projected behind her.

MAGS
When I was seven, I wrote a letter to Stephen Hawking...

CUE #003: We see him.

MAGS

And I shared my theory of the universe in intricate, color-coded detail, and he wrote back, “Jesus, you are beyond me.” I had a room that was handmade to make me feel that magic was, at all times of the day and night, a dependable option thanks to the twinkling stars, comet trails, and cream-colored clouds that streaked across the infinite, midnight-blue sky of my ceiling that my mom painted.

CUE #004: We see her spectacular, planetarium-worthy bedroom sky.

MAGS

...when she was young, healthy, and still able to do things like wave to daddy’s video camera with daffy, rubber-faced merriment like she was the first giddy passenger on a rocket ship bound for the moon.

CUE #005: Mom makes faces for us.

MAGS

My mom had long, graceful fingers, like Vladimir Horowitz...

CUE # 006: We see his hands on the keyboard.

MAGS

....who played with the little finger of his right hand slightly curled up until it needed to land precisely on the note. And that is just how she played me. At night, she loved to trace the geography of my right-out-of-the-bubble-bath-back ever so lightly like she was practicing Liszt’s Consolation No.3 In D-Flat Major.

CUE #007: We hear a sampling of the piece

MAGS

It was like she was in awe of her handiwork, the structure she had co-built with my dad. On the night that she finished my ceiling, she had me lie on my bed and with an arm-sweeping, “Ta-da!, she switched off the light, and the heavens began to shimmer and flow in a light show that surely would have brought Archimedes to his knees.

CUE #008: We see another shot of the room.

MAGS

She suddenly appeared a fairy’s inch away from me...

CUE #009 - We see her Mom dressed in her fairy splendor.

MAGS
...as if she had flown, via the fine-spun wings that I secretly believed that she was born with, and in the strictest of confidence, she whispered in my ear, “The painted sky is an escape route, my darling, so you can fly away from anything that frightens you.” To emphasize her most burning desire, which was for me to have as many pioneering options as possible, my wallpaper was emblazoned with the faces of famous scientists...

MAGS
Like Emilie du ‘Chatelet, who translated Newton’s “Principia,” who still managed to have many babies, and Caroline Herschel, the first woman to discover a comet.

CUE #010: The scientists appear.

MAGS
My friends had prince-hungry Cinderella on their walls...

CUE #011: We see Cinderella with her Prince.

MAGS
But I had Dorothy Hodgkin and Rosalind Franklin on mine.

CUE #012: We see those scientists too.

MAGS
But most of all I had my mom, who loved to twirl madly in the park in her Balenciaga Floral Pleated Maxi Skirt, fall to the ground and call herself “Autumn.”

CUE #013: We see barefoot Mom in her twirling skirt.

MAGS
Daddy was a slightly enigmatic, movie star handsome attorney with a deep-dimpled Cary Grant chin...

CUE #014: We see Cary.

MAGS
...that I loved to lightly navigate with a feathered finger while he read The Wall Street Journal as I sat in his lap, as curled up and content as an overfed Persian cat whose fluffy white tail quietly rose and fell like a lazy raja’s fan.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

Daddy, who always smelled like the men's cologne department at Bloomingdales, was as crisp as the sharp-edged cuffs of his custom-made monogrammed shirts and had pupils that sparkled like the twelve tiny diamonds that circled the dial of his Rolex watch. Sometimes, while hidden deep behind the citadel of a drowsy book, he would suddenly have this mournful, faraway look etched on his face as if he was watching a flotilla of missed opportunities sail by. I had already begun to cultivate my writer's inquisitive skill by then, which would rescue me time and time again, as recently as today. Although he never spoke of it, I sensed that he longed to hurl his imaginary lasso onto the mast of any of those ships and sail towards the romantic coda of a brilliant sunset. His work world always felt dark and threatening to me because it often made him disappear from our daily lives for sometimes weeks at a time. One second, he'd be there, and then poof, just like that, his scheming shoes and conspiratorial suits would vanish without a trace.

CUE #015: We see an empty closet hanger.

MAGS

Every time this happened, I was convinced that foul play was involved. I would torment myself by playing out the same vivid scenario in my head of having to go down to the police station with my poor, fitful mom to solemnly file a missing person report to the seen-it-all desk sergeant who was far too professional to tell us the truth: that I would never see my daddy alive again. And then, completely out of nowhere, Daddy would suddenly reappear with the flourish of a grand wizard. Before I could burst into tears or summon the hurt walls of my 8-year-old defense system, I would be instantly seduced by the sheer velocity of his flamboyant, just for me, "Presto-Change-o" presence, and that was all that I needed to fall into his arms and adore him again. His peace offering was always yet another snow globe for my alarmingly expanding collection.

CUE #016: We see the globes.

MAGS

...which felt like purple hearts that were awarded to me for all the self-inflicted wounds that I suffered on the war-ravaged fields of abandonment. Daddy would continue his win-me-over campaign with one of his next out-of-left-field projects. And what girl does not want to be won over, especially by their daddy? One day, within minutes of yet another sudden re-entry into my atmosphere, he declared that I simply had to have a bay window in my room because, according to him, everything that happened on the streets of New York was a movie that was not to be missed and I needed a proper screen and an old-timey popcorn machine to enjoy the show. Right after my window had been installed, along with an actual movie seat he found at a flea market, the following exchange between my father and I became a lifelong sacred ritual. He would ask, "What are your favorite movies, Princess?" And I would reply, "Every day, Daddy." We continued to casually lob that routine back and forth like a badminton shuttlecock at family gatherings and the end of every no-matter-how-brief phone call.

MAGS (CONT'D)

Sometimes, when I was away at Brown or when I lived in Los Angeles long after he died, while I was sitting in an actual movie theater or stuck in traffic on the 405, I would quietly play both parts. I asked. He answered. I suppose it was just my way of saying, "I miss you so much, Daddy."

(Then:)

Back when I was little, I remember thinking how amazingly pink and perfect my life was. It honestly never occurred to this little pearl of a girl as our dry cleaner, the aggressively friendly Mr. Tozitsky.

CUE #017: we see him in his dry cleaning store.

MAGS

...used to call me with his thick-as-a-kielbasa Polish accent, that anything could penetrate the island of my Manhattan-based, concrete-reinforced paradise. That, of course, is the tragic folly of the privileged child. You're simply too distracted by your seemingly flawless existence to be able to grasp the concept that in one sudden nuclear flash, in one tiny electrical impulse of a second, somewhere between a panicked heartbeat and a suddenly suffocated breath, <u>everything</u> could be wiped out. Forever.

(That transports her back for a moment. Then:)

Looking back at my own personal tragedy makes me think of the images of the day that President Kennedy was shot.

CUE#018: We see the 1963 Dallas motorcade.

MAGS

One minute, he was beautiful and intact, smoothing down his perfect, impervious-to-the-wind pompadour, waving to the crane-necked, photo-snapping, horn-rimmed crowd, ever the invincible, conquering hero, with his trusty, perfectly radiant princess with her pink pillbox crown at his side in the backseat of their smooth sailing, wide open chariot and then in a blink...

CUE #019: We hear three LOUD shots RING OUT.

MAGS

...everyone was staggered, rudderless, and worst of all...orphaned.

(That word pierces her heart. Then:)

My life was no different on the day that everything changed. I had unknowingly been locked in a different, no less deadly kind of telescopic sight, and with one clean kill shot, my childhood, as I knew it, was assassinated, too.

(Then:)

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

The news that was delivered by my already grieving daddy was that my young, vibrant, enchanted mommy, who loved to skip hand-in-hand with me down Sixth Avenue en route to see the Christmas Show at Radio City or chase me through the mountains of Sycamore and Sassafras leaves in Sheep Meadow, was going to die. Soon. Really soon.

(Then:)

The first thing that I thought of was her skin, which was always as sweet smelling and warm as a freshly baked Magnolia Bakery red velvet cupcake, suddenly turning as cold as the atrophied, frostbit metal swings of a snow-buried winter playground. I remember envisioning her looking up at me as she inhaled the tangy citrus scent of a bright yellow lemon in the produce section of D'Agostiono's and then suddenly vanishing without saying a word. Then I pictured her reading Le Petite Prince to me, as she kissed my forehead and read the words, "C'est un endroit myste rieux, le land de larmes," which translated means, "It is a mysterious place, the land of tears." And then she disappeared again without even saying, "Au Revoir," leaving nothing in her wake but the desolate, dust-filled death ray of a nighttime lamp.

CUE #020: We see a shot of the lonely lamp.

MAGS

Later, in my dreams, just as she was about to reach the epiphany of her sacred transparency, she would kneel, as she always would, right before she would head out the door without me and whisper: 'I'll be back. Because mommies always come back." Or she would appear to me in the first bloom of morning, at the tip of my bed, dancing in the dimension of sunlight, always barefoot, always eager, always true to her word. I secretly hoped, or needed desperately to believe, that there was some kind of contract that all parents had to sign on the day you were born that would keep you tethered to them forever. Whether it existed or not, I did know that there was an out-clause, and it was called cancer.

(Then:)

They say that dogs can smell cancer in people, and I think children can, too. I remember early on, when she would suddenly leave a room, no matter how casual or official her exit, I would keep watching her until she disappeared. When I could no longer see or hear her, I would panic, race into the other room, throw my arms around her waist with a tight vice grip, and bury my face in her stomach, refusing to let go. It was during these moments that I tried to inhale her cancer. Beneath the scent of her Jardin D'Amalfi perfume and munificent slathering of Ultra Diamond Transformative Energy Crème, she smelled like long-expired milk, and that is perhaps the only odor that a mother can produce that will repel her child, and I was no exception.

From that point on, I held my breath whenever she was close. I guess it was my way of adapting to it rather than issuing a formal concession. All of my other senses were officially on high alert.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

A series of behind-closed-bedroom-door-summit-meetings were being held with alarming regularity, where at least a few times I heard the wall-muffled sounds of my daddy crying. That plaintive little boy howl was so upsetting that it quickly became my go-to weapon of choice whenever I felt the urge to sabotage my life when things were going just a little too right. As for my fate, the jury reached its decision, and the unanimous verdict was announced by my Daddy when we had "the talk."

CUE #021: We see Daddy and Mags, hand in hand, in silhouette.

MAGS

A python kills its prey by suffocation. It uses the momentum of its strike to throw coils around its victim's body and then literally begins to squeeze the life out of you. Every time the prey exhales, the snake squeezes a little more tightly until the victim can't breathe anymore, and I was slowly asphyxiated in the same way, in the strangulating cadence of words like "metastasized," "out of options," and "fatal." I remember thinking: this is the language of the dead that we have to speak now. I couldn't translate anything that Daddy was saying into the simple vocabulary of the native tongue of children. Nothing was right. Pieces no longer fit. Daddy wasn't even Daddy. He was more like the notifying officer...

CUE #022: The military officer stands at the front door.

MAGS

And I was the next of kin who was being prematurely informed, in an appropriately dignified and understanding manner, that my beloved mommy was about to be officially declared "killed in action." He might as well have said, "The United States offers you our deepest regrets. I'm sorry. There is nothing more that can be done. It's over." Daddy encouraged me to express my feelings, which at that point had gathered like an angry torch-bearing mob to protect and defend the homeland of my heart. I remember screaming, "How could she do this to me? Why would God do this to us? Why?" God's response was an avalanche of unopened envelopes.

CUE #023: We see them fall from the sky. One is marked "Return To Sender."

MAGS

As my world began to spin faster and faster on its now hobbled axis, I found myself, like Le Petit Prince, perched on my barren planet, looking for any sign of hope in the vast unknown. Her diagnosis hadn't given us enough time to shelter ourselves, let alone her, from the crushing force of the raging pancreatic cyclone that was fast approaching. I could not border up her bedroom and hunker down with hopeful songs and prayers until it passed. I could not protect her.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)
(Then:)
Over the next few weeks, she began to wither and decay as if she was following instructions. Her skin and the whites of her eyes turned as yellow as the lemons that she loved to inhale. Instead of aging her rapidly, the illness made her look perversely younger until all that remained was a skeletal infant swaddled and curved in her king-sized bed. Her soundtrack (everyone comes with one), which she unconsciously sang while she washed the dishes or painted her toenails, was:

CUE #023B: Snow White sings, "I'm Wishing."

MAGS
Just like that, her soundtrack was replaced by the rattling requiem of her lungs. I knew that denying the existence of my adversary or hoping for the arrival of a miracle was not going to get me anywhere. Her condition was a clear call for immediate action, so I whittled down my list of options and quickly came up with two practical solutions. I either had to find some way to go back in time to alter history or figure out a way to reconfigure the current course of human events. I chose the latter and turned to the one person I knew could deliver the goods. I had always secretly believed that in the event of an emergency, I had the top-secret ability to reach Handsome Jesus directly, which is what I called him then because, well, am I right, ladies?

CUE #024: We see a shot of Handsome Jesus with sparkling eyes and hear The Roches' cover of "The Hallelujah Chorus."

MAGS
The problem was time. Whenever I closed my eyes, I kept seeing the face of the Wicked Witch of the West and her rapidly draining hourglass.

CUE #025: We see The Witch brandishing her hourglass.

MAGS
That sand was now my mortal enemy. At one stage of my ongoing negotiations with Handsome Jesus, I offered up a soul swap deal: a mine for her scenario. But it was obvious, from the static-infused silence that came transmitting back from the great beyond, that I was either not reaching him, or worse, this was a non-negotiable situation. It felt so personal and vindictive that I did what I always did when things didn't go my way. I pitched a fit. On normal days, the art of catastrophe is the built-in specialty of 8-year-old girls and, unfortunately, as I eventually discovered, women of practically any age. But this was not just some emotionally charged performance to get what I was being denied. I was bombarded by feelings that were hotter than the switched-on burners of the kitchen stove that I was taught never to touch.
(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

And yet, both my hands were suddenly glued to them, and I could not pry them off no matter how hard I tried. The more that I cried out in pain, the more no one heard me. Which brought me to the sudden, stunning conclusion that I might somehow be responsible for all this. I began to brutally interrogate myself. What had I done to deserve such an unimaginably cruel fate? Had my true nature been found out? Had I done something so thoughtless or worse, deliberate, that it was judged unforgivable? Whom had I wronged? Whom had I hurt or offended? I ransacked through the drawers of my brain, trying to remember that one single inciting incident that might have been the root cause of this unbearable havoc. But I could not come up with a thing.

(Then:)

I remember catching glimpses of my daddy floating up and down the hallway in his gravity-defying socks.

CUE #026: We see Daddy in a helpless, non-voluntary flight.

MAGS

He could barely tolerate a yes or no question before he would retreat into the ether of his outsized despair. Mommy levitated in the air...

CUE #027: We see her hovering above her bed.

MAGS

...suspended between heaven and her mattress, tethered to IV bags like a quickly deflating parade balloon, surrounded by prescription bottles, pumps, tubes, and a <u>relentless</u> vital signs monitor.

CUE:#28: We see and hear the monitor.

MAGS

My visits with her were initially a frequent commute. I would curl up next to her and listen to the modulation of her faint, syncopated breaths, which was the only sound that I desperately needed to hear as I traced the epidermal frontier of her back with my finger, just like her nightly inventory of me that she had done so many times before. But I was doing something different: I was memorizing her so I could re-draw her on the canvas of my imagination when she was no longer here. The room felt like the shades were always drawn, even when they were partially or even wide open. Shadows drifted in and out like hushed missionaries. The hospice nurse, Anna, an ancient-looking woman with a faint, impossible-to-decipher, Mona Lisa-like smile and eyes as blue as Lake Como.

CUE #029: We see Anna.

MAGS

...arrived at our doorstep one day with a suitcase in hand, like Max Von Sydow in "The Exorcist."

CUE #030: We see the famous shot and hear the theme.

MAGS

She was at once a soothing and threatening presence. On one hand, her kind, elfin-like appearance made it feel like she had brought with her a powerful, just-for-mommy elixir direct from the Ministry of Divine Health, while at the same time, she felt like a professional assassin who was trained in the art of goodbye which more often than not, made her presence unbearable. I remember staring at her, trying to break the code of her face, hoping that her eyes might drop their professional guard and reveal some crucial bits of information, but it was mommy's sallow, quickly evaporating body that told the tale. After lingering in a coma for what felt like decades, one day, her eyes suddenly snapped open as if the world had just yelled, "Surprise!" and she saw me. I mean, she <u>really</u> saw me. She smiled, said my name like it was made of sugar, and then fell back onto the goose-feathered bow of the invisible starlit sloop that was waiting to carry her far, far away.

(Then:)

Back in my room, I climbed onto my bed with fierce determination and stepped boldly onto a pile of hastily stacked pillows...

CUE #031: We see her wearing a mask and superhero outfit, with fists on her hips, standing on her pillow-launching pad.

MAGS

To do what I should have done from day one: fly away. I envisioned reaching a galaxy billions of light-years away in a matter of seconds, where infinity was the only option. My thinking was if I could get there first, I would snatch Mommy before she could go any further and fly her home in my arms, propelled by the velocity of effulgent stardust while whispering into her ear that she was my darling too. But my feet never left the launch pad of my mattress, and I immediately knew why. My custom-made escape-route sky had been permanently shut down because for it to stay open for business, it required one crucial ingredient: my Mom: Guardian of Enchantment and Defender of the Moon. As far as I knew, she hadn't left any detailed operating or maintenance manual behind, so just like that, my ceiling became just another ceiling.

CUE #032: The ceiling goes from the glorious to the plastered ordinary.

MAGS

I remember throwing open my windows, lying on the bed, closing my eyes, crossing my hands at my chest, gripping my imaginary rosaries, and pretending to be a beautiful corpse, like Juliet Capulet, at the end of the play. I held my breath for as long as I could, daring my heart to stop, as the wind bullied its way through the twisted drape skirt of my lacy lady curtains.

CUE #033: We see the billowing curtains.

MAGS

This simulation was inspired by the thought that if I could no longer feel her life, then I was damn well going to feel her death. That way we could remain connected forever.

(Then:)

The only break we got was when we would get one of those totally out of nowhere unseasonably warm days or a sudden, startling fusillade of city rain. I remember thinking that if each raindrop landed on a piano key, they would play Chopin's Nocturne No. 1 in B Flat Minor.

CUE #034: We hear a sampling of the music and then see a ballet class.

MAGS

...which was the music that my ballet teacher, Madam Komarova always played while she angrily cracked her snarling Russian Hound-Head cane on the floor and demanded that we embrace our inner ballerinas.

MAGS

We all tried to appear graceful in the cold, wind-leaky gulag of her Upper West Side studio that always smelled like Daddy right after a furiously contested racquetball game at Chelsea Piers. But the truth was no one felt beautiful. We all felt clumsy and hopeless, as if we were being punished for the sin of who we were. Time slipped out the front door around the time that Daddy stopped going to work or out into the world for his Sunday morning/pajama bottom and puffy-jacket-bagel-and-New-York-Times safaris. Long after the thick fog of after-midnight stillness would roll in, the only thing I heard was the sound of the insistent pendulum, which swung like the sword of Damocles inside the lean belly of our antique grandfather clock that stood like a sentry in the main foyer.

CUE #035: We see it.

MAGS

It was like its sole purpose was to ensure that few got in and no one got out. At school, gravity had no use for me. It was like my solitary spacewalk.

CUE #036: We see her air drifting down a hallway.

MAGS

...had suddenly become untethered from the halls of The Trinity School. Back home, our matching Irish Setters, Franny and Zooey, knew exactly what was happening.

CUE #037: We see their deeply sad pooch faces.

MAGS

Tails became wag-less. Ears were lowered at half-mast. Eyes were filled with dog despair.

(Then:)

I remember lying on the couch listening to Joni Mitchell's album Blue, trying to tap into my mommy's frequency with all my might.

CUE #038: We see a Blue Joni and hear a bit of piano.

MAGS

I believed those songs held all kinds of hidden messages meant only for me. But all I got was the fact that Joni's relationship with men was totally screwed up.

(Then:)

At my absolute lowest point, I toyed with the idea that since my ceiling was no longer a way out, perhaps leaping headfirst out the window or allowing myself to be voluntarily pushed by hovering conspiratorial spirits was a potentially viable solution. My 8-year-old's logic was that if Handsome Jesus meant me to fly, I would fly; if he didn't, hello pavement. Luckily, my poorly thought-out flight plan was mercifully aborted when I was rescued and brought back to earth by my Aunt Claire, who was my mom's younger sister.

CUE #039: We see her spritely, goofy presence.

MAGS

Where my mom was genetically flawless and always on the verge of extemporaneous joy, Aunt Claire was anthropologically challenged. Her hair was baffled, her nose looked like an uncooked dinner roll, and her unibrow, when it was left unwaxed, made you think that maybe Darwin was on to something. Despite her rather astonishing shortcomings and having survived the torment of being called "Claire The Loon" for most of her high school life, Aunt Claire was a positive, relentlessly playful person. She just had to work at life a little bit harder. Frankly, I think, unlike most of us, Aunt Claire knew the precise location of where her true, elusive beauty lived.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

When she arrived that day, leading the cavalry, I was beyond delighted because, finally, the persistent ringing of our doorbell was not heralding the arrival of the grim-faced pizza delivery guy whose unfortunate skin resembled the very thing he was transporting.

CUE #040: We see a shot of him.

MAGS

But it was much more than that. Aunt Claire's sudden unexpected cameo appearance in the theater of my bedroom, in her reluctant coat and defiantly mismatched scarf from Bergdorf's, which was a store that I loved because I always felt so safe in their dressing rooms, could only mean one thing: I was getting out. And just like that my everyday countenance returned. The fever had been broken, I could walk erect again with my head, however provisionally back in the clouds where it rightfully belonged. Aunt Claire was just the tonic that I needed to be reminded of for a few brief shining hours, that I was still capable of being equal parts cherished and alive. When she announced in her own, zany Jack-in-the-Box way that we were going to The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which to this day is still my favorite place on earth. Normally, I would have exploded into a burst of New Year's Eve confetti. But instead, much to my surprise, the complete opposite happened. I didn't react at all. I went completely mute because, frankly, hearing the sound of a spirited outsider's voice, especially in my native tongue, was so startling that it made me so dizzy that I practically fainted from the thrill of it. But it was also that kindness dispensed like this, as casually as pretzel samples at the mall, felt so foreign and confusing to me that I suddenly found myself distrusting the entire operation. Plus, was leaving my post something that I could be court-marshaled for? Sensing my apprehension, Aunt Claire deftly capped my shuddering wellhead by assuring me that all would be well. And then she lured me in with the irresistible news that a huge, just-for-kids exhibit had opened that day called "Fantasy and Fairy Tales In Art." I don't remember bolting out the door.

(Then:)

Making your entrance into the heart of the city at lunchtime, especially when it's been a while, is like leaping headfirst into the main tent of a three-ring circus.

CUE #041: We see a shot of Manhattan as The Big Apple Circus and hear CITY NOISE.

MAGS

(yelling over the racket)

Everywhere you look, you are surrounded by people juggling shopping bags, city-worker acrobats, prancing show dogs, and all kinds of clown-like characters with wild hairdos and flamboyant costumes. To this child's ears, that whistle-blowing, madly honking, siren-shrieking car and truck symphony sounded like swirling, boisterous, carefree calliope music.

CUE #042: We add LOUD calliope-driven circus music to the mix.

MAGS
(Yelling)
It felt like I was plugged directly into Con Ed's main power grid and could feel its sizzling electricity surge through every neuron of my body. I needed Dr. Frankenstein to scream...

CUE #043: We see wild-eyed Gene Wilder in Young Frankenstein.

MAGS
"She's Alive! Alive, I tell you! Alive," as bolts of Mary Shelley lightning crackled across the sky. By the way, when I was four, I wrote a fan letter to Ms. Shelley, and just like Handsome Jesus, I never heard back. Anyway, a mere five or ten minutes into celebrating the return of my ability to intermittently skip and sprint while pulling poor Aunt Claire like a winded rag doll, my head began to spin like the green-domed carousel at the Jardin du Luxembourg...

CUE#044: We see the carousel twinkling in the Paris night

MAGS...
...which Mommy told me came alive every night after midnight all by itself so that the horses could run free. Before I knew it, I was sailing through the halls of the museum aboard my very own, personal invincible galleon of unfettered delight. These were hardly uncharted waters. I knew the museum far better than I knew the layout of my apartment. This was my turf, baby.

CUE #045: We see tiny Mags staring at a painting.

MAGS
By the time I was two or three, I would spend half my time there, guiding people to their exhibit destinations, which often included the newer, fresh-faced, navigation-challenged museum workers who were trying desperately not to be lost. What I loved most about the museum was how it spoke to me. Nothing about it felt the least bit scholarly or antiseptic. I had long ago concluded that I had enjoyed several past lives as I never felt more relaxed than when I wandered amongst the art and artifacts of the Roman, Greek, and Byzantine exhibits whose clothes-challenged statues...

CUE #046: We see the statues.

MAGS

...always seemed very happy to see one of their own. And yet, I felt equally welcomed by Diane Arbus's photo of those freaky identical twins (P.S.--Sometimes I would go to the museum dressed in the identical corduroy dress, white tights, and headband so I could become the missing triplet). The Rembrandt paintings loved to see me, too. I swear to God, everyone in "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp"...

CUE #047: We see the Rembrandt painting.

MAGS

...would stop what they were doing, casually look up when they saw me, and say, "Sup." And yet, this time around, nothing moved me, as it always had, because deep down inside, I knew it served as a reminder that everything I loved would be here forever. Except Mommy. She was the exhibit that I cared for the most.

(Then:)

After a few hours, we found ourselves in a long kid-filled line at the Fantasy and Fairy Tale exhibit...

CUE#048: we see the enchanted exhibit.

MAGS

And suddenly, my eyelids slowly began to close like the final shot of a Chaplin film.

CUE #049: We see her yawning.

MAGS

I was fading fast, and I panicked because if my exhaustion became public, it would mean one thing: a one-way ticket back to the way too real-life world. Aunt Claire, who had periodically been taking my emotional temperature as efficiently as Mommy's round-the-clock nurse, Anna, sensed my disintegration no matter how hard I tried to cover it up with a facade of sparkling alertness. She knelt attentively and gently whispered the six single worst words that no child ever wants to hear. She said: "I think it's time to go." I went from zero to devastated in under a second, and I just broke into a million jagged shards of sadness, like Daddy's crystal decanter, which went flying when Zooey jumped on him on Christmas. Everything just came pouring out of me. The rage, the hurt, the unfairness, the expectations, the demands, the exhaustion that no 8-year-old body should ever have to contain. Just as I was about to howl like a trapped wildebeest...I saw her.

(Then:)

The mermaid.

CUE #050: We see her swimming, and she is exquisite.

MAGS

She was the grand centerpiece of the fairy tale exhibit, which, in this case, was a sea creature-filled, oxygen-bubbling, deep-blue, aquatic wonderland. Seeing her was like getting hit square in the face with an inflatable baseball bat stuffed with glitter that filled my lungs and accelerated my heart with such a rush of excitement because I knew, at the moment, for the first time, that other than Mommy and Daddy, there was finally someone else to love. An actual, real-life mermaid was sitting just inches from me, and being denied this once-in-a-lifetime meet and greet with her was just too much to bear. What was most precious to me for the past few months had begun to vanish. But not this time. No way. I had to be near her. Touched and protected by her. She was my salvation. Before Aunt Claire could try to extract me from the exhibit, that was the moment that I caught the mermaid's eye, and she caught mine.

CUE: #051: We see the Mermaid's look of delight.

MAGS

She smiled at me as if I were the room's only child. And just like that, every single grown-up and child retreated into the shadows like the Jets and the Sharks did when Tony and Maria saw each other for the first time in the West Side Story gym.

CUE: #052: We see them.

MAGS

And now, all that was left in the world was me and my own personal mermaid. In one powerful, impossible-to-measure moment of pure recognition, we were connected as if we had been searching for each other all our lives. The rush of pure exhilaration that I felt was the kind of dopey, divine happiness that comes when you tear open your biggest birthday present or when your Daddy says, "Good job."

(Then:)

And just like that...

(Then:)

I was airborne, flying right toward her, and landed at her side, perfectly mirroring her hand-to-knee pose.

CUE #053: We see a shot of our mermaid as Mags FLIES in and poses by her side just like her.

MAGS

I instantly became her most trusted, confident, and sidekick. We sat there like a pair of perfectly matched porcelain bookends for what seemed like an eternity of exquisite forever, admiring each other's repose, silently celebrating our newfound bond and exclusive life-long friendship to come. She looked down and smiled at me as if the first thing she was going to say was, "Welcome home, my love." Her hair was made of waist-length, finely spun gold; her arms were long and ballerina slender. Her eyes looked like they had been custom ordered from Tiffany's catalog For Perfect Jade Green Irises, her delicate chest was held together with matching pink sea shells, and her slowly fanning turquoise fins set off a million sparkles of brilliant light like my favorite Korean Lady glossy nail polish the moment that it attracted moonlight. Suddenly, a look of concern appeared on her face, and in one fluid motion, she bent down towards me and studied me, just like I did when I tried to memorize Renoir's "Bal du Moulin de la Galette." Her hand fluttered down her cheek, and every finger was a tiny butterfly. She drew in a gasp of recognition as if her intuitive mermaid heart had just told her everything about my mom. Then, without asking me a thing, she gently stroked my hair like I was her favorite lamb and said with absolute certainty:"There is always beauty." And then she kissed me on my cheek. Her lips felt like they were made out of cashmere and fairy magic. The veil of suffocating darkness had not just been lifted. I was given the gift of absolution. I had been both saved and blessed by my own personal mermaid and in my book, that was every bit as powerful as being consecrated by Handsome Jesus himself. I don't know. Being both eight and, therefore, insatiable, I was hoping to get a little extra chin wag with her so we could, you know, gossip a bit and compare girl/mermaid notes. But intuitively, I knew that my time to sit at the fins of enchantment was up, as all the fully dimensional sights and sounds of museum life roared back like a massive, rolling, full moon tide. During my trance, an endless, forever snaking fidgety conga line of antsy children had formed between a pair of uncertain red velvet ropes, every one of them ready to stage a coup that was about to topple my reign as mermaid best friend. I had to think fast as a faceless, sinewy security guard started to guide me away from her by my elbows, I squirmed out of his grip and yelled out" Wait! In case of an emergency, how can I reach you? Can I have your number?" She flashed a faint, ironic mermaid smile which to me said, "Sorry, I'm a celebrity with a huge international following. We don't give out our numbers." By this point, the security guard had his hands around my waist and was pulling me further and further away. I cried out: "Where do you live??" She put up her hand to the guard and motioned to me with her finger to lean in close and as I did, her warm as the Atlantic Ocean in August lips, grazed my ear and she whispered her address to me in perfectly nuanced mermaid and I screamed, "Got it! Thanks," as I was air-lifted back to the Aunt Claire landing strip of the museum. I already felt like I was a million light years away from my mermaid, who in the faraway distance was already captivating my replacement, another wild-eyed, overly eager but hardly-as-interesting-as-me visitor girl. I felt my heart begin to sink like a treasure chest of a million doubloons. But I somehow managed to rally, comforted by the thought that most people who met me said that I was memorable, so that offered me a glimmer of hope.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

(Then:)

I have no memory of what happened immediately after. I remember waking up sweat-drenched and sleep baffled, burrowed face down, 20,000 leagues under my comforter's sea of Canadian feathers.

CUE #054: We see a shot of her feet sticking out from beneath a comforter.

MAGS

And I remember racing through the items on my mental checklist. Where was I? In my bed. How did I get there? I had no idea. I vaguely remembered a cab ride, my head being stroked like a floppy kitten in Aunt Claire's lap as I watched the fuzzy streetlights speeding by, hearing the full faucet gush rush of traffic and the faraway drone of Middle Eastern music fleeing from the driver's dashboard radio. Did I really meet my mermaid? Is it day or night? Just as I was about to cast my ballot for the most creditable thought, I sat up and noticed the clearly defined shadow of my daddy sitting near the edge of my bed.

CUE #055: We see him in the shadow place.

MAGS

He was crying, and suddenly, I felt the unbearable extraction of Mommy from my heart. I remember screaming, "MOMMY!" "MOMMY!" and ran down the endless, pitch-black, tunnel-vision hallway to her bedroom so I could fall into her baby-warm hammock arms until I saw her empty bed.

CUE #056: We see the bed.

(Then:)

All that was left to breathe in was the stunned, panic-stricken fumes of nothing.

(Then:)

The silence terrified me. I wanted to scream, "I'm only 8, god fuck damn it! You can't have her! Give her back! Give her back!" But nothing came out of my mouth because I believed that if I said anything mean or angry, God would invalidate our sacred commandment, which said...

(Then:)

Mommies always come back.

(Then:)

Over the next few hours, a series of shadow grown-ups slipped in and out of our house, speaking in the low rustling timbre of sorrow.

CUE #057: We see a series of twisted shadow images in silhouette.

MAGS

Over the next few days, life felt lifeless, without sound or color...

CUE #058: We watch all the color drain from a shot of their living room.

MAGS

....and most importantly, without her. And yet I remained the dogged, impassioned resistance fighter, exhaustively combing the countryside in search of any sign of her that might have survived the scorched earth battleground of terminal illness. The reality is she was easy to find because she was everywhere that I looked. She was the pale pink sweater, draped and drooping on a chair...

CUE #059: We see the sweater

MAGS

...which had been instantly transformed into a statue that memorialized both her casual posture and generous, flung wide open arms, which were now conspicuously drained of both her actual arms, which, in turn, were drained of me. Her skin lotion, whose puissant scent always trumpeted her imminent and much-anticipated arrival, barely clung to life in the molecules of her still-damp bath towel...

CUE #060: We see her abandoned towel sprawled on the bathroom floor.

MAGS

In the fibers of her stunned clothes that hung mournfully in her gallows closet and in the ghostly death mask impression of her head, which had been sculpted and entombed in the soft white clay of her appropriately named Egyptian high threaded pillowcase..

CUE #061: We see the impression in her pillow.

MAGS

And then there was her tuna sandwich...

CUE #062: We see the sandwich in all its tuna and garnished glory.

MAGS

That sat perched and waiting, like a pet with a leash in its mouth, on the top shelf of the refrigerator.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

Even over these last few weeks, when she was disappearing, she still had the will and the creative power to cleverly manipulate the atoms of her universe, as all true artists can, to get the most out of life by turning whatever she touched into art. Even the much-maligned and usually anonymous garnish was a fashion statement, like a stunning broach pinned just so for maximum effect. The sandwich was officially granted a pardon by me and immediately became a kind of canned fish-based shrine, proof positive that beyond a shadow of a doubt, anything can stay alive forever, even a humble Bumble Bee tuna salad sandwich on multi-grain bread.

(Then:)

Because all the final grown-up plans had been privately discussed and mutually agreed upon well in advance, everything moved with surprising velocity and efficiency. I was simply on the moving sidewalk of mourning and let it carry me off in whatever direction it thought best.

(Then:)

There was a funeral with sad-eyed adults who all looked like grief-stricken children all dressed up for the worst Halloween ever, who told vibrant stories about their time spent with mom, which was meant to be comforting, healing, and funny, and people laughed even while they cried. That was followed by a ceremony where my mom's ashes and buoyant spirit were set free at her favorite spot along the banks of the Hudson River. Like those of us who had assembled along the river, the rain-swollen, dark clouds could not hold anything back and showered us with their tears while phone lines of birds...

CUE #063: We see the bird mourners.

MAGS

...perfectly arranged in a formal and dignified manner, silently observed the proceedings as if they had flown in specifically to both pay their last respects.

(Then:)

The scenery of our play changed rapidly. We must have been driven home, but I honestly can't remember a second of the journey, what was said, who drove, or who was even in the car. We were air-lifted back to our apartment, where cliques of grown-ups grazed and gabbled as I hid under the table, listening as I did at the beach from inside the sanctuary of my chaise lounge and beach blanket tent. But instead of the siren song of the tide-tumbling sea, I heard fidgety forks, jiggling ice cubes, and the sound of the East River wind trying hard to crash the party. A few people cried, especially when they looked at me as I tried to travel incognito to the bathroom.

(Then:)

But the worst moment, the absolute, final blow came when I opened the refrigerator to say a silent good night to the tuna sandwich only to discover that it was gone. Someone had eaten it and with it, they had swallowed her whole. Its sacred pink plate had been casually dumped into the sink, like a throat-slit gangster, lumped together with all the other completely meaningless, ordinary, everyday dirty dishes.

CUE #064: We see the dearly departed dishes, including an empty pink dish among the body count.

MAGS

Mommy's ashes had been scattered, and now the single most tangible symbol of her earthly existence had been erased. The loss didn't just stagger me. It instructed me.

(Then:)

In no uncertain terms, I knew exactly what I had to do.

(Then:)

When one experiences both life and death at such a tender young age, as clearly as I did on the afternoon of my own personal tuna fish sandwich tragedy, any form of escape, no matter how implausible, seems imminently doable. My entire exit strategy came to me as a fully formed vision. I quickly reasoned that I would have to wait until midnight to put my plan into motion because that was when my dad would have finally succumbed to the grown-up lullaby of Ambien.

(Then:)

Before I knew it, it was time. I hadn't slept a wink, having spent the entire night fine-tuning the details of my great escape. It never occurred to me to put on a proper coat because when you find yourself in the throes of a self-induced hypnotic trance, the rules of common sense simply no longer apply. I did, however, perhaps intuitively, choose to wear my Wendy onesie because she was, after all, the ultimate surrogate mother symbol of Never Land, which empowered me. I chose my battery-powered sneakers as my mode of transportation mainly because Velcro straps were easier to fasten in the dark, plus their blinking lights...

CUE #065: We see them in all their twinkling glory.

MAGS

...would provide me with an on-again/off-again illuminated runway that would act as my guide as I trekked my way blindly through the scary, perilous, mountain range of nighttime living room furniture.

CUE #066: We see it. And she is TERRIFIED.

MAGS

The worst part was getting past the grotesque wall shadows that looked like the taloned hand of Bellatrix Lestrange trying to snatch me.

CUE #067: We see the taloned hands

MAGS
In what felt like hours, I finally reached the foyer's final frontier, ran for the front door, and entered the heart of Manhattan's darkness.

CUE #068: We see a horror film-worthy shot of the city as a bolt of angry lightning streaks across the sky.

MAGS
(scared to death)
I had never walked through the streets of New York by myself, by day or especially at night before, and the minute my feet hit the concrete, I took off as if a starter's pistol had just been fired.

CUE #069: We hear a LOUD starter pistol BANG and watch her POV of the distorted dstreets.

MAGS
In my mind, I was running the Olympic marathon race of my life, and all I could hear was the sound of my panic-soaked breaths and galloping sneaker hoofs, whose street-slapping noise ricocheted off concrete and glass as I was cheered on by the roar of an imaginary frenzied crowd.

MAGS
Somewhere behind me, in the incalculable, quickly disappearing distance, was the ambient city soundtrack whose instruments included the occasional syncopated traffic light and the one lone wolf taxi that sloshed its way through the empty street and Upper Eastside puddle sea. But none of that distracted me. I was on a final mission, and nothing was going to derail my focus or get in my way, except perhaps my own personal primitive fears, which suddenly started to scream from my gut and paralyze me in my tracks the second that I reached my destination: Central Park.

CUE #070: We see a spooky shot of nighttime Central Park.

MAGS
By day, the park was my sunlit playground paradise. But seeing it at night was like seeing it without its clothes on, and I was <u>shocked</u> by the stark, grown-up nakedness of it all.

CUE#070_2: We see a shot of haunting, twisted trees.

MAGS
I sensed the presence of a rabid, razor-toothed quadruped...

CUE #071: We see a terrifying monster.

MAGS
Whose sole after-hours purpose was to devour the small and innocent and then use my bones as floss.

(Then:)
My heart drums were now beating at war pitch level.

CUE #072: We hear her pounding heartbeats.

(Then:)
This was it. It was now or never. I held my breath, puffed up my chest until my lungs felt like a pair of matching airbags, and ran right into the night bowels of the park until I was standing at the precise point that I had set out to reach:

(Then:)
The Pond, where, by day, nautical-minded children came to navigate their toy boats.

CUE #073: We see a shot of the night twinkling pond in black and white.

MAGS
This was the forwarding address that my mermaid had whispered in confidence to me at the museum. I knew that this was the only spot on earth that I could go to where I could reclaim the most important part of me, which had been wrenched from my soul like a Rosebud sled.

(Then:)
Having rejected the grief advice offered to me by all those well-meaning grown-ups who thought that wearing Lululemon yoga pants and Birkenstock sandals would instantly turn them into Baba Ram Dass, I was completely out of options. So I went for the Hail Mary pass of spiritual contact. I kicked off my blinking sneakers and stood on tiptoes on the edge of the pond.

CUE #074: We see her perched, bare feet

MAGS
...like I was about to perform the ultimate Olympic high board descent, and as Wendy beamed from my tee shirt as if she was quietly approbating my decision, I closed my eyes, threw up my arms, held my breath like I did when I was about to get a flu shot and fell backward into the bone-chilling water.

CUE #075: We see her free fall and then, under black, hear a loud splash.

MAGS

As I began to sink...

CUE #076: We watch her descent

MAGS

I was suddenly bombarded with a highlight reel that featured the best moments of my life that initially insulated me from the ice cold water like my Uniqlo parka or daddy's warm French toast arms.

(Then:)

I guess this is as good a moment as any to mention that I could not swim. In my defense, let me say that I believed at the time, as any child does, that I could do anything without an ounce of training; all I had to do was activate my own personal pretend switch, and boom, I was an expert in anything. So, it was rather startling to me when I continued to sink rather quickly toward the bottom of the lake.

(Then:)

I know what you're thinking: I'm here, right? Telling you this story. So everything turned out okay, right? Well, let's just say things did not go exactly as you think they did. To calm myself, I remember reasoning that any minute I was going to see my own personal mermaid who would encase me in a magical bubble of pure, eternal light. But time was running out. My lungs and eardrums were ready to detonate, and a white-hot flash of panic suddenly flooded through the vascular highways of my body. A kind of instant text message that said: "Uh-oh." Was sent directly to my brain. Right around now was when the thought occurred to me that perhaps magical thinking was not the world's best substitute for an experienced lifeguard. But to my surprise, the terror that should have logically accompanied that thought was replaced by a rather surprising feeling of complete well-being. Just like that, I was no longer Virginia Wolf with her boulder-filled pockets. I felt lighter than air, totally carefree, completely ready to accept the natural flow of my inevitable fate. I remember smiling as if death itself had just officially welcomed me like a Walmart Greeter. I had arrived, albeit much faster than I ever could have imagined, at the dramatic finish line of my life, so there was no longer any need at this point to hold my breath. The story was no longer just about me or my mom. It was about what lived right here, deep below the surface of the obvious and the ordinary. The sheer thrill that came with that moment of exquisite clarity felt so all-consuming and generous that it transformed me. I was finally an exquisite, sylphlike ballerina enveloped by a spotlight cast by the moon. I was Odette drowning in my own Swan Lake, whose exhilarating crescendo would be this final descent en pointe.

CUE #077: We see her transformed into an underwater ballerina.

MAGS

I shut my eyes and braced myself for my transition as Tchaikovsky's Op.19 began to play from the port of somewhere.

MAGS

And that's when I felt a pair of arms encircle me. I opened my eyes, expecting to see Daddy, but I came face to face with my mermaid instead.

CUE:#078: We see her mermaid

Who kissed me ever so lightly on the lips and sent an effusion of oxygen directly into my lungs. And then she spoke to me. But it wasn't her voice that I heard. It was my mommy, reading to me from the faraway, foregone conclusion of tomorrow. Suddenly, the water became as cordial as my nightly bubble bath as she recited the words of Le Petit Prince, who said, "You alone will have the stars as no one else has them. In one of the stars, I shall be living. In one of them, I shall be laughing. And so it will be as if all the stars were laughing when you look at the sky at night; you - and only you - will have stars that can laugh." And then I felt her spirit leave my mermaid. And yet...I felt her more deeply than I ever had. I knew my mommy's star would adore me even when the lemon-yellow sun shone, or snow fell like freshly sifted pastry flour. For how long? Well, when you asked my mommy how old she was, she always replied, "Forever and a day." With a heart that was now as light as a balloon filled with helium, which, by the way, is the second-lightest element in the observable universe, that's when my mermaid's eyes lit up like a pair of ancient candles.

CUE#079: We see the candles in her eyes.

The kind that the widows of the sea placed in their windows to become the beacon of light for their sailor husbands who had journeyed far beyond the reaches of home. And then, just as I reached out to her...As If by explicit instructions, I was suddenly compelled to swim upwards...

CUE #080: We see her ascent.

MAGS

...faster and faster...until...I was greeted by my night sky ceiling, which had been reopened for business.

CUE #081: We see her starry, starry night ceiling.

(Then:)

It took me a moment or two to realize that I was no longer at the bottom of the pond but was tucked tightly in my bed.

(MORE)

MAGS (CONT'D)

I knew, with 100%, absolute certainty, that I had been carried there by Mommy as an homage to our nightly "it's time for bed, my darling, ritual." Now, this might lead some of you to believe this was all a dream. Maybe it was. Maybe it wasn't. But then again, isn't everything you love a dream?

MAGS

I suddenly stood up on my bed, stretched my arms upwards, closed my eyes, and instead of praying for flight, I blasted off the launchpad of Cape Mattress, actuated by the propulsive speed of every mother's love.

CUE #082: We see the spectacular universe and hear Holst's Jupiter: The Bringer of Jollity as she SOARS through the galaxy.

MAGS

I soared through the hand-painted universe and could feel myself being born again, but this time as a blazing protostar, 275 million light years from yesterday and trillions of miles beyond tomorrow. I began pulling in matter from a nearby envelope of gas and dust until I finally exploded...

CUE #083: THE BIG BANG!

MAGS

...giving off a brilliant light that was ten times as luminous as the Sun...

We see the LIGHT

MAGS

...which left an indelible comet trail in my wake...

We see the STREAKING comet.

MAGS

...which all these years later, I know was my own personal, now and forever self.

CUE #084: We see The Little Prince sitting on his planet, staring at the stars

MAGS

This maiden flight, this thrilling cosmological expedition, would take me far beyond the outermost reaches of my imagination, which, in time, would inform every book, every play, every poem, and every movie that I would go on to write from that point on and for the rest of my life. Years later, I passed the unwritten rules of enchantment on to my two little girls...

CUE #085: We see them side by side posing in Mermaid outfits.

MAGS
...who learned to swim in the deepest part of their own personal pond, just like I did.
(Then:)
Back then, I remember the next morning as the sun lifted my eyelids with the feathery ease of Barber's Adagio.

CUE #086: We see a little girl's eyes opening as we hear Samuel Barber's Adagio for Strings.

MAGS
(Then:)
Through the language of light, I was informed that it was time to go on with my life.
(Then:)
Once dressed, Daddy and I had our usual solemn pre-bus breakfast. And then something astonishing happened. As Daddy cracked his egg like it was the outer shell of his heart and I cat-licked the overflowing marmalade-crusted edges of my English muffin, he looked up like he was in a trance...and he smiled at me, and I knew why. He saw my Mommy in the pools of my eyes. I knew that he did because he looked deeply into them, and with a whisper as downy as the petals of a Rose Sugar Moon, he began to recite. He said, "My bounty is as boundless as the sea, my love as deep. The more I give to thee, the more I have for both are infinite." Then, in a state of hallowed veneration, for the first time in months, he slowly began to shed the chrysalis of his sadness until he emerged as an incandescent, fully emancipated butterfly. And then, without saying a word, he offered me his hand, which I grabbed like it was the brass ring of my Paris carousel.

CUE#087: We see the merry-go-round
(Then:)
And then, we floated across the room, like our shoes were made out of Ouija board's heart-shaped planchettes, to the long-shuttered and forgotten stereo. Daddy flipped open the dust lid, and with a skillful, audiophile aim, he dropped the needle onto the anxiously waiting track of Mommy's favorite song.

CUE #088: We hear the song "I'm Wishing."

MAGS
As Snow White began to sing, I carefully boarded the slope of his well-worn slippers...

CUE #089: We see the shoe-on-shoe shot as the song continues.

MAGS.
I pressed my cheek into his warm, half-buttoned sweater, and we started to dance.

CUE #090: We see them dance to a delicate piano piece.

MAGS
Which is something that we did for years...

We see the father of the bride dancing with his daughter.

MAGS
...and years go to come.

We see her dancing with her elderly dad.

MAGS
Do you know what the best day with him was? Everyday.

The lights slowly feather down.

THE END

Performance rights must be secured before production. For contact information, please visit the information page for My Own Personal Mermaid