

OTHERTOWN

(A children's playroom in an old house. A few pieces of furniture, a rocking horse, a few stuffed animals, toys and/or board games, and a small couch or loveseat that can seat two)

TOBY: *(From off)* There's something in the playroom you gotta see.

ALEX: *(As they enter)* The house is really clean. You did a good job here, or was that mom? Must've been mom.

TOBY: I paid a service to come in.

ALEX: Oh, can you afford that, such a big house?

TOBY: Not my money. Mom had set some aside.

ALEX: God, this room. Looks so empty. What did you do with all my stuff?

TOBY: Well, there's a few things I still gotta get to, as you can see. Some stuff I put in storage, you know, if you and Curt have kids. Do you want me to ship it out to you?

ALEX: *(ALEX is somewhat distracted looking at some toy)* What? Oh, no. I'll let you know.

TOBY: The rest I gave to a shelter.

ALEX: *(More incredulous than angry)* You gave my stuff away? Without consulting me?

TOBY: Seriously, Alex? You haven't cared about this stuff since you left the house. In fact, I don't remember you caring about it a hell of a lot while you were in the house. You're gonna get huffy about it now?

ALEX: I cared about it. I just outgrew it or something. But no, you're right. And I know I already said it, but you've been great taking care of all this and I am so, so sorry I couldn't get out here sooner. You know, I –

TOBY: Yeah, yeah. Curt was in the hospital. I heard you the first time.

ALEX: Believe me, if I could have –

TOBY: Yeah, I didn't need you, really. What *you* may have missed by not being here, that's your thing.

ALEX: You did a good job, Toby.

TOBY: (*Facetiously*) Amazing, isn't it?

ALEX: I'm not saying...

TOBY: I'm just busting your chops. There wasn't that much to do. Mom made a list.

ALEX: Really? She actually left instructions?

TOBY: Yeah. Some instructions, some informational items.

ALEX: But that's – you mean this wasn't some spur of the moment thing? She planned it?

(TOBY has moved behind the couch)

TOBY: Yeah. Mom had lots of plans. Anyway, what do you think? *(TOBY is indicating the couch)*

ALEX: (?)

TOBY: You don't recognize it? I guess I should've figured that.

ALEX: Recognize – oh, the couch. That's the Magic Couch?

TOBY: You bet.

ALEX: Really? From the show? It looks so small.

TOBY: That's the Magic Couch. Remember the episode where I scratched our initials on the leg and got in all that trouble? Look.

ALEX: (*ALEX examines the couch*) Wow. It is. Wait, you really did that?

TOBY: And then we went to Othertown where you're *supposed* to scratch your initials in furniture.

ALEX: Some lesson for kids. No wonder they cancelled the show. Where did you get it?

TOBY: Mom got it. I didn't know about it until I came in here to straighten up

ALEX: Where did she get it?

TOBY: I'm guessing Tommy kept it after the show got cancelled and he gave it to her for some reason.

ALEX: Huh. Topsy Turvy Tommy. I wonder what he's doing.

TOBY: He had something on Nick for awhile. It was like a kiddie game show. Might still be on.

ALEX: The Magic Couch. They couldn't think of a better name than that? What a dumb show that was.

TOBY: It was a great show.

ALEX: You were four. What did you know?

TOBY: What millions of other four year olds knew; that it was a great show. And just to be clear, by the time it was cancelled I was nine, and I still thought it was a great show.

That show made your life, Alex. At least that's what you told me. Didn't you say that's how you met the rich and famous Zoe who gave you entrée into that glitterati world you inhabit?

ALEX: You have a very distorted notion of what “world” I inhabit. What did you do with the ashes?

TOBY: They’re next to pop’s in the bedroom.

ALEX: Mom leave any instructions about where she wanted them spread?

TOBY: No.

ALEX: Really? That’s odd. Any ideas?

TOBY: Nope. She sold the cabin years ago. That would have been a good spot.

ALEX: Yeah, that would. Well, we could still sneak up there and spread them.

TOBY: It’s a gated community now. *Las Cascadas*. You wouldn’t recognize it.

ALEX: Hmm. Maybe back in Cartagena?

TOBY: Okay. Next time I’m traveling down to Colombia I’ll pack the two funeral urns. With my record, no way they’d suspect a drug deal.

ALEX: Okay, not a great idea.

TOBY: And besides, dad was Venezuelan. Scatter his ashes in Colombia and he’d come back to haunt you.

ALEX: He’s already doing that. Maybe Aunt Sofia would have an idea. Oh god, we have to tell them all down there, mom’s cousins...

TOBY: I already emailed Sofia. I’m sure the whole country knows by now.

ALEX: Okay, good. How did you get her email? Oh, mom’s instructions.

TOBY: Yep.

ALEX: Do you still have them, by the way? I’d like to look at them.

TOBY: Nope. Burned them.

ALEX: Burned them? Why?

TOBY: That was one of the instructions. I wish she'd put it first, then I wouldn't have had to do the rest. *(Beat. With difficulty)* We need to go back, Alex.

ALEX: What?

TOBY: We need to go back.

ALEX: To Colombia? We've never been to Colombia, how could –

TOBY: To Othertown. We got the couch. I'm sure you remember the words:

Magic Couch lift me up

ALEX: Toby, stop. You're weirding me out.

TOBY: *(Beat)* Don't worry. Doesn't work unless we both do it. Remember that episode where I tried to go alone?

ALEX: No. What, do you have the boxed set? How do you remember all this?

TOBY: Hello? We were there. And they're not on DVD. They *should* release them, though. Those action figures of us are going for big bucks on Ebay.

ALEX: Really? Those cheap plastic things? Didn't even look like us.

TOBY: Didn't matter. You underestimate how popular that show was.

ALEX: Oh yeah? Then why did they cancel it?

TOBY: You tell me.

ALEX: *(Beat. Somewhat sarcastically)* "Glitterati world." Really, Toby. If you only knew.

TOBY: I'm wrong about Zoe?

ALEX: I'll give you Zoe. When mom sent me to Marlborough Zoe *was* all over me. I was like this big star to her 'cause she had grown up watching the show.

TOBY: Like everybody else our age.

ALEX: Which was so ironic, considering who her grandfather was, with his two Oscars and his three Tonys. And yeah, eventually she did take me into her world with her movie star friends. But we had a lot in common. It wasn't just the show.

TOBY: And Curt? Didn't you tell me he started stalking you when he learned you were at Barnard?

ALEX: He wasn't stalking me. But yeah, he definitely tracked me down. Funny to think of a Phi Beta Kappa grad student with that Othertown poster on his wall. I mean, yeah, it helped me get attention. But you think Curt and I got married just because I was a kid star on a PBS show?

TOBY: I don't know why you got married.

ALEX: (*More to herself*) Well, for that matter, neither do I. See, that's your issue, Toby. You felt the sum total of your worth was shuttling back and forth to Othertown on a ratty old couch. And when there was no more show, and people weren't breaking down your door to cast you in something else, you eventually gave up trying.

TOBY: Yep, I certainly did. But just so we're clear, I didn't want to go to any other show.

ALEX: What did you want?

TOBY: I wanted to go back to Othertown.

ALEX: Well, the show was cancelled. You needed to –

TOBY: I didn't want to go back to the show. I wanted to go back to Othertown.

ALEX: (*Somewhat baffled beat*) I don't even know what that means. And that's why you gave up and turned to crack?

TOBY: You don't just *turn* to crack. You distort and twist and contort yourself.

ALEX: It just killed mom.

TOBY: No offense, Alex, but I don't think you have a clue as to what killed mom.

ALEX: That's for sure. But you know what I mean. You broke her heart.

TOBY: Well, she could always take solace in the fact that her other child had abandoned her.

ALEX: Okay, let me have it. I know you've been waiting to do this.

TOBY: Please, Alex. I just told you what I've been waiting for. It has nothing to do with scolding you. And just to ease your conscience, or maybe make it worse, I don't know, mom blamed herself for your alienation. And dad's dementia. And my drug habit. And 9/11. And just about everything else.

ALEX: Oh god, that pathetic woman.

TOBY: Yeah, that pathetic woman.

ALEX: What about a memorial service?

TOBY: Who are you going to ask to come? All her family is down there. And after pop died, she pretty much never left the house.

ALEX: But there are still people. Tommy would know.

TOBY: You really want to contact Tommy?

ALEX: Yeah. Why not?

TOBY: Anyway, mom said no service.

ALEX: Shit. I want to do something. Dead people have no right leaving instructions for the living. It doesn't matter to them. And I need closure.

TOBY: You want closure? I'll help you. You sit on that couch...

ALEX: Stop it.

TOBY: ...and I'll sit next to you...

ALEX: Toby!

TOBY: ...and we hold hands...

ALEX: (*Emphatically*) Stop it. I get it, Toby. You hate yourself. You've had a rough life. I'm not going to pay for that.

TOBY: You're the one looking for closure. Just trying to help.

ALEX: You did this to me when you came to New York. Curt was so excited to meet his childhood hero, little Toby. And you walk in, stoned out of your mind, going on and on about how Othertown was a real place, how all that stuff really happened.

TOBY: It did really happen.

ALEX: Stop it, Toby. That's enough.

TOBY: You used to think it really happened too. I know you're blotting it out, but you did.

ALEX: Well, that just goes to show you what a good actor I was. I even got you to believe me.

TOBY: You bet you did. Not 'cause you were a good actor, which I guess you were, I mean it's not like we were doing Tennessee Williams, but because you believed it. And that belief lifted me up and carried me along with you.

ALEX: This is a dopey conversation going nowhere. You can put me up tonight, right?

TOBY: The bed is made in your room.

ALEX: Sleeping in my old room, that'll be a trip. It's a trip just being in this house.

What's going to happen to it, anyway?

TOBY: Mom left it to both of us, so...

ALEX: Oh. That's a surprise. Well, you can have my half, I guess. Curt and I don't need it. I assume you're going to sell it.

TOBY: Maybe. What do you mean you don't need it? If you have kids –

ALEX: We're okay. Trust me. *(Beat)* What'll you do with the money? This house is probably worth north of a mil.

TOBY: Probably.

ALEX: Well, look. Maybe we can put it in a trust or...

TOBY: I've been clean for five years.

ALEX: Okay. Good. I mean I didn't know.

TOBY: I put aside childish things, although, thanks to you, not always willingly.

ALEX: You know, Toby, if I wanted to spend an evening having somebody take potshots at me, I could have stayed home and saved the airfare.

TOBY: *(Beat)* Look, I'm sorry if I'm being snippy. I've been dealing with a lot of shit here. But I've been through enough recovery to know how important you are in my life, even though you're rarely in my life. I love you, Alex. You don't have to worry about that.

ALEX: You have a funny way of showing it.

TOBY: How often do I get to see you? It took mom dying to get you to sit in a room alone with me. I don't want to disappoint her.

ALEX: *(Facetiously)* That's why she killed herself? To get us together?

TOBY: It was in the instructions.

ALEX: Bullshit.

(TOBY smiles broadly)

ALEX: That was the last of my chops. No more busting.

TOBY: I know you remember the episode where we were fighting and then we went to Othertown where we were *supposed* to be fighting.

ALEX: Yeah, vaguely. What was the lesson in that?

TOBY: That was one of my favorites. I mean, I had so much fun doing that.

ALEX: Yeah, throwing all those Styrofoam whatever-they-weres at each other. What were those things? I'm telling you, the whole art department was on acid.

TOBY: Not that part. I just felt so connected to you. You looked at me and made that famous angry face of yours...*(anticipating, then coaxing)* come on, come on *(ALEX makes the face)* yeah, that one. Wow, you looked just like you did when you were nine.

ALEX: I've had a lot of practice lately.

TOBY: But what I loved was that I could see in your eyes that I mattered to you.

ALEX: Because I was angry at you? That sounds like Othertown logic. *(TOBY smiles)*
But I guess that doesn't make it wrong, does it?

TOBY: No. It makes it other, which makes it part of the whole, which was the point of Othertown.

ALEX: Oh Toby, you're reading way too much into that show. That's way too cerebral for Topsy Turvy Tommy.

TOBY: He didn't write the scripts.

ALEX: I don't get it, Toby. You're a lot smarter than I am. Couldn't you find a better life for yourself?

TOBY: I did. I found it when I was four. Then at nine I lost it – or I got lost in it; I'm not really sure.

ALEX: If Othertown is going to be your answer to everything, I take back what I said about you being smarter than me.

TOBY: The show that was my life was cancelled; my sister who I idolized left me; the place where I so looked forward to going to was no longer accessible; my father, who to be honest I never really knew, was deep in dementia; and my mother...well, being smart just meant that I had a really *deep* understanding of how fucked-up I was.

ALEX: So you self-medicated. What did that resolve?

TOBY: It postponed, it didn't resolve. Sure you don't want to give it a try? (*TOBY again indicates the couch*)

ALEX: Why is this so important to you?

TOBY: Why isn't it important to you?

ALEX: To sit on some relic from my past? You think it's going to change anything?

TOBY: Only if you *want* something changed. Do you?

(*Beat*)

ALEX: Okay, for you. 'cause I guess I love you too.

TOBY: That's nice to know. But try doing it for yourself first.

ALEX: You know, one more of these pseudo Zen cryptic remarks and my brain is going to turn to jelly. (*ALEX plops down on the couch*) Okay, I'm sitting.

(*ALEX becomes increasingly agitated and uncomfortable, finally beginning to panic.*)

(*She jumps up from the couch*)

TOBY: (*Beat*) You okay?

ALEX: Yeah. I'm fine. Jet lag, something.

TOBY: What just happened?

ALEX: Nothing. I didn't like sitting on it.

TOBY: I could tell that.

ALEX: *(Beat)* Why didn't mom want me to see those instructions? What was on there?

TOBY: Does this have anything to do with why you were freaking out on the couch?

ALEX: Forget about the fucking couch for a second. God, you're as OCD as she was.

Answer me or I'll make my angry face again.

TOBY: If mom asked me – instructed me not to tell you, wouldn't it be a bit disrespectful to –

ALEX: Fuck you. And fuck her. Fuck the dead. Fuck the past. God, nothing can torture you as much as the stuff you've left behind.

TOBY: That's all I've been saying.

ALEX: Knowing her, there's probably another copy somewhere. Is it on her computer?

TOBY: It was handwritten.

ALEX: And you could read it, that scrawl?

TOBY: She read it to me.

ALEX: Wait, she told you what to do after she was going to commit suicide? Did she say she was going to commit suicide?

TOBY: She just said after she died.

ALEX: And that didn't make you suspicious?

TOBY: *Alejandra, por favor.* She talked about this all the time. I thought she was just crying wolf. This wasn't the first list like this she made, believe me. And honestly, it may even have been an accident. All those different pills that she was taking. Fucking LA shrinks.

ALEX: So you're not going to tell me what she said?

TOBY: I didn't say that. I said it would be disrespectful to tell you. As it happens, I didn't have any respect for her.

ALEX: This is a hell of a memorial service.

TOBY: Well, I didn't. And you didn't either. Which makes me wonder why you care so much about what she said.

ALEX: So if you have no respect for her, tell me.

TOBY: When you tell me what happened on the couch.

(Beat)

ALEX: Well, she's done it again. Even dead she finds a way to push my buttons. Here's to you, Miss Colombia 1980.

TOBY: Runner-up. Second runner-up.

ALEX: That's not what she told me.

TOBY: I looked it up.

ALEX: *(Beat)* Second runner-up? Typical. Just another lie.

TOBY: It's not a lie if you believe it.

ALEX: How could she believe it? You know what those pageants are like.

TOBY: That was the back story of her character on her soap. So eventually, I guess, it became *her* story.

ALEX: *(Cynically)* Her story, yeah. *(Broadly, like in overacted melodrama)* *Dios me libre de mi vida loca.*

TOBY: That's good. You sounded just like her.

ALEX: I heard it often enough.

TOBY: You know, she actually said that on her show. It was her signature line.

ALEX: Really? How do you know all this?

TOBY: I found a bunch of episodes on the web. And that's just how she said it on the show. It's worth watching, if you're interested. She couldn't really act, but god, was she a knockout, with a stunning body.

ALEX: *(Pretending to speak into a microphone)* Dr. Freud to the playroom, stat.

TOBY: Losing her show, leaving her family, coming to America, and having us, it was too much for her. Particularly losing her show.

ALEX: Now you're defending her?

TOBY: Othertown.

(ALEX stares at TOBY incredulously. She then looks around the room a bit)

ALEX: *(ALEX goes over to the rocking horse)* *Hola, Toronado, mi caballito.* Good thing you left him.

TOBY: Yeah. I figured if you have kids, that would be something –

ALEX: *(A small outburst)* Why do you keep bringing that up? Let *me* worry about having kids.

TOBY: O-kay. *(Beat)* What was that all about?

ALEX: Nothing. What do you mean? *(ALEX stares at TOBY for a while)* This fucking room. This fucking house. *(Beat)* Look, the night mom died and you called me, Curt wasn't in the hospital.

TOBY: Oh?

ALEX: The reason I couldn't come out here is 'cause I was trying to save my marriage.

TOBY: *(Beat)* Yeah. You said a couple of things tonight that made me wonder. What's up? *(Beat)* I mean, only if you want to talk about it.

ALEX: No, it's okay. *I* was self-medicating and Curt busted me.

TOBY: You? You don't even drink. What were you taking?

ALEX: Birth control pills.

TOBY: (?)

ALEX: Curt and I had this understanding that once he got moved to the evening news we would start a family. He got the job in January. But I kept taking the pill. And I never told him.

TOBY: Why?

ALEX: That's certainly what Curt wants to know.

TOBY: You don't want to have kids?

ALEX: I don't know. I thought I did. I was trying to figure it out, but Curt doesn't have much patience with these things. He kept insisting I wasn't making sense and I just got so defensive about it that the rhetoric escalated and soon the whole marriage was in play.

TOBY: But you must –

ALEX: *(Another outburst)* I don't know I don't know I don't know. *(Beat)* I just couldn't explain it, to him or to myself.

TOBY: Couldn't, or didn't want to?

ALEX: Now *you're* gonna be my shrink? You'll do anything to get me on that couch, won't you. *(Stares at the couch for a beat)* Do you remember the episode – god, I just flashed on this – where we were being punished for eating too much candy, and then we

went to Othertown and Topsy Turvy Tommy was telling us we could eat as much candy as we wanted, but we didn't want to eat it, and he kept telling us we should, we had to.

TOBY: No. I don't remember that at all.

ALEX: You don't? Hmmm. I don't know why I just thought of that. For a second it seemed...anyway, that's what happens when you mention kids. I just flash on this mess back home I have to figure out...and this mess in here (*pointing to her head*) that I have to figure out.

TOBY: Well, under those circumstances, Alex, I really do appreciate your coming out here at all.

ALEX: It was as much an escape as anything else. (*Somewhat derisively*) A trip to Othertown. God, life is hard when you peak at eleven years old.

TOBY: Did you ever ask yourself how we ended up getting cast in that show?

ALEX: I always assumed it was because pop knew Tommy from Disney, and we were cute, and we *were* cute. So when he developed the project, I guess...

TOBY: Lotsa cute kids in LA. I was four, you were six. You can get four and six year olds a lot cuter than we were with credits as long as your arm.

ALEX: Okay. Where is this going?

TOBY: Use your imagination. Miss Second Runner-Up Colombia with the million dollar legs and a husband with Alzheimer's. And Tommy drooling over her...

ALEX: Oh god, Toby. There's no way.

TOBY: Just think about it. Mom gets written out of her *telenovela* so she marries pop, a guy 30 years older than her who just happens to be loaded and have connections with American TV. Unfortunately, her career plans don't pan out 'cause he wants a family. So

now she's thinking she'll do it vicariously through us. Along comes Tommy, who, granted, looked like Jabba the Hutt, but he knew how to pitch and did lunch with all the right people. Pop is in La-La Land, Tommy dangles Othertown in front of her, and mom gets topsy turvy with Topsy Turvy Tommy.

ALEX: Yecch. What a pathetic image. That fat greaser. You know this? Or are you –

TOBY: I know it. And it lasted for a while. But when the tits started sagging, Tommy decided to move on. That (*TOBY points to the couch*) I believe, was a parting gift.

ALEX: No wonder sitting on it gives me the creeps. And you know this how?

TOBY: I was still living here, Alex. And when he split, she pretty much told me the whole story.

ALEX: Topsy Turvy Tommy. Oh god. That poor woman. Wow, you came loaded for bear tonight. And you got more, I know it.

TOBY: *Un poquito.*

ALEX: I should call Curt. (*Checks watch*) Shit, it's too late.

TOBY: It's not even midnight in New York.

ALEX: He goes to sleep at ten. He gets up early to go to the gym. I can't believe she was fucking Tommy. How come she let him cancel the show if that was the case?

TOBY: The show didn't work anymore. And it wasn't Tommy's call.

ALEX: So they dumped us. How do they decide something like that? I mean, I get the networks with the audience share, but this is PBS. What criteria did they use?

TOBY: The smell test, I guess. They watched it and it just didn't resonate.

ALEX: Right, it didn't resonate with a roomful of fiftysomething suits. The kitten syndrome. We grew out of our cuteness, our innocence.

TOBY: You stopped believing, Alex. You stopped believing and that's what killed the show.

ALEX: I don't understand you. We share all this stuff, I open up to you, you tell me you love me for the first time in your life, and believe me, it was nice to know that somebody does, and yet you keep turning it around and try to guilt me with your fantasized nonsense. You want to blame me, that's fine. I fucked up your life, I killed the show, I deserted you. Good. Now get over it.

TOBY: I'm sorry, Alex. I didn't mean to blame you. It's not about that.

ALEX: What is it about?

TOBY: It's about Othertown. Only when you take the other side can you fully understand.

ALEX: Understand what?

TOBY: That's what we have to go back to find out.

ALEX: (*Baffled beat*) I'm still on New York time. That's way too deep for me.

TOBY: I'm stuck, Alex. I haven't been able to move since then. In virtually every way, my life is better now than it's ever been. But I'm not here. I'm just watching it all on a monitor. I've lined up the usual suspects and sure, I've got lots of issues and lots of reasons why I'm so lost. But I keep thinking if I can figure this one out, it will jumpstart everything else. (*Beat*) When I discovered the couch here, I naturally tried sitting on it and it was like some bizarre dream. I saw things going by me but I knew I wasn't moving. And then I realized – this is going to sound weird...

ALEX: ...that you were growing smaller.

TOBY: Yes. Yes. Is that what happened to you when you sat on the couch just now?

ALEX: Yeah. I was shrinking so fast it felt like falling.

TOBY: Man. Somehow that's the key to this, Alex.

ALEX: Back up a second. You knew what was going to happen to me when I sat on that couch and yet you made me do it anyway?

TOBY: You're my big sister. Let's face it, we grew up as orphans in this house. And whatever we faced, whether here or in Othertown, you always led the way.

ALEX: (*Sarcastically*) Helluva job I did.

TOBY: You did a helluva job. I idolized you so much. And it wasn't just me. It was millions of kids all over the country. All the Zoes and all the Curts out there. But then sometime in Season Five everything changed.

ALEX: Yeah. I know at some point it all seemed foolish to me. I don't know why.

TOBY: And you stopped believing.

ALEX: Toby, I never believed.

TOBY: If you don't remember, how do you know you never believed. I was there, Alex. That wasn't acting. You knew, we knew, that whatever turmoil or pain that opening scene set up, we would find the other side of it in Othertown. That's what we believed, and that's why the show rocked.

ALEX: Toby...maybe. Maybe that happened. But I was eleven. There comes a point...

TOBY: Bullshit. We never outgrow that. We never outgrow the belief that we can become whole.

ALEX: Mom sure did.

TOBY: She *lost* her belief, she didn't outgrow it. She refused to try to find it again.

ALEX: (*Beat*) Jesus, I need a drink.

TOBY: I thought you didn't drink.

ALEX: There's a lot we don't know about each other, isn't there? Is there anything in the house?

TOBY: No. When I went to rehab they told mom to clean everything out.

ALEX: Great.

(ALEX sits on the rocking horse)

TOBY: *(Beat)* You and Curt going to be all right?

ALEX: Not unless I figure this out.

TOBY: And you have no idea what's going on?

ALEX: When Curt confronts me, I just go through Fear of Parenting 101 with him. How inadequate I feel. How am I going to protect the kid. How am I going to know what to do. But he doesn't buy it. Mostly because I don't buy it. There's something else going on. I just can't figure it out. I just can't see myself being a parent.

TOBY: Been there. God knows, growing up in this house, feeling so abandoned, the idea of having to take care of someone else...

ALEX: Yeah, but that's not what I'm talking about. I mean it literally. I can't *see* it. I try to make a picture of it in my mind, and I can see the kid, but I can't see me. And - and this is why I just can't explain it to Curt. That kid, that kid...

TOBY: ...is you?

ALEX: *(Nods)* And it totally freaks me out.

TOBY: Alex, we really, really need to go to Othertown.

ALEX: Tobias, *basta! Me vuelves loca.* *(Beat)* God, that really sounded like mom.

TOBY: Do you remember the episode, I think it was the second season, where we wouldn't eat the cauliflower? And then we went to Othertown...

ALEX: (*Dismissively*) Yeahyeahyeah. And there was all this food laid out, and we learned that the food we liked least tasted best. Didn't work. I still won't eat cauliflower.

TOBY: The discomfort you feel on that couch is telling you something. You know, in recovery you learn that the animal part of your brain works really simply: approach or avoid. That was the magic of Othertown. We confronted the ugliest, the scariest, the most unknowable parts of ourselves and embraced them and became whole.

ALEX: Until the next episode.

TOBY: Right. Until the next episode. You want to spend the rest of your life in reruns?

ALEX: (*Beat*) Am I doing this for me or for you?

TOBY: For me, definitely for me. Because I love you and I can't stand to see you in pain. So do it for me.

ALEX: I thought you wanted us both to do it.

TOBY: First you need to be able to sit there by yourself.

ALEX: (*Looks intently at couch*) Just looking at it gives me the willies. Give me a few minutes. We talked about my wonderful life; why don't you fill me in on what's happening with you. You're clean for five years...

TOBY: Right. And I'm working for a small company that does some subsidiary work for Ubisoft. They do video games.

ALEX: I know who they are. Curt, I'm embarrassed to say, is addicted to Assassin's Creed. Gives him an excuse to stay out of the bedroom. Ubisoft. Impressive.

TOBY: It's no big deal. But you should be happy for me 'cause I've been there three years and they trust me.

ALEX: Great.

TOBY: And Kerry is expecting, I mean Kerry and I are expecting. Oh, that was dumb.

ALEX: No, Toby, that's wonderful. Congratulations.

TOBY: Was that the wrong thing to say?

ALEX: *Now* you're worried about hurting my feelings? It's great. (*ALEX embraces TOBY*) Oh, Toby, I'm so proud of you.

TOBY: Thanks.

ALEX: When?

TOBY: October.

ALEX: I want you to stay in touch with me from now on, much more than those stupid emails we exchange every six months or so, and let me know all about it.

TOBY: Okay.

ALEX: Wow, that actually calmed me. First hug I've had in a while. Okay, little bro, I'm ready to tackle the couch.

TOBY: Good.

ALEX: What do you think is going to happen?

TOBY: Well, I –

ALEX: Maybe I'm better off not knowing. Maybe I'll shrink into another dimension like the guy in the film.

TOBY: I don't think so. But no matter what, I'm here, if that helps.

ALEX: Big time.

(ALEX slowly lowers herself onto the couch. During the following her anxiety and emotional level continue to rise until she is totally overcome)

ALEX: Well, so far...Oh god, it's like vertigo. *(Squints)* Toby, what's with the light? Could you turn that off? It's really bright. It's getting really hot in here. Toby, could you...*(More of a child's voice)* Tommy, it's too hot. These are melting. See? You have it on your fingers. You can't touch my dress, you'll ruin it. Please don't touch my dress. No. No, I don't want that. I don't like those. Mr. Tommy, please, I don't like those. Don't make me do that, I don't want to do that!

(ALEX jumps up and backs away from the couch. TOBY touches her on her shoulder and she violently recoils from the touch, screaming. She turns and sees it's him and rushes into his arms)

ALEX: Oh Toby, oh Toby. *(Sobbing)* Oh god. Oh god. Right on the fucking set. That animal, that fucking lowlife animal. Oh god. Oh god oh god oh god.

TOBY: Let it go.

ALEX: Toby...Toby, oh god. What a fucking nightmare.

TOBY: I know. I know. I'm sorry.

ALEX: I can't believe it. I can't believe I repressed that. Oh god.

TOBY: How old were you? Do you remember?

ALEX: *(Sardonically)* Oh yeah. It's all coming back to me now. Oh good god, that predatory piece of shit.

TOBY: How old?

ALEX: Season Five, I mean I was eleven.

TOBY: Yeah. Figures. Sorry to make you go through that.

ALEX: You knew?

TOBY: Well, I certainly suspected it. I just never had the guts to bring it up with you...or with mom.

ALEX: Maybe that's why she sent me away to Marlborough, to protect me. Or maybe she was just jealous. Do you think she knew?

TOBY: *(With some difficulty)* Alex, it was the first thing on the list.

ALEX: *(ALEX starts crying again)* Oh god. And she never said anything.

TOBY: At first she was probably too dependent on Tommy to...

ALEX: Oh, nonono. I don't want to hear that. Don't you dare defend that narcissistic bitch.

TOBY: I'm not defending her, but most of the time she thought she was still in her soap. Reality was too painful. And finally, when she didn't have the strength to deny it anymore, I think that memory of what Tommy did more than anything else drove her over the edge. *Dios me libre de mi vida loca.* God save me from my crazy life. *(Beat)* How're you doing?

(ALEX starts crying again, sits on couch)

ALEX: Oh, Toby, I repressed that all this time? No wonder I'm such a mess.

TOBY: You'll clean up well, trust me.

ALEX: I think I do trust you. Now I gotta start on myself. What else have I been sitting on?

TOBY: You mean apart from the couch?

ALEX: Look at that. How did I get here? *(Takes a deep breath)* I feel like I'm breathing for the first time in twenty years.

TOBY: Yeah. Now we just need to find you some fresh air.

ALEX: Forget the fresh air. But boy could I use a drink.

TOBY: There's a bar about four....

ALEX: That's okay. I don't think I could take two steps right now.

TOBY: Okay, just relax.

ALEX: Yeah, it's so bizarre. Now this couch actually feels comfortable. Just like it did when we used to go...*(Fight tears for a few seconds)*

TOBY: You okay?

ALEX: I will be. *(Beat as ALEX composes herself)* This thing is scary. *(ALEX indicates the Magic Couch)* What are you going to do with it?

TOBY: Hopefully take one more trip.

ALEX: Toby...really? With me?

TOBY: I don't mean right this second, Alex. You're obviously in no condition right now to do any heavy lifting.

ALEX: I'm fine. I mean, I'm as fine as you can be after you've been hit by a wrecking ball. But I'm all right.

TOBY: Anyway, if you're going to be staying the night, we can revisit this tomorrow.

ALEX: *(ALEX gets up and goes over to him)* I have no idea who I'm going to be tomorrow morning. I feel so helpless right now, so vulnerable. You know how I am. I need to do something proactive. If you really think you need me, Toby, please, I'm here. Let your big sister help.

TOBY: *(Beat)* When they cancelled the show, I feel like somehow part of me got stranded in Othertown, some part of me I've totally lost touch with. I need to find him,

and approach him, and embrace him, and become whole. And I need you to go with me and help me look for him. I know none of this makes sense to you but...

ALEX: Oh, Toby, please. I've been doing nothing *but* making sense for years, and look at all the good it's done me.

TOBY: Are you sure, Alex?

ALEX: (*ALEX plops back on the couch*) Shotgun.

TOBY: And you're really okay with this?

ALEX: Oh yeah. I'm hoping Tommy will be there so I can rip his balls off.

(*ALEX slaps the seat next to her, indicating for TOBY to sit. TOBY tentatively sits next to her. He begins to exhibit signs of discomfort. ALEX takes his hand*)

ALEX: Does that help?

TOBY: Big time.

ALEX: Okay, little bro, fasten your seat belt, it's going to be a bumpy flight.

(*Lights fade as ALEX and TOBY's voices crossfade to their voices as children*)

ALEX AND TOBY: *Magic Couch lift me up*

Wipe away this foolish frown

Turn me 'round 'til I am found

Upside down in Othertown

- end of play -