

MAGGIE

Pilot Episode

"A Star Is Born"

Written by

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Based on:
The true story of Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins

Address
Phone Number

" A STAR IS BORN"

TEASER

A light piano sonata plays as images from history appear:

MONTAGE - MOMENTS IN TIME

-Jews suffer in concentration camps...

-Military men kiss their wives and nurses as they receive word that World War II has ended...

-American Soldiers distribute food supplies to displaced Korean citizens...

-The Russian military marches during a parade in 1950...

-Protestors are beaten by communist Russian police...

-Helicopters fly over Soldiers marching down a road during the Vietnam War.

END MONTAGE

Finally, a picture fades in of the woman who was the news reporter that covered it all:

Marguerite "Maggie" Higgins.

END TEASER

ACT ONE

SUPER: CHABOT COURT, CA 1930

INT./EXT. HIGGINS HOUSE - DAY

MARGUERITE "MAGGIE" HIGGINS, nine years old, curly blonde hair and clear blue eyes, gazes out of her living room at a group of neighborhood kids gathered to play a game of "gutter tag".

Maggie races into the kitchen to ask her mother, MARGUERITE HIGGINS, 30's, for permission to go outside--

MAGGIE

Mama, can I go outside to play
"gutter tag" with the other kids?

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

Now you know I don't like you
playing those games.

MAGGIE

Aw, mama, all of the other kids are
doing it. Please?

Maggie, with a sad face, stands with her fingers intertwined.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

Well, the game is good
exercise...and the street is
blocked with no traffic...I guess
it would be alright for you to go
and play with the other kids. Go
ahead.

Maggie bolts out the door and charges towards the OTHER KIDS who are huddled up and ready to play.

Maggie, caucasian, born in Hong Kong, speaks with a slight accent noticeable to the other kids.

MAGGIE

Can I play?

The other kids break their huddle to form a teasing formation.

OTHER KIDS

Marguerite's a Chinaman.
Marguerite's a Chinaman.

(MORE)

OTHER KIDS (CONT'D)

Dirty Chink. Dirty Chink.
 Marguerite go wash your feet. The
 Health Department's across the
 street. Marguerite's a Chinaman.

Maggie flaps her arms and stomps her feet.

MAGGIE

I am not a Chinaman. Liar, liar.
 I am not a Chinaman.

The other kids continue to tease Maggie.

OTHER KIDS

You're a poor person Chinaman. Go
 back to China.

MAGGIE

I am not a Chinaman.

Maggie cries and runs back home to her family.

INT. HIGGINS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Maggie speaks to her parents Marguerite and LARRY HIGGINS,
 30's.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

Just because you were born in Hong
 Kong doesn't mean you're a bad
 person, Maggie.

LARRY HIGGINS

You're just as American as any of
 those silly children. Don't be
 such a coward. Now you go tell
 them that Chinamen have slant eyes
 and that you're obviously not a
 Chinaman.

MAGGIE

The kids always make fun of me and
 call me names.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

No matter what people say about
 you, you're special, Maggie.
 People are going to learn to love
 you for what you are inside. You
 just wait and see.

Marguerite gives Maggie a hug and a kiss on the forehead.

SUPER: NEW YORK CITY 1941**EXT. NEW YORK CITY - DAY**

The year is 1941 and a vibrant metropolitan New York City hustles and bustles with energy. Tuckers and Fords race down the busy streets. Women sport Kitty Foyle dresses and red lipstick as they scurry the pavement during rush hour while men in business suits with fedoras debate over the stock market.

Maggie, 20's, departs the train station with a battered suitcase in one hand and a gray, rayon-wool overcoat in the other.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Maggie applies for an apartment somewhere in New York. The place is a quaint, charmless roach hotel located somewhere near Greenwich Village--but it'll do for now.

The LANDLORD, 40's, female, fast-talker, gives Maggie the run-down--

LANDLORD

No pets, no noises, no nonsense...is that clear?

MAGGIE

Yes.

The landlord glances over Maggie's application.

LANDLORD

You're from California...a Berkeley girl.

MAGGIE

Yes, ma'm.

LANDLORD

Gotta boyfriend.

MAGGIE

No.

LANDLORD

Good. They're nothing but trouble anyway.

MAGGIE

I'll remember that.

LANDLORD
Got any family in town.

MAGGIE
I have an uncle and an aunt in Long
Island. They're a little weird but
they're usually there when I ask
for money.

LANDLORD
You're gonna need 'em. New York's
a rough town.
(beat)
So what brings you to the Big
Apple?

MAGGIE
I want to be a reporter.

LANDLORD
A reporter. Not many ladies in the
reporting field. You got your work
cut out for ya.

MAGGIE
Work is my middle name.

LANDLORD
I like that.

MAGGIE
My daddy always told me that I
could do anything a guy could do.
(then)
So, do I have the apartment or not?

The landlord thinks for a moment.

LANDLORD
You know, you remind of my niece
back in Florida...

MAGGIE
Great, I'll get my things.
(then)
Oh, by the way, would you know
where the nearest metropolitan
newspaper is?

LANDLORD
Check out the Herald Tribune
building.

MAGGIE
Thanks for the tip.

The landlord turns to leave, then turns back to Maggie--

LANDLORD
Good luck out there.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

Maggie arrives at the New York Herald Tribune building.

Dressed in a blue gabardine suit, she gets off of the elevator and approaches a MAN standing in the hallway.

MAGGIE
Excuse me sir, would you know where
the city editor is?

MAN
It's right through those doors.
You gotta get through the
receptionist first and she's a real
bat if you don't have an
appointment.

MAGGIE
I'll remember that.

Maggie steps into the lobby area, spots the receptionist who has a scowl on her face.

Maggie thinks to herself and tries to find a way in.

Then, out of nowhere, a group of men exit the elevator and storm across the lobby.

Maggie pretends to be a part of the group and marches past the receptionist desk into the main room.

In the main room are rows and rows of desks with typewriters.

It's a cacophony of typing and side barbs, debates and conversations.

Maggie stands in the middle of it all as innocent as a lost child looking for her parents.

Maggie approaches a reporter sitting at a desk, CARL LEVIN, 30's, cigarette in his mouth.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)
Excuse me.

CARL LEVIN
What can I do for you?

MAGGIE
Where's the city editor?

CARL LEVIN
You see that big, tall guy sitting
over there at the big desk in the
middle of the room?

MAGGIE
Yeah.

CARL LEVIN
That's L.L. Engelking, otherwise
known as Engel. He's the guy
you're looking for.

MAGGIE
Thanks.

CARL LEVIN
No problem.

Maggie glides across the room and approaches the desk of L.L. Engelking, 40's, big bull of a man, Texas accent and mad as hell.

Maggie, shy, approaches L.L. Engelking with caution, speaks in a soft, whispery voice:

MAGGIE
Mr. Engelking.

L.L. ENGELKING
Hullo! Who are you?

MAGGIE
My name is Maggie...Maggie Higgins.

L.L. ENGELKING
Make it fast.

MAGGIE
I'm looking to fill the reporter
position.

L.L. ENGELKING
I didn't know there was a position
open.

MAGGIE

There isn't. I just want to put in my application before anyone else.

L.L. ENGELKING

You got references?

MAGGIE

No.

L.L. ENGELKING

Know anyone at here at the paper?

MAGGIE

No.

L.L. ENGELKING

I don't hire women.

MAGGIE

Just give me a chance.

L.L. ENGELKING

I don't give chances either.

MAGGIE

I have a degree in French from Cal Berkeley where I worked on the paper and covered a bunch of stories that made the front page. I'm a really hard worker and dedicated to getting the story and...

L.L. ENGELKING

--you come into my office, unannounced with no connections in New York or at the paper...

MAGGIE

Right.

(then)

Here's my scrapbook.

Maggie hands L.L. Engelking a scrapbook from the Daily Cal.

L.L. Engelking flips through the scrapbook with caution.

L.L. ENGELKING

You know kid, you must be crazy to leave a perfectly good state like California to try and crack a newspaper town like New York City.

MAGGIE

I guess growing up with an alcoholic Irish father who lost his job during the depression instilled in me a sense of motivation.

L.L. Engelking finishes reading the book, hands it back to Maggie.

L.L. ENGELKING

You got spunk kid. With the draft taking so many of the staff, we may have to fill them with a few women.

(then)

Come back in a month. There may be an opening.

MAGGIE

A month?

L.L. ENGELKING

Positions are tight nowadays, especially for female reporters. That's all I have.

Maggie, disappointed, stands to leave.

MAGGIE

Thanks for your time, Mr. Engelking.

Maggie leaves.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - DAY

Maggie sits outside the office of the Dean of the Columbia School of Journalism, CARL ACKERMAN, 40's.

A RECEPTIONIST enters Carl Ackerman's office.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Ackerman, a young lady named Marguerite Higgins is waiting to see you.

CARL ACKERMAN

Tell her that all spots for women are filled.

RECEPTIONIST

I told her that, but she still insists on speaking to you.

CARL ACKERMAN

Tell her to come back another time.

RECEPTIONIST

I did. She's been sitting outside of the office for the past four hours waiting.

Carl Ackerman pauses for a while, thinks.

CARL ACKERMAN

Very well, let her in.

The receptionist retrieves Maggie.

Maggie enters the office.

MAGGIE

Hello Mr. Ackerman, my name is Maggie Higgins...

CARL ACKERMAN

Young lady, all positions for women are filled until next year. You'll just have to wait.

MAGGIE

Mr. Ackerman, please, I have no where to go. I came to New York with no money and no connections. I need school to survive and I really want to become a journalist.

Maggie's big blue eyes and soft round face exude an innocence that Carl Ackerman can't deny.

CARL ACKERMAN

The semester begins in four days. You'll need permission from the Dean of Women and jump through a series of hoops and tricks which makes it almost impossible for you to get in.

Maggie stands, walks to the door.

MAGGIE

Thanks for explaining the procedure to me. I'd like to speak to the Dean of Women.

CARL ACKERMAN

Look, if you can get past the Dean,
I'll let you into my journalism
program.

MAGGIE

That's all I need to know.

CARL ACKERMAN

I'll escort you down to meet the
Dean.

Carl Ackerman gets up and walks Maggie down the hall to the
Dean of Women's office.

HALLWAY

Maggie and Carl Ackerman arrive at the Dean of Women's
office.

CARL ACKERMAN

Here you go.

MAGGIE

Thank you, sir.

Maggie enters the Dean's office.

DEANS OFFICE

Maggie speaks to BETH JOHNSON, 40's, Dean of Women, about
getting into Columbia.

BETH JOHNSON

Getting into our journalism program
with only four days until the start
is practically impossible.

MAGGIE

Dean Ackerman said the same thing.

BETH JOHNSON

We would need both high school and
college transcripts, five letters
of recommendation...

MAGGIE

--Is that all?

BETH JOHNSON

Well, yes.

Maggie gets up and darts out of the room.

HALLWAY

Maggie speaks on the phone to her father, Larry Higgins.

LARRY HIGGINS (O.S.)
You want me to do what?

MAGGIE
I need you to call all of my professors, get my high school and college transcripts and send them to me as soon as possible via telegram.

LARRY HIGGINS (O.S.)
I'll do what I can.

MAGGIE
Thanks, dad. Luv ya.

LARRY HIGGINS
I love you too, pumpkin.

The two hang up.

FOUR DAYS LATER:

INT. DEANS OFFICE - DAY

Maggie meets with Dean Ackerman.

CARL ACKERMAN
It's a miracle! In all of my years... you are truly amazing.

MAGGIE
It was just a lot of hard work and a little bit of luck.

CARL ACKERMAN
Ms. Higgins, it's my pleasure to accept you into the journalism program here at Columbia.

Carl Ackerman extends his hand to Maggie.

Maggie accepts.

MAGGIE

Thanks for having me. I promise that I'll do the best job here at Columbia.

CARL ACKERMAN

I'm sure you will. Now, all that you have to worry about is tuition.

Dean Ackerman exits the room.

Maggie sits back and glows with excitement.

INT. COLUMBIA CLASSROOM - DAY

Carl Ackerman teaches his journalism class filled with students from all walks of life. In the middle of it all, smack dab in the front row sits Maggie, attentive and as alert as a bunny rabbit.

CARL ACKERMAN

Welcome to the class, all. I'm your professor Mr. Carl Ackerman and I'll prepare you to take on the world as you enter the illustrative world of journalism.

Maggie quickly raises her hand.

CARL ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Yes, Ms. Higgins.

MAGGIE

When will we get to see some action.

CARL ACKERMAN

I was getting to that.

(then)

As your first class assignment, you'll be placed on competing teams to cover a story. Whoever wins, although there is no prize, will earn the prestige of being the top new team of the semester. Any questions?

The room is silent.

CARL ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

Good. You'll be divided by your current positions in the room with the left side being team one and the right side being team two. Your team leaders will provide you with your assignments.

The class disperses into their teams.

SOME TIME LATER

Maggie sits with her team as they are given their assignments.

The team leader, JOHN TEBBEL, 30's, speaks:

JOHN TEBBEL

Okay, for the first class assignment I want you to cover the local pet shelter and...

Maggie interrupts.

MAGGIE

Do you think we could do something more daring? I mean, I know pets are important, but I need a bit more of a challenge.

John Tebbel thinks for a moment.

JOHN TEBBEL

What do you have in mind?

MAGGIE

Anything but covering how fluffy broke his leg.

The class laughs.

JOHN TEBBEL

O.K., Ms. Higgins, how about you get us a story on Lewis Valentine the police commissioner of New York. That should keep you busy.

MAGGIE

Sounds like a breeze.

JOHN TEBBEL

Good luck.

(then)

Class you're dismissed.

Maggie gets up to leave as the rest of the class disperses.

John Tebbel speaks to a colleague, MAX SMITH, 30's, as the class leaves.

MAX SMITH

That's one spunky young lady.

JOHN TEBBEL

She's going to need more than spunk.

MAX SMITH

Why's that?

JOHN TEBBEL

Lewis Valentine is as stubborn as a bulldog and almost never gives interviews. She's gonna have her hands full with this one.

The two men look at Maggie as she chats with her classmates.

INT. COLUMBIA CLASSROOM - DAY

It's a week later and the journalism class is in session with Maggie at the center of attention.

CARL ACKERMAN

Class, I want to recognize one of your own for a job well done in covering the story on Lewis Valentine...Maggie Higgins.

The class applauds.

Maggie stands and speaks in a soft, whispery voice.

MAGGIE

I just want to thank all of those who helped me including Bob Garst and Ted Bernstein of the New York Times.

CARL ACKERMAN

Maggie, please, you have to tell the rest of the class how you did it.

MAGGIE

Well, I just used a little charm, a little bit of hips and lowered eyelashes to work my way in. It was nothing at all.

The class laughs.

Two female students, ELIE ABEL, 20's, and FLORA LEWIS, 20's, have a sidebar conversation:

ELIE ABEL

Well, look at the new star reporter.

FLORA LEWIS

I bet she offered more than kind words to get the story.

ELIE ABEL

I wonder if she was able to keep her legs closed long enough to type up the report.

Maggie continues to speak about the cover story.

MAGGIE

And I just want to think all of the little people for your support too. I couldn't have done it without you.

CARL ACKERMAN

Thank you, Maggie. That was a tough beat and you clearly excelled above the rest of the class.

Maggie moves back to her seat.

CARL ACKERMAN (CONT'D)

O.K., class, that's it. The class is adjourned.

As Maggie gets up to leave, a fellow student, MURRAY MORGAN, 20's approaches her.

MURRAY MORGAN

Maggie...hey, Maggie.

Maggie, startled, turns around.

MAGGIE

Oh, hey cutie.

MURRAY MORGAN
I have some fantastic news!

MAGGIE
What is it?

MURRAY MORGAN
I quit.

MAGGIE
Quit what?

MURRAY MORGAN
I left my position as Columbia
University correspondent for the
Herald Tribune for a better paying
job with Time. How about that?

MAGGIE
And?

MURRAY MORGAN
So...that means my old position is
open.

MAGGIE
Really.

MURRAY MORGAN
I recommended you to Engelking to
replace me.

MAGGIE
That's great.

MURRAY MORGAN
But...Engelking doesn't want to
hire a woman.

Maggie stands, disappointed for a moment, then lightens up--

MAGGIE
Thanks for the tip, guy. Gotta go.

Maggie gives Murray Morgan a hug and a kiss then bolts out of
the door.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

Maggie, decked in a green coat with a mink collar, stands
innocently with ruby red cheeks as she comes in from the
cold. Smiling.

Before L.L. Engelking can get a word out--

MAGGIE

I know you said that you didn't want a women reporter, but I had to try. I just know I could do a good job for you.

L.L. Engelking is silent as he studies Maggie.

L.L. ENGELKING

You really think you can do it, eh?

MAGGIE

I'm the best woman for the job.

A pause.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Like you said before, with so many men going off to war, it might be a good idea.

Maggie, tight and nervous, stares at L.L. Engelking.

Then.

L.L. ENGELKING

Do you think you could start today?

Maggie smiles.

MAGGIE

You betcha.

L.L. Engelking rises.

L.L. ENGELKING

Follow me.

Maggie stands, follows L.L. Engelking to the main floor.

MAGGIE

Where are we going.

L.L. ENGELKING

I'm throwing you into the fire.

L.L. Engelking leads Maggie to the center of the main room filled with nothing but reporters and journalists tending to their everyday business.

L.L. ENGELKING (CONT'D)

Everybody listen up!

The room freezes.

L.L. ENGELKING (CONT'D)
 I want you all to meet the newest
 addition to the team, Maggie
 Higgins. Put her through
 hell...she's new.

The crowd looks at Maggie, pauses for a moment then resumes their business.

Maggie stands nervously in the middle of the main room, alone, as L.L.Engelking goes back to his desk.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Maggie reads "A Farewell To Arms" by Ernest Hemingway while sitting alone in her apartment.

It's dark and quiet as Maggie sinks into the world of the famous war epic novel.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
 (re: passage)
*If people bring so much courage to
 this world, the world has to kill
 them to break them, so of course it
 kills them. The world breaks every
 one and afterward many are strong
 at the broken places. But those
 that will not break, it kills. It
 kills the very good and the very
 gentle and the very brave
 impartially. If you are none of
 these , you can be sure it will
 kill you too but there will be no
 special hurry.*

Maggie closes the book, thinks to herself, gazes out of her window and looks up at the stars as sounds of imaginary artillery shells explode and soldier's screams fill her mind.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO**INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Maggie sits alone at her desk. Reminiscing. She writes a letter home to her mother.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Dear Mother, New York City has been the time of my life as I have learned so much in so little time. I was able to meet a few new friends as well although most of them think that I am too competitive. I only wish that--

Ring. Ring.

The telephone rings.

Maggie folds her letter, puts it in the drawer then gets up to answer the phone.

MAGGIE

Hello.

On the other side is STANLEY T. MOORE, 20's, ruggedly handsome and equally charming--

STANLEY MOORE (O.S.)

Hey there.

MAGGIE

Stanley Moore!

STANLEY MOORE

Just thought I would drop a line.

MAGGIE

I didn't think you'd call me.
How's Berkeley?

STANLEY MOORE

I graduated last semester. I'm at Harvard now.

MAGGIE

That's great.

STANLEY MOORE

Hey, I was thinking. I come to New York just about every weekend now and wanted to know if we could do some catch-up from our old times at Berkeley. It'll be fun.

MAGGIE

I would like that a lot Stanley.

STANLEY MOORE

I know a nice little coffee shop in Greenwich Village where we can meet. Let's say Tuesday afternoon. How's that?

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Maggie meets Stanley Moore at a coffee shop, deeply engrossed in every word that comes out of his lips.

STANLEY MOORE

After Berkeley, I traveled around the world for a few months where I was exposed to the many injustices of the world. I could use your help in spreading the liberal message.

MAGGIE

My family...the newspaper...society are all so conservative and pacifist. I just don't know how I could get through to them.

STANLEY MOORE

Socialism's iron hand, capitalism's greed, gender inequality are the rust that is deteriorating our society.

MAGGIE

Stanley, I think you just made me a new member.

Maggie and Stanley shake hands.

MONTAGE - MAGGIE AND STANLEY BECOME LOVERS.

-Maggie and Stanley attend a liberalist rally.

-Maggie and Stanley attend a poetry reading.

-Maggie and Stanley return to Maggie's apartment after a date and make passionate love.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Maggie meets with her childhood friend from school, PHOEBE TRUE, 20's.

MAGGIE

...and on top of that he comes from a prestigious family of lawyers, he's very smart with a radical mind to match. He's my Prince Charming prize. All the girls are going to envy me.

PHOEBE TRUE

Tell me more.

MAGGIE

He wants to get married.

PHOEBE TRUE

So soon?

MAGGIE

On top of that he will be joining the military in June and wants me to come along with him.

PHOEBE TRUE

Maggie, this sounds like a lot.

MAGGIE

I wanna do it, Phoebe. He moves me in ways that I've never felt before.

PHOEBE TRUE

Are you even ready for marriage? What about your career?

MAGGIE

I guess we'll just have to wait and see. I think he's the one, even if he's a little on the selfish side.

PHOEBE TRUE

No matter what happens, Maggie. I'm there for you, girl.

The two hug.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

L.L. Engelking rummages through newspaper clippings as Maggie stands at his desk waiting for her first assignment.

MAGGIE

Anything interesting going on in New York these days Mr. Engelking?

L.L. ENGELKING

Hmmm. I have cats stuck in trees, record attendance at beaches...

MAGGIE

That sounds like loads of fun.

L.L. ENGELKING

You know, you always seem to come back with a story. See what you can do with this?

L.L. Engelking hands Maggie some paper clips and background material.

MAGGIE

The city zoo? Oh, great, I get the worst cover story on earth.

L.L. ENGELKING

I know the people over there. They're plenty of fun.

MAGGIE

I'll get right on it.

Maggie runs out the door.

INT. CENTRAL PARK ZOO - DAY

Maggie arrives at the Central Park Zoo where the head zookeeper, HENRY ADDISON, 40's, is busy at work.

Maggie knocks on the door panel three times.

HENRY ADDISON

Oh, you must be the girl from the high school looking for an internship.

Maggie, shocked, shakes off the comment.

MAGGIE

I'm Maggie...Maggie Higgins from
the Herald Tribune.

HENRY ADDISON

They're letting women cover stories
nowadays?

MAGGIE

Sure looks like it.

HENRY ADDISON

Well, come on in. How can I help?

MAGGIE

I got word the heat wave is causing
massive casualties. I thought I
could take a look for myself and
get the story.

HENRY ADDISON

Well, one of my girls just had a
sunstroke.

MAGGIE

Did I understand you correctly?
You said that one of your animals
has had a sunstroke?

HENRY ADDISON

That's right. Follow me.

Henry Addison leads Maggie down a corridor to an open room
where a jaguar sits in a cage with an ice pack on her head.

MAGGIE

This is the animal you were
speaking of?

HENRY ADDISON

This isn't just any animal, this is
Rosita! She's the meanest cat in
the world. God, what a lot of
trouble she's been until today.
Now, she's as docile as you please.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

And that's how it came to pass that
the New York Herald Tribune had an
exclusive picture and story about
the fierce South American jaguar
who had been downed by New York
weather.

(MORE)

MAGGIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

This scoop just so happened to be my first and most inconsequential story.

Maggie takes pictures of Henry Addison as he stands next to the cage with Rosita.

INT. EPISCOPAL CHURCH - DAY

Maggie and Stanley Moore return to Chabot Court, California to wed. Rows of family of friends look on as Maggie, dressed in a green wool dress, stands softly as Stanley Moore commits to his vows.

The mother of the groom, in protest of her son marrying Maggie, wears a black dress.

A MINISTER administers the wedding vows for the couple.

MINISTER

And do you, Stanley T. Moore, take Ms. Marguerite Higgins as your lawfully wedded wife?

STANLEY MOORE

I do.

MINISTER

And do you, Marguerite Higgins, take Mr. Stanley T. Moore as your lawfully wedded husband?

MAGGIE

I do.

MINISTER

I now pronounce you man and wife.
(then, to Stanley Moore)
You may kiss the bride.

Maggie and Stanley T. Moore kiss.

Music Plays.

INT. RECEPTION HALL - DAY

The reception is packed with family members of the bride and groom. Maggie and Stanley dance the night away as everyone watches: some with joy, some with disgust.

Marguerite and Larry Higgins stand near a corner.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

The nerve of the grooms' mother to wear a black dress to her own son's wedding. It's bad enough that this was an Episcopalian ceremony and most of us are Catholics.

LARRY HIGGINS

Could you please keep it to yourself. This is our daughter's wedding.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

I just don't like it.

Then Stanley Moore stands to make a toast.

STANLEY MOORE

To all of our friends and family, we would like to extend our most sincere thanks as we embark on this very important moment in our lives. Please keep us in your prayers as we go on our honeymoon to Mount Carmel. Thank you.

The crowd applauds.

Maggie rushes over to her father, Larry.

MAGGIE

Daddy, thanks for taking leave from the Air Force to come home to give me away. I don't know what I could do without you.

LARRY HIGGINS

Anything for my little girl.

MAGGIE

How about a dance with the new bride.

LARRY HIGGINS

It would be my pleasure.

The two embrace then head to the dance floor.

INT. COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY - DAY

A crowded auditorium is filled with the family and friends of the most recent graduating class at Columbia.

Fans blow as it is a hot day in May when students realize the fulfillment of their four years of hard work.

An ANNOUNCER, calls the names of the recipients to confer the degrees.

ANNOUNCER

...and with honors, I would like to confer the degree of Masters in Journalism to Marguerite Higgins.

The room applauds.

Marguerite and Larry sit in the crowd and applaud.

Maggie gets up, accepts her award, waves to the crowd, then exits the stage.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

L.L. Engelking and Maggie meet. Maggie, glowing with the excitement of victory from finally graduating school, anxiously awaits her next assignment.

L.L. ENGELKING

Maggie, you are the hardest working of all of our cub scouts on staff.

MAGGIE

I always give my best to get the story.

L.L. ENGELKING

You sure do and as I promised you after you graduated... I'm promoting you to full-time straight news reporter.

Maggie springs up, runs over to Engelking and gives him a big hug.

MAGGIE

How can I ever thank you?

L.L. ENGELKING

Thank me by doing a good job and staying out of trouble.

MAGGIE

Thank you, thank you. You won't regret this.

Maggie runs out the door.

As Maggie enters the main room, she is greeted by a city editor, JAMES HALL, 40's.

JAMES HALL

Hey, Maggie I heard that you got promoted to full-time.

MAGGIE

Gee, word travels fast. I just got the news myself.

JAMES HALL

So, now that you made the big time, how about we throw you into the fire.

MAGGIE

I'm ready for anything.

JAMES HALL

I have a lead. James Caesar Petrillo, head of the musician's union, is a hard sell. I need you to get in there to interview him. What do you say?

Maggie thinks for a while.

MAGGIE

Consider it done.

Maggie cracks James Hall a smile, then leaves.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA - DAY

Maggie, motivated and curious, arrives at the Waldorf-Astoria to meet James Caesar Petrillo.

As Maggie enters the lobby, she meets with a RECEPTIONIST.

MAGGIE

Hi, I'd like to meet with James Petrillo.

RECEPTIONIST

And you are?

Maggie thinks of a good lie.

MAGGIE

I'm a reporter from Town and Country and I would like to do a lifestyle interview on Mr. Petrillo.

The Receptionist thinks for a while.

RECEPTIONIST

I love that magazine.
(then)
He's in room #275.

Maggie leaves, gets on the elevator to the second floor.

Maggie arrives to room #275. Knocks.

A voice belonging to JAMES CAESAR PETRILLO, 50's, screams from behind the door:

JAMES CAESAR PETRILLO

Who is it?

MAGGIE

Ms. Higgins.

After a moment, the door cracks open.

Maggie stalls for a while then pushes the door opens and enters the room.

After traveling down the entrance hall, Maggie arrives at the bed sitting room.

In a large corner chair, James Petrillo sits in a bathrobe with striped silk pajamas smoking a cigar.

JAMES CAESAR PETRILLO

Who the hell are you?

James Petrillo sharply jumps to his feet.

Maggie, unnerved and shaken from the cold, answers--

MAGGIE

Marguerite Higgins.

JAMES CAESAR PETRILLO

Who is Marguerite Higgins?

MAGGIE

I'm a reporter from the Herald Tribune

JAMES CAESAR PETRILLO
I thought you were the maid.

MAGGIE
I just want to ask a few questions
for my news story. It won't take
long. I promise.

JAMES CAESAR PETRILLO
You know you look a little bit like
my daughter.

MAGGIE
This won't take long.

Maggie pulls out her pad and then begins to ask questions to
James Petrillo.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

A crowd of city editors, reporters and staff gather around
Maggie and L.L. Engelking.

L.L. ENGELKING
You did it again, Maggie!

MAGGIE
Luck was on my side. He even said
that I looked like his daughter.

L.L. ENGELKING
You're amazing and as a result, I'm
giving you another promotion to
straight news reporter. No more
stories about the heat wave.

MAGGIE
I don't know what to say.

L.L. ENGELKING
Say yes.

Maggie pauses, then--

MAGGIE
Yes.

The room applauds.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY**

Maggie and Stanley Moore sit in the living room and drink tea.

MAGGIE

My parents still haven't got over the fact that I married a communist.

STANLEY MOORE

It'll take a little bit of time. I'm sure they'll come through soon enough.

MAGGIE

My dad is as stubborn as a cement brick.

STANLEY MOORE

It doesn't matter as long as I have you in my corner.

MAGGIE

It's so hard to fill the role of house wife.

STANLEY MOORE

You'll get used to it.

MAGGIE

I don't think I want to...I mean...I love my job as a reporter.

STANLEY MOORE

A reporter is no life for a woman.

MAGGIE

It's my life!

(then)

I'm keeping my maiden name...and my job at the Herald.

Stanley is stunned.

STANLEY MOORE

We can talk about this when I come back home from my first duty assignment.

(then)

(MORE)

STANLEY MOORE (CONT'D)

I just got word that I'll be
stationed in Russia.

MAGGIE

Russia? I don't want you surrounded
by a parade of ballet dancers vying
for your attention.

STANLEY MOORE

Well, you don't have a say in the
matter and neither do I. I report
in two weeks.

Maggie slides over to Stanley Moore, hugs him.

MAGGIE

I'm not going to have to worry
about you am I?

STANLEY MOORE

Not one bit, love. We just have to
make it through this blasted war.

The two kiss.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

The newspaper staff is gathered for a meeting held by L.L.
Engelking. Maggie, energetic, sits next to him.

L.L. ENGELKING

As you know things are a little
slow right now, so I'm going to be
depending on all of you to dig for
whatever stories you can get your
hands on.

Maggie raises her hand, then stands.

MAGGIE

I have a few leads. They're not
great, but they beat covering the
local bake sale.

L.L. ENGELKING

Thanks, Maggie.

(then)

The meeting is adjourned.

The crowd separates.

Two reporters, JOHN WATSON, 30's, and TYLER JACOBS, 30's
converse.

The two observe Maggie as she walks away from the meeting.

JOHN WATSON
(re: Maggie)
Now that's a nice ass.

TYLER JACOBS
You're telling me. She's got the
body of a pin up girl with the
brains of a scientist.

JOHN WATSON
You know her, Tyler? Call her over
here so I can meet her.

TYLER JACOBS
I think she's married.

JOHN WATSON
Just call her over here.

Tyler Jacobs whistles to Maggie.

TYLER JACOBS
Hey Maggie.

Maggie notices, then walks over to the two guys.

MAGGIE
Hi, Tyler.

TYLER JACOBS
Maggie, I want you to meet
John...John Watson.
(then, to John)
John, meet Maggie Higgins.

MAGGIE
Hi, John.

JOHN WATSON
Hi Maggie. Hey, I see you're new
here. If you need any help, let me
know.

MAGGIE
I'll do that.
(then)
Hey, gotta go. See you later
Tyler...John.

As Maggie walks away, John and Tyler look at Maggie ass.

JOHN WATSON
(to himself)
Looking forward to working with you
soon, Ms. Higgins.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

Maggie and John Watson hit it off. The relationship becomes more intimate as Maggie hugs and flirts with John Watson despite being newly married.

The two cuddle in public as their colleagues look on in disgust.

INT. BLEECKERS RESTAURNT - NIGHT

The staff of the New York Herald convene at a local restaurant for a night of fun.

Music plays while everyone socializes.

Maggie, meanwhile, is seen sitting on the lap of John Watson.

The two kiss in a dark corner.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maggie and Phoebe True speak over brunch.

PHOEBE TRUE
The glamour of it all. Maggie
Higgins the straight news reporter
and newly, happily married woman.

MAGGIE
What can I say, when I set a goal I
go right after it. However, I
don't know about the happily
married part.

PHOEBE TRUE
Maggie, it's only been eight
months. You just got off of your
honeymoon.

MAGGIE
The trip was wonderful, but I don't
think it'll last.

Phoebe looks at Maggie with shock and amazement.

PHOEBE TRUE
Why did you marry him?

MAGGIE
It was the only way I could get him. Stanley was so attractive, now he belongs to me. One thing I'm sure of is that we're not going to have children. I know they absolutely destroy your sex life.

PHOEBE TRURE
I can't believe you're saying this.

MAGGIE
Phoebe, you're made for marriage, me, I may be destined to live life as an independent.

Phoebe sits and looks at Maggie horrified. Her ideal image of Maggie has been tarnished in a matter of minutes.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

It's nighttime and Maggie is busy typing away at another news story.

She's sitting alongside MORTON GLAZER, 30's, rough around the edges, a cigarette hangs out of the corner of his mouth.

MAGGIE
O.K., I got it now. What do you think of this story.

Maggie hands the pages to Morton Glazer.

MORTON GLAZER
Sloppy. Very sloppy.

MAGGIE
Aw, come on Morton.

MORTON GLAZER
Your story is sloppy, you're sloppy...

MAGGIE
Morton, help me out.

Morton Glazer thinks for a moment--

MORTON GLAZER

Look, Maggie, you need to improve your prose and word usage in a few places. It's just a few corrections, that's all. Other than that, your writing is great.

MAGGIE

Thanks, Morton.

MORTON GLAZER

No problem.

MAGGIE

Oh, Morton...

MORTON GLAZER

Yes, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Do you think I'd be a good war correspondent?

MORTON GLAZER

Yes, Maggie. You'd be a fine war correspondent.

MAGGIE

You just gave me the encouragement I needed.

MORTON GLAZER

Just be a little patient for your next opportunity.

MAGGIE

No time for that, I gotta go.

MORTON GLAZER

Wait, where ya' goin'.

Maggie gets up and rushes out of the room

Maggie bolts pass the desks to the office of the owner of the New York Herald Tribune's wife, HELEN ROGERS REID, 50's, who is doing overtime late night in her office.

Maggie knocks on the panel outside of the door.

Knock. Knock. Knock.

HELEN ROGERS REID

Come in.

MAGGIE

Hi Ms. Reid, I'm Maggie Higgins.

HELEN ROGERS REID

Yes, how may I help you?

MAGGIE

I'm a news reporter who wants to talk to you about being sent overseas.

HELEN ROGERS REID

I don't have time now. Come back later or talk to my husband--

MAGGIE

--I want to talk to you, Ms.Reid. I'm a female in a man's world...and I'm just trying to do what any man can do.

HELEN ROGERS REID

Any man, huh...

MAGGIE

Yes. I just wanna put in my application for overseas reporter because if there's any place for a woman reporter to be, it's covering our guys out there in a war.

HELEN ROGERS REID

You've got some spunk, girl.

MAGGIE

If I didn't have spunk, I wouldn't be a reporter.

HELEN ROGERS REID

So, you want to be a war correspondent...

MAGGIE

Yes, ma'm.

HELEN ROGERS REID

Well, since you were so courageous, I'll put you at the top of my list. You know us females have to look out for each other out there.

MAGGIE

Thank you, ma'm.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

L.L. Engelking is surrounded by staff as he ponders his next news story. Maggie, bright eye and bushy tail waits by.

L.L. ENGELKING

O.K. all, I just got word that Madam Chiang Kai-Shek has decided to bless New York with her presence.

Morton Glazer stands up to speak--

MORTON GLAZER

You mean the Madam Chiang Kai-Shek who's the wife of the Chinese Nationalist.

L.L. ENGELKING

That's right. She's in town trying to gain support for the Nationalist party.

MORTON GLAZER

She's pretty high-profile. How do you think we're going to get in to meet her?

L.L. ENGELKING

She's staying at the Waldorf Astoria where she'll be hosting a dinner party on Thursday for society's finest.

Maggie stands to speak--

MAGGIE

Oooh, the Waldorf Astoria, I wanna go.

L.L. ENGELKING

You got it, Maggie. I'm putting you on the press list.

MAGGIE

Thanks, Engel. I'll get my things ready.

L.L. ENGELKING

You'll be meeting with Tom Luce of the Times who will give you the run down.

Maggie gets up and leaves.

INT. WALDORF ASTORIA - NIGHT

The main dining room of the Waldorf Astoria is filled to the brim with politicians, celebrities and businessmen dressed to the tee's as they await remarks from Madam Chiang Kai-Shek.

Maggie, dressed in an elegant evening gown, converses with Morton Glazer who escorts her.

MAGGIE

This is a nicely planned event.

MORTON GLAZER

When your country is being overthrown by a bunch of communists, I would think that you would go out of your way to impress the big wigs.

Madam Chiang Kai-Shek gets up to speak:

MADAM CHIANG KAI-SHEK

I would like to extend a thank you to all for attending this fabulous dinner. Your support to the Nationalist cause is both needed and appreciated.

An ANNOUNCER gets up to speak.

ANNOUNCER

Thank you all for your attendance. Madam Chiang Kai-Shek will now adjourn to her quarters.

Madam Chiang Kai-Shek gets up to leave the room.

Maggie gets up, tries to follow Madam Chiang Kai-Shek for an interview.

MAGGIE

Madam...Madam Chiang Kai-Shek...

Maggie is intercepted by a SECRET SERVICE AGENT.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Excuse me ma'm, but Madam Kai-Shek is headed to a private meeting for invites only.

The Secret Service Agent pushes Maggie back.

Maggie thinks for a moment, then notices a friend, HENRY R. LUCE, 40's.

MAGGIE
Hey, hey Henry.

Henry Luce turns around.

HENRY LUCE
Maggie Higgins, the cub reporter...

MAGGIE
--Not a cub reporter anymore, I
need access to the Madam Chiang Kai-
Shek meeting.

HENRY LUCE
Oh, I couldn't let you in unless I
let all of the other reporters in
too.

MAGGIE
But all of the reporters have gone.
It would be just be one more
person. Just me.

Henry Luce thinks for a moment...

HENRY LUCE
Well, I'll tell you this. There
are about forty-two secret service
men upstairs who are mighty
particular about who shares Madame
Chiang's company. If you can get
by them, it's all right with me!

Henry Luce turns and starts to walk away.

Maggie calls out to him--

MAGGIE
But, Mr. Luce can I tell the secret
service men that it's alright with
you if it's alright with them?

HENRY LUCE
Yeah, go ahead.

Maggie rushes passes the exiting reporters, up the steps and
smack dab into the forty SECRET SERVICE MEN.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1
Excuse me, but the public isn't
allowed inside this area.

MAGGIE
I'm sorry sir, but this is
important business.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
Please, ma'm. We don't have time
for antics...

MAGGIE
--I'll have you know that this is
not an antic.
(beat)
Look, I work for the Herald, I'm
new, I just want to get in to see
Madam Chiang Kai Shek. Henry Luce
said that it was o.k. with him to
go in. Whaddya say?

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
I say no--

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1
--Come on. Let's let her in.
She's harmless.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
Harmless.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #1
She looks like Daisy Mae for
goodness sake.

MAGGIE
I'll be in and out.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT #2
Oh, what the hell. Go ahead,
and...

MAGGIE
--I'll just be a minute.

Maggie darts off and heads into the press room.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
*And so Madame Chiang, Henry Luce
and other diplomats had our
meeting. I think Madam Chiang Kai-
Shek thought I was someone's
secretary.*

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FLASHBACK

INT. HIGGINS HOUSE - DAY

Maggie's mother, Marguerite Higgins, and father Larry Higgins, square-off in the middle of their charmless living room as they have a bit of a discussion--

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

(to Maggie)

Your father has lost his job!

LARRY HIGGINS

Why do you have to get
so...goddamn...melodramatic about
everything?

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

What are we going to do without any
money?

LARRY HIGGINS

We have savings stashed away, I--

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

--We don't have any savings. We
spent most of it to get the bills
up to current.

LARRY HIGGINS

I can get another job.

MARGUERITE HIGGIN

How are we going to survive?

A pause.

LARRY HIGGINS

We'll just have to make due while I
figure things out.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

Figure things out?

LARRY HIGGINS

Yes.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS

Figure things out?!

LARRY HIGGINS
I can get a job as a trash
collector.

MARGUERITE HIGGINS
A trash collector!

LARRY HIGGINS
What do you want me to do?

MARGUERITE HIGGINS
Have you no shame, Mr. Higgins?

LARRY HIGGINS
Damn it Marguerite, just give me a
chance!

MARGUERITE HIGGINS
You've had your chances.

All of a sudden, Marguerite faints, crashes to the ground.

LARRY HIGGINS
Maggie, get some ice and a rag for
your mother.
(then)
Grab some ammonia too.

Maggie rushes into the kitchen.

She grabs some ice...

She grabs some ammonia...

Then a clean, soft rag.

Maggie rushes out of the kitchen, stops, catches her breath
then runs into the living room.

Maggie hands her father the ice, ammonia and the rag as she
stands over her mother and father helplessly.

MAGGIE
Here you go, papa.

LARRY HIGGINS
Thank you, princess.

MAGGIE
You really do need to get a job,
papa.

Larry is stunned. Silent.

Larry calmly gets up, walks over to a table where his sporting trophies sits, picks up his Orinda silver golf trophy.

Larry holds the trophy, observes it, looks at Maggie then hurls the trophy at Maggie just missing her head and bursting through the front window.

LARRY HIGGINS

If I wanted your smart-ass opinion,
I would have asked for it.

Maggie is shaken with fear as tears crawl down her face.

Ring. Ring.

The telephone rings.

MAGGIE

I'll get it.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

It's a clear Sunday afternoon while Maggie speaks to her mother on the telephone.

MAGGIE

(into the telephone)
Mother you're drunk
again...mother...please stop it.
What I do with my life is my
responsibility...

Maggie begins to cry.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Mother, please stop.

Stanley Moore returns home from shopping.

STANLEY MOORE

Maggie, I'm home.

MAGGIE

(to her mother)
Look, mother, I have to go...bye.

Maggie hangs up the phone.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Hey love.

STANLEY MOORE

Maggie, look, I've been doing some thinking. I want us to move back to California.

MAGGIE

California?

STANLEY MOORE

New York is too wild and crazy to raise a family. We need more space.

MAGGIE

But Stanley, New York is where I work. I love my job...my friends.

STANLEY MOORE

They're too fast and a little cheap. We can make new friends in California.

MAGGIE

I'm not moving to California.

STANLEY MOORE

Look, Maggie, I'm not asking...I'm telling you...as your husband.

MAGGIE

I'm not moving to California. Not now, not ever.

STANLEY MOORE

How dare you disrespect me.

MAGGIE

All I ever wanted to be was a news reporter in New York. It's my life. This marriage was just a hobby...a fun gig on the side...

SMACK!

Stanley slaps Maggie.

Maggie falls to the ground, weeps.

STANLEY MOORE

You disrespectful bitch. My parents were right, you're not good enough to be my wife.

Stanley storms out of the apartment.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
 That was the last time I saw
 Stanley. I didn't even see him
 during the divorce proceedings as
 he was overseas and I was stuck in
 New York. I guess I was never
 meant for the marriage life after
 all.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Phoebe True arrives at Maggie's apartment to pick her up for a lunch date.

Phoebe arrives at Maggie's front door. Knocks.

PHOEBE TRUE
 Maggie.

Phoebe knocks again.

PHOEBE TRUE (CONT'D)
 Maggie.

Maggie opens the door, half-naked.

MAGGIE
 Hey, girl. How are you? Jus'
 gimme a minute to get some clothes
 on.

As Phoebe enters the apartment, a half-naked man emerges.

It's John Watson.

JOHN WATSON
 Oh, hello. Who might you be?

PHOEBE TRUE
 I'm Phoebe...Phoebe True.

JOHN WATSON
 Well, nice to meet ya'.

John Watson puts on his clothes then gets ready to leave.

Maggie rushes out to give John Watson a kiss.

MAGGIE
 Bye, babe.

JOHN WATSON
 Bye, babe.

John Watson leaves the apartment.

PHOEBE TRUE
Maggie...what was...who was that?

MAGGIE
Oh, that's John. He's harmless.

PHOEBE TRUE
Harmless?! You're a married woman!

Maggie pops open a bottle of bourbon.

MAGGIE
Well, the marriage isn't working out. Stanley asked for a divorce a few days ago.

PHOEBE TRUE
Maggie Higgins, you go and get your husband back right now.

MAGGIE
Since when did you earn the right to order me around.

PHOEBE TRUE
Since the moment I became your friend.

MAGGIE
Well, I don't need anyone looking over my shoulder now. I can do alright by myself.

PHOEBE TRUE
What will people say about...

MAGGIE
--I don't care what people say. They can all go to hell.

PHOEBE TRUE
Where's that charismatic, young fireball from Oakland?

MAGGIE
She's dead.

PHOEBE TRUE
Maybe we need to have lunch at a different time. You need to sort things out for now.

Phoebe backs up and walks out of the door.

Maggie, drunk, screams at Phoebe as she leaves--

MAGGIE

Just go ahead and leave. You're just like the rest of them. I don't need any of you! You hear me.

INT. MEDICAL CLINIC - DAY

Maggie, somber and subdued, arrives at a specialized medical clinic.

It's cold, dark and silent. The lights are dimmed slightly as if this place were designed to hide secrets.

It is...

It's an abortion clinic where women go to do the unthinkable-- abort unwanted children.

A RECEPTIONIST sits at the front desk filling out forms.

MAGGIE

Hi, I'm here for my ten o'clock appointment.

RECEPTIONIST

Name.

MAGGIE

Maggie Higgins.

The receptionist flips through a few files.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh, yes. Doctor Reagan will be with you shortly.

MAGGIE

Thank you.

Maggie creeps over to an open chair, takes a seat then scans the room.

Nobody else is there, except for Maggie--alone.

Maggie glances over to see pamphlets on abortion and on follow-up instructions after the procedure.

She picks one up and reads it.

DOCTOR REAGAN, 50's, comes out from the back room.

DR. REAGAN
Ms. Higgins.

MAGGIE
Yes.

DR. REAGAN
I'm ready to see you now.

Maggie gets up and follows Dr. Reagan to the back room.

BACK ROOM

DR. REAGAN
Hello, Ms. Higgins. Have you had
time to read the information
regarding the procedure?

MAGGIE
Yes.

DR. REAGAN
I trust that you had a chance to
speak to your parents regarding the
procedure.

MAGGIE
Yes...no.

DR. REAGAN
Did they consent to you--

MAGGIE
--It's not important.

Dr. Reagan pauses, not sure of what to make of the truth
behind Maggie's statements--

DR. REAGAN
Do you have any questions?

MAGGIE
Can we just get on with it?

Dr. Reagan, empathetic, agrees.

DR. REAGAN
There are gowns in the closet to
your rear. You can disrobe then
I'll be back in a few moments so
that we can begin.

MAGGIE
Thank you, doctor.

Dr. Reagan leaves.

Maggie sits expressionless as she contemplates one of the most important decisions of her life.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

It's another day at the office. Typewriters clack away while reporters chat and gossip over the latest news stories.

Maggie, as usual, is in the middle of it all.

L.L. Engelking approaches Maggie.

L.L. ENGELKING
Maggie, I need to speak to you for a moment.

MAGGIE
Sure, Engel.

L.L. ENGELKING
As a matter of fact, I think we need to speak at a place other than here.

MAGGIE
Sure. Just let me know the place.

L.L. ENGELKING
Lets meet tonight at Bleeckers.

MAGGIE
Lets do it.

INT. BLEECKERS RESTAURNT - NIGHT

Another night at Bleeckers. Everyone's drinking and dancing as Maggie and L.L. Engelking sit in the corner.

Maggie tosses a coin in prominently placed coat of armor--a Bleeck's tradition.

L.L. Engelking looks on with amazement as Maggie bursts with electric energy and excitement.

MAGGIE
So, Engel, what is it that you want to talk to me about.

L.L. ENGELKING
I want to talk to you
about...well...you, Maggie.

MAGGIE
I know where this is going.

L.L. ENGELKING
It seems that you have been a
little overambitious lately.

MAGGIE
Engel, you know that I work harder
than everyone else.

L.L. ENGELKING
We all know that you work hard,
Maggie, but there is something
called ethics and downright
respect.

MAGGIE
It seems that I've offended you.

L.L. ENGELKING
You're damn right!

MAGGIE
Engel.

L.L. ENGELKING
I got word that you went over my
head to get assigned overseas.

MAGGIE
Engel, you know that's what I
always wanted to do. I didn't mean
to go over anyone's head.

L.L. ENGELKING
Well, you did. It made me look
like a damn fool in front of the
whole department.

MAGGIE
I'm sorry, Engel. I'm just a girl
reporter trying to make a way in a
man's world.

L.L. Engelking sits back, thinks in silence.

L.L. ENGELKING

If you weren't so damn cute and innocent, I would have figured out a way to fire you.

MAGGIE

Well, a big ol' lug like you wouldn't do such a thing to one of your most loyal reporters, would you?

L.L. ENGELKING

No I wouldn't.

MAGGIE

That's what I thought.

L.L. ENGELKING

Oh, Maggie.

MAGGIE

Yes, Engel.

L.L. ENGELKING

Before you exchange the humdrum existence of a mere reporter for the glamour of a war correspondent, I'd like to ask you something. You're the dirtiest woman I've ever met. Why don't you wash your neck?

Maggies doesn't say anything, she just looks at Engelking and blushes.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**INT. CIRCUS TENT - HARTFORD, CT - DAY**

Scores of children fill a circus tent to look at the latest lion-taming act. Screams and cheers of joy and excitement fill the air as the young spectators look on.

MENS BATHROOM

Two men have a casual conversation while one of them lights up a cigarette and smokes it.

The two men chat for a while then leave the tent.

The man with the cigarette drops his cigarette in a trash bin and walks away.

The lit cigarette sparks a fire.

The children in the tent continue to cheer, completely oblivious to the fire that emerges in the next room.

All of a sudden, the small fire spreads and quickly turns into an inferno racing through the entire tent and entraps the youthful spectators.

Animal cages block the main exit and, as the fire spreads, the children become confused and start to scamper.

Within moments, the fire spreads everywhere and a flaming roof drops down on the crowd.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

It's 3:00 p.m. in the afternoon and the office is quiet. All of the senior reporters have received their assignments and have left the office for the day--except for one lonely reporter, Maggie.

L.L. Engelking bursts into the room--

L.L. ENGELKING

Listen up, I need all available reporters for a disaster over in Hartford, CT...

Maggie springs up.

MAGGIE
I'm available.

L.L. ENGELKING
Maggie, I need you to stay local.

MAGGIE
This isn't just because I'm a woman
is it.

L.L. ENGELKING
Maggie...

MAGGIE
Aw come on, Engel.

L.L. Engelking looks around, sees no one in the office.

L.L. ENGELKING
What the hell. Maggie, get out to
Hartford, CT quick. There's been a
fire and we need coverage. You'll
be meeting up with Ted Lawson.

MAGGIE
I'm on it.

Maggie gets up and bolts out of the door.

EXT. CIRCUS TENT - HARTFORD, CT

Maggie, scruffy, dirty and anxious races through the crowd.

Men in tights and circus costumes carry bodies to assist the
police.

Female performers embrace each other and weep as they provide
testimonies to news reporters.

Private vehicles and horse-drawn carriages are used to
transport the severely burned victims.

Maggie meets up with TED LAWSON, 30's, Tribune reporter.

MAGGIE
Ted Lawson?

TED LAWSON
That's me. You must be Maggie.
Well, here you go, have fun
covering one of the great tragedies
of the decade.

Maggie looks around, spots a POLICE OFFICER--

MAGGIE

Sir...sir, my name is Maggie Higgins, reporter for the New York Herald Tribune. Could you give me a little bit of details on the situation here.

POLICE OFFICER

Somebody lit a cigarette in the men's room which started the fire. The whole damned tent went to flames and we couldn't get the kids out in time. The death toll stands at one hundred sixty-eight, most of them kids.

Maggie looks around, getting a panoramic view of the disaster of the circus fire and how changed so many lives and caused so many tears.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

The Hartford incident was my baptism by fire in experience of death and destruction. It was now that I knew I was ready to be a war correspondent.

INT. NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE - DAY

The office is buzzing with excitement as a new day with new stories are on the horizon.

Maggie sits at her desk working on the Hartford circus fire story.

Ted Lawson and L.L. Engelking have a side-bar conversation.

TED LAWSON

She's so aggressive, everyone wants to know where you got her.

L.L. ENGELKING

She's a firecracker isn't she.

TED LAWSON

I'd work with her anytime. She's a little pushy, but I'll take it.

L.L. Engelking breaks from the conversation with Ted Lawson and approaches Maggie.

L.L. ENGELKING
 You did it again, Maggie. Great
 job. You can go over my head
 anytime.

MAGGIE
 That means a lot coming from you,
 Engel.

Maggie turns to her typewriter and continues typing away.

As L.L. Engelking walks away, GEORGE CORNISH, 30's, New York
 Herald Tribune's managing editor calls Maggie into his
 office.

GEORGE CORNISH
 Maggie, Maggie...darling, I have
 great news.

MAGGIE
 What could it possibly be?

GEORGE CORNISH
 You're all set for overseas.

MAGGIE
 That's great.

GEORGE CORNISH
 Maggie, I hope you're ready for
 this challenge of a lifetime.

Maggie looks at George Cornish for a while, then turns and
 races out of the door.

INT. MAGGIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Maggie sits alone in her apartment as she pens a letter to
 her mother and father.

MAGGIE (V.O.)
 Dear Mom and Dad: With the way the
 war is going, I realize that we in
 America are having an unfairly
 easy time, particularly as compared
 with the men and women of Britain.
 So I try to think that three or
 four or even five more years of war
 ought to be faced by us who are so
 well off without any whimpering...

Then.

Bang. Bang. Bang.

The door knocks.

Maggie gets up, opens the door.

It's Phoebe True.

PHOEBE TRUE

Heya girl.

MAGGIE

I didn't think that you would want to show your face around here again.

PHOEBE TRUE

I got word that you received an overseas assignment, so I wanted to say goodbye.

MAGGIE

I won't be gone too long.

PHOEBE TRUE

I just want you to know that no matter what happens, we'll still be girlfriends no matter how crazy things get.

MAGGIE

Phoebe, I can be a real jerk sometimes...

PHOEBE TRUE

That's one of your unique qualities.

MAGGIE

I said a lot of bad things.

PHOEBE TRUE

It doesn't matter as long as you're alright.

MAGGIE

I'm doing just fine.

Phoebe True walks over to Maggie and gives her a hug.

PHOEBE TRUE

If you ever need me, just--

MAGGIE
--give you a call.

Phoebe and Maggie hug again.

They gaze at each other, then Phoebe waves goodbye as she leaves the apartment.

Maggie sinks in her couch, sulks and thinks about her friendship with Phoebe.

EXT. QUEEN MARY - NIGHT

In the vast of night, the ship QUEEN MARY embarks on a crossing to Southampton.

It's eerie. It's quiet. It's virtual darkness.

Aboard the ship is Maggie, she wears a full Army uniform, canteen strapped to the shoulder, writing pad in front breast pocket and helmet slipped back revealing her blonde-curly hair.

Maggie looks with amazement as the ship ports and she begins a brand new journey in a brand new country.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW