

Looking for Paradise – Pilot Episode, Draft 1, April 23, 2014

by J. Tony Smith

Fade in–

The scene is a hotel cafe, based on the ideas of hip multicultural, literary "world cafes," but swallowed digested, and pooped out by the corporate culture that runs the hotel chain's marketing department. Think cardboard coasters with images of Ché.

We see RUBY a dark haired woman of 35. Her hair is combed, but barely. Her clothes are nice, mid-level business attire (not biz casual, not biz formal), but they are unevenly pressed and placed just slightly askew, as if she put the clothes away too hurriedly and put them on in a hurry as well. The straight lines on this girl have gone crooked.

RUBY is on the telephone, multitasking by filling out a form, stacking papers into piles, then putting them into envelopes all the while keeping the phone conversation going.

RUBY:

Uh huh... mmm... yeah... oh, Sandy, I really can't have this conversation right now. I know, Greg's habits are disgusting, I told you that when you started seeing him,... uh huh,... yeah... And then he ATE IT??? Oh my God, that's disgusting!!

Look, we have to have this conversation another time. I have a bit of a crisis on my hands. Well, that's why I called you. I... I have to find a place to live. ... Yeah, I have to find an apartment or something and I thought you might help.

Yeah, um, Rick kicked me out... yes, kicked me out. Um, because I stole money from the company.... \$30,000... and went to Vegas... huh? Yes, all of it. .. Yeah, when he came to pick me up at the Vegas Police Station, that was it.

No, Rick wouldn't press charges, he just fired me and wants me to pay it back. Then why id he have to pick me up at the police station?... Oh, It was nothing. ... Anyway... no, really, it was nothing... no, let's just move on...
Sandy, you're driving me crazy...

Alright!... it was for public nudity... and riding a stolen elephant... sort of simultaneously... Well, it seemed like a fun thing to do at the time!... In hindsight, sure, it probably wasn't very wise, but how many times are you going to have the opportunity to ride an elephant in the buff? [Other patrons of the Café look up at this] Some things are just hard to pass up! ...

So look, I can tell you all that later. I need to look for an apartment tomorrow and I want you to come with me. You can? Oh good! Have breakfast first?
OK, meet me here at about 10.

Oh, and don't tell Mom. Really Sandy, don't even kid about it. You remember how she was when Rick and I got married. She went on about what a bad idea it was. I'll never hear the end of it. So don't breathe a word. OK? Good. Oh, and tell Greg I said BUUURRRRRPPPP!!! [Other patrons look up again]!!!! He he he. .
Love you Sis!

RUBY hangs up and focuses on sorting her mailings, chanting "cover letter, resume, in the envelope, stamp, seal. Cover letter,..." her chant begins to become a little song/rap, and she starts moving to the rhythm until she's actually rocking out to it. Other patrons notice, but this time are less judgmental, more open to joyful exuberance.

A woman, AMANDA, in her early 60's enters the café, scans the tables quickly, homes in on RUBY and declares:

AMANDA:
Ruby, what on earth has gotten into you?

RUBY abruptly pulled from her resume rock out, sheepishly looks up at AMANDA.

RUBY:
Hi Mom.

AMANDA:
Ruby, I don't know what I'm going to do with you.

RUBY:
How did you know where I was?

AMANDA:

Rick told me, of course. I called to get that wonderful _____ Recipe of his that the Dachshund meet-up group loved so much, and when I asked for you, he told me the whole sordid thing. Poor man.

RUBY:

Poor man? What about me? He wasn't the one who had to clean up Elephant poop for 13 hours. I don't know what they'd been feeding Jamy there, but it sure wasn't pretty!

AMANDA:

Oh, please, Ruby. You got off easy. Quit thinking of yourself just this once. You got yourself into the problem, now quit whining about it. Rick, on the other hand, didn't ask for this, and now he's got to explain the missing \$40,000, and a wife who is bonkers.

RUBY:

I'm not bonkers, Mother, and it was \$30,000.

AMANDA:

It was 40. Rick had to bribe the circus so they wouldn't press charges, or you'd have been doing a lot more than 13 hours of jumbo poop duty, he.... I said "poop" and "duty".

RUBY:

Mother, grow up, this is serious. Look, was there a particular reason you dropped by? Besides sticking me in the ribs with that Satan's pitchfork of a tongue?

AMANDA:

Yes. I want to know what you are going to do. What's your plan?

RUBY:

What do you mean, “what’s my plan?” Obvious, isn’t it? Get a job, get a place to live, get my life back.

AMANDA:

It’s that last part that I’m interested in... what’s your plan to get your life back? You know there’s no going back to Rick. As soon as you can get a place, Rick’s writing you off. Of course I told him not to marry you in the first place, but who listens to me.

RUBY:

Thanks a lot for your support, Mother.

AMANDA:

What? I was looking out for you as much for him. I knew you wouldn’t make one another happy. I told you not to marry him, too. My point is that you can’t have Rick to fall back on anymore. There will be no more rescues from Rick. The next fight you get into at the mall over the last Electrohead CD...

RUBY:

Radiohead, mother....

AMANDA:

Rick won’t be there to make sure you don’t go to jail for breaking an 18 year old cheerleader’s nose (though it did improve her looks, if you ask me). When you max out the credit card on a set of antique tarot cards... 15 decks of them, he won’t be there to negotiate a lower interest rate for the 57th time. You’re on your own kid. So what I want to know is, what’s your plan?

RUBY:

I don’t know Mom. I just know I have to take it one step at a time, and my first steps are a place to work and a place to live.

AMANDA:

Well, you’d better hurry up and figure out how to make sure that the next step doesn’t come up with Elephant Doody all over it. Here, let me help you with those.

AMANDA and RUBY begin packaging up the resumes, with AMANDA starting in with the “Cover letter...resume...” chant.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

Psychiatrists Office (Dr. Hand)

We see a psychiatrists office. Not large, just 2 chairs, a computer on a desk by a window (potential here for a stateroom scene ‘intervention.”) There is an old tattered poster of the “Hang In there” kitty as if it was an original from the 70’s. It is framed. It would look cheesy if it weren’t for the fact that everything else on the walls was beautiful and wonderfully taken care of . Framed photographs of fjords and glaciers. Small items on bookshelves from various places worldwide. The poster seems out of place except its frame and antiquity unifies it somehow with the rest of the decor.

The computer is also clearly an antique running 20 year old dentist client tracking software the Dr. acquired from the previous office tenants.

DR. HAND and RUBY are seated in the chairs.

DR. HAND:

So, Ruby, tell me why you’ve come to see me.

RUBY:

You mean besides the fact that the Las Vegas Police, the Nevada Gaming Commission, the American Society of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, my husband, my mother, and my doctor all think I’m totally crazy?

DR. HAND:

Well, that’s a start, but besides that, tell me why you’re here, why you’ve decided to come, why you’re complying with what they said.

RUBY:

Everyone keeps dying that what I’m doing isn’t normal, the behavior isn’t normal, that I’m not normal. I just don’t know what normal is. So, I thought maybe after you talk to me maybe you might tell them that actually I am normal.

DR. HAND:

Well, normal is pretty relative, Ruby. How do you feel. Do you feel normal?

RUBY:

I feel fine. Uncomfortable, uneasy, unfrocking believably put-out over having to go through all this. Sad that my husband couldn't hold it together through this. I mean, what's the deal? I've always pulled through these things before, and we've laughed about it. What makes this so different?

DR. HAND:

Perhaps he's tired? Perhaps he's having trouble trusting you after this. I don't know, as I haven't talked to him, and I probably won't. I'm here for you and what I can tell you is that you've behaved in ways that have pushed just about everyone. And yet everyone still basically likes you, loves you, and wants the best for you. THAT'S why you are here, Ruby. Not because everyone thinks you are crazy, but because everyone wants you to be well and act well. If your husband or the police or the judge or the ASPCA just thought you were crazy, you'd be in the hospital or jail or worse. In gratitude for that you are going to have to work hard and learn about why you choose the behaviors you do and how to change that. You won't be alone, though. I'll be here to help you through, to guide you when you need it and to applaud when things go well. Oh, and you'll have these, too.

He holds up a large bottle of pills then tosses them to her [schtick here?]. She squints at them, rolling the bottle around to see the pills more clearly, reading the label aloud.

RUBY:

Lithium?

DR. HAND:

Right. One of the lodes psych meds there is, and still one of the most effective.

RUBY:

And what will it do?

DR. HAND:

Well, if it works it should help level out your moods, keep you from going either too manic or too depressed.

RUBY:
My moods?...

DR. HAND:
Yes, in your intake questionnaire you wrote that there are times when you have extra energy, you're extra awake and your mind races. You said that these periods can last for many days and that during these periods you have been most likely to get into trouble. Those are your manic periods, times when you are experiencing a mood of mania.

RUBY:
And the opposite times are the depressed times? But I always through depression had to do with sadness. I'm not usually very sad, even when I'm feeling at my worst.

DR. HAND:
And that's not uncommon. Depression is about mood states, not emotions. It is about being in that slump you can't get out of. There are always going to be flashes of happiness and sorrow mixed in, but they will be fleeting next to the overwhelming tide of mood that surrounds them for someone like you.

RUBY:
So what else is there to make it better?

DR. HAND:
Besides the meds? Talk therapy. Re-learning how to live in a way that keeps you in control and holds your mood stable.

RUBY:
But I liked my moods... at least I liked the more energetic moods. Things were fun. I was fun. I liked me.

DR. HAND:
But you didn't like jail and you didn't like getting kicked out of your home, and you didn't like picking up elephant excrement. You didn't like the aftermath, and no one else does either. You need to have control so that you don't have to clean up after yourself... or various pachyderms.

Ruby nods silently.

DR. HAND:

Well, we've run out of time for today. I've got another patient waiting. I've set up some counseling sessions with you, one single and one group, for next week. These are VERY important.

RUBY:

Wait, I thought I had 50 minutes...

DR. HAND:

Hmm. Not with your insurance, managed care and all that. Still, I'll see you next week. Take the meds, one in the morning and one at night. Get your sleep and go to the counseling sessions.

RUBY:

(Getting up and standing outside the door) Bye.

DR. HAND:

Good-bye Ruby. Don't worry, we'll help you. You're in good... um... hands.

RUBY:

They make you say that?

DR. HAND:

Until I can come up with something better.

RUBY:

Good luck with that.

He nods at her and shuts the door. Ruby hesitantly moves away.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

We see the doorway of an apartment. The door is aluminum with aluminum numbers, spotless. RUBY and her wiser SANDY come into frame.

RUBY:

This guy sounded nice enough on the phone. A little particular but nice.

SANDY:

Well, let's see. (She rings the doorbell. Footsteps are heard inside, running to the door. The door opens. KENNY, and 45 year old bald man in tight yellow polo and pleated khaki pants bursts through.)

KENNY:
(Agitated, whispering) Who rang that bell!??

SANDY:
Well, I did.

KENNY:
Didn't you read the sign?

SANDY:
What sign?

KENNY looks around, sees no sign, looks under the women's feet by actually grabbing their legs, then goes back in, picks up something on the floor, brings it back outside and hangs it on a hook. A meticulously printed sign says "Do not ring bell, please knock lightly."

KENNY:
Sorry about that. Gerte's sleeping and really doesn't do well with the extra noise. You understand. Now, what can I do for you?

RUBY:
Hi, I'm Ruby. I called about the room you're letting out?

KENNY:
Ah, yes, You talked with my partner, Andy. He said you'd be by. I'm Kenny.

He shakes her hand then leans over toward the door and screams.

KENNY:
Andy!

He immediately thinks better of what he has just done, wincing.

KENNY:
Damn. He hates it when I do that. Especially when Gertrude is sleeping.
Please, come inside.

Just inside the door, KENNY stops them.

KENNY:

Please remove your shoes and I'll get you some house slippers. There you go. Wood floors, you know.

KENNY pulls a pair of paper slippers like you'd find in a hospital or clean room out of a nearby closet. As the women are putting on their slippers, ANDY arrives.

ANDY:

Kenny, what are you doing? (he grabs the slippers out of the women's hands) We give guests the good slippers. What are you thinking?

ANDY hands the women two new sets of slippers. These look and feel exactly like the first set except they are a different color, dark blue instead of light blue. The women look at each other, shrug, and put them on.

ANDY:

This way!

ANDY says this without checking to see if the women are done putting them on. RUBY has to hop down the hallway while she finishes.

The hallway has large Robert Mapplethorpe style photographs on the wall. So large as to make the people in them seem larger than life. ANDY stops in the hall a moment, leaving RUBY face to face with a reclining weatherman.

ANDY:

These photographs were a gift to me from the Swedish Consulate to Italy who I helped out of a difficult mess with the Italians. Intrigue over ancient meatball recipes. You'd be surprised how serious the swedes are about their meatballs. Speaking of which, here is the kitchen.

He moves out of the hall into a spacious and spotless kitchen.

ANDY:

We'll set up a separate cabinet.. here... for the new housemate and a separate shelf in the fridge. Pots and pans are available but no metal utensils are to be used. Everything is non stick and I want it to stay perfect. Also, we have a dishwasher, but everything must be rinsed thoroughly by hand first. We only use the dishwasher as a sanitizer. OK, come over this way, please.

They pass into a living room, perfectly minimal except for about 12 vases of various sizes and ages.

ANDY:

This room is our living room where we spend a lot of our evenings reading, and Kenny likes to watch reality TV. Unfortunately, unless you really like Dancing With the Stars or Real Housewives it probably isn't the place for you. This is really Kenny's territory in the evenings. I just use my earphones.

KENNY:

Of course, during the day this area's pretty free, so it is up for grabs.

ANDY:

And please don't touch the vases. We actually had a decorator come in and create the perfect environment for my collection. See how each one faces just the...

ANDY stops, and squints at a medium sized vase on a wooden pedestal, uses his finger to just touch along the lip of the vase.

ANDY:

... Kenny? have you been dusting in here?

KENNY:

(Looking sheepish) Just a little. But I made sure to keep everything in perfect alignment.

ANDY:

(Looking furious) Kenny! This vase is at least 3 degrees off. I can see the dust ring! No I have to call Wilson back and have him align the whole thing all over again.

KENNY:

Really Andy, it's pretty close. We don't need to wet Wilson involved again. (to the women) Wilson's our Feng Shui artist. Andy won't do a thing to the house without him. In fact, if you take the room, Wilson will have to help you make sure it is harmonious with the rest of our home. We wouldn't want to throw the chi off balance, would we?

ANDY:

Let me show you the room. (To Kenny) We'll talk about the vases later.

They walk down the hallway to a door at the end and Kenny opens it and we see a perfectly immaculate room. The shape of a shoebox it is so clean, so perfect that it gives off the feeling of the inside of a coffin. Clean, beautiful, but sterile. RUBY begins to step inside but ANDY stops her.

ANDY:

No, no. we can't let you in yet. We just had the carpet shampoo'd and coved out, and we don't want to disturb it as it settles.

KENNY:

Yeah, one crushing footprint and the whole thing would just need to be re-done in order to keep the wear even.

ANDY:

Besides, just look at how beautiful it is. A gorgeous sea of ecru beneath walls of ebony and eggshell with an eggshell sky. Perfect, don't you think?

ANDY looks at SANDY and smiles. Kenny frowns, noting a slight flirtation.

KENNY:

Well, that's the house. Are you interested?

RUBY:

Um... yeah.

KENNY:

Great! Here's the application. Fill that out and bring it back along with the \$38.00 application fee, and when we've completed interviewing the other applicants we'll let you know!

RUBY:

(taking the application) Thank you.

KENNY:

You're welcome. I'll take you to the door.

ANDY:

It was nice to meet both of you (he seems to linger a bit while shaking hands with SANDY). I look forward to seeing you both again soon. Kenny,

I'm off to take care of Gertrude. Try not to make so much noise. (To the women) Good-bye.

ANDY leaves while KENNY grits his teeth.

At the door the women take off their slippers and hand them to KENNY. KENNY removes some plastic zip lock bags from the closet, brushes off the slippers and places them into the bags, tucking them in amongst the other slippers.

KENNY:

Don't tell And. He only wants these used once, but I just can't bear to throw them away. They're so expensive. Anyway, thanks for coming. Well see you soon.

RUBY and SANDY:

Good-bye. Thank you.

RUBY and SANDY walk out and watch as the front door closes.

SANDY:

Uh... Next?

They walk out.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

The front door of a farmhouse style home. RUBY and SANDY are by the door, RUBY knocking using an old fashioned knocker with a lions head.

INSIDE:

Hmrmphrm!

SANDY and RUBY look at each other puzzled. RUBY knocks again.

INSIDE:

Chrmphrmpm!

Quick look at SANDY and RUBY as RUBY knocks again.

INSIDE:

Charm Heen!

SANDY:

Oh, she's saying, "Come in!" Open the door.

RUBY and SANDY open the door and enter. Down the hall do a room dark with drawn drapes and the flicker of a TV screen showing a shopping program. HELEN, a woman in her 60's, large and immobile, sits in a reclined, cat in her lap. She looks up briefly.

HELEN:

Hello girls. I'm Helen. I expect you're here about the room. It is just down the hall, second door on the left. Keys are in the door. The Kitchen is just passed that, so if you see a fridge you've gone too far. This here's the living room, but most folks don't socialize here much, so I make it my command post. Oh, and there's an application in the room if you're interested.

RUBY:

Thanks. Second on the right?

HELEN:

That's right. It is the only one with a key in the door.

RUBY nods and she and sandy head down the hall. They come to the door, well worn and in bad need of new paint to cover chips and stains along the bottom. The door sticks badly, and RUBY has to lean into it to get it to open. It bangs open with a "doioioioing" like a comedy Robin Hood's arrow.

On opening the door the two of them begin to look in but are hit by an amazing smell. They both look away and start coughing.

SANDY:

Oh my god!... cough...what in ... cough... what is that smell?...cough... cough

The enter and look around the room which is stained and marked and chipped. Clearly very little has been done to keep or maintain the room. RUBY and SANDY's eyes are both watering and both are holding their hands over their noses.

SANDY:

I can't... cough... I can't take it anymore Ruby. Let's get out of here.

They walk the wrong way, through the kitchen which is dingy and greasy. The refrigerator has lines of stains on the side as if something bubbled up and pushed its way out like the blob. SANDY and RUBY stick their tongues out miming illness. They work their way back to the hall and try to sneak past the living room. Without turning her head, HELEN calls out.

HELEN:
Did you girls find everything OK?

RUBY:
Um, yes, everything was fine.

HELEN:
Good, and did you get an application?

RUBY:
Um...

HELEN:
You didn't get an application?

SANDY:
(Elbowing RUBY) She forgot. I got one for her.

HELEN:
Oh, good. For a minute there I thought you didn't like the place. Ok then.

RUBY:
Um, one suggestion? The room has a slight odor?

HELEN:
Oh that? That's just Old Albert.

RUBY:
Old Albert?

HELEN:
Yes, he's the tenant who had the room just previous. Old guy, so we all used to call him Old Albert.

RUBY:
Good Old Albert.

HELEN:

Yep. He kicked the bucket in there, but it took us a while before any of us noticed.

RUBY:

(looking queasy) He died in there...?

HELEN:

Yep. That weird smell's pretty much all this house has left of Albert, God rest his soul. We all sure do miss him.

RUBY:

Um... hmm... Well thank you Helen. This has been interesting.

RUBY and SANDY walk toward the door.

HELEN:

You girls take care now, and don't forget to bring back that application!

RUBY and SANDY:

(looking at each other with expressions of horror and amazement) OK,
Bye!

RUBY and SANDY go out the door. The door closes and we fade out to the sounds of the Home Shopping Network.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

We see a montage showing RUBY and SANDY visiting about a dozen places. Music plays the song "Our House" by Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young. One house full of 20 year old herdy types staring at her every move. An overly bubbly couple with lots of Christian stuff around. One house with lots of huge Thomas Kinkaid paintings. A very goth looking group clearly into the BDSM scene. A house way too tiny. A house with no doors. A house with too much stuff (Hoarders). At each it is clear that the house is a problem and RUBY looks more and more tired.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

SANDY and RUBY are walking toward a plain but comfortable looking house. It is evening. RUBY in particular looks beat.

RUBY:
Can't we just go home, Sandy. I'm so tired.

SANDY:
This is the last house on our list, RUBY. We've come this far, and this is the last one. And for some reason I've got a good feeling about this one.

RUBY:
Oh, all right.

RUBY walks up to the door in order to ring the bell, but before she can do it the door bursts open and a small rocket flies out of the door and hits RUBY squarely in the forehead, knocking her down. SANDY rushes to RUBY as does JANE, a punk girl with a cane.

JANE:
Oh my god, oh my god. Are you alright?

SANDY and JANE help a dazed RUBY sit up, holding her head. She nods.

JANE:
Oh my god, I'm so sorry. (yelling toward the house) Ron, you've killed a guest! I told you to do this in the back yard!

RON:
(from inside) Sorry. Is the rocket OK?

JANE:
(to RON inside) Is the ROCKET ok? Is THAT what I just heard you say? Get the hell out here and apologize to this lady! (to RUBY whom she is helping to her feet) You'll have to excuse my brother. He's a lame ass.

RON exits the house looking sheepish.

RON:
Hi. I'm so sorry. Were you hurt?

SANDY:
(looking at RUBY's forehead) Well, I think she's going to have a lump but other than that she'll be ok. Do you have any ice?

JANE:
(to RON) See! (smack's RON in the head) Now she's going to have a lump.
Happy? Go in there and get her some ice, already. (to RUBY) I really am
sorry. Why don't you come in and I'll get you some water, or would you
prefer some tea?

JANE walks RUBY and SANDY through the living room where 2 more people sit.
RALPH who was helping RON with the rocket experiment, is ultra clean cut. He
wears bright colors and all of the edges are sharp and perfectly straight. He
wears latex gloves. ELLA sits in a chair in a corner of the room. Her knees are
pulled up to her nose so her eyes peek out over the top. When the women enter
she pulls her legs up even tighter.

JANE:
Hey everyone. This is... wait... (leaning to SANDY and RUBY)... I didn't get
your names.

SANDY:
I'm Sandy and this is Ruby.

JANE:
Everybody, this is Sandy and Ruby... (leaning to SANDY and RUBY again)
And I assume you're here about the room?

RUBY:
(nods her head)

SANDY:
Yes, Ruby is.

JANE:
Great! (she points to RON) Well, you met Ron.

RON:
(steps forward) Hi. Sorry again. You're doing ok?

RUBY:
(smiling) Yeah, just a little dazed.

JANE:
And assisting Ron in his Lunar Lander attempt is Ralph.

RALPH:
Hi! (waves his latex incased fingers)

JANE:
And that over there in the corner is our lovely Ella. Say, "Hi!" Ella!

ELLA:
Hi. (in a barely audible squeak as she sinks further behind her knees)

JANE:
Ella's just a little shy until she gets used to you. Ok, why don't you come into the kitchen and I'll pour you some tea, 'Kay?

The 3 of them go to the kitchen, JANE moves to the stove and motions RUBY and SANDY to sit at the table.

JANE:
(looking in the cabinet) We've got Orange Pekoe, Darjeeling, Lemon, Cinnamon and apple spice...

SANDY:
I'll have the apple spice, please.

RUBY:
(still a bit swishy after the head impact, but speaking in a deep voiced British accent) Tea, Earl Gray, Hot.

JANE:
Ahhh... We have a geek on our hands! Don't worry, I've always had a thing for Jean Luc Picard, too. In fact, I feel our household has a lot in common with Star Trek.

Jane brings over the mugs, steaming.

SANDY:
Really?

JANE:
Yeah. One of the things I always liked about the show is how, in spite of all their differences, their various handicaps, they all work together to make the ship run smoothly. Each takes part in the team, adding their individuality, flaws and all, to that team in order to make the world, the universe, a better place.

We're like that here. Each of us has some pretty major flaws. I've only got one leg, hence the cane. My brother is somewhere on the autistic spectrum, somewhere a little past asberger's, and has major attentional issues. He gets really hyper focused. Ralph is pretty obsessive/compulsive. He's got a lot of routines that are vital to his daily happiness. And Ella has pretty debilitating Anxiety issues. As you saw, meeting new people is not her strong suit.

All that said, we've all come a long way together. We help each other get through each day and that helps make the next day even easier. We help Ralph make his routines go more smoothly now we've all learned them, and he's gotten much more brave. Six months ago he never would have been able to help my brother like he was today. And just a couple of months ago Ella would have run from the room she heard you outside. The fact that she stayed put seems like a miracle.

So, yeah, I think we've got a lot in common with the Enterprise crew. So Ruby, what's your big issue, your "thing" you're working on? I mean, besides your concussion.

RUBY:
My, "Thing?"

JANE:
Yeah. I've known enough "flawed" people in my life to tell. You're screaming out that you're hobbling on some crutch. I also noticed you're wearing a wedding ring and you are looking for a new place to live. That tells me that something happened, recently, to get you away from your husband. So I assume you've got something going on. So what is it? What's going on with you?

RUBY:
I just did some things, got into trouble, and now the doctors think I have this condition.

JANE:
No drugs? Alcohol? (RUBY shakes her head to both of these). Good.

RUBY:
Anyways, I'm not sure I believe or trust the doctors, but I do know I've got to fix something, change something because everyone's treating me differently now.

JANE:

Well, maybe this house is the change you're looking for. We'd welcome you, flaws and all, if you decide to live here. Would you like to see the room now?

RUBY:

(sipping her tea) Yes, please.

JANE:

OK, follow me.

JANE takes RUBY and SANDY upstairs to a room. It is comfortable, cozy, and already has a bed in it, made with an old fashioned quilt comforter.

JANE:

The bed and desk come with the room, unless you've already got stuff you'd like to use. Then we'd sell it. What do you think.

RUBY walks to the window, a bay window that looks out over a park across the street.

RUBY:

I love it.

JANE:

Well I have to check with the others to be sure, but basically it is yours if you want it.

RUBY:

You're just going to give it to me? I don't need to fill out an application, there aren't other candidates?

JANE:

Well, I've got a feeling about you, and I think you'll fit into our little away team just fine. Actually I knew you'd probably be around today. We have a doctor who checks in on us here, and apparently your doctor told her you were quite the catch. In all the time I've talked to candidates for this room, none showed nearly the resilience and patience you showed today when you got hit in the head. Most were impatient and surly over trifles. That's not going to work in this house, I can tell you. But you were polite to all of us, even after being attacked with a rocket. So, what do you say, would you like to live here?

RUBY looks at SANDY. SANDY shrugs, but smiles. RUBY turns back to JANE.

RUBY:
Can I think about it?

JANE:
Sure! It's a bit deal moving in with a bunch of people. Take you rtime.
The room isn't going to anyone else until you decide. You ready to go?

RUBY:
One more minute... (she looks out the window again)... Ok, Let's go.

JANE:
Ok, let me walk you out.

Jane walks them downstairs and to the front door. They go out the door and SANDY and RUBY stand on the doorstep while JANE stands in the doorway.

JANE:
Let me take one last look at that head. Yep, almost good as new. Put a little ice on it when you get home. You shouldn't hardly even feel a bruise and you definitely won't see one tomorrow. Thank you for coming hand I hope to hear from you real soon.

RUBY:
Thank you for showing us the room and for the tea. I'll let you know as soon as I can figure it out.

JANE:
Ok, bye. Nice to meet you too, Sandy. Bye.

SANDY:
Bye.

SANDY and RUBY take a few steps, RUBY sops, looks at SANDY for a moment, then runs back to the door, catching it just before JANE closes it.

RUBY:
Jane, wait...

JANE:
(opening door) Yes?

RUBY:
I've decided. Yes, if the others agree, I'll take the room. I want to live here with all of you.

JANE:
(cracking a huge smile) That's wonderful! Ruby, I really think you'll like it here!

RUBY:
When could I move in?

JANE:
I'll talk to everyone tonight, and as long as they all say yes, you could move in as early as tomorrow! Let me know your timeline and we'll help you move.

RUBY:
Great, I could start moving stuff in tomorrow.

JANE:
I will need a rent check and deposit, that won't be a problem, will it?

RUBY:
No problem. I'll bring them with me.

JANE:
Great. Hey, I have to tell you, I have a little confession. I did know a little more about you than I let on when we were talking.

RUBY:
You did? (looks puzzled)

JANE:
Yeah... there's a photo of you a tourist snapped in vegas that's been circulating on the internet. Gray is definitely not your color.

RUBY, JANE, and even SANDY, slightly apart, begin to chuckle at this.

RUBY:
Well, I guess I should have expected it. Thank you for having me, anyway. See you tomorrow.

JANE:
See you tomorrow. Good-night.

RUBY:
Good-night.

SANDY:
Good-night.

RUBY and SANDY walk away. Jane closes the door.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

RUBY is in her hotel room, wearing a white terrycloth robe. Her hair is wet suggesting she's just exited the shower. She is sitting on the edge of her bed talking on the telephone.

RUBY:
So, Mom, Sandy helped me find a place today... yep, already found it... lucky, I guess... yeah, it seems like the right place to me... tomorrow I start moving things in... tomorrow...they all seem nice... four of them, two men, two women.. sure you can come over, I just didn't think you were the moving type. Let me get one trip of things in and go from there. I have no idea what I'm going to do for furniture... I've got a bed but it depends on what Rick is going to give up. .. No, I haven't talked to him yet. I figured I'd talk to him tomorrow before going over. I figure he'll be at work so I can just get my stuff pretty freely. Well it's my stuff he can't really say much about it, can he? It's just the stuff that's both of ours that'll make a difference, I'll just wait on all that stuff till I can go over it with him....Well, I've got to get to bed, Mom. It's been a long day. I love you, too, Mom. Ok. Good-night!

RUBY hangs up the phone, gets her purse and takes it to the bathroom. In the bathroom she reaches into her purse to grab some Tylenol. As she pulls it out, she also pulls out the bottle of lithium which falls on the floor. She reaches down, picks it up and looks at it for a moment. She sets it down on the counter and the camera focuses on it while she takes the Tylenol. She puts the Tylenol on the counter pauses a moment, then turns, shuts off the light, and leaves (camera still on the lithium bottle).

FADE OUT

END CREDITS