

The Better Half

By

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INT. MINI VAN - DAY

MINDY (early 40's) in the driver's seat studies a well-worn envelope, on the front a REGAL LOGO: Scheffert, DiNay and Fields--Family Law.

A SOOTHING MALE VOICE resonates from the radio.

MALE VOICE (OS)
There's never been any question
about it. Your thoughts really do
become things.

She looks in the rear view mirror, hurriedly places the envelope in her purse.

MALE VOICE (OS) (CONT'D)
You have power to craft your own
reality. We all have the ability.

JERRY (mid 40's) approaches struggling with a suitcase and golf bag, pissed off and staring at the driver.

JERRY
Open the fucking hatch! Christ!

MALE VOICE (OS)
Do you want a better life?

Mindy pushes a button. Slowly the rear door ascends.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jerry heaves the items into the van.

MALE VOICE (OS)
How badly do you want it?

JERRY
How many times I gotta tell ya?
Enough with that monkey shit!

He slams the door shut, opens the passenger side, jumps in.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

MALE VOICE (OS)
You need only to en--

Jerry roughly ejects the c.d., heaves it across the street, spits out the window.

(CONTINUED)

MINDY

Really?

JERRY

You're a fucking nutbag, Mindy, I swear to Christ! If you'd get off your fat ass and do something with yourself you'd learn right quick you don't need some asshole telling you how to make things better.

Mindy puts the van in drive, pulls into the street.

MINDY

A full week, Jerry. You could have at least gotten up early and said goodbye to her.

JERRY

Why? She doesn't give a shit.

MINDY

You should give a shit!

He scowls out the window.

JERRY

She's gonna turn out just like you, fat, bland and with her hand always out begging for money.

Mindy nods, staring ahead. Jerry looks at the speedometer.

JERRY (OS)

A little gas, grandma, the flight leaves in less than an hour!

EXT. AIRPORT - DAY

Mindy watches from the rear view mirror as Jerry collects his items from the back.

MINDY

Call me when you get in.

JERRY

Yeah, free buffet, booze and a suite on the company, I'll make sure you're my first call, dear.

He slams the hatch closed, shuffles into the airport. Calmly, Mindy retrieves another c.d. from the visor, places it into the player.

INT. DAY SPA - DAY

Earphones in, draped only in a towel, Mindy receives a massage from a MUSCULAR HUNKY MASSEUSE.

MALE VOICE (OS)
Your thoughts become things. That
is the simple secret.

MONTAGE

-- Mindy smiles from behind a mud mask.

MALE VOICE (OS) (CONT'D)
The more you visualize the life you
want...

--TWO LADIES exit the sauna leaving a sweating but relaxed Mindy to enjoy the heat in solitude.

MALE VOICE (OS) (CONT'D) (cont'd)
...the higher likelihood it will
magically appear from the ether.

-- Glowing, Mindy tips the masseuse as she exits the spa.

EXT. MINDY'S HOUSE - DAY

With a spring in her step, the divorce papers partly exposed from her purse, Mindy places her key into the front door only to find it easily pushes open.

INT. MINDY'S HOUSE - DAY

The door softly swings open to reveal a confused, concerned Mindy. She places her keys between her fingers as a makeshift weapon, enters the house.

The rush of WATER RUNNING in the distance. Slowly she rounds the corner into the living room. BANGING of metal causes her to freeze in her tracks.

Instinctively she reaches into her purse, retrieves her cellphone. Nervously, she cranes her neck around the corner, fingers prepared to dial. CRASH! The breaking of glass.

Her phone RINGS, startling her. She answers quickly.

MINDY
(whispering)
Hello?

(CONTINUED)

CHILD'S VOICE (OS)

I see you!

Mindy pulls the phone away, looks at the display: HOME.

MINDY

Lexi?

Immediately Mindy is ATTACKED by a BLOND BLUR, knocked onto the sofa. A MANE OF LIGHT HAIR whips around.

MINDY (cont'd)

Alexia Nicole!

A smiling, adorable eight year old LEXI hugs her mother.

LEXI

I got you!

MINDY

Why aren't you at school?

LEXI

It's a special day! Daddy and I are making you dinner?

MINDY

Honey, Daddy's in Las Vegas--

LEXI

No he's not! He's in the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A jean clad male ass and legs just behind an open refrigerator door. Lexi runs past Mindy standing silent in the doorway.

Jerry pops his head out from the door.

JERRY

Hey Hun, we got any green peppers.

Mindy, her mouth agape in disbelief.

LEXI

See?

JERRY

Min?

Mindy shakes her head in the negative.

(CONTINUED)

JERRY (cont'd)

That's ok, we'll just have to make
due with tomatoes, right squirt?
Sorry, I broke the water pitcher.
I'll get you a new one tomorrow.

MINDY

What are you doing here?

With a LARGE CARVING KNIFE Jerry nonchalantly cuts tomatoes.
Lexi snatches a piece, pops it in her mouth. Mindy's eyes,
fixate on the carving knife.

JERRY

Making lasagna. You still like
lasagna, right?

She reaches for a pair of scissors from the counter, hides
it behind her back, ready for anything.

MINDY

The trip?

JERRY

Changed my mind. Thought it would
be more fun to spend the day with
stinky face over there.

Lexi playfully sticks her tongue out.

JERRY (OS)

Got her out of school early. You
don't mind, do you?

MINDY

No...it's fine.

Jerry puts the knife down, ambles over to Mindy with love in
his eyes.

JERRY

Good.

He hugs his wife. Kisses her on the head.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Now, why don't you go relax a bit,
it's going to take me and Gordon
Ramsey here a bit to prepare this
feast. Go ahead, read, watch t.v.,
we got this.

(CONTINUED)

Jerry gives his wife a sincere smile, turns back to the work at hand. Mindy remains staring at her daughter and husband happily engrossed in the meal preparation.

She backs out of the kitchen still clutching the scissors.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A large spread of Italian dishes cover the table. Jerry and Lexi playfully joke between bites of garlic bread, pasta and salad.

Mindy stares at her purse resting on the floor in the corner, the corner of the legal envelope peeking out from the side pocket. She chugs a glass of red wine.

JERRY

Honey?

No response.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Mindy?

MINDY

What?

JERRY

You ok? You haven't eaten much.

MINDY

I'm fine.

JERRY

You won't be if you drink anymore wine on an empty stomach. There's one good thing about an empty stomach though. Tell your mom what that is, Lex.

LEXI

Room for dessert?

JERRY

Spoken like a true prodigy!

Jerry rises from the table, enters the kitchen.

JERRY (OS)

I remember how much you loved that double chocolate cake we had that time in Sedona....

(CONTINUED)

He reappears with a confectionery marvel.

JERRY

So we called and got the recipe,
which was no easy task, that's for
sure!

LEXI

Daddy had to bribe the guy with the
promise of free marketing campaigns
for six months just so the chef
would tell him the secret!

Mindy looks to the cake, then to her family.

JERRY

You don't want to try it?

MINDY

Maybe later. I think I need to lay
down.

JERRY

Yeah, ok, we'll clean up and then
I'll get Lexi ready for bed.

MINDY

No!

Jerry and Lexi, both startled by this curt outburst.

MINDY (CONT'D)

I want to do it.

JERRY

Ok, sure. You heard your mother
darling. Off to bed!

Lexi gets out of her seat, wraps her arms around her father,
lovingly squeezes him with the passion that only a daughter
can show for her father.

Jerry grins from ear to ear, touched by this genuine act.
Mindy can't bear to watch this site.

MINDY

Lexi, upstairs.

INT. LEXI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Surrounded by pink wallpaper, Mindy is propped up on the bed watching Lexi browse a castle-shaped bookshelf.

MINDY

Honey?

Lexi responds without looking up from her task.

LEXI

Yeah?

MINDY

Do you notice anything strange about Daddy?

LEXI

You mean how nice he's being.

Lexi looks back at her mother, Mindy nods.

LEXI (CONT'D)

It worked, that's all.

MINDY

What worked, honey?

LEXI

All that stuff. You know, praying and hoping. What you do in the car when you take me to school and stuff.

A wave of realization washes over Mindy's face.

LEXI (CONT'D)

I've been thinking real hard about it. Haven't you?

Again, Mindy nods.

LEXI (CONT'D) (cont'd)

See. It works. Especially with both of us doing it.

The child gives her mother a sincere grin. Easily, and without effort, Mindy responds in kind.

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mindy sets her purse on the nightstand, removes the envelope, tucks it under the mattress.

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Mindy lays on her side, pretending to sleep as Jerry quietly gets under the covers. He leans over, kisses the back of her head.

JERRY

I really, really love you Min.

He squeezes her shoulder, rolls over, his back to hers. Tears well in her eyes through the darkness. She turns, mounts Jerry, kisses him passionately.

Quickly, awkwardly, both Mindy and Jerry rely on instinct as they rip their own clothes off. She finds the right position, rocks forcefully back and forth, immediately achieving orgasm.

Mindy dismounts, rolls onto her back, a large, satisfied sigh escapes her lungs. Jerry repositions himself on top of her.

MINDY

You didn't?

JERRY

I'm just getting started.

Mindy's smile evolves into contagious laughter as Jerry also chuckles. He proceeds to enter her as the lovemaking continues.

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM - LATER

The smiling couple spoon.

JERRY

Know what would be really good right about now?

MINDY

Hmm...Round Four?

JERRY

Sure, but I was thinking some of that cake.

(CONTINUED)

MINDY
Definitely! I'll go get it.

Nude, Jerry jumps out of bed.

JERRY
No way! You stay right here.

He pulls on his boxer shorts.

MINDY
(giggling)
If you insist.

Jerry exits. Mindy's grin gets wider. A MUFFLED CELLPHONE RING. She leans to the nightstand, removes her phone from the purse, looks at the display: JERRY'S CELL. She answers.

MINDY (cont'd)
Just bring the whole cake, sexy!

JERRY (OS)
What the fuck are you talking
'bout? You been drinking?

MINDY
Jerry?

JERRY (OS)
I told you five times, and God
knows I kept track, you were
supposed to pack my silk golf
shirt! I swear to Christ you do
this shit to me on purpose!

Mindy flings back the covers, gets out of bed, heads to the door.

MINDY
Wait...what?

JERRY (OS)
You dumb deaf cunt! The purple golf
shirt! I unpack and it's not here!

On the back of the door, said golf shirt hangs, a loud, obnoxious, garish garment only a real asshole would wear. Mindy touches it.

She exits the room. The SOUND OF SILVERWARE CLINKING in the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

MINDY
(whispering)
Where are you?

JERRY (OS)
Where do you think, bitch? The
Palazzo minus my lucky golf shirt
because you can't follow simple
directions!

Mindy creeps barefoot down the carpeted steps.

MINDY
(still whispering)
That's not possible...

JERRY (OS)
Anything's possible when you're
married to a retard!

She peaks around the corner to see Jerry lifting the cellophane from the cake.

MINDY
(still whispering)
When are you coming back?

JERRY (OS)
You're unbelievable! Wednesday,
Flight Seven Three O, as in Oh you
are so stupid!

Mindy disconnects the call. Enters the kitchen. She reaches over, touches Jerry. He smiles, turns around, embraces her.

JERRY
You ok?

MINDY
Yeah...

JERRY
I love you...

INT. MINDY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Jerry sleeps blissfully. Plates with cake crumbs rest on the nightstand. Mindy rises from the bed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Mindy, holding the golf shirt, gently leads an eye rubbing Lexi to the fireplace.

LEXI
Mommy...I want to go back to bed.

MINDY
We will, baby, we just have to do something first.

Mindy crouches down, shows Lexi the shirt.

MINDY (CONT'D)
We both love Daddy, don't we?

The child nods.

MINDY (CONT'D) (cont'd)
And we don't want him to go back to being mean, right?

Lexi nods more emphatically.

MINDY (CONT'D) (cont'd)
Ok, so we need to keep wishing--

LEXI
You mean praying?

MINDY
Exactly! We need to both keep praying that mean daddy never comes back. Can you understand what I'm telling you?

The child points to the shirt.

LEXI
What's that?

MINDY
We're going to burn it. It's like our way of saying thanks for Daddy being nice.

LEXI
But he likes that shirt! Why would he thank us for burning it.

(CONTINUED)

MINDY

No, he won't thank us. It's a way
for us to tell...to show...do you
know what a sacrifice is?

Lexi shakes her head.

MINDY (CONT'D)

That's ok. All you need to do is
think everyday, and thank God Daddy
is now a good Daddy. Can you do
that?

Lexi smiles, takes the shirt from her mother, throws it the
fire. Mindy takes a long match from the mantel, strikes it,
brings the flame to the corner of the shirt. Immediately it
catches on fire.

Mother and daughter stand, holding hands, smile together
watching as the sacrifice burns.