

WELCOME HOME

Written by:

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FADE IN:

INT./EXT. CONDO - EVENING

Joana's tranquil condo is decorated in soothing colors of understated creams. This trendy shabby-chic style lends itself to a millennial with good taste and class.

JOANA NOVAK, 24, is a dark-haired stunner with a natural, athletic physique that matches her open, honest personality. There's a mystery and beauty that oozes from her Eastern European ancestry. She pulls up her pant leg and we see a nasty dog bite surrounded by blood. Joana winces.

Joana's interest is also focused on her guest, NELSON B. MOULDING, 39, a tall, dignified businessman, with impeccable manners and expensive taste.

NELSON B. MOULDING

What about you, Joana, feeling better?

Joana dries her wound, applies a medicated ointment.

JOANA

It's a gift - dogs hate me.

As she applies a band aid, Joana starts to shake, Nelson steadies her. He finds a bottle of California red wine and free pours two glasses. Nelson samples the wine.

NELSON B. MOULDING

Not that I'm a betting man, but what were the odds? *Cash for Critters* was a huge success.

JOANA

And thanks, Nelson, for comin' by.

NELSON B. MOULDING

What are neighbors for - it's just the right thing to know each other better. Cheers!

Nelson and Joana clink a toast, smile, check each other out.

He feels her forehead, checks temp.

JOANA

Ahhhhh, I'll survive.

NELSON B. MOULDING

Yeah, no sense missing out on life.

Joana shares a framed picture of her father.

JOANA

Talk about missing out - now you take my retro dad - he plays by the old rules. Jeez, his love of old-fashioned Eastern European customs includes everything - even the men I date. No high rollers, nothing extreme. Only men from the Ukraine, that's the deal.

NELSON B. ERICKSON

Is he bringing you down?

JOANA

Seriously, I'm a new age feminist, yet he figures anybody who hits on me better be ready to get hit right back.

NELSON B. MOULDING

Don't you go get all weepy on me. Tell you what, I'll call tomorrow.

Nelson tenderly puts a blanket over Joana, takes a bow, then leaves.

Joana passes out.

INT. JOANA'S CONDO - NEXT EVENING

Two dozen red roses are delivered to Joana's condo.

JOANA

(on cell to Nelson)

Hey, Nelson, I'm not just brushing up on small talk - you've made my day! The roses are gorgeous.

Joana snaps a picture of the roses and sips peppermint tea.

NELSON B. MOULDING (V.O.)

So the deal is, I'll take you to a five star restaurant very close by - my treat.

Joana dives head first into her closet - tosses every outfit onto her bed, considers dresses, then pants, then fake furs. Within minutes, chaos is king.

JOANA  
(on cell )  
No can do.

NELSON B. MOULDING (V.O.)  
What's up?

Joana giggles.

JOANA  
(on cell)  
I'll make you a home-cooked Eastern  
European meal, it's my thank you.

Joana tidies condo, vacuums, dusts and cleans windows.

RING, RING.

Joana's cell phone:

JOANA (V.O.)  
Hello?

Silence.

JOANA (V.O.)  
(exasperated)  
Hello? Hello?

Joana listens, hesitates.

Heavy breathing on the line.

JOANA (V.O.)  
Who's calling? Who's...

MYSTERY FEMALE (V.O.)  
Get out. Get out now.

JOANA (V.O.)  
Is this for real?

MYSTERY FEMALE (V.O.)  
You're gonna bring him down!  
You're half his age. People do  
crazy things...

Joana shuts her cell off.

JOANA  
Telemarketers. Again.

Joana tidies condo, fusses in the kitchen.

EXT. JOANA'S CONDO - LATE EVENING

MAXINE MOULDING, 44, (Mystery female on the phone and Nelson's soon-to-be ex-wife) is an uptight, overweight, middle aged woman encased in black - black hair, black designer coat and pumps with a leather, oversized black Chanel purse.

Maxine brandishes a Glock handgun which waves around with no apparent direction.

Then Maxine's eyeglasses go flying. Without them, she's nearly blind.

She bumps into walls and potted plants.

She scream, yells, curses and swats the air with her gun.

MAXINE MOULDING

Can't fool me, chicky poo. I found  
your phone number. Some sly little  
witch ain't gonna love you like I  
do. I go down - everybody goes  
with me.

She blockades the condo entrance. Pulls a bottle of white wine from her Chanel bag. Indulges. Fires a shot from the Glock, it zings around the building, pierces the door jamb.

Police sirens blare in the distance, an OFFICER accosts Maxine. (O.C.)

Commotion. (O.C.)

INT. JOANA'S CONDO - NEXT EVENING

Joana prepares a five star meal. She starts with pan fried rump roast, to which she adds mushrooms, paprika and Creme Fraiche. She sets beef stroganoff on the kitchen table.

Doorbell RINGS.

Joana opens the door and greets Nelson warmly.

They go to the kitchen table, share a meal.

Joana leans over, and thanks Nelson profusely.

JOANA

... and what you did for me was  
very kind. You made my heart melt!

She hugs Nelson.

They browse Joana's photo album. Watch Netflix.

Soft and subtle, these two neighbors bound by a misadventure, share their first kiss.

JOANA (CONT'D)

I was hoping we'd get to know each other...

NELSON B. MOULDING

Joana, I was hoping you were hoping that -

They share a hug.

NELSON B. ERICKSON

You do know I'm married? In name only. We have separate homes, lead separate lives. It's a long story.

Joana is flabbergasted.

JOANA

I'm gonna ask you to leave.

NELSON B. MOULDING

Nobody knows anybody nowadays -  
Can't you give me a chance?

JOANA

This here is a deal breaker. It's a line I won't cross.

Nelson sets down his drink, straightens his tie and leaves the Condo.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. JOANA'S CONDO - DAY

Everyday brings a dozen red roses.

We see red roses on the kitchen table, the entry table, in the bedroom, in the bathroom, on top of the toilet, in the shower and stored in the refrigerator.

Joana and her Dad, PETROV NOVAK, 55, visit in the living room.

Petrov's handsome with greyish streaks in his dark hair. He has a quiet determination, and completely dotes on his daughter (an only child).

JOANA

Wait, Dad. I'll prepare your favorite tea.

In the kitchen, Joana steeps European tea bags in boiling water. Then adds cane sugar. She serves her Dad.

PETROV NOVAK

(Eastern accent)

You know, Jo, after your Mom died, I tried to be both a Mom and a Dad to you. But perhaps I was mistaken... you needed a female mentor in your life, and I couldn't give that to you. It sure wasn't "*Keeping Up With The Kardashians*."

JOANA

Dad, the deal is, you did a great job.

Joana gives her Dad a massive hug. Tousles his hair.

PETROV NOVAK

Gotta admit, the first years were tough - your Gramma blamed me. Rumor has it....

JOANA

Dad, where's this coming from?

Petrov pours a glass of wine, then scarfs it down.

PETROV NOVAK

So, you like this Nelson fella?  
Does he make your heart melt? He's  
not from Ukraine..

JOANA

(laughs and giggles)  
Yeah, Dad, he's got it all.

Strangely, her Father grabs Joana by the shoulders and plants her on the couch with a firm push.

PETROV NOVAK

Jo, I have a secret that haunts me.  
Ya know, your Mom never did adjust  
to our new life in America. Please  
listen. (beat) Your Mom didn't die  
of cancer, she committed suicide.

Petrov wraps his arms around Joana to protect her as he's done for so many years.

Joana freaks out.

Suddenly she takes a dozen roses from the bathroom and smashes them into the garbage. Next, she grabs roses from the bedroom and living room, smacks them into the garbage compactor. She wrestles her Dad off the couch, then yells at him.

JOANA

Go to hell!

Petrov pulls out something from his inner pocket and shows it to Joana.

She glances at the picture, jumps up, turns away.

JOANA (CONT'D)

No way, Dad. No arranged marriage.  
Not now.

Petrov looks at the picture again - a handsome Eastern European man grins at the camera. He holds a bouquet of flowers...

PETROV NOVAK

Ya gotta understand - love isn't  
about individuals - it's about two  
families uniting, supporting and  
loving each other. Ya know, with  
the same Eastern European customs,  
the same heritage.



JOANA  
Marriage can go to hell.

Joana goes to the kitchen, returns with cookies. Dumps them on his lap.

JOANA (CONT'D)  
You and I have history - don't ruin it.

Petrov puts on his coat, kisses Joana goodbye. She freezes, refuses to acknowledge her Dad.

INT./EXT. JOANA'S CONDO - NEXT WEEK

Joana and Nelson relax on the couch. After a passionate hug, Joana gets right to the point.

JOANA  
It's just a damn mess is all.

NELSON B. ERICKSON  
Baby, the best is yet to come.

Joana grabs a tissue, wipes tears from her eyes.

JOANA  
I've had to re-examine my life.  
We're talking about character and morals, Eastern European customs.

NELSON B. ERICKSON  
Go on...

JOANA  
Someone like you, to make it all worthwhile.

She hugs Nelson's shoulder.

NELSON B. MOULDING  
You bring out the best in me. I love that.

They kiss and snuggle.

JOANA  
Okay, but what about your ex-wife?  
Is she gonna freak?

Joana's on edge, taps her foot, bites her lip.

NELSON B. MOULDING

Soon as she gets back, I gotta get medical treatment for her mental health issues. First, I'll get her a mobile app to reduce anxiety.

Nelson's positive. He pulls brochures from his briefcase.

NELSON B. MOULDING (CONT'D)

Look, just look at this, new to the market. She can wear a neuro stimulation device and it will treat her depression and aggression. Divorce? Yeah, gotta move forward.

And for the next ten days, life was a breeze. Nelson and Joana enjoy togetherness like teenagers jacked up.

Montage - in Joana's Condo:

Romantic dinners with gourmet cuisine and wine.

Hold hands and watch TV. Play with Oreo.

Snuggle in bed together.

NELSON B. MOULDING (CONT'D)

Darling, just for this evening I've got a meeting I can't cancel. The Asian market is essential to our company, and with our dollar so high, we've really gotta capture our exports.

JOANA

Seal it with a kiss, Buddy.

They share a long, lingering, loving kiss and hug. Nelson heads out, and blows a kiss goodbye.

About four minutes later, there's a KNOCK on the door.

JOANA (CONT'D)

(flings open door)

Darling, what'd you forget?

Suddenly and violently, she's pushed aside. Joana's belted to the floor and a foot stomps on her head several times.

JOANA (CONT'D)

Wwwwwwhat the hell?

Blood gushes from her ear.

Nelson's psychotic ex-wife, Maxine, hyperventilates, gasps and pants.

Her eyes are wild with hate, her hair freaks into a Don King.

This massively overweight woman is out to kill.

MAXINE MOULDING

(screams)

Listen to me, you little slut. You can kiss your Ukrainian ass goodbye. You ain't bringing me down. Bitch!

Maxine kicks and punches Joana's body, as Joana puts her hands up to protect her head. Blood spurts on the floor and splatters the wall.

MAXINE

You. You ain't real! You hear me? I gonna make a fool out of you!

Maxine raises a gun in the air, FIRES a shot to the ceiling. Then FIRES five more shots.

At that moment, she points the gun at Joana's head.

JOANA

You're seriously creeping me out!

MAXINE

Too late for talking. First I kill Nelson, then I come back for you. Tell me. Bitch.

Several times Maxine smacks the gun across Joana's shoulders and head. Joana passes out.

INT./EXT. JOANA'S CONDO - NEXT DAY

Nelson brings red roses, yet again.

Joana lays on the couch.

Nelson applies a treatment of ice cubes onto her head.

NELSON B. MOULDING

Okay, it's time I leveled with you, and I need to be straight up.

JOANA

Nelson, I mean, this is pretty hard to swallow.

Joana adjusts the ice pack treatment.

NELSON B. MOULDING

This is tough - where to begin? At first I thought our marital problems were all my fault. After all, I'm successful and notorious workaholic. Yeah, sometimes I can be meaner than a junk yard dog. But after a time, the tension builds and builds in our marriage. Then Maxine explodes.

JOANA

She gets physical with you?

NELSON B. MOULDING

Yeah, but afterwards she always says sorry and begs my forgiveness. And I always forgive. But not this time. No can do. She needs professional help.

Nelson paces back and forth.

He pulls a Colt 45 from his pocket, loads it with bullets.

NELSON B. MOULDING (CONT'D)

I'm sorry to put you in danger.

JOANA

All those whispers in my ear...

Nelson puts his arms around Joana. Then hightails it to the kitchen and grabs a giant stuffed bear, presents it to Joana.

Joana laughs. She hugs the bear.

NELSON B. MOULDING

I want you to know, Joana, when this situation is settled, I'm getting a divorce and I'd like us to have a relationship - marriage, if that's what you want.

She downs a couple of pain killers, pulls the blanket to her chin. Joana and Nelson share a tender embrace.

Maxine Moulding stands outside Joana's condo with a listening devise in her ear. Hears everything. Inside her Chanel bag we see a long-nose Glock. Maxine removes the Glock and loads it.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. JOANA'S CONDO - LATER

Just before Nelson rings the security buzzer, he hears a rustle behind him.

He turns.

Maxine holds a Glock in her hand, points it at Nelson's head.

Gone are the designer pumps - she's barefoot. The Chanel bag is tossed on the ground and all contents are spread out.

Nelson looks back and forth in complete agony.

NELSON B. MOULDING

But, but, but I thought you were in custody.

Nelson holds his hand up to protect his face.

MAXINE MOULDING

Asshole, I fled, I ain't going down alone. Nobody's gonna control me. Where's that little bitch?

NELSON B. MOULDING

Wait. There's help for you. Apps and technology will treat you!

Without warning, Maxine FIRES the gun and a bullet blasts into Nelson's chest.

He falls to the ground as blood seeps onto the concrete.

Maxine bends down and supports her husband as he dies.

Suddenly there's a second SHOT from her gun.

Maxine slips to the ground beside Nelson.

INT. JOANA'S CONDO - FOUR MONTHS LATER

Joana hugs her new son, NELSON JR, 3. An adorable Eastern European orphan with huge brown eyes, dark hair, and rambunctious energy - he chases balls around the table and couch.

JOANA

First thing we did, my son, was change your name to Nelson.

(MORE)

JOANA (CONT'D)

Yes, you'll miss your friends at the Ukrainian orphanage, but this is your new home now. I hope you like it...

She gives hugs and kisses to Nelson, Jr.

Joana's Dad runs and plays with his new grandson.

PETROV NOVAK

What I don't know in this neighborhood ain't worth knowin' and I'm telling the frickin' world my beautiful daughter finally got a Ukrainian man in her life.

JOANA AND PETROV

Welcome home, our amazing son!  
Welcome to America!

They kiss the newest family member and shower Nelson with gifts and toys.

The sun goes down and a beautiful American sunset welcomes the evening.

FADE OUT.