

**Edge of Ledge.**

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## **SYNOPSIS**

Distraught that his new wife has left him for an accordion player, JOEY MANCINI wants to jump from the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor ledge outside of his office. ALMA MANCINI, JOEY's mother, arrives with a plate of freshly made lasagna. BRENDA CARTER, JOEY's secretary returns to the office after realizing she forgot to turn off the coffee maker. She notices the open window and sees her boss and ALMA on the ledge. She joins them. They talk. NYPD crisis cop, RICHIE arrives. ALMA finds it an opportune moment to play matchmaker for BRENDA and RICHIE. They decide to leave and go out for a drink. ALMA leaves in order to not be late for her Broadway show.

## **CAST**

JOEY MANCINI: 40, a nerdy accountant

ALMA MANCINI: 70, very old-school Italian, peppers her conversations with Italian slang words

BRENDA CARTER: 35, frumpy but cute, JOEY's secretary

RICHIE BOCHINSKY: 35, handsome, blunt talking cop

**Edge Of Ledge**

23<sup>rd</sup> Floor Ledge of Building, 7PM, Friday

JOEY MANCINI stands against “wall”.

JOEY (*answers ringing cell phone*)

Yeah...No, don't send her up here...I swear, you send her, I'll jump...I mean it. I'll jump...I don't want to talk to her. Let her talk to my dead body, don't put her on the phone...Yes, Cindy...What am I doing up here? (*sarcastic*) Since it was such a nice night, I thought I'd step out on the ledge to get some fresh air...You think Hank playing “Happy Days Are Here Again” on his accordion will cheer me up?...Cindy, it's been a lovely 6 week marriage, good-bye. (*hangs up*).

After a beat, ALMA is ar “window”.

ALMA

Joey, what'sa matta wit you? You cacooz? Get inside your office, right now.

JOEY

No.

ALMA

Don't let me come out there, I'll give you a slap.

JOEY

Give me a slap. What am I five?

ALMA

I'm coming out there, I'll show you five.

JOEY

Don't, ma.

ALMA

You comin inside?

JOEY

No.

ALMA

I'm comin' out.

JOEY

You'll fall.

ALMA

If I fall, God is gonna curse you for killing your mother.

JOEY

Stay inside, ma.

ALMA goes “on ledge”. She walks against  
“building’s wall” slowly.

ALMA (*looking down*)

Madonna. (*mah-don*)

JOEY

Don’t look down, ma. We’re on the 23<sup>rd</sup> floor.

ALMA

You couldn’t find no ledge to jump from on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor? I could handle the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, no problem.

JOEY

What are you doing in the city anyway?

ALMA

A bunch of us from the senior center are going to see “The Miserables”.

JOEY

The Miserables? Oh, you mean, Les Miserables.

ALMA

When I was getting ready, I saw on the early news it was you up here, I figured I have to come to the city anyway, why not leave early to stop by and see what’s going on.

JOEY

That was thoughtful.

ALMA

You know, kill two birds with one stone. (*a beat*) So to speak.

ALMA removes covered plate from bag.

Here, I thought you would be hungry so I brought you lasagna. Eat it while it’s still warm.

JOEY

I appreciate your bringing it, ma. I can’t eat nothing.

ALMA

Eat. It’s a sin, you waste food. A double sin, it’s Italian food.

JOEY

I’m ready to jump to my death, ma, you want to feed me lasagna?

ALMA

You’ll fall faster on a full stomach.

BRENDA comes to window. Looks out.

BRENDA (*shocked*)

Boss, what are you doing out there? Hello, Mrs. Mancini.

ALMA

Hello, Brenda.

JOEY

I thought you already left for the night.

BRENDA

I did. When I got home, I was worried I left the coffee pot on in the break room. I came back to check.

ALMA

Did you?

BRENDA climbs out “on ledge”.

BRENDA

Yes. Nothing happened though. The bottom of the coffee pot pretty much burned what little coffee was left. I’m soaking the pot now.

ALMA

You know what works to get rid of burnt coffee in a coffee maker?

BRENDA

What?

ALMA

Soft soap. Squirt the soap into the pot. Let it sit overnight. By the morning, rinse it out. Good as new.

BRENDA

Good idea. I’ll try it.

JOEY

Hello? I’m here. The jumper’s hasn’t left the building yet and you two are getting all Martha Stewarty.

BRENDA

Let’s all go inside. We could fall and get killed.

JOEY

That’s my plan.

BRENDA

You want to die?

ALMA

It’s that slut he married.

BRENDA

Cindy? What happened?

JOEY

She was cheating on me.

BRENDA

No.

ALMA

I could stab her.

JOEY

Ma, please.

ALMA

I says to Joey when he first told me about her, I says Joey, go find yourself a nice Italian girl like your cousin Gino did. Does my capitosto son listen to his mother? My sister Alda's son, Gino, is getting' married next month and my son is out on the ledge.

JOEY

Ma.

ALMA

Don't gimme none of that ma stuff. Your cousin Gino and Maria are getting' married next month subject closed. Everyone's gonna be there. Your cousin Louie from Philadelphia. Fat Aunt Agnes is flying up from Miami.

BRENDA (*laughting*)

Fat Aunt Agnes?

ALMA

I had two aunts called Agnes. Bald Aunt Agnes and Fat Aunt Agnes. We didn't want to hurt blad Aunt Agnes' feelings, you know, calling her bald. We just called her Aunt Agnes.

JOEY

You didn't care about hurting Fat Aunt Agnes by calling her fat?

ALMA

Statazeete your mouth or I'll hit you into next week. Also comin' to Gino's wedding is Gloria Pichetti. (*to BRENDA*) Now she's the one I wanted Mr. Playboy ova here to marry. She got brains, she got beauty—

JOEY

She has hair growing out of a wart the size of a quarter right here (*gestures to his lip*).

ALMA

So what? She got a blemish. Like you're perfect. Remember I use to change you, mister.

JOEY

Enough, ma.

ALMA

And one other thing, Mr. Perfect. Gloria finished beauty school with honors, I bet you didn't know that. And, she's opening her own beauty salon. You could have been all set. *(to BRENDA)* My Joey could have been set for life; Gloria having her own business.

JOEY

Enough with Gloria. No more about Gino's wedding. No talking.

ALMA *(after a beat)*

Another thing, I didn't give you life? That wasn't you inside my belly for 9 months? Look at this fat *(ALMA grabs "fat" stomach)*. Where you think it came from?

JOEY

I'm guessing too many cannolis.

ALMA

No, Mr. Wise Guy, this fat came from givin' birth to you. You ungrateful graziano.

JOEY

Considering I weighed less than 10 pounds at birth, ma. How do you account for the other 60 extra pounds.

ALMA

You bastardo. Now you got me so bambalee, I could push you off this ledge. *(to BRENDA)* You see what I 'm dealing wit.

BRENDA

Maybe it's Mr. Mancini's nerves talking.

ALMA

He's got nerves all right. Speaking to me, his mother like the way he does.

JOEY

Ma. *(ALMA looks away)* Ma. Ma.

ALMA *(to BRENDA)*

Brenda, please tell my son, I'm changin' my name. It's no longer "ma" to him. He wants to talk, he calls me Mrs. Manacini.

BRENDA

Mr. Mancini, your mother said—

JOEY

I heard her. *(a beat)* I gotta go to the bathroom.

ALMA looks away and doesn't budge.

I gotta go.

ALMA

Who's stoppin' you? Go. Make it quick I gotta get to The Miserables.

BRENDA

The Miserables?

JOEY inches his way in front of BRENDA.

JOEY

She means Les Miserabe.

BRENDA

My favorite musical. It's been on Broadway forever.

ALMA

Tells you how long it's been since I was at a show. Then my son has to pull this stunt. *(to JOEY)* Go ahead, tell me how much you hate me so I can die in peace. Go ahead.

JOEY is now going through the window.

JOEY *(turns to ALMA)*

I don't hate you, ma.

ALMA

Then do me a last favor. My last request. Before you come back and jump, write a note and leave it on your desk, "I don't hate my mother." Will you do that for me?

JOEY *(rushing to bathroom)*

Sure, no problem.

ALMA

One otha thing.

JOEY

Yes?

ALMA

Afta you're done, wash your hands. *(a beat)* Brenda. Any boyfriends?

BRENDA

Sadly, no.

ALMA

You're beautiful. You got a good job. You got the smarts.

T RICHIE pokes head out of window.

RICHIE

Which one of you is gonna jump?

ALMA

You got it wrong, not us. We ain't jumpin'.

BRENDA

Mr. Mancini, Mrs. Mancini's son is the one. He's not here.

RICHIE (*into shoulder walkie-talkie*)

Too late Captain. The guy already took the building.

BRENDA

No, Mr. Mancini's in the bathroom.

RICHIE

I'll call you back, Captain. You're telling me, the guy who's gonna jump is takin a leak?

ALMA

I brung him up with good hygiene.

RICHIE

If the guy's in there what are you two doing out here?

BRENDA

Waiting to talk him out of jumping.

ALMA

Let me tell you, officer, trying to talk to my son is like talking to this (*hits the "wall" with her fist*) wall. He's thick. Like his father.

RICHIE

Why don't you two come in?

ALMA

Afta what he said to me and the trouble I went through bringing him this lasagna all the way from Brooklyn, you think I'm lettin' him off that easy?

RICHIE

Miss, will you come in?

BRENDA

Sir, I don't want to leave Mrs. Mancini out here all alone.

RICHIE

If you're not cokmin' in, I'm comin' out.

RICHIE stands on ledge withthem.

The name's Richie, Richie Bochinsky.

BRFENDA

I'm Brenda Carter.

ALMA

She's gorgeous, ain't she? Sholda been a model, this girl. And, Richie, not for nuthin', she's available.

BRENDA (*embarrassed*)

Mrs. Mancini.

RICHIE

I got eyes. She is gorgeous.

ALMA

Brenda, I'm lyin'? You ain't available?

BRENDA

I am but—

RICHIE

Good to know, Brenda. For the record, Mrs. Mancini, I'm also available.

ALMA (*to BRENDA*)

And, Brenda, he's got a steady job.

JOEY enters, climbs out on ledge.

JOEY

What the hell?

ALMA\

Come ova here, let mommy smell your hands make sure you used soap.

JOEY

MA!!!

RICHIE

You're the jumper?

JOEY

I am. I've been talking to Capt. Moriarity. Who are you?

RICHIE

Sergeant Richie Bochinsky. I'm in crisis management.

JOEY

What does that mean?

RICHIE

I talk jumpers like you otta jumpin'.

JOEY

That's not going to happen here. My new wife left me for an accordion player.

RICHIE

A new one on me. I mean, I had wives leave for singers. Last week I had one leave for a drummer. You're my first accordion player.

JOEY

You can understand why I want to jump.

RICHIE

Only thing I understand at this point, pal. Is I'm tired of you jumpers. You're my fifth one today. My advice is either get your ass in the building or jump. Them are your two options.

JOEY (*horrified*)

Which department did you say you worked for?

ALMA (*looks at watch, heads toward window*)

Oh, my God. It's twenty minutes to eight. I gotta go. I'll be late for the show. Bye, Brenda. (*whispers*) You got a live one here.

BRENDA

Bye, Mrs. Mancini.

ALMA pass in front of RICHIE.

ALMA

Bye, Richie. (*whispers*) Betta grab her quick, she's a classy broad, ain't she?

RICHIE

Sure is. What show are you seeing?

ALMA

The Miserables.

RICHIE

I seen The Miserables two years ago.

ALMA passes in front of JOEY.

ALMA (*to JOEY*)

Call me tomorrow, let me know how things worked out.

JOEY

I could be dead by tomorrow, ma.

ALMA (*exiting*)

Then don't bother callin'.

RICHIE

How about a date sometime?

BRENDA

Sure. When?

RICHIE

Right now is good.

RICHIE reaches for BRENDA's hand.

BRENDA (*taking his hand*)

Let's go. (*to JOEY as she passes in front of him*) Excuse me, Mr. Mancini. Good night.

JOEY

You kiddin' me? I'm ready to honest to God jump and you're leaving me?

BRENDA (*exiting*)

I'm sorry, Mr. Mancini. It's been a while since I've had a date.

A few beats. JOEY gives up and goes into window.

JOEY

(*calls after them*) I hope you're satisfied. You've all spoiled my perfect suicide.

**End of Play**