

The Interview

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Cast of Characters

Maggie Dawson: 24-year-old secretary at Marshgrove Publishing

Daniel Barnes: 29-year-old boss at Marshgrove Publishing

Larry Jones: 50-something boss at Marshgrove Publishing

Scene

Top floor of Marshgrove Publishing. The office is clean and neat and very high class. This is clearly a nice place to work.

Time

Quittin' time. About 5:00 p.m.

As the lights come up, DANIEL sits behind a desk in an office, shuffling paperwork of some sort. MAGGIE is upstage outside his office at another desk, filing her nails. LARRY closes a door at the far side of the stage, carrying a briefcase. She looks up as he crosses the stage.

MAGGIE

Larry! Can I steal you for just a minute?

LARRY

Oh, no, Maggie, I'm heading home for the weekend.

MAGGIE

(rising from her desk)

It'll only be a minute.

LARRY

(pushing past her)

A minute I don't have time for right now.

MAGGIE

(trying to stop him, but not with force)

It's just a quick question—

LARRY

(turning around to face her)

A quick question that will wait until Monday. Have a good night, Maggie.

He exits.

MAGGIE sighs, staring at the door, then furtively glances over her shoulder at the door to DANIEL's office. He has apparently not noticed the exchange and is still working on his paperwork. MAGGIE crosses to her desk and gets out a compact mirror. She checks her makeup, snaps the compact closed, and straightens her skirt. Then she turns and walks over to DANIEL's office door. She knocks, opens the door, and leans against the frame casually.

DANIEL

(looking up from his paperwork)

Oh, has Larry left?

(checking his watch)

I'll only be here a little longer. You can go home.

He looks back down at his paperwork. MAGGIE takes a deep breath and then steps into the office, closing the door. DANIEL looks up again, confused.

MAGGIE

Actually, I was hoping I could talk to you for a minute.

DANIEL

Can it wait 'til Monday? I'm going through resumes for the new editing position right now.
(he looks down at his papers again.)

MAGGIE

(walking over to the desk)

Have you considered hiring from within?

DANIEL

(looking up again)

Well, no, I guess not. Larry just handed me these resumes to look at... Did you have someone in mind?

(She stares at him expectantly.)

Oh, you?

MAGGIE

Yes, me. I have an English degree. Is that so hard to believe?

DANIEL

But you're working here as a secretary—

MAGGIE

Administrative assistant.

DANIEL

Yes, administrative assistant. Why haven't you mentioned this to Larry?

MAGGIE

I have! But it's always 'I'm busy now, Maggie' and 'Don't be silly now, Maggie' and 'You're too valuable as an assistant, Maggie'.

DANIEL

It sounds like he's made up his mind then.

MAGGIE

Yes, but you haven't.

DANIEL

(he sighs)

I'd hate to go over Larry's head. I've only been at this branch for a year.

MAGGIE

He gives you the final say in hiring decisions though, doesn't he?

(She walks behind the desk and leans in close to DANIEL.)

Don't you think you should give me a chance?

DANIEL

(flustered, he stands and backs away from her)

I don't know if that's a good idea. Larry wouldn't like it.

MAGGIE

(advancing closer to him)

Isn't there anything I can do to convince you?

DANIEL

Jesus, what is this? A cheap porno?

MAGGIE

No, but we can make it one if you like.

(she traces a finger over his chest)

DANIEL

(backs away around to the front of the desk)

What is wrong with you?

MAGGIE

There's nothing wrong with wanting a promotion after two years with the same company!

DANIEL

Well, no, I suppose not...

(MAGGIE advances around the desk and he begins backing away around the other side.)

B-but I'd need to see a resume and conduct an interview...

(he trips and falls back into his chair as MAGGIE leans over him.)

MAGGIE

We could have an interview right now.

DANIEL

(pushing past her, he rushes to stand by the door and clears his throat.)

Yes, well, then. Have a seat and we'll begin.

MAGGIE

(surprised)

Really?

(she begins to undo the buttons of her shirt.)

You're being awfully formal about this.

DANIEL

(panicking, he turns away.)

No no no! I meant a real interview. Not...whatever you're implying.

MAGGIE

(hesitates for a moment, then redoes her buttons and sits.)

You can turn around, you know.

(he does.)

You'd think you'd never seen a woman undress before.

DANIEL

(defensively)

I have, it's just unprofessional. Besides, you don't want to make a bad impression on your interviewer, do you?

MAGGIE

I suppose not.

(she stands and extends her hand)

Hi, I'm Maggie Dawson; I'm applying for the editor position.

DANIEL

(shakes her hand firmly)

A pleasure to meet you Ms. Dawson. Did you bring a resume with you today?

MAGGIE

(stands quickly and smiles broadly)

One second.

She runs out to her own desk and rifles through one of the drawers. DANIEL uses the opportunity to take his seat behind the desk back. MAGGIE finds what she is looking for and sits down across from DANIEL. He scans the paper she hands him.

DANIEL

So you graduated from Lowell University a few years ago and you've just had the one job since then?

MAGGIE

Yes. I got hired right after graduation.

DANIEL

Do you live around here then?

MAGGIE

Born and raised here.

DANIEL

(sincerely)

Your parents must appreciate that.

(MAGGIE smiles tightly)

So, what makes you think you're qualified for this position? You do have a very short resume.

MAGGIE

I was the editor for my college's literary magazine for two years and I had a book critique column online. I'm driven, eager to learn, and willing to relocate.

DANIEL

I'm sorry, Maggie, you just seem a bit underqualified.

MAGGIE

I've been loyal to this company for years, fetching coffee, doing paperwork, finishing jobs no one else would do. Doesn't that count for something? Don't I deserve this?

DANIEL

Deserve? Loyalty earns you nothing in the real world.

MAGGIE

I was raised to believe otherwise.

DANIEL

So was I, but belief won't stop betrayal.

MAGGIE

Bitter much? Just because you were "betrayed" doesn't mean you should take an

opportunity away from me.
(DANIEL remains silent.)
What, did your wife leave you or something?

DANIEL
My fiancée, actually.

MAGGIE
(surprised)
I...I'm sorry. I didn't realize...

DANIEL
Oh, stop. She left me three years ago after six years of being together. Turned out she had been sleeping with the bartender who introduced us.

(shaking his head)
Three years, and I should be over it, right? I should have moved on, but I can't. Not when everything reminds me of her. Not when my apartment is filled with the absence of her things.

(MAGGIE puts a hand on his arm.)
This gives you an advantage, doesn't it? I'm sure you've got tricks up your sleeve for seducing broken men.

MAGGIE
(pulling away from him)
Excuse me? I was being sympathetic. I didn't realize bitterness had broken you.

DANIEL
(sarcastically)
Oh, I'm sorry. What was it I said that offended you? The part where I implied you're easy?

MAGGIE slaps him.

DANIEL
The truth hurts, doesn't it?

She hits him again.

DANIEL
Though maybe not as much as your slaps. Jesus, you swing like a volleyball player! I think one of my teeth might be loose.

MAGGIE

Don't you ever call me that again.

DANIEL

For God's sake, Maggie, you were trying to seduce me for a job. What am I supposed to assume?

(She is silent.)

I can practically smell the desperation coming off you.

MAGGIE

Disappointment isn't exclusive to you, you know.

DANIEL

Let me guess: born and raised in a small town, and now you feel trapped, so you want this promotion as an excuse to leave without hurting your parents.

(MAGGIE is silent.)

Hit it on the head, didn't I?

MAGGIE

It doesn't matter anyway. You weren't going to give me the job.

DANIEL

No, I wasn't.

MAGGIE

You know, you're one of the only men who's ever refused me?

DANIEL

I can understand why. Don't think I wasn't tempted. It's just my professional integrity that stopped me.

MAGGIE

Professional integrity stops you from having sex with me but not from belittling me?

DANIEL

Yeah, sorry about that.

(rubbing his jaw)

You sure have some power for being so small.

MAGGIE

It's not bruising, is it?

She examines his jaw closely. Daniel winces, then puts his hand over hers touching his cheek and turns quickly and kisses her. She pulls back, shocked.

MAGGIE

What happened to professional integrity?

DANIEL

(flustered again)

I didn't mean...I'm sorry...

MAGGIE

What Larry doesn't know won't hurt him, right? We're the only ones here.

(she reaches for the buttons on her shirt again but DANIEL stops her)

DANIEL

No! No, that's not what I meant. It's just you were so close, and you're very pretty, and I'm sorry.

MAGGIE

So we're still at no promotion then. I understand.

(She picks up her resume and walks to the doorway of Daniel's office.)

You really should take a look at those resumes again. There are several qualified people.

DANIEL

How do you..?

MAGGIE

I printed them off and filtered out the bad ones before you even saw them.

DANIEL

You really do practically run this place, don't you?

MAGGIE

(smiling)

Good night, Daniel.

(she begins to step out)

Thanks for the kiss.

(She turns.)

Oh, and don't tell Larry about this? Please?

DANIEL

Of course not.

Maggie walks out to her desk and gathers her things. Daniel sits contemplatively in his office. Maggie is walking toward the door when—)

DANIEL
Maggie?

MAGGIE
(turning back around)
Yes?

DANIEL
Would you like to get lunch tomorrow?

Lights fade.