

-- an excerpt from a screenplay entitled *In Dog Years* by Juliet Johnson. Here is the context: May works in an office in Los Angeles with her boss Nathaniel. Nathaniel is flying for Christmas to a winter wonderland in Vermont (a small town called North Hero) to surprise his fiancé Hope with marriage. May is in love with Nathaniel. She is convinced that he loves her but just doesn't know it - after seeing them together we agree with May (also we don't like Hope very much). May follows Nathaniel to Vermont (stalks him really) accompanied by her best friend April. Along the way, they fall in with the members of a French-Canadian circus troupe called The Misfits, especially the young tumbler/hypnotist named Marcel and the huge, cross dressing weight lifter identified here as the Drag Queen. The Misfits are performing at the *Grisly Pup*, a notorious hotel/bar in this lake-country small-town paradise. Nathaniel in this excerpt is about to surprise Hope with a wedding ring and tell her that they're getting married on Christmas eve. It is now or never for May to declare her love. --

EXT. NORTH HERO - TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Hope and Nathaniel are walking, talking.

May is crossing the street, heading directly at them.

April dashes across the street, PUSHES May over on the icy street. HONKING horn. April is almost hit by a car, the car SKIDDING to a stop blocking her way.

Hope is gazing in shop windows. Marcel sees Nathaniel pull out a ring box, look at it.

May gets up, heads toward Nathaniel. Marcel tackles her, throws her against a wall as Hope and Nathaniel pass.

MARCEL

The moment is not yet.

Hope and Nathaniel are oblivious. They're getting aboard a horse-drawn carriage.

EXT. NORTH HERO - TOWN STREET - NIGHT

Marcel holds onto May, tossing her against a jazz club entrance, almost knocking over the bouncer.

MAY

This is my thing, not yours!

MARCEL
That is more like it!

MAY
I'm serious! Let me talk to him!

April is heading for the carriage. May breaks free and runs toward them..

MARCEL
Finally, some balls!

AT THE HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE

The driver is helping Nathaniel into the carriage. April sees May coming, leaps into the driver's seat and takes off, knocking Nathaniel and Hope into the seats!

DRIVER
HEY!

A policeman at the cafe sees this, jumps up, heads after the carriage.

ON THE STREET

The carriage is driving fast and crazy. Nathaniel and Hope are hanging on!

May sprints after them and LEAPS onto the back platform! It's almost a circus trick. She's freaked out!

The carriage veers wildly!

HOPE & APRIL
Ahhhhk!

APRIL
(yelling excitedly)
Great night for it, huh?!

Her horse is totally out of control. Drives up onto the sidewalk, wiping out a cafe table! People leap in different directions!

APRIL
(continuing)
Wild horse! Wild horse!

As they pass the TOWN SQUARE FOUNTAIN April leaps off, into the fountain! She rolls out of the water and takes off down a side street.

The cop is chasing from a block away, runs through the

fountain after April.

The carriage continues out of control! Careening around the street around the fountain and back up into town!

The horse is freaked by screaming people!

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

April is running like mad. The cop scampers around the corner. She's laughing!

She runs into the Misfits Christmas caroling. (Marcel is not with them.) They pull her swiftly into their puffy caroling outfits, continuing on.

She scampers under the Drag Queen's skirts.

The cop speeds by.

April is hidden under the Drag Queen's skirts. She uses her cell phone light to see that she's face to face with the Drag Queen's waist -- and he's not wearing undies! She looks down, way down. In awe.

ANGLE ON THE CAROLERS

there is a strange glow emanating from the Drag Queen's skirts.

EXT. NORTH HERO, MAIN STREET - NIGHT

People are shouting. Marcel stands in the middle of the street, facing the horse coming at him from way down the street. A lady in the crowd SCREAMS.

EXT. SIDE STREET - CONTINUOUS

April comes out from under the skirts.

APRIL

(to the Drag Queen)

You're right. Skirts are better...pants'd never work.

(hearing the screams from the main street)

Oh my God -- no -

She races off with the carolers following.

EXT. NORTH HERO, MAIN STREET - NIGHT

Marcel has his arms raised. The horse and carriage are now closer.

IN THE CARRIAGE

Hope is flat on the floor as Nathaniel steps on her head to climb to the driver's seat and heroically attempt to get the reins. He sees that the horse is about to mow down Marcel.

May climbs over the back of the carriage and onto the seats, also stepping on Hope (who has her shawl over her head) to try to reach the front seats and Nathaniel, who **THROWS HIMSELF ON THE HORSE!**

Marcel stands calmly. The horse runs right at him.

At the last moment:

Clinging to the horse, Nathaniel can only watch in fear;

April and the Carolers have now arrived and watch Marcel's impending collision;

The horse slams on the brakes, skidding, sparks flying from horseshoes, May flying from the driver's seat onto Nathaniel's back.

The horse **STOPS**, skidding exactly to the edge of Marcel's feet.

Nathaniel sits up on the horse, oblivious to May on his shoulders, staring down at Marcel.

MARCEL

Now. There is room for you.
Bonjour.

MAY

(from on his back)
Hi, Nath.

May tumbles, like she's one of the Misfits, over his shoulder, **PLUNK**, to a position facing him on the horse.

They stare at each other for a moment before Marcel pulls her down off the horse.

HOPE (O.S.)

(still buried in her
coat)
Are we alive?! Are we alive?!

A crowd starts to surround the carriage. Nathaniel looks down, stunned, at May. She gives him a little wave.

NATHANIEL

May...?

HOPE (O.S.)

(hysterical)

Nate are you okay!?

Nathaniel and May are locked in each other's eyes.

April hides her face in the Drag Queen's shoulder. Peeks out.

Hope looks up from underneath her shawl. She rises and sees Nathaniel looking, sees May.

MAY

(to Nathaniel only)

Hi.

Nathaniel smiles, still bewildered. Then he laughs.

Hope looks at the two of them.

He jumps down from the horse, gives her a hug.

NATHANIEL

Are you okay?

HOPE

(still on the carriage)

Who's this?

NATHANIEL

This is - the office!

May looks at Hope. Full of hope.

MAY

I'm May.

May reaches up to Hope to shake hands.

HOPE

I'm -- you're the office?

MAY

I'm one of the office. I booked this whole trip. Everything going all right?

HOPE
Is she okay?

NATHANIEL
I don't know.

MAY
That carriage ride looked a
little, uh -- bumpy --
(gesturing at the
circus freaks)
MAY
(continuing)
My friends were just trying to
help -

Hope looks at the others. April waves.

HOPE
What are you doing here?

May looks at Nathaniel.

MAY
I just wanted to say
congratulations. You're up here
for your relationship,
that's...great. I know what it
feels like.

Pause. They stare at her. She sighs, happily.

MAY
(continuing)
That commitment to love, that's...
commendable. There should be more
purity like that in the world.
(looking at Nathaniel)
Right?

NATHANIEL
Right.

He's looking at her. But not getting it. She waits.

MAY
...That's it, really. I guess
that's really it.

She looks at him again.

HOPE
You came from Los Angeles?

MAY
Well, Nathaniel's always
forgetting SOMETHing...

He laughs.

NATHANIEL
Yeah.

MAY
Remember last year? He thought his
car was stolen? He forgot where he
parked it?

Hope stares at him.

MAY
(continuing)
There's always something.

NATHANIEL
True.

MAY
He's kind of an idiot!

She tries to playfully punch his arm. Punches him hard.

NATHANIEL
Ow!

HOPE
(still trying to
understand)
Did you -- bring him something --
from the office...from LA...then -

There's an awkward pause.

HOPE
(continuing)
You couldn't have just been in the
area.

May looks at Nathaniel. He's starting to feel strange. He
looks at her, as if trying to figure out what he's feeling.
May waits for him to say something.

Marcel nudges May.

MARCEL
May.

May looks behind her at him.

He turns her to him. Gives her a nice, warm kiss on the lips.

She looks at him afterward, his French glint in his eye.

MARCEL
(continuing; proud)
You are brave, cherie.

April is staring. Nathaniel and Hope are confused too. Marcel pulls her away from them.

MARCEL
(continuing)
She's here for me.
(to Nathaniel)
Don't be a stranger. You come to the Grisly Pup, anytime.

He leaps up into the carriage, replacing the reins next to Hope, speaking softly only to her.

MARCEL
(continuing)
And you. You have such lovely eyes...The same color as mine...

HOPE
I guess...

MARCEL
(forcing her to look)
No, look...You see? So deep...Look and see in my eyes...we are almost the same...deep in my eyes....

Nathaniel has turned back to May.

NATHANIEL
Did you...meet him booking my reservation or something?

MAY
Nope.

MARCEL
(to Hope quietly,
Svengali in control)
Deep...deep...you're eyes are heavy...

Nathaniel is looking struck. April appears.

APRIL

Those free companion passes are
literally -- a free companion -

Marcel jumps down, leaving Hope staring, glazed.

MARCEL

Quick. We go.

(pats Nathaniel)

She is stalking you. All the way
from Los Angeles. The Grisly Pup!
Tonight, my friend.

He catches up to May, grabs her hand. The entourage tails
them away:

APRIL

What was with the lip action?!

MARCEL

(to May, fervently)

We go quickly, Hope will not
remember you.

Nathaniel, with Hope in the background still on the
carriage, watches them walk off up the street. We see him
look down at the ring box and put it into his coat pocket.

HOPE (O.S.)

I HATE ANIMALS!

HOLD ON NATHANIEL, thinking.