

MR. POPPER'S PENGUINS 7/31

-JANIE-

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SC. #1

MR. POPPER

Hmm. Let me see... No!

(holds up one of the papers)

I've read everything there is to know about the crazy old bat!

There's no "it" anywhere. Get me more!

Pippi nods and exits quickly before Bitey can get her kneecap again.

INT. MR. POPPER'S CONDO - NIGHT

Popper anxiously checks his empty voice mail as we see the penguins in the b.g. playing with Billie. She's having a pillow fight using expensive couch cushions. Bitey chomps down on the pillow, sending feathers flying.

Janie sits across the room, texting. She reads something that hurts. She drops her phone on the floor and drops her head into her hands.

MR. POPPER

What? What happened?

JANIE

Nothing. I'm fine. Billie, it's time to go. Get your coat on.

MR. POPPER

Janie, what happened?

JANIE

I said I'm fine.

Popper looks at his daughter, determined. Comes over and sits down next to her.

MR. POPPER

Look, Janie, I know I blew it with my advice last time. But I can be pretty good when it comes to--

Janie's phone buzzes. Janie, irritated, pushes past them out the door, Billie in tow.

JANIE

We gotta go. Mom's here.

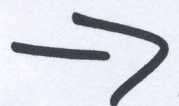
Janie and Billie are out the door.

INT. MR. POPPER'S CONDO HALLWAY

Popper follows the girls to the elevator.

(CONT.) →

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MR. POPPER

Janie, wait...I wanna help.

JANIE

(still hostile)

Really? Fine. Here it is:
Madison broke up with Cooper Keegan
to go out with Brandon Yee.

The elevator door opens. Janie steps in with Billie. After a beat, Popper gets the hint and steps in. Janie continues as the doors close.

JANIE (CONT'D)

So Cooper texted Brittany to ask if I was going to the Snow Ball Dance. And Brittany's all, "No, she's not going." And I like look all desperate and dumb. But then...

INT. MR. POPPER'S CONDO LOBBY

The elevator opens. Janie steps out, still talking. Popper struggles to keep up with her pace and her story.

JANIE

(in tears) So great, right? Cooper's gonna ask me to the dance. But he never calls and now Brittany's telling everyone that Cooper kissed Madison in third period! But then I hear Brittany likes him too so I don't what to think! So there it is. What do you got, father figure?

Popper's outmanned on this one.

MR. POPPER

Um...I'm sorry, who's Brittany again?

BILLIE

Brittany's Madison's BFF. (then)
And a total skank.

Janie storms out.

EXT. MR. POPPER'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Popper chases Janie and Billie. Amanda steps out of her mini van and slides the side door open for the girls.

MR. POPPER

Janie, hold on. Just...

CONT. →

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Janie stops, turns and folds her arms. Amanda looks on as Popper digs deep for the right thing to say.

MR. POPPER (CONT'D)

Look, sweetheart, maybe this just wasn't meant to be. Don't waste your tears trying to chase something that's never gonna happen. There's gonna be another boy, I know it, and you'll make that work for sure.

JANIE

Okay so just don't care and move on. Thanks. I feel way better.

STOP

Janie climbs into the van with Billie and slams the door.

MR. POPPER

(to Amanda)

I don't get it. It's good advice.

AMANDA

Maybe she doesn't want advice, Thom. Maybe she just wants you to be her Dad. Just listen and empathize with what she's going through.

MR. POPPER

So we both have to suffer through Cooper Keegan, the world's most schizophrenic teenager?

AMANDA

Goodnight, Popper.

Amanda drives off in the van. Popper hangs his head.

INT. MR. POPPER'S CONDO

Popper enters. Examines his trashed apartment: spilt aquarium, knocked over DVD rack, etc. Shakes his head with contempt. He walks into the...

INT. BATHROOM

Popper steps up to the toilet, lifts the seat and starts to unbutton his pants when he notices Captain is at his side, looking up at him. Popper glares back.

MR. POPPER

What? I can't get thirty seconds of privacy around here!?

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-- Loudy shrieks. Popper does the "close your beak" hand signal. Loudy stops shrieking and he gets a fish.

-- In the bathroom, Popper holds each bird over the toilet, one by one.

-- Lunchtime. Popper sits at a restaurant watching the penguins on his iPhone Nanny-cam.

-- Popper reads a book about penguins as he casually tosses fish to the well behaved birds seated around him.

-- Janie and Billie enter the condo. Their jaws go slack when they see the penguins all lined up before Popper. He raises his hands over his head like a ballet dancer, stands on his toes, and does a turn. The penguins follow. Sort of. Nimrod goes the wrong way. But it's pretty impressive. Billie laughs, joins in.

JANIE

(rolls her eyes)

Remember when you lost me in that supermarket? Did you really have to find me again?

JANIE gets a text. She steps away to write back as Popper and Billie dance with the penguins. Janie steps back in a moment later, in a bit of shock.

~~BILLIE~~

~~What?~~

MR. POPPER

(not trying to solve)

Look, whatever news it is, I'm here for you, okay, Sweetie?

JANIE

(playing it cool)

Relax. It's no biggie... Cooper Keegan just asked me to the Snowball Dance.

Janie hold up the phone, beside the text we see the famous COOPER KEEGAN in his icon photo. Billie screams, hops up and down joyously. Janie beams. Popper masks his concern under a happy face.

MR. POPPER

Well that's great, sweetheart. That's really... wonderful.

JANIE

Ohmagod! I need a dress!

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POPPER-JANIE

~~POPPER~~

MR. POPPER

Well then, let's go get you a dress.

JANIE

(dubious)

You mean you? Really? Um... Okay.

INT. UPSCALE DRESS SHOP - LATER

Several fast cuts of Janie looking at herself in several different mirrors in several different terrible dresses. She's not happy.

A SHOPGIRL crosses to a dressing room. A pile of dresses are thrown over the top of the door. She removes the throw-aways.

SHOPGIRL

Didn't like any of these, hon?

JANIE (O.S.)

No. Sorry.

Close on Billie, napping. Pull back to reveal Popper, also napping.

JANIE (CONT'D)

Daddy, I look terrible in all of these. Maybe we should just forget it and go home.

MR. POPPER

(wakes) No. C'mon. This is fun. Like when you used to play dress up.

JANIE (O.S.)

I'm not a kid anymore. We've been all over town and nothing fits me right.

MR. POPPER

What about the white one you liked? Try that one on.

JANIE (O.S.)

(ugh) I am now.

Janie steps out. SHE'S BEAUTIFUL. Popper and Billie are blown away.

BILLIE

You look like a fairy princess.

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JANIE

Yeah, right. Dad, I can trust you
to tell me the truth.

MR. POPPER

I'm gonna give it to you straight.
No sugarcoating.
(then)
You're an angel.

JANIE

(touched)
Shut up.

————— STOP

INT. MR. POPPER'S CONDO - NIGHT

Popper and the girls return with Janie's dress. The penguins
stay put. Not marching over to join them.

BILLIE

Hi birdies! Daddy can I get them a
snack?

MR. POPPER

Sure. Just little ones though.

Billie rubs their bellies before exiting to the kitchen.
Janie sits down next to the birds and pets them. Popper gets
a call on his cell. "Franklin" on the Caller ID. Uh oh...

MR. POPPER (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)

Mr. Franklin--

FRANKLIN (ON PHONE)

Tell me, Popper, what's going on
with the Algonquin Hotel?

MR. POPPER (INTO PHONE)

I'm sorry? We're not working on the
Algonquin--

FRANKLIN (ON PHONE)

That's right, we're not. It was a
great deal. But we turned it down.
So we'd have capital for your
tower. This is my last call.

Click. Popper's about to throw his phone when Janie calls out:

JANIE (O.S.)

Oh my God. Dad?

MR. POPPER

What?

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101.

~~PIPPER~~

~~Yes, it's just across the park,
sir. I'll have him there.~~

Popper grabs Janie's cell and hands it to her...

START
→

MR. POPPER

Call him.

JANIE

Who?

MR. POPPER

Cooper freakin' Keegan!

JANIE

But, Dad--

MR. POPPER

Janie, I was wrong. About a lot of things. Listen, you're such a wonderful, smart, beautiful girl. You can't keep that all to yourself. You have to put your heart out there sometimes and, yes, it might get broken but that's just how it all works. Call him and tell him how you feel.

JANIE

I don't even really like him anymore. (then, genuine) But thanks. (holds up Popper's cell) Call her.

MR. POPPER

Who?

JANIE

Mom freakin' Mom.

Popper smiles.

STOP

INTERCUT AMANDA AND RICK. In the back of a cab. She picks up.

AMANDA

What.

MR. POPPER

Look, I know this is gonna hurt if you say no. Worse than anything yet. But I'm asking it anyway. Please. Don't go to Ghana.

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