



A NEW BEGINNING

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INT. FRASIER CRANE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Somehow, the apartment is the same as ever. Killer view, piano in the corner, that deadly recliner dead-center.

FRASIER CRANE, 60s, enters from his bedroom wearing a lush robe. A loud BUZZING is coming from the kitchen.

FRASIER
Is that absolutely necessary?

The buzz grows louder.

FRASIER (CONT'D)
Pardon my interruption, but--

The buzz stops. Frasier tidies the messy breakfast table.

MAN (O.C.)
(shouting)
You say something?

FRASIER
What's the point.

FREDERICK CRANE, 30s, emerges from the kitchen in a robe. Despite being father and son, they have no traits in common besides dressing up for breakfast.

FREDERICK
You want a shake? Twenty-eight grams of protein.

FRASIER
I don't need protein. I need peace and quiet. And if you're going to stay here, there are a few rules I need to clarify. Rule number one--

FREDERICK
Look, this isn't my first choice of accommodations. It happens to be one step above my buddy Mikey's futon. That thing's got more stains than a stained glass window.

FRASIER
You are more than welcome here, as I've always said.

Frederick grabs the newspaper.

FREDERICK

People say things all the time without meaning them: 'I'll buy the next round. Yes, of course I wanted season tickets to the opera for Christmas. No, you weren't helicopter parents.'

FRASIER

Very funny. But what kind of father would I be to leave my son out on the street?

FREDERICK

The contractor said the renovations will be done in a few weeks.

FRASIER

If you're that gullible, then I'm the Duke of Sussex.

Knock on the door. Frasier goes to answer.

FREDERICK

Plus, my hamstring is killing me and you have a fancy-ass elevator.

FRASIER

(opening the door)

I'd love to know the definition of the term "fancy-ass."

Enter NILES CRANE, the brother, particular in every way.

NILES

Good morning, Frasier. Frederick.

FRASIER

You're up early.

NILES

I'm on my way to an estate sale. Donovan Gettyside? The poor man suffered terribly in his final years, but now I'm taking that collection of vintage baseball mittens off his hands.

FRASIER

I thought they do that at the morgue.

FREDERICK

Baseball *mittens*?

NILES

Is that not right? I'm still learning.

Frederick can only shake his head.

FREDERICK

Say, is Daphne downstairs? Why don't you ask her to come up.

NILES

No, sorry.

FREDERICK

No, she's not downstairs? Or no, you won't ask her to come up?

NILES

I respectfully decline to answer.

FREDERICK

C'mon, you can't still be salty--

NILES

No, Frederick, your Aunt Daphne is nowhere near the vicinity of this building.

Frederick shrugs, 'Alright.'

FRASIER

Niles, isn't it about time you put all this behind you? It was a silly childhood crush. He was *seven*.

NILES

Seven! Boys can be *crafty* at seven.
(eyeing Freddie)
But I suppose it was a long time ago. Perhaps this water could be put under the bridge.

Niles goes to shake.

FREDERICK

Hey now, we're family!
(bear-hugging him)
So...does Daphne still use that lavender shampoo?

Niles twitches like a grasshopper.

NILES
(to Frasier)
See! See!

FRASIER
Frederick! Stop torturing the man.
Apologize to your uncle.

FREDERICK
Sorry, Uncle Niles.

NILES
Fine.
(beat)
And to answer your question, yes.
You're looking at a man who wakes
up next to a lavender-scented
pillow every morning.

FREDERICK
Congratulations.

FRASIER
Oh, Niles, would you care to join
me at Le Petit Bistro tonight?

NILES
I'd love to. But is this one of
your pencil-ol'-Niles-in tricks and
then you pull the rug out from
under him when you confirm a last-
minute date?

FRASIER
How could you suggest such a thing?
Can't a man want to spend quality
time with his brother? Family is
the most important thing in the
world to me--

FREDERICK
Can I come?

FRASIER
Sorry, reservation for two.

NILES
Well, alright. I recently had a
rather exquisite dream about their
carrot crepe with littleneck clams--

FREDERICK
Geez. Leave it in the bedroom.

NILES
Seven o'clock?

Frasier's phone DINGS. He looks at it.

FRASIER
Actually, I'm afraid I need to
reschedule.

NILES
Of course.
(on his way out)
Have fun with Tricia or Tracy or
Tallulah. But be sure to tell your
lucky guest that Niles Crane's
bottom is the only thing that
belongs in their chair!

Frasier closes the door on him.

FRASIER
Not on your life.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: NOT A DAY GOES BY

INT. KACL RADIO STATION - DAY

Frasier sets his briefcase on his console. ROZ DOYLE, 50s and
a firecracker, bursts in.

ROZ
This is the most depressing day of
my life.

FRASIER
It's barely noon.

ROZ
So what.

FRASIER
More depressing than the morning
you found that newscaster's toupee
swimming in your bathroom sink?

ROZ
Yes.

FRASIER

More depressing than when that Silicon Valley CEO dumped you three days before going public?

ROZ

Yes.

FRASIER

More depressing than--

ROZ

Jesus, Frasier, I get your point.

FRASIER

I have plenty more.

ROZ

How are you not depressed? This is a tragedy.

FRASIER

Roz, Macbeth was a tragedy. Medea was a tragedy. This was simply an inevitability.

ROZ

I didn't think you'd be so quick to roll over.

FRASIER

And here I thought you would be.

ROZ

Zip it, Doc.

Frasier settles into his seat.

FRASIER

All I can do is give listeners my very best. The fight is over. If KACL no longer has funding, what are the options? Prop up the entire station by myself? As station manager, you knew there was nothing left to be done.

ROZ

You could at least give a damn. Everyone else is leaving. And look at me. I can't believe I'm stooping this low.

FRASIER

Yes, Roz, I'm sure filling in as my producer is an unimaginable hardship. Thank you for debasing yourself on my account.

ROZ

I've done worse.

FRASIER

As for myself, I've passed grief and moved on to acceptance. I'm looking forward to a few months on a beach, taking time for myself.

ROZ

Frasier, you work two hours a day. You've had nothing but time.

FRASIER

(pointing to clock)

Speaking of, aren't we on in five?

ROZ

Dammit.

Roz races to her booth. Frasier puts on headphones.

FRASIER

Good afternoon, Seattle. I'm Dr. Frasier Crane and this is an auspicious time, as you all well know. After twenty-five years, this is my final week on the air. We are passing the figurative torch to--
(checks papers)
Gimlet Media, who is taking over the station as a West Coast base for their podcast empire.

Frasier shudders.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Roz, who's our first caller?

ROZ

On line one, we have Danica, who's fed up with being ghosted.

FRASIER

Intriguing. Hello, Danica. I'm listening.

But he's definitely not.

DANICA (V.O.)

Hey, Doc. Well, you see, I've been noticing a pattern. I date someone for a few weeks and then suddenly, poof! They disappear.

Frasier's distracted by something on his desk.

DANICA (V.O.)

And I dunno, is it me? What can I do to keep from getting ghosted?

Frasier snaps to: 'Ghosted'? Roz shrugs. He's on his own.

FRASIER

Well, *Monica*, when we lose someone close to us, it's normal to feel their presence around us at holidays, birthdays, anniversaries.

DANICA (V.O.)

We never made it long enough to have an anniversary.

FRASIER

What you need is a sense of closure.

DANICA (V.O.)

Right. But how can I get closure if they keep disappearing?

FRASIER

The disappearance of someone who loves us is a difficult challenge--

DANICA (V.O.)

But I'm saying they don't love me. Or at least that's what they said.

FRASIER

Of course they loved you. Our memories often play tricks on us--

DANICA (V.O.)

You think they loved me? Maybe I am remembering this wrong.

FRASIER

Exactly. These ghosts you're seeing aren't real. They're fragments of memories and all the wonderful times you shared together.

DANICA (V.O.)

We did have a wonderful time. Maybe I should keep reaching out.

FRASIER

Exactly! Continue to communicate with these "ghosts" in every way. Write letters, go to the places you went together, keep your memories alive. Don't let go of your past.

Behind the glass, Roz buries her head in her hands.

DANICA (V.O.)

Oh...kay. I'll give it a try.

FRASIER

Thanks for calling, *Danielle*.

INT. FRASIER CRANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Frederick's in the recliner, watching sports. Frasier enters.

FREDERICK

Hey, Pops. You're home early.

FRASIER

I thought I'd spend some quality time with you tonight.

FREDERICK

Got called out again for using that picture, huh?

Frasier hangs up his coat.

FRASIER

I don't know what you're referring to.

FREDERICK

Told you it's not cool to use a twenty-year-old airbrushed headshot on your profile.

FRASIER

But I haven't aged a day.

Frederick shakes his head. Frasier surveys the messy apartment en route to the kitchen.

FREDERICK

Say, get me a beer, wouldja?

FRASIER

Sure, Dad.

Frasier stops in his tracks: What did he just say?

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Uh, *Freddie*. Sure.

He goes to the kitchen, gets a beer, returns.

FREDERICK

Bet you didn't think it'd be this tricky, huh?

FRASIER

What do you mean?

FREDERICK

It's tough enough for guys my age, can't imagine how dating must be for you. Single. *Again*.

FRASIER

Thank you very much for your sympathy, but I'm doing just fine. Besides, a little name recognition goes a long way. I have a platform. I have cachet.

FREDERICK

Hate to break it to you, but everyone has a platform.

(beat)

Talked to Charlotte lately?

FRASIER

I don't know to whom you're referring.

FREDERICK

C'mon. Half time's over in three minutes and I'm about to clock out.

FRASIER

Oh, *that* Charlotte? She made it very clear that we were incompatible for the long-term.

FREDERICK

How'd she do that?

FRASIER

By saying "Frasier, we're incompatible, please don't call or write me." And apparently she moved to the Ozarks.

FREDERICK

You'd fit right in there.

FRASIER

Speaking of fitting in, you look especially comfortable.

FREDERICK

Sure am. I just woke up from a nap with my hand down my pants.

FRASIER

Honestly, sometimes I wonder where you came from.

FREDERICK

Stick your hand down your pants and there's your answer.

FRASIER

That's unimaginably crude.

FREDERICK

Not much else to do around here anyway.

FRASIER

You could see the specialist your doctor recommended. Get you back in fighting shape.

FREDERICK

When you do the damage I did, there's no getting back.

FRASIER

I'm sorry, Freddie. You know, I can't stop thinking about it. The best boarding schools. Ivy League bound. A prodigy in every way and you chose...sports?! But I know how much baseball meant to you.

FREDERICK

I played *football*, Dad. Christ.

Frasier attempts to sit on the couch amid the junk.

FRASIER

Well, we have to get you moving--

FREDERICK

You want me to move?

FRASIER

Moving around sooner or later.

FREDERICK

I just need a little time.
 (drains his drink)
 And another beer. Be a pal?

Frasier reluctantly heads back to the kitchen.

FRASIER

You're just as stubborn as--
 (turning on his heel)
 Say now, I have an idea.

FREDERICK

(watching TV)
 Uh huh.

FRASIER

I know someone who might be able to
 get you in shape. You'll like her.
 (beat)
 Frederick?

FREDERICK

I'm listening.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: YOU COULD DRIVE A PERSON CRAZY

NILES (V.O.)

Absolutely not.

FRASIER (V.O.)

I'm at my wit's end. Please, Niles.

INT. CAFE NERVOSA - DAY

The brothers are holding court in their local coffee shop.
 Prices have tripled to keep up with the Starbucks machine.

NILES

Frasier, I know he's your son, and he's my nephew, but his fascination with Daphne is, well, if I had to diagnose I'd say he was obsessive--

Niles inspects his espresso cup.

NILES (CONT'D)

--is it me or is this demitasse featuring a hairline fracture? A man cannot take a proper sip from a defective cup. This is ludicrous.

FRASIER

You don't say?

NILES

Besides, Daphne is incredibly busy these days--

DAPHNE enters, wearing khaki with binoculars around her neck.

DAPHNE

Hello, Frasier. Hi, darling. Thought I might bump into you here.

FRASIER

Morning, Daphne.

Niles offers his seat.

DAPHNE

(re: the seat)

Oh no, I'm just grabbing something to go. A golden-crowned kinglet was spotted in the park and I'm dying to get a peek before the wee thing disappears. You need anything?

NILES

If you'd please order me another cappuccino--

DAPHNE

Not the cup again.

Daphne goes to order. Frasier eyes Niles: 'Busy?'

NILES

Her birding is all-consuming.
(but back to the cup)
I'll have to speak to the manager.
(MORE)

NILES (CONT'D)

I just ordered the most exquisite Ann Demeulemeester set, I can direct him to the shop.

FRASIER

Enough with the damn cup! Freddie can't get complacent. A grown child boomeranging back into a parents' home can lead to larger issues: inertia, codependency, an inability to think for oneself.

DAPHNE

(calling over)

Niles, did you want whole or skim?

NILES

You decide, Angel Hair.

Niles looks at Frasier.

FRASIER

You of all people know the dangers of that.

NILES

Fine. But I'll have to set some ground rules.

INT. FRASIER CRANE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Frasier is lecturing Freddie in the living room.

FRASIER

(reading)

No drinking alcohol or sparkling beverages in her presence. No physical touch. No shared laughter--

Frasier crumples Niles's list of demands.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Just don't be a creep, OK?

FREDERICK

Please. Has a Crane man ever been a creep?

CUT TO:

FRASIER'S WIDE EYES.

His face is PRESSED against the glass. Ogling something.

FRASIER

Oh, mama.

INT. KACL RADIO STATION - DAY

We see from his POV: A beautiful woman sitting in his chair.
This is GRACE.

Frasier enters the booth.

FRASIER

May I help you with something?

GRACE

Just giving this a spin.

FRASIER

Well, allow me.

Frasier tries to twirl her chair seductively, and BANGS her
knee against the desk.

GRACE

Ow, dammit!

FRASIER

Sorry, goodness, I'm terribly--

GRACE

It's fine. I'm--
(inspecting her shin)
--that half-marathon can run
itself, I guess.

FRASIER

An athlete, too? The river runs
deep. I'm Dr. Frasier Crane,
welcome to my booth.

GRACE

Hi, Frasier. I'm Grace. This is the
fourth time we've met.

Whoops.

FRASIER

I apologize. I've been a little out
of sorts lately--

GRACE

I've heard cancellation can do that to a man.

FRASIER

Canceled? Who was canceled? I wasn't canceled. The entire station was gutted and fed to these piranhas from Brooklyn. They're so ferocious, you wouldn't believe--
(beat)

Now I remember. How was your trip?

GRACE

Wonderful. Piranhas love a cross-country flight.

FRASIER

And a little nibble, too.

But nah, Grace isn't buying what he's selling.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Did you arrive to scorch our earth and start over?

GRACE

No, I came to offer you a job.

FRASIER

(wait, what?)

That's...very kind of you. But you'll have to get in line. Now that I'm on the market my list of suitors has been a mile long.

GRACE

Really? Who?

FRASIER

Well, there's, um, I'm tuning out of the radio game altogether. There's a certain intimacy that can only be achieved through private practice.

GRACE

Last year our most popular podcast had one hundred million downloads and the host became a New York Times-bestselling author. Twice.

FRASIER

Well. I tip my hat to him.

GRACE

Her.

It was Grace, of course.

FRASIER

Right. Well, as they say, who needs intimacy if you have fame?

GRACE

I usually cultivate talent from the ground up. I turned the owner of a famous Instagram dog into a trusted expert on dog psychology and expressing canine anal glands.

FRASIER

Excuse me?

GRACE

But name recognition is a helpful shortcut to building an audience.

FRASIER

I'm flattered, but there is a beach somewhere with my name on it--

GRACE

You only have to work two hours a week, our producers book all the guests, and our new intern will voice all the protein powder ads so you don't have to.

FRASIER

Where do I sign?

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: NOT WHILE I'M AROUND

INT. FRASIER CRANE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Frederick attempts an elaborate yoga pose as Daphne looms.

FREDERICK

What do you call this one?

DAPHNE

The "Murder Victim."

FREDERICK

Geez.

DAPHNE

Straighten your leg. So how are you and Dr. Crane getting along?

FREDERICK

Good.

DAPHNE

He's a stickler when it comes to rules. 'The crystal goes here' and 'My snifter goes there' and 'No speaking before nine a.m.'

FREDERICK

Yeah.

DAPHNE

And a bit chatty, too, which grates on the nerves. I always found it funny that he never seemed to realize when he went on and on and on and on.

FREDERICK

Uh huh.

Daphne presses her palm into Frederick's foot.

FREDERICK (CONT'D)

Ooh, that feels--ouch!

DAPHNE

You're going to need to stretch more regularly if you want to get back on your feet. You can't be a couch potato forever.

Frederick gets up, then slumps into the recliner.

FREDERICK

Would that be so bad?

DAPHNE

A grown man living with his father. Wouldn't that cramp your lifestyle?

FREDERICK

I don't mind. Plus, he's got like a billion kinds of cheese in the fridge. Plain brie, double brie, triple brie--

DAPHNE

Careful. The men in your family all need to watch the cholesterol.

FREDERICK

I'm fine watching it so long as I don't need to do anything about it.

DAPHNE

Get up. Three more sets to go.

FREDERICK

Oh brother.

The front door OPENS to Frasier, buoyant as a balloon.

FRASIER

Hello, all. I have fantastic news!

No response.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Aren't you going to ask what it is?

DAPHNE

I assumed you were going to keep talking.

FREDERICK

Yeah, that's what you always do.

FRASIER

Fine, I'll tell you. You are looking at the next great, global podcast sensation!

Crickets.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Well?

FREDERICK

They're not really my thing.

DAPHNE

Oooh, is it going to be a true crime podcast? Are you going to follow around a guy you suspect is a serial killer and then we get clues that he might be a serial killer and then I'll start thinking that everyone I meet might be a serial killer, too?

FRASIER

Tempting as that sounds, I'm actually going out on a limb and will be advising people about their mental health.

DAPHNE

That's a bit dry, don't you think?

FRASIER

(deflating)

No, I do not.

FREDERICK

Well, congrats, Dad.

DAPHNE

No retirement then? No beach?

FRASIER

They need me to start right away. Get a few episodes ready to go. Besides, the beach is like Patti LuPone. It's not liable to disappear in the next century.

FREDERICK

Who?

Frasier doesn't dignify this with a response.

DAPHNE

I'm happy for you, Dr. Crane. No one loves his job more than you. In fact, I've never met anyone more obsessed with his own career. My Grammy Moon used to say that when a man's ego is tied to his job--

FRASIER

Thank you, Daphne. That's enough.

Frasier crosses to his home bar.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

I suppose I'll toast then.

FREDERICK

Yeah. To new beginnings.

FRASIER

I do seem to have a remarkable habit of overcoming adversity.

(reciting)

(MORE)

FRASIER (CONT'D)
"Paint me the bold anfractuuous
rocks faced by the snarled and
yelping seas--"

ARF. ARF ARF. What was that?

DAPHNE
There's your yelp alright.

FRASIER
Frederick. What did you--

Suddenly, an adorable, springy dog BOUNDS into the room.

FRASIER (CONT'D)
Oh dear god.

He JUMPS on the table, and stares directly at Frasier.

FRASIER (CONT'D)
Is this a nightmare?!

FREDERICK
No, this is Bart.

DAPHNE
(petting him)
What a little darling.

FREDERICK
My roommate had to go to a wedding
in France. I said it would be OK if
he crashed with us.

Frederick tries to get Bart to sit. No dice.

FRASIER
Freddie. You're my son and I love
you. But I cannot allow a dog to
invade my domestic quarters.

DAPHNE
Oh, Dr. Crane--

FREDERICK
It's just until I'm back in my own
'domestic quarters.'

FRASIER

I'm loath to spend my so-called Golden Years vacuuming fur and hearing the pesky rattle of canine toenails on my Brazilian walnut floors, which I just had refinished by the finest woodsman in Seattle.

Bart JUMPS to the floor, to Frasier's horror.

FREDERICK

But Grandpa had Eddie. I don't see how this is any different.

FRASIER

Yes, well.

(a moment)

It is and it isn't. I don't need to explain myself.

Frasier heads to his bedroom with his sherry.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm going to draw a bath and celebrate my myriad accomplishments.

He's gone.

DAPHNE

Strange.

FREDERICK

What?

DAPHNE

That's what all the serial killers say.

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: LOSING MY MIND

INT. KACL RADIO STATION - THE NEXT DAY

Frasier walks down the hallway. Roz catches him.

ROZ

So what time's your flight?

FRASIER

Excuse me?

They enter his booth.

ROZ

Aren't you heading to Tulum or who-knows-where on Saturday after we wrap up this dog-and-pony show?

FRASIER

That does beg the question: Who is the dog, and who is the pony?

ROZ

You don't want to know my answer.

FRASIER

And well, I can't recall my flight time. Morning, I believe.

ROZ

You *believe*? You're full of it. I know you're not leaving. Stacey from billing saw you with Ms. Podcast Queen. Did she get her tentacles around you, too?

FRASIER

Oh, if only she'd squeeze.

ROZ

And what about me? Did the last few decades mean that little to you?

FRASIER

Oh, Roz. I didn't--I thought you'd move on. Start a new chapter.

ROZ

I accepted long ago that this--
(meaning him)
--is the book I'm stuck with. And it is not a short story.

FRASIER

True. We've written enough to make Knausgaard envious. I'll talk to Grace about finding you a position--

ROZ

They already have dozens of producers and editors.

(MORE)

ROZ (CONT'D)

A bunch of twenty-two-year-old guys who eat, drink, and sleep wearing noise-canceling headphones, all while acting like they invented the goddamn idea of listening to people talking. IT'S CALLED RADIO. AND I INVENTED IT, OK?!

FRASIER

How do you know they sleep with headphones?

ROZ

I didn't say I hated them, OK?

FRASIER

Ah.

ROZ

I just can't believe you'd do this--
(as something dawns)
Oh. I get it.

She crosses to her booth. Frasier follows.

FRASIER

What?

ROZ

Nothing.

FRASIER

Spit it out.

ROZ

Fine. It's obvious. You're afraid to retire. You're afraid what it'll be like when no one needs you anymore and you don't have anywhere to be at two p.m. every weekday. I remember what it was like when you came back from Chicago after Charlotte dumped you.

FRASIER

I was not *dumped*.

ROZ

OK, skip it. But you were nervous to start again. Yet you picked up the routine like that.

Roz snaps her fingers.

ROZ (CONT'D)
 Maybe you're a little afraid to be
 alone in a quiet house.

FRASIER
 That's ridiculous.

ROZ
 OK. You'd know better than me.

FRASIER
 Besides, Freddie is staying with me
 until his apartment is renovated,
 the place is anything but quiet.

ROZ
 Alright. But grief shows up in
 strange ways.

On his way back to his booth:

FRASIER
 Thank you, Ms. Kübler-Ross. That's
 most helpful.

Roz motions they're about to go on air. Frasier sits.

FRASIER (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Ridiculous.
 (into mic)
 Good afternoon, Seattle. This is
 Dr. Frasier Crane. Roz, who's our
 first caller?

ROZ
 On line one, we have Steve, who's
 having trouble coping with his
 father's sudden death.

Frasier double-takes.

FRASIER
 And who do we have on line two?

ROZ
 Dead air. Steve's your man.

FRASIER
 Alright, Steve. Go ahead. I'm
 listening.

STEVE (V.O.)

Hey, doc. Yeah, I'm--well, you see, my dad passed on and it really hit me like a ton of bricks.

FRASIER

I can imagine.

STEVE (V.O.)

And I'm just wondering, uh, will it ever get easier?

FRASIER

The short answer is yes. But the long answer--how long has it been?

STEVE (V.O.)

Six years.

FRASIER

Six, *six* years? Try six months, OK, then we might be able to talk about the fresh sting of grief. Then we might be able to talk about the silence and the "what ifs" and the absence of the person who raised you, who confounded you, who you finally began to understand after many long, challenging years--

STEVE (V.O.)

Hey, doc, you OK?

FRASIER

(recovering)

I apologize. This isn't a measuring contest.

STEVE (V.O.)

I hope not. My dad was five-six.

Frasier laughs.

FRASIER

Why don't you tell me about him?

As they continue their conversation, we...

CUT TO:

TITLE CARD: BEING ALIVE

INT. FRASIER CRANE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Daphne and Frederick are engrossed in a book.

DAPHNE

See this one? The wandering tattler. I spotted him last Sunday puttering around like he didn't have a care in the world.

FREDERICK

You don't say.

Frasier enters the apartment.

FRASIER

Hello, Daphne, Freddie.

FREDERICK

Hey, Dad.

DAPHNE

Evening, Dr. Crane.

Frasier hangs his coat and approaches.

FRASIER

I was wondering. Do you think I've been acting a bit unusual lately?

DAPHNE

No more so than any other day.

FRASIER

Roz seems to think I'm reluctant to retire because, well, I started tuning her out when I caught the word 'grief,' but that can't be it.

DAPHNE

Hmm. A bird who's in mourning will often vocalize in strange ways. Or flap its wings to signal distress.

She raises her arms; Freddie mimics her. The door FLINGS open. Hello, Niles.

NILES

Unhand my wife!

Niles bounds over, flapping his own chicken wings. They stare. There's nothing to unhand.

DAPHNE

Evening, dear. How was your day?

Frederick ruffles his hair.

FREDERICK

Hey, Unky Niles.

Niles is disarmed and at a loss.

NILES

My day was, uh, unremarkable.

He's still suspicious. Frasier's at the home bar.

FRASIER

Sherry, Niles?

NILES

No, thank you. I need to keep my wits about me.

FRASIER

The Queen Mary set sail on that one long ago.

Just then, Bart SPRINTS into the room. Niles stares, Frasier doesn't notice.

NILES

Excuse me, Frasier? Is Pavarotti still alive?

FRASIER

Of course not, Niles. You know he died in 2007.

NILES

I thought so, but now I'm worried I'm having some sort of time reversal episode.

He points to the dog. Frasier turns.

FRASIER

Freddie! I thought I made myself very clear earlier.

FREDERICK

What am I supposed to do, throw him out on the street?

FRASIER

An alley would suffice.

DAPHNE
 (petting Bart)
 Niles, maybe we should get a dog?

NILES
 Ho! If I wanted to hear whimpering
 from the other side of a double-
 bolted room in the middle of the
 night, I'd go back to Maris.

FRASIER
 Niles, now that you're here for
 some inexplicable reason, I'd like
 your opinion on something. Roz
 thinks I have a fear of retiring,
 that I don't want to be alone, and
 that I--I can't remember, something
 to do with grief.

Niles waits.

FRASIER (CONT'D)
 Well?

NILES
 Well, what? As reluctant as I am to
 agree with Roz about anything,
 that's all true.

FRASIER
 You can't be serious.

NILES
 Do you finally want to talk about
 this?

DAPHNE
 (to Frederick)
 Perhaps we should give them some
 privacy...

NILES
 Halt! You're not to leave the
 perimeter of this room!

DAPHNE
 (pointed)
 Or what?

NILES
 (wilting)
 Did I mention how lovely you look
 today, my pet?

DAPHNE
 Uh huh. "My pet," my arse.

Daphne and Frederick leave. Niles watches her go.

FRASIER
 (snapping fingers)
 Hello?

NILES
 (he comes round)
 Frasier, I've been trying to have
 this conversation with you for
 months. You've been absolutely
 impenetrable.

FRASIER
 I have not. Besides, there's
 nothing to discuss, I'm heading to
 bed, goodnight.

He paces to his bedroom.

NILES
 Frasier. Please.

Frasier turns. Niles motions to the couch. Frasier comes
 back, but doesn't sit. A moment.

FRASIER
 Well?

NILES
 Well.

FRASIER
 I'm not going first.

FRASIER CRANE'S KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Daphne is rifling through the refrigerator.

DAPHNE
 Five cheeses! The man's got a death
 wish.
 (to Freddie)
 I know why you're here, you know.

FREDERICK
 Yeah, my busted linoleum's getting
 replaced.

DAPHNE

Sure it is. I've spent enough time in this family to know when one of you is lying. Your shoulders hunch and your eyebrows creep all the way up to your hairline--

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM:

Frasier's shoulders are hunched, his eyebrows sky-high.

FRASIER

"Lingering" emotions, I don't know what you're talking about!

NILES

Frasier, after Dad--

(beat)

All the planning and arrangements and that eight-hour drinking fest at Duke's from which I'm still recovering--that reminds me, I forgot to look up 'pickleback.'

(beat)

We didn't get a chance to discuss the big picture. And then everything happened at the station. Your problem-solving brain took over. And I feel as though you might have gotten swept up by other distractions before you had a chance to adequately deal with Dad's death.

FRASIER

I've dealt. I'm an expert dealer. Fly me to Vegas, plop me at Caesar's, slap on a name tag, and I'll show you who's a good dealer--

BACK IN THE KITCHEN:

FREDERICK

You got me. My apartment isn't being renovated. Slumlords don't even have the word "renovation" in their vocabulary. I just...he sounded so down, you know?

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM:

FRASIER

Besides, everything's perfectly fine! It's a beautiful day!

(MORE)

FRASIER (CONT'D)

We live in a beautiful city! It's
2020 and America is beautiful!

NILES

Now I really know you're lying.

FRASIER

Plus, I'm a psychiatrist for crying
out loud, of course I know how to
handle grief.

NILES

You don't have to handle anything.
You can and should feel all the
emotions you want. That's the only
way to move on.

FRASIER

Well, how about you, huh?

BACK IN THE KITCHEN:

DAPHNE

I know what you mean. Our living
room has turned into a rec room
with baseballs, basketballs,
footballs everywhere. Niles is
working his way up to learning how
to bounce one.

BACK IN THE LIVING ROOM:

NILES

Frasier, I just spent half of
David's college fund on a rookie
baseball card featuring some kind
of overly muscular sportsman for an
activity with which I'm completely
unfamiliar, all as a sort of a
pseudo replacement for Dad. So,
yes, that's how I'm handling it--
not the best way, not the worst
way. But it's a way.

FRASIER

When Mom died, I thought I couldn't
feel more lost. And then, you know,
three marriages later.

(a wave of his hand)

But now...

NILES

It takes time.

FRASIER

I suppose if I had to analyze this rationally, I feel as though a chapter of my life is simply over.

Frasier sits.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

Is this what it feels like to no longer be a son? What a strange sensation. And if I'm not a son, and if I don't have my career...

(beat)

Who am I?

NILES

Well, you're a brother.

Daphne enters with drinks.

NILES (CONT'D)

And a friend.

Frederick enters.

NILES (CONT'D)

And a father.

FRASIER

That's all true.

Frasier regards Frederick with a smile.

FRASIER (CONT'D)

I just wish--I can't believe I'm about to say something so cliché, which I've heard thousands of people say to me over the years, but which I've never truly understood until now.

(then)

I wish I had more time with him.

NILES

Me too.

FREDERICK

I do too.

DAPHNE

I miss that ol' goat every day.

Their eyes move toward the recliner.

FRASIER
I can still hear that laugh.

NILES
The incessant click of his remote.

DAPHNE
The pop of his Ballantine.

POP! Frederick cracks his beer.

FRASIER
(raising his glass)
To Dad. Marty Crane was one-in-a-
million.

They toast.

EVERYONE
To Dad.

They sip. Frasier surveys the recliner.

FRASIER
Can you believe he stuck me with
that thing? What a perfectly
appropriate ending.

As they linger with their memories...

Bart RUNS over, LEAPS onto the recliner, and SETTLES.

The Crane family smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW.