

[2.4]Flour Child

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Transcript {nick hartley}

ACT ONE

Scene One - Radio Station

Frasier is taking a caller on his radio show. Roz is in the producer's booth.

Maggie: [v.o:] It's not that I don't like him, Dr. Crane: it's just that he's got so attached to me. Roses every day for a week after two dates!

Frasier: Maggie, the first thing you have to do is sit Gavin down for a nice long conversation. [*Frasier notices Roz shaking her head*] A frank and honest discussion, tell him that though he wants to go at one speed you need to go at another. [*Frasier notices Roz shaking her head again*] Tell him you're not rejecting him and that you're fond of him but if he doesn't give you some breathing room... you know, suddenly I wonder what Roz, my non-PhD holding producer thinks you should do?

Roz: Well, I just think that any guy that's that clingy after two dates has a major insecurity problem. I say dump him now: head to the hills and don't look back.

Maggie: [v.o:] It's so good to hear that, Roz. [*Frasier is surprised*] That's what I wanted to do but I felt so guilty. Thanks so much, bye. [*hangs up*]

Frasier: And that takes us to commercial. This, for those of you that may have forgotten, is the [*angry:*] "Dr. Frasier Crane Show!"

Roz enters and hands Frasier a pass, a piece of paper and a big card.

Roz: Here's your new parking pass. I confirmed your dinner reservations for three; at your father's request you'll be dining at "Chez Shrimp."

Frasier: Oh!

Roz: There are two letters that you've got to sign: a card for Clarence the guard that we're all signing, and a letter for the sign-ups for the KACL bowling team - I'll file this right in the trash.

Roz exits the studio. Frasier looks at the card. It's in the shape of a big teddy bear.

Frasier: Oh wonderful, another card. Of course, I, as resident wit

here, will have to think of something clever to say. Well, at least I've got another gala KACL birthday bash to look forward to. I can just taste that frozen Sara Lee cake right now, whilst, on applause, a full-grown adult snuffs out a handful of tiny candles!

Roz enters hearing him grumbling.

Roz: What are you grouching about?

Frasier: Oh nothing, nothing.

Frasier opens the card. It begins playing music.

Frasier: Yes, the pageantry never stops.

FADE OUT

Scene Two - Taxi Cab

A lady (Arleen) is driving Frasier, Martin and Niles home. They are in heavy traffic and car horns can be heard all over.

Martin: Mr. Fancy-pants! You've gotta buy a German car!

Frasier: It's not my fault it broke down.

Martin: Hey, if you bought American, they wouldn't have to tow your car halfway across the state to get it fixed. That's why I always buy American. Breakdown, you can drive to the nearest garage. I could break down all alone in the middle of Alaska...

Frasier: Finally a thought to raise all our spirits!

Niles: This traffic is murder. I'd suggest we walk home but I'm afraid what the humidity will do to these loafers. Does calfskin pucker?

Frasier: Yes, Niles! That's why on humid farms, the calf is the most made-fun-of of all the animals!

Niles: There's no point in being snide. We're all going to be in here for a while, we might as well try and make pleasant conversation. We are a family, after all, it shouldn't be that hard.

There is a long silent pause. Then Martin starts up talking... to Arleen.

Martin: So, you been driving long?

Arleen: Not really.

Martin: I bet you have some pretty good stories, though?

Arleen: You guys ever hear of a woman having a baby in a cab?

The three kid about and ad-lib "yeahs" and "we've all heard that one."

Martin: Why, did it happen in this cab?

Arleen: No, I think it's about to.

Martin: [*shocked:*] You're pregnant!

Arleen: Yes. [*begins screaming in labor pains*]

Frasier: Well, don't panic, it may just be false labor.

Arleen: My water's just broken! I'm sitting in a puddle of water.

Niles pulls his feet up.

Niles: Calfskin, calfskin!

Frasier: Niles!

Martin: I think the closest hospital is First Methodist.

Frasier: Dad, we'll never make it in this traffic. I think we better

pull over.

Niles: Please try to park facing down hill.

Frasier: Niles!

Arleen: I can't have my baby here!

Frasier: All right, there's no reason for you to be concerned. You're in the presence of two trained medical professionals. [then] Niles, help the woman.

Niles gets out of the cab. He opens her door and she falls out. After much screaming he pushes her back in and closes the door.

Frasier: No, Niles! The other door.

Niles goes to the other door and gets into the cab. Meanwhile, Martin picks up the squawk box.

Martin: Is anybody there? Come in!

Niles: All right, the most important thing you can do right now is breath deeply. Just do as I do.

Niles breaths in and out. She copies.

Frasier: Are you feeling faint or out of breath?

Niles: [hyperventilating] Yes, both of those.

Man: [v.o:] Hello, go ahead.

Martin: Yeah, I'm calling from cab number... 804. This is an emergency. Your driver, Arleen, just went into labor. We're at the corner of 14th on Sycamore. We need an ambulance here right now, do you hear me? Over.

Man: [v.o:] Yes, I'll get right on it.

Arleen: Ah, it really hurts.

Niles: It's okay, it's natural.

Arleen: No, you're squeezing my hand!

Niles stops.

Frasier: Get a hold of yourself, Niles!

Niles: I'm sorry, I only did this once before in medical school. And all I remember is a bright light, lots of blood and then a linoleum floor hurtling towards my forehead.

Arleen: You fainted!

Niles: Oh, switch places with me, honey, and see how you do!

Frasier: Oh, Niles get out of there. I'll help her.

Niles gets out of the cab and Frasier takes his place.

Arleen: The baby's coming now!

Frasier: If it does come, I'll be here to catch it. Now listen, just continue with your breathing. [she does] Now, I don't want you feeling guilty for having your baby in a cab. No, there's nothing to be ashamed of. I'm sure many great Americans have been born this way. Cab Calloway comes to mind. My particular area of medicine is psychiatry and I like to specialize in the head, you know, not the lower portion of the body - it's much less messy that way. Not that your lower half is messy at all, it's quite beautiful... not that I'm looking! [she screams] It's hurting a bit?

Arleen: No, you're driving me crazy! [chucks a cap at him]

Martin pushes Frasier out and gets in himself.

Arleen: What, are you a doctor too?

Martin: No, I'm a retired cop.

Arleen: Well, what took you so long?

Martin: Everything's going to be just fine, sweetheart. Now I've delivered more than a few babies in my lifetime and some of them are even older than you are now. Now, Frasier's going to hold your hand and help you with your breathing. And Niles is going to look out for an ambulance and I'm going to get ready to bring your beautiful baby into this world. Okay?

Arleen: Okay.

Martin: Now, are there any questions?

Niles: Yes, should our meter still be running?

Martin and Frasier gives him a look as Arleen screams with another labor pain and throws up a hand that knocks Niles out cold.

FADE TO:

Scene Three - Frasier's Apartment

On the dining room table, Daphne's bathrobe is laid out.

Daphne: [o.s:] Hello? Are you back yet?

When there is no answer, Daphne rushes in wearing just a towel and her shower shoes. She picks up her nightgown to put it on. However, at that moment the Cranes enter. Daphne, half out of her towel, holds the robe in front of her, seemingly naked behind it. Niles gapes, and even Frasier and Martin are stunned.

Daphne: Well go on, turn your heads.

Daphne turns round to change. The three men turn round 180 degrees and face the wall - however, Niles continues turning until he is back where he started - staring at Daphne. Frasier puts a stop to it and turns him back just before Daphne can catch him. She's ready.

Daphne: Okay.

They all turn back.

Daphne: So, I guess you've had some excitement tonight.

Niles: [the wrong end of the stick:] No, I haven't!

Frasier bats his arm.

Daphne: Well, your father sure made it sound exciting on the phone. Delivering a baby in a taxi.

Niles: [realising:] Oh, that. I don't think of that as excitement as much as my sworn duty to use those skills I honed in medical school.

Frasier: Yes, Niles ran down to a falafel stand for a pot of hot water.

Martin: What I can't get over is that feeling of being there right when a person's life begins. One minute it's just this blob in some lady's stomach, next minute it's a person.
[visualizing:] Blob - Person!

Frasier: The miracle of birth summed up in one poetic phrase.

Daphne: I bet you have some fond memories of when your son was born.

Frasier: Oh yes, of course. I remember the very first time I held him in my arms as a newborn. And it was as if everything in the universe simply melted away. There was just a father, a son and the distant sound of Lilith saying, "If you ever come near me again, Frasier, I'll drop you with a deer rifle."

Martin: At least nowadays fathers get to see their sons being born.

In my day, they stuck us all in the waiting room, smoking cigarettes and reading "Life" magazine. I still remember the exact article I was reading when Niles was born. It was about Mickey Mantle. Talk about life setting you up for a fall! Well, it's been a long night. I'm turning in.

Martin exits to his bedroom.

Frasier: Night, Dad.

Daphne: I can't wait to see what kinds of dreams I have after all this talk about childbearing. Probably that one where my mother shows up and says, [*imitating old woman:*] "Well, Daphne, you're fifty now and you've never given me grandchildren." [*normal voice:*] Then I say, "That was my choice to make, Mum, I was thinking of my career." [*mother's voice:*] "Oh sure, your career, but did you ever think of me?" [*normal, getting carried away:*] "Mother, I don't want to start this again, just drop it." [*old voice:*] "But will she drop it?" [*normal:*] "Oh shut up, mother!" [*old voice:*] "Don't talk to me like that, young lady..."

Daphne carries on and exits to her room.

Frasier: I wonder how many more people she's got in there with her.

[*pause*] Sherry, Niles?

Niles: No, thank you.

Frasier: You seem awfully reflective, is something on your mind?

Niles: Actually, yes. For the past several months I've noticed my thoughts often drifting to the same subject: will I ever be a father?

Frasier: Ah.

Niles: There are pros and cons, of course, but watching that child's birth tonight I realise it's something I really want... I think.

Frasier: Well, it's perfectly natural to have parental stirrings around at your age.

Niles: Uh, er, no, this is more than stirrings. I wake up nights thinking about it.

Frasier: Have you talked this over with Maris?

Niles: Not yet. I like to know what I want before Maris tells me. I'm just not sure I'm really ready for fatherhood.

Frasier: Well, Niles, no-one's ever really sure. You know, in schools these days, teenagers who are thinking about becoming parents are given a ten-pound sack of flour to keep with them for a week as though it were a baby.

Niles: [*laughs*] You're kidding?

Frasier: No, no, no, they hold it, they care for it, they never let it out of their sight. It gives them a very good idea of the cost and responsibility of being a parent.

Niles: Hmm, that's very clever. What could be better than hands-on experience? Might be worth a try.

Frasier: Well, I wasn't actually suggesting.

Niles: Well, why not? It's the perfect week: Maris is away, I'm desperate to resolve the issue; Frasier, where do you keep the flour?

Niles begins searching the living room.

Frasier: In the kitchen.

Niles: [*excited:*] In the kitchen.

Niles and Frasier enter the kitchen.

Frasier: The cabinet next to the sink.

Niles: [*opens cabinet and gets out a pack:*] Yes! Here it is.
[*reads*] Extra refined. [*to Frasier:*] It's taking after his old man all ready!

Frasier: No Niles, that's the sugar. If we're going to do this, we're going to do it right.

Frasier puts the sugar back and brings out the flour.

Frasier: Now, here is the flour. [*reads*] Bleached, one hundred percent fat free, best when kept in an airtight container.
[*to Niles:*] It seems this one's taking after its mother.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FLOUR CHILD

Scene One - Café Nervosa.

Frasier is sat at the table when Niles enter with his bag of flour to his shoulder.

Frasier: Hello, Niles.

Niles: Hello, Frasier, may I join you? Or should I say, may we?

Frasier: *Mais oui.*

Niles sits with his "baby."

Frasier: I see you're still continuing with our little baby experiment.

Niles: Yes and it's turned out to be quite a learning experience. It's not easy, though. I take him everywhere. Get up for two a.m. feedings, the whole exhausting nine yards.

Niles notices a mother and baby walk past him, he interrupts.

Niles: What a beautiful baby, how old is he?

Mother: Eight weeks.

Niles: Oh, great age isn't it?

Niles turns his "flour child" round and we see that he has two plasters on.

Frasier: Niles, I can't help noticing that your child has a little boo-boo.

Niles: Oh, it's nothing. I was playing him some Brahms the other night, never too early to ingrain them. I guess I must have begun conducting with one of the gilded chopsticks Maris wears in her bun and I accidentally ran him through.

Frasier: What young parent doesn't tell that story?

Niles: The scars were just plain carelessness. The fault of my new houseman, Guy.

Frasier: What did Guy do?

Niles: No, no, [*next to the same pronunciation:*] Guy.

Frasier: Guy.

Niles: Back of the throat, Guy.

Frasier: Oh, who cares?

Niles: He had just given my car the most brilliant shine when I sat the baby on the roof and down it went, down the windshield and onto the driveway. Will you watch him for me while I order?

Frasier nods. Niles lays the new-born on the chair and goes to the counter. Then Roz enters, and notices the sack.

Roz: Hey, Fras. Is this seat taken? [*points to chair with flour*]

Frasier: Well, actually... [*catches himself:*] No.

Frasier takes the flour from the seat and lays it on the floor.

Roz: [*sits*] You'll be happy to know that Clarence is doing a lot better. I just dropped his card off.

Frasier: Clarence?

Roz: Yeah, Clarence the guard.

Frasier: Oh, down at the station, Clarence, oh yes, good. I didn't know he was sick.

Roz: You signed his get-well card.

Frasier: You mean that wasn't a birthday card?

Roz: No, he's in the hospital having a kidney transplant.

Frasier: Oh my God, I thought it was his birthday. I wrote, "Dear Clarence, you're not getting older, you're just getting closer to death"!

Roz: How could you think it was his birthday?

Frasier: I don't know, I guess I just didn't recognise the traditional card for a man in an advanced state of kidney failure was a giant pink bunny rabbit. Do you think he's read it yet?

Roz: No, I don't think so. He was sleeping when I left.

Frasier: I'm going to look like a callous fool. We've gotta get back down there and get that card back.

Frasier and Roz stand up to leave.

Niles: [*enters*] How can you be leaving? [*notices baby:*] I asked you to baby-sit!

Frasier: Oh, Niles! I don't have time to stand here and listen to your insanity, I have to go and steal a get-well card from a kidney patient!

Niles picks his son up and nurses it as the radio star and producer leave.

FADE TO:

NO GUTS, NO GLORY

Scene Two - Frasier's Apartment

Daphne and Frasier are reading the get-well card.

Daphne: What does that say? Geb?

Frasier: [*looks:*] No, no, it's "get." [*reads*] "Get well soon, love Andrea." Just copy it down, move onto the next name.

It then becomes apparent that Frasier and Daphne are copying the names from the old card onto a new, identical card.

Frasier: We'll have to transfer all the old names from this card onto the new card, as quickly as possible, I want to get it back there tonight.

Daphne: So you actually snuck into a man's hospital room and stole his card?

Frasier: I did not sneak in! Luckily, the man was in extreme pain and heavily sedated.

Martin gives his comments from where he is sitting on his "throne."

Martin: This never would have happened if you had taken the time to find out who this Clarence guy was! You never pay any attention to the little people in your life.

Frasier: Yes, well as soon as we're done with this, why don't we invite all the commoners over to drive me down to the town square and give me a good stoning! [doorbell] That must be Niles. He's going to take me down to the hospital.

Frasier opens the door to Niles. He is stood with a wide smile on his face and his flour child hanging from him in a baby carrier.

Frasier: Hello Niles. [notices]

Niles: Hello Frasier.

Niles enters not even thinking about the ludicrous "baby-bag."

Martin: What are you doing with that thing?

Niles: I'm forging a parent-child bond that will last forever.

Martin: Well that's a relief, I was afraid it might be something stupid!

Niles: If it makes you feel any better, I don't wear this in public, I just wanted to get the complete picture of parenthood.

Frasier: And?

Niles: It's driving me batty!

Niles sits down and knocks the what-would-be head of the baby against the table.

Niles: Oh the feedings every two hours. Constant monitoring where he is, I can see how parents can be obsessed with worry. Last night, I actually had a dream my flour sack was abducted and the kidnapper started sending me muffins in the mail. Well, on the plus side, I've learned a lot. I think if I ever undergo through the real thing I'll make quite a wonderful parent.

Niles lifts it out of its pouch revealing to us that it is in fact burnt to a crisp.

Frasier: Niles! What has happened to your child?

Niles: I was practicing my Tai Chi exercises this morning and I accidentally kicked him into the reflecting pool. That's when I brought him inside and left him by the hearth to dry.

Frasier: He caught on fire?

Niles: It's not as careless as you make it seem. After all, a real child would have cried before it burst into flames!

Niles's watch begins to beep.

Niles: Oh, time for his nap.

Niles puts the sack on the couch with it's "head" on a cushion.

Niles: Turn him over if he starts fussing, will you, dad?

Martin: No.

Niles: I'm role playing, dad.

Martin: Try playing the role of a sane person.

Frasier and Niles cross to the sherry, they pour.

Frasier: So Niles, any closer to making a decision about fatherhood?

Niles: To tell you the truth, no. At one minute I think there's no chance in hell I'll ever be able to stand the stress. The next I find myself daydreaming about taking my son on his first trip to the museum or listening to him pick out his first feeble "Für Elise" on the piano and I swear there are tears in my eyes.

Frasier notices that Eddie has begun ripping Niles's son to bits. Flour is all over the couch.

Frasier: Oh, dear.

Niles: What?

Frasier: Eddie.

Daphne: [Australian accent:] That dingo's got your baby!

Niles notices and stands up to go to the rescue.

Niles: Oh God, Eddie!

Daphne: Don't worry, I'll clean up that mess, Dr. Crane.

Niles: Oh my God.

Martin: For God's sake, Niles, calm down. I think it's time you realized something. That is not a person, it's a bag of flour. There's an easy trick to tell the difference: people don't usually come with pop-over recipes on their backs. This whole thing's stupid. We're talking about having a baby here. You don't make that decision intellectually, you make it in here. [*points to his chest*] In your gut. You must have a gut feeling, Niles - what is it?

Niles: I'm not sure.

Martin: Well, you better be because no amount of thinking can prepare you for what having a kid is really like. It's hard, full of surprises. Like maybe your kid won't want to take piano lessons or go to the museum. He might want to go to a baseball game.

Niles: Don't even say that.

Martin: Just trust yourself, son. That's all. You'll know if it's right or not.

Frasier: [*picks card up*] Well, Niles, I'm finished with this now, if you're ready to take me to the hospital.

Niles: You know Frasier, I'm beginning to wonder if this whole experiment wasn't just a way of convincing myself that I'm ready for something when I know in my heart, I'm not.

Frasier: What do you mean?

Niles: I want to have a baby, but I just don't want it enough. That's the hardest thing I've ever had to admit.

Frasier: Why do you say that?

Niles: Oh, because it's so selfish. I'm the right age, I have the money, the energy.

Frasier: Niles, it's only selfish when people have babies for the wrong reasons. I think more people should do what you did and find out if they're really ready. Look, just because you feel this way now doesn't mean things can't change a few years down the line.

Niles: Perhaps you're right. Of course, Maris and I will be over forty then. Maybe it wouldn't hurt to look into getting some of her eggs frozen.

Frasier: Ooh, I suspect they're only a few degrees away from that now.

Frasier and Niles exit.

FADE TO:

Scene Three - Hospital Corridor

Niles and Frasier are walking down the corridor of the hospital.

Niles: You're certainly going to a lot of trouble for this Clarence fellow. Who is he?

Frasier: Beats me. Some guy down at the station.

Frasier enters the room with the patient in. The old man is in bed fast asleep. Frasier notices get-well cards strung across a string above the man's bed so opens the card to put it with the rest. However, upon opening the card the music strikes up. Frasier quickly puts the card up and the whole string falls down covering the sleeping man in cards. Meanwhile the music from the card puts a finishing touch to the scene.

Frasier quickly hurries out slamming the door behind him. When he gets out, Niles has gone, and he comes face to face with an old man walking along the corridor. This man is the real Clarence. He is walking with his wife, Mary.

Clarence: Dr. Crane! It's Clarence. You weren't in there looking for me, were you?

Frasier: As a matter of fact I was, yes.

Clarence: They changed my room.

Mary: Oh, this is so sweet of you.

Frasier: Well, you know, Clarence is such a fixture down at the station. I just haven't felt the same there without him.

Clarence: You find the time to come down here while the rest of those bums at the station don't even send me a card.

Frasier: Gee, Clarence, there's an explanation for that...

Frasier opens the room he just went in and offstage we hear the music and a man screaming, "Make the music stop!" Frasier quickly shuts the door.

Frasier: You see, the others at the station, they just don't know you the way I do. Yes, well you get yourself well and get right back there. I miss seeing you every time I walk by the.... place you tend to be. [calls:] Niles.

We now see another hospital corridor. It is the birth ward. Niles is looking through a window at all the newborns.

Frasier: [calls:] Niles. [enters] Niles, what are you doing?

Niles: Looking at these babies. I can't help wondering if I made the right decision.

Frasier: Niles...

Niles: Oh look at them, they're healthy, beautiful, lovable...

Frasier: Flammable!

Niles: How can I deny myself this experience? Maybe I'm more ready for parenthood than I thought.

The cab driver from Scene Two enters from a room across the hallway. She is carrying her baby.

Arleen: Hey, what are you guys doing here?

Frasier: How funny running into you, and this must be...

Arleen: Yes, little Nathan. Oh, I'm so glad I ran into you. We both want to thank you guys again. So, would one of you like to hold him?

Niles: Yes. [he is thrilled to hold him and does so] Shush! [Nathan starts crying] Why shouldn't you cry? Everything's so new to you, so much to do, a life to live.

Arleen: No, you've got his leg pinned back.

She takes him from him.

Arleen: Well, see you guys. Say hi to your dad for me. [*leaves*]

Niles: Perhaps I made the right decision.

Frasier: Oh, I think so. Ready to go?

Niles: Uh-huh.

Frasier exits as Niles carries on staring at the newborns.

END OF ACT TWO

Credits:

Frasier's Apartment

Daphne is in the kitchen making a cake. There is a bowlful of flour on the side. There is also a pack of flour which Daphne picks up and cuddles as if it were a baby. Martin enters and laughs at her. So Daphne takes some flour and throws it at Martin. Martin does it back to her. They carry on throwing more and more flour until Daphne takes the whole bowl and throws it over his head as we FADE OUT.

Guest Appearances

Special Guest Star

CHARLAYNE WOODARD as Arleen

Guest Starring

AARON HEYMAN as Clarence

LINDA PORTER as Mary

ALVY MOORE as Patient

ROBIN KRIEGLER as Mother

Guest Callers

AMY MADIGAN as Maggie

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