

B to A

by C.M. Miller

Script Treatment - 2021

Logline:

When a college athlete finds her life uprooted by an unplanned pregnancy, her eccentric, older, army veteran brother lends a helping hand.

While they navigate the hurdles of returning home, family restoration and the adoption process, a beleaguered couple struggle with infertility clings to hope.

Overview:

‘**B to A**’ is a crackling, character-driven drama that centers on ABIGAIL, a bright, college student and star singer, whose life is uprooted by an unplanned pregnancy. But when a conversation with her older brother RUSSELL convinces her to pursue adoption rather than a quick abortion, her choice pushes her, and those around her, to the far edges of trust and sacrifice.

Like the film, *Magnolia*, ‘**B to A**’ branches out with interlocking vignettes to show the daily struggles and decisive moments of characters who are shattered, challenged, or ultimately redeemed by Abigail’s decision to adopt.

As Abigail moves away from college to an apartment with Russell, she faces snarky detractors, miscommunication and friction with the baby’s father JOSH, whose sister TINA pushes to adopt the baby herself.

Meanwhile, MARK and JEN, a hopeful, but infertile couple, who struggle to navigate the adoption process and continue amidst setbacks. Despite a botched adoption, in which the pregnant mother who choose the couple changes her mind after giving birth, a social worker named NANCY encourages the couple to maintain hope.

This story unfolds with textured moments and subtle, crackling dialogue that coaxes rather than shouts, in the vein of comedic, but touching character dramas like *Nebraska*, *Juno*, and *Manchester by the Sea*. The story explores how small, but genuine moments of courage, faith, and sacrifice can multiply, changing the lives of others in incredible ways.

Character List:

ABIGAIL PRICE – early twenties, sharp, determined. A college swimmer who likes her ducks in a row. Her struggle with unwanted pregnancy leads her toward a decision to adopt.

ISAAC – Abigail’s son, raised by Jen and Mark. Shy, a bit disinterested, but intrigued by the story of how he was adopted.

RUSSELL PRICE – thirties, ABIGAIL’s older brother. Cantankerous, witty, and usually broke, he’s a generous joker who is struggling to find direction and confidence after returning from a stint in Afghanistan.

JOSH LACROIX – early twenties, father of ABIGAIL’s baby. Shy but dramatic singer who does ‘singing telegrams.’ Josh assists Rachel through her decision to pursue adoption, rather than abortion.

TINA – Josh’s older sister, who pushes to adopt Abigail’s baby with her husband, Donald.

MARK – mid thirties, smart, logical, accomplished, a Christian who runs sound for his church and works as a systems Engineer. Loves math and photography.

JEN – mid thirties, a relational, humorous, people person who wants desperately to start a family.

ANNIKA – mid-twenties, a young mother of two pregnant with her third child. She chooses Mark and Jen as the couple, but is then dissuaded by her mother, and decides to keep the baby after it has been born.

NANCY – A social worker at the Wayfinder adoption agency; gruff and no-nonsense, but nonetheless helpful, she works with both Annika and Abigail, as well as Beth and Jen, who hope to adopt.

SHEA – Jen’s swim coach.

ANNIKA’S BOYFRIEND – early twenties, leather-jacket wearing fellow who refuses to sign over his new son for adoption.

Story Treatment

***STORYLINE A** – A reunion with Abigail, her biological son Isaac, and his adoptive parents, Mark and Jen

***STORYLINE B** – TEN YEARS EARLIER - Abigail, Josh (Isaac's biological father) and her brother Russell's story.

***STORYLINE C** – TEN YEARS EARLIER – Mark and Jen's pregnancy and adoption journey.

Act One

A) We open on a panoramic of gorgeous Lake Shasta, out in Northern California. It's summer. While a deer and its fawn drink from the lake, Isaac, (10 years old) watches them through binoculars from the roof of a houseboat. When teenagers nearby jump from a houseboat into the lake, Isaac ventures to the edge, scared, but determined to take the plunge. He's interrupted by Abigail (30's), who tries to talk to him. Isaac runs back into the houseboat.

B) *Ten years earlier...* Abigail, (20's) leans forward on a pool starting block. She swims, leads the pack, but then falls behind and crashes against the wall. Something's wrong... She crawls out of the pool throwing up, and Shea (40's) a coach, insists she sit out. While she's recovering, Abigail sees her friend Josh (20's), wearing the college's barracuda Mascot costume. He waves her over and they talk in the bleachers. Josh seeks closure on their one-night stand from several weeks ago; he's stunned when she tells him she's going to take care of the resulting pregnancy herself, and that there's nothing between them. Josh pushes to help but Abigail insists that she doesn't need any help.

C) Mark and Jen (mid 30's) move boxes into a new house, playfully arguing over whether or not to make the spare bedroom an office, or keep it ready for a newborn. At Jen's insistence, Mark relents -- this time it will work.

B) In her dorm room, Abigail gathers herself, then makes the call to for an appointment at the health clinic. Meanwhile, Josh calls Abigail's older brother Russell, whom he met once, to tell him about the situation.

C) Mark and Jen wake up early, mixing the hormone cocktails for in vitro.

B) Russell (late 20's) cleans up the spare room in the apartment he shares with full-time gamer Syd. He takes a number of Polaroid pictures of the room, then hops in his car... the 'Faith mobile' a beat-up old van that doesn't start without prayer. He drives out of town, on a mission.

Abigail confronts Shea in her office, asking her for a few days off. Shea asks what's going on and when Abigail misleads her, she demotes her to alternate on the lineup for a national tournament. Abigail backs up, telling her that she's asking time off so she can take an abortion pill and then return in a week. A bit unsteadily, Shea offers herself as a resource, agreeing to the time off.

After making it past a kiosk worker, Russell surprises Abigail at her dorm cafeteria. Russell asks Abigail how she's doing, but she dodges his inquiries, focusing instead on what he's been up to since returning back from Afghanistan.

Russell hints that he knows – he came across the state to talk to her about her pregnancy — a matter of life and death. Abigail pushes him away, at one point racing Russell across the quad of her campus. She's enraged that he found out... but glad that he's there to talk to. Abigail tells him about her appointment and Russell tells her to hold off and offers her a B plan: come back home and move into his place for her pregnancy, and the adoption process. Russell lays out Polaroid photos of the threadbare spare room, proving it's for real. When the faith-mobile gets towed, he runs out, leaving Abigail to contemplate.

C) Mark and Jen get a call from the Doctor – still nothing. Jen storms outside, but Mark follows her, suggesting they look into adoption.

B) Unsettled, Abigail calls Russell, arguing a bit more, trying to figure out who told him. Russell holds his ground, encouraging her to think of their Mother, her sacrifices, the faith she clung to in hopes that they would too.

C) Mark and Jen sit through a droll orientation at the adoption clinic. They interview with Nancy (40's) who asks about their life story, and insists on hearing about their attempts to get pregnant so far. Unwilling to share, Jen gets up to leave, but Nancy talks straight to her, convincing her to stay.

Act Two

B) Crossing campus, with all the visiting families with small children seemingly leaping out at her, Abigail stops off an interfaith chapel to think.

She studies a picture of her mother, taken in the hospital before she died of cancer. Abigail appears at Shea's office and says she has to quit the team for this year. Shea supports her decision.

C) Mark and Jen fill out their couple's profile; Mark hides his unease by writing horrible joke answers, and a steamy version as if it's for a dating site... Jen sorts through pictures and finds the perfect one – Mark and her sitting on the edge of Mark's family's houseboat at Lake Shasta. Now hopeful, she emails the profile in.

B) Abigail drives through down to her home city, not knowing what's next. Remembering something, she pulls over, calls Russell and tells him she's coming. Russell hangs up and shouts to Syd that his sister's coming. They go full commando on the apartment, cleaning it up with ridiculous hacks and tomfoolery.

A downcast Josh has lunch with Tina, (30's) his older, married sister. Pressing, Tina discovers what's going on. She pressures Josh if Rachel might consider letting her and her husband adopt the child. Josh promises to ask.

C) Mark runs sound at church, waving as Jen walks off with her Sunday school class. He settles down as the Pastor goes on about 'faith in the hope of things unseen...' but on the computer, he sees an email from Nancy at the adoption agency. When the service ends and he calls Jen over, she reads it and makes a bit of a scene...

B) Abigail moves into the apartment, astonished and amused at how they've cleaned and decorated it. Seeing that Russell is still living out of his army suitcase, Abigail insists on taking him to a thrift store. Abigail knows her way around it so well that they offer her a job. Seeing that Russell is holding onto their deceased mother's belongings, she offers to go visit her at the cemetery with him and then give them away.

C) At her office, Nancy sits with Annika, (20's) a young mother of two noisy children and a very pregnant belly. Hopeful, glowing, Mark and Jen sit to join them. While the father isn't there to finalize the adoption, Annika promises he'll approve of them. Mark and Jen are beaming.

B) Pregnant and showing, Abigail works at the Thrift store, swims laps at a local pool, and browses for a junior college class on the couch while Syd watches *Gattaca*. She makes an appointment with a junior college counselor and another with the adoption agency, IMing back and forth with Josh.

Tina calls Josh for an update, and learns that Abigail moved back home; she's going through the adoption process without his input. Tina makes plans to go visit Abigail herself.

Abigail talks with a guidance counselor who, upon learning she is pregnant, asks if she needs any help about family planning. When Abigail says she is planning to adopt, the counselor shares that she's adopted -- and that she her adoptive family decided to move her to the foster care system.

C) Mark and Jen cook dinner at home, anxious, excited. They say a prayer before dinner and pray for Annika and her baby.

At the hospital, Nancy is invited into the room to meet the Father, and get his signature on the final adoption papers. The Father asks her to wait outside while he talks to Annika, who is holding and admiring her baby. They call Nancy back in...

B) Russell comes home, complaining about being laid off. Abigail asks about going to visit their mother, but he storms off instead... Abigail sees a letter from the army laying across his desk – she learns Russell left Afghanistan with a dishonorable discharge.

Working at the Thrift store, Abigail runs into Tina, who introduces herself and immediately presses her, saying she and her husband want to adopt the baby. When Abigail pushes back, Tina pressures her with scary stories – adoptive parents who aren't who they say they are. Abigail leaves.

C) At home, Mark gets a call and Jen rushes into the room. But as she reads his facial expression, she walks out, unable to hold back tears. The adoption with Annika fell through and they are crushed.

B) Abigail confronts Russell on his discharge, his problems since returning home. He stiffens but she presses, insisting she let her help him back. Russell punches the glass window to their balcony. Abigail runs out to the car, and cries.

C) Jen speaks with her Pastor and resigns her teaching position. In the car, Mark encourages her to hold on, but she insists he make the call and remove their profile from the agency. At her office, Nancy hangs up, takes a printout of their online profile and writes 'redacted' on it.

B) Russell comes out to the car and apologizes. To his surprise, Abigail rebukes him – where was he when their Mom was dying? Running from the problem, overseas. She demands to know who told him about her pregnancy, and Russell

tells her it was Josh. Abigail slaps him... but she gets a phone call from Josh, apologizing for what his sister Tina did. Abigail confronts him and he says that he'll sign over for the adoption and let her choose the couple. Somewhat encouraged, Abigail forgives Russell, who reveals he's leaving for a job in a new state.

C) Mark and Jen take down the nursery, assembling a desk and bookshelves – the spare room is going to be an office after all.

Act Three:

B) At the apartment, Russell and Syd replace the glass themselves. Russell talks to his boss at work, then to a counselor. He fulfills his promise to take Abigail to visit their Mom. They drop their Mom's things off at the Goodwill.

Josh drives down to the city. When he arrives, he meets Abigail and takes her to the adoption agency, where they meet with Nancy. Abigail looks over profiles of couples, and she lands upon the profile of Mark and Jen, which says 'redacted.' Nancy explains that they've asked their profile withdrawn, but Abigail says she'd like to meet them... if they're willing.

Russell leaves an envelope of cash in Aideen's room and says goodbye with Syd. He gets in the faith mobile and starts driving across town.

C) At home, Mark gets another phone call... Jen won't hear of it, but he argues that they should at least give it a chance

B) Abigail and Josh come to the apartment and find an envelope of cash – enough for rent through the rest of the year. Abigail calls Russell to say goodbye, and that she might have found a couple.

A few weeks later, a VERY pregnant Abigail and Josh meet Mark and Jen at Nancy's office. It's a bit awkward at first, nerves are tense and fraught. But Abigail warms to Mark and Jen. All four of them sign the adoption papers, making it official. Josh calls Tina to tell her the news – Abigail's chosen a couple and he's signed the paper. Tina congratulates him, but cries after hanging up. Josh calls Russell.

B) Russell drives across the state, but then stops and turns around. Having delivered her baby, Abigail and Josh share a moment with it. She names it Russell,

after the one convinced her to tip the scales. Russell comes in, and Josh gives them a moment.

C) Delighted and beaming, we hear Mark and Jen rushing out to bring their new baby home. They haven't converted the office back to a nursery... we see a chest of drawers outfitted with pads and a blanket.

B) A few weeks later... Slender again, Abigail dives in the water, and races. She checks in with her guidance counselor, confirming that credits have transferred and she's been accepted back to her college. Seeing that strange number called her phone, Abigail calls it and talks to Jen, calling to ask if she'd like to visit her son, whom they've named Isaac. Abigail says she's not sure just yet. But she tells Jen that she'd like to stay in touch and maybe... someday, she can meet Isaac.

Finale:

A) Back at Lake Shasta...*ten years in the future*... Mark and Jen load up the car, but Isaac is nowhere to be found. Mark peers across the water and sees two figures standing on top of the houseboat.

It's Abigail and her son, Isaac, holding hands. He counts down and jumps – Abigail stays behind. *Psych!* C'mon, Isaac shouts, you promised!

Abigail takes a breath, savors the moment, and jumps.