CLOSE-UP OF VADA SULTENFUSS' FACE

VADA
I remember before I was born, wounded up like a fur ball in the highly overrated fetal position, luckily I'm not claustrophobic, but on rainy days I still feel a tightness in my left shoulder. So now that my stepmother's pregnant, I understand what the baby's going through, and I'm not jealous at all, really, not at all.

VIEW OF THE SULTENFUSS' DINING ROOM TABLE. VADA, HARRY AND SHELLY ARE SEATED. SHELLY IS VERY PREGNANT

HARRY
Hey you're not eating your meatloaf.

SHELLY
If I eat it I'll throw up.

HARRY
Well you should at least try a little bit.

SHELLY
Then I'll throw up a little bit.

VADA
(to Shelly's stomach)
Are you sure you wanna get involved in this?

OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, MUSIC IS PLAYING OUR HOUSE, INSIDE HARRY IS SINGING

HARRY
...windows are illuminated by the evening sunshine through them fiery gems for you, only for you, our house, is a very, very, very fine house, with two cats in the yard, life used to be so hard, now everything is easy 'cause of you...

Harry walks to Vada who is placing chairs in rows in the funeral room

HARRY
Vada, try to scrunch these chairs together a little more.
VADA
Dad, I'm trying. The chairs, they won't scrunch.

Doorbell rings

ARTHUR
I'll get it.

HARRY
Well I guess we'll just set up more chairs in the library and pipe the sermon in like we did with Old Man Hasselmeyer.

VADA
Better fix that speaker, it makes the minister sound like an astronaut.

Arthur opens the front door to reveal Judy

ARTHUR
Oh, hello Judy.

JUDY
Hi Arthur.

Harry walks past

HARRY
Hi Judy, come on in.

JUDY
Hi Mr. Sultenfuss.

ARTHUR
(to Vada)
Look who I found.

VADA
Hi Judy!

Judy doesn't enter the funeral room. She doesn't like the idea of being anywhere near a corpse

JUDY
(nervous)
Hi.

VADA
Come on in!

JUDY
That's okay.

VADA
It's just a corpse.
JUDY

I know that.

VADA

You should be here when they bring in a body that's been dead for a couple of days, and they haven't found it yet, 'cause it was in an apartment, and no-one came to visit, or floating in a river, and then the body starts turning this weird shade of green, you know, like watery pea soup? The arms and legs deteriorate first, the body looks like a raisin with four fat legs. Anyway, this is why I'm seriously considering cremation. Judy??

front door closes

Judy???

ARTHUR

I think you lost on the raisin with the four fat legs honey.

LIVING ROOM, HARRY AND SHELLY ARE SITTING WATCHING TV, VADA GETS A DRINK AND JOINS THEM

Harry and Shelly are laughing

HARRY

I got a card from your Uncle Phil in Los Angeles today, said he went body surfing.

VADA

I don't know if I can picture Uncle Phil body surfing.

SHELLEY

I don't know if I want to.

HARRY

Vada I wanna ask you a favor, remember you can absolutely say no if you want to.

Shelly gives Harry a look

I'm just bringing it up for discussion.

SHELLY

But Harry, I thought we decided we weren't gonna do this.

Vada looks confused

VADA

Do what?
HARRY
Well the thing is your room is right next door to ours, and so we thought, well, I thought, if you were willing we might move you to Grammoo's room, and use your old room for the nursery. See we're gonna be up half the night with a newborn and there'll be a lot of noise....

VADA
You want me to move?

HARRY
Well not far, just down the hall. Plus Grammoo's room's a lot bigger, and you get a view of the whole neighborhood.

Vada looks a little put out

VADA
Okay, no problem.

HARRY
Okay thanks, atta girl.

OUTSIDE, ON THE DECK, HARRY IS PLAYING HIS TUBA, SHELLY COMES OUT

SHELLY
(at the door)
Harry?
(closer, a little louder)
HARRY??
(in Harry's ear)
*HARRY*!!!!

Harry gets a fright and blows a foul note

I'm sorry to interrupt honey but Vada's upset.

HARRY
Oh, she's fine, she'll love her new room.

SHELLY
Look we react to every kick this baby gives, maybe Vada's trying to tell us something too.

BOWLING ALLEY, VADA AND HARRY ARE BOWLING, CLOSE UP OF HARRY HOLDING UP HIS BALL

HARRY
The thing to remember is you must visualize a spare. The parabola of the arcing ball must intersect with the pyramid of the pins at precisely this angle of attack.
Harry bowls his ball, which goes straight into the side ditch.

Shit.

Harry walks back to Vada.

VADA
Visualize a spare?

HARRY
Well you know what I mean.

VADA
So, what's on your mind?

HARRY
Me? What makes you think there's something on my mind?

VADA
You're passing up Archie Bunker to go bowling, you've gotta have an angle.

HARRY
No, I just thought it'd be nice if the two of us had an evening out so we could... talk.

Vada stands up and picks up a ball.

VADA
Shelly's already told me all about sex.

HARRY
She told me too, I mean, she told me she told you about sex, I personally knew about sex long before I met Shelly.

VADA
I figured you did.

Vada bowls her ball and gets a perfect strike.

VADA
Yes!

Vada returns and sits down.

HARRY
Ahh, strike, not, not bad at all. No, this talk isn't about sex, it's, well there've been a lot of changes, and I know you're upset about losing your room, but the baby's gotta go somewhere.

VADA
No it's okay, I understand, really.

HARRY
Honey that's very mature, I'm proud of you Vada.

Harry then gets up to bowl again

VADA
Maybe I should just move to China. One kid per family, that way you don't lose your room.

HARRY
Hey, why don't you just keep your room and we'll put the baby in the back yard.

VADA
Don't do that, you've got the whole garage.

HARRY
Oh yeah, right-between the power mower and the weed killer.

VADA
Dad I'm kidding, you can have the room.

HARRY
Seriously?

VADA
Seriously.

HARRY
Great.

Harry stands poised to bowl...

VADA
I'm thirteen, maybe it's about time I got my own apartment.

THUD, Harry drops his ball and turns around looking staggered, then sees that Vada is definitely kidding

VADA AND JUDY ARE IN A SHOP SMELLING PERFUMES

JUDY
My mother can't have any more kids.

VADA
Neither can mine. She's dead. It's Shelly who's pregnant.

JUDY
(raising wrist to Vada's nose)
What do you think?
Vada smells Judy's wrist

VADA
I think I'm leaning towards passionflower, it combines the traditional floral scent with the musty aroma of samba wood.

A group of teenage guys enter the shop

VADA
What are you staring at?

JUDY
It's Kevin, I don't want him to see me.

VADA
See you? He can smell you from there.

JUDY
Oh God, he's coming over here, act natural, totally natural.

Vada and Judy stand close to a rack of sunglasses, Kevin and his two friends approach

JUDY
(looks at Kevin with a large smile, and slowly takes her sunglasses off)

Hi Kevin.

KEVIN
Hi.

Vada turns around wearing sunglasses with enormous lenses

KEVIN
(to Vada)
Real cool Sultenfuss, you look like a grasshopper.

His group of friends laugh and move off

VADA
What's the matter?

JUDY
He likes you.

VADA
Likes me? He said I looked like a grasshopper.

JUDY
Boys always pretend they hate you when they really like you.
That's ridiculous, so, if you really can't stand someone, then you pretend that you're really crazy about them?

I don't know. And I don't care, Kevin's a jerk and I don't like him anymore. He's all yours!

If grasshopper is a term of endearment, I've got a lot to learn.

So have you guys thought of any new names for the baby?

Vada looks annoyed and drops with a thud the load of books she is carrying

Umm, yeah, if it's a girl I'm kinda leaning toward Esme.

Esme?

Yeah, you know that kinda sounds like a noise your nose makes, (nasalised) es-MEH. I mean it's...

And what if it's a boy?

Oh Harry Junior of course.

Dad, when a boy likes you, does he pretend that he doesn't like you? And if he pretends that he doesn't like you how can you tell that he likes you?

What boy likes you?

It's just a question, it's not about anybody.

BEDROOM IN SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, ARTHUR, SHELLY, HARRY AND VADA ARE MOVING AROUND DOING VARIOUS THINGS

VADA'S THOUGHTS
Uh oh, here comes puberty.

SHELLY
Vada, I think what you're talking about is the fear of rejection. You see men will do anything to avoid looking foolish.

HARRY
Oh, Shell, that's ridiculous, where are my needle nosed pliers?

SHELLY
Listen, if a boy wants to do homework with you, it really means he didn't have nerve to ask you out on a date, so you'll get your homework together and pretend to be studying, and the next thing you know you're ordering pizza and talking about your favorite movie stars.

VADA
So you're saying...What are you saying??

HARRY
Honey, ahh, guys don't wanna appear over anxious, so if you think there's a boy that might like you, let him know that you like him, so he won't feel he's taking such a risk when he's thinking of asking you out.

Okay?

OUTSIDE, VADA IS RIDING HER BIKE DOWN THE PAVEMENT AND ARRIVES AT JUDY'S HOUSE

Vada presses the doorbell, Judy opens the door

JUDY
Hi.

VADA
Hi, wanna help me pick out wallpaper for my new room tomorrow?

JUDY
ehh...I don't know I mean....

Kevin appears from inside the house holding a carton of juice

KEVIN
Is it okay if I drink this?

VADA
It's okay with me, hi Kevin.
Well if it isn't Vada, the grasshopper girl.

JUDY
Stop it Kevin.

KEVIN
I was kidding, it's a joke okay.

JUDY
We were just doing our homework and studying for the test.

VADA
And the next thing you know you're gonna be ordering pizza and talking about your favorite movie stars. See ya.

Vada gets on her bike and rides off

VADA'S THOUGHTS
In the future I think I'll stick to asking Dad for advice on embalming.

VADA IS CLIMBING THE STAIRS COMING TOWARD THE CAMERA, SHE HEARS SHELLY SINGING "BABY LOVE" AND HARRY PLAYING THE TUBA IN A BEDROOM AND ENTERS

SHELLY
Baby, Baby, Baby love, my baby love, I need you oh how I need you, why do you do me like you do, haven't I been good to you, so deep in love with you, Baby, Baby.

I read an article that says if you sing to the baby it's a calming influence.

VADA
Assuming the baby's a "Supremes" fan.

SHELLY
I bet your mom sang to you.

HARRY
Well if there was an article about it I'm sure she did. She was always reading.

SHELLY
Yes I know, it runs in the family.
(to Vada)
New book?

VADA
The Collected Works of Alfred Biedermeyer

HARRY
Her favorite poet.
SHELLY
(shaking head)
Never heard of him.
(burp)
Excuse me.

HARRY
How about a nice glass of milk?

SHELLY
And some taco chips so I can dunk.

Harry leaves, and Shelly leans forward to talk to Vada

SHELLY
You know Vada, being an older sister, you're gonna be very important in this baby's life.

Vada's glance shifts onto Shelly's enlarged breasts, she smiles, a little embarrassed, Shelly looks down at them and laughs

SHELLY
They're enormous, I know.

VADA
Is there milk in them already?

SHELLY
No, the milk comes when the baby comes.

VADA
When did you umm, I mean umm...

SHELLY
Oh, I was a very late developer, they used to call me "Shelly Two Backs". All my friends had real bra's, not like the training ones I had.

VADA
Why do they call them training bra's? It's not like learning to ride a bike.

SHELLY
I know, I guess it's just sort of preparing you for the rest of your life. It's not easy being a woman.

VADA
You're telling me.

VADA'S ROOM, BOXES EVERYWHERE, VADA IS LYING ON HER BED THINKING TO HERSELF

VADA'S THOUGHTS
All the great writers pondered the meaning of life and death. I've been thinking a lot about
my mother recently, even though I don't have any memories of her. I wish I could see her just once, even if it were only in a dream. I know she'd help me figure things out.

VADA'S ENGLISH CLASS AT SCHOOL

MR. OWETT

Bless me now with your fierce tears I pray, do not go gentle into that good night, rage, rage against the dying of the light.

What do you think Dylan Thomas is saying here? "Rage against the dying of the light."

KEVIN

He's mad 'cause they shut-off his electricity.

class laughs

MR. OWETT

I think he was referring to life energy Mr. Phillips, which in your case wouldn't cause much of a power shortage, now would it?

class goes "oooohh", Vada then raises her hand

MR. OWETT

Vada?

VADA

The poem is really about attitude. It's about not giving up and...it's easy to be overwhelmed sometimes but...that's when we should...force ourselves to push on.

Alfred Biedermeyer said, "To heed the urgent inner voice, embracing destiny, not choice".

MR. OWETT

That's very good Vada. All right, moving on, I want you to give you guys a chance to write.

class does an "awe man"

Hey, hey, hey, listen up, I want you to write about someone very special, someone interesting, someone you admire, someone who has achieved something worth writing about, but it's gotta be a stranger, someone you've never met, I want you to investigate the personal side, play Perry Mason, see what you can come up with. All right? Any ideas? Remember two things: Someone who has achieved something and someone you have never met.
Kevin raises his hand

Kevin?

KEVIN

Elvis, the king.

MR. OWETT

Elvis, the king.

another guy raises his hand

Devon?

DEVON

Farrah Fawcet, I love to watch that girl run.

MR. OWETT

Why is that Mr. Reid?

Devon

...never mind.

class laughs

MR. OWETT

Vada what about you, who have you come up with?

VADA

My mother.

MR. OWETT

Your mother?

VADA

I never met my mother.

VADA, HARRY AND SHELLY ARE WALKING DOWN TOWN TALKING

VADA

I know my mom's favorite color was pink, and she ate peanut butter and banana sandwiches for breakfast, but that's not what I would call hard hammered facts.

HARRY

I told you about the pumpkin didn't I?

SHELLY

No.

HARRY

Ah, well, I bought her this huge pumpkin for Halloween, but she couldn't bear to carve it so she saved it for weeks, and it ended up under the Christmas tree.
Then Grammoo said on Christmas Eve, there was this sickening smell permeating the entire house.

Oh no.

Yeah when I picked it up it sort of exploded and liquefied at the same time.

It wasn't funny, it soaked clear through Grammoo's oriental.

There's still a big spot on the floor.

INSIDE A GENERAL STORE, VADA, SHELLY AND HARRY ENTER

Okay, we need wallpaper paste.
(to shop owner)
Hey Cece!

Oh, is there anything else you remember, how did you propose? Was it romantic?

Well, I kinda just blurted it out over a root beer float.

Mmmmmm. Root beer float that sounds good.

Did she mention any contests that she won? I mean she must have had some awards, she was so talented and all.

She was talented, but honey I wish I could help you a little more, it's just that your mother and I had kind of a whirlwind courtship, she came to town with this traveling theater group, I proposed on our second date, two weeks later we were married and almost nine months later you were here and she was gone.

Was it a nice funeral?
HARRY
Oh yes, lovely funeral, Gernaldi brothers did a beautiful job, lots of pink roses...I used the white hearse. Hey, how about this flowered wallpaper for your room?

Vada pulls out a roll of pitch black wallpaper and shows it to Harry

VADA
How about this?

AT SCHOOL, VADA IS WALKING DOWN CROWDED STAIRS BEHIND MR. OWETT

VADA
Hi Mr. Owett.

MR. OWETT
Hey Vada. How's your report coming?

VADA
Great, I have so much to say, I hardly know where to start.

MR. OWETT
You know I've been re-reading Virginia Woolf, I think she'd be a natural for you, she led a fascinating life.

VADA
Thanks, but I think I'm gonna stick to my mom, she led a fascinating life too.

MR. OWETT
I'm sure she did.
   (to Judy and Kevin, who are standing near Vada)

Hey guys.

KEVIN
Vada, he was giving you an easy out so you wouldn't have to write about your mother.

VADA
But I wanna write about her.

KEVIN
You're crazy, what was her big achievement? Did she invent gravity?

VADA
No-one invented gravity, it just exists.

JUDY
Then what did she do?
VADA
Well...I'm not supposed to talk about it, but since I'm gonna write about it I might as well tell you. She was a spy against the Russians.

KEVIN
Oh please, who do you think you're kidding? And where did she spy on the Russians from, here in Pennsylvania??

VADA
No, not here in Pennsylvania, she went to Russia undercover with her acting troupe and got a lot of highly sensitive secret plans sent back. Just when she was about to go home, she got caught, and they killed her.

KEVIN
All right, so when did she have you between all her acting and spying and getting caught?

VADA
That's simple. She was pregnant with me...when she went to Russia and she didn't know...and then when the Russians found out, they waited to shoot her 'cause you're not allowed to kill pregnant women anywhere in the world.

JUDY
So she had you in jail, in Russia?

VADA
Well actually I was born in Siberia and then they shot her and sent me home to my Dad.

KEVIN
Vada, if bullshit wore a bra, you'd be topic. Come on Judy.

Kevin and Judy walk off

VADA
Ohh...ask anyone, ask my Dad!
(pause)
Could be true.

Vada goes to her locker and opens it, exchanging books

VADA'S THOUGHTS
How come guys talk so much when they have nothing to say, and girls have plenty to say, but no-one will listen.

VIEW OF RUG ON FLOOR OF SULTENFUSS' LIVING ROOM, VADA LIFTS UP THE RUG AND EXPOSES THE LARGE BLACK PATCH THAT THE
I used to come down here and sleep on this spot when I was little. My report is gonna be a disaster, everything I know about her fits into one little box.

A box?

Oh Vada, what a sweet baby book!

It's only filled out to page two. I was eight pounds, four ounces. There's so many programs, she was in a lot of plays.

Dad said that when she was on stage, she held the audience in the palm of her hand.

What's this? December 8th, 1958?

I don't know, Dad doesn't either.

Well, it must mean something. She was obviously very sentimental.

This is one of my favorite things, her passport.

(looking at the photo)
Oh Vada she's so beautiful.

Margaret Ann Muldovan, Born in Los Angeles, California, February 7th 1936. Aquarius.

Margaret's my middle name, but everybody called her Maggie. Los Angeles, have you ever been there?
No. You know they say, that it never rains, that you can barbecue on Christmas day...instead of riding your bike, you just surf over to your friends house. Oh, and the place is just crawling with celebrities. I know someone who saw Walter Matthau picking up his dry-cleaning.

VADA
Is that why Uncle Phil moved there?

SHELLY
Uncle Phil just needed a change, a little adventure.

VADA
I wonder why she got a passport if she never went anywhere.

SHELLY
Well you've gotta be prepared.

VADA
I'm definitely traveling some day.

Shelly gets an idea

SHELLY
Why not now?

VADA
What do you mean?

SHELLY
How would you like to go visit your Uncle Phil in Los Angeles...next week during your spring vacation, you could do research on your mom.

VADA
But what about you and the baby? You need me.

SHELLY
Oh, but I'm not due to have the baby for another six weeks or so.

VADA
Yeah, it would be kinda great.

SHELLY
It would be fantastic.

VADA
But Dad'll never go for it.

SHELLY
You leave your father to me.
FOYER OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, HARRY AND SHELLY ENTER THROUGH A DOOR ARGUING

SHELLY
We should encourage her to spread her wings.

HARRY
She can spread her wings, right here in Pennsylvania. You don't send a child alone to Los Angeles, she could come back with her ears pierced, her legs shaved and God knows what else.

SHELLY
She is not a child Harry, she is a young woman, she's on the brink of...

HARRY
Disaster, disaster lurks behind every palm tree.

SHELLY
You're being narrow-minded.

Harry begins to move up the stairs

HARRY
Look, maybe when she's a little older, I'd be more then happy to bring up...

Vada approaches from upstairs

(to Vada)
Ohh...Hi Vada, we were just having a little....

VADA
You were just having a fight about me. Wouldn't you like to hear my opinion?

HARRY
Of course.

VADA
I think that if I'm old enough to accept a new baby, and if I'm old enough to accept a new room, I'm old enough to go to California.

HARRY
Honey I know it's fun to think about these things but....

VADA
I already bought a ticket.
HARRY

What??

VADA

I used my own money and got a great deal, it's a Q47NR five day fare, which means that I have to change planes in Dallas and stay over a Saturday.

There's no exchanges or refunds, so...if you don't let me go then I will have wasted my entire life savings.

HARRY

Ah, uh, uh, bu...but...but I... I... Isn't it against the law to sell airline tickets to minors?

Harry looks at Shelly, who looks guilty

Don't tell me you aided and abetted this little scheme?

SHELLY

Well, Vada needed me.

Vada leaves the room

Besides the airline requires the signature of an adult.

HARRY

Yeah and they forgot to ask for one who wasn't having hormone surges.

SHELLY

Oh come on Harry, we're talking about five days here.

HARRY

I really think we're going overboard for just a simple school assignment.

VADA IS BACK IN LIVING ROOM, RUBBING HER HAND ON THE PUMPKIN STAIN SPOT, WE CAN HEAR HARRY AND SHELLY IN THE BACKGROUND

SHELLY

But it's not a little school assignment. I think maybe all of this is happening for a reason.

HARRY

Reason? What reason?

VADA LIES DOWN AND PUTS HER HEAD ON THE SPOT
SHELLY
Phil's moving to LA, Grammoo's passing, the baby being born, Vada's report, I think...

CAMERA IS BACK ON SHELLY AND HARRY

...maybe all of these are signs, signs that it's time for Vada to take this trip.

HARRY
Signs. OOOOOOOOOOOOH, let me get the loch ness monster on the phone, you two have a lot to talk about. No, I'm sorry, Vada is NOT going to Los Angeles, now I have made my decision and that is final.

AT THE AIRPORT, VADA AND HARRY ARE WALKING OUT TOWARDS THE CHECK IN DESK

HARRY
And remember don't talk to anyone, even if a nun sits next to you, don't talk to her.

VADA
No nuns, got it.

HARRY
And no boys, promise me, oh those LA people are all so corrupt you'll end up pregnant and on drugs...and don't come running to me when you wake up in the city morgue with a tag on your toe having been beaten up into an unrecognizable pulp by some surfer...and DON'T make eye contact, it communicates an implied vulnerability.

Vada hands her ticket to the attendant

VADA
What does that mean?

HARRY
It means...I'm a paranoid nitwit who's never let his baby girl out of his sight for the simple reason he's a paranoid nitwit. So why don't you just say "Oh Dad" and get on the damn plane already?

Vada gives Harry a hug

VADA
Bye Dad, I'll miss you.

HARRY
Thanks, I needed that.

VADA
I'll be back in 137 hours.

HARRY

Have fun.

Vada waves as she boards the plane

Not too much.

OUTSIDE VIEW OF AIRBORNE PLANE, SWITCHES TO INSIDE VIEW OF VADA AT HER WINDOW SEAT, SHE GETS OUT HER BOX AND LOOKS THROUGH IT AGAIN

VADA'S THOUGHTS

It's hard to believe that my mother's whole life fits into this box. I've just gotta think of this stuff as clues...or good luck charms.

But I need more than luck to solve this puzzle, I need a miracle.

CONVEYOR BELT AT AIRPORT IN LA VADA'S BAG DROPS ONTO BELT AND BEGINS TO MOVE ALONG, AT FIRST ATTEMPT VADA MISSES HER BAG, THEN SHE GETS IT

Vada has her bag and stands in the middle of the terminal waiting, a boy is seen running into the building, he stops and looks around, passing straight by Vada, then turning and trying to get a look at her, Vada will not allow this as she keeps turning away from him

BOY

Are you waiting for someone?

Vada stays turned away and does not reply

BOY

Excuse me I asked you a question.

VADA

I'm not supposed to talk to strangers, not even nuns.

BOY

You're Vada right?

Vada turns nervously and looks at him

VADA

How did you know my name?

BOY

Your Uncle Phil told me.

VADA

Where is he?? He was supposed to meet me.
BOY
Hey relax, you think I kidnapped him or something?

VADA
This is California, anything is possible.

BOY
Well if I was looking for a victim, I definitely wouldn't pick your Uncle Phil who outweighs me by about 150 pounds, besides, who would I ask for ransom? You??

VADA
Are you suffering from a chemical imbalance or is it just an attitude problem.

BOY
My only problem is that your Uncle Phil is giving me five bucks to pick you up but I don't get paid 'till delivery.

VADA
Gee, that is a problem.

the boy picks up Vada's suitcase and begins to walk off with it

VADA
Put that down, I'll...I'll call the police!

BOY
What are you gonna do? Tell them that...a polite person helped carry your bag?

VADA
I don't think you're very polite.

BOY
Yeah, well I don't think you're very grateful. A lot of people in your position would say "thank you".

he begins to move off, Vada follows

VADA
THANK YOU.

BOY
Don't mention it.

VADA
I don't even know your name.

NICK
It's Nick.

(giving Vada's ticket to attendant)
There you go.

ATTENDANT
(checks ticket against luggage)
Okay.

NICK
Thanks.

outside

NICK
Oh great, no cabs!

Hari Krishna guy approaches Vada

MAN
I have a gift for you.

he gives her something

VADA
Thanks....

NICK
No THANKS!

VADA
He said it was a gift.

NICK
Yeah, RIGHT.

VADA
I don't need you to be telling me to...

NICK
TAXI!!!

the two rush up to a waiting taxi, cutting off a woman who was about to get in

NICK
Get in...get in!!

TAXI DRIVER
Okay, you look like a man who knows where he's going, where're we headed?

NICK
Take the 405 to Santa Monica, Santa Monica to Whittier, Whittier to Sunset.

CAMERA IS FOLLOWING TAXI FROM SKY, SONG IS PLAYING SWINGTOWN VADA IS WATCHING OUT WINDOW ALL THE SIGHTS, THEY PASS AN OIL PUMP, A HUGE DONUT STORE, CAPITOL RECORDS BUILDING ETC.
Vada waves out the window to a surfer in a red convertible, then they turn off, and pull up to a building with "BUDAPEST auto repair" written on it.

NICK
(paying driver)
There you go.
(to Vada)
See that building, my grandfather built it.
Budapest auto repair.
(points)
That's my room right up there. One of these days this is all gonna be mine.

Vada enters the large garage and sees Phil walking inwards

VADA
Uncle Phil!!

Phil turns around

PHIL
Vada!!
Vada runs and jumps into Phil's arms
Look at you, oh hi, hi, hi!! How are you? You look great, how's Shelly? Your dad?

VADA
They're great.

PHIL
How about Nick? Did he take good care of you?

VADA
He was very polite, worth the entire five dollars.

PHIL
Uh huh, well...good to know.

Phil hands Nick a $5 note

NICK
Thanks

ROSE
(appears from behind a door, holding phone under her ear)
Give it back Nicholas!

NICK
But we made a business deal.

ROSE
What ever happened to a good old-fashioned favor huh?
Nick returns the ROSE
(into phone)
Now Irving our family's been dealing with your company for over forty years now, now either the timing chain is here or isn't here and from what I can see it isn't here, now you wanna come down and explain to the customers why we can't re-assemble the cars because not all the parts are here.

Now come on, I have enough trouble keeping my weight down, I don't need this blubber from you, are we quite clear on this Irving or do I have to speak with your father?
(pause)
Thank you. Yes, yes I love you too Irving.
she then hangs up, and notices Vada

You must be Vada! Oh what a face!
she leans over and hugs Vada
Oh if I had a face like that I wouldn't have to yell so much. I'm Rose, Rose Zsigmond, Nick's mother among other things.

VADA
You're Nick's mother?

ROSE
What, did you think he was raised by a pack of wolves? Don't be misled by the haircut.

NICK
Mom!

Phil moves over to Rose and puts his arm around her shoulders

PHIL
Who knew that when I started working in the finest foreign car shop in LA, I would also find the light of my life.

ROSE
Yeah, well he left out a couple of steps, ah look, I've gotta get back to these bills, Phil will you help Vada get settled?

PHIL
Come on...I'll show you where you're gonna stay.

Vada and Phil go upstairs, and enter a very nicely done up room

PHIL
Here we go...not what you expected from downstairs right? Now well put your stuff over here in this closet...you can unpack later and this is where you sleep. Luckily this sofa bed is really comfortable, I can tell you that from personal experience.

(pointing)
Bathroom, do you have to?
(pointing)
Rose and my room.

VADA
She lives here too?

PHIL
Ahh, that's right, like one big happy family. This is Nick’s room and uhh....

VADA
But...are you engaged or something?

PHIL
Dating, seriously dating. You're thirsty, want something to drink? Sure you do, it's been a long trip.

Phil goes and begins to get Vada a drink

You see Vada, marriage, marriage is a very big step...and...no... not something to be entered into lightly, see I just uhh...I just wanna make very sure that everything is absolutely right before I go jumping into some kind of a...

VADA
Sounds like you have a fear of commitment, Uncle Phil.

PHIL
That's ridiculous, I'm...I'm very, umm, what do you call it?

VADA
Committed?

PHIL
Committed.

VADA
So does that mean that you sleep here every night?

PHIL
Yes, it does.
Phil holds up two containers, one of orange juice and one of milk, Vada

indicates the milk

VADA
Well then that's not exactly dating is it.

PHIL
Vada, I know that traditionally you're not supposed to do a lot of these things before you're officially married...but these are very, very special circumstances.

Phil pours Vada a drink of milk, as she drinks it we hear...

VADA'S THOUGHTS
When sex is involved, it's always special circumstances.

AT THE ZSIGMOND DINNING TABLE. ROSE, PHIL, VADA AND NICK ARE SITTING, EATING

VADA
My parents had a brief, but intensely fulfilling relationship. She's remained a woman of mystery to this day.

NICK
And you're gonna solve the mystery?

VADA
I got it all figured out, I know she went to Wilson High School, so first thing tomorrow, I'm gonna go there and get a copy of her yearbook. That way I can get the names of all the people she was in clubs with and found out who her friends were.

PHIL
Then you'll be all set.

ROSE
Sounds like you're very organized.

VADA
I had to be, I only have five days. So just point me in the right direction and....

PHIL
I'll do better than that. I'll send you off with your own private guide.

Phil looks at Nick

NICK
(mouth full)
Muh??

PHIL
I'd consider it a personal favor.

Nick flashes an evil look at Vada

VADA IS IN A DRESSING GOWN, WALKING TOWARD THE KITCHEN WHERE NICK AND PHIL ARE WASHING DISHES AND TALKING, VADA STOPS BEHIND THE FRIDGE AND LISTENS

PHIL
It's not like you had a whole lot planned for this week right? It'll be okay. Hey, here you go.
Phil hands 10 to Nick

NICK
What's that?

PHIL
Ten bucks.

NICK
What's it for?

PHIL
For the mini-bike fund.

NICK
Wow!

PHIL
Well I know you're not crazy about taking Vada around tomorrow, so...I just want you to know I appreciate it though.

NICK
No problem.

PHIL
You're a good man Nicholas.

NICK
Phil, I think you should consider...

fades as Vada walks off

CLOSE UP OF VADA IN BED. SHE WAKES UP, AND GETS UP, WANDERING OUT ONTO THE FRONT PORCH IN THE FRESH MORNING AIR LOOKING AT LA

EXTERNAL VIEW OF BUS GOING DOWN A HIGHWAY

INSIDE BUS, VADA AND NICK ARE SITTING ON ONE OF THE SEATS

VADA
I thought my mom went to school in LA, we've gotta be closing in on the Grand Canyon. But I'm sure for a trip to the Grand Canyon you'd charge a little more than...ten dollars.

Nick ponders on this for a moment and then looks annoyed

NICK
You know eavesdropping is a very unattractive habit.

VADA
I wasn't eavesdropping, I was overhearing.

NICK
I didn't ask for the money, Phil just gave it to me.

VADA
Well look, I know that all you care about is your precious mini-bike. It's obvious you have no sense of historical perspective, I think we're here.

she pulls the buzzer

NICK
(to driver)
Getting off please.

VADA
Excuse me, pardon, thank you, excuse me.

Vada and Nick get off the bus and walk towards an empty field, there is a plaque standing near them, so Vada goes to look

VADA
Where's the school?

looks at the plaque and reads from it

VADA
Due to a devastating fire June 17 1963, Wilson High School was closed.

I can't believe it! My mother's high school burned down!

NICK
They obviously have no sense of historical perspective either.

VADA
It's not funny! I mean what am I gonna do? Without that yearbook I'm lost. I can't just walk around town looking for someone with a
Wilson High School Letter sweater!!

NICK
Vada.

VADA
WHAT??

NICK
Calm down! We just have to ask ourselves, where your books come from.

I mean they don't appear out of thin air.

INSIDE A PRINTING PRESS SOMEWHERE, VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING BEHIND A WORKER

MAN
Watch these machines now.

VADA
This is really very nice of you.

MAN
It's no problem, I had a mother once myself.

they all enter a large storage room

MAN
If it's in here at all, it's in the back two rows.

VADA
O.K. Thank you very much.

MAN
Happy hunting.

Vada and Nick begin to search through boxes and boxes of books

NICK
I don't mean to alarm you, but I'm getting a nose bleed from the altitude.

VADA
Just remember the needle in the haystack.

NICK
I never did understand that story, did someone find the needle or not?

VADA
What difference does it make?

NICK
A big difference, if someone found it we
should keep looking, if they didn't we're just wasting our time.

VADA
Oh my gosh, here it is!

Vada searches quickly through the book

VADA
Look, here she is.
Margaret Ann Muldovan - Newspaper, Literary magazine, French Club, Drama Club, Debate Club, Girls Basketball and Swim team. With Maggie's combo of good looks and talent, we're sure to be seeing her name in lights. She was gonna be famous.

NICK
Yearbooks always set you out for disappointment, I want mine to say: Nick probably won't amount to much, so don't be surprised if you never hear anything about him again. Can we go?...It smells like someone left their gym bag in here.

VADA
It's the leather bindings, I love the fragrance of vintage books.

NICK
I love the fragrance of chilidogs.

VADA AND NICK ARE AT AN OUTDOOR FAST FOOD RESTAURANT, EATING

VADA
He was on the school paper with my mom...great...a full page of Tanaka's, fifteen with the initial 'D', this is gonna be tough.

NICK
Don't forget, the girls change their names if they got married.

VADA
I'd never do that.

NICK
Get married?

VADA
Change my name.

NICK
What, you think the guy should change his name?
Vada gets up to go to the phone

VADA
I don't think anybody should change their names, that way you can always find them when you need them.

NICK
What if you don't wanna be found?

VADA
Why do you argue with everything I say?

Nick grabs one of Vada's chips while she's not looking

L.A.P.D., VADA AND NICK ARE GOING UP THE STAIRS, THEY APPROACH A FEMALE COP AT THE DESK

VADA
Hi.

COP
Can I help you?

VADA
Umm, yeah does someone named Daryl Tanaka work here?

COP
Sure. (turns around and shouts) Hey TANAKA, you got company!

DARYL
It's too bad about your mom. At least she went peacefully, I've seen a lot of people go out the hard way.

VADA
What do you remember about her.

DARYL
Well, we worked on the school paper together. I remember when the Legion of Decency declared Rebel without a Cause unfit...boy...that Jim Backers, what an actor uh? What an actor.

Ah, she wrote this article about censorship in the first amendment, she was really something. Graduation, some big deal congressman saying Senator McCarthy was the greatest American ever. Maggie gets up in front of five hundred people...walks out...couple of people followed her too.

Took a lot of guts.
VADA
Wow, you walked out with my mother?

DARYL
You kidding?

he picks up a picture and shows Vada and Nick

My parents would have shot me.

I was the president of the young republicans. Nee say second generation...hall monitor. I didn't wanna start World War Three.

NICK
You saved a lot of lives, you should be very proud.

VADA
Umm, I'm trying to find out her greatest achievement.

DARYL
She was the uhh...first girl ever suspended for smoking.

VADA
Suspended from school, my mother??

DARYL
Everyone was really surprised when Maggie was turned in, she got kicked out for two weeks.

NICK
What kind of sleazoid geek would turn her in?

DARYL
I would do it again in a minute.

VADA
You ratted on my mother??

NICK
Who are you? Hitler's hall monitor?

DARYL
Well maybe you should join a hippie commune. But let me tell you something. Sooner or later it's gonna be your turn to take out the garbage.

NICK
What about giving the other guy a break.

DARYL
What about living in the real world pal?
INTERCOM
TANAKA got a minute?

DARYL
I'll be right there.

he gets up and begins to leave

(to Vada)
Oh, ahh, I'd be a little more careful of who
I hang around with.

Nick picks up Daryl's packet of cigarettes and shows them
to Vada

NICK
(to Vada)
Care for a smoke?

VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING ALONG THE STREET

VADA
This'll be great in my report, my mother was
suspended for smoking.

NICK
I think it's cool.

VADA
You would.

NICK
You'd rather have a mother that's a member of
the police state? Rules are made to be broken.
(pointing to Nixon on TV in a shop window)
Just ask him.

NIXON ON TV
...about the fact that the president has
nothing to hide...in this matter...

BUDAPEST AUTO REPAIR, A RED JAGUAR ENTERS WITH A SCREECH
AND A MAN GETS OUT AND MOVES OVER TO ROSE

ROSE
Hello.

MAN
Hi.

ROSE
What can I do for you?

MAN
Ehh...I'm staying at the chateau and the guy
who runs the garage there said that you're the
best Jag people in town...so uhm.
ROSE
Well Enrique is great and...we are the best.

MAN
Then I have come to the right place.

ROSE
I guess you have.

MAN
I'm Sam Helburn. Sam.

ROSE
Rose.

they shake hands

ROSE
So what's wrong?

SAM
Nothing, nothing at all.

ROSE
I mean...with your car.

SAM
Oh, ahh, oil change, I...ehh...I just drove in from Chicago and uhh...nice hair.

ROSE
Excuse me?

SAM
I was commenting on your hair.

ROSE
Oh, are you a hairdresser?

SAM
I'm a pediatric cardiologist.

ROSE
Oh, you mean you...fix the hearts...of little babies?

SAM
Mostly...little babies, but...not exclusively.

Phil looks up from his work to see Sam holding Rose's hands, he is mildly annoyed

SAM
(laughing)
...It's all in the hands really. You know you have nice hands, you operate?
ROSE
(laughing)
Yes, I do.

SAM
...so I guess I'll always...teach...you
know...'cause it makes a good relief from the
operating-room, I feel I have an obligation...

Rose and Sam continue conversing as Phil comes over to them

PHIL
Hi, Phil Sultenfuss

Phil goes to shake Sam's hand and then realizes that they
are very dirty and
withdraws his hand Oh sorry. Ahh, some kind
of problem here?

ROSE
No, there's no problem, Dr. Helburn just
needs to have his oil changed.

PHIL
Oh I see, 'cause usually that doesn't require
such a lengthy consultation.

SAM
Well Rose was being very thorough.

PHIL
Was Rose.

ROSE
Ahh, Dr. Helburn, why don't you come in
tomorrow-morning at eight o'clock, that's when
we open, we'll get you started.

SAM
I'll be here.

PHIL
I look forward to it.
Phil slaps the windscreen of Sam's car, leaving a huge
greasy handprint

Oh, I'm sorry, I'll get that for you in the
morning.

he gets out a rag and wipes the mark, smearing it
Oooh, made it worse, Get that for you in the
morning. Nice wheels.

SAM
Thanks.
Sam reverses out and drives off

PHIL
What's with the touching, why was he touching you?

ROSE
He wasn't touching me he was just...gesture...

PHIL
He was caressing.

ROSE
Phil for God sake.

PHIL
God? No I didn't think you'd want to invoke God Rose, because he saw even more than I did.
ROSE
Look Phil, if you want the rights of a husband, you're gonna have to ask me something but if not, you're gonna have to get accustomed to the rights of what you are.

PHIL
Oh...what's that?

ROSE
Right now? An intimate border with...mechanical skills.

Phil notices Nick and Vada entering the garage

PHIL
Hi!

ROSE
Oh, Hi, how's the investigation going?

NICK
Just call us the "dead end kids".

VADA
May I use the phone please.

ROSE
Oh, yeah, sure, help yourself.

PHIL
Anyone with taste, anyone with breeding... A gentleman, would choose British racing green, with maybe a tan interior...but when you buy a red car, with a black interior and wire wheels, you have one thing on your mind and one thing only and I'm too much of a gentleman
to say what that one thing is...in front of the children.

Vada and Nick exchange looks

Even if I am just a glorified boarder.

Phil changes the radio station from the classical one that Rose has it on,

to a modern one, with some heavy 70's music on it

Vada is talking on the phone trying to find the number for another one of her mother's friends

VADA

Hi, I would like the number of Stanley Rosenfeld photos, please?

IN A BALL ROOM, HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE ARE DANCING TO A SONG BEING PLAYED BY A LIVE BAND, VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING WITH STANLEY ROSENFELD

STANLEY

You know photography is an art form if you take it seriously enough, which I happen to do.

Stanley sees a couple dancing

Ester, Ester you gorgeous thing you, smile for the birdie. Hold, hold.

ESTER

Stomach in Harold.

click

STANLEY

BEEEEUUUUUTIFULLL.

ESTER

Thank you.

STANLEY

Thank YOU.

Vada and Nick exchange weird looks

Your mother was something-special Vada, to tell you the truth, I had quite a crush on her.

VADA

Really?
STANLEY
Who didn't? She could play basketball like Jerry West, she danced like Sid Cherice, then she'd look at you with those big blue eyes, forget about it. I asked her out a couple of times but she always said no.

Lenny, Nancy, you just got married, look happy, look happy, look like you mean it.

BEEAAAUUUUUUUTIFULLL.

I remember those days, then we all went off to UCLA and she started hanging round with those drama department types. There was this one guy, Peter Webb he's become a big director in Hollywood now...and the only reason I know him at all is that we were all together in this big poetry class with this crazy guy Albert Boderfelder...

VADA
Beidermeyer?

STANLEY
Beidermeyer that's it, what a mad man.

VADA
He's a great poet.

STANLEY
He is?

VADA
Do you know him?

STANLEY
Everybody did, walk along Citrus between Fountain and Sunset any afternoon.

VADA
He'll remember my mother for sure. STANLEY It was a big class Vada and...but...well of course he'll remember, who could forget Maggie?

VADA
Just one more thing. Does this mean anything to you?

Vada gets out the brown paper bag and shows it to Stanley

STANLEY
No it doesn't but... I...I wish it did.
VADA
Well, thanks for your help Mr. Rosenfeld and I'm sorry my mother wouldn't go out with you, I'm sure she would have had a really great time.

STANLEY
I would have tried to show her a good time. I promised her when she left that I would never forget her and I never did. Stanley Rosenfeld does not forget.

VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING DOWN A PAVEMENT, TALKING

VADA
This is the street he walks down every day. When he needs inspiration...

NICK
Boy, you're really into this.

VADA
He is one of the great poets.

they look across the road and see an old man sitting in a chair, writing

VADA
I think it's him.

they cross the road

VADA
He's writing. Hello?

MAN
If you're selling Girl Scout cookies I'm borderline diabetic.

VADA
You're Alfred Beidermeyer aren't you?

ALFRED
You had to remind me?

VADA
Are you writing a poem?

ALFRED
No, I'm writing to the phone company because they keep charging me for calls to Caracas, Venezuela...do you know anybody in Caracas, Venezuela?

VADA & NICK
No.
Neither do I.

a buzzer sounds

Ask not for whom the bell tolls...time for my medication and my nap.

as he gets up, he knocks everything off his table

NICK
Here, we'll help you carry your stuff.

ALFRED
I can handle it, I can handle that. Oh well, thank you, I'm in the penthouse.

Vada and Nick begin to climb the stairs

Penthouse A, it's there over on the left.

Alfred begins to climb the stairs after Vada and Nick, very slowly

NICK
If he has a heart attack you're carrying the body down yourself.

VADA
At least it gives you plenty of exercise.

ALFRED
It keeps me young.

They all enter Alfred's apartment

VADA
(referring to the table that she is carrying)
Umm, where do you want this?

ALFRED
Oh, just put it over there.

Vada is looking through Alfred's bookshelf

VADA
Do you still teach?

ALFRED
No, no, no, I gave it up ten years ago...actually it gave me up.

Vada finds a book of interest

VADA
My mother took this course with you at UCLA..."The Foundations of Poetic Thought".
ALFRED
UCLA? My cardigan sweater period.

VADA
Her name was Maggie Muldovan.

ALFRED
(completely absentmindedly)
Ohhhhh.

NICK
Remember her?

ALFRED
I've been blessed with a very bad memory.

VADA
People said she looked like me.

ALFRED
I was drinking a little in those days.
(gets up)
I'm drinking a little these days too.

VADA
I'm sure she found your lectures fascinating.

ALFRED
Oh I doubt it...lectures are notoriously boring.

VADA
No they're not. I wanna be a writer, I wanna be just like you.

ALFRED
Humph, meee?? My dear, this is not a country that rewards poetry, this is a country that rewards gas mileage, besides, people don't read poetry anymore, they watch television. Don't be a poet, be a TV repairman.

OUTSIDE, NICK AND VADA ARE GOING DOWN STEPS OUTSIDE ALFRED BEIDERMEYER'S FLAT

NICK
Vada, come on...I got a place I always go when I need cheering up.

TAR PITS, VADA AND NICK ARE ON THE VIEWING PLATFORM LOOKING OVER THE EDGE

VADA
The tar pits? This is where you come to get cheered up?

NICK
Look at it this way, however bad I feel, it isn't as bad as becoming extinct in a bottomless pit of tar.

VADA
And I thought I was weird.

NICK
You are weird. Let's just go.

VADA
Oh, no wait, I like that you bought me here.

Vada and Nick sit down on a concrete bench

NICK
Hey what do I care...I mean, consider the sorts, a chick from Pennsylvania, who wears a mood ring.

VADA
This isn't just a mood ring.

NICK
Does it work?

VADA
Well, it doesn't open cans or anything but it...it's sort of a reminder of a friend of mine.

NICK
Boyfriend?

VADA
Well he was a boy, he was my friend...he was my best friend. When we were kids we were gonna...move out here and move to the Brady Bunch.

Then umm, I lost this ring in the woods...and when he went to find it...he got stung by bees and he died.

NICK
Do you think your friend's up in Heaven now, looking down on you and watching you all the time?

VADA
(smiles)
Well, I hope he's not watching me all the time.

NICK
Let me see if it changes colors on me.
VADA
ehh...Okay...but be careful, it has a lot of sentimental value.

Vada takes the ring off and hands it carefully to Nick, they stand up

NICK
Maybe it'll fit my pinkie.

VADA
Don't force it, you'll break it.

NICK
I'm not gonna break it, I just wanna see it change colors.

VADA
I want it back now. I never should have taken it off, I want it back.

Nick begins to tease Vada with her mood ring, she begins to get quite distressed

NICK
Hey relax, I'm not gonna break it.

VADA
Give it to me!

NICK
Come and get it.

VADA
Just give it to me!!

NICK
Just come and get it...right here!

VADA
DON'T, come on!!

Nick has his back against the side of the platform with his arm outstretched, threatening to drop it

NICK
Woah, watch it!

VADA
DON'T!!!

NICK
(expression suddenly changes)
Uh oh...
VADA
What do you mean "Uh Oh"???

NICK
...I dropped it.

VADA
In the tar??

NICK
It was an accident, I'll get you a new one.

Vada runs off down the steps

NICK
Where are you going???

VADA
Owh...

Nick is sprinting after Vada, who is running fast toward the fence

NICK
Vada wait up!!!!! WAIT!!!!!

Vada tries to scale the fence to get into the enclosed area to retrieve her ring, Nick pulls her off

NICK
What are you doing? You can't go in there!

VADA
Oh no?!?!?!

Vada climbs again, Nick pulls her off again

NICK
It's dangerous!!

VADA
(pushing Nick)
Leave me alone!!

That ring is the only thing I have left of Thomas J, I have to get it!!

NICK
You mean,
(opening other hand)
this ring?

VADA
Jerk! You IDIOT!!!
Vada begins to hit Nick quite fiercely

NICK
You hit pretty good, for a girl!!

they run off

NIGHT TIME INSIDE THE ZSIGMOND HOUSE, NICK OPENS HIS BEDROOM DOOR AND EMERGES DRESSED IN HIS PAJAMAS

Nick walks over past where Vada is sleeping on the couch-bed and stops, turns back and moves over to take a look at the sleeping beauty, all of a sudden the light in Rose & Phil's room goes on

ROSE
(whispering, from bedroom)
Nicholas! What are you doing up?

NICK
I...ahhh...umm...I'm thirsty.

ROSE
There's water in your bathroom.

NICK
(opening fridge)
I want juice!

ROSE
Don't wake up Vada.

NICK
I won't.

Vada smiles and opens her eyes

SOME WESTERN MOVIE SET IN HOLLYWOOD, VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING ALONG TALKING TO PETER WEBB

PETER
I think ahh...Maggie could have been a major glitter. She'd talent, God knows that face was made for close-ups but everything was...magic with Maggie. I remember, we were walking down Hollywood Boulevard, we put our feet in the stars' footprints, you know like tourists do, Maggie could not believe it, her feet were the same size as Judy Garland. Of course mine matched perfectly with Orson Wells. Hahaha, just kidding.

You should call Hillary Mitchell...Maggie were very close. She's got this funky little clothing store over here on Melrose, I'd call her for you but well we ahh, kinda had this
thing you know...got a little messy.

Peter writes on a piece of paper and then hands it to Vada

VADA
Thanks. Umm...would you know what this is?

Vada hands her mother's brown paper bag over to Peter

PETER
Well not really. Ahh, could be the date of an opening, an audition...eh...umm...birthday?
Not my birthday. I dunno, who...eh...writes dates on paper bags?

Peter gives the bag back to Vada

VADA
My mom.

PETER
(looks at watch)
Woooh, I have got to get to Dailies, gotta break this up.

VADA
Well thanks for your time, I know you're very busy.

PETER
You are Maggie all over...you let me know if you ever wanna be a movie star...you got the face for close-ups too.

VADA
Thanks.

Peter gives Vada a kiss on the forehead, then walks off

NICK
What a dufus.

LIVING ROOM OF ZSIGMOND HOUSE, PHIL AND ROSE ARE READY TO GO OUT, VADA AND NICK ARE SITTING READING MAGAZINES

PHIL
We may go out for coffee after the meeting so don't expect us before midnight.

ROSE
There's plenty of fruit.

PHIL
You know where the fire extinguisher is.

NICK
If the fruit burst into flames I'll be
ROSE
(to Nick, whom she gives a kiss on the forehead)
You're so clever.
(to Vada)
Are you all right honey?
VADA
I'm just tired.
ROSE
All right, well get to bed early and don't let anybody in. Bye.
PHIL
Lock the door.
VADA
Bye.

Vada looks up expectantly at Nick, who gets up and goes to the door to check that Rose and Phil have left
NICK
We have lift off.

the song "Bennie and the Jets" begins to play

ON HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD, NICK AND VADA ARE LOOKING AT ALL THE STARS ON THE PAVEMENT

VADA
Joan Crawford, oh I love her...there's the Marx Brothers. Carol Lombard, my dad's favorite!

NICK
Never heard of her.

VADA
Montgomery Clift, wait 'till I tell Shelly.

NICK
Here's Judy Garland!

Vada runs over

VADA
My mother stood on this very spot.

NICK
I'm afraid your feet won't fit in there.
VADA
That's 'cause I was cursed with the Sultenfuss Bear Claws. My hands fit.

NICK
Big deal.

A hippie walks past smoking a joint, and blows a puff of it on Vada, who

smells it and coughs

VADA
What's he smoking?

NICK
What do you think?

VADA
Really?

Vada starts off after him, but Nick grabs her arm and pulls her away, they

walk off and then Vada sees a sign saying

Ears Pierced, 5.00

VADA
Hey look!

NICK
This is a totally barbaric custom.

They enter the store

VADA AND NICK STROLLING QUIETLY DOWN A PAVEMENT IN FRONT OF A LARGE WALL MURAL OF MOVIE STARS

NICK
So if Phil marries my mom, she'd be your Aunt right?

VADA
Right.

NICK
And you'd be my cousin?

VADA
Yeah I guess...sort of.

NICK
But we wouldn't really be related right?

VADA
Oh no, we wouldn't be from the same
bloodlines or anything. We'd be like two total strangers who...accidentally had relatives that got married.

NICK
Good. I mean...

VADA
Marriage can really complicate things. So, aren't you gonna say anything about my earrings?

NICK
I already did, it's a totally barbaric custom...but on you, it looks good.

Vada smiles

BUS PULLS UP TO STOP NEAR BUDAPEST AUTO REPAIRS, NICK AND VADA RUN OFF OF IT AND SPRINT OFF TOWARDS THE DOOR TO NICK'S HOUSE

VADA
We should've called.

NICK
It's not that late!

despite entering the living room, Rose and Phil are sitting waiting

ROSE
You're grounded 'till you're fifty!

NICK
You're over reacting!

ROSE
Make that sixty and I'm docking your allowance for two weeks.

NICK
MOM!

ROSE
You think this is easy for me? You go out on the town and I get to be the bad guy. Look I don't want you to be some punk hoodlum delinquent but I can't do my job as a parent if you don't do your job as a kid.

VADA
It's not his fault!

NICK
No...it was me. And I'm sorry mom, really, ju...just tell me what to do, I'll do
Go to your room.
(to Vada)
And you...I don't suppose your father gave you permission to pierce your ears, did he?

Not exactly.

Well just don't shave your legs...he'll never let you visit us again if I send you home hairless and full of holes.

Phil moves his hand up to cover his smile as he tries desperately not to laugh.

GARAGE DAY, DR HELBURN DRIVES IN

SAM
Good morning.

ROSE
Well maybe for you.

SAM
Something wrong?

ROSE
Well let's just say you're lucky you deal with children who are under anesthesia.

SAM
Well, even without anesthesia I always tell my patients to...eh... to relax.

Look...eh...isn't it time for your coffee break or something? There must be some place we can go...talk?

ROSE
Oh no, I, I...eh...I couldn't.

SAM
You couldn't?

ROSE
Well I'm sort of involved.

SAM
Sort of?

ROSE
Let's just say I...eh...I'm involved.
SAM
Where I come from, involvement...generally calls for a substantial piece of jewelry.

ROSE
Oh, well, I don't wear a lot of jewelry.

SAM
All right, so you don't like jewelry but...eh...you do like...eh...good music. Liszt, one of my favorites.

ROSE
Lizt was my parents' favorite, they were Hungarian.

SAM
Hungarian. Famous for their beautiful music...and beautiful women.

Phil approaches, looking annoyed

PHIL
Doctor Helburn, what a surprise. In the last couple of days we've changed your oil, realigned your brakes, balanced and rotated your tires, aligned your front end, and flushed out your entire cooling system, I really didn't expect to be seeing you for another three thousand miles.

SAM
Oh what can I say Phil, it's just that I feel so welcome here.

ROSE
And you are.

Phil glances at Rose

SAM
Ahh, why don't I come in first thing in the morning and you can check out that left blinker for me.

ROSE
Oh, sure okay.

SAM
I'll see you then...I look forward to it.

Sam gets into his car and drives off

PHIL
You really oughtta flush out that line of bullshit he's got:
Hungarian's are famous for their beautiful women.

ROSE
What's wrong with a little flattery? What's wrong with a little appreciation?

Rose starts to move toward the office

PHIL
Wait, are you saying that I don't appreciate?

ROSE
I'm saying he asked me out for coffee, like a real date, when was the last time you did that?

PHIL
Wha...what do you mean? We have a date every night.

ROSE
No, that's not a date, a date is when I don't cook.

Rose shuts the door

PHIL
I do the dishes.

VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING DOWN A STREET, THEY STOP AND ENTER A SHOP

VADA'S THOUGHTS
I'd go to a fortuneteller but they can only predict the future...I need someone who can predict the past.

INSIDE SHOP

LADY
Hi, can I help you?

VADA
Are you the Hillary Mitchell who went to school with Maggie Muldovan?

HILLARY
Maggie Muldovan? Did you...know her?

NICK
She's her daughter, Vada.

HILLARY
Ooh...of course!
(hugs Vada)
Oh, look at you! Oh it's the eyes mostly and
the hair too and now she's gone...she's
gone...she'll never get to see how well you've
turned out. Oh... oh my God...Maggie! You poor
thing!

Hillary begins to sob and hug Vada

VADA
It's okay really, I was just a baby.

HILLARY
I'm sorry, it's just...I've been taking all
these seminars to get in touch with my
feelings and...sometimes it gets out of hand.

Nick reaches over and gets a tissue, then hands it to
Hillary

NICK
Here.

HILLARY
Oh, thank you, you're very sweet. So how did
you find out where I was?

NICK
Peter Webb told us.

HILLARY
Peter? You saw Peter? Oh God...
(begins to cry, and then hugs Nick)

Oh forgive me, I'm making such a scene here.
Why don't you have a seat.

VADA
Thanks.

HILLARY
I remember Maggie...and your Dad too, you
know we used to all pile into his old 54 Ford
pickup. "Chuck the Truck" we used to call it.

It was pitch black, with a red leather
interior. Does he still drive that?

VADA
No, but sometimes he drives a hearse.

NICK
He's an undertaker.

HILLARY
You're kidding, Jeffrey Pommeroy's an
undertaker?

Vada and Nick are confused
His name's Harry Sultenfuss.

Oh.
(then it dawns on her)
Ohhh?

What're you saying?

Ummmmm, look, I...I...

Are you saying my mother had another husband?

Oh honey, back then...people did crazy things.

They sure did! They got kicked out of school, they married truck drivers...these are my mother's greatest accomplishments? I'm sure glad I came all the way out here to find them out.

Vada runs out of store, Nick looks at Hillary and then follows

OUTSIDE ON SIDEWALK

Vada is running down the sidewalk

Vada, wait up!

Vada slows down and Nick catches up

Just because you mother was married before, it...it doesn't mean anything.

(very near tears)
Maybe not...but maybe it does. If no one told me about this, I mean...maybe they're trying to hide something.

Like what?

Maybe this Jeffrey guy is...is my real father. I mean...look at me, I have the hair of a dead person and...and my nose, no one in
my family has this nose, it could be the nose of...a...of a complete stranger,

Vada's voice is getting a little hysterical and she is starting to cry

I mean...I came out here to...to find out about my mother and I...and I found...

Vada turns around, covers her face and cries

NICK
Don't cry...come on...that lady in there looked pretty flaky to me.

How 'bout Phil, maybe he knows something about all this. At least you should talk to him before you get worked up.

VADA
Before I get worked up? You don't think this is worked up?

Nick takes Vada by the shoulders and gently turns her around, he then wipes a tear from her cheek

NICK
That thing you said about your nose...it was a stranger's nose...well it's not...it's...I mean...it's yours...you know?

VADA
Nick?

NICK
Yeah?

VADA
This has been a real confusing day.

Nick nods

ZSIGMOND DINING ROOM TABLE, VADA, PHIL, NICK AND ROSE ARE SITTING EATING

VADA
How could Dad let me visit here and find out like this?

Phil shrugs

VADA
I'm gonna call him...and make him tell me everything.
Phil knows something that Vada doesn't, and he doesn't want Vada to phone Harry at the moment.

Harry at the moment

PHIL
Uhh sweetie, I wou... I wou...I wou...

VADA
Don't worry, I'll do it in my own subtle way.

Vada picks up the phone and dials a number.

HARRY
Hello? Sultenfuss Parlor.

VADA
Hi Dad.

HARRY
Hi honey.

VADA
I just called to say that I'm having a really great time.

HARRY
Good! You should go over and watch some Ted Carson.

VADA
Actually, I wanna see Jeffrey Pommeroy.

HARRY AND SHELLY'S ROOM BACK IN PENNSYLVANIA, SHELLY IS LYING IN BED LOOKING SICK, HARRY IS SITTING BESIDE HER ON THE PHONE TO VADA

HARRY
Is he...eh...some kind of a new rock star or something?

VADA
Yeah.

HARRY
Totally groovy huh?

VADA
Totally.

HARRY
Ask him if he needs a good tuba player.
I will. How's Shelly?

Oh she's fine...ahh...umm the doctor just...ehh...told her to stay in bed and get a little rest and...'n stay quiet...just...just to make sure that...

Okay...bye daddy, I love you.

I love you too sweetie, bye.

Give my love to Shelly.

Harry hangs up and then looks at Shelly who has just opened her eyes, and is weakly smiling a little

Shelly's sick...I have to get to the bottom of this whole thing and get back there.

She'll be all right baby.

Yeah...right, it's pointless to worry.

I'm not authorized to trace licenses for civilians.

His name is Jeffrey Pommeroy and he used to drive a 54 Ford pickup, black with red interior. Please?

Give us a break. All you have to do is make a phone call.
I thought I told you to lose this guy.

NICK
Look, sergeant I know I said some things last time that I shouldn't have said at all but...

DARYL
I think the phrase was "Sleazoid Geek".

NICK
I'm sorry okay...we gotta find this guy because...he knew Vada's mom and he could tell her stuff that no one else knows.

DARYL
You're still asking me to break the law.

VADA
No, we're asking you to stand up with Maggie Muldovan like you should have years ago.

Daryl thinks for a moment then picks up the phone and dials a number

DARYL
Yeah, this is Sergeant Tanaka from Holenbeck, I need a current address for a Jeffrey....

VADA
Pommeroy.

DARYL
Pommeroy...he may or may not be driving a black 54 Ford Pickup.
(covers phone)
Monday.

VADA
(disappointed)
I'm leaving Sunday.

DARYL
(into phone)
Could you hold on for a second?
(quietly, to Vada and Nick)
Look, I can't get priority without a criminal charge.

NICK
So charge him with something...who's gonna know?

DARYL
Me, I'll know!
VADA
Do you wanna be a hall monitor all your life?

DARYL
(into phone)
Hello, I'm gonna need this right now...this
guy...well we think he might be going after
the governor.
(pause)
Twenty minutes? Fine.

BUDAPEST GARAGE, VADA AND PHIL ARE LOOKING AT THE ENGINE OF
A CAR

PHIL
So give him a call, the worst he can do is
hang up on you, right?

VADA
I feel like before I can talk to him I have
to see his face.

PHIL
How's this for a solution. We'll take a drive
over to his place, you can introduce
yourself....

VADA
I'd like to see his house but...I don't know
if I'd have the nerve to just go up and knock
on his door. I don't think I can go through
with it.

PHIL
Then we'll keep driving...you'll decide.

VADA AND PHIL DRIVING DOWN HIGHWAY, THEY TURN OFF INTO A
SIDE ROAD

PHIL
You're awfully quiet.

VADA
Do you think I should tell my dad about
Jeffrey Pommeroy?

PHIL
I don't know, he's got an awful lot on his
mind right now.

Maybe some day when the time is right.

VADA
Maybe.

PHIL
Then again, your dad's got his own memories
VADA
A secret, I like that.

PHIL'S TRUCK PULLS UP TO A HOUSE

PHIL
This is it I guess.

VADA
Well, I've come this far...the least I can do is knock on the door.

PHIL
You want me to come with?

VADA
(shakes her head)
I should do this myself.

PHIL
Okay...take your time...I'll...I'll go for a walk around.

VADA
Okay.

Vada gets out and makes her way up to the front door, petting the dog sitting on the doorstep, she turns to look back at Phil

PHIL
(in car, gesturing that she should press the bell)
Go ahead honey...go ahead.

Vada presses door bell, waits then presses it again, then a man opens the door

MAN
Hi there...can I help you?

VADA
Are you Jeffrey Pommeroy?

JEFFREY
Sure am, who are you?

VADA
I am Vada Margaret Sultenfuss. My mother was...

JEFFREY
Maggie...Maggie's little girl.

Vada nods

JEFFREY
I was hoping I'd get to meet you.

VADA
You mean, you knew about me?

VOICE FROM INSIDE
Who is it honey?

A woman appears next to Jeffrey

JEFFREY
It's aah...Maggie's little girl, Vada.

WOMAN
Ohh, Oh my.

JEFFREY
This is my wife Emily.

EMILY
Hi.

VADA
Hi.

JEFFREY
Umm...can you come in for a minute?

VADA
I'd like to, thanks.

they enter the house. Vada walks next to Jeffrey who leads them into the living room, a little girl suddenly comes running in

LITTLE GIRL
Mommy, Daddy, I painted you a rainbow, come and see.

EMILY
(to Katie)
This is Vada,
(to Vada)
Vada this is our little girl Katie.

VADA
Hi.

KATIE
(shy)
Hi.
EMILY
Umm...why don't we let Daddy and Vada visit for a little while?

KATIE
Okay.

JEFFREY
Okay.

KATIE
Bye.

VADA
Bye.

(Emily and Katie leave)

She looks a little like me when I was a little girl.

JEFFREY
Does she?

Vada nods

JEFFREY
I'm glad you're here.

VADA
You are?

JEFFREY
Yeah, come on, let's talk.

they move into the kitchen

IN KITCHEN, JEFFREY IS IN FRIDGE GETTING A DRINK

VADA
We have this school assignment to write about someone we never met and I chose my mother. She was born in Los Angeles and since my uncle Phil moved out here I came in to visit him and then I looked at her high school yearbook and... and I called a few people and one guy said that she went to UCLA, another guy said that I should call Hillary Mitchell so....

JEFFREY
Hillary Mitchell? How's she?

VADA
Oh she's great...she's a little crazy though. Anyway, Hillary said that you had a black Ford truck and this policeman I know got in touch with Motor Vehicles and...he gave me your address and here I am.
JEFFREY

(laughs)

VADA
I told you it was a long story.

JEFFREY
That's all right, you know what? You sound just sounded just like your mother...she told great stories. Stories with crazy accents and...special effects.

VADA
Special effects?

JEFFREY
Yeah like, switching a lamp on and off when she was talking about lightning...audiences love stuff like that. And your mom knew how to work an audience.

VADA
I don't know very much about her...I was hoping that you could help me.

JEFFREY
I'll try.

Vada gets out her brown paper bag and hands it to JEFFREY

VADA
No one else knows what this means.

JEFFREY looks at it for a moment as memories come flooding back

JEFFREY
You see...the thing is, we always wanted to work in a theater, so we drove out to New York, to Broadway where it was...where it was all happening...and...New York was just full of fancy French restaurants and we wanted to get married in one but we were totally broke, so your mom found this little coffee shop...little tables round the back...and real tablecloths on 'em, and a minister who worked cheap...but when we got down to the coffee shop there was a sign on the door that said Closed by the Board of Health. By that time it had started snowing, so...we just got married...right outside in the snow.

It was freezing but it was wonderful. And for our wedding feast, we had a bag of hot roasted chestnuts. This is the bag.

VADA
And she saved it.

JEFFREY

(nods)
Well, we didn't have a camera...so she just wrote the date on the bag and said, "This will be out wedding album, this will be a day we will never forget." We never did.

VADA
Do you have any pictures if her?

JEFFREY
I've got something better.

ROOM WITH PROJECTOR SITTING BEHIND COUCH, VADA IS SEATED ON THE COUCH AND JEFFREY IS SITTING BEHIND HER OPERATING IT

Vada and JEFFREY are watching the movie

JEFFREY
We called ourselves "The Appearing Nightly Players".

MAGGIE
(on screen, in French accent)
Darling, oh where is my chauffeur? You don't want I should walk to the stage? An actress of my overwhelming talent?

VADA
She's beautiful.

JEFFREY
We performed on the beach one summer...ha...everything went wrong.

we can see the acting troupe stuffing round on the beach, then Maggie in a doughnut-floatie in the sea with an umbrella, then playing volleyball, then sitting at a table surrounded by friends, she is convinced to sing by her friends, which she begins to do

MAGGIE
Smile though your heart is aching,
Smile, even though it's breaking,
When there are clouds,
In the sky you'll get by,
If you smile through your fears and sorrows,
Smile and maybe tomorrow,
You'll see the sun come shining through if you,
Light up your face with gladness,
Hide every trace of sadness,
Although a tear may be ever so near,
That's the time you must keep on trying,
Smile, what's the use of crying,
You'll find that life is still worthwhile,
If you just smile.

the group that Maggie sang for start to complement her and chatter away, then the reel ends, JEFFREY turns off the projector, gets up and turns on the light

JEFFREY
She had a...a beautiful voice.

Vada nods, crying a little

JEFFREY
Would you like...eh...to have these movies?

VADA
(turns around)
More than anything in the world.

JEFFREY
(nods)
It's good to see Maggie again...and you.

VADA
Umm...didn't you ever wonder about me?

JEFFREY
Well I didn't know about you until after she was gone.

VADA
I thought that...umm...maybe you'd be curious about how I turned out.

JEFFREY
I'd say you turned out just fine.

VADA
I guess what I mean is, my mother married my dad after you...and then I was born, so I thought that...maybe you got divorced because of me.
JEFFREY
Wait...woah...woah...wait a minute...Do you think I'm your father?

VADA
Well...

JEFFREY
Honey I'd be proud to be your father, really.
It just isn't so.

they walk outside

JEFFREY
Maggie wanted to have a baby...and...umm...I didn't.

VADA
oh.

JEFFREY
She didn't wanna miss out on anything...especially motherhood...it got to be a real problem with us.

I thought she had plenty of time, she didn't.
Anyway...that's why I was grateful when she met your father, he had the sense to love her the way she deserved...and most of all...I was glad that she had you, the baby she always wanted.

I wanted you to know that.

this has made Vada's day, she looks very happy, they hug each other

BUDAPEST GARAGE, VADA IS TALKING TO NICK, ROSE AND PHIL

VADA
And I'm gonna use the movies when I give my report. Jeffrey says audiences love special effects.

NICK
You better ace it...you sacrificed our whole vacation.

ROSE
Well it's a wonderful story with a very happy ending.

Sam enters the garage in his car

PHIL
Sorry doc, we close for business at 3 o'clock today.
Sam gets out and walks over to Rose, and offers Rose a box

**SAM**
Ahh...this isn't business. You know I...I found this wonderful little Hungarian restaurant that makes it's own strudel and I...I thought you might like a taste of the old country. You see there's apple in there and...and cherry and this is the...eh...cheese but I...I gotta say I think that cherry is...is really....

Phil grabs the strudel and puts it back in Sam's car

**PHIL**
Okay, that does it, that does it, the strudel does it, first it's brakes then.... I mean I am not gonna let some Podiatrist with a Jaguar full of strudel come waltzing in here and....

**SAM**
I'm not a Podiatrist, I'm a Cardiologist.

**PHIL**
Who cares? Rose, tell him we have an arrangement.

**SAM**
Well, wha...what kind of arrangement?

**ROSE**
Yes, what kind of arrangement? I'd be very interested to know what kind of an arrangement we have.

**PHIL**
You know exactly...what kind it is. Come on Rose...what do you want from me?

**ROSE**
I don't want anything you don't wanna give me.

**SAM**
And you certainly shouldn't settle for anything less that you deserve.

**PHIL**
You stay out of this, look, if I had a red XK-150 with a black interior, I sure as hell wouldn't be handing out relationship advice.

**SAM**
I don't think the color of the interior is....
PHIL
Rose this not the place to be having this...

ROSE
I think this place is just fine.

PHIL
You know how I feel about you.

ROSE
You like the way I cook...you think I make out a great invoice. PHIL
You and Nick and...and this...this garage are my whole life...I love you. Sure you don't have the greatest taste in music...but there's not another woman who could look so sexy in that smock. What I'm try... what I'm trying to sa...

Vada takes Phil's hand and mouths the word "commitment" to him, giving him strength

What I mean to say...Rose will you marry me?

ROSE
You really think I look sexy in this smock?

PHIL
Is that a yes?

Phil and Rose hug each other and kiss, Sam looks defeated, Vada and Nick smile at each other

AT AIRPORT, VADA IS ABOUT TO BOARD HER PLANE, ROSE AND PHIL ARE STANDING NEXT TO HER

VADA
Thanks for everything, you're the best.

PHIL
No, you're the best and I don't want you talking to anybody on the plane.

VADA
Dad already gave me this lecture. He's gonna meet me at the airport, then we'll go for some pizza, then we'll have dinner in bed with Shelly.

PHIL
Sounds great, well you give 'em both one of these for me.

Phil gives Vada hug and a kiss

VADA
Bye Aunt Rose.
Bye Niece, Vada.

Rose and Vada hug

Thanks. Well, bye.

Vada walks down the corridor a little and stops by Nick who is waiting for her

...umm...Listen, I'm sorry...you had to sacrifice your entire vacation.

Some sacrifices are worth it.

You mean...it wasn't that terrible?

I wouldn't say it was terrible...it was...kind of...

An adventure?

Part adventure...part miracle.

Nick looks into Vada's eyes, they kiss, a long moment passes and their lips part. They both smile at each other

Write me a poem?

(shakes her head smiling)

No?

I'll write you ten poems.

(ByA springs to life informing people to board NOW)

Bye.

Good-bye, look in your backpack.

Vada turns around and looks at Nick

VADA
Okay.

Vada walks down the passage and turns out of sight, Nick turns and heads past Rose and Phil, his eyes fixated on some object far away, there is only one word to describe how he looks

STONED ON LOVE

INSIDE PLANE, VADA IN HER SEAT, SHE REMOVES HER SEATBELT AND OPENS HER BACKPACK

She finds a little box which she opens and finds contained in it a note and a pair of earrings, she looks at the earrings and then reads the note

VADA'S THOUGHTS

(reading note)
In memory of barbaric customs, Love Nick.

This makes Vada extremely happy

VADA'S THOUGHTS
Life is full of barbaric customs, I just hope they all end with a kiss like that.

As Vada disembarks, she makes her way into the crowd of people waiting to pick up others, Arthur is standing there waiting, Vada approaches

VADA
Arthur, where's my dad?

ARTHUR
He took Shelly to the hospital.

VADA
Is she okay?

ARTHUR
Well, she was making a lot of noise.

They exit the scene

OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL, ARTHUR PULLS UP AND LETS VADA OUT

Vada gets out of the car and runs inside, making her way through corridors to the maternity ward, where Harry is waiting

VADA
Dad!

Vada and Harry hug each other

VADA
What happened to Shelly?
HARRY
She just had a baby that's all.

VADA
(excited)
We have a baby?

HARRY
Uh huh, a boy, you've got a new brother.

VADA
Can I see him?

HARRY
You can do anything you want. You're his sister.

Hey, what's on your ear?

VADA ENTERS THE ROOM WHERE SHELLY IS LYING HOLDING THE BABY

VADA
Shelly?

SHELLY
Hey! Oh look.

VADA
He's so tiny.

SHELLY
I know, look at his little hands.

HARRY
I'm sorry I couldn't come pick you up honey.

SHELLY
I was pushing as fast as I could.

VADA
Did it hurt a lot?

SHELLY
You have no idea.

BABY
WAAAAAAAAAAH!!!

SHELLY
Shhhh.

VADA
Let me hold him.

SHELLY
O.K.
Vada gently takes the baby from Shelly's arms

SHELLY
Maybe he's wet?

HARRY
Maybe he's hungry.

VADA
He's okay...you just have to sing to him.

"Smile though your heart is aching,
Smile, even though it's breaking,
Although a tear may be ever so near,
That's the time you must keep on trying,
Smile, what's the use of crying,
You'll find that life is still worthwhile,
If you just smile."

OUTSIDE, HARRY SHELLY VADA AND BABY (IN PRAM)
ARE TAKING A WALK

VADA'S THOUGHTS
Things haven't exactly calmed down around here, I got an A+ on the report, Dad's getting used to my pierced ears and Nick's coming to visit this summer. Other than that I'm busy being a big sister. I'd like to tell my brother about my mom, how I got to meet her friends and find out how special she was, I mean...she may not have her footprints in cement but she definitely left her imprint on the world...and I told them that even though it sounds conceited...her greatest achievement was me.

Vada, Harry, Shelly and the baby cross the road and walk off down the sidewalk as the camera rises and the song "My Girl" begins to play and the credits roll