

DIVINE SECRETS OF THE YA-YA SISTERHOOD

Screenplay by
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Adaptation by
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Based on the Novels by Rebecca Wells entitled
"Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood" and
"Little Altars Everywhere"

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FINAL DRAFT

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... YAYA... - Rev. 11/20/01

DARK

A1

FLASHBACK - EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT (1937)

A1

*

A house on a small town street in the dark of night. A downstairs window slides open. A nightgowned girl climbs out and quietly drops to the ground. A cloth sack is handed to her from inside the house. She helps another smaller nightgowned girl climb out. Another girl follows, then one more. Crossing yards, then the street, they steal off into the night.

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1

EXT. WOODS - CLOSE SHOT OF LEAVES - NIGHT

1

*

fluttering on the forest floor. A younger girl's foot steps INTO FRAME, then the other. We TRACK ALONG the ground as two more feet, then two more, then two more. All together, four 10-year-old pajama-clad girls tiptoe quietly through the woods in the dead of night. LITTLE VIVI, a sack over her shoulder, leads the way to a prepared clearing. Four rocks surround a small teepee of twigs, logs and dry pine needles. Vivi strikes a match and lights the fire which illuminates their faces. She directs CARO, NECIE, and TEENSY to their places on the rocks.

Vivi removes four handmade headdresses from her sack -- fashioned with feathers, rhinestone pins, ribbons, etc. Each girl ties one to her head.

LITTLE VIVI

These are the headdresses of the queens that have gone before us, who ask us to carry on their magic... They come from the Indian Holy Ground, the jungles of the ancients, the prairies of the Norwegians and the forests of the mighty Amazons... The royal crowns of our people.

She takes a "jewelled chalice" out of the sack and pours a viscous liquid from a jar into it. Little Vivi holds the cup and chants:

LITTLE VIVI

This is the blood of our people,
the wolf people...

She's making this up as she goes along...

(CONTINUED)

1

CONTINUED:

1

LITTLE VIVI

Aimee Malissa Whitman: I declare
you Princess Naked-As-A-Jaybird.

Teensy jumps up.

LITTLE TEENSY

Hot-cha-cha!

One by one, the girls sip, communion style, Vivi giving
each one a name as she does.

LITTLE VIVI

Caroline Eliza Bennett, I crown
you Duchess Soaring Hawk... Denise
Rose Kelleher, Countess Singing Cloud...

And now taking a sip herself...

LITTLE VIVI

And I, Viviane Joan Abbott am
hereby and forever Queen Dancing
Creek.

Now, dramatically, Little Vivi takes a knife from her
sack.

NECIE

Now wait a minute! I don't think we
need to start carving ourselves up!

CARO

Bwaaauk! Bwaukbwaukbuaauk!

VIVI

Silence!

Vivi cuts a small slit in the palm of each hand. Blood
trickles. Murmuring an incantation, she gives the
knife to each girl. One by one, they cut their palms.
Then Vivi directs them to stand.

LITTLE VIVI

We are the flames of the fires,
the whirling of the winds, the
water of the rains and rivers and
the oceans, we are the rocks in
the stones. Now by the power
invested in me I declare, we are
the mighty Yaya Priestesses. Let
no man put us under.

They get closer to the fire. Arms extended, hands palm
to palm, fingers entwined, they seal the Yaya union.

(CONTINUED)

2

CONTINUED:

2

MAY

Well, we don't want to burn the
place down but otherwise is that it?

INTERVIEWER

Dark in what way? Angry?

SIDDA

(to May)

That's exactly it!

INTERVIEWER

When you say dark, you mean what?
Angry? Violent?

3

INT. PECAN GROVE - VIVI WALKER'S BOUDOIR - MORNING

3

VIVI WALKER, an elegant, coifed older beauty, is sitting
at her vanity, lining her lips with the sure hand of
somebody who's done it eighty-four thousand times.

SIDDA (V.O.)

No. Although she knew how to
handle a switch. Or a belt.
Times were different then. She
came from the 'spare the rod,
spoil the child' philosophy of
child-rearing. They all did.

2

INT. NEW YORK THEATER

2

Sidda and the Interviewer are still in their seats.

SIDDA

But still she was loaded with
charm. Looks. The whole package.

INTERVIEWER

But damaged.

SIDDA

Wounded. The most charming
wounded person you've ever met.

INTERVIEWER

Wounded how?

SIDDA

Oh, I don't know. Her mother was
a bit of a religious... fanatic
might be too strong of a word and
Grampa was overprotective on the
one hand but passive, under his
wife's thumb.

CONTINUED:

SIDDA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The women manipulated and the men hid out, huddled in their duck camps, clutching their bottles of Makers Mark, waiting for the storms to pass. And yet they seemed like they were mostly having fun.

SHEP WALKER walks into the kitchen as a coffee CUP whizzes past his head and SMASHES against the wall. He doesn't flinch. Vivi drops her head on the kitchen table and cries uncontrollably. Shep pours himself a cup of coffee, takes a sip and stands behind Vivi rubbing her hair with his free hand.

SIDDA (V.O.)

In many ways, I owe all my creativity to her. If I'd had an easy childhood, I'd have nothing to write about.

INT. NEW YORK THEATER

The sign on the stage flickers on for a second, then stops.

SIDDA

As it is, I'll be lucky to get about half of it down. And I'm not sure people would believe it if I tried to write it anyway.

INT. PECAN GROVE - HOUSE - MORNING

Vivi, face tear-stained, goes around the house with a hefty trash bag, throwing away pictures of Sidda, silver frames and all.

INT. SIDDA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Sidda is drinking coffee with CONNOR.

SIDDA

(reading)

The gifted daughter of a tap dancing, child abuser of a mother and a distant emotionally absent father -- oh shit! Connor! Oh shit! Oh no! This can't be!

(CONTINUED)

8

CONTINUED:

8

VIVI

Well, it felt longer!

NECIE

Remind me never to speak to
Time Magazine.

*

CARO

That writer probably trumped all
that up. You know how those
Yankees like to make us all out to
be a bunch of swamp-water,
alligator-wrestling bigots.

TEENSY

You ought to give Sidda the
benefit of the doubt. Just call
her.

VIVI

You know, Teensy, ever since you
quit drinking, you've stopped
thinking clearly. How can I
possibly call a person that no
longer exists?

(beat)

Gimme the phone.

They fireman-brigade the phone to her. Vivi dials, then
in a perfectly calm, sweet voice:

VIVI

Hello. Good morning, Connor.
Why, just lovely. Thank you for
asking. Is she there?

9

INT. SIDDA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

9

Connor holds out the phone to Sidda.

CONNOR

See, it's her. I told you she'd
be fine.

Sidda warily takes the phone.

SIDDA

Mama.

9

CONTINUED:

9

SIDDA

Connor, in the real world of normal people you would be right. But Vivi Abbot Walker has never gotten over anything in her privileged, booze-soaked, self-centered, God-forsaken life! I know her, Connor! She will not get over this. It's just too good.

*

10 INT. SIDDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

10

*

Sidda opens an envelope, embossed, return-address Pecan Grove monogram. Out comes burnt charred pieces of photos, photos of Sidda where Vivi has cut herself out.

11 INT. PECAN GROVE - DAY

11

Vivi opens an envelope from Sidda. Opening night, 8th row center seats to her play, cut into tiny little pieces.

12 INT. SIDDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

12

*

Opening an envelope. It's Vivi's will. There are spaces where Sidda's name has literally been cut out. The confetti of chopped-up pieces come fluttering out.

Sidda picks up the phone.

*

SIDDA

*

(on phone)

*

Shepard! It's me. Has Mama called you?

*

*

13 INT. LITTLE SHEP'S HOUSE - DAY

13

*

Sidda's little brother, Shep, grimacing.

*

LITTLE SHEP

*

Yyyyyyup.

*

SIDDA (V.O.)

*

And?

*

LITTLE SHEP

*

Sid, don't get me in the middle of this.

*

*

15

INT. SIDDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

15

*

The PHONE is RINGING.

SIDDA

Don't answer it! It's her.

Connor answers anyway. It's her.

CONNOR

Hello, Vivi.

VIVI

Hello, Connor.

CONNOR

Did you call to talk to Sidda? Or to hang up.

VIVI

I called to tell her that I received the invitation and that all I'll be sending is my condolences to you.

CONNOR

Vivi, I'm going to say to you exactly what I would say to my own mother. Grow up.

Sidda is jumping up and down, Connor is her hero.

CONNOR

(to Sidda)

What are you jumping up and down about? The same goes for you. You two are acting like children.

Sidda stops jumping up and down. Vivi hangs up.

CONNOR

Did she just hang up on me? She hung up on me.

SIDDA

See what I mean?

CONNOR

How has your ol' man hung in there for forty-odd years?

SIDDA

Well, for one thing, she moved out of the bedroom sometime in the early Sixties. So he's had a lot of time to himself.

(CONTINUED)

SIDDA

Of course not. Whenever Mama can't handle something, it's only a matter of time before y'all come swooping in.

CONNOR

Hello. I'm Connor McGill. I, for one, am very pleased to meet you.

CARO

I'm Caro, this is Teensy...

NECIE

And I'm Necie. And you are a fine-looking young man. 'Course, I'm just goin' based on looks here, but you look just fine.

SIDDA

Now, before y'all start I wanna say one thing. It's not gonna work.

CONNOR

By the way, what is a Yaya?

SIDDA

Basically, it's crazy cajun for drinking buddy.

NECIE

That's a terrible description.

CARO

Girl, you're walking close to the line.

SIDDA

Well, I've clearly stomped across it with Mama. Might as well blow the whole wad.

CARO

Listen, petite bebe. No one on earth, and I mean no one understands better than us how crazy your mama is. We're not here to dispute that. She's mad as a hatter and that's never gonna change.

(CONTINUED)

TEENSY

She'd skin us alive if she knew we were here. We told her we were going to a spa where there's no alcohol.

NECIE

Teensy joined the triple A.

TEENSY

That's just what it looks like to you.

CARO

Anyway, the point is, Sidda...

Caro suddenly decides to change tack.

CARO

I'm starving. We know when we're licked, okay? So how 'bout you let us just take you out to dinner and we'll get on the plane in the morning. No questions asked.

The waiter sets down a second round of drinks in front of Caro and Necie and a champagne flute in front of Sidda.

CARO

What are those dainty little things you're drinking?

SIDDA

Kir Royales. Champagne and chambord. The smell of bourbon makes me sick.

NECIE

Me too. I've always stuck to Scotch.

TEENSY

My God! Broadway. I just can't get over it. It's just too much. Your mama is so proud... I mean... she was...

CARO

For God's sake, Teence. We said we wouldn't talk about Vivi, we took a solemn oath and there you go...

(CONTINUED)

18

CONTINUED: (2)

CARO

I had to try it. It's delish.

SIDDA

Didn't work.

They are stricken for a moment.

SIDDA

The food didn't come.

Relief.

TEENSY

Oh! It didn't, did it. Maybe
that one doesn't work up here.

SIDDA

Guess not. Anyway, here's to
Mama. Long may she rave.

They all pick up their glasses.

ALL THREE YAYAS

Yaya.

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE UP TO:

19

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - BEDROOM - MORNING

19

*

Sidda's face. Sleeping it off. Her eyes flutter
slightly. A SOUND from the other room: Bourree!

*

*

*

Her eyes slap open. She sits bolt upright in bed.

Sidda looks around. She's in a rustic cabin bedroom.
Why?

*

*

*

SIDDA

What? Noooo! I'm not... I'm not
here! I can't be! I'm there!

20

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - LIVING ROOM

20

The Yayas around a table, not a care in the world,
playing the most addictive card game ever -- Bourree.

CARO

Sounds like Sleeping Beauty's up.

(CONTINUED)

SIDDA

You better listen up right this minute. I am not a child! I am a grown woman with a life a thousand miles from here and I am going back to it right now.

Teensy comes to the door, ignoring the ultimatum.

TEENSY

I'm making you coffee. The real kind. Good ole Louisiana chicory. Not that fancy New York swill.

SIDDA

Just what the hell do y'all think you're doing!?!

CARO

A Yaya mission of mercy, pal.

TEENSY

An intervention.

SIDDA

Why me? I've been in therapy for fifteen years. With a professional! She's the one who needs help!

CARO

Yes. You're right. But, bebe, she's getting up there, like the rest of us. She is what she is. But you, you have a long life ahead of you and you shouldn't have to spend any more of it tangled up in anger and resentment.

SIDDA

I'm not angry! And the only resentment I feel is you all thinking you have the right to disrupt my entire life because Mama had a hissy fit when essentially all I did was tell the truth!

Sidda steadies herself on the dresser.

SIDDA

Hang on. I'm spinning.

Caro, Necie and Teensy turn on their heels and march to the living room.

22

CONTINUED:

22

CARO

You want out? That book minus the
chip on your shoulder is your
ticket back to New York.

23

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - BEDROOM - DAY

23

*

Sidda storms back in, throws herself on the spring bed
and bobs up and down on the mattress. Over the VOICES of
two Yayas in a bidding war, the distinctive sound of ICE
TINKLING IN A GLASS.

Sidda clamps her hands to her ears -- slamming the brakes
on a parade of bad memories. She sees the card players
through the door. She blinks.

24

OMITTED

24

*

25

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (PRESENT)

25

*

Sidda bolts. She grabs Caro's Bloody Mary on her way to
the porch.

26

EXT. PORCH - DAY

26

*

Sidda sits cross-legged in an old cane rocking chair.
Stares out into the creek.

The sound of CHILDREN SPLASHING and SCREAMING...

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

*

Okay! Who wants to drown?

27

FLASHBACK - EXT. CREEKBANK - DAY (1961)

27

Yayas on the creekbank. Vivi and Caro both in striped
tank suits. Necie counting children. Teensy on her
side, sunning. All are brown as berries. And very
happy.

Vivi scans the kids in the water. A dozen hands shoot up
in the air, waving for Vivi's attention. Vivi puts on
shorts and a shirt over her swimsuit and then points out
at Sidda who is doing her free-form water ballet.

(CONTINUED)

28

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - LIVING ROOM - DAY (PRESENT) 28 *

Sidda walks back into the cabin, passes by the card players and plops down on the sofa. She glances at the book, then picks it up and inspects it.

The Yayas exchange glances.

CARO

Three hearts, Necie.

Sidda opens the old scrapbook. Things are stuffed in between the pages in no particular order: Ticket stubs, yellowed invitations, letters, dried corsages, and photographs, hundreds and hundreds of them.

The Yayas watch Sidda's face as she looks at a photo.

SIDDA

Oh my God. Look at this.

Sidda holds up a photograph of the Yayas sitting on the creekbank in their glory days.

SIDDA

Look how young y'all were.

CARO

I would give anything to have known then what I know now. And to still have those thighs.

NECIE

I'm sure they're still buried in there somewhere.

CARO

I hate you.

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPH

Vivi, Teensy and Caro at about age 12, on the steps of a stately Southern mansion -- in full antebellum regalia, hoop skirts, bonnets, little gloves.

WIDER

SIDDA

What in the hell?

Sidda holds up the picture. Teensy squints to see it.

(CONTINUED)

29

CONTINUED:

29

JAMES JR.

And get that ugly luggage into the house before somebody thinks we've got a bunch of hoboes coming to stay.

As Vivi passes James, Jr., she growls and swipes at him like a tiger. Startled, he takes a step back. Vivi and the Yayas burst into giggles. Teensy checks out the front of the house.

LITTLE TEENSY

(under her breath)

I don't think this place is so great.

*

30

INT. ATLANTA MANSION - DAY

30

Inside is a different story; the girls try not to seem overwhelmed by the grandeur. Uniformed maids take Willetta in one direction while others lead the girls up the sweeping staircase. A black uniformed man carries the luggage.

*

TEENSY

(whispering)

Mama says that Uncle James and Aunt Lou are Nouveau Riche.

*

LITTLE VIVI

What's that?

*

LITTLE TEENSY

I don't know, but it's not good.

*

LITTLE CARO

With all this money, maybe they should buy your cousin a new face. The one he's got is no good at all.

*

*

*

31

INT. ATLANTA MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY

31

The girls are led into a large, beautiful bedroom with a fireplace. Three antebellum dresses hang on the armoire. The Yayas take it all in as nonchalantly as possible but they are buzzing with excitement.

*

*

*

INT. MANSION - BATHROOM - DAY

32

*

Vivi takes a peek into the bathroom: huge and marble with a great big tub. Fancy soaps and bath salts.

35

INT. MANSION - BATHROOM - NIGHT

35

*

The three Yayas are in the huge clawfooted tub together. Teensy has dumped an entire bottle of French bath salts in the water.

LITTLE VIVI

I feel like a Paris princess.

In walks Willetta donning a starched uniform, frilly white apron and maid's cap. She's none too happy about it either.

WILLETТА

What'ch'y'all doin' all in that tub? How y'all s'posed to get clean all soakin' together like that? Get on outta there.

LITTLE TEENSY

Aunt Loouuiisse told us to take a bath.

She hands them all towels.

LITTLE VIVI

Look at you, Willetta, all done up in a Frenchy uniform! I'm gonna take a picture of you to show everybody at home.

WILLETТА

Oh no you ain't! Now, get your clothes on for fancy dinner. They got it all done up down there like they's the king of England.

LITTLE VIVI

Isn't this just the most magnificent thing that could ever happen.

WILLETТА

I s'pose that's what I'd be thinkin' if I was you.

The Yayas exit the bathroom and Willetta catches a look at herself in the mirror.

WILLETТА

Oh Lord. I done died and gone to hell.

39

INT. MANSION - MAID'S ROOM - NIGHT

39

Vivi stands watching a sleeping Willetta who's lying in bed. Then she sobs; Vivi realizes she's not asleep, she's crying.

LITTLE VIVI

Willetta?

WILLETТА

(startled)

What you doin' down here! Get yourself back in that bed!

LITTLE VIVI

I can't sleep. Why are you crying?

WILLETТА

I be cryin' 'cause I misses my family.

LITTLE VIVI

You miss Maman Delia?

WILLETТА

Child, your old gran ain't my family! I got my own gran and my own mama and daddy, too.

LITTLE VIVI

Stop cryin', Willetta. You're not supposed to cry. You're supposed to be takin' care of us. You wanna play cards? Like at home?

Willetta cries harder.

WILLETТА

No, child. I don't wanna play no cards.

LITTLE VIVI

How about some hot chocolate? Will you make me some? Willetta? We could both have some. Like you make it at Maman Delia's.

Willetta stops crying and looks at Younger Vivi incredulously.

WILLETТА

If'n you want hot chocolate, go fix it yourself!

Willetta resumes crying and Vivi scampers out of the room.

LITTLE VIVI

Did I hear you right?

JAMES JR.

What, y'all deaf?

LITTLE CARO

I heard him loud and clear.

LITTLE TEENSY

Me too.

Vivi picks up her Limoges plate filled with eggs, grits, and bacon and heaves it at James, Jr. -- a dead-on hit.

LITTLE VIVI

You shut your mouth, you prissy
ass little mama's boy!

After a quick glance at Vivi, Willetta is gone. Everyone is shocked dumb. Aunt Louise jerks Vivi from her chair, shaking her.

AUNT LOUISE

You apologize this instant! Do
you hear me? Apologize right now
or I'll send y'all back to that
godforsaken swamp you crawled out
of!

Vivi looks to Teensy and Caro. Vivi is red with anger. Teensy picks up her plate, ready.

LITTLE TEENSY

Aunt Lou, you better let go of her
or I'm gonna let that ugly half-
wit you call Junior have it again.

Aunt Louise is in a standoff with Teensy, still clutching Vivi by the shoulders.

LITTLE CARO

I wouldn't spend one more minute
in this godforsaken nut house if
you got down on your knees and
begged like a dog. Here, Junior,
you can have my breakfast too.

Caro heaves her plate at James, Jr. Boom. Direct hit. Teensy still holds her plate poised to throw.

AUNT LOUISE

Don't. You. Dare.

(CONTINUED)

43

CONTINUED:

43

TEENSY

Honey, your grandmother was just about the unhappiest person I've ever seen. And something about Vivi's very nature...

CARO

... scared the shit outta her. She was overwhelmed by Vivi's life force. I mean, nothing's changed, dahlin'. From the moment your mama came into the world she took up all the space in the room.

Sidda flips another page. It's a picture of Vivi at 17 with handsome young Jack Whitman. They're clearly in love.

SIDDA

Whoa.

TEENSY

That's my brother, Jack.

SIDDA

I didn't know you had a brother, Teensy. My whole life I didn't know.

TEENSY

That's why you're here, bebe. To know what you didn't know.

Teensy drapes her arm over Sidda's shoulder and kisses her on the cheek as they all walk out of the cabin.

SIDDA

What is it about Mama in that photograph?

NECIE

It's the smile.

CARO

That's before we had to hold our stomachs in.

FLASHBACK - EXT. CAJUN PARTY - MAGIC HOUR (1944)

44

*

This is the Bayou Saint Jacques, Genevieve Whitman's country.

*

(CONTINUED)

46

EXT. WHITMAN'S YARD - NIGHT

46

Vivi and Jack are rocking in a glider swing, her feet in Jack's lap. She's crying.

YOUNGER VIVI

You're lying! You don't want to
be a pilot! You just want to
impress your father!

She punches him, hard.

JACK

I'm not doing this just for him,
Vivi. There's a war on and... it
would be wrong not to go.

(CONTINUED)

47

EXT. TEENSY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

47

*

The Yayas lounge in pajama tops and panties, smoking Luckys and sipping Cokes. Caro stands in front of a fan with a wet washcloth held against her body. Teensy adds rum to Vivi's Coke.

YOUNGER TEENSY

*

... because he made me swear not to till he told you himself.

Vivi kicks at Teensy's legs but Teensy dodges without spilling a drop of her drink.

YOUNGER VIVI

*

You shoulda warned me! What did Genevieve say?

YOUNGER TEENSY

*

She cried and begged him to change his mind. Daddy called her unpatriotic. Made a speech and gave a toast. Maman said she'd never drink to a son going to war. So now Daddy's in the doghouse.

YOUNGER CARO

*

There's not a goddamn breeze in the entire state of Louisiana.

YOUNGER NECIE

*

I'll never be able to sleep in this heat.

YOUNGER CARO

*

I'm feeling weak. Somebody call me an ambulance.

YOUNGER TEENSY

*

You're an ambulance.

YOUNGER VIVI

*

Well damn it, we can't just sit here and puddle. The mountain won't come to Mohammed. We're just gonna have to make our own goddamn breeze. Come on.

48

EXT./INT. GENEVIEVE'S CAR - HIGH ANGLE - NIGHT

48

*

of the Yayas still in pajama tops, panties and bare feet, pushing the Packard down the driveway.

49

CONTINUED:

49

YOUNGER NECIE

And if that doesn't work, what?
Flash your high beams? We are
going straight to hell.

YOUNGER TEENSY

Hot-cha-cha!

51

OMITTED

51

A52

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - MAGIC HOUR (PRESENT)

A52

They are all slouched in repose.

TEENSY

We went to jail. I was very proud.

NECIE

Your mama was a bad influence.

CARO

(to Necie)

If it wasn't for you, our moral
fiber would have been shredded to
tattered rags.

NECIE

Teensy, smack her for me.

SIDDA

Am I gonna have to give you all a
time-out?

B52

INT. PEACAN GROVE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

B52 *

Shep walks to Vivi's closed bedroom door and stands
outside, not knocking, just standing.

*
*

SHEP

Vivi? You all right?

*
*

VIVI (O.S.)

I'm fine!

*
*

He stands a moment longer regarding the closed door...
Ruminating.

*
*

SHEP

Need anything?

*
*

VIVI (O.S.)

Nope.

*
*

WILLETТА

Don't you be talkin' 'bout old.
You the one with the birthday
round the corner here.

A HORN HONKS outside.

CHANEY

There's Mr. Shep. I'll be back in
a little bit, Letta.

As soon as he's gone:

WILLETТА

You gonna tell me what's wrong or
do I have to use what brain cells
I got left tryin' to figure it
out.

VIVI

Nothing's wrong. Really. Except.
Well. Sidda. I mean Willetta,
you know me. I wasn't a horrible
mother, was I? I tried. You know
I did.

WILLETТА

This about the New York Times
thing?

VIVI

How'd you hear?

WILLETТА

Mr. Shep tells Chaney everything.
Then Chaney tells me everything.
I don't tell nobody nothin' but
I'm gonna tell you something right
now.

Willetta studies Vivi's troubled face.

WILLETТА

Sooner or later, everybody's bill
comes due. You got to let the
child feel the way she feel.
Ain't nothin' else to do.

Vivi is mortified.

VIVI

Oh shit.

55

CONTINUED:

55

A grand ballroom is adorned with poinsettias and sparkling lights and packed with friends and family. Vivi stands in front of a gift table with her father and PETE on one side and Jack Whitman on the other. She couldn't be happier. *

NECIE (V.O.)

Jack arrived the day before, home on leave.

TEENSY (V.O.)

It was a miracle that he'd been able to come home early for Christmas. For him to be there for her birthday was the high point of the whole thing for her.

The CAMERA FINDS Buggy off to the side in martyr mode. For once she's wearing lipstick, but embarrassed to be caught looking pretty. The song ends to huge applause as the Yayas and their dates flock around Vivi.

Mr. Abbott hands Vivi a small gift-wrapped package and kisses her on the cheek. Teensy leans in to Caro and whispers:

TEENSY

He kissed her. I'm gonna faint.

Caro elbows a young Shep Walker, the boy next to her.

YOUNGER CARO

Shep, cig, please.

He lights a cigarette and hands it to her.

YOUNGER CARO

Oh boy. Look at Buggy.

Buggy watches Vivi and Taylor, livid as Vivi unwraps her present. As the band revs up with "White Christmas," Vivi snaps open the lid of a velvet ring box.

YOUNGER VIVI

Daddy!! Is it real?! Is it...
it's just about the most beautiful
thing I've ever seen!

Vivi holds up a stunning five diamond ring and hugs her father. She rushes to embrace her mother. Buggy is rigid and doesn't return the hug.

(CONTINUED)

56

INT. VIVI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

56

All four Yayas in a puppy pile on Vivi's four-poster bed, warming each other as they drift off to sleep.

Suddenly, the door flies open and Buggy enters in her bathrobe, a rosary dangling from her hand. One by one, the Yayas come to life.

The next thing they know, Buggy is rifling through quilts and bodies until she finds what she's looking for. Vivi's hand. The one with the ring. She grabs the ring and yanks it off Vivi's finger.

BUGGY

Whatever you did to make your
father give you this ring is a
mortal sin. May God forgive you.

Buggy stomps out of the room, slamming the door. Vivi leaps to her feet, anger and pain rising within her at the same speed. She screams -- half to the door, half to herself!

YOUNGER VIVI

I didn't do anything! That was
from Daddy. He gave me that ring!
He gave it to me.

YOUNGER CARO

She's sick, Vivi. Don't let her
get to you.

Vivi collapses back onto the bed, hiding her face in her hands.

YOUNGER TEENSY

It's okay, Viv. I'll steal it
back if I have to.

Vivi's friends enfold her. Caro strokes her back.
CRASH! Followed by YELLING AND SCREAMING. Buggy and Mr. Abbot go at it. The Yayas reflexively shield Vivi at the sound of APPROACHING FOOTSTEPS.

The door to Vivi's bedroom flies open. Mr. Abbot roughly pushes Buggy into the room.

MR. ABBOT

Do it, Buggy. Do it!

Buggy is crying but she defiantly refuses to move. He shoves her.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNGER CARO

Listen, pal, your father is nuts
but your mother is crazy.

YOUNGER TEENSY

She's not just crazy. She's a
jealous hateful witch.

YOUNGER VIVI

No. She's... She loves me...

(beat)

She does.

Caro lights a cigarette and hands it to Vivi.

YOUNGER CARO

Then let her act like it.

Teensy picks up Vivi's hand and gazes at the ring.

YOUNGER TEENSY

Damn. That ring is worth a whole
pile of money.

Caro and Necie catch on. They try to rally Vivi's
spirits. And their own.

YOUNGER CARO

That ring is all yours, pal. You
can do whatever you want with it.

YOUNGER NECIE

You could even sell it. It's like
money in the bank.

But Vivi is only half-listening. She's finally seen
it -- the worst side of her parents. And now, she knows
she's not a child anymore.

YOUNGER VIVI

How about that? I'm rich, huh?

CUT TO:

Sidda is quiet for a moment.

SIDDA

Okay. That was rough, I'll admit.
But people have survived a lot
worse than that. Me included.

(CONTINUED)

CARO

Oh, bebe, do you ever. Wait till
you see what we have for you.
Crayfish Etoufee. Your mama's.

TEENSY

You sit tight. We'll fix it all
up for you.

Caro and Teensy head to the kitchen.

ALL THE YAYAS
(including Sidda)

Yaya.

Sidda cringes when she realizes what she's just done.

Alone in the room, she flips through the book. Not just
idly but now with curiosity. And intent. Envelopes are
pasted into the book with the addresses facing out. The
letters inside are folded, sticking out of the tops.
Sidda looks at one addressed to her mother at St.
Augustine Academy. It's postmarked 1945, from Pete
Abbott, Vivi's little brother. *

PETE (V.O.)

Dear Stinky, I would have rather
driven into a nest of Japs than
drive you to the station this
morning.

FLASHBACK - INT. CAR - PREDAWN (1945)

PETE ABBOTT, 16, drives Vivi, her face streaked with
tears. Buggy sits in the back praying, murmuring with
her rosary. *

BUGGY

She is a flower, but she is
wilting. Remove her from the
temptations of the world so that
she may bloom in the spirit.

Vivi and Pete look at each other, scared and repulsed by
their mother.

PETE (V.O.)

That was a lowdown, sneaky trick.
Sometimes I think Mama is not
right in the head.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YOUNGER VIVI

But, Mama, everything's planned
for this afternoon! Everybody's
seeing me off at the 2:56!

BUGGY

Get up. I need to strip your bed.

Vivi gets out of bed and stands beside it. Buggy flings
back the covers. Efficient as a hospital nurse, she
whips the pillow out of its case, and peels back the
cotton mattress pad.

YOUNGER VIVI

Daddy didn't say anything about
this.

BUGGY

Your father doesn't tell you
everything. You're not his wife.

Buggy gathers the sheets and pillow underneath her arms,
raising her chin slightly, waiting for Vivi's reaction.
Mother and daughter stand glaring at each other.

YOUNGER VIVI

Is he coming? I need to tell him
good-bye.

BUGGY

He's not to be awakened.

YOUNGER VIVI

But I won't be able to see the
Yayas, Mother. I can't leave
without telling them good-bye.

BUGGY

Stop it! I won't hear one more
word about your precious Yayas!
Haven't you caused enough
suffering in this house?

Vivi stands on the curb as Pete carries her luggage into
the lobby. Still in the car, Buggy opens the back door.
She turns her body slightly, as though she might climb
out and go to her daughter; instead, she begins a silent
prayer.

YOUNGER VIVI

Mama, what are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

62 INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT) 62

Sidda finishes the letter, refolds it and puts it back in the envelope.

SIDDA

(to herself)

Holy shit. Buggy was a freak.

She picks up another letter from her mother addressed to Caro.

63 FLASHBACK - INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - HALL - DAY (1945) 63

Vivi is dragging her footlocker down the long, wide hall as girls walk by not acknowledging her struggle or even her presence.

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

Dear Caro... Every single girl at this school is ugly. The way they dress and make them wear their hair. I guess soon, I'll be ugly too. Obey the church, confess your sins, and die, that's the plan here. It all comes down from the Mother Superior, the Boris Karloff of the nun world.

MOTHER SUPERIOR walks down the center of the hall as the girls part like the Red Sea, cutting her a wide swath and avoiding her eyes.

64 INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - VIVI'S ROOM - DAY 64

Vivi sets up the footlocker in her tiny room and on it places a picture of Jack and photos of the Yayas. Vivi lifts her velvet birthday dress and looks for a place to hang it. No closet. She removes the crucifix over her bed and hangs the dress from the nail.

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

My room here is a pen, a hole, a cell. They call me by my middle name here, to try to make me forget who I am... Once in a while, I do.

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - CAFETERIA - DAY

65 *

Vivi is sitting alone, wan and nervous, looking as though she might throw up as she tries to take a spoonful of soup.

(CONTINUED)

68

CONTINUED:

68

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

Caro, this is exactly like being
in prison, but I don't know for
what crime.

She puts down her pen.

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

I dream that Jack will fly down
and take me out of here. We'll
fly away together and be happy.
Somewhere. I know it sounds as
if I've lost my mind. Maybe I
have.

Vivi takes down her velvet gown from the wall. She pulls
the dress over her head. Strapless, the dress is far too
big for Vivi's emaciated body.

She lets the dress fall, crumpling around it and then she
crumples into it too and quietly begins to cry.

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

I don't understand how they could
leave me here. Please ask Pete to
talk to Daddy again. I am
desperately begging you to help
me. I love you and miss you all
more than I can possibly say. All
my love, Vivi.

69 INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - HALLWAY/STAIRS - DAY

69 *

Vivi comes to the top of the stairs holding the railing.
She looks ill.

70 INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - HALLWAY - DAY

70 *

She continues down the hallway, holding the wall to
steady herself. She opens the door to her room.

71 INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - VIVI'S ROOM - DAY

71 *

She drops her books. Over her bed her dress hangs in
tatters. Someone has cut the velvet skirt to ribbons.
Her legs buckle. Her knees hit the floor, then her head.
Girls stop and stare, but no one moves to help.

74

CONTINUED:

74

SISTER SOLANGE

Mother, do you think it might be prudent to call her parents? The child is in pain.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I do not think it wise to worry her parents. She's here because she is a sinner and they want her here.

Sister Solange bows her head; her vow of obedience is sacred. However:

75

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - INFIRMARY - NIGHT

75

Vivi is sleeping holding onto her pillow. Sister Solange takes the pillow to put it under her head. A packet of letters falls from the pillow case. Sister looks at the letters, looks at Vivi and leaves the room.

76

INT. ST. AUGUSTINE'S - HALL - EARLY MORNING

76

The Mother Superior walks quickly down the hall, fingering her rosary beads as she nears the infirmary. She enters and fires the question at Vivi:

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Who is Genevieve Whitman?

(CONTINUED)

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I will not release this child to you. You are not her mother!

GENEVIEVE

You not nobody's mother, sister!

MOTHER SUPERIOR

If you continue to disregard my wishes, I will have to call Father O'Donagan.

GENEVIEVE

Call the Pope, but Vivi is coming home with me. Now.

Genevieve takes Vivi's hand as Teensy holds the pillow. Caro and Necie carry Vivi's trunk. The students watch the confrontation, fascinated.

Caro and Necie walk past Mother Superior, bumping her as they join Genevieve, Vivi and Teensy.

YOUNGER CARO

'Scuse me, coming through.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

Let go of Joan!

Mother Superior follows as Genevieve and the girls hustle Vivi out of there.

YOUNGER TEENSY

Her name's not Joan. It's Vivi.

Mother Superior reaches toward Vivi in an attempt to stop her. Genevieve turns and puts her hand on Mother Superior's chest, stopping her cold in her tracks.

MOTHER SUPERIOR

I am responsible for saving this girl's soul!

YOUNGER CARO

Hah! Good luck!

The girls start to move Vivi down the hall. Genevieve has locked eyes with Mother Superior, and man, if looks could kill.

GENEVIEVE

If Lord Jesus ever find out he married you, he gonna want a divorce!

(CONTINUED)

79

CONTINUED:

79

CARO

Don't answer it!

TEENSY

Hello?

It's clear from Teensy's reaction that it's indeed Vivi.

INTERCUT WITH:

80

INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - NIGHT

80

Vivi, a drink in one hand, the phone in the other.

VIVI

Ah-ha! Caught ya! Why on earth
do y'all think you can get away
with this? You think I don't know
what you're up to?

TEENSY

(on phone)

What do you mean, 'up to'? What's
that supposed to mean?

VIVI

You don't fool me for a second.

These women have been dealing with each other for a long,
long time. Vivi begins reinstating some photos onto the
mantle and piano from their place in the wastebasket.

TEENSY

(on phone)

Um...

Teensy is going to blow it. Caro takes the phone.

CARO

We're not up to a goddamn thing.
And if we were, it'd be none of
your business. So don't go poking
around or you'll spoil everything.
You think you're so smart.

VIVI

I don't want a big fuss. That's
all I ask. And I don't want
candles on my cake. It'll look
like the burning of Atlanta.

(CONTINUED)

80

CONTINUED:

80

TEENSY

She lived with us for a couple of months. Mama wouldn't even let her go home till she was good and strong again.

CARO

Genevieve all but knocked the stuffing out of Buggy and Taylor for letting that happen to Vivi.

TEENSY

Buggy halfway thought Mama was a witch.

(CONTINUED)

SIDDA

A little disoriented.

CONNOR

Horse tranquilizers will do that.

SIDDA

I can't believe you let them do this!

CONNOR

Honey, they didn't ask my permission. They called me on the way to the airport. They informed me of their plan. I saw you off.

SIDDA

From where?

CONNOR

I met you at the airport and helped them get you on the plane. They were totally organized. They had a note from a doctor. By the way, your pills are in your bag.

SIDDA

(loudly)

I have a bag?

CARO

(from the kitchen)

In the closet! Tell Connor we say hello.

SIDDA

Did you hear that?

CONNOR

Yeah. I'll tell you one thing. Meeting them explains a lot about you.

SIDDA

Such as?

CONNOR

Let me put it this way. You're a hell of a lot more normal than you've any right to be. You know what the tall one said? The one with the tank?

(CONTINUED)

83

CONTINUED:

83

SIDDA

What? Why are you so worried
about this?

He exhales heavily.

CONNOR

Because I'm afraid that one day
our kids may feel that way about
you.

This knocks the wind out of her.

SIDDA

Ow.

CONNOR

Those women may be nuts, but I got
the feeling maybe they know
something you don't.

SIDDA

I don't think it's fair to bring
kids we don't even have into it,
Connor. That was a low blow.

CONNOR

Well. That's the way I feel.
Deal with it.

She hangs up on him.

CONNOR

I guess your mother taught you
well.

85

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

85

Caro, Necie and Teensy come back into the living room
with coffee and liqueurs.

NECIE

Don't you New York people say
good-bye?

SIDDA

Not when the other person is on
their high horse thinking they
know so much.

CARO

Oh, I hate that. I especially
hate it when they're right.

(CONTINUED)

86

CONTINUED:

86

He throws down his cigarette.

PETE

Vivi! Vivo!

Vivi and Necie stop at the foot of the bridge. Pete comes to them.

PETE

C'mon. We have to go to Teensy's house.

YOUNGER VIVI

No.

Vivi drops her bike.

PETE

Vivi.

YOUNGER NECIE

Pete. No. No.

PETE

Come on.

Vivi steps back from Pete. Necie drops her bike and goes to Vivi.

YOUNGER VIVI

God. Please. No. No. No.

The word "no" becomes a howl of pain. That howl of pain becomes...

87

INT. WHITMAN LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

87

... Genevieve's. SHIRLEY, the Whitman maid, is sitting in the living room, crying. A telegram lies on the floor. Vivi runs into the house and goes to the Whitmans' bedroom. Necie picks up the telegram. Pete stops at the door.

SHIRLEY

I knowed something bad was comin'.
Jus' yesterday I done heard that
screech owl. I held that baby boy
in my arms and done blessed him
with magnolia leaves like Miss
Genevieve want. Just like Miss
Genevieve want.

89

CONTINUED:

89

NECIE

You all right to drive?

TEENSY

Of course I am.

NECIE

Habit.

TEENSY

I'll see you all tomorrow.

They kiss good night and she heads out. Caro looks at Sidra.

CARO

Wasn't all just fun and games.

SIDRA

So I see.

CARO

Shall I make a long story short?
They never found his body. Not a
dog tag. Not a shoe. Nothing.
Genevieve got herself believing
for a while that it was all a
mistake. That he was alive,
somewhere... And then, she stopped
believing. And then... the good
French lady took her leave.

SIDRA

I knew I should have stopped while
I was behind. Poor Teensy.

NECIE

Your mama rallied for her. But
the two of them, neither one has
ever been the same. I wish you
could have seen what your mother
was like as a girl. You would
have loved her.

SIDRA

Necie, me not loving Mama was never
the problem.

CARO

Her not loving you was never the
problem either.

(CONTINUED)

91 EXT. SPRING CREEK - NIGHT

91

Sidda walks out and down to the water. She stares into the moonlit surface, smooth as glass.

92 FLASHBACK - EXT. UNDERWATER - SIDDA'S POV (1961)

92

Swimming TOWARD the surface and BREAKING THROUGH.

The sound of CHILDREN SHRIEKING and LAUGHTER fills the air.

LITTLE SIDDA

is in the water and looking back toward the creek-bank. Sixteen petite Yayas in all, running, splashing, crying, chasing and in the center of the storm sit the Yayas. Beach bags and coolers and Thermoses of vodka and grapefruit juice are all around them. One Thermos has "RE - VIVIFICATION - TONIC" written on the side.

Vivi is lying on her stomach with her hands under her chin as Teensy rubs baby oil with iodine on the back of her legs. She smiles at Sidda and gives her a pinkie wave. Sidda dives back underwater.

A94 FLASHBACK - INT. PEACAN GROVE KITCHEN

A94 *

Vivi stands at the stove stirring a roux, wooden spoon in one hand, drink in the other. Little Sidda sets the table. Shep comes in the door, still dirty from work. He opens the refrigerator, takes out a beer. He opens it and slips an arm around Vivi's waist, looking over her shoulder. She, not quite imperceptibly, squirms away. Shep feels the rebuff and is stung. Once again. He takes a sip of his beer.

SHEP

Whatsa matter, Vivi?

No response.

SHEP

I'm still not Jack, huh... Vivi.
I'm what you got.

She turns on him, hissing.

VIVI

Shut up, Shep!

(CONTINUED)

YOUNGER VIVI

What are you talking about? You go out there to drink yourself to sleep! You don't lift one finger to help me with this family!

YOUNGER SHEP

I don't lift a finger? Really? Then what's that bustin' my ass all day about? Look at my goddamn hands, Vivi!

*

BACK UNDER COVERS

The sound gets closer and they all get very quiet. Sidida turns off the flashlight.

BAYLOR

Is Daddy gonna kill her?

LITTLE SIDDA

She'll kill him first.

Lulu starts to cry. Little Shep and Sidida make her be quiet.

LITTLE SHEP

Quiet! You don't shut up you'll get us all killed.

Lulu makes herself be quiet.

YOUNGER VIVI (O.S.)

I don't want to look at your ugly cotton-farmin' hands and I sure as hell don't want you puttin' 'em on me!

Flashlight back on.

(CONTINUED)

97 INT. SIDDA'S APARTMENT - MORNING (PRESENT) 97

Connor picks up the phone.

INTERCUT WITH:

98 INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - BEDROOM 98

Sidda on the phone.

CONNOR

Hi.

SIDDA

Why do you answer the phone that way?

CONNOR

What way?

SIDDA

Like you know it's me.

CONNOR

But it is you.

SIDDA

Look, I've been awake all night thinking about what you said. And I think I see what you're getting at.

CONNOR

Your tone makes me think that you don't.

SIDDA

Well, think about it, Connor! Why would my kids feel that way about me if I wasn't in some way unfit?

CONNOR

Our kids.

Sidda is getting more and more agitated.

SIDDA

If I wasn't in some way damaged? That's what you're saying!

CONNOR

Not even close.

(CONTINUED)

CONNOR

No! I never said I wanted that!

SIDDA

Okay. Okay. You want me to make it easy for you? Okay. Let's just put this whole thing on hold for a while until you can figure out how badly I'm going to fuck up everybody's life! Do not mail out those invitations.

CONNOR

Siddalee Walker. You are on the verge of making a very big mistake right now.

SIDDA

So are you. Only I'm not gonna let you.

She hangs up.

He looks at the phone. He cannot believe what just happened.

CONNOR

I don't believe this! Did you just call off our...

He is going to call her back but as he puts his finger on the phone to dial, he realizes: *

CONNOR

I don't have the goddamn number!!

He flips open the address book and dials.

INTERCUT WITH:

CONNOR

Vivi!

VIVI

Yes?

CONNOR

This is Connor.

She hangs up on him.

(CONTINUED)

99

CONTINUED: (2)

99

CONNOR

(yelling)

I don't know whether you really
ruined Sidda's life or not, but I
do know that now you're ruining
mine! And your phone etiquette
sucks!

He hangs up on her.

100

EXT. PECAN GROVE - DAY

100 *

Vivi charges toward her Lincoln in a rage. She drives
out of the driveway.

101

INT. SHEP'S TRUCK - DAY

101 *

Chaney and Shep in Shep's truck watch her go. They just
look at each other, Shep wearily, Chaney quietly
sympathetic.

102

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - BEDROOM - MORNING

102

Sidda gets up and goes into the bathroom.

103

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - BATHROOM - DAY

103

Sidda opens the medicine cabinet looking for aspirin.
She finds a jar of Noxema. She opens it, smells it.
There is one little white blob left. She puts it on her
nose and looks in the mirror.

104

FLASHBACK - INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN (1961)

104

Little Sidda in the mirror. She goes back to the living
room. It's the same room and the same furniture. There
are sixteen kids in pajamas; many with Noxema on their
noses, most with sunburns, hustling for cots set up in a
long line. MUSIC is PLAYING and Teensy, Sidda and Vivi
are dancing as Caro and Necie tuck in and kiss each and
every child. Vivi grabs Sidda and the two dance.

105

EXT. ROAD - DAY (PRESENT)

105

Vivi is blowing down the road, too fast. She's
practicing what she's going to say.

(CONTINUED)

TEENSY

You are so lucky! If you put one scratch on my baby I would have your ass.

Vivi hops out of the car. Furious. Charging.

VIVI

Teensy, I demand that you move that piece of shit out of my way, this very instant!

TEENSY

Who do you think you're talking to? Don't you take that tone with me!

VIVI

I know she's there! What is going on? Is betrayal absolutely everywhere?

TEENSY

Yes. Your lifelong friends are programming your daughter to destroy you.

VIVI

Somebody better tell me what's going on.

Teensy studies Vivi for a moment.

TEENSY

Vivi. I have loved you like a sister my whole life. We've been to hell and back more than once, haven't we?

VIVI

Don't do it like this, Teensy! Don't dredge everything up so that I can't be pissed off! You've all been goddamn Mother Teresa!

TEENSY

Vivi! Calm down! You are just going to have to trust us. Just give us some time. If you go there now, it's just gonna ruin... everybody's life.

(CONTINUED)

111 EXT. LIQUOR STORE PARKING LOT - NIGHT

111

Vivi pulls into the parking lot of the "ABRACADABRA LIQUOR STORE." The neon sign is the same one that was on the stage of the theater. She puts it in park and cries. Baylor and Lulu are being very quiet. Little Shep looks out the window as if he's watching passing scenery. But Sidda scoots over to Vivi and quietly sings her a little song, trying to comfort her.

LITTLE SIDDA

(singing)

'I see the moon, the moon sees me,
the moon sees the one who I want
to see. So God bless the moon and
God bless me and God bless the one
who I want to see.'

*

Vivi rests her head on the steering wheel while Sidda sings and pats her back. The sign flashes red and white on the children's faces.

112 INT. VIVI'S CAR - DAY (PRESENT)

112

Her head resting on the steering wheel, Vivi has pulled to the side of the road.

113 EXT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - DAY

113 *

Sidda, Caro, Teensy and Necie are out walking. Sidda is very, very upset.

TEENSY

It's ridiculous! I don't think
that's what he meant at all!

CARO

Kids, we gotta slow down or I'm
gonna pop a lung. Now listen,
Siddo, I know you come by your
flair for drama honestly, but you
don't call off a wedding and a
seven year goddamn relationship on
the basis of one phone call!
Especially after the goofballs we
had you hopped up on! Stop. I
gotta rest.

Necie hands her her oxygen tank. Caro takes a couple
breaths with the mask to her face.

(CONTINUED)

113 CONTINUED: (2)

113

SIDDA (CONT'D)

I don't think some kid should have to find out the hard way! And neither should Connor! She didn't want us! Fine! But she should have stayed gone. When y'all finally dragged her ass back here, she just drank until we all went away. As I'm sure you know since y'all were mixin' the drinks!

The Yayas look at each other in disbelief.

114 EXT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - NIGHT

114 *

Vivi, outside, alone in the dark, in her nightgown. She lights a circle of sparklers around her. She stands in the center holding a lit sparkler in each hand. She looks up at the sky and raises the sparklers above her head.

VIVI

Mary, Mother of the motherless, lady of the fields and prairies, can you see me? I'm here. It's me again.

She waves her sparklers.

VIVI

I need some divine intervention once again, quelle grande surprise. And here it is: My oldest daughter, Siddalee, the loudmouth I've been complaining about, may be walking away from true love. Please. Stop her. Don't let her run away. This is because of me. She's never said it, but I know. She only saw me holding back. I take full responsibility, but I would appreciate you keeping that to yourself. Please pass this on to your son and his father. I promise to not smoke but one a day. And to only have one drink a week. I mean a day. I'll do the best I can. Just help her out on this one thing and I'll find a way to pay you back.

(CONTINUED)

118 EXT. SPRING CREEK - DAY

118

Shep's truck pulls up to the cabin. He gets out as SidDA comes out.

SIDDA

Daddy?

SHEP

Hey, butterbean. Look at you.
You look pretty good for a
hostage.

SIDDA

My captors are humane. You look
like you're holding up pretty
well, yourself.

They give each other a hug. He looks at his daughter.

SHEP

Another fine mess.

SIDDA

Daddy, the best lesson I ever
learned from you was to lay low.
What happened?

SHEP

Security's been breached. Backups
have been called in. Full-scale
Yaya alert.

SIDDA

Ah, but the prisoner has been left
unattended. You could bust me
out.

SHEP

I could. Except wherever we go,
we'd still be there.

SIDDA

No escape.

SHEP

More like Stockholm syndrome.

SIDDA

That's you. But what about me?

SHEP

You'll end up as the leader.

SIDDA

The inmate takes over the asylum.

(CONTINUED)

CARO

Goddamnit, Vivi! For once, will you stop worrying about how it's going to make you look?

(inhales again)

Will you think about what you're saying? She has no idea!

TEENSY

We have the book, Vivi. We're showing her the book.

VIVI

What? No! All the letters? No! I can't believe y'all are doing this to me! She knows too much as it is.

NECIE

Frankly, she doesn't know shit. And what she does know, she's made the worst of it.

CARO

It's like this, pal. If you don't tell her, we will. Case closed.

VIVI

This is not the Yaya way!

CARO

It is now.

NECIE AND TEENSY

Yaya.

Shep and Sidda sit together.

SHEP

We were ill-equipped. I think it can be summed up in 'the road to hell is paved with good intentions.'

Sidda smiles.

SIDDA

How about the road back? What's that paved with?

(CONTINUED)

124 EXT. PECAN GROVE - NIGHT 124

Shep pulls up in his truck and regards his dark house.

125 FLASHBACK - EXT. PECAN GROVE - NIGHT (1961) 125 *

Chaney and Shep pull up to the house in Shep's truck. Four Yaya cars are parked out front. MUSIC BLARES from inside. Shep and Chaney exchange knowing glances.

YOUNGER SHEP

You mind waitin' here for a minute?

CHANEY

I'll wait.

126 INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - NIGHT 126

Shep walks in the front door to JAMES BROWN as LOUD as it can be played.

SHEP'S POV

A petite Yaya boy is passed out with his blanket on a love seat in the foyer.

A lot of RACKET upstairs. KIDS SHRIEKING and RUNNING around.

Shep PEERS AROUND a corner INTO the living room. Yayas, drunk and happy, teach new dance moves to Sidda and the older kids.

127 INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT 127

Shep finds Baylor and another kid drinking Hershey's chocolate syrup out of the can. He's seen enough.

128 EXT. PECAN GROVE - NIGHT 128

Shep returns to the truck.

YOUNGER SHEP

Mind if I drop you off?

CHANEY

I don't mind.

(CONTINUED)

133

CONTINUED:

133

CONNOR

I'm Connor McGill.

Shep doesn't really register.

CONNOR

I'm supposed to be marrying
Sidda...Shep hears Vivi at the top of the stairs. She's trying
to see who it is.

CONNOR

... But she was abducted the other
day by some friends of yours
and...

SHEP

Son. Save your breath. This is
not my department. Come on in.

Vivi comes downstairs for a better look.

SHEP

Vivi Walker. Connor McGill.
She'll take over from here. Good
luck.Connor and Vivi size each other up as Shep mosies back
upstairs.

SHEP

Night, night.

134

INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

134

With just the stove light on, Vivi sits at the kitchen
table with Connor. She can't stop looking at him.

CONNOR

You're a lot smaller than I
thought you'd be. She always
makes you sound... bigger.

VIVI

She said you were very handsome.

CONNOR

Her gift for overstatement is well
documented.

(CONTINUED)

135 CONTINUED:

135

CLOSE ON GLASS

The melting ICE shifts and makes a little CLINK.

The sound startles Sidda who has been standing next to her mother's bed. Sidda starts to cough. Vivi wakes up.

YOUNGER VIVI

What? What is it?

Sidda is in a full-on coughing fit. Vivi is groggy as hell. She pulls Sidda to her, and raises Sidda's arms above her head. It doesn't help. Vivi picks up her glass.

YOUNGER VIVI

Here, baby, swallow just a little sip of water.

Vivi holds the glass as Sidda drinks. But Sidda gags, spits out the liquid, and coughs harder. Vivi smells the contents of the glass.

YOUNGER VIVI

Oh my God! I'm sorry, buddy. I thought it was water.

LITTLE SIDDA

Lulu and Baylor are sick. Baylor pooped in the bed.

136 INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

136

Lulu is crying. Baylor has diarrhea. It is all over the bed. Vivi picks him up and takes him into the bathroom. Sidda begins coughing again.

137 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

137

YOUNGER VIVI

Baylor, get in the tub and take off those underpants. Sidda! Stop that coughing. Come in here and help your brother!

138 INT. CHILDREN'S ROOM - NIGHT

138

Vivi comes back in and goes to Lulu. She feels her head.

YOUNGER VIVI

You're hot as Hades. Come here.

(CONTINUED)

142

CONTINUED:

142

YOUNGER VIVI

(shaky)

Willetta. I need you. It's an
emergency. Thank you. I'm sorry
it's so early.

143

INT. VIVI'S BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

143 *

She is still wearing the coat. She puts on lipstick and
combs her hair. Looking in the mirror she feels like a
hundred years old. She is still fighting tears.

144

INT. KITCHEN - EARLY MORNING

144

Willetta is cooking breakfast. Vivi enters in the white
coat.

YOUNGER VIVI

Willetta, do you have any money?

WILLETТА

No, ma'am. I don't.

Willetta watches Vivi. Vivi shoves her chapel veil into
her pocket.

YOUNGER VIVI

Make sure Little Shep eats his
oatmeal or he'll be into the
cookies before you can turn
around.

WILLETТА

I will. Where you goin' in your
fancy coat?

YOUNGER VIVI

I'm going to confession. I'm
going to get absolution.

WILLETТА

You watch out for them old cat-
eyed priests. They mean.

YOUNGER VIVI

I'll be back in an hour.

INT. CONFESSIONAL - MORNING

145

Vivi is in the booth, wearing her chapel veil..

(CONTINUED)

148

INT. LUCKY PAWN SHOP - MORNING

148

Vivi stands at the counter with the velvet ring box her father gave her while the pawnbroker looks through a loupe at the ring.

PRIEST (V.O.)

Do you have the courage to make sacrifices?

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

Yes, Father.

The pawnbroker nods. He writes a pawn ticket.

PRIEST (V.O.)

Well then, ask Mary, the mother of our blessed Lord, to teach you to bear your cross silently, patiently...

He counts out five hundred dollars in twenties.

PRIEST (V.O.)

... and in perfect submission to the will of God. We are put on this earth to suffer. Through suffering you reach happiness...

He slides the money and the ticket across the counter to Vivi.

149

INT. VIVI'S CAR - MORNING

149

Vivi driving again.

PRIEST (V.O.)

... through humiliation that you attain glory. It is your duty to live together in love and fidelity with your husband and to raise your children in the Catholic faith. You must banish these bad thoughts.

YOUNGER VIVI (V.O.)

Father, what if I cannot make the thoughts stop?

150

EXT. HIGHWAY - DRIVING SHOT - DAY (LATER)

150

PRIEST (V.O.)

Then you commit a sin of faithlessness in the passion of your redeemer.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

159

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING (LATER)

159

Vivi's eyes flutter open. She sits up and looks around.
Sunlight streams into the room. She looks at the clock.
9:05 AM. She picks up the phone. She clears her throat.

(CONTINUED)

160

CONTINUED:

160

She holds her hand up to display the ring. Connor takes her hand and looks closely at the ring. He doesn't let go of her hand.

CONNOR

Vivi, I just want the woman to marry me. Got any ideas?

VIVI

I might just have a few. Come on. I'll show you to your room.

161

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

161

Vivi goes back to her room. She passes Shep's room on the way. She looks at the door as she passes. She stops. She goes back. She stands outside the closed door. She starts to move away, but then stops again. She decides to knock. Lightly. So lightly no one would be able to hear it.

162

INT. SHEP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

162

Shep's eyes pop open. He listens. There it is again. He sits up, smooths his hair and goes to the door. He opens it. No one. He opens it wider and sees Vivi down the hall.

SHEP

(whispering)

Vivi?

She stops but doesn't turn around.

SHEP

Did you knock?

She doesn't know what to say. She wraps her arms around herself. He comes out into the hall.

163

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

163

SHEP

Come here, baby.

She goes to him. He puts his hands on her arms.

VIVI

I had a question.

He looks up and down the hall as if someone were likely to come along any moment. He motions for her to come into his room. She does and he closes the door.

165 CONTINUED:

CARO

I'll take the lead on this. Just don't chicken out when she starts yellin'. If she gets really out of hand, I'll pretend to faint.

They go into the house.

TEENSY

Yooohoo! Yaya! God, it smells good in here.

166 INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

166 *

Vivi is cooking while Shep and Connor drink coffee.

VIVI

Hiii! You're just in time. I'm making beignets.

*

Vivi's good mood throws them almost as much as Connor being there.

CARO

Hi. Everybody. Connor. What are you doing here?

CONNOR

I've come to reclaim 'my bride.'

TEENSY

She'll hate it if you call her that.

CONNOR

It'll be our secret. Secrets are kind of Yaya forte. From what I understand.

CARO

Well, that's kind of what we came to talk about.

Vivi's face goes calm.

CARO

Vivi.

VIVI

We had this discussion. I think I was perfectly clear.

(CONTINUED)

166 CONTINUED: (2)

166

Connor doesn't know what the hell is going on. He keeps quiet.

SHEP

(to Yayas)

I'll go with you.

They each go and kiss Vivi as they leave.

VIVI

You can't all go! I can't be here while...

CONNOR

I'll stay. I'll stay with you, Vivi.

CARO

God, I like this boy.

They all leave. Vivi turns to look at Connor, not really knowing what to say. Then:

VIVI

Once, a long time ago, I dropped my basket.

CONNOR

Okay.

167 EXT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - MORNING

167

The Yayas and Shep get out of the car and head inside.

168 INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - LIVING ROOM

168

Sidda is surprised to see them all together. She's been crying.

SHEP

Hey, butterbean. What's the problem?

She's drying her tears.

SIDDA

Nothing. Connor's just not answering the phone and...

They all look so serious.

(CONTINUED)

173 INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - KITCHEN (PRESENT)

173

She doesn't answer.

VIVI

I have to take some things over to
Willetta. You want to go?

174 FLASHBACK - INT. VIVI'S BEDROOM - CLOSE ON VIVI'S
SHAKING HANDS - DUSK (1962)

174

as she tries to count by two's pills scattered on top of
her dressing table. In the b.g., the sound of the
TELEVISION, the sound of LITTLE SHEP AND BAYLOR SHOUTING.

YOUNGER VIVI

Shut up! For God's sake, stop all
that noise.

She has to start over with the counting.

YOUNGER VIVI

Goddamn you... Forgive me...
forgive them, four...

Vivi counts the pills two by two.

VIVI'S POV

of the pills BLURRING, DOUBLING. She starts over.

BACK TO SCENE

YOUNGER VIVI

Wait! Wait a minute! Two,
four...

Baylор is now crying in the b.g. Little Shep calls from
the other room.

LITTLE SHEP (O.S.)

Mama!

Vivi slams her fist on the table, scattering the pills.

REVEAL Vivi's room.

Vivi has surrounded herself with religious artifacts.
There is a holographic image of the Virgin Mary, the kind
whose eyes follow you wherever you go.

(CONTINUED)

BAYLOR

Shep's bad.

Sidda glances up at Vivi. Her eyes widen. Something's wrong.

Vivi grabs Baylor and drags him out of the room. She is pulling his shirt off.

YOUNGER VIVI

You are going to be clean! If our
mother sees you like this...
Outside!! Everybody!

LITTLE SHEP

Whose mother? If whose mother
sees?

Little Shep and the others follow, not understanding
what's happening.

LITTLE SIDDA

It's raining! We can't go out.

Vivi appears confused for a moment, but doesn't stop her
tirade. Sidda is staring at her mother, worried.

YOUNGER VIVI

Everyone off with their clothes!
Hurry! I'll clean you up before
he has a go at you. Outside!
(panicking)
I have to save my babies! Help
me! Oh, God...

LULU (O.S.)

Mama?

Vivi jumps at Lulu's voice. Lulu's standing outside the
screen door wearing her angelic white nightgown. Sheer
terror washes across Vivi's face.

YOUNGER VIVI

Holy Mary Mother of God! It's not
time yet! Wait!

LULU

I'm all wet.

YOUNGER VIVI

Get out of those filthy rags!
Quick!

178

CONTINUED:

178

CHANEY

No, no, Miz Vivi! You leave them
children alone!

Willetta runs across the grass to the hysterical
children.

YOUNGER VIVI

Don't touch me!

Chaney holds Vivi's arms. She struggles, but is no match
for Chaney.

WILLETТА

My babies...

Baylor is curled up in a ball on the grass. Little Shep
turns away from Willetta, ashamed. Lulu is eating a
chunk of her hair. Willetta is crying as she picks up
Baylor and takes Lulu's hand.

WILLETТА

Come on, my little babies...

YOUNGER VIVI

God wants them clean. They're not
clean.

Vivi is kicking and screaming. Willetta walks back
across the grass to her house; Little Shep and Sidda hold
onto her robe, sobbing as they follow.

CHANEY

They are clean, Miz Vivi! Clean
as angels.

Chaney lets go of Vivi.

CHANEY

Willetta! We got to try to find
Mr. Shep! She done lost her mind!

Vivi sits on the grass. Sidda looks back at her mother.
Vivi pushes herself up and stumbles toward the house.

179

INT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - LIVING ROOM (PRESENT)

179

All the Yayas watch Sidda. Her face is white and she
looks up at them.

SIDDA

Yeah? So?

(CONTINUED)

181

CONTINUED:

181

YOUNGER CARO

No idea, but she eats them like they're goddamn M&M's.

BEAU POCHE

Dr. Lowell. That man ought to be run out of town on a rail. I'm going to give her a mild tranquilizer. She's having a seizure.

He gives her a shot.

YOUNGER CARO

She hurt the kids, Beau. They're at Willetta's. You need to get over there.

BEAU POCHE

Aw, hell.

They hear a TRUCK and Caro runs to see who it is.

182

EXT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - NIGHT

182

Caro meets Shep outside.

YOUNGER CARO

Shep. Vivi's sick. She's cracked up. We've got to get her some help.

YOUNGER SHEP

Where are my children? Are they okay?

YOUNGER CARO

No, Shep! No one is okay!

He turns to go back to his truck.

YOUNGER CARO

(evenly)

Shep Walker. Don't you even think about getting back into that truck. You get in there. Your wife is in serious trouble.

YOUNGER SHEP

Where is she?

YOUNGER CARO

Inside with Beau Poche.

(CONTINUED)

184

CONTINUED:

184

YOUNGER SHEP

She can't eat.

BEAU POCHE

No, Shep. She can't.

Shep sets the sandwich on the counter above his head. He picks up the bacon off Vivi's lap and wipes her mouth and then cups her face with his hands and kisses her very gently.

YOUNGER CARO

Beau. Go on over and see about the kids.

185

INT. WILLETТА AND CHANEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

185

Beau walks in the door of the small house. The four kids are huddled on a bed, all dressed in Willetta's girls' nightgowns and dresses. Their faces are tear-streaked and they are calmer but still crying. Willetta sits on the bed with them, rocking Lulu.

186

EXT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL - MORNING

186

Teensy, her husband CHICK, Caro, Shep and Vivi pull up to the hospital. Shep helps Vivi out of the car as if she is made of glass. And right now, she is.

187

INT. PRIVATE HOSPITAL - MORNING

187

Shep is filling out some papers. Vivi sits in the chair in front of the desk. Caro, Teensy, and Chick stand nearby. Nobody talks. The ADMINISTRATOR of the hospital comes in.

ADMINISTRATOR

I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.

The Administrator takes the paperwork from Shep and looks it over.

ADMINISTRATOR

Is she signing herself in or are you having her committed?

Shep seems shocked at the question.

YOUNGER SHEP

She's signing herself in.

(CONTINUED)

LULU

No, sit down, Daddy.

YOUNGER SHEP

No, I gotta be going, butterbean.
Give me a kiss.

He reaches down and picks her up but she bites him on the leg instead.

YOUNGER SHEP

Lulu! What the hell...

LULU

Sit here.

Shep doesn't know what to do. Suddenly he bursts into tears. Caro puts her hand on his back as he covers his face with his hands. He sobs, hard. One by one the kids take notice. Sidda sets down her basket and goes over near him, but not to him, tentatively watching. Caro helps him sit back down and Lulu climbs in his lap, happy as a little clam.

Sidda is silent.

NECIE

When your mama got home, we tried to get her to talk about her breakdown. She refused and refuses to this day.

CARO

Only once, she made me tell her how I found you and the kids. Every single mark on your bodies. She was twisted with guilt.

TEENSY

Honey, I think the reason she stayed distant is that she never trusted herself again. She didn't think she deserved you. Everything else is an act, bebe.

NECIE

And those pills, Dexamyl. Half Dexedrine, half Miltown. They were supposed to cure drinking. Nobody knew shit back then.

(CONTINUED)

189

CONTINUED: (2)

189

They nod.

SIDDA
(utterly bewildered)

Yaya.

190

EXT. SPRING CREEK CABIN - AFTERNOON

190

Sidda is outside with all the Yayas and Shep. The Yayas climb into Teensy's Bentley.

NECIE
We'll just be cookin' if you need us. We've got a birthday party to throw.

Shep and Sidda wave as they drive off. Sidda leans against his truck.

SHEP
You okay?

Sidda nods.

SHEP
It wasn't always bad, honey. Do what I do. Think about the good times. Let that be what sticks with ya.

SIDDA
What are you, some kind of saint?

SHEP
Yeah, that's me. Saint Shep of the fields. Patron saint of sunflowers.

He hugs and kisses her. As he drives away, she walks to the water. She lies down on the bank and looks up at the sky. *

SIDDA'S POV *

of a bi-plane flying through the sky. *

191

FLASHBACK - EXT. LANDING STRIP - DAY (1961)

191

A small bi-plane lands at the end of the airfield as the Yayas, each in their own car with their kids, pull up to a crowded air field. *

YOUNGER VIVI
Sidda, we have to get a number.
Go get in line at that booth.

(CONTINUED)

192

CONTINUED:

192

YOUNGER VIVI

Sidda, dahlin', climb on in! You waited two whole weeks for this.

LITTLE SIDDA

I can't.

Vivi kneels down to Sidda.

YOUNGER VIVI

What's the problem? Are you scared?

Sidda hangs her head in humiliation.

PILOT

(flirtatiously)

Why don't you hop in?

Vivi doesn't want to, but she wants to be brave in front of Sidda.

YOUNGER VIVI

Will you go if I go?

Sidda shakes her head no. Vivi hands Lulu off to her.

YOUNGER VIVI

Okay then, I'll report back.

Vivi boards the plane. The airplane man straps her in. Sidda, holding Lulu, watches the plane taxi down the parking lot runway. Inside the plane, Vivi hoots and hollers with Little Shep and Baylor as the plane lifts off.

AIRPLANE MAN

(to Sidda)

Climb on down, honey, got a lot of people waitin'.

193

EXT. VIVI'S T-BIRD - AFTERNOON

193

Vivi flies down the road with the kids. Everyone is on a post-plane high. Except for Sidda, who still holds Lulu.

YOUNGER VIVI

Dahlin', you missed the ride of a lifetime!

Lulu is waving out the window at the Yaya caravan.

Suddenly, Sidda bursts into tears.

(CONTINUED)

194

CONTINUED:

194

LITTLE SIDDA

That's exactly it.

Vivi lays on the HORN. Caro sticks her head out the door.

YOUNGER VIVI

Sidda and I have to see a man about an airplane. There's shrimp in the fridge, vodka in the freezer, and Oreos in the cookie jar. We'll be back.

Vivi puts her foot to the pedal and they ROAR off.

195

EXT. AIRSTRIP - DAY

195 *

The parking lot is almost empty. The Pilot is re-fueling as Vivi and Sidda pull up in the T-Bird.

YOUNGER VIVI

Hello, there! Remember me?

He doesn't.

PILOT

Not really.

YOUNGER VIVI

I know you've had a long day and must be utterly exhausted. But could you possibly consider giving one last ride to my little girl?

PILOT

Nope. Sorry.

Vivi hops out of the car to make a quiet appeal.

YOUNGER VIVI

Please, she panicked when it was her turn and now she's just dying to go up.

PILOT

Ma'am, I gotta get to Baton Rouge then fly to Macon, Georgia in the morning. I been out here since seven A.M.

YOUNGER VIVI

I'll pay you. Hold on a second...

(CONTINUED)

LYLE

He said just gas, no cash. He
pays the bills.

Vivi sighs. She gets out of the car, goes to Lyle and
drops the bullshit.

YOUNGER VIVI

Listen to me, Lyle Johnson. I
need fifteen goddamn dollars right
this instant! It's for my
daughter.

LYLE

I'm sorry. I take my orders from
Shep.

Sidda is embarrassed and disappointed.

LITTLE SIDDA

It's okay, Mama. Never mind.
Let's give up and go on home.

YOUNGER VIVI

Don't let me ever hear you utter
those words again. You hear me?

Suddenly, Vivi's eyes catch a Chrysler Imperial pulling
up to a gas pump. Plan B.

YOUNGER VIVI

Come on out of the car.

Sidda climbs out and holds her mother's hand as they
approach the LADY in the Imperial.

YOUNGER VIVI

I've got a proposition for you,
dahlin'. How much gas are you
planning to buy this evening?

LADY

I'm filling up.

YOUNGER VIVI

How about you let me put it on my
husband's charge account and you
pay me cash. What do you say?

The woman sizes Vivi up and then looks at Sidda. Vivi
pats Sidda to go on back to the car.

(CONTINUED)

199

CONTINUED:

199

YOUNGER VIVI

I can't thank you enough for this.
You don't know how much this
means.

PILOT

No sweat, lady. I was a kid once,
too.

200

EXT. AIRSTRIP - MAGIC HOUR

200 *

The plane taxis and takes off. Sidda and Vivi cling to each other, smiling as wide as they can. The Pilot asks Vivi a question we can't hear but she points to the right.

201

EXT. PECAN GROVE - MAGIC HOUR

201 *

The PLANE is BUZZING low over the house and all the Yayas and petite Yayas come running outside to see what's going on.

202

EXT. PLANE - MAGIC HOUR

202 *

The plane dips a wing as it makes a tight turn and Sidda and Vivi wave to their little Yaya and friends below.

203

EXT. PECAN GROVE - MAGIC HOUR

203 *

All the Yayas and petite Yayas wave, jumping up and down with excitement.

204

EXT. PLANE - MAGIC HOUR

204 *

The Pilot flies them over the small town, the lights below twinkling.

YOUNGER VIVI

(into Sidda's ear)

Isn't it like a fairyland? Don't
we live in the most magical place?
We're just two angels up in the
sky smiling down on all our
friends, aren't we? Aren't we
lucky?

FADE TO BLACK.

207

EXT. ROAD - MAGIC HOUR

207 *

Connor is driving. Sidda can't believe it as they drive through fields of sunflowers. It's so beautiful.

SIDDA

When did all this happen?

CONNOR

It was like this when I got here.

208

EXT. PECAN GROVE - MAGIC HOUR

208 *

Connor and Sidda pull up to the house. The party is getting underway.

SIDDA

Maybe it's better that a lot of people are here.

Connor leans over and kisses her.

CONNOR

Stick with me, kiddo. She's putty in my hands.

209

EXT. PECAN GROVE - PORCH - MAGIC HOUR

209 *

Vivi and Shep are sitting in a porch swing together. Sidda and Connor come onto the porch. Vivi and Sidda look at each other. Neither one knows what to say.

SIDDA

You know Connor.

SHEP

(to Connor)

Come on with me, son. Meet the Walker men.

Shep and Connor take a powder.

Sidda stands not knowing what to do. Vivi pats the porch swing for her to sit down. Sidda does and Vivi, not looking at her, takes her hand. They look out at the fields of sunflowers.

VIVI

How 'bout that, huh? It's a Van Gogh out here now. You think you know a man that you've put up with for nearly fifty years and then he goes and does something like that.

(CONTINUED)

VIVI

And then it dawned on me. All those years I had prayed, had begged on my hands and knees for God to make me more, give me more, make me better, make me stronger, make me saner, to make my dreams come true and finally I got an answer.

SIDDA

What?

VIVI

You.

Sidda's heart blooms.

VIVI

Right there in one person, all I'd ever wanted to be and do... and there you are. You came right through me and I never even realized it. I hate it when it's right in front of your face and you miss it, don't you?

Sidda wraps her arms around Vivi so tightly, they hug so tightly, you think they may never let go. Finally, they do.

VIVI

You better goddamn marry that boy.

SIDDA

I will.

VIVI

Good. I know I've got the worst mother in the world prize locked up and in the bag, but I'd still like to be there.

Sidda looks out over the fields. *

SIDDA

What if we did it here?

VIVI

That would be very convenient. I could walk to it.

Vivi reaches in her pocket. She pulls out a ring. The ring.

(CONTINUED)

211

CONTINUED:

211

LITTLE SHEP

I don't know, Sid, I guess I just
let it go. I thought I've got
crazy parents, some people have
sane ones, although I've yet to
meet anyone that thinks that. And
some people have no parents. Just
all part of some big plan that I
don't get. But I figured I've
given over enough of my life to
her and now, my life is mine. And
she's just somebody in it.

SIDDA

That's so enlightened, Shepard.

LITTLE SHEP

It's also only half true. I still
have the world's worst temper. I
have to watch myself around my
kids. And I don't really sleep
all that well. But I'm better
than I used to be.

Just then, Necie and Teensy come up and take Sidda by
the hand.

TEENSY

Shep, will you allow us to spirit
your sister away? We have some
unfinished Yaya business.

LITTLE SHEP

Far be it from me. Carry on...

NECIE

We'll return her in one piece.

Necie and Teensy pull Sidda towards the house.

SIDDA

What the hell is going on?

A212 OMITTED

A212 *

212 INT. PECAN GROVE HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

212

They stop outside Vivi's door.

TEENSY

Put your game face on.

(CONTINUED)

212 CONTINUED: (2)

212

Necie produces the "jewelled chalice." The MUSIC and the LAUGHTER from the party wafts into the room. Vivi takes the cup to Sidda. Sidda looks into the cup.

SIDDA

What the hell is this?

VIVI

This is the blood of our people, the wolf people... the alligator people and the crazy people from whom we gain our strength to rule all worlds...

She puts the cup to Sidda's lips. Sidda sips.

SIDDA

Mmmm, blood.

Vivi tries not to laugh as she passes the cup. Each Yaya takes a sip. Vivi sets down the cup and dramatically, with a flourish, reveals the knife.

TEENSY

Oh, no. We're really gonna do that?

VIVI

Hell yes. Of course we are.

Vivi pierces each palm with the knife.

SIDDA

Guys, this is how you get diseases.

She passes the knife to Caro.

CARO

Honey, the only disease that can survive our bloodstream is alcoholism.

Teensy is searching her palm.

TEENSY

Is that it? I can't tell if it's a scar or a wrinkle.

CARO

That's a wrinkle, pal. You've got some scars behind your ears though.

(CONTINUED)

212

CONTINUED: (4)

212

VIVI

Oh, of course! Have you chosen
your Yaya name?

SIDDA

How about Princess Running
Mascara?

CARO

How 'bout Princess Runs Off at the
Mouth? Kiddin', dahlin'.

VIVI

How about Princess Dances in
Water?

NECIE

Ooo, I like that.

They all agree that it's good.

VIVI

Welcome Princess Dances in Water.

ALL THREE YAYAS

Welcome Princess Dances in Water.

VIVI

We are the mighty Yaya
Priestesses. Let no man put us
under.

Arms extended, hands palm to palm, fingers entwined, they
seal the Yaya union.

VIVI

Now our blood flows through each
other as it has for all
eternity... Loyal forever, we
raise our voices in the words of
Mumbo Gumbo... Yaya!

213

EXT. PEACAN GROVE - PORCH - NIGHT

213 *

Shep and Connor sit rocking on the porch. At the sound
of "Ya-Ya!" coming from upstairs, they both look up,
then at each other, then back out towards the fields.

*
*
*

SHEP

Nice here on the porch, idn't it?

*
*

CONNOR

Love it.

*

(CONTINUED)

THIS SCRIPT WAS PREPARED

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