

MY GIRL

Written by

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Setting: MADISON, PENNSYLVANIA 1972

CLOSE UP OF VADA

VADA

(to camera)

I was born jaundiced. Once I sat on a toilet seat at a Truck stop and caught hemorrhoids. And i've learned to live with this chicken Bone that's been lodged in my throat for the past three years, so I knew Dad would be devastated when he learned of my latest affliction.

(to Harry)

Dad, I don't wanna upset you, but my left breast is developing at a significantly faster rate than my right. It can only mean one thing. Cancer. I'm dying.

HARRY

(ignoring Vada)

O.K. Sweetie, hand me the mayonnaise out of the fridge.

FRONT OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE

Vada closes front door and goes down the steps to a group of boys

VADA

All right, who's in raise your hand.

All the boys raise their hands except Thomas J

BOY

Are you coming or not Thomas J?

THOMAS J

I don't think so.

VADA

I knew he wouldn't come.

THOMAS J

I can't, I have to go home.

BOY#2

Yeah, to play with his DOLLS.

VADA

Leave him alone! Come on, let's go.

Group of boys enters house lead by Vada

Once inside, the group is suddenly stopped

VADA

(to boy#2)

Hey, you didn't pay me!

BOY#2

How do I know you were gonna show us one?

VADA

You're such a baby.

BOY#2

All right, here.

Boy reaches inside his pocket, gets money out and gives it to Vada

VADA

All right, follow me and don't say a word.

They walk towards two large doors, stop, and Vada turns around

You ready?

They enter the coffin display room, and move over to the coffin in the middle of the room

You sure you wanna see it, or is someone gonna go yellow belly?

BOY#3

I'm not chicken!

VADA

Okay. Lean forward.

A tense moment as the coffin lid is flung open by Vada and

the boys gasp as they look inside

GIRL#1

It's empty!

BOY#2

You're so weird!

BOY

I want my money back!

VADA

I was afraid of this.

They begin to move into another part of the house

BOY#2

Of what??

VADA

Well, sometimes when we get 'em, they're not completely dead, you know, like when they cut a chickens head off and it still runs around crazy.

BOY#3

You're full of shit.

VADA

I bet she's roaming around this house somewhere.

They open the door into the living room, where Grammoo is in her rocking chair

There she is, in the rocking chair.

Pause, then Grammoo begins to rock the chair gently. The boys all gasp and then all exit very quickly

VADA

Hi Grammoo.

Vada seats herself upon Grammoo's lap

HARRY

(in distance, from
downstairs)

Vada would you bring down my cigarettes?

Vada gets up and begins to leave

VADA

Seeya later.
(kisses Grammoo on forehead)

BASEMENT, HARRY & ARTHUR WORKING ON MR. LAYTON

HARRY

Did I tell you, he was my woodshop teacher.

ARTHUR

You took woodshop?

HARRY

Yeah, I made a tie rack.

ARTHUR

I made a tie rack.

Vada comes down the stairs and stops just before the corner that would allow her to see the corpse of Mr. Layton

VADA

Ahem.

HARRY

Vada, just put 'em on the stool.

Vada places the packet on a stool

VADA

Daddy guess what I beat Thomas J in monopoly yesterday.

HARRY

(completely ignoring Vada's
comment)
Ya, that rack holds six ties.

ARTHUR

I still have mine.

Vada recognizes Arthur's voice

VADA

Arthur!!

ARTHUR

Vada!!

VADA

I beat Thomas J in monopoly yesterday.

ARTHUR

Good for you baby.

VADA

Once you put the hotels on board walk and
Park Place he puts a shoe in your way.

ARTHUR

I like to buy off all the railroads.

Harry is slightly annoyed at Vada distracting them

HARRY

Vada, we're trying to work here.

CAMPER PULLS UP OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS HOUSE

BASEMENT

VADA

Cruella deville stole all the puppies, she
was gonna make a fur out of 'em!

HARRY

(to Arthur)

Hand me the canula.

Vada begins to sing doo-wah-diddy-diddy, Arthur joins in

HARRY

(annoyed)

VADA!

VADA

Dad?

HARRY

I'm embalming my high school teacher, don't
sing.

(beat)

All right Arthur, just a slide of the
needle.....

(fades out as Vada climbs
stairs)

Vada climbs stairs and stops to read patient note, **CAUSE OF
DEATH - CANCER OF PROSTATE**

HARRY

(to corpse)

One nice model C-501 bronze stainless eternal
journey, yeah, you look like a champion.

OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS' HOUSE DAY, STRANGE WOMAN GETS OUT OF CAMPER, WALKS UP TO DOOR AND RINGS BELL, VADA ANSWERS

STRANGER

Is Mr. Harry Sultenfuss in?

VADA

Sure, come on in.

Vada and strange woman make their way to a desk in the foyer, and sit down

So, have you had the unfortunate experience of recently losing a loved one?

STRANGER

(puzzled look)

Could I see your Dad, just for a second?

Vada runs across to call downstairs

VADA

DAD, SOMEBODY'S HERE!!

Vada runs back to the desk

He's downstairs working on Mr. Layton.
Prostate Cancer. Once it hits your prostate,
you're a goner.

STRANGER

Oh.

Harry enters

HARRY

How may I... Help you?

STRANGER

I'm Shelly devoto. We spoke, the other day
regarding the make up artist job.

HARRY

Oh yes.

SHELLY

It's still available I hope?

HARRY

I think it's still available.

SHELLY

I'm a licensed cosmetologist, I worked for two years, at the "Dino Raphael" Salon, all my customers cried when I told them I was leaving.

HARRY

Uhh, Miss devoto...

SHELLY

I have a wonderful disposition, I put people right at ease.

HARRY

Uhh, Miss devoto, these people are already at ease. This is not a Beauty Parlor, it's a Funeral Parlor.

SHELLY

They're dead?

HARRY

Yes they are.

SHELLY

Stiffs??

HARRY

(for want of a better word)
Deceased.

SHELLY

The add just said "Makeup Artist"

Doorbell rings

HARRY

Ahh, excuse me a second will you?
(opens door)
Hi George, this is a twelve-fifty-eight, I didn't want the burnished handles.
(door closes off scene)

Vada looks out the window at Shelly's camper

VADA

Is that your camper?

SHELLY

Yes it is.

VADA

That's really cool.

Grammoo walks past in a fixed stare

SHELLY

(to Grammoo)

Hello.

Grammoo keeps walking as if she hadn't heard

VADA

She's shy.

SHELLY

Oh.

Harry is standing at the door directing the men with the coffin

HARRY

Just put it back in the display room fellers.

MEN

Okay Harry.

The men move off, Vada walks over to Harry

VADA

Daddy, how come that coffin's so small?

HARRY

They come in all sizes honey, just like shoes.

VADA

Is it for a child?

Harry hesitates

HARRY

Of course not.

VADA

Then who's it for?

Small pause while Harry thinks of a reply

HARRY

Short people, very short people.

Shelly walks over to Harry

SHELLY

Excuse me, what about the job?

HARRY

Pardon?

SHELLY

I need the job.

HARRY

Oh, You still want it? Even though uhh...

SHELLY

Ohh, oh sure it's no big deal, you see all my former clients will eventually die, and all your clients used to be alive, so they have something in common.

HARRY

You'd be doing hair and makeup and answering the phone.

SHELLY

Okay Mr. Sultenfuss, you got a deal.

HARRY

Great, you can start right away. Call me Harry. Now, umm, is this what you'd normally wear for work? Don't get me wrong, I like it, very much, but the....

SHELLY

I promise i'll take good care of these people, they deserve it, they're dead, all they've got left is their looks.

Harry and Vada exchange weird looks

OUTSIDE SHOPPING MALL-AREA DAY

Vada and Thomas J are riding their bikes through town

THOMAS J

Hey look at this, no feet!

VADA

Oh wow, a real evil canieval.

Vada and Thomas J ride up through a garage

PSYCHO MECHANIC

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING IN MY GARAGE, GET

OUTTA HERE!!!

Vada and Thomas J arrive outside the entrance to the Doctors surgery, Vada enters and climbs stairs, she passes a small boy in a wheelchair in the corridor, Vada enters room

INSIDE DOCTOR WELTY'S WAITING ROOM

NURSE RANDALL

Hi Vada, what's wrong today?

VADA

I'm very sick.

NURSE RANDALL

Okay, take a seat, i'll check if the doctor can see you.

She picks up phone and whispers something inaudible to the doctor

NURSE RANDALL

Okay, he'll see you, why don't you go in?

Vada opens door to doctors surgery and enters

OVER DR WELTY'S SHOULDER, CLOSE UP OF VADA HAVING HER EAR EXAMINED

VADA

Well, what is it? I can handle it.

DR WELTY

You are perfectly healthy.

VADA

That can't be, I have all the classic symptoms.

DR WELTY

Sweetheart, did they bring Mr. Layton to your house today?

VADA

Yes.

DR WELTY

Vada you've gotta stop this, there's absolutely nothing wrong with you!

Vada gets up in a mood, puts hat on, and walks to the door, stopping and says with condescending intonation...

VADA

I'll just have to get a second opinion.

OUTSIDE DOCTORS SURGERY DAY

Vada emerges from the building and gets on her bike

THOMAS J

So, what'd he say was wrong with you?

Vada is turning and beginning to ride away

VADA

The whole medical profession is a crack.

Thomas J is trying to catch up

THOMAS J

Hey wait up for me!

BIKE RIDE DOWN MAIN STREET IN TOWN

VADA & THOMAS J ARE SINGING

Vada slows down, stops and looks at a person on a ladder painting a house

VADA

Hey look!

Thomas J stops also

THOMAS J

At what?

VADA

That's Mr. Bixler, let's go talk to him.

THOMAS J

I don't wanna talk to a teacher, it's summer!

VADA

Hi Mr. Bixler!

Mr. Bixler turns around and sees Vada and Thomas J

MR. BIXLER

Mademoiselle Sultenfuss and the amazing Dr. J! How's the summer treating you?

VADA

It's okay. Mr. Bixler, I finished all the books for summer reading.

MR. BIXLER

Really? Already? The summer's just begun.

VADA

Yes, and now I'm reading War & Peace for fun.

MR. BIXLER

No wonder you're my prize pupil. What about you Thomas J?

THOMAS J

I haven't started yet.

MR. BIXLER

Better get on his case Vada.

Mr. Bixler gets down off his ladder

VADA

Mr. Bixler, how come you're painting this old house?

MR. BIXLER

Well I just bought it, now I'm fixing it up.

VADA

This is one big house for one single person.

MR. BIXLER

Well, you never can tell...

(Vada gets worried look on her face)

I might get a pet.

(Vada's expression relaxes, she smiles)

VADA

How are you gonna get the money for this old house if you're not working?

MR. BIXLER

Well I'm gonna teach creative writing this summer, so, I'm doing some work.

VADA

How much does it cost?

MR. BIXLER

Thirty five dollars.

VADA

What do you get for that?

MR. BIXLER

Me, two hours a week, talking about poetry.
This an interrogation Vada?

VADA

No. Well, guess i'll go home and finish off
War & Peace.

MR. BIXLER

It's summer! You're kids! Go play!

Vada and Thomas J ride off down street

**SIDE ON SHOT OF VADA AND THOMAS J RIDING DOWN STREET,
CAMERA IS MOVING WITH THEM**

THOMAS J

Wanna go to Gray's orchard and pick some
peaches?

VADA

No, I'm going home.

THOMAS J

Why? It's not dinner time yet.

VADA

Dinner time?? You're like a dog! You just go
home to eat.

Vada accelerates leaving Thomas J in her tracks

Don't pee on the hydrant!!

VADA'S BEDROOM

Vada puts a record on to play.

(song is "Wedding Bell
Blues")

She then opens a drawer and picks up a class photograph,
with Mr. Bixler enhaloed in a heart shape. Music begins to
play and Vada sings along the first few bars whilst looking
at the photo longingly

**SULTENFUSS' DINING ROOM TABLE NIGHT, VADA IS LYING ON THE
FLOOR SPRAWLED OUT, HARRY AND PHIL ARE HAVING A
CONVERSATION, AND GRAMMOO IS SITTING STARING INTO SPACE,
SHELLY ENTERS**

SHELLY

Excuse me Harry, I finished Mr. Layton's hair. He kinda looked.....

(she sees Vada lying down
sprawled out on the floor)

Harry, what's wrong with her??

HARRY

Oh, she's just pretending. Vada, get up here and eat your broccoli!

Shelly moves over and crouches down next to Vada

VADA

(very sick sounding voice)

I think it's my prostate.

All of a sudden, Grammo begins to sing

GRAMMOO

I got rhythm, I got music, I got my man who
could ask for anything more? I got daisies, in
green pastures, I got my man, who could ask
for anything more?

As this is being sung, Shelly slowly looks up with a VERY weird expression, this is too much for her

**OUTSIDE FRONT OF HOUSE, VADA AND THOMAS J SITTING ON STEPS
DAY**

Shelly exits house and closes door behind her, and then crouches down beside Vada and Thomas J

SHELLY

Who's winning?

VADA

I am.

As Vada and Thomas J continue to play, three Vada-aged girls come up to the end of the Sultenfuss' driveway

GIRL#1

Look, there's Vada and her little BOYFRIEND
(very mocking voice)

VADA

He is not my boyfriend!

GIRL#2

I bet she kissed him on the lips!

VADA

Do you think I kissed that ugly old thing?

THOMAS J

Yeah anyway.

GIRL#2

Come on let's go.

GIRL#1 & GIRL#2

Judy's father owns the movie theater and we get to see all the movies WE want for free.

JUDY

Maybe you can come some time.

GUY#2

Eeeuw, don't invite HER, she'll have to bring her boyfriend.

The two girls begin to walk off, Judy follows slowly looking guilty and embarrassed by her friends

GIRL#2

(together)

Vada and Thomas, sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G, first comes love, then comes marriage, then comes Thomas J in a baby carriage.

Judy wanders off screen, looking sorry for Vada

SHELLY

You know Vada, you shouldn't let those girls upset you.

VADA

I'm not upset. I will never play with those girls. I only surround myself with people who I find intellectually stimulating.

Thomas J looks at Shelly and smiles, he is proud to be the friend of such an intelligent girl

SHELLY

(to Vada)

Want a piece of chocolate?

Vada shakes her head

SHELLY

Thomas J?

THOMAS J

I'm allergic to it.

SHELLY

To chocolate?

VADA

He's allergic to everything.

SHELLY

Chocolate?

VADA & THOMAS J

TO EVERYTHING.

Shelly notices a ring that Vada is wearing on her right index finger

SHELLY

Ooh, that's a pretty ring you're wearing.

VADA

It's a mood ring, it tells what mood I'm in.

THOMAS J

It doesn't work, it always stays black.
(NOTE ring is BLACK)

VADA

It's only black when you're around 'cause you put me in a bad mood.

SHELLY

Maybe black means you're happy?

VADA

I don't think so.
(pause)
Shelly, how can I get thirty five dollars?

THOMAS J

She's crazy, she wants to go to school over the summer.

VADA

It's not a real school, it's a writing class, I wanna be a writer.

THOMAS J

She only wants to do it because her sweetie

pie's the teacher.

Vada is annoyed that Shelly now knows her little secret and pushes Thomas J

VADA

Shut your big fat mouth!

SHELLY

I think you'd make a fine writer, did you ask your Dad?

VADA

He won't give it to me.

SHELLY

Well you don't know that. Ask him.

**SULTENFUSS' LIVING ROOM, GRAMMOO AND HARRY WATCHING TV,
VADA ENTERS**

Vada passes Grammoo and Harry who are watching a TV show, she then seats herself next to Harry

VADA

Daddy, can I have thirty five dollars?

HARRY

That's a lot of money for a little girl.

VADA

It's for school, for summer writing class.

HARRY

(engrossed with TV show)
Any more soda left?

Vada pours Harry another soda

VADA

Shelly thinks I'd be a good writer.

HARRY

Last month you wanted to play the violin.
Then you wanted to be a ventriloquist.

Harry keeps his gaze fixed the entire time upon the TV screen

VADA

Dad?

HARRY

(referring to TV)
I love this guy!
(he laughs)

VADA

Dad??

HARRY

What?

VADA

The money?

HARRY

Ahh, maybe next summer.

VADA'S THOUGHTS

He forgot about the time I wanted to be a
magician, I was really great at making myself
disappear.

**FOYER OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, VADA BOUNCING BASKET-BALL,
ARTHUR ENTERS**

VADA

Wanna play?

ARTHUR

No, I gotta go to the cemetery, keep your
head up. Don't look at the ball, look at me.

Arthur grabs ball and begins to dribble it properly as a
demonstration

See. You were looking at the ball. All right?
Keep your head up. Gimme some skin,

They both give each other five i.e. Slap each others hands,
Arthur exits. Vada continues bouncing the ball, which
accidentally veers off and goes down the stairs into the
basement

SCARY MUSIC

Vada goes very slowly down the stairs, and peeks round the
corner, she is clearly very scared of the basement and the
corpses contained in it, she then rushes down and grabs the
ball. As she turns around, Shelly, who is upstairs walking
through the house and sees the door ajar, slams it shut
unaware that Vada is down there. Vada runs up the stairs and
tries to open the door, she can't, drops the ball and starts

to yell out for help and bang on the it. Shelly hears the noise and comes to the door. Vada, overcome with fear, sits on a step, covers her ears and begins to sing doo-wah-diddy-diddy. Shelly yanks the door open and sees Vada crouched on the step

SHELLY

Vada? VADA?? What happened??

VADA

(extremely frightened and
timid)

My ball, I lost my ball.

SHELLY

(picking Vada up onto her
feet)

Come on sweetie.

The two exit the scene

**SHELLY PUTTING MAKEUP ON DEAD LADY, BASEMENT OF SULTENFUSS'
HOUSE**

SHELLY

Excuse me Harry?

HARRY

Uh huh?

SHELLY

Could you take a look at Mrs. Porter?

HARRY

Yeah.

Harry gets up from his desk, moves over to Mrs. Porter and observes Shelly's work, he looks unimpressed

Didn't I give you a picture of what she
looked like?

SHELLY

Yeah,

(searches pockets, eventually
pulling out a photo)

Harry compares photo with Mrs. Porter's face

SHELLY

You don't like it?

HARRY

This was the Reverend Porter's wife, you have her looking like a two dollar hooker.

SHELLY

(a little offended)

I think she looks nice! Her lips are very thin so I used the gloss to give them a more sensual quality, and her eyes just needed a little definition, and her hair, I'm sorry, nobody wears this hairdo anymore in 1972.

HARRY

She did. This photo was taken a month ago at the church food drive.

SHELLY

I just wanted to get past this "old school Marm" image.

HARRY

That wasn't an image. She WAS an old school Marm.

(beat)

Fix it.

Harry begins to leave

SHELLY

Harry?

(Harry stops and turns around)

I was just wondering, if there is anything wrong with Vada.

HARRY

What do you mean??

SHELLY

Well the other night at dinner...

HARRY

Oh that, she just likes to play.

SHELLY

I don't think so, I think she's confused about death.

HARRY

She was raised in a funeral home, she knows a thing or two about it.

SHELLY

Harry, I really think she.....

HARRY

(annoyed)

She's a perfectly happy eleven year old girl,
look, don't give me any advice about my
daughter, okay?

**OUTSIDE FRONT OF HOUSE, VADA AND THOMAS J ARE TURNING A
SKIPPING ROPE AND PHIL IS JUMPING IN IT PUFFING AWAY, VADA &
THOMAS J ARE SAYING A RHYME THAT GOES WITH SKIPPING GAMES,
SHELLY PULLS UP IN HER CAMPER**

VADA

There's Shelly!

Vada and Thomas J stop turning the rope leaving Phil
standing there exhausted, and run over to Shelly's camper,
Shelly gets out

SHELLY

Hi.

VADA

Can we look around in your camper?

SHELLY

Sure. I'll give you the royal tour.

Vada and Thomas J rush inside the camper

(surprised at Vada and Thomas
J's eagerness to get inside)

Woah! Gosh!

Thomas J seats himself at the drivers seat and makes "vroom
vroom" noises, Vada sits at the table, selects a book from a
small bookshelf on the side, and begins to read it

THOMAS J

Wow, this is the coolest thing, like you
really eat and sleep here?

SHELLY

Uh huh.

THOMAS J

I'm gonna drive us to Liverpool.

SHELLY

Liverpool?

VADA

Big Ringo fan.

SHELLY

Ohh, right. Would you like a soda?

VADA

I would.

SHELLY

Thomas?

THOMAS J

Yes please.

Thomas uproots himself and sits opposite Vada at the table

THOMAS J

What are you reading?

Vada makes a gesture at Thomas J with her finger up to her lips implying that he should be quiet

Shelly notices Vada reading the book

SHELLY

Oh! You shouldn't be looking at that, it's a little too old for you.

She takes the book away from her

VADA

Did you read ALL these books?

SHELLY

Uh huh.

VADA

What are they about?

SHELLY

Mostly love, and romance.

THOMAS J

Eeeeeuuww, gross.

SHELLY

They're just fun to read.

Shelly hands the soda around

Here, cheers.

Everybody takes a mouthful of drink

VADA

Are you married?

SHELLY

No, I'm divorced.

VADA

Daddy said it's bad when people get divorced.

SHELLY

Well, sometimes married people just find out they can't live with each other.

THOMAS J

Mine aren't divorced.

Thomas J gets up and reaches for the cookie jar

Shelly, can I have a cookie?

SHELLY

With bottle of soda in mouth
Hmmmph gurgle gurgle...

Thomas pulls out a few bank notes of largish denomination

THOMAS J

Hey, where are all the cookies??

Vada sees the money and the expression on her face shows she has an idea

SHELLY

Well, I guess you found my secret hiding place.

THOMAS J

What are you saving for?

SHELLY

Nothing in particular, just putting it away for a rainy day.

Cuckoo clock goes "Cuckoo." Lunch time, 12 o'clock

THOMAS J

I'm supposed to be home at noon for lunch, thanks Shelly.

Thomas J leaves

SHELLY

Bye. Well Miss Vada, what d'you say we head back?

VADA

Can I use your bathroom first?

SHELLY

Sure.

VADA

You don't have to wait, daddy'll be mad if you're late.

SHELLY

Okay.

Shelly exits and Vada enters toilet with a VERY guilty look on her face

SUMMER WRITING CLASS, FOCUS ON MR. BIXLER

MR. BIXLER

The great way, is not difficult for those with no preferences, with the absence of both love and hate, everything becomes clear and undisguised. That was written by a Chinese Philosopher in the year 600. Now why would I choose to bring that up in a creative writing class? Because, the absence of judgment helps us to appreciate reality. In other words, I want you to listen to your classmates writing, with a clear and open heart, okay? So who's gonna go first?

GUY

I got one.

He gets up

I sang a song for you to hear, I painted a picture for you to see, I picked a rose for you to smell, I planted grass for you to touch, But you did not hear my song, You did not see my picture, You did not smell my rose and YOU did not touch my grass.

Woman

Maybe she was outta town?

GUY#2

That's not funny, his poem is about futility,
we toil in unrewarded obscurity.

MR. BIXLER

Now, I hear judgment, let's not forget the
part about the open heart...

The door at the back of the room opens and Vada enters
holding a writing pad and pen looking nervous

Vada, is there, something I can do for you?

VADA

(very nervous)
I paid the money.

MR. BIXLER

For this class?

VADA

Uh huh, I wanna be a writer.

MR. BIXLER

Vada, this is an adult writing class.

JUSTIN

Hey, I think it's real beautiful. She want's
to be a writer.

MR. BIXLER

Vada, you sure you wanna do this?

Vada nods her head

MR. BIXLER

Welcome to the class, go find a seat.

The class applauds

Okay ahh, who's next?

RONDA

I experienced something with my boyfriend the
other day, and I wrote a few words down.

MR. BIXLER

The floor's yours Ronda.

RONDA

He covers me like a blanket, from the cold,

dark night, As I look into his eyes, I know
it's right, To touch, To feel, I know he's
real, Flesh all a mush, Flesh ALL a mush, I
can't fight it, There's no point, I wake up in
Lighter joint.

Several looks glance around the room. Vada raises her hand

MR. BIXLER

Uhhh, va, uhh, Vada.

VADA

I wrote a poem too.

MR. BIXLER

Please.

VADA

Loads of ice-cream by Vada Sultenfuss
I like ice-cream a whole lot, It tastes good
when days are hot, On a cone or in a dish,
This would be my only wish, Vanilla, chocolate
or rocky road, Even with pie a la mode.

That's all I got so far.

JUSTIN

I hear that Vada, Flesh all a Mush or Rocky
Road, it's about desire.

MR. BIXLER

Vada that's... It's very sweet, and it rhymes
and that's also good but, you're not
expressing to me what's in your soul. I want
you to show me how you see the world, your
fears, your desires, your innermost secrets.

VADA'S THOUGHTS

My fears and secrets. I'm afraid I killed my
mother.

**OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, THEN INSIDE ON SHELLY AT DESK,
TUBA IS BEING PLAYED IN THE BACKGROUND**

Shelly gets up smiling when she hears the music and
proceeds to the living room

Shelly pokes her head in the door to see Harry playing a
tune to Grammoo on his tuba

HARRY

(sung, to Grammoo)

Can not do without, Harry's wild about me.

SHELLY

Excuse me Harry, I'm sorry, I just wanna let you know that the flowers were delivered. And the room's all set up.

HARRY

Thanks, listen I wanna apologize for the other day downstairs, about Vada, I was a little harsh.

SHELLY

I shouldn't stick my nose in other people's business. It's just that I like Vada, very much.

HARRY

After my wife died, Grammo moved in here to help take care of Vada. They were very close, but lately as her mind's been wandering more and more, Vada's been acting kinda crazy. I'm sure she'll snap out of it though.

SHELLY

I'm sure she will.

VADA AND THOMAS J AT THEIR FAVORITE SPOT, EDGE OF LAKE WITH VERY LARGE BEAUTIFUL WEEPING WILLOW JUST UP THE BANK A LITTLE FROM A SMALL PIER WHERE TWO FISHING POLES ARE SET UP, ONE HELD BY VADA AND THE OTHER BY A HOLDER AS THOMAS J HANGS UPSIDE DOWN FROM THE TREE

THOMAS J

Nothing's biting today.

VADA

Maybe they had a big breakfast.

THOMAS J

(hanging from tree)

I'm gonna be an acrobat when I grow up.

VADA

Big deal, I can do that too.

(Thomas J's reel begins to click)

Thomas J, you got something!

THOMAS J

Oh no!

(he jumps down from the tree)

UUH.

VADA

Hurry!

THOMAS J

I'm trying.

VADA

Reel it in.

(Thomas J reels the fish in)

He's only tiny, throw him back.

THOMAS J

I don't like touching fish, how do you pull
the hook out without touching it?

Thomas J puts his foot on the fish and pulls

VADA

You're hurting him, don't kill him!!

The hook is out of the fish's mouth and sitting on the pier

Vada then removes the hook from the fish's mouth {minor
error in film} and in the process pricks herself

VADA

Ouch! Darn hook!

Vada puts the fish back

VADA

I'm bleeding, did he get away? Go look.

Thomas J looks and sees the fish, dead, floating on top of
the water

THOMAS J

Yeah he got away. Come on let's go.

VADA

Hey, we can become blood brothers.

THOMAS J

Naah, I don't wanna.

VADA

You could pick that scab on your arm.

THOMAS J

It's a mosquito bite.

VADA

It'll bleed.

THOMAS J

If I do it, can we go?

VADA

Uh huh.

THOMAS J

Okay, OW!

Thomas J picks the scab on his arm which begins to bleed

VADA

Okay, rub them together.

They rub their cuts together

VADA

Now we're blood brothers for life.

HARRY IS TYPING UP A DEATH NOTICE IN HIS STUDY, SHELLY ENTERS

SHELLY

Hi.

HARRY

Oh Hi, what can I do for you?

SHELLY

Nothing, I was just wondering what you were doing.

HARRY

Oh, I'm just typing up a funeral notice, you know when someone dies people want it in the paper usually, it's a service we provide for the family.

SHELLY

Oh right, right,
(she picks up the newspaper).
Bader Lorenzo Died June 22
1972 Devoted husband to
Nicolette. Cherished father of
Babritzio and Heidi, In lieu
of flowers, please send
donations to the holy names
society.

HARRY

I wrote that.

SHELLY

No kidding?

Harry gives Shelly a matter-of-fact look

SHELLY

Oh it's good, "In lieu of" I love that word
lieu.

HARRY

I prefer it to "instead", it has more
dignity.

SHELLY

In lieu... "instead".... No contest.

HARRY

It's no big deal.

SHELLY

You have to learn how to take a complement.
(Shelly turns the newspaper
over)
Movies, movies, ahhhh, "Love Story" at the
drive in, I cried my eyes out, did you see it?

HARRY

I haven't been to the movies in AGES.

SHELLY

I love going to movies, especially at the
drive in. I don't think there's anything more
romantic than going to the drive in.
(subtle HINT)
I'll let you get back to work.

Shelly begins to exit with a look of failure on her face

HARRY

I do enjoy playing bingo, if you'd like to
join me for a game tomorrow night at church
you're welcome to.

SHELLY

(considers for a moment)
Okay.

Harry resumes typing

VADA IS RUNNING THROUGH FOYER AND BEGINS TO PASS BATHROOM
WHERE SHELLY IS PUTTING ON MAKEUP

SHELLY

Hi Vada.

VADA

Are you going out somewhere?

SHELLY

No.

VADA

So how come you're putting lipstick on?

SHELLY

A girl's always gotta look her best.

VADA

I think lipstick looks fake, no-ones lips are
that color.

SHELLY

Have you ever tried any?

VADA

No.

SHELLY

Come here, sit down.

Vada enters bathroom and sits down on the closed toilet
seat, Shelly brings up a stool and sits down in front of
Vada. Vada gets some lipstick put on her

SHELLY

Now, first we blot.

Vada blots her lips on some tissue

SHELLY

Take a look. I think it looks real nice on
you.

Vada looks in Shelly's mirror

VADA

Shelly, do you think I'm pretty?

SHELLY

Yes, Vada I think you're very pretty. You've

got these great big sparkling eyes, the cutest little nose, an amazing mouth.

VADA

The boys at school don't think I am.

SHELLY

They'll come around. Close your eyes, I wanna bring out the gorgeous color in them. The first rule in applying eye makeup, is you can never wear enough blue eye shadow.

VADA

Do you like putting makeup on people?

SHELLY

Uh huh, i've been trying to get out to Hollywood for years to do makeup for all the stars, I haven't gotten there yet.

(she finishes her work)

All right, open your eyes.

Vada opens her eyes and looks in the mirror

VADA

Shelly, I would definitely hold off on that Hollywood thing.

VADA EXITS HOUSE THROUGH FRONT DOOR, RAUNCHY MUSIC IS PLAYING AND SHE DOES A GROOVY WALK TO THE STEPS WHERE THOMAS J AWAITS HER, SHE LIES DOWN LENGTH WAYS ACROSS THE STEP AND LOOKS AT HIM

THOMAS J

Your lip bleeding?

VADA

No.

THOMAS J

What's wrong with your eyes?

VADA

A girl can never wear enough eye shadow.

THOMAS J

Where's your bike?

VADA

Oh, in the garage. Walk me over.

The two enter the garage, where a large black hearse is

parked

VADA

It's only a garage, come on.

Vada notices that one of her streamers on her bike is gone

VADA

Hey, one of my streamers is gone! It probably
fell off in here.

Thomas J walks over to a model of a head

THOMAS J

Hey look at this!

VADA

That was Grammo's. It's a phrenology chart,
they used to study the bumps in your head to
see if you had a good personality or not. Come
here, i'll diagnose your head.

THOMAS J

No, I don't wanna.

VADA

Come on, it's fun.

Vada examines Thomas J's head and then compares it with the
chart

VADA

Hmmmm, interesting.

THOMAS J

What?

VADA

You have no personality.

THOMAS J

Hey, where does it say that?

VADA

Never mind.

Thomas J knocks the lid off a small box and reveals a photo

THOMAS J

Is that your Dad?

VADA

Yes.

THOMAS J

Who's that with your Dad?

VADA

It's my mother.

THOMAS J

Do you remember her?

VADA

No. Grammo said she's in heaven.

THOMAS J

What do you think it's like?

VADA

What?

THOMAS J

Heaven.

VADA

I think, everybody gets their own white horse, and all they do is ride and eat marshmallows all day, and everybody's best friends with everybody else, when you play sports, there's no teams, so nobody gets picked last.

THOMAS J

But, what if you're afraid to ride horses?

VADA

It doesn't matter, 'cause they're not regular horses, they got wings, and it's no big deal if you fall, you just land in cloud.

THOMAS J

That doesn't sound so bad, come on, we'll never find that streamer.

As they leave, Vada turns back and grabs the photo, then returns to Thomas J

HARRY'S BEDROOM, HARRY IS DRESSING AND GETTING READY FOR HIS DATE WITH SHELLY

The tune "Moonglow" is playing on the radio

PHIL

Well well well, what's going on in here?

HARRY

Nothing, I'm dressing.

PHIL

Oh, you're dressing, uh huh, Harry Harry
Harry Harry, don't you know it's not nice to
lie to your big brother?

Phil then proceeds to give Harry a noogie

HARRY

**HEY! WATCH THE HAIR!! THIS SHIRT GIVES!!! ALL
RIGHT!!!!**

Phil stops

I'm going out with Shelly.

PHIL

Oh yes, oh that's great.

HARRY

I'm very nervous.

PHIL

Why?

HARRY

The last date I had was twenty years ago.

PHIL

That's true. Harry Harry sit down, let me
fill you in on today's women, since the last
time you dated, something happened, "The
Sexual Revolution", now before that, you used
to have to hold a door open for a woman, pull
her chair out, pick up the check, no more no
more, you wanna know what else is missing?
BRAS!

HARRY

Oh come on.

PHIL

Harry, I'm serious, trust me Harry this
woman's lifting us in, you gotta treat her
like every Tom Dick and Harry.

HARRY

Are you sure about all this?

PHIL

Did you not tell Vada I'm a womanizer huh?

HARRY

Oh, I'm running late. Shelly'll be here any minute.

PHIL

Oh she's picking you up, good you're on the right track.

HARRY

No, she's just driving over here, then we're taking my car. How do I look?

PHIL

Like a Sultenfuss. Go get 'em.

Harry runs down the stairs and passes Vada on the way

HARRY

Goodnight Vada.

VADA

Dad, why are you dressed up to go to bingo?

HARRY

Ahh, I just wanna look nice.

VADA

You never cared before.

HARRY

Well Shelly's coming over, we're gonna go together.

VADA

Why?

HARRY

She likes to play bingo.

VADA

Can I go too?

HARRY

Naah, I think you'd better stay here and keep Grammoo company.

Harry leaves and then Vada makes a decision, she goes out the door

OUTSIDE THE SENNET'S HOUSE, VADA IS CREEPING ALONG NIGHT

Vada approaches the Sennet's house and signals through the window for Thomas J to come outside, which he does

THOMAS J

Vada? Vada?? Where are you??

Vada springs up from her hiding place

VADA

Here.

THOMAS J

Don't DO that!!

VADA

Sorry.

THOMAS J

What do you want? My mom will skin me alive if she finds I'm out here.

VADA

Let's go to the church, they're playing bingo tonight.

THOMAS J

I told you i'll get in trouble.

VADA

Pacifist!

THOMAS J

I am not.

VADA

Bed wetter!

THOMAS J

I stopped that!

AT THE CHURCH, FOCUS ON THE BINGO ANNOUNCER WHO IS CALLING OUT THE NUMBERS

HARRY

Don't worry, there's a strategy to bingo. For instance, on a given night anybody can win, but I play the odds, when choosing bingo cards, I use a range of theories from the laws of probability to avoiding duplicate number

systems. This way you get much more activity.

SHELLY

(hopeful)

Does it make it easier to win?

HARRY

No. Just, more activity.

Harry then pulls a seat out and sits down in it, cutting Shelly off, who has to pull her own seat out and sit down

HARRY

(as he sits down, to the
person next to him)

Hi Carl.

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH NIGHT

Vada and Thomas J are walking up to the church

THOMAS J

They're not gonna let us in Vada, we're kids.

VADA

We're not gonna bet, we're just gonna watch.

THOMAS J

Watch bingo? I don't even like to play bingo.

VADA

Duck!

Vada and Thomas J are ducking behind a counter on one side of the church, Harry and Shelly are quite clearly visible on the other side of the room

SHELLY

(in the distance, as a number
is announced)

Oh great!

THOMAS J

Hey there's your Dad and Shelly.

VADA

Ssshhhhh, I don't want them to see me.

SHELLY

(in the distance again, as
another number is announced)

Aarrggh.

CLOSE UP OF HARRY AND SHELLY

As Shelly looks around the bingo table, she notices that everyone around her is chronologically advantaged in a big way

SHELLY

I just had a terrible thought Harry.

HARRY

What's that?

SHELLY

I'm gonna be putting makeup on some of these people very soon.

HARRY

Why d'you think these seats were empty.

OUTSIDE

THOMAS J

Can we go yet?

VADA

Go???

THOMAS J

You know I'm not allowed outside my myself after dark.

CLOSE UP AGAIN

SHELLY

Oh, I'm just not lucky Harry.

HARRY

Look, it's not always luck, I mean, depending upon the placement of the numbers, a guy with 10 cards could win just as easily as a guy with 100.

SHELLY

Kinda like men.

HARRY

Oh, how do you mean?

SHELLY

You can be in a room with 100 men, and not like any of them, or you can be in a room with

just one man, and he's exactly the one you want.

Harry and Shelly are about to kiss each other, Vada sees this and doesn't look too happy about it

VADA

(in semi-deep fake voice)

BINGO!

BINGO ANNOUNCER

We have a winner. Will the winner please raise their hand?

CARL

There was no bingo, it came from outside.

VERNON

How could someone outside get a bingo?

CARL

Someone outside didn't get a bingo, someone outside yelled bingo you moron!

VERNON

Who are you calling a mowon?
(false teeth)

VERNON'S WIFE

Put a lid on it Vernon!

CARL

Put a lid on it?? If you weren't 200 years old, I'd kick your wrinkled ARSE!!

The two old men then have a fight, Harry attempts to break it up

HARRY

Hey fellers fellers, it's just a bingo game.

Meanwhile, Shelly has found it all rather amusing

OUTSIDE

VADA

We can go now.

Vada and Thomas J run off down the street

VADA'S BEDROOM NIGHT, VADA IS LYING ON HER BED THINKING

As she hears Harry's car approaching, she goes to her window and looks out it through the venetian blinds

OUTSIDE STOPPED CAR

Harry gets out of his side, comes round to the other side and then hesitates before deciding to follow his brothers advice and let Shelly get out herself, which she does, eventually

SHELLY

I had a good time tonight.

HARRY

I haven't had a bingo partner in ages.

They walk up to Shelly's camper

SHELLY

Would you like to come in and see my house?
Just for a minute.

HARRY

Okay, sure.

They enter, Vada continues to watch them from her room

INSIDE CAMPER, HARRY AND SHELLY ENTER

SHELLY

Home sweet home.

HARRY

It's nice.

SHELLY

I did it myself. I read a magazine article about how to maximize small spaces.

HARRY

Well it certainly looks bigger that it seems.

SHELLY

You can look in the bathroom if you want.
People are always curious about that, like what happens when you flush.

Harry moved toward the back of the camper and looks in the bathroom, and then flushes the toilet

HARRY

Yeah.

SHELLY

Are you mad at me?

HARRY

No, why?

SHELLY

I don't know, tonight you just seemed a little cool, not opening car doors and...

HARRY

Oh, that was Phil, trying to give me advice on dating 70's women. Look I'm so out of touch, I haven't dated women in ages, not since my wife died.

SHELLY

What happened to her?

HARRY

Ahh, complications during child birth, she died two days after Vada was born.

SHELLY

Did she ever see Vada?

HARRY

I brought the baby into the room a couple of times, she opened her eyes, yeah, yeah I think she saw Vada. It was.....

Harry looks at the item that he picked up and was fiddling with to calm his nerves

Did I ruin this?

SHELLY

Dance with me?

HARRY

Here?

SHELLY

This is where we are.

HARRY

Is there enough room?

Shelly moves an object from the floor, which creates more room

HARRY

I haven't danced in.....

SHELLY

In ages, I know, me neither.

They begin a slow dance

HARRY

Rock?

SHELLY

See, you're not that out of touch.

(they dance)

You're good.

HARRY

At Widdman High I was considered a pretty hot date, I did a killer frugue.

Shelly smells Harry's neck

SHELLY

What are you wearing?

HARRY

Old Spice, Phil says it's a timeless classic.

They continue to dance

SHELLY

Do you want to?

HARRY

Want to what?

SHELLY

Kiss me.

HARRY

Yes.

SHELLY

Good.

They then have a long kiss

SHELLY

Good at kissing, and dancing, I'm very optimistic.

They then kiss again, this time interrupted by the clock

cuckooing

HARRY

I ahh, better go.

SHELLY

It's only eight o'clock.

HARRY

Goodnight Shelly.

SHELLY

Goodnight.

Harry exits the camper followed by Shelly who stands at the door

OUTSIDE CAMPER NIGHT, HARRY HAS JUST GOT OUT OF SHELLY'S CAMPER

SHELLY

Well, I guess it's official we had a date, maybe we can play bingo again sometime.

HARRY

I'm tired of bingo, maybe we should try that drive in of yours.

SHELLY

Goodnight.

Harry waves

VADA'S ROOM

Vada finishes watching, and goes to bed

SUMMER WRITING CLASS DAY

MR. BIXLER

Before the class started, Ronda and Justin wanted to lead the class in a group meditation.

WOMAN

Ooooh that's really cool.

JUSTIN

Okay what we're gonna do is, send our vibes out into the group.

Justin turns on some kind of tape deck which begins to play

weird music

RONDA

Everybody hold hands, and close your eyes.
Relax your muscles and take deep breaths.

JUSTIN

Now, try to feel what the other person is
feeling, without speaking any words, send out
your vibe, and receive the vibes around you at
the same time. Can you feel it?

RONDA

Okay, open your eyes. What did everybody
feel?

GUY

I felt Mrs. Hunsaker's strength.

OTHER GUY

I can feel that Ronda is one with the Earth,
she's so cosmically in tune.

RONDA

So right on, that's exactly what I sent out,
and I felt like, you were full of inner peace
and harmony.

MR. BIXLER

Vada, what did you feel.

VADA

I felt Justin's hangnail.

JUSTIN

No Vada, that's not what we're looking for, a
hangnail is insignificant. What's in my soul,
feel my aura.

VADA

I don't think I'm allowed to.

JUSTIN

I tell you what, let's try it again, hold
hands.

VADA'S THOUGHTS

Grammoo once had a hangnail on her big toe.
It got infected and traveled to her vocal
chords, it ruined her singing voice, I don't
think Grammoo thought it was insignificant.

VADA'S ROOM, VADA LYING ON BED THINKING

Vada gets out of bed and goes down corridor to see Grammo, she seats herself cross legged next to Grammo on her bed and takes her hands in an attempt to do some spiritual healing

SUPERMARKET DAY, VADA AND HARRY ARE SHOPPING

HARRY

Lettuce, watch out for the rust when you get lettuce.

Suddenly Shelly appears behind them and calls out

SHELLY

Hey, I thought I recognized you two, hi Vada.

VADA

Hi.

HARRY

I'm just picking some things up for the barbecue.

SHELLY

Yeah, me too, mind if I tag along?

HARRY

Not at all. Lot of potatoes!

SHELLY

It's for Shelly's famous potato salad.

HARRY

I'm looking forward to that.

Vada, who is pushing the shopping trolley behind Harry and Shelly, obviously does not like the idea of Harry & Shelly, and she rams her cart into Harry

HARRY

HEY, OUCH, damn it!! Vada, watch what you're doing.

VADA

Sorry.

SHELLY

You know this is gonna be my first 4th of July picnic in a long time.

HARRY

Really?

VADA

(picking up large can of
prunes)

Dad, didn't you say you needed prunes REAL
bad?

HARRY

Ahh, Vada, just put anything you want in the
cart, anything at all.

(to Shelly)

I don't know what's gotten into her today.

Vada begins to throw cans of every description from the
shelf into the shopping trolley at regular intervals, not
giving a stuff what they contain

VADA'S THOUGHTS

I used to like to play with my Ken and Barbie
dolls, Ken was my favorite. Then one Christmas
I got them a camper, and all they wanted to do
was hang out in it by themselves. So I wasn't
too upset when they took that wrong turn and
went over a cliff.

**CLOSE UP OF AMERICAN FLAG DAY, HARRY - PLAYING TUBA,
SHELLY, PHIL & VADA SINGING "STAR SPANGLED BANNER" AND
GRAMMOO STANDING NEXT TO THEM WATCHING**

**MUSTANG PULLS UP NEXT TO SHELLY'S CAMPER, IT STOPS AND TWO
MEN GET OUT**

**HARRY COOKING MEAT PATTIES ON BARBECUE, WHICH ARE BEGINNING
TO LOOK CHARRED, PHIL IS STANDING NEXT TO HIM**

PHIL

Harry Harry Harry Harry Harry, I told you to
use fewer briquettes and now look what you've
done. You've cremated them.

HARRY

That's what I do. Do you wanna do it??

PHIL

No, no no....

HARRY

Look if you think you know how, why don't you
pre-measure the briquettes in little packages,
put out a product, support me for a while!

Phil exits scene, Shelly comes up behind Harry

SHELLY

How's it going chef?

HARRY

Okay.

Vada is seen turning her head to look at Harry and Shelly, she doesn't like Harry and Shelly standing so close together, she decides to make her move and pushes in between Harry and Shelly

VADA

Are they ready yet?

HARRY

No, sweetie, not yet.

Shelly begins to brush Vada's hair with her fingers, which Vada does not like and she shakes her head to get Shelly off

VADA

When?

HARRY

Soon honey, soon.

Shelly again tries to fix up Vada's hair
(which there doesn't appear
to be anything wrong with)
And Vada shakes her off again

VADA

When??

HARRY

In a minute, look it's hot, sweetie you'll
burn your nose, look out.

Vada backs off, followed by Shelly

**THE TWO MEN THAT GOT OUT OF THE CAR ARE PROCEEDING UP THE
SULTENFUSS' DRIVEWAY**

**FOCUS ON PHIL, HARRY, VADA, SHELLY AND GRAMMOO AT THE TABLE
OUTSIDE, SHELLY SAYS A SEMI-GRACE**

SHELLY

Rub a dub dub, thanks for the grub, yay God.

HARRY

I'll second that.

VADA

Hey Shelly, like seafood?

SHELLY

Uh huh, why?

VADA

See food!

Vada opens her mouth and displays half chewed BBQ cuisine to Shelly

SHELLY

(laughing)

That's attractive.

Shelly's glance moves to behind Grammoo on the other side of the table and beyond, where the two men are standing looking around

SHELLY

(under her breath)

Oh shit! Excuse me...

Shelly gets up and moves off to talk to the men, Vada and Phil turn so they can see what is going on, Harry can already see, Grammoo just sits staring into space

MAN

Hey Shelly, who lives here?

(pointing at hearse)

The Addams Family?

SHELLY

Danny, what are you doing here?

DANNY

What am I doing here????? What am I doing here?

SHELLY

(to other man in background)

Hi Ralph. Oh Danny, how'd you find me here?

DANNY

You told everybody where you were going, I'm here for the motor home.

Scene shifts to Vada, Phil and Harry for a moment

PHIL

These two people do not have a good relationship.

SHELLY

(in background)

No! _I_ bought it, _I_ paid for it...

Scene shifts back to close up of Shelly and Danny arguing

SHELLY

I've been living in it for over a year, the camper is mine.

DANNY

Excuse me, MUTUAL ASSET, that's what the lawyer said, it's supposed to be "OUR MUTUAL ASSET", not "Shelly's recreational vehicle". Gimme the keys.

SHELLY

Keep your voice down!

DANNY

What?

SHELLY

The boss is watching us...

DANNY

(sarcastic)

I'm impressed.

SHELLY

God I guess i'll have to introduce you now.

DANNY

Yeah, all right...

Shelly and Danny walk over to the table where the rest of the family are seated, Ralph follows close behind

SHELLY

(Talking to Danny, pointing at the people respectively)

This is Harry, Phil, Grammoo and Vada Sultenfuss...

DANNY

Vada Sultenfuss?? Tough break.

VADA

(matter-of-fact)

I like my name.

SHELLY

(to the Sultenfuss')

This is Danny and Ralph, they own the Dino
Raphael salon in Detroit.

(pointing at Danny)

We used to be married.

VADA

(extremely hopeful, to Danny)

Are you here to take Shelly back?

Danny shakes his head at Vada, then Harry gets up and walks
round the table

HARRY

Uhh, it's nice to meet ya. Uhh, we got
burgers and hot dogs here if you'd care to
join us?

DANNY

Can't stay, I'm just here because my
wife.....

Shelly quickly interjects

SHELLY

Ex...ex, ex...

DANNY

My __EX__ wife seems to have ripped off my
camper.

HARRY

Shelly?

SHELLY

Honestly Harry, he got the mustang, I
promise.....

DANNY

I don't think so, I got a copy of the
property settlement right here.

Danny pulls out a piece of paper

Ahh Shit, this is my lease..... Damn it, I
keep forgetting things, I'm getting senile.

HARRY

Danny?

DANNY

WHAT?

HARRY

Okay, I know you've suffered a terrible loss, and there's really nothing anyone can do to comfort you, but I urge you to focus on the times you had with the camper, the trips you took, the sights you saw, those days are gone now, but they'll live on in your heart forever.

DANNY

(to Shelly)

This guy bonking you?

SHELLY

(disgusted)

Danny that's a real _bonehead_ thing to say!

HARRY

(to Danny)

Look, you're not gonna take Shelly's camper.

DANNY

Oh.. Oh.. Oh no?? Oh?

HARRY

It's her home! It's where she lives!!

DANNY

Oh really, okay fine look, go cook,

(to Shelly)

Gimme the goddam keys.

Danny tries to grab the keys from Shelly

SHELLY

Stop it! That hurts!!

Harry is now VERY annoyed

HARRY

Danny.....

As Harry says "Danny" for a second time he plants his fist in Danny's stomach with force, winding him and shutting him up

FOCUS ON VADA AND PHIL'S FACES, WHICH ARE STARTLED

**FULL SCENE, SHELLY IS GAPING, DANNY IS BENT OVER WITH RALPH
HOLDING HIM UP, VADA AND PHIL WATCHING CLOSELY AND GRAMMOO
STARING INTO SPACE**

RALPH

What'd you do that for??

HARRY

Who are you?

RALPH

I'm his brother.

HARRY

Oh then you'll probably be visiting us here
quite often.

RALPH

WHY??

HARRY

Because if he ever tries to take Shelly's
camper again, I'm gonna bury him in my front
yard.

Ralph looks rather disturbed by this

FOCUS ON VADA AND PHIL, VADA STILL GAPING

PHIL

(quiet voice, to Vada)
Your father is a savage.

Vada looks up at Phil, Phil looks back and nods

**ROAD IN FRONT OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, DANNY AND RALPH IN CAR,
SHELLY LEANING OVER WITH HER HEAD IN WINDOW NIGHT**

SHELLY

Bye Ralph.

The car with Danny and Ralph in it pulls away and Shelly
waves

SHELLY

(to Harry)
Well, you were pretty great!

HARRY

Is it really your camper?

Shelly makes gesture with her right hand suggesting "sort of"

Suddenly a sky rocket screams up in the sky and then explodes, Harry and Shelly look up and watch the fireworks

SHELLY

Can we see it from the back yard?

HARRY

You can get the general idea...

They move off to the back yard...

HARRY

Yep, there they are... They always look the same every year...

SHELLY

Pointing upwards Look...

HARRY

Did you ahh, love him?

SHELLY

I would never marry anybody I didn't love.

VADA AND PHIL SITTING ON SEAT-SWING WATCHING FIREWORKS

VADA

He must like Shelly, I never saw him hit anyone in his life.

PHIL

He likes her.

VADA

Does he love her?

PHIL

Probably.

VADA

Do you like her?

PHIL

Yes I do, and I think she's very good for your father.

VADA

Why?

PHIL

After your mother died, he was sad all the time, but before that, he was pretty funny.

VADA

Really?

PHIL

Now when I see him with Shelly, sometimes he seems like the old Harry.

VADA

My Dad was funny?

PHIL

Well he wasn't one of the Marx brothers, but he made me laugh.

VADA'S THOUGHTS

My Uncle fought in the Korean war, he had a steel plate put in his head, Daddy said he didn't come back the same, one night, he picked up a radio station from Oklahoma in his teeth, it was really neat.

**DR WELTY'S SURGERY, LOOKING AT VADA WHO HAS HER MOUTH OPEN
WITH A TONGUE HOLDING STICK DOWN HER THROAT**

VADA

Aaaaaaaaaahhhh.

VADA

(with stick in mouth)

Carnnk yu sheeee ik??

Dr. Welty removes stick from Vada's mouth

VADA

Can't you see it?

DR WELTY

No.

VADA

It's there.

DR WELTY

Vada there is no chicken bone stuck in your throat.

Vada looks at the Dr.'s certificates up on the wall

VADA

Dr. Welty, are you sure those are yours?

**WAITING ROOM, NURSE RANDALL IS DEMONSTRATING A SYRINGE TO
THOMAS J, HOW TO USE IT AS A WATER GUN**

NURSE RANDALL

So you fill it with water like this, and what have you got? A water gun.

THOMAS J

Cool, can I get one for Vada?

NURSE RANDALL

Oh yes, yes.

She gets another one out of her drawer

Thomas, let me ask you a question. Does Vada ever tell you why she comes down here so much?

THOMAS J

Cause she's dying.

NURSE RANDALL

Do you think she is?

THOMAS J

No.

NURSE RANDALL

Why do you think she says that?

THOMAS J

Cause she gets scared of all those dead people in her house, and you know that saying, If you can't beat 'em, join 'em, well if she's one of them, she won't be as scared.

NURSE RANDALL

You know what I think? I think Vada's very lucky to have a friend like you.

Nurse Randall hands Thomas J another syringe

THOMAS J

She's my best friend.

The door to the doctor's surgery opens and Vada exits

NURSE RANDALL

Miss Vada, how are you feeling?

VADA

As good as can be expected.

CORRIDOR OUTSIDE DOCTORS WAITING ROOM

THOMAS J

Hey Vada, guess what we got?

VADA

What?

Thomas J begins to run, and as he passes Vada he squirts his syringe at Vada

THOMAS J

THIS!!

(squirt)

VADA

HEY YOU!!!!

(squirt)

I'm gonna get you!!!

(squirt)

I'll get you!!!!

Vada at this point is unarmed, and she chases Thomas J down the stairs

FOREST DAY, VADA AND THOMAS J ARE RUNNING THROUGH IT FIRING THEIR WATER GUNS AT EACH OTHER AND YELLING AT EACH OTHER, HAVING FUN

Suddenly Thomas J stops in his tracks

THOMAS J

Woah!!

VADA

What?

THOMAS J

Pointing There's a beehive right there!

VADA

So?

THOMAS J

Stand back.

Thomas J stands a pace back behind a branch on the tree and

begins to squirt the beehive

VADA

Are you crazy, you'll get stung!!

THOMAS J

You're right, let's knock it down.

VADA

What do you want it for anyway?

THOMAS J

For their meat.

The two start throwing rocks at the hive, which gets damaged and eventually falls to the ground

THOMAS J

Got it!

VADA

My mood ring! It fell off! I gotta find it!

They begin to search for Vada's mood ring

Suddenly bees begin to swarm, luckily Thomas J notices in time

THOMAS J

They're alive!! Run for your life!!!

Vada just stands there looking, Thomas J comes back and grabs her arm, this wakes her up and they begin to run

THOMAS J

Run faster they're after us!!

VADA

I am running faster!!

THOMAS J

Hurry!!!

They have run to the spot with the weeping willow and the pier, they run out on to the pier

VADA

Jump in the water!!

THOMAS J

But I have my clothes on!

VADA

Do it!

UNDER WATER VIEW OF THEM BOTH, HOLDING THEIR BREATH

**INSIDE VIEW OF FRONT DOOR TO SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, VADA ENTERS
DRENCHED**

HARRY

(in the distance, from
upstairs)
Vada is that you?

VADA

Yes..

HARRY

Hey guess what? We're going to the carnival
tonight, be ready to go in 10 minutes.

Vada likes this news, she hurries up the stairs

HARRY

Shelly's coming with us.

Vada is now not so happy

**CARNIVAL NIGHT, FERRIS WHEEL IS SPINNING, MANY PEOPLE ARE
SCREAMING IN A TYPICAL CARNIVAL MANNER, SLOW ZOOM ON HARRY,
SHELLY AND VADA**

SHELLY

So Vada, what's your favorite ride?

VADA

I like the freak show.

HARRY

I know, I know, let's go on the "sit on the
bench and rest" ride.

SHELLY

I don't think that that roller coaster agreed
with your bad stomach. You know Vada you have
to watch what you eat here, I remember one
time I went to a carnival with my cousins
David and Frank, and they both ate hot dogs,
and the next day they came down with
nephritis.

VADA

Nephritis? It's a kidney disease, you don't

get it from hot dogs.

SHELLY

Well, I'm no doctor. All I know is, the next day they had really high fevers, and their faces got very fat. They baffled medical science, they were in a magazine.

Vada and Harry give Shelly a "yeah RIGHT" look

SHELLY

They were!! "Popular Mechanics", no "Popular Science". I don't know, popular.

HARRY, SHELLY AND VADA ARE STANDING AT A STALL WHERE OBJECT IS TO GET A BALL IN FISH BOWL

SHELLY

Oh look they're trying to hit that poor thing.

HARRY

Watch you don't knock out a fish.

SHELLY

Perfect.

HARRY

I don't know which ball's mine.

Vada gets a ball in a bowl

VADA

I won, I won!!!

SHELLY

Oh great!!

ATTENDANT

Hooray, we have a winner,
(picks up fish in plastic bag)

There you go little girl.
(gives fish to Vada)
See how easy it is folks!

Shelly inspects fish, holding it along with Vada

SHELLY

Oh Vada, that's a gorgeous goldfish.

Vada notices something on Shelly's hand

VADA

Where'd you get that ring?

All of a sudden Shelly looks up with a guilty look

VADA

(extremely hopeful)

Did you win it?

Harry and Shelly exchange looks, Harry smiles, followed by Shelly

SHELLY

Vada we have something to tell you. Harry?

Harry sits down on table and looks at Vada in a matter-of-fact way

HARRY

Vada we have some good news, Shelly and I are getting married.

Vada's expression begins to change from hopeful, to horror, but then she drops her fish

VADA

Oh my fish!!!

Vada quickly bends over to pick up the fish

HARRY

We're having the wedding sometime near the end of the summer.

VADA

Not acknowledging Harry's comment You'll be okay little fish.

SHELLY

Vada? Would you like us to get you another goldfish?

VADA

(angry)

NO!, He's fine.

(less angry, talking to fish)

Fish are very resilient animals you know.

Don't worry, I won't get another fish.

Shelly and Harry exchange worried looks, Vada doesn't seem to have understood

ANNOUNCER

**THE BUMPER CARS!! THE BUMPER CARS!! FOR JUST
50 CENTS A HALF DOLLAR, FIVE DIMES, 10
NICKELS, WE HAVE A RIDE THAT'S GUARANTEED TO
REARRANGE ALL OF YOUR INTERNAL ORGANS.**

SHELLY

Oh bumper cars, oh you can't go to a carnival
and not ride the bumper cars.

HARRY

I fall asleep at the wheel.

VADA

(malicious grin)
I'll ride on the bumper cars with you!

SHELLY

Oh great Vada, come on...

They run off leaving Harry to carry the teddy bear and the
fish

SHELLY

(to the attendant)
Uhh, two.
(to Vada)
I got the blue one!!

Vada runs in past Shelly and seats herself in a car

VADA

NO!

SHELLY

Yes!!

Shelly gets in the blue one

SHELLY

(pointing at Vada)
I am gonna get you.

Vada straps herself in, Shelly turns around and gives Vada
the thumbs up, Vada looks VERY intent on brutally murdering
something now, and she returns the thumbs up, as she does
so, music begins to play and the power is turned on, the
song is "Bad Moon Rising"

HARRY

Vada, keep your hands on the wheel!!

Vada rushes straight at Shelly and rams into her at top speed, so that Shelly's car is spun around a little, Shelly screams, this is all in good fun, at the moment. Then Vada rams her again, and again, and again, and again, and eventually, Shelly does not look too pleased, she can't escape Vada

HARRY

Careful Vada, careful.

HARRY

Shelly LOOK OUT!

WWHHAAMMM

Shelly and Vada pull up along side each other, Vada gives Shelly a satisfied but still spiteful grin

VADA IS RIDING HER BIKE ALONG HER STREET TOWARDS THE CAMERA, SHE STOPS AND DISMOUNTS OUTSIDE THOMAS J'S HOUSE

Vada rings the Sennett's doorbell, and Mrs Sennett answers

MRS. SENNETT

Hi Vada.

VADA

Hi, can Thomas J come out?

MRS. SENNETT

Sure, come in.

Thomas J is coming down the stairs

THOMAS J

Hi Vada.

VADA

Hi, wanna ride bikes?

THOMAS J

Sure.

MRS. SENNETT

Ohh, did you make your bed?

THOMAS J

Yes.

MRS. SENNETT

You're sure?

THOMAS J

It's made.

MRS. SENNETT

Come here, you've got a milk mustache.

Mrs. Sennett wipes Thomas J's lip

THOMAS J

Come on, let's go.

VADA

Bye Mrs. Sennett.

THOMAS J

Bye Ma.

MRS. SENNETT

Have fun kids.

The two exit the house

**OUTSIDE FRONT OF SENNETT'S HOUSE, VADA AND THOMAS J ARE
WALKING DOWN THE STAIRS**

VADA

I'm running away.

THOMAS J

Where you running to?

They get on their bikes and begin to ride off

VADA

California, I'm going to Hollywood to live
with the Brady Bunch.

THOMAS J

I wanna live with them too.

VADA

No, you can't, they have enough kids, you'll
have to live with the Partridge Family.

THOMAS J

Really?

**SOMEWHERE ON A PATHWAY IN A LIGHT FOREST, VADA AND THOMAS J
ARE RIDING THEIR BIKES**

Thomas J stops and then does Vada

THOMAS J

That's it.

Thomas J goes and sits down on the river bank, Vada follows with an annoyed look

VADA

Get up!?

THOMAS J

I'm tired of running away. Besides, we past this place two times already. We're not getting nowhere.

Vada sits down next to Thomas J

THOMAS J

Why are you running away?

VADA

My Dad gave Shelly a ring.

THOMAS J

Wow, was it a decoder ring?

VADA

You're such a retard, it was an engagement ring.

THOMAS J

They're getting married?

Vada nods her head

THOMAS J

So now you'll have a mother.

VADA

I don't like her.

THOMAS J

I do, she's real funny.

VADA

He likes her better than me.

A TREE DUSK, THOMAS J AND VADA ARE UP THE TOP OF IT

THOMAS J

I'm hungry, I can't last any longer.

VADA

Then go home, baby.

THOMAS J

I have to anyway, my mom will be worried.

VADA

Leave then, some friend you are.

THOMAS J

You can come to my house for dinner?

VADA

No, I'm hiding out.

THOMAS J

Okay, seeya.

Thomas J climbs down from tree, and leaves

DISSOLVE INTO NEXT SCENE

VADA STILL IN TREE NIGHT, SHE LOOKS AROUND AND THEN DECIDES TO GET DOWN

Vada jumps down, and we can now see that the tree was on the Sultenfuss' front lawn

INSIDE VIEW OF FRONT DOOR, VADA ENTERS AND CLOSSES IT

As soon as Vada has entered, she waits for someone to come running and ask her if she's all right, where she's been, they were so worried etc., Nothing happens, all she can hear is the noise that the TV is making. So she opens the door again and slams it. Still nothing. She decides to give up, and go find Harry, she walks to the living room where the TV is on, Harry and Grammo are asleep in their chairs

Vada begins to ascend the stairs, depressed

VADA'S THOUGHTS

In social studies we learned some people stole the Limburg baby right out of his house, I think i'll sleep with my window OPEN tonight.

OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, A LOUD HIGH PITCHED SCREAM IS HEARD

VIEW OF CORRIDOR LEADING TO BATHROOM

VADA

OH MY GOD!!!

Vada bursts out of the bathroom and screams down the stairs

VADA

DADDY!! Daddy daddy!!!! Daddy!!??!?!?

Vada runs into a room where Shelly is

VADA

Daddy??!?!?!?

SHELLY

Vada, Vada, what's the matter?

VADA

Where's Daddy?

SHELLY

Well he just left, what's wrong?

VADA

I'm hemorrhaging.

SHELLY

What do you mean you're hemorrhaging?

VADA

(very weak, scared voice)

I don't want, I don't need your help....

Vada tries to run away, but Shelly stops her

SHELLY

Vada, did this happen in the bathroom?

Vada nods her head

SHELLY

How old are you?

VADA

I'm eleven and a half.

SHELLY

It's okay, come on upstairs, we have to have a little talk.

They exit

VADA'S BEDROOM, VADA AND SHELLY SITTING ON BED

VADA

My Mommy and Daddy did THAT?

SHELLY

It's actually a very beautiful thing, and
look there wouldn't have been a Vada.

VADA

I think it should be outlawed.

SHELLY

Believe me, some day, you'll feel
differently.

Door bell is heard ringing

VADA

Oh, that's probably Thomas J, I don't wanna
see him. It's not fair. Nothing happens to
boys.

OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, VADA OPENS DOOR

THOMAS J

Hi Vada, can you come out?

VADA

I dunno..

THOMAS J

Please, it's real hot, maybe we can go
swimming?

Vada is angered by this, she comes storming out

VADA

NO!

Vada pushed Thomas J hard enough to make him fall over, she
is angry

Get outta here!! And don't come back for five
to seven days!!!

Vada runs inside and slams the door, leaving poor Thomas J
sitting on the porch looking startled

**FUNERAL ROOM OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, PIPE ORGAN IS BEING
PLAYED, MANY PEOPLE ARE SEATED AND THERE IS AN OPEN COFFIN
UP THE FRONT**

LIVING ROOM, VADA IS READING A BOOK, AND WATCHING GRAMMOO

TO BE SURE THAT SHE DOESN'T WANDER OFF, VADA PUTS THE BOOK DOWN

VADA

Grammoo, I'm going to the bathroom, i'll be right back.

She then gives Grammoo a little kiss, and makes her way out of the living room to the bathroom, closing the door behind her, as she goes to enter the bathroom she hears giggling coming from the next room, so she goes to investigate. Harry and Shelly are kissing and giggling. As she is watching this, Grammoo gets up, enters the funeral room and makes her way to the front, when she gets there, she picks up a rose, takes a look at the dead man, and begins to sing into the rose as if it were a microphone

GRAMMOO

It's quarter to three, there's no-one in the place, just you and me.

As this is being sung, Vada hears and turns around with an OH SHIT look on her face, Harry and Shelly also hear it and make off for the funeral room, Vada quickly retreats into the room where Harry and Shelly were, closing the door behind her

So santa-macho, I got a little story you oughtta know, we're comin' my friend, to the end of a brief episode, so make it one for my baby and one more for the road.

HARRY

I'm so sorry, it's all right ma, I'm very very sorry.

ROOM IN SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, HARRY BURSTS IN, CLEARLY HE IS VERY ANGRY

HARRY

Grabs Vada by the shoulders

Now what were you thinking, huh? HUH???? It's your responsibility to watch her!! Do you have any idea how upset those people are in there???

Vada breaks free from Harry's grip, and walks briskly out of the room. Shelly looks back at Harry expectantly

WEEPING WILLOW TREE DOWN AT THE LAKES EDGE, VADA AND THOMAS J ARE SITTING UNDER IT RESTING QUIETLY

VADA

Why do you think people want to get married?

THOMAS J

Well when you get older, you just have to.

VADA

I'm gonna marry Mr. Bixler.

THOMAS J

You can't marry a teacher, it's against the law.

VADA

It is not.

THOMAS J

Yes it is, cause then he'll give you all A's and it won't be fair.

VADA

Not true.

VADA

(nervously, uncertain)

Have you ever kissed anyone?

THOMAS J

Like they do on TV?

VADA

Uh huh.

THOMAS J

No.

VADA

Maybe we should, just to see what's the big deal.

THOMAS J

But, I don't know how.

VADA

Here, practice on your arm like this.

Vada brings her forearm up to her mouth and starts to kiss it, Thomas J follows

THOMAS J

Like this?

VADA

Uh huh.

(they kiss their arms for a
while)

Okay, enough practice.

VADA

Close your eyes.

THOMAS J

But then I won't be able to see anything.

Vada raises her fist

VADA

Just do it.

THOMAS J

Okay, okay.

VADA

Okay on the count of three.

CAMERA SWITCHES ANGLES TO GIVE A CLEAR SIDE ON OF THOMAS J

VADA

One.

VADA

Two.

VADA

Two and a half.

VADA

Three.

Vada leans forward and kisses Thomas J on the lips, they
both look surprised, Vada then sits back against the tree,
long pause

VADA

Say something it's too quiet.

THOMAS J

Umm, Ummmmmm

VADA

(agitated)

Just, hurry.

Thomas J stands up and begins to say something along the

lines of...

THOMAS J

On political agents to the flag of the United
States of America,

Vada stands up and joins in

THOMAS J & VADA

And to the republic for which it stands, one
nation, under God, individual, with liberty
and justice for all.

When they finish, they both still look a little
uncomfortable

**ROAD DAY, VADA AND THOMAS J ARE WHEELING THEIR BIKES BACK
DOWN IT**

VADA

You better not tell anyone.

THOMAS J

You better not either.

VADA

Well, let's spit on it.

THOMAS J

Okay.

Both of them raise their hands to their mouths and spit on
them, they then shake hands and when finished wipe them off
on their trousers

VADA

Seeya tomorrow.

THOMAS J

Okay, seeya.

(Vada starts off down the
road)

Vada?

VADA

What?

THOMAS J

Would you think of me?

VADA

For what?

THOMAS J

Well if you don't get to marry Mr. Bixler.

Vada smiles, and gets on her bike

VADA

I guess.

As Vada rides off, Thomas J smiles

BACK IN THE WOODS WHERE VADA AND THOMAS J HAD FOUND THE BEEHIVE

Thomas J comes across the beehive, inspects it and then kicks it, he waits and then once he is adamant that there is no danger, he begins to search for Vada's mood ring, he searches, and as he does so, bees begin to swarm, he finds the mood ring, and by the time he notices that there are bees everywhere, it is too late..

THOMAS J

(as he finds the mood ring)

Yes!

THOMAS J

(reacting to the bees)

Ow, ahh, NO!, Get away!!!

We see Thomas J's glasses fall off onto the ground

OUTSIDE FRONT DOOR, SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, POLICEMAN PRESSES DOORBELL, HARRY ANSWERS

A policeman enters, takes his hat off and explains what has happened to Thomas J to Harry, who becomes clearly very distressed

VADA'S ROOM, VADA IS FEEDING FISH, HARRY ENTERS

HARRY

Hi Vada.

VADA

Hi.

HARRY

What are you doing.

VADA

Feeding my fish.

HARRY

Is that the fish you won at the carnival?

VADA

Yes.

HARRY

He's getting big.

(sad pause)

Vada, come here and sit down for a minute.

Vada sits down next to her Dad

HARRY

Vada, something happened to Thomas J last night, he stepped on a beehive.

VADA

(beginning to look worried)

I told him not to tease those bees. Did he get stung?

Harry nods

VADA

Maybe I should go over and yell at him.

HARRY

No sweetheart, you can't.

VADA

(looking very worried)

Why not?

HARRY

He was allergic to bees.

VADA

(extremely worried)

He's okay isn't he?

HARRY

(shakes head, near tears)

There were just too many of 'em.

When Vada hears this, her eyes begin to flood with tears and the expression on her face changes movingly, it looks as though she just lost the most special and important part of her life. And she has

VADA RUNNING UP STAIRS INTO DOCTORS OFFICE

VADA

Dr. Welty!!!? Dr. Welty??

DR WELTY

Vada, what's wrong sweetheart?

VADA

I can't breathe, I'm suffocating.

DR WELTY

Oh, wait relax now, let me look, let me look,
come up here and we'll have a look.

Dr. Welty lifts Vada up onto bed

VADA

It hurts, it hurts so bad, make it stop.

DR WELTY

What Hurts Vada?

VADA

The bee stings! I can't breathe!

**OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, HARRY AND ARTHUR ARE BRINGING
THOMAS J IN ON A STRETCHER**

**INSIDE, CORRIDOR OUTSIDE VADA'S ROOM, SHELLY IS CLIMBING
STAIRS CARRYING A TRAY OF FOOD, SHE STOPS OUTSIDE VADA'S
ROOM**

SHELLY

Knocks Vada?

View shifts to inside Vada's bedroom, where she is curled
up in a little ball on her bed

I'm leaving some food for you by the door, in
case you get hungry.

Vada remains where she is, the doorbell rings

DOWNSTAIRS, SHELLY OPENS DOOR TO REVEAL JUDY

SHELLY

Hi.

JUDY

Hi, is Vada home?

SHELLY

Yes she is, but she's very upset, so she's

not seeing anyone.

JUDY

Oh, I'm Judy, I go to school with her, I wanted to tell her I'm sorry about Thomas J.

SHELLY

Well maybe she'll feel better in a couple of days.

JUDY

Will you tell her I came by?

SHELLY

Sure.

JUDY

Thank you. Bye.

SHELLY

Bye.

Shelly closes the door

PEOPLE ARE ENTERING THE FUNERAL ROOM

REV

Hi Harry.

HARRY

Ahh, Reverend Miles.

REV

The Sennetts want to thank you for taking care of things so quickly.

THE FUNERAL ROOM IS FILLING UP, WITH THOMAS J AT THE FRONT IN A COFFIN

CORRIDOR OUTSIDE VADA'S ROOM, SHELLY STOPS OUTSIDE IT

SHELLY

(knocks)

Vada? I see you took your tray in,

Vada is looking out her blinds at all the black cars and people dressed in black entering her house

Maybe you should come down for the funeral, sometimes it helps. Vada?

HARRY'S STUDY, HARRY IS LOOKING AT A PIECE OF PAPER, SHELLY

ENTERS

SHELLY

She won't come out. It's been a whole day.
You have to do something Harry.

HARRY

The funeral's starting.

Shelly is now very emotional

SHELLY

Open your eyes, she's eleven years old! Her
only friend in the world is dead.

HARRY

I know that, but what do you want from me?

SHELLY

Stop hiding Harry, you run Harry. When I
first came here, the idea of working with dead
people, didn't exactly thrill me, but when I
saw a family lived here, I thought, "if I'm
living without a family, at least I can work
with one, and maybe once in a while i'll be
invited in for supper."

HARRY

Yeah, and when those suppers are disrupted
because there's a car crash, or there's a
fire, or a little boy steps on a beehive.

SHELLY

I'm not asking you to stop feeling for those
people. But life isn't just death Harry, don't
ignore the living, especially your daughter.

Arthur enters

ARTHUR

Excuse me Harry, Shelly, the minister's about
to begin.

HARRY

Thank you Arthur.

Shelly exits

FUNERAL ROOM, MINISTER IS WALKING UP THE FRONT

MINISTER

We are here to honor Thomas James Sennett. He

was born, May 7 1961, in Madison,
Pennsylvania, and he was survived by his
loving parents, Charles and Susan Sennett.....
(fades as camera changes)

**CAMERA IS ON VADA, WHO IS SLOWLY MAKING HER WAY OUT OF HER
ROOM**

The minister is heard to say this in the background

MINISTER

The family has asked me to say a few words
before we proceed. No words that I could say,
would begin to describe the loss and grieving,
one word that keeps ringing in my ear is
Why?. Why would God choose to take this
little boy from us? I can't give you an answer
to that question, but I can tell you that God
has chosen Thomas J for some very special
reason, we must find solace in knowing that
Thomas J is now in Gods care. In that face,
there is no sorrow such as....

The ministers words fade into the very moving music

**CAMERA IS ON VADA SLOWLY DESCENDING THE STAIRS AND LOOKING
INTO THE FUNERAL ROOM, THE MUSIC, SCENE AND ACTIONS OF
CHARACTERS IS GETTING TO THE POINT OF MAKING THE VIEWER CRY**

Vada stops and sits on a step where she can look through
and see Thomas J lying in his coffin, she begins to cry

**BACK IN FUNERAL ROOM, VADA ENTERS AT THE BACK AND BEGINS TO
SLOWLY MAKE HER WAY UP TO THE FRONT**

MINISTER

....disciples began to chastise them, and
Jesus said "Let the children come to me, do
not hinder them, for the Kingdom of God
belongs to such as these.

(the minister notices Vada
coming around the front of the
room)

He laid his hands on their heads before he
left that place, let us pray in silence.

Vada has made it right up to the coffin, which she leans
over and crying, says the following

VADA

Wanna go tree climbing Thomas J?

CAMERA DOES A CLOSE UP OF THOMAS J'S BEE STING COVERED FACE

CAMERA GOES BACK TO PREVIOUS SHOT INCORPORATING VADA AS WELL

VADA

His face hurts, and where is his glasses? He can't see without his glasses! Put his glasses on!

(Harry and Shelly are rapidly approaching Vada, Shelly takes hold of her and tries to pull her away)

Put on his glasses! He was gonna be an acrobat.

HARRY

He's gone sweetheart. He's gone!

VADA

Get away, get away!!

Vada breaks away from Harry's grip and runs out of the room, followed closely by Harry and Shelly

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE, VADA IS RUNNING DOWN THE STEPS, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY HARRY

HARRY

Vada wait! Vada! Vada!!

Harry stops running after Vada as she sprints off down the road

Vada arrives at Mr. Bixler's house

MR. BIXLER

Vada! I was just on my way to your house. Are you all right? I'm so sorry about Thomas J.

Vada covers her ears and begins to sing "doo-wah-diddy-diddy"

MR. BIXLER

Okay, okay we don't have to talk about him, Vada, Vada we don't have to talk about him, it's okay. We won't talk about him all right?

VADA

(crying)

Justin and Ronda say that I should tell people what I feel.

MR. BIXLER

(nods)

Come here, sit down over here.

The two of them sit down on Mr. Bixler's porch

Vada is clearly in a lot of pain and she wants it to stop

VADA

Mr. Bixler,
(emotional pause)
I love you.

MR. BIXLER

Oh, Vada...

VADA

I love you like my Dad loves Shelly. I wanna
live here.

MR. BIXLER

Pause as he takes all this in I think your Dad would miss
you.

VADA

No he wouldn't, I can't go home.

A woman appears at Mr. Bixler's front door

SUZANNE

I'll be ready in a second, I just can't seem
to find my other earring....

MR. BIXLER

Suzanne, this is Vada.

SUZANNE

(comes over to Vada and
crouches)

Vada, hi, I'm really sorry.

MR. BIXLER

Could you just give us a minute?

SUZANNE

Yeah.

Suzanne goes back inside

VADA

Who's that?

MR. BIXLER

That's Suzanne.

(pause)

She and I are gonna be married this Fall.

As soon as Vada hears this, she reacts, shaking her head and backing off

VADA

No....

MR. BIXLER

I...I was gonna bring her to class next week.
I wanted to hear your poem. Oh Vada, please
honey I cared for him too, Vada please! Vada,
Vada sweetheart don't.....

VADA

Get away from me!

Vada runs off down the road

**WEeping WILLOW, VADA AND THOMAS J'S FAVORITE SPOT, VADA IS
UP HIGH IN THE TREE**

Vada is climbing around in the tree, clearly trying to get
somewhere of significance

VADA'S THOUGHTS

Why do you think people wanna get married?

THOMAS J'S VOICE

When you get old, you just have to.

Vada pulls out her photo of her mother

THOMAS J'S VOICE

Who's that with your Dad?

VADA'S THOUGHTS

It's my mother.

THOMAS J'S VOICE

I'm gonna be an acrobat when I grow up.

(pause)

Vada, would you think of me? Well if you
don't get to marry Mr. Bixler.

VADA'S THOUGHTS

Now we're blood brothers for life.

Vada gets out to the end of a branch, and makes a daring jump to another, had she fallen she would be dead

OUTSIDE SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, POLICEMAN CLIMBS STEPS AND RINGS DOORBELL, SHELLY ANSWERS

POLICEMAN

Shelly I'm sorry but we haven't found her yet.

SHELLY

It's dark, she can't be alone in the dark.

POLICEMAN

We'll keep looking.

SHELLY

We, no, we've been looking since this morning, her teacher called, and he said that she went there first.....

POLICEMAN

I know, I know you told us.

SHELLY

But I....

Shelly is cut off as the door opens and in walks a very shaken Vada

SHELLY

Vada. Are you okay?
(Vada nods)
Oh God.

Shelly embraces Vada

VADA'S ROOM, SHELLY AND VADA ARE SITTING ON VADA'S BED, SHELLY IS BRUSHING VADA'S HAIR

VADA

I should have told Thomas J that he was my best friend.

SHELLY

I'm sure he knew.

Shelly puts a nightie on Vada

VADA

Shelly, I stole some money from your cookie jar, to pay for the writing class.

Shelly ponders this for a moment

SHELLY

It's okay sweetheart.

VADA

I'll pay it back, besides, I don't think i'll ever go to class again.

SHELLY

I'll tell you what, you dedicate your first book to me, and we'll forget about the whole thing.

VADA

I will I promise.

SHELLY

Okay, get in to bed.

Vada gets into bed and extends her arms to Shelly, they hug each other, Vada has finally accepted Shelly

SHELLY

Goodnight.

VADA

Goodnight.

Shelly exits and turns off the lights

DOWNSTAIRS, HARRY ENTERS

SHELLY

(sitting on stairs)

She's in.

BACK IN VADA'S ROOM

Harry enters, walks over and kisses Vada, then turns around and begins to exit

VADA

Did I kill my mother?

HARRY

What??

VADA

The bees killed Thomas J, and I killed my mother.

HARRY

No, no.

Harry pulls up a chair and sits down next to Vada

HARRY

No sweetie that wasn't your fault, things like that aren't anybody's fault, it just happened.

Vada pulls out the photo of Harry and Vada's Mom from under her pillow

VADA

I found this.

HARRY

I forgot about that picture, where did you find it?

VADA

In the garage.

HARRY

Ahh, that little Chevy was your mothers favorite car.

VADA

What was my mama like?

HARRY

She was pretty, and kind, she had your eyes. Oh boy did she love to laugh. Sometimes when you laugh, you sound just like her.

VADA

Really?

HARRY

Uh huh. You know what your mother did when she found out she was gonna have you? She came home and painted this whole room pink. She was so sure she was gonna have a little girl.

VADA

Do you miss her?

HARRY

Yes, I did, very much for a long time, and even now, I get a little sad when I think of a pretty flower or a sunset that your mother

would have liked.

VADA

I think every time I see a climbing tree i'll think of Thomas J.

HARRY

That's good, memories are good sweetheart. Vada, I'm sorry; I was trying to keep it from you, I just couldn't. You're a good girl, and I want you to be happy; don't be an old grump like me.

(Vada puts the photo back under her pillow, Harry gets up and kisses her)

Seeya in the morning.

Harry begins to leave room

VADA

Daddy, it's not so bad to be like you.

A CAFE IN TOWN, HARRY IS EATING, MRS. SENNETT COMES AND KNOCKS ON THE WINDOW

Harry makes his way out of the cafe to talk to Mrs. Sennett

HARRY

Mrs. Sennett, how are you doing?

MRS. SENNETT

Some days I think i'll be okay, others, well I have to force myself even to get out of bed, I know it's crazy, but sometimes I think he's just away at summer camp. How's Vada?

HARRY

Oh she's doing much better. Ahh she's just inside.

(walks over to entrance)

VADA!

Vada, who is inside talking to someone, hears and comes outside

VADA

Mrs. Sennett.
(she runs and gives her a hug)

MRS. SENNETT

Vada. I've been wanting to come over to see you,

(she reaches inside her purse
and gets out something, it is
Vada's mood ring)

Thomas J had this on him, I thought you might like to have it.

Vada slides the ring onto her finger, the ring is BLUE

You were such a good friend to him, I hope you'll still come by and visit me.

VADA

I will, I promise.

Mrs. Sennett looks at Harry as if to say good-bye, and then walks off slowly

VADA

Mrs. Sennett.

(she stops and turns around
to look at Vada)

Thomas J will be all right, my mother will take care of him.

MRS. SENNETT

Thank you Vada.

She then turns and walks off

SUMMER WRITING CLASS, FOCUS ON MR. BIXLER

MR. BIXLER

(reading from book)

Encased in talent, like a uniform, the rank of every poet, is well known. They can amaze us like a thunderstorm, or die so young, or live for years alone. My advice to you on our last class, be a thunderstorm.

JUSTIN

What exactly do you mean by that?

MR. BIXLER

I mean, be dangerous

(Vada enters the back of the
room)

And unpredictable. And make a lot of noise.

Mr. Bixler sees Vada

MR. BIXLER

Vada.

As Vada is noticed, she goes around getting hugged by everyone

JUSTIN

Hey, we missed you man! Gimme a hug!

Vada gives Justin a hug, she then proceeds towards Mr. Bixler

MR. BIXLER

I was hoping you'd stop by today.

Vada and Mr. Bixler hug each other

VADA

I can't stay, I just came to read my poem.

MR. BIXLER

We'd love to hear it.

VADA

Weeping willow with your tears running down,
Why do you always weep and frown, Is it
because he left you one day, Is it because he
could not stay, On your branches he would
swing, Do you long for the happiness that they
would bring, He found shelter in your shade,
He thought his laughter would never fade,
Weeping willow stop your tears, There is
something to calm your fears, You think death
as if you forever part, But I know he'll
always be in your heart.

There is a long pause as it sinks in, everybody remains silent, then just before the scene changes, the Temptations song "My Girl" begins to play

OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL, VADA COMES OUT THE DOOR AND DOWN THE STEPS WHERE JUDY AWAITS HER

VADA

Hi Judy.

JUDY

Hi Vada.

VADA'S THOUGHTS

Things are a little better these days; I finally swallowed that chicken bone, Judy and

I are gonna be in the same home room and the
republican party just re-nominated Mr. Nixon.

Vada and Judy ride off down the road on their bikes, the
camera angle rises and the credits begin to roll as the song
My Girl plays

THE END