

My Girl 2

By Janet Kovalcik

SETTING: MADISON, PENNSYLVANIA 1974

CLOSE-UP OF VADA SULTENFUSS' FACE

VADA

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

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

HARRY

Hey you're not eating your meatloaf.

SHELLY

If I eat it I'll throw up.

HARRY

Well you should at least try a little bit.

SHELLY

Then I'll throw up a little bit.

VADA

(to Shelly's stomach)

Are you sure you wanna get involved in this?

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

HARRY

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

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

HARRY

Vada, try to scrunch these chairs together a little more.

VADA  
Dad, I'm trying. The chairs, they won't  
scrunch.

Doorbell rings

ARTHUR  
I'll get it.

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

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

Arthur opens the front door to reveal Judy

ARTHUR  
Oh, hello Judy.

JUDY  
Hi Arthur.

Harry walks past

HARRY  
Hi Judy, come on in.

JUDY  
Hi Mr. Sultenfuss.

ARTHUR  
(to Vada)  
Look who I found.

VADA  
Hi Judy!

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

JUDY  
(nervous)  
Hi.

VADA  
Come on in!

JUDY  
That's okay.

VADA  
It's just a corpse.

JUDY

I know that.

VADA

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

front door closes

Judy???

ARTHUR

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

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

Harry and Shelly are laughing

HARRY

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

VADA

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

SHELLY

I don't know if I want to.

HARRY

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

Shelly gives Harry a look

I'm just bringing it up for discussion.

SHELLY

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

Vada looks confused

VADA

Do what?

HARRY

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

VADA

You want me to move?

HARRY

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

Vada looks a little put out

VADA

Okay, no problem.

HARRY

Okay thanks, atta girl.

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

SHELLY

(at the door)

Harry?

(closer, a little louder)

HARRY??

(in Harry's ear)

\*HARRY\*!!!!

Harry gets a fright and blows a foul note

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

HARRY

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

SHELLY

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

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

HARRY

The thing to remember is you must visualize a spare. The parabola of the arcing ball must intersect with the pyramid of the pins at precisely this angle of attack.

Harry bowls his ball, which goes straight into the side ditch

Shit.

Harry walks back to Vada

VADA

Visualize a spare?

HARRY

Well you know what I mean.

VADA

So, what's on your mind?

HARRY

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

VADA

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

HARRY

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

Vada stands up and picks up a ball

VADA

Shelly's already told me all about sex.

HARRY

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

VADA

I figured you did.

Vada bowls her ball and gets a perfect strike

VADA

Yes!

Vada returns and sits down

HARRY

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

VADA

No it's okay, I understand, really.

HARRY

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

Harry then gets up to bowl again

VADA

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

HARRY

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

VADA

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

HARRY

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

VADA

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

HARRY

Seriously?

VADA

Seriously.

HARRY

Great.

Harry stands poised to bowl...

VADA

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

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

VADA AND JUDY ARE IN A SHOP SMELLING PERFUMES

JUDY

My mother can't have any more kids.

VADA

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

JUDY

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

Vada smells Judy's wrist

VADA

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

a group of teenage guys enter the shop

VADA

What are you staring at?

JUDY

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

VADA

See you? He can smell you from there.

JUDY

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

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

JUDY

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

Hi Kevin.

KEVIN

Hi.

Vada turns around wearing sunglasses with ENORMOUS lenses

KEVIN

(to Vada)

Real cool Sultenfuss, you look like a grasshopper.

His group of friends laugh and move off

VADA

What's the matter?

JUDY

He likes you.

VADA

Likes me? He said I looked like a grasshopper.

JUDY

Boys always pretend they hate you when they really like you.

VADA

That's ridiculous, so, if you really can't stand someone, then you pretend that you're really crazy about them?

JUDY

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

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

ARTHUR

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

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

SHELLY

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

ARTHUR

Esme?

HARRY

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

ARTHUR

And what if it's a boy?

HARRY

Oh Harry Junior of course.

VADA

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

HARRY

What boy likes you?

VADA

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

ARTHUR



Uh oh, here comes puberty.

SHELLY

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

HARRY

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

SHELLY

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

VADA

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

HARRY

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

Okay?

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

Vada presses the doorbell, Judy opens the door

JUDY

Hi.

VADA

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

JUDY

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

Kevin appears from inside the house holding a carton of juice

KEVIN

Is it okay if I drink this?

VADA

It's okay with me, hi Kevin.

KEVIN

Well if it isn't Vada, the grasshopper girl.

JUDY

Stop it Kevin.

KEVIN

I was kidding, it's a joke okay.

JUDY

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

VADA

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

Vada gets on her bike and rides off

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

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

SHELLY

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

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

VADA

Assuming the baby's a "Supremes" fan.

SHELLY

I bet your mom sang to you.

HARRY

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

SHELLY

Yes I know, it runs in the family.

(to Vada)

New book?

VADA

The Collected Works of Alfred Biedermeyer

HARRY

Her favorite poet.

SHELLY

(shaking head)

Never heard of him.

(burp)

Excuse me.

HARRY

How about a nice glass of milk?

SHELLY

And some taco chips so I can dunk.

Harry leaves, and Shelly leans forward to talk to Vada

SHELLY

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

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

SHELLY

They're enormous, I know.

VADA

Is there milk in them already?

SHELLY

No, the milk comes when the baby comes.

VADA

When did you umm, I mean umm...

SHELLY

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

VADA

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

SHELLY

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

VADA

You're telling me.

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

All the great writers pondered the meaning of life and death. I've been thinking a lot about

my mother recently, even though I don't have any memories of her. I wish I could see her just once, even if it were only in a dream. I know she'd help me figure things out.

VADA'S ENGLISH CLASS AT SCHOOL

MR. OWETT

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

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

KEVIN

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

class laughs

MR. OWETT

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

class goes "oooohh", Vada then raises her hand

MR. OWETT

Vada?

VADA

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

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

MR. OWETT

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

class does an "awe man"

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

Kevin raises his hand

Kevin?

KEVIN

Elvis, the king.

MR. OWETT

Elvis, the king.

another guy raises his hand

Devon?

DEVON

Farrah Fawcet, I love to watch that girl run.

MR. OWETT

Why is that Mr. Reid?

Devon

...never mind.

class laughs

MR. OWETT

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

VADA

My mother.

MR. OWETT

Your mother?

VADA

I never met my mother.

VADA, HARRY AND SHELLY ARE WALKING DOWN TOWN TALKING

VADA

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

HARRY

I told you about the pumpkin didn't I?

SHELLY

No.

HARRY

Ah, well, I bought her this huge pumpkin for Halloween, but she couldn't bear to carve it so she saved it for weeks, and it ended up under the Christmas tree.

VADA

Then Grammo said on Christmas Eve, there was this sickening smell permeating the entire house.

SHELLY

Oh no.

HARRY

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

Shelly laughs

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

VADA

There's still a big spot on the floor.

INSIDE A GENERAL STORE, VADA, SHELLY AND HARRY ENTER

HARRY

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

VADA

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

HARRY

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

SHELLY

Mmmmmm. Root beer float that sounds good.

VADA

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

HARRY

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

VADA

Was it a nice funeral?

HARRY

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

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

VADA

How about this?

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

VADA

Hi Mr. Owett.

MR. OWETT

Hey Vada. How's your report coming?

VADA

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

MR. OWETT

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

VADA

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

MR. OWETT

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

Hey guys.

KEVIN

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

VADA

But I wanna write about her.

KEVIN

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

VADA

No-one invented gravity, it just exists.

JUDY

Then what did she do?

VADA

Well...I'm not supposed to talk about it, but since I'm gonna write about it I might as well tell you. She was a spy against the Russians.

KEVIN

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

VADA

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

KEVIN

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

VADA

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

JUDY

So she had you in jail, in Russia?

VADA

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

KEVIN

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

Kevin and Judy walk off

VADA

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

Vada goes to her locker and opens it, exchanging books

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

VIEW OF RUG ON FLOOR OF SULTENFUSS' LIVING ROOM, VADA LIFTS UP THE RUG AND EXPOSES THE LARGE BLACK PATCH THAT THE



PUMPKIN LEFT SHOWING SHELLY

VADA

I used to come down here and sleep on this spot when I was little.

My report is gonna be a disaster, everything I know about her fits into one little box.

SHELLY

A box?

TOP VIEW OF BOX, VADA AND SHELLY ARE SITTING ON A BED LOOKING THROUGH IT

SHELLY

Oh Vada, what a sweet baby book!

VADA

It's only filled out to page two. I was eight pounds, four ounces.

(looking further in box)

There's so many programs, she was in a lot of plays.

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

SHELLY

(looking at a small brown paper bag)

What's this? December 8th, 1958?

VADA

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

SHELLY

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

VADA

(as Shelly pulls out a passport)

This is one of my favorite things, her passport.

SHELLY

(looking at the photo)

Oh Vada she's so beautiful.

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

VADA

Margaret's my middle name, but everybody called her Maggie. Los Angeles, have you ever been there?

SHELLY

No. You know they say, that it never rains, that you can barbecue on Christmas day...instead of riding your bike, you just surf over to your friends house. Oh, and the place is just crawling with celebrities. I know someone who saw Walter Matthau picking up his dry-cleaning.

VADA

Is that why Uncle Phil moved there?

SHELLY

Uncle Phil just needed a change, a little adventure.

VADA

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

SHELLY

Well you've gotta be prepared.

VADA

I'm definitely traveling some day.

Shelly gets an idea

SHELLY

Why not now?

VADA

What do you mean?

SHELLY

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

VADA

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

SHELLY

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

VADA

Yeah, it would be kinda great.

SHELLY

It would be fantastic.

VADA

But Dad'll never go for it.

SHELLY

You leave your father to me.

FOYER OF SULTENFUSS' HOUSE, HARRY AND SHELLY ENTER THROUGH  
A DOOR ARGUING

SHELLY

We should encourage her to spread her wings.

HARRY

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

SHELLY

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

HARRY

Disaster, disaster lurks behind every  
(hesitates)  
palm tree.

SHELLY

You're being narrow-minded.

Harry begins to move up the stairs

HARRY

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

Vada approaches from upstairs

(to Vada)

Ohh...Hi Vada, we were just having a  
little....

VADA

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

HARRY

Of course.

VADA

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

HARRY

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

VADA

I already bought a ticket.

HARRY

What??

VADA

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

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

HARRY

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

Harry looks at Shelly, who looks guilty

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

SHELLY

Well, Vada needed me.

Vada leaves the room

Besides the airline requires the signature of an adult.

HARRY

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

SHELLY

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

HARRY

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

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

SHELLY

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

HARRY

Reason? What reason?

VADA LIES DOWN AND PUTS HER HEAD ON THE SPOT

SHELLY

Phil's moving to LA, Grammo's passing, the baby being born, Vada's report, I think...

CAMERA IS BACK ON SHELLY AND HARRY

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

HARRY

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

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

HARRY

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

VADA

No nuns, got it.

HARRY

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

Vada hands her ticket to the attendant

VADA

What does that mean?

HARRY

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

Vada gives Harry a hug

VADA

Bye Dad, I'll miss you.

HARRY

Thanks, I needed that.

VADA

I'll be back in 137 hours.

HARRY

Have fun.

Vada waves as she boards the plane

Not too much.

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

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

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

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

BOY

Are you waiting for someone?

Vada stays turned away and does not reply

BOY

Excuse me I asked you a question.

VADA

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

BOY

You're Vada right?

Vada turns nervously and looks at him

VADA

How did you know my name?

BOY

Your Uncle Phil told me.

VADA

Where is he?? He was supposed to meet me.

BOY

Hey relax, you think I kidnapped him or something?

VADA

This is California, anything is possible.

BOY

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

VADA

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

BOY

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

VADA

Gee, that is a problem.

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

VADA

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

BOY

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

VADA

I don't think you're very polite.

BOY

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

he begins to move off, Vada follows

VADA

THANK YOU.

BOY

Don't mention it.

VADA

I don't even know your name.

NICK

It's Nick.

(giving Vada's ticket to attendant)

There you go.

ATTENDANT

(checks ticket against luggage)

Okay.

NICK

Thanks.

outside

NICK

Oh great, no cabs!

Hari Krishna guy approaches Vada

MAN

I have a gift for you.

he gives her something

VADA

Thanks....

NICK

No THANKS!

VADA

He said it was a gift.

NICK

Yeah, RIGHT.

VADA

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

NICK

TAXI!!!

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

NICK

Get in...get in!!

TAXI DRIVER

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

NICK

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

CAMERA IS FOLLOWING TAXI FROM SKY, SONG IS PLAYING SWINGTOWN VADA IS WATCHING OUT WINDOW ALL THE SIGHTS, THEY PASS AN OIL PUMP, A HUGE DONUT STORE, CAPITOL RECORDS BUILDING ETC.



Vada waves out the window to a surfer in a red convertible, then they turn off, and pull up to a building with "BUDAPEST auto repair" written on it

NICK

(paying driver)

There you go.

(to Vada)

See that building, my grandfather built it. Budapest auto repair.

(points)

That's my room right up there. One of these days this is all gonna be mine.

Vada enters the large garage and sees Phil walking inwards

VADA

Uncle Phil!!

Phil turns around

PHIL

Vada!!

Vada runs and jumps into Phil's arms

Look at you, oh hi, hi, hi!! How are you? You look great, how's Shelly? Your dad?

VADA

They're great.

PHIL

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

VADA

He was very polite, worth the entire five dollars.

PHIL

Uh huh, well...good to know.

Phil hands Nick a

5 note

NICK

Thanks

ROSE

(appears from behind a door, holding phone under her ear)

Give it back Nicholas!

NICK

But we made a business deal.

ROSE

What ever happened to a good old-fashioned favor huh?

ROSE

(into phone)

Now Irving our family's been dealing with your company for over forty years now, now either the timing chain is here or isn't here and from what I can see it isn't here, now you wanna come down and explain to the customers why we can't re-assemble the cars because not all the parts are here.

Now come on, I have enough trouble keeping my weight down, I don't need this blubber from you, are we quite clear on this Irving or do I have to speak with your father?

(pause)

Thank you. Yes, yes I love you too Irving.  
she then hangs up, and notices Vada

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

VADA

You're Nick's mother?

ROSE

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

NICK

Mom!

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

PHIL

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

ROSE

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

PHIL

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

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

PHIL

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

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

VADA  
She lives here too?

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

VADA  
But...are you engaged or something?

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

Phil goes and begins to get Vada a drink

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

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

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

VADA  
Committed?

PHIL  
Committed.

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

PHIL  
Yes, it does.

Phil holds up two containers, one of orange juice and one of milk, Vada

indicates the milk

VADA

Well then that's not exactly dating is it.

PHIL

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

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

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

VADA

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

NICK

And you're gonna solve the mystery?

VADA

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

PHIL

Then you'll be all set.

ROSE

Sounds like you're very organized.

VADA

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

PHIL

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

Phil looks at Nick

NICK

(mouth full)  
Muh??

PHIL  
I'd consider it a personal favor.

Nick flashes an evil look at Vada

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

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

NICK  
What's that?

PHIL  
Ten bucks.

NICK  
What's it for?

PHIL  
For the mini-bike fund.

NICK  
Wow!

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

NICK  
No problem.

PHIL  
You're a good man Nicholas.

NICK  
Phil, I think you should consider...  
fades as Vada walks off

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

EXTERNAL VIEW OF BUS GOING DOWN A HIGHWAY

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

VADA

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

Nick ponders on this for a moment and then looks annoyed

NICK

You know eavesdropping is a very unattractive habit.

VADA

I wasn't eavesdropping, I was overhearing.

NICK

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

VADA

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

she pulls the buzzer

NICK

(to driver)  
Getting off please.

VADA

Excuse me, pardon, thank you, excuse me.

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

VADA

Where's the school?

looks at the plaque and reads from it

VADA

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

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

NICK

They obviously have no sense of historical  
perspective either.

VADA

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

Wilson High School Letter sweater!!!

NICK

Vada.

VADA

WHAT??

NICK

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

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

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

MAN

Watch these machines now.

VADA

This is really very nice of you.

MAN

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

they all enter a large storage room

MAN

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

VADA

O.K. Thank you very much.

MAN

Happy hunting.

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

NICK

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

VADA

Just remember the needle in the haystack.

NICK

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

VADA

What difference does it make?

NICK

A big difference, if someone found it we

should keep looking, if they didn't we're just  
wasting our time.

VADA

Oh my gosh, here it is!

Vada searches quickly through the book

VADA

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

NICK

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

VADA

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

NICK

I love the fragrance of chilidogs.

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

VADA

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

NICK

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

VADA

I'd never do that.

NICK

Get married?

VADA

Change my name.

NICK

What, you think the guy should change his  
name?



Vada gets up to go to the phone

VADA

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

NICK

What if you don't wanna be found?

VADA

Why do you argue with everything I say?

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

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

VADA

Hi.

COP

Can I help you?

VADA

Umm, yeah does someone named Daryl Tanaka work here?

COP

Sure.

(turns around and shouts)

Hey TANAKA, you got company!

DARYL

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

VADA

What do you remember about her.

DARYL

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

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

Took a lot of guts.

VADA

Wow, you walked out with my mother?

DARYL

You kidding?

he picks up a picture and shows Vada and Nick

My parents would have shot me.

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

NICK

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

VADA

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

DARYL

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

VADA

Suspended from school, my mother??

DARYL

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

NICK

What kind of sleazoid geek would turn her in?

DARYL

I would do it again in a minute.

VADA

You ratted on my mother??

NICK

Who are you? Hitler's hall monitor?

DARYL

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

NICK

What about giving the other guy a break.

DARYL

What about living in the real world pal?

INTERCOM  
TANAKA got a minute?

DARYL

I'll be right there.  
he gets up and begins to leave

(to Vada)  
Oh, ahh, I'd be a little more careful of who  
I hang around with.  
Nick picks up Daryl's packet of cigarettes and shows them  
to Vada

NICK

(to Vada)  
Care for a smoke?

VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING ALONG THE STREET

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

NICK  
I think it's cool.

VADA  
You would.

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

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

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

ROSE  
Hello.

MAN  
Hi.

ROSE  
What can I do for you?

MAN  
Ehh...I'm staying at the chateau and the guy  
who runs the garage there said that you're the  
best Jag people in town...so uhm.

ROSE

Well Enrique is great and...we are the best.

MAN

Then I have come to the right place.

ROSE

I guess you have.

MAN

I'm Sam Helburn. Sam.

ROSE

Rose.

they shake hands

ROSE

So what's wrong?

SAM

Nothing, nothing at all.

ROSE

I mean...with your car.

SAM

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

ROSE

Excuse me?

SAM

I was commenting on your hair.

ROSE

Oh, are you a hairdresser?

SAM

I'm a pediatric cardiologist.

ROSE

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

SAM

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

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

SAM

(laughing)

...It's all in the hands really. You know you  
have nice hands, you operate?

ROSE

(laughing)  
Yes, I do.

SAM

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

Rose and Sam continue conversing as Phil comes over to them

PHIL

Hi, Phil Sultenfuss

Phil goes to shake Sam's hand and then realizes that they  
are very dirty and

withdraws his hand Oh sorry. Ahh, some kind  
of problem here?

ROSE

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

PHIL

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

SAM

Well Rose was being very thorough.

PHIL

Was Rose.

ROSE

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

SAM

I'll be here.

PHIL

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

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

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

SAM

Thanks.

Sam reverses out and drives off

PHIL

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

ROSE

He wasn't touching me he was just...gesturing...

PHIL

He was caressing.

ROSE

Phil for God sake.

PHIL

God? No I didn't think you'd want to invoke God Rose, because he saw even more than I did.

ROSE

Look Phil, if you want the rights of a husband, you're gonna have to ask me something but if not, you're gonna have to get accustomed to the rights of what you are.

PHIL

Oh...what's that?

ROSE

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

Phil notices Nick and Vada entering the garage

PHIL

Hi!

ROSE

Oh, Hi, how's the investigation going?

NICK

Just call us the "dead end kids".

VADA

May I use the phone please.

ROSE

Oh, yeah, sure, help yourself.

PHIL

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

to say what that one thing is...in front of  
the children.

Vada and Nick exchange looks

Even if I am just a glorified boarder.

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

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

Vada is talking on the phone trying to find the number for  
another one

of her mother's friends

VADA

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

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

STANLEY

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

Stanley sees a couple dancing

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

ESTER

Stomach in Harold.

click

STANLEY

BEEAAUUUUUUUTIFULLL.

ESTER

Thank you.

STANLEY

Thank YOU.

Vada and Nick exchange weird looks

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

VADA

Really?

STANLEY

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

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

click

BEEAAAUUUUUUUTIFULLL.

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

VADA

Beidermeyer?

STANLEY

Beidermeyer that's it, what a mad man.

VADA

He's a great poet.

STANLEY

He is?

VADA

Do you know him?

STANLEY

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

VADA

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

VADA

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

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

STANLEY

No it doesn't but... I...I wish it did.



VADA

Well, thanks for your help Mr. Rosenfeld and I'm sorry my mother wouldn't go out with you, I'm sure she would have had a really great time.

STANLEY

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

VADA AND NICK ARE WALKING DOWN A PAVEMENT, TALKING

VADA

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

NICK

Boy, you're really into this.

VADA

He is one of the great poets.

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

VADA

I think it's him.

they cross the road

VADA

He's writing. Hello?

MAN

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

VADA

You're Alfred Beidermeyer aren't you?

ALFRED

You had to remind me?

VADA

Are you writing a poem?

ALFRED

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

VADA & NICK

No.

ALFRED

Neither do I.

a buzzer sounds

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

as he gets up, he knocks everything off his table

NICK

Here, we'll help you carry your stuff.

ALFRED

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

Vada and Nick begin to climb the stairs

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

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

NICK

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

VADA

At least it gives you plenty of exercise.

ALFRED

It keeps me young.

They all enter Alfred's apartment

VADA

(referring to the table that she is carrying)

Umm, where do you want this?

ALFRED

Oh, just put it over there.

Vada is looking through Alfred's bookshelf

VADA

Do you still teach?

ALFRED

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

Vada finds a book of interest

VADA

My mother took this course with you at UCLA..."The Foundations of Poetic Thought".

ALFRED  
UCLA? My cardigan sweater period.

VADA  
Her name was Maggie Muldovan.

ALFRED  
(completely absentmindedly)  
Ohhhhh.

NICK  
Remember her?

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

VADA  
People said she looked like me.

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

VADA  
I'm sure she found your lectures fascinating.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NICK

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

VADA  
And I thought I was weird.

NICK  
You are weird. Let's just go.

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

Vada and Nick sit down on a concrete bench

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

VADA  
This isn't just a mood ring.

NICK  
Does it work?

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

NICK  
Boyfriend?

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

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

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

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

NICK  
Let me see if it changes colors on me.

VADA  
ehh...Okay...but be careful, it has a lot of sentimental value.

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

NICK  
Maybe it'll fit my pinkie.

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

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

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

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

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

VADA  
Give it to me!

NICK  
Come and get it.

VADA  
Just give it to me!!

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

VADA  
DON'T, come on!!!

Nick has his back against the side of the platform with his arm outstretched,

threatening to drop it

NICK  
Woah, watch it!

VADA  
DON'T!!!

NICK  
(expression suddenly changes)  
Uh oh...

VADA  
What do you mean "Uh Oh"???

NICK  
...I dropped it.

VADA  
In the tar??

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

Vada runs off down the steps

NICK  
Where are you going???

VADA  
Owh...

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

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

Vada tries to scale the fence to get into the enclosed area to retrieve her

ring, Nick pulls her off

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

VADA  
Oh no?!?!?!?

Vada climbs again, Nick pulls her off again

NICK  
It's dangerous!!

VADA  
(pushing Nick)  
Leave me alone!!

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

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

VADA  
Jerk! You IDIOT!!!

Vada begins to hit Nick quite fiercely

NICK

You hit pretty good, for a girl!!

they run off

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

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

ROSE

(whispering, from bedroom)

Nicholas! What are you doing up?

NICK

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

ROSE

There's water in your bathroom.

NICK

(opening fridge)

I want juice!

ROSE

Don't wake up Vada.

NICK

I won't.

Vada smiles and opens her eyes

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

PETER

I think ahh...Maggie could have been a major  
glitter. She'd talent, God knows that face was  
made for close-ups but everything was...magic  
with Maggie. I remember, we were walking down  
Hollywood Boulevard, we put our feet in the

stars' footprints, you know like tourists do,  
Maggie could not believe it, her feet were the  
same size as Judy Garland. Of course mine  
matched perfectly with Orson Wells. Hahaha,  
just kidding.

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

thing you know...got a little messy.

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

VADA

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

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

PETER

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

Peter gives the bag back to Vada

VADA

My mom.

PETER

(looks at watch)

Wooh, I have got to get to Dailies, gotta break this up.

VADA

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

PETER

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

VADA

Thanks.

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

NICK

What a dufus.

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

PHIL

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

ROSE

There's plenty of fruit.

PHIL

You know where the fire extinguisher is.

NICK

If the fruit burst into flames I'll be



prepared.

ROSE

(to Nick, whom she gives a kiss on  
the forehead)  
You're so clever.

(to Vada)

Are you all right honey?

VADA

I'm just tired.

ROSE

All right, well get to bed early and don't  
let anybody in. Bye.

PHIL

Lock the door.

VADA

Bye.

Vada looks up expectantly at Nick, who gets up and goes to  
the door to check

that Rose and Phil have left

NICK

We have lift off.

the song "Bennie and the Jets" begins to play

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

VADA

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

NICK

Never heard of her.

VADA

Montgomery Clift, wait 'till I tell Shelly.

NICK

Here's Judy Garland!

Vada runs over

VADA

My mother stood on this very spot.

NICK

I'm afraid your feet won't fit in there.

VADA  
That's 'cause I was cursed with the  
Sultenfuss Bear Claws. My hands fit.

NICK  
Big deal.

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

smells it and coughs

VADA  
What's he smoking?

NICK  
What do you think?

VADA  
Really?

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

walk off and then Vada sees a sign saying  
Ears Pierced, 5.00

VADA  
Hey look!

NICK  
This is a totally barbaric custom.

They enter the store

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

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

VADA  
Right.

NICK  
And you'd be my cousin?

VADA  
Yeah I guess...sort of.

NICK  
But we wouldn't really be related right?

VADA  
Oh no, we wouldn't be from the same

bloodlines or anything. We'd be like two total strangers who...accidentally had relatives that got married.

NICK

Good. I mean...

VADA

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

NICK

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

Vada smiles

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

VADA

We should've called.

NICK

It's not that late!

they enter the living room, Rose and Phil are sitting waiting

ROSE

You're grounded 'till you're fifty!

NICK

You're over reacting!

ROSE

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

NICK

MOM!

ROSE

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

VADA

It's not his fault!

NICK

No...it was me. And I'm sorry mom, really, ju...just tell me what to do, I'll do

anything.

ROSE

Go to your room.

(to Vada)

And you...I don't suppose your father gave you permission to pierce your ears, did he?

VADA

Not exactly.

ROSE

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

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

GARAGE DAY, DR HELBURN DRIVES IN

SAM

Good morning.

ROSE

Well maybe for you.

SAM

Something wrong?

ROSE

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

SAM

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

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

ROSE

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

SAM

You couldn't?

ROSE

Well I'm sort of involved.

SAM

Sort of?

ROSE

Let's just say I...eh...I'm involved.

SAM

Where I come from, involvement...generally calls for a substantial piece of jewelry.

ROSE

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

SAM

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

ROSE

Liszt was my parents' favorite, they were Hungarian.

SAM

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

Phil approaches, looking annoyed

PHIL

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

SAM

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

ROSE

And you are.

Phil glances at Rose

SAM

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

ROSE

Oh, sure okay.

SAM

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

Sam gets into his car and drives off

PHIL

You really oughtta flush out that line of bullshit he's got:

Hungarian's are famous for their beautiful women.

ROSE

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

Rose starts to move toward the office

PHIL

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

ROSE

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

PHIL

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

ROSE

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

Rose shuts the door

PHIL

I do the dishes.

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

INSIDE SHOP

LADY

Hi, can I help you?

VADA

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

HILLARY

Maggie Muldovan? Did you...know her?

NICK

She's her daughter, Vada.

HILLARY

Ooh...of course!

(hugs Vada)

Oh, look at you! Oh it's the eyes mostly and

the hair too and now she's gone...she's gone...she'll never get to see how well you've turned out. Oh... oh my God...Maggie! You poor thing!

Hillary begins to sob and hug Vada

VADA

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

HILLARY

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

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

NICK

Here.

HILLARY

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

NICK

Peter Webb told us.

HILLARY

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

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

VADA

Thanks.

HILLARY

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

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

VADA

No, but sometimes he drives a hearse.

NICK

He's an undertaker.

HILLARY

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

Vada and Nick are confused

VADA  
His name's Harry Sultenfuss.

HILLARY  
Oh.  
(then it dawns on her)  
Ohhh?

VADA  
What're you saying?

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

VADA  
Are you saying my mother had another husband?

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

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

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

OUTSIDE ON SIDEWALK

Vada is running down the sidewalk

NICK  
Vada, wait up!

Vada slows down and Nick catches up

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

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

NICK  
Like what?

VADA  
Maybe this Jeffrey guy is...is my real father. I mean...look at me, I have the hair of a dead person and...and my nose, no one in



my family has this nose, it could be the nose  
of...a...of a complete stranger,

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

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

Vada turns around, covers her face and cries

NICK

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

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

VADA

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

Nick takes Vada by the shoulders and gently turns her  
around, he then wipes

a tear from her cheek

NICK

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

VADA

Nick?

NICK

Yeah?

VADA

This has been a real confusing day.

Nick nods

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

VADA

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

Phil shrugs

VADA

I'm gonna call him...and make him tell me  
everything.

Phil knows something that Vada doesn't, and he doesn't want Vada to phone

Harry at the moment

PHIL

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

VADA

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

Vada picks up the phone and dials a number

HARRY

Hello? Sultenfuss Parlor.

VADA

Hi Dad.

HARRY

Hi honey.

VADA

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

HARRY

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

VADA

Actually, I wanna see Jeffrey Pommeroy.

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

HARRY

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

VADA

VADA

Yeah.

HARRY

Totally groovy huh?

VADA

Totally.

HARRY

HARRY

Ask him if he needs a good tuba player.

VADA

VADA

I will. How's Shelly?

HARRY

HARRY

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

VADA

VADA

Okay...bye daddy, I love you.

HARRY

HARRY

I love you too sweetie, bye.

VADA

Give my love to Shelly.

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

VADA

VADA

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

ROSE

She'll be all right baby.

VADA

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

L.A.P.D. AGAIN, VADA AND NICK ARE TALKING TO DARYL TANAKA

DARYL

I'm not authorized to trace licenses for  
civilians.

VADA

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

NICK

Give us a break. All you have to do is make a  
phone call.

DARYL

(to Vada)  
I thought I told you to lose this guy.

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

DARYL  
I think the phrase was "Sleazoid Geek".

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

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

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

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

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

VADA  
Pommeroy.

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

VADA  
(disappointed)  
I'm leaving Sunday.

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

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

DARYL  
Me, I'll know!

VADA

Do you wanna be a hall monitor all your life?

DARYL

(into phone)

Hello, I'm gonna need this right now...this guy...well we think he might be going after the governor.

(pause)

Twenty minutes? Fine.

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

PHIL

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

VADA

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

PHIL

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

VADA

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

PHIL

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

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

PHIL

You're awfully quiet.

VADA

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

PHIL

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

Maybe some day when the time is right.

VADA

Maybe.

PHIL

Then again, your dad's got his own memories

and he's got his own life now...I think this is a secret just between you and your mom.

VADA

A secret, I like that.

PHIL'S TRUCK PULLS UP TO A HOUSE

PHIL

This is it I guess.

VADA

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

PHIL

You want me to come with?

VADA

(shakes her head)

I should do this myself.

PHIL

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

VADA

Okay.

Vada gets out and makes her way up to the front door, petting the dog sitting

on the doorstep, she turns to look back at Phil

PHIL

(in car, gesturing that she should press the bell)

Go ahead honey...go ahead.

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

MAN

Hi there...can I help you?

VADA

Are you Jeffrey Pommeroy?

JEFFREY

Sure am, who are you?

VADA

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

JEFFREY

Maggie...Maggie's little girl.

Vada nods

JEFFREY

I was hoping I'd get to meet you.

VADA

You mean, you knew about me?

VOICE FROM INSIDE

Who is it honey?

A woman appears next to Jeffrey

JEFFREY

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

WOMAN

Ohh, Oh my.

JEFFREY

This is my wife Emily.

EMILY

Hi.

VADA

Hi.

JEFFREY

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

VADA

I'd like to, thanks.

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

LITTLE GIRL

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

EMILY

(to Katie)

This is Vada,

(to Vada)

Vada this is our little girl Katie.

VADA

Hi.

KATIE

(shy)

Hi.

EMILY

Umm...why don't we let Daddy and Vada visit  
for a little while?

KATIE

Okay.

JEFFREY

Okay.

KATIE

Bye.

VADA

Bye.

(Emily and Katie leave)

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

JEFFREY

Does she?

Vada nods

JEFFREY

I'm glad you're here.

VADA

You are?

JEFFREY

Yeah, come on, let's talk.

they move into the kitchen

IN KITCHEN, JEFFREY IS IN FRIDGE GETTING A DRINK

VADA

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

JEFFREY

Hillary Mitchell? How's she?

VADA

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



JEFFREY

(laughs)

VADA

I told you it was a long story.

JEFFREY

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

VADA

Special effects?

JEFFREY

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

VADA

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

JEFFREY

I'll try.

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

VADA

No one else knows what this means.

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

JEFFREY

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

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

VADA

And she saved it.

JEFFREY

(nods)

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

VADA

Do you have any pictures of her?

JEFFREY

I've got something better.

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

Vada and JEFFREY are watching the movie

JEFFREY

We called ourselves "The Appearing Nightly Players".

MAGGIE

(on screen, in French accent)

Darling, oh where is my chauffeur? You don't want I should walk to the stage? An actress of my overwhelming talent?

VADA

She's beautiful.

JEFFREY

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

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

MAGGIE

Smile though your heart is aching,

Smile, even though it's breaking,

When there are clouds,

In the sky you'll get by,

If you smile through your fears and sorrows,

Smile and maybe tomorrow,

You'll see the sun come shining through if  
you,  
Light up your face with gladness,  
Hide every trace of sadness,  
Although a tear may be ever so near,  
That's the time you must keep on trying,  
Smile, what's the use of crying,  
You'll find that life is still worthwhile,  
If you just smile.

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

JEFFREY

She had a...a beautiful voice.

Vada nods, crying a little

JEFFREY

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

VADA

(turns around)

More than anything in the world.

JEFFREY

(nods)

It's good to see Maggie again...and you.

VADA

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

JEFFREY

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

VADA

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

JEFFREY

I'd say you turned out just fine.

VADA

I guess what I mean is, my mother married my  
dad after you...and then I was born, so I  
thought that...maybe you got divorced because  
of me.

JEFFREY

Wait...woah...woah...wait a minute...Do you think I'm your father?

VADA

Well...

JEFFREY

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

they walk outside

JEFFREY

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

VADA

oh.

JEFFREY

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

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

I wanted you to know that.

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

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

VADA

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

NICK

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

ROSE

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

Sam enters the garage in his car

PHIL

Sorry doc, we close for business at 3 o'clock today.

Sam gets out and walks over to Rose, and offers Rose a box

SAM

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

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

PHIL

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

SAM

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

PHIL

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

SAM

Well, wha...what kind of arrangement?

ROSE

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

PHIL

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

ROSE

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

SAM

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

PHIL

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

SAM

I don't think the color of the interior is....

PHIL

Rose this not the place to be having this...

ROSE

I think this place is just fine.

PHIL

You know how I feel about you.

ROSE

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

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

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

ROSE

You really think I look sexy in this smock?

PHIL

Is that a yes?

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

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

VADA

Thanks for everything, you're the best.

PHIL

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

VADA

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

PHIL

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

Phil gives Vada hug and a kiss

VADA

Bye Aunt Rose.

ROSE

Bye Niece, Vada.

Rose and Vada hug

VADA

Thanks. Well, bye.

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

VADA

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

NICK

Some sacrifices are worth it.

VADA

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

NICK

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

VADA

An adventure?

NICK

(smiling)

Part adventure...part miracle.

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

NICK

Write me a poem?

VADA

(shakes her head smiling)

NICK

No?

VADA

I'll write you ten poems.

(PA springs to life informing people to board NOW)

Bye.

NICK

Good-bye, look in your backpack.

Vada turns around and looks at Nick

VADA

Okay.

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

STONED ON LOVE

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

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

(reading note)

In memory of barbaric customs, Love Nick.

this makes Vada extremely happy

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

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

VADA

Arthur, where's my dad?

ARTHUR

He took Shelly to the hospital.

VADA

Is she okay?

ARTHUR

Well, she was making a lot of noise.

they exit the scene

OUTSIDE THE HOSPITAL, ARTHUR PULLS UP AND LETS VADA OUT

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

VADA

Dad!

Vada and Harry hug each other

VADA

What happened to Shelly?



HARRY  
She just had a baby that's all.

VADA  
(excited)  
We have a baby?

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

VADA  
Can I see him?

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

Hey, what's on your ear?

VADA ENTERS THE ROOM WHERE SHELLY IS LYING HOLDING THE BABY

VADA  
Shelly?

SHELLY  
Hey! Oh look.

VADA  
He's so tiny.

SHELLY  
I know, look at his little hands.

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

SHELLY  
I was pushing as fast as I could.

VADA  
Did it hurt a lot?

SHELLY  
You have no idea.

BABY  
WAAAAAAAAAAH!!!

SHELLY  
Shhhh.

VADA  
Let me hold him.

SHELLY  
O.K.

Vada gently takes the baby from Shelly's arms

SHELLY

Maybe he's wet?

HARRY

Maybe he's hungry.

VADA

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

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

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

VADA'S THOUGHTS

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

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