

SOME GREAT REWARD

"Something To Do"

TV pilot by Jan Wilson

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INT. WOYZECK HOME, JILL'S BEDROOM - DAY

SUPER: ALBUQUERQUE, 1985

JILL WOYZECK ("Voy-check"), 17, grabs a few schoolbooks from her dresser and crams them into her backpack. Her Depeche Mode "Some Great Reward" 1985 tour t-shirt fits a bit snug due to the extra 30 pounds on her frame.

She turns on the small TV on her dresser that sits atop a big 1980s era VCR. MTV appears. Pat Benatar struts her stuff.

MOM (O.S.)

Jill! Come get breakfast!

JILL

Hang on! Gotta put a tape in!

She grabs a blank VHS tape, pops it into the VCR.

JILL (V.O.)

Now for the first important decision of the day. Standard speed, slow speed or super slow speed?

She hesitates before adjusting the button on the VCR's panel.

JILL (V.O.)

If I use slow speed that only gives me two hours, but it'll be better quality.

She glances at her clock. 7:43 AM.

JILL (V.O.)

MTV plays two blocks of videos at this time, then usually a special about metal bands. Then a few hours more of regular videos.

MOM (O.S.)

I'm not calling you again!

JILL

Coming!

JILL (V.O.)

This is a difficult decision. I've got a better chance of catching a Depeche Mode video in the afternoon, but it'll be not-so-great quality.

She decides. Flips the button to SLP.

JILL (V.O.)

Better safe than sorry. I can always get a better quality version later.

She pushes the record and play button at the same time. The recording commences.

MOM (O.S.)
 Jillian Woyzeck, your breakfast is
 ready! Going once, going twice...

INT. WOYZECK HOME, KITCHEN - DAY

Jill grabs the paper plate of eggs and toast from MOM's hands.

JILL
 Sold!

MOM
 Was about to give it to Muffin.

MUFFIN, a chubby Chihuahua stands nearby on high alert for falling food. Mom, mid 40s, tosses her a tiny bit of bacon.

Jill passes through the kitchen which is a messy explosion of construction upheaval. The stove is still in its place but the sink is missing, the countertops are gone and half of the cabinets have been ripped out.

Jill carries her plate through the obstacle course of toolboxes, boxes, and power tools in her path.

She passes the kitchen table, stacked high with all of the dishes and food from the missing cabinets.

INT. WOYZECK HOME, LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jill joins DAD, mid 40s, at the coffee table where he already munches his toast as he sits on the couch. She plops down on the floor. Dad's work shirt has "Medina's Kitchen & Bath" embroidered above the pocket.

DAD
 Can I have your bacon?

He reaches out to steal it. She swats his hand away.

JILL
 Thief!

He manages to break off a piece of her bacon.

JILL
 Mom! Bacon thief!

MOM (O.S.)
 Marvin! Let your child eat!

DAD
 (to Jill)
 Snitch.

JILL
 So Dad, I don't think you need to
 hook up the sink. I'm kinda digging
 this paper plate thing.

DAD
No dishes to do!

JILL
Exactly!

Mom joins them on the couch, paper plate on her lap.

MOM
But the pots and pans still get dirty.

DAD
You don't like washing the pots and pans in the bathroom sink?

JILL
Hey, you could just take them into the shower with you. Wouldn't that be easier?

MOM
Yeah! Or I have an idea. We could get the workman to finish the kitchen.

Faster than lightning he swipes Mom's bacon. She shrieks.

MOM
Marvin, you bastard!

Muffin watches, scans floor for scraps.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Establishing shot, a large high school in a nice neighborhood.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, OUTDOOR HALLWAY - DAY

Jill stands at her locker. The inside of the door is covered with Depeche Mode stickers, Depeche Mode photos from magazines, Depeche Mode magnets, Depeche Mode's "Some Great Reward" cassette cover taped to the inside door. She's a girl of singular focus and loyalty.

Jill slams her locker closed. Her best friend VICTOR GARCIA's open locker is next to hers. It's an explosion of color and images. Farrah Fawcett, Jaclyn Smith and Charlie's other Angels. Bo Derek, Blondie, and Tina Turner. Every square inch is covered with glamorous women. And he's even used acrylic paint to fill in the gaps with tiny little masterpieces of abstract art.

Victor, a tall, handsome Hispanic 17 year-old, closes his locker revealing pretty DANIELLE BROOKS, 18, at her open locker door next to his: a mirror, which she's using to reapply her eyeliner, a pocket for emergency mascara and lip gloss. Several school photos of cute guys, you just know they are seniors.

VICTOR
(to Jill)
Hey! How'd you get that Depeche Mode
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
 tour shirt already?! Oh my god!
 It's so cool!

JILL
 My cousin saw them last week in New
 York, he sent it to me. Nice, huh?

VICTOR
 Oh, thanks, Jill, it's not like I
 wanted one or anything.

JILL
 Sorry, Pop Tart. I didn't know he
 was going to send me one.

DANIELLE
 You think this lip gloss is okay?

JILL
 (placates)
 Yes, yes. Very kissable. The boys
 will love it.

VICTOR
 Just like Boy George on the cover of
 "Colour By Numbers."

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, PSYCHOLOGY CLASSROOM - DAY

Jill's glazed-over eyes try to focus on the chalkboard where MR. DEAKINS outlines Freud's phases of development: oral, anal, phallic, latency and genital.

MR. DEAKINS
 The phallic stage occurs from age
 three to six. At this age...

Mr. Deakins drones on. Next to Jill Victor can barely suppress giggles as he scribbles notes.

VICTOR
 (whispers to Jill)
 There's something about the phallic
 stage I think I like.

Jill shakes her head in exasperation.

VICTOR
 (whispers)
 But there's something to be said about
 the anal stage too.

Some of the other STUDENTS overhear, chuckle.

VICTOR
 (whispers)
 What's your favorite stage, Puddin'?
 You like the phallic stage too?

JILL
 (whispers)
 I like the stage in drama class.

Victor sighs.

VICTOR
 (whispers)
 Oh, that's okay, L.B. Someday you'll
 catch up to us.

JILL
 (whispers)
 Shh. Quiet, dork.

Mr. Deakins's sudden silence is noticeable. Victor and Jill
 look up. He is staring at them.

MR. DEAKINS
 Victor, did you have anything you
 wanted to add about Freud's five stages
 of development?

VICTOR
 No, I think you're doing a wonderful
 job covering it. I wouldn't dream of
 improving upon it. Riveting stuff.

MR. DEAKINS
 Thank you, that's very respectful of
 you. And one day when I visit you at
 your job I will let you recite the
 McDonald's menu to me without
 interruption.

Jill and Victor sit open-mouthed at Mr. Deakins's insult.

VICTOR
 (whispers)
 That is so wrong! McDonald's employees
 don't recite the menu. Customers
 just read it themselves.

Mr. Deakins bumps his desk and a piece of chalk rolls off. As
 he turns back to his lecture on the board he slips on the chalk.
 He does a wild, flailing dance. Then hits the floor hard.

JILL (V.O.)
That's the best Freudian slip I've
ever seen!

Rude snickers from the kids.

JILL (V.O.)
Oh my god, that's funny! I should
say that! Everyone will laugh!

He hops up, tries to save face, brushes off his pant legs.

JILL (V.O.)
 Say it, Jill! It's fucking funny!
 It would break the tension!
 (practices her delivery)
 That's the best Freudian slip I've
 ever seen!

Long pause. Perfect time to speak!

MR. DEAKINS
 Alright, back to the latency stage...

JILL (V.O.)
 Jill, you are pathetic.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - DAY

Establishing shot of a large modern performing arts center.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - DAY

Jill and Victor sit on the empty stage. Jill scribbles in a notebook while Victor cleans out his backpack.

VICTOR
 What a dick. I thought teachers were
 supposed to be nurturing.

JILL
 They can't all be like Mr. Markowitz.

VICTOR
 I know, but still. So rigid and such
 a hard ass. Do you think Deakins was
 a Marine or something?

Jill still writes.

JILL
 What's another word for depressed?
 But like accepting the depression?

VICTOR
 Gee, thanks for listening.

JILL
 Resigned! That's the word.

VICTOR
 What are you writing now? Another
 play? A love letter to Dave Gahan?

JILL
 Nah. Something new. I don't love
 Dave Gahan, I love the whole band.

VICTOR
 Who would be your ideal cast to perform
 one of your plays?

JILL
 Hmm. I'm not sure.

Danielle plunges into their space. Pretty, perky, full of bold energy bordering on obnoxious. Victor and Jill get up and all three walk across the stage.

DANIELLE
 Hello, children.

JILL
 Hey, Danielle.

DANIELLE
 So who's that guy?

JILL
 What guy?

DANIELLE
 Some guy, saw him with Mr. Markowitz.

VICTOR
 Oh, that's descriptive.

DANIELLE
 Some sexy-looking guy.

Jill and Victor shrug. They reach the other side of the stage, keep going and disappear into the adjacent classroom.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY

MR. MARKOWITZ, 60s, ruffled and disheveled, shuffles to the front desk as the class settles into their seats.

Victor hands Jill a page ripped out from a magazine, the schedule for Depeche Mode's "Some Great Reward" concert tour. Jill squeals in delight. Her eyes are glued on the page so she doesn't notice ROGER ADDISON, 35, enter with a rock star swagger, dressed in jeans, and a blazer over a t-shirt.

Everyone sneaks glances at the stranger. Lean, hair a bit long, scruffily handsome. He leans against a filing cabinet, arms crossed, the picture of casual cool. Roger surveys the class with a confident gaze.

MR. MARKOWITZ
 Good afternoon everyone. Settle down,
 my dear thespians.

Mr. Markowitz quickly scans the class and checks everyone off in his roll book. The rambunctious class chats and laughs in this happy, fun class.

Danielle and Victor watch Roger, then catch each other's eyes with a "who the heck is this guy?" look. Jill is still entranced by her concert schedule.

MR. MARKOWITZ

Okay, my loves, I have some news.
Settle down, listen.

They all settle. At last Jill lifts her gaze from her Depeche Mode schedule. She sees Roger -- hit by a bus -- like coming face to face with a rock star. Roger happens to glance at her, eye-to-eye. Jill panics, averts her gaze back down to her desk.

MR. MARKOWITZ

It seems like I'll be taking a leave
of absence for a while.

Class gasps in protest.

MR. MARKOWITZ

I've been having some health issues
and I'll be taking some time off to
deal with that.

A DAINTY GIRL starts to sob.

MR. MARKOWITZ

No, no, it's okay! I'll be fine.
Honestly. Just need to take care of
some health problems. But don't worry.
In the meantime Mr. Addison will be
taking over.

All heads turn to ROGER. He gives a sly wave to the students.
Jill dares to make eye contact again and smiles.

MR. MARKOWITZ

He's an actor and a director. And
you've even written a few pieces I
believe, is that right?

Roger nods.

MR. MARKOWITZ

He's done lots of plays at local
theaters and I'm sure you'll be fine
under his direction.

Danielle scans him up and down.

DANIELLE

(whispers to Jill)
Kinda hot for a teacher.

Jill has no response. But Victor nods slightly.

MR. MARKOWITZ

I'm going to go to the office for a
bit, and I'll let you get acquainted
with Mr. Addison.

Mr. Markowitz leaves. Roger struts to the front, sits on the desk.

ROGER

Hello! So as Mr. Markowitz said my name is Mr. Addison, but please call me Roger if you want.

The students look at each other in disbelief.

ROGER

I'm sure you're all going to miss Mr. Markowitz, but in the meantime we'll be hard at work and he'll be really proud of what we've accomplished when he returns.

Dainty Girl raises her hand.

ROGER

Yes?

DAINTY GIRL

Do you know what's wrong with him?

ROGER

No, I'm afraid I don't. But I'm sure he'll be fine. Mr. Markowitz told me that there's still a few of you that have to do your skits today, and in a minute we'll go into the theater for that. But in the meantime I'd like to get an idea of what you're all about. I know you all act, that's what we do here.

DANIELLE

Well, if you can call it that.

The class laughs.

ROGER

Hey, you gotta start somewhere, right? Anyone have any aspirations to direct?

Not much response from anyone.

ROGER

Okay, that's cool. Anyone write?

Jill's eyes grow big. She looks down at her desk.

VICTOR

Jill does!

ROGER

Great. Who's Jill?

Jill raises her hand. Gives a death stare to Victor.

ROGER

What kind of stuff do you write?

JILL (V.O.)

This was my time to shine. Tell everyone what I'm all about, what I can do. Show them the great depth I have and the great lengths I go to in order to express myself. Now's your time, let them know!

JILL

Um...skits and stuff.

Roger nods, smiles.

ROGER

Great, that's great. Maybe we'll see your name in lights someday, eh?

JILL (V.O.)

"Skits and stuff"? Wow, you're already wowing him with your words.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - LATER

TALL GANGLY BOY, NERDY BOY and STUDIOUS GIRL are onstage running around in a silly, loud skit.

NERDY BOY

I always take my chicken with me!

STUDIOUS GIRL

But why a pet chicken? Why not a dog?

Tall Gangly Boy runs around flapping his arms like a chicken.

TALL GANGLY BOY

Bawk, bawk, bawk! Ba-gawk!

The class laughs. They sit in the first five rows, scattered in small groups. Jill, Victor and Danielle sit together.

As the silly skit ends, the actors rejoin the other students. Roger goes to the front of the audience.

ROGER

Okay, for tomorrow I want everyone to recite a poem.

The students groan.

ROGER

It should be at least two or three minutes long. This will be an exercise in projection. I'll be sitting in the very last row and I should be able to hear you perfectly. You don't have to act the poem out or anything, this is simply for voice only.

Some kids groan. Finally Jill raises her hand.

JILL
Mr. Addison?

Everyone turns to face her.

ROGER
You can call me Roger if you want.

JILL
Um, Roger, do you think that instead
of doing a poem we can do a song?
Just speak it I mean, not sing it.

All heads swivel back to Roger, waiting.

JILL
Songs are like poetry. Well, some are.

VICTOR
(quietly)
And easier to memorize.

ROGER
I believe that many songs are as
layered and gorgeous as poetry. Yes,
you may choose a song.

Murmurs of relief and joy. The class gives Jill nods and smiles
of approval.

DANIELLE
Gee, I wonder what band she's gonna use.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, PARKING LOT - DAY

Jill treks across the parking lot. Students pour out from every
doorway as the school day ends.

Jill pauses to let a car pass. It's Roger. He waves as he goes
by. She smiles, waves back. As he passes she notices his bumper
stickers: Greenpeace and bull's eye logo that says "The Who".

INT. WOYZECK HOME, JILL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jill kneels in front of her TV and VCR, watches MTV. An Adam
Ant video plays. Jill presses play, watches. It's a commercial.

JILL (V.O.)
It's not easy to monitor eight hours
of video tape hoping for a Depeche
Mode video.

She pushes stop, then fast forward. Checks again. Eurythmics.
Fast forwards again. Stops. Elton John. Tries again.

JILL (V.O.)
At the same time you check the tape
you gotta make sure you don't miss the
video on actual live TV.

Thompson Twins. Fast forward.

JILL (V.O.)
Patience and diligence is required.

Stops. Play. "Another Tricky Day" by The Who plays. She watches for a few seconds. Hits pause. Smiles. Grabs paper.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Roger stands near the stage, skims the attendance roll book.

ROGER
 (pronounces it correctly)
 Woyzeck!

Starting at the bottom of the list? Jill raises her hand.

JILL
 Um, I'm here.

JILL (V.O.)
Oh, my god, he said it right!

VICTOR
 Oh my god, he said it right!

ROGER
 Your name is Woyzeck?

JILL
 Yeah. That's me. I'm Jill.

ROGER
 Woyzeck, cool.

Nod of approval. Back to the roll call.

ROGER
 Adams?

DAINTY GIRL
 Here.

ROGER
 Archuleta?

Danielle whispers to Jill.

DANIELLE
 W comes before A now?

VICTOR
 He's a rebel.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - LATER

Roger leaves the group, walks up the aisle to the back row.

ROGER
 Who wants to go first?

Danielle's hand shoots up.

DANIELLE

I'll do it!

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Trim but filled out, Danielle struts across stage until she is front and center. From the last row Roger calls out.

ROGER

Danielle, right?

DANIELLE

Right. That's right, *Roger*.

ROGER

Whenever you're ready, Danielle.

She takes her jacket off, tosses it behind her, smooths down her tight Aerosmith t-shirt. Clears her throat.

DANIELLE

"Here come old flat top. He come groovin' up slowly. He got joo joo eyeballs. He one holy roller. He got hair down to his knee. Got to be a joker, he just do what he please. He got bad production. He got walrus gumbot..."

As Danielle continues Victor and Jill whisper in the audience.

JILL

Why'd she pick such a hard song? The lyrics are nonsensical. That makes it hard to memorize.

VICTOR

Yeah, right, like he'll notice. Like he knows Aerosmith.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

DANIELLE

"Come together right now over me."

Danielle finishes reciting her song, hops offstage and rejoins Victor and Jill.

JILL

(quietly to Victor)
You know that's actually a Beatles song, right?

VICTOR

I only know the Aerosmith version.

JILL

Oy.

ROGER
 (calling from last row)
 Okay, Danielle, good projection.

VICTOR
 (whispers)
 Duh. You can always hear Danielle!

ROGER
 But learn the words. You combined
 two verses together.

Danielle covers her embarrassment by rolling her eyes.

DANIELLE
 None of it makes sense anyway.

Jill can't hide a smirk. Jill raises her hand.

JILL
 I'll go.

ROGER
 Alright, Woyzeck, go for it.

DANIELLE
 (whispers)
 Go for it, *Woyzeck*.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Jill is the epitome of awkwardness onstage. Shifting her weight from foot to foot. Fidgety. But once she begins her recital is quite dramatic, infused with meaning.

JILL
 "You can't always get it when you
 really want it. You can't always get
 it at all. Just because there's space,
 in your life it's a waste, to spend
 your time why don't you wait for the
 call? Just gotta get used to it. We
 all get it in the end. Just gotta get
 used to it. We go down and we come
 up again."

Victor seems confused.

VICTOR
 (whispers)
 What the hell song is this?

JILL
 "Just gotta get used to it. You
 irritate me, my friend. This is no
 social crisis. This is you having
 fun. No crisis. Getting burned by
 the sun. This is true. This is no
 social crisis. Just another tricky
 day for you..."

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

JILL

"...You know how the ice is, it's thin where you're skating. This is no social crisis, it's just another tricky day for you."

Silence from the back of the audience. She waits.

ROGER

That was The Who!

JILL

Yeah!

ROGER

Awesome! I love The Who. That's a great song.

DANIELLE

(whispers to Marty)

Well, that's not supposed to matter!

ROGER

Pete Townshend, yeah, he's a great writer. Good call on doing songs instead of poems, Woyzeck.

She smiles, jumps offstage, walks to seat.

ROGER

Your projection wasn't too loud.

Danielle smirks.

ROGER

But I think it makes the audience lean forward, they want to know more. It was just enough to entice them, draw them in. Nicely done.

Danielle's smirk vanishes. Style over substance wins.

ROGER

You a Who fan?

Before she can answer Danielle does so for her.

DANIELLE

No!

Jill shrugs it off.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY

Kids pour out of class. Roger stands sunning himself.

VICTOR

You like the Who, huh?

ROGER
Yeah, love The Who. Great band. You like 'em?

VICTOR
Um, I loved "Tommy."

ROGER
The original album or the campy movie?

VICTOR
Campy movie.

ROGER
Yep.

VICTOR
It's so sad when Ann-Margret died at the end. All those fabulous leopard skin outfits and that big hair.

Roger nods, casts a side glance at him.

ROGER
You know Ann-Margret, huh?

VICTOR
Sure. But you know, just because it was a popular movie.

ROGER
Yep.

VICTOR
(over-explains)
My older brother liked it, showed it to me.

ROGER
Yep.

Victor takes his leave to his next class. Jill passes Roger.

ROGER
Woyzeck.

She turns and stops, smiles when she sees him.

JILL
Mr. Addi -- Roger.

ROGER
Woyzeck. That's a famous play.

JILL
It is?

ROGER
Yes. By Buchner. I directed it a few years ago at the Kimo Theater.

JILL

Really?

ROGER

Yeah. I have a very fond place in my heart for Woyzeck.

JILL

Oh! I wondered how you knew how to pronounce it right. *Nobody* does.

ROGER

Nobody but me.

JILL

Nobody but you.

ROGER

Woyzeck is a poor soldier who takes place in medical experiments to earn money to support his girlfriend and their child. She sleeps with another man and he ends up stabbing her to death by a pond.

JILL

That's a *lovely* story.

He laughs.

ROGER

It's a tragedy about jealousy and how the lower classes are treated by the upper class and the military.

Any excuse to chat with him, Jill leans against the wall, drops her backpack to the ground.

ROGER

And peas.

JILL

Peace. Nice.

ROGER

Peas. The food. In one of the medical experiments Woyzeck is forced to eat nothing but peas. This ends up affecting his mental state. Hence the stabbing of the girlfriend.

JILL

That's weird. The peas, I mean. Not the stabbing. But I guess the stabbing would be weird, too. Both I guess. I don't know.

JILL (V.O.)

Shut up, idiot! You're not making any sense!

ROGER

No, you're right. Stabbings are common. But eating nothing but peas...that's not normal. I had my actor onstage for six full minutes eating peas. No dialogue, no other action. Just eating peas.

JILL

That's a long time.

ROGER

Yeah! A very long time to have an audience watch a man eat peas!

JILL

Did they like it?

He nods.

ROGER

Yeah. Well, the critics did. It got very good reviews. That's why I have such fond memories of the name Woyzeck.

She's all smiles.

JILL

You direct a lot of plays?

ROGER

Some. Every year I also put on a festival where we do productions of several short plays, like three in a group, put on a few groups throughout the summer.

JILL

Oh yeah? That sounds cool. Do you write them?

ROGER

No, not usually. I have written a few plays. But we try to find new writers and showcase their work.

She doesn't blink. Eyes wide.

JILL (V.O.)

New writers?! That could be me! I write plays! I'm a new writer!

JILL

New writers?

ROGER

Yeah. Drama class is not just about an easy A for getting onstage and being silly. That's why I'm having you guys write your own skit. Actually

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

write it down. Learn play structure, formatting, the nuts and bolts of what it takes to create a piece of theater. Remember, this is drama class, not acting class.

She's entranced. Nods.

JILL

Yeah.

ROGER

You better get to class.

JILL

Yup.

Picks up her backpack, slings it over her shoulder.

JILL

Later, Roger.

ROGER

Later, Woyzeck.

She drags herself away from him.

INT. WOYZECK HOME, JILL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Victor holds up Jill's Depeche Mode T-shirt, checks the tour dates on the back. Jill's sprawled on the bed with paper and pencil.

JILL

Did you write your skit yet?

VICTOR

No. Look, the closest they are coming to Albuquerque other than Dallas, yuck, is Los Angeles on March 30th.

JILL

That's a thousand miles away!

She finds a calendar. Plops back on her bed. Muffin hops up.

JILL

The 30th is a Saturday.

Victor stands at her dresser. Grabs her brush, brushes his hair.

VICTOR

Perfect! We could leave Friday night, see the concert on Saturday, come back Sunday. We won't miss any school.

JILL

You mean fly there? My parents won't pay for that. No way.

VICTOR

We could drive. We could take my car. Split the cost of gas. How long would it take to drive there?

JILL

Like a whole day I bet.

VICTOR

We could take turns. That way we wouldn't have to stop at a motel.

JILL

Still gonna need gas money.

VICTOR

I have some money. Do you have any?

JILL

A little. But what about tickets? Are they already sold out?

VICTOR

I don't think so. We could always get some. There are always scalpers outside those places.

She leans back, deep in thought. He joins her on the bed, pets Muffin who cuddles up to him. She goes back to her homework. Victor glances at her paper.

VICTOR

There's like ten people in your skit!

JILL

So? We don't have to perform it, remember? Just write it.

VICTOR

Do you think your mom and dad would let you go to LA?

JILL

I don't know. Will yours?

VICTOR

Probably. My grandma lives out there in Van Nuys. We can stay with her.

JILL

We still have a few weeks, we could save up money for gas.

VICTOR

Yeah. We can get extra shifts at the movie theater.

JILL

"Would you like butter on that?"

VICTOR
Butter *flavoring*.

Victor snatches another paper.

VICTOR
"The Ugly Dress"? What's this?

She grabs it from him.

JILL
Nothing. Just a poem. Or like a monologue thing.

VICTOR
We have to write a monologue?!

JILL
No! I'm just doing it for fun.

VICTOR
You're such a nerd.

JILL
God, I would love to see Depeche Mode in concert so much!

VICTOR
I know, so let's go! Let's go to Los Angeles! Come on, you're dependable, your parents will trust you to go.

JILL
Neither of us is 18 yet.

VICTOR
So? We can drive. We both have licenses. You can talk them into it. They let you drive their car.

JILL
Yeah, sometimes. To school and back.

Victor hops off the bed.

VICTOR
I need some pizza. Or Burger King.

JILL
Okay. Let's go.

INT. WOYZECK HOME, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Victor and Jill trot through the obstacle course of boxes and mess in the torn apart kitchen.

MOM
Hi Victor.

VICTOR
Hey, Mrs. Woyzeck. Still cooking out
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
of a suitcase, huh?

MOM
So to speak, yes.

She is putting away the last remnants of dinner dishes.

MOM
Where you going?

JILL
Burger King.

VICTOR
(to Jill)
Or pizza maybe. I can't decide.

MOM
Didn't you just eat?

VICTOR
No, that was two hours ago.

MOM
Oh to have my teenage metabolism back.

JILL
Wish I had one in the first place.

Dad appears from behind a cabinet adrift in the center of the kitchen, crowbar in hand.

DAD
You get your homework done?

VICTOR
She did, yeah. She even did extra work. Drama nerd.

DAD
That's my girl.

VICTOR
Oh yeah, if Roger tells her to write one skit she'll turn three in.

DAD
Who's Roger?

VICTOR
The new drama teacher.

DAD
You call him Roger?

JILL
Yeah, Mr. Markowitz got sick, remember? He's out for a while.

MOM
Oh dear. I hope he's okay. Such a
(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)
 nice man. What's he have? Cancer?

JILL
 Jeez, Mom!

MOM
 What? I'm just asking.

JILL
 I know, but don't put that out there.

MOM
 Well, honey, it's a good bet if he's
 sick enough to need time off it might
 be cancer.

Victor and Jill exchange a concerned glance.

JILL
 Crap.

VICTOR
 Well. Just think, that's all the
 longer you'll get Roger.

Mom glances over to gauge Jill's response to that. Jill's pleased.

DAD
 You have money?

JILL
 Um, not gonna say no to money, Dad.

He pulls a five dollar bill from his wallet, hands it over.

JILL
 Thanks, Dad!

They leave.

DAD
 She seems enthused about class.

MOM
 Enthused about the *teacher*, dear.

INT. PEDRO'S PIZZA PALACE - NIGHT

Victor and Jill sit in a booth, each with a slice of pizza.

VICTOR
 You should've asked them.

JILL
 I will.

VICTOR
 Make sure they know we'll be staying
 with my grandma. Makes it sound better.

Danielle makes her grand entrance gulping soda, then a loud burp, which is somehow cool coming out of a pretty face.

VICTOR

Hey, Danielle's 18, if she goes too maybe they'll be more likely to -

JILL

(whispers)

Shh! No, don't ask her!

VICTOR

Why not?

JILL

Just don't.

Danielle plops down next to Jill with a slice.

DANIELLE

Hola, bambinos.

VICTOR

Are you here alone?

JILL

She doesn't go anywhere alone.

DANIELLE

No. Well, yeah. But I'm meeting Billy Blackmore soon for a date.

JILL

Then why are you eating now?

DANIELLE

Yeah, right, like I'm gonna eat pizza in front of him.

VICTOR

Yeah, that'd be...um...tragic?

She bites into her pizza.

DANIELLE

A disaster! Melted cheese stringing everywhere. Oregano in my teeth. What an attractive sight I'd be.

VICTOR

Oh, but you don't mind *me* seeing all of that. Thanks.

Danielle laughs. Burps.

DANIELLE

Nope! I'm having pizza now, then when we have our date I have a salad with him.

JILL

Wow. That's a lot of hoops to jump
(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)
through. Just to impress a guy.

VICTOR
Said the girl who's writing a novel
for her teacher.

DANIELLE
What are you writing?

JILL
Nothing. Just a monologue for class.

DANIELLE
Oh yeah, that skit we have to write.

VICTOR
No, no, she's writing an extra one.
You know, "for fun!"

DANIELLE
Nerd.

JILL
Some day when I'm a famous playwright
you'll remember this and think "Oh,
yeah, she started her work way back
when." What're we gonna say about
you? "That Danielle, she never ate
pizza in front of guys!"

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, CAFETERIA - DAY

Victor and Jill are in the lunch line choosing their food.

VICTOR
Luis said that Mr. Deakins said Mr.
Addison has quite the reputation
amongst the other teachers.

Jill instantly loses interest in her dessert choices.

JILL
Wait, he said what? Was actually
Luis there when Deakins said it?
What exactly did he say?

VICTOR
Well, I don't have a court reporter's
transcript, Puddin'. I wasn't there
when Deakins said it.

JILL
Okay, but what exactly did Luis say
he said?

Victor stops, thinks and recites it carefully.

VICTOR
Luis said "Deakins said Mr. Addison
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
has quite a reputation."

JILL
That's it? That could mean anything.
He didn't say bad reputation, right?
He just said "quite a reputation"?

Victor nods.

VICTOR
Yes, your honor.

They pay for their lunches, go into the huge seating area.

JILL
I mean, George Washington has "quite
a reputation." A reputation can be
good, right?

VICTOR
Yes, that's true. You should be on
the debate team.

JILL
Oh, public speaking? No thanks, rather
cut my right arm off.

VICTOR
But you're in drama!

JILL
Yeah, but that's just in class. Debate
team has to perform in front of the
whole school. And out in public. Oh
my god, no way. You should do debate
team! You're the outgoing one.

They pass a SNARKY STUDENT who overhears and adds...

SNARKY STUDENT
I think the word you're looking for
is "flamboyant"!

Victor waves him off with dramatic flourish.

VICTOR
I don't think Deakins specified good
or bad reputation. Could've been
bad. Luis's tone of voice implied it
wasn't a good reputation.

JILL
Yeah, right. Roger JUST got here and
Deakins is trying to convince us he
knows all this stuff about Roger.

VICTOR
OR you could say Roger's ONLY been
here a few days and he already has a
(MORE)

VICTOR (CONT'D)
bad reputation. Red flag!

JILL
He's just jealous because we like
Roger better. He's a cooler teacher.

VICTOR
Being able to defend the unlikely,
unpopular but plausible viewpoint is
what you have to do on the debate team.

JILL
Both of my arms, Victor. I'd rather
rip off both my arms.

Victor and Jill join Danielle at a table.

VICTOR
This quesadilla has meat in it!

JILL
So? You eat meat.

VICTOR
But it's not a quesadilla if it has
meat in it. Quesadilla means melted
cheese only in a tortilla.

JILL
So call it a quesadilla with meat.

Danielle barely looks up from her scribbling.

VICTOR
Right, but I mean, why call it a
quesadilla at all then? It's more
like a folded burrito.

JILL
It's sad is what it is.

DANIELLE
Who cares?

JILL
Shh, it's fifteen minutes 'til class,
Danielle's sacred homework time.

DANIELLE
Shh.

JILL
That's what I just said, shh.

Jill scoots Danielle's purse over to make room for her tray.

JILL
Move your purse.

VICTOR
 (still on quesadilla rant)
 Purse? You mean her fabric grocery
 bag that also holds her wallet, keys
 and makeup.

Danielle looks up, confused.

DANIELLE
 What?

VICTOR
 A quesadilla with meat is not a
 quesadilla!

Jill glances at Danielle's homework.

JILL
 Danielle, you're not doing it right!
 A play isn't written with everything
 at the same margin like that. The
 dialogue margins go here, and the
 action is like this.

Danielle rolls her eyes.

JILL
 Why do you think Roger gave us that
 sample page from a script? To show
 us how to format plays.

DANIELLE
 I don't care! I'm not a writer!

JILL
 It was the entire point of the
 assignment.

DANIELLE
 This is for drama class, why do we
 have to write it down at all? Let's
 just perform them!

Victor takes her paper and reads from it.

VICTOR
 "What do you think we should do?" "I
 don't know. What do you think? "Maybe
 we should go inside." Yes, can't
 wait to perform this.

DANIELLE
 This is stupid, we're just supposed
 to be putting on skits, not being an
 editor.

JILL
 Danielle, it's important that we learn
 the nuts and bolts of what creates
 good theater. It's called drama class,
 (MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)
not acting class.

Victor and Danielle stare at her.

VICTOR
Unpopular, but plausible.

JILL
Just eat your folded burrito.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY

Class is over. Jill watches Roger erase the board and when the other kids finally leave Jill approaches him.

JILL
Roger?

He turns, smiles, genuinely happy to see her.

ROGER
Woyzech!

He stops what he's doing to give her his full attention.

JILL
Um...I kind of wrote an extra thing.
I guess it's like a monologue or
something. I was just experimenting.
I don't really know what I'm doing.

ROGER
And you want me to read it and give
you my critique?

JILL
Yeah. I mean, since you write stuff
too I thought maybe -

ROGER
I'd be honored.

He holds his hands out. She doesn't hand it over.

JILL
Um, don't show anyone, okay?

ROGER
Got it. You don't want to be labeled
the teacher's pet.

JILL (V.O.)
I wish.

JILL
Right. Or a super nerd.

He wiggles his fingers, indicating she should relinquish it.

ROGER
I'll take very good care of it.

JILL
Okay. Thanks.

He smirks.

ROGER
It's not about eating peas, is it?

INT. WOYZECK HOME, MOM & DAD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Dad is fresh out of the shower, in cozy sweats drying his hair with a towel. Mom lays out her outfit for tomorrow, chooses earrings to match her outfit.

DAD
She mentioned Roger six times at dinner. Six. I counted.

MOM
Yes, I know. I was there.

DAD
Do you think that's healthy? Obsessing on a teacher?

MOM
Pretty normal.

DAD
How old is this guy? You meet him?

MOM
No. Don't worry, even if he's younger than Mr. Markowitz I doubt he's going to start dating her.

DAD
Well of course not. Don't be silly.

MOM
So what's the harm in it? Honey, most girls get a crush on a teacher at some point.

DAD
Yeah?

MOM
Mine was Mr. Baxter.

She sits on the bed, leans against the headboard.

MOM
Our art teacher in 11th grade. He had a little beard. Very rare. All the other male teachers had to wear suit and ties, but because was working with messy stuff he wore just a button
(MORE)

MOM (CONT'D)
down shirt with a long white smock.

DAD
Sounds sexy.

MOM
Oh, hush. You had to be there. When he'd paint he'd get it all over his hands. He didn't care. He was so passionate about his art. It was sexy.

DAD
Great. That makes me feel better.

MOM
It's normal at that age. She's just as obsessed with Depeche Mode and their lead singer. What's the difference?

DAD
The lead singer of Depeche Mode doesn't have access to our daughter.

MOM
So shall we keep her home from school? Lock her in her room?

DAD
I don't know. How'd your teacher crush turn out?

MOM
He went to Vietnam the next year.

DAD
Shit. Did he ever come back?

MOM
I don't know. I graduated after that. I hope so.

INT. VICTORY THEATER - NIGHT

Roger sits in the audience of a small black box theater. A few other THEATER PEOPLE sit scattered around him.

Onstage a minimalist stage setting depicts the inside of a castle. A CREW MEMBER adjusts the lights that bathe the stage in a bluish light. An ACTOR mills around stage studying his "Hamlet" script.

ACTOR
(quietly to himself)
"The play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king."

Roger reads something on torn out notebook paper. He turns to his scruffy male COLLEAGUE next to him.

ROGER

This is one brave and insightful kid.

The Crew Member onstage shouts to Roger.

CREW MEMBER

(re: onstage lighting)

Hey boss, is this blue gel too much?

Roger studies the stage for a second. Turns to his Colleague.

ROGER

Not sure. You think it's too cool?

Should we warm it up a bit?

The Colleague shrugs.

COLLEAGUE

You're the director.

ROGER

(to Crew Member)

Maybe a tad warmer. It's Denmark,
not the North Pole.

(to Colleague)

One of my students, she's a bit
overweight and she wrote this. Listen
to this part.

(reads)

"But unlike a young girl who makes a
one-time fashion misstep who can step
out of her ugly dress at the end of
the day, I cannot remove mine. An
unwanted daily uniform. A permanent
ugly dress I'm resigned to wear."

COLLEAGUE

Oo, ouch. A kid wrote that?

ROGER

A high school kid, yeah. It's three
pages long.

COLLEAGUE

Female I assume?

Roger nods.

COLLEAGUE

Three pages of "oh woe is me?"

ROGER

Surprisingly, no. I was expecting
that. But this is deep and poignant.
And darkly funny. Bright kid. But
she needs to be a bit less inhibited.
This could be a great monologue.

COLLEAGUE

It's not a monologue? What is it?

ROGER

An essay I guess.

COLLEAGUE

You guess? Don't run a tight ship over there with homework, do you?

ROGER

This isn't homework. This is just something extra she wrote.

COLLEAGUE

Maybe she doesn't want to be a performer. We're not all showmen like you.

ROGER

Actually, you're right. I think she wants to be a writer. But damn, this could be a killer monologue if she had the guts to perform it.

COLLEAGUE

Yeah, right. In front of other high school kids? Why not just ask her stand naked in the lunch line?

ROGER

Yeah. Kids can be cruel.

COLLEAGUE

Assholes I think is the word you're looking for.

ROGER

Adults aren't much better.

COLLEAGUE

Yeah. Kids are just assholes-in-training.

ROGER

How many kids you have?

COLLEAGUE

Three! Hey, how come you didn't cast the players yet?

ROGER

I thought I might let some of my drama students fill in some of the smaller player roles.

COLLEAGUE

Brave man.

ROGER

Nah, they're okay. Some are pretty sharp. No speaking roles, just fill in some of the troupe. Might be fun for them. Something to do.

The Actor onstage waves his script to get Roger's attention.

ACTOR

Are we going to rehearse today or
should I go practice in a mirror?

Colleague rolls his eyes.

COLLEAGUE

Actors. I love the theater, but could
we do it without the actors?

ROGER

This is why I get the big money.

COLLEAGUE

What are you getting for this, like
300 bucks?

ROGER

(to Actor onstage)

Yes, go ahead. Start at "I have heard
that guilty creatures..."

Actor clears his throat and gets into character again.

ACTOR

"I have heard that guilty creatures
at a play by the very cunning of the
scene..."

Roger and Colleague talk in whispers as the Actor performs.

ROGER

I'm not doing it for the money. This
is my ticket to Juilliard.

COLLEAGUE

Aren't you a little too old to go to
Juilliard? Hasn't that ship sailed?

ROGER

As an instructor, you asshole. There's
a position opening up. I've already
applied. I have a pretty good shot,
they liked me at the interview.

COLLEAGUE

But?

ROGER

I got great reviews for "Woyzeck" but
they said they don't want a one-trick
pony. They're gonna delay their
decision 'til after "Hamlet."

COLLEAGUE

Aaah. So this is your chance to jump
out of the small pond and into the
big ocean.

ROGER

Big Apple. I can't wait to sink my teeth into the New York theater scene.

COLLEAGUE

(re: Actor onstage)

So this dick onstage is your only hope of success in New York?

ROGER

He's a great actor. But he is kind of an asshole, isn't he?

COLLEAGUE

All the best actors are. Hey, you're a pretty good actor, aren't you?

Roger grins and flips him the bird.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, DRAMA CLASSROOM - DAY

The class settles quickly when Roger enters, eager to listen.

ROGER

Today's the big day! I know you're all wondering what play we're going to do. The anticipation is killing you. So I'm going to tell you!

Everyone perks up.

ROGER

Right after I take roll.

The class groans and laughs.

VICTOR

Tease!

ROGER

How well you know me, Victor.

Roger, knowing their names now, can take roll silently.

VICTOR

(to Danielle)

I bet you get the female lead!

She smirks and nods.

DAINTY GIRL

You don't know that.

VICTOR

Yes I do. Each year the lead roles are given to the seniors since it's their last year.

DAINTY GIRL

That's not fair.

DANIELLE

Sure it is. You'll be a senior next year. Just wait your turn. I waited last year. This is my year.

DAINTY GIRL

You're not the only female senior.

VICTOR

Oh, that's true. Jill might get it.

Danielle doesn't lose her smile. She's not worried one bit.

VICTOR

(to Jill)

Are you auditioning, L.B.? Maybe you'll get it.

Jill shrugs.

SNARKY STUDENT

Why do you call her L.B.?

JILL

None of your business!

Victor covertly turns to the Snarky Student.

VICTOR

(whispers)

Late Bloomer.

JILL

Danielle is more outgoing. She'll probably get it.

VICTOR

That's true. But at least try!

(overly loud)

Just think, being directed by your handsome and sexy Mr. Addis--

JILL

Shhh! Why do you always try and embarrass people?

DANIELLE

(joking)

Bully!

Roger pretends not to hear any of this.

ROGER

Okay, kids. Listen up. This spring we will be performing Horton Foote's "Spoon River Anthology."

A sea of blank faces.

VICTOR

Spoon what now?

ROGER

"Spoon River Anthology." It's a very famous play. It's very often performed by high schools because there are so many roles that everyone gets a chance to be in it.

Pleased murmurs fill the room. He passes around handouts. Danielle turns to the Dainty Girl.

DANIELLE

See? No need to have a hissy fit. You'll get a role.

ROGER

Yes, plenty of roles. I've attached the scenes you'll be auditioning with so I hope you all try out. Auditions will be Thursday after school so you have two days to look over the sides.

VICTOR

Look over the what?

ROGER

Sides. That's what you call it them when it's just a few pages of a script that you're given to audition with.

VICTOR

Sides?

ROGER

Yes. When you get home and your parents asked what you learned today you can tell them you know what sides are. Okay, now everyone into the theater. Practice your skits.

As they shuffle into the theater Victor holds up his sides and launches into a loud rendition of Judy Collins' "Both Sides Now."

VICTOR

"I've looked at life from both *sides* now. From up and down and still somehow..."

Roger enjoys the performance and Victor's lack of shyness.

ROGER

Oh, and here's something else I think you'll all like about the play. The whole thing takes place in a graveyard and every single character is dead!

Danielle looks at her handout.

DANIELLE

Cool! You mean we're all zombies?

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

Students break into groups and scatter all over. Some onstage. Some in the back of the audience. Some backstage.

Jill is in a group with Dainty Girl and Nerdy Boy.

NERDY BOY

Okay, are we gonna do the one where I have turned into a giant chicken?

DAINTY GIRL

What is it with you and chickens? Were you raised on a farm or something?

Roger passes and catches Jill's eye. He gestures for her to follow him. She perks up.

JILL

Hang on, Roger needs me.

She follows him over out of the way. They sit near the back of the auditorium.

ROGER

I read your "Ugly Dress" piece.

She cringes.

ROGER

No, no, don't be embarrassed. I was very impressed with it.

She beams.

JILL

Really?

ROGER

Yes! It was raw and honest and gut-wrenching.

JILL

Gut-wrenching is good? That doesn't sound good.

ROGER

Oh, it is. The cardinal sin of writing is to bore your audience. You want them to care for the characters, be moved by their plight.

JILL

Plight?

ROGER

Yeah, well, you know what I mean.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

Feel for them and be able to relate.

She nods, but not quite sure.

ROGER

You probably feel like the odd man out, but I assure you everyone else in here feels the same way. But they aren't able to communicate that in a concise, moving way. It usually comes out as bullying or overcompensating in some obnoxious way.

From a distant corner of the auditorium Danielle's deafening laugh and loud voice rings loud and clear.

DANIELLE (O.S.)

You are such a dork!

Roger points toward the sound of Danielle's voice.

ROGER

Perfect example.

Jill laughs.

ROGER

I thought your piece was great. It takes a lot of courage to open up like that.

She shrugs.

JILL

I guess. Thanks.

ROGER

It does, it really does. What you wrote was very personal. But rather than just whine about your...

JILL (V.O.)

My flab? My blubber? My hugeness?

ROGER

...your beautiful *being*, you gathered strength and wisdom from it. I think it's made you a stronger person.

Cringes and blushes at the same time. He's a bit uncomfortably close to her so no one can overhear.

JILL

Wow, thanks.

ROGER

You know what would make you an even stronger person?

JILL

What?

ROGER

If you read this to the class.

Panic flashes across her face.

JILL (V.O.)

Aaaaaaaaaahhhhhhhhh!

JILL

Wait! You didn't say I had to read it out loud!

ROGER

No, no! You don't! Calm down, you don't have to. Just a suggestion.

JILL

Oh, my god. I can't.

He gazes into her eyes. Doesn't speak. Waits.

JILL

But...if I did...

Gives an encouraging nod, waiting for the end of that sentence. She toggles from pride to terror and back again.

JILL

No. I can't. I'm too shy.

ROGER

But if you're going to be in drama it wouldn't hurt you to open up a bit and put yourself out there.

JILL

But I don't want want to be a professional actress or anything.

ROGER

Doesn't matter. It'll help you in real life.

She laughs.

JILL

"Real life"?

ROGER

Yes. Life is hard enough as it is without being extra vulnerable.

JILL

I'm vulnerable?

ROGER

In a way. Vulnerable because you're a young babe in the woods. Limited

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)
 experience out in the world, just
 like all your other fellow students.
 And also...because...

JILL
 Because of my ugly dress.

ROGER
 Because you're different. I'd like
 to help you by sharing some life
 lessons with you.

JILL
 Life lessons. There's not going to
 be homework, is there?

It's a conscious joke and he chuckles.

ROGER
 No. No homework.

JILL
 Good. Because algebra is already
 killing me!

ROGER
 Life lesson number one: Algebra IS
 stupid. Life lesson number two:
 That what doesn't kill me makes me
 stronger. Algebra isn't killing you.
 You're merely wounded.

JILL
 Yeah. Right. But the healing process
 is a bitch!

Hearty laugh from him.

ROGER
 I think you ARE meant to be a writer.
 If I can steer you in the right
 direction I'll feel my time here at
 La Manzanita was worth it.

It's hard for her to hide her ear-to-ear grin.

ROGER
 By the way, can you explain to me why
 you took drama in the first place
 since you're so shy?

JILL
 Oh, that's easy. Danielle made me.

INT. WOYZECK HOME, JILL'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Jill sits on the floor in front of her TV and VCR fast forwarding
 through her daily MTV videos. Play. Aerosmith. Stop. Fast
 forward. Play. Soft Cell. Stop. Fast forward.

Victor sits on her bed flipping through a magazine.

VICTOR
You are obsessed.

Stop. Play. Simple Minds. Stop. Fast forward.

JILL
Not obsessed. I'm loyal and thorough.

Victor laughs.

VICTOR
Interesting distinction. Isn't
rationalization a great tool?

JILL
You're the one who wants to drive a
thousand miles to see them!

VICTOR
So do you!

JILL
Exactly! So why am I obsessed and
you're not?

VICTOR
Wait...

He pauses while he dissects her argument.

VICTOR
Oh. Yeah. Right.

Stop. Play. Tears for Fears. Stop. Fast forward.

JILL
Ahh! Look! Got one!

Depeche Mode's "People Are People" plays. They both watch,
enraptured by the quirky black and white video, both in heaven.

VICTOR
They are so cool.

INT. GARCIA HOME, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Victor carries Jill's VCR, Jill follows. MR. GARCIA and MRS.
GARCIA sit watching TV. Both are mid forties. The living room
is very plain, minimal decorations. A huge ornate crucifix and
painting of Jesus dominate the main wall.

JILL
Hi, Mrs. Garcia. Hi, Mr. Garcia.

Mr. Garcia nods hello.

MRS. GARCIA
Hi hon. What're you guys doing?
What's that?

VICTOR

Jill's VCR.

MRS. GARCIA

Don't you have a VCR already?

VICTOR

Yeah. But we're gonna hook them up to each other.

MRS. GARCIA

Why?

VICTOR

It's complicated, Mom.

Victor doesn't stop, heads towards his room.

JILL

We're gonna record some stuff.

Mrs. Garcia nods, not really understanding or caring.

INT. GARCIA HOME, VICTOR'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Victor's room is like the rest of the house, plain, sedate decor. A cross over his bed and other items obviously chosen by his mom.

Victor puts Jill's VCR next to his, plugs it in.

VICTOR

Okay, now what?

JILL

I need two RCA cords, one for audio, one for video. And a blank video.

Victor opens his closet door. Suddenly the room is filled with color, energy and life. Every inch of the inside of his closet door is covered with glamorous photos of every conceivable female movie star or rock star. Debbie Harry, Cher, Bo Derek. Dozens of big and small photos cut from magazines.

He has also painted every single surface of the closet walls and shelves with his unique style of art. His sacred hidden altar.

Victor grabs the cords, hands them to Jill. She plugs them into the backs of both VCRs; two VCRS are now connected to each other. Blank tape goes in one.

JILL

Okay, now where's the movie?

Victor holds a VCR tape in a case from a video rental store.

VICTOR

Okay, you're sure this is gonna work? It's not going to erase the movie, is it? Or eat the tape?

JILL

No. Would I be doing this if it ruined the tapes?

She holds her hand out for the tape. He still won't hand over his cherished rental.

VICTOR

If this tape gets ruined Duke City Video is gonna charge me \$120.

JILL

Trust me. It works. You're gonna have your very own copy of the movie.

He hands over the tape. She pops it in and pushes play. Presses record and play at the same time on the other VCR.

JILL

Watch, we'll do a little trial run.

The opening credits of "Yentl" appear on screen.

JILL

How many times have you rented this?

VICTOR

About four.

JILL

And how many times did you watch it each time you rented it?

VICTOR

Oh, let's not get bogged down in numbers, shall we?

Jill laughs.

JILL

And I'm the obsessed one.

Jill lets the video run for about 15 seconds. Stops both machines, rewinds both. Plays the one with the blank tape. The opening credits of "Yentl" appear onscreen.

JILL

Ta da!

VICTOR

Oh, sweet merciful Jesus in heaven.

JILL

Can you say that about a Jewish movie?

A knock on the door.

MR. GARCIA (O.S.)

Hey, kids?

Victor bolts to the closet, shuts the door. Mr. Garcia pops in.

MR. GARCIA

Mom wants to know if you want some
leftover lasagna.

EXT. GARCIA HOME, BACKYARD - NIGHT

Victor and Jill lay on their backs in the grass in the dark yard.
Plenty of stars in the sky.

VICTOR

(sings)

"Papa, can you hear me? Papa, can
you see me? Papa, can you find me in
the night?"

JILL

Oh, god! I should've known better.
I knew this was gonna make you sing!

VICTOR

(sings)

"Papa, are you near me? Papa, can
you hear me? Papa, can you help me
not be frightened?"

JILL

I should've made the VCR eat the tape.

Victor throws his arms open to the sky above them.

VICTOR

(sings)

"Looking at the skies I seem to see a
million eyes, which ones are yours?"

JILL

You should be on Broadway or something.

VICTOR

Oh, that reminds me. The other day I
was singing or doing something and
Roger laughed and said "You'd be a
great cabaret act."

She laughs.

VICTOR

He didn't say "You'd be great IN a
cabaret act." He said I'd BE a great
cabaret act. Should I be offended?

JILL

Offended? Why would you be offended?
He's amused by you, entertained by
you. You're a drama student, why
would you take that as an insult?

He shrugs.

VICTOR
Well, you know...

She doesn't know.

JILL
What? It was a compliment!

VICTOR
You'd defend him no matter what.

JILL
No I wouldn't. Why would I do that?

VICTOR
You love him more than I love "Yentl."

JILL
I do not!

VICTOR
Look! A shooting star!

JILL
Make a wish!

VICTOR
I wish that we all get great roles in
the play.

JILL
Hmm.

VICTOR
What? You ARE going to try out, right?

JILL
I don't know.

VICTOR
Why wouldn't you? You try out every
year. This is your senior year!
Seniors get the biggest parts!

JILL
I know. But trying out in front of
Roger makes me kinda...

VICTOR
Kinda what? Lovestruck?

JILL (V.O.)
Mortified. Intimidated. Embarrassed.
Feeling like the floor will swallow
me up when I see that look in his
eyes, "You're terrible, do you really
think you deserve to be in my play?"

JILL
Kinda nervous.

VICTOR

Is that all? You're always nervous to audition. We all are. You're supposed to be. Never stopped you before. You'll get over it.

JILL (V.O.)

Don't think so. Sharing my writing and doing crappy skits are one thing, well, two actually. But acting for him, like "I'm good enough for you to cast me in a lead role" is another.

VICTOR

Another shooting star! Make a wish.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Roger sits on the edge of the stage. The kids settle in.

ROGER

Alright my little chickens. We've only got five groups left who need to do their skits. So we have a little extra time. Some of you have been writing extra pieces.

Jill's eyes grow wide.

JILL (V.O.)

Oh, god.

Victor nudges her.

ROGER

Good pieces.

JILL (V.O.)

Not "some" of us. Just me. He just means me!

ROGER

And I'm sure the class would love to hear some new work. And you all would be very respectful, am I right?

Nods and yeahs from everyone.

JILL (V.O.)

Holy crap. He's talking to me. He wants me to read "The Ugly Dress."

ROGER

As your teacher it'd make me proud to hear you do it. Deserves to be heard.

JILL (V.O.)

Jill! You dumb ass! This is your chance to impress him! He's begging you to perform, he already likes it!

(MORE)

JILL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I could show everyone what I'm capable
of! Oh my god, my heart is racing!

Roger manages to make eye contact with her long enough to make his point, but not long enough for others to notice.

ROGER
 What doesn't kill you makes you
 stronger.

The other kids look around to see if anyone is raising their hand or volunteering. Of course no one is.

JILL (V.O.)
If I got up there and did it he'd
fucking love me! He'd be so proud!
Do it! Just do it!

Roger gives her a few more seconds to speak up. She doesn't.

ROGER
 Okay, that's fine. We can move on.
 Steve, is your group ready?

JILL (V.O.)
Jill, you stupid fucker! That was
your chance! Coward! You don't deserve
his attention. Go ahead. Let Danielle
have all it all. As usual.

She can't meet Roger's eye. She lets him walk up the aisle right past her without looking up.

JILL (V.O.)
She'll get the lead, spend all that
time with him after school at
rehearsals. I'll go home and watch
my stupid MTV tapes.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, DRAMA CLASSROOM - LATER

A lot of FAWNING STUDENTS swarm around Roger after class, all vying for his attention. Jill heads for the door.

ROGER
 See you at the audition, Woyzeck.

JILL
 Um. Don't think so. I'm not gonna
 try out.

His face falls.

ROGER
 Really?

JILL
 Yeah.

ROGER

That's a shame. It won't be the same without you there. Was hoping you'd show up. Well, have a good day.

JILL (V.O.)

He's hoping I'll show up? Wow. Well, maybe I could swing by.

EXT. PEDRO'S PIZZA PALACE - DAY

Danielle and Jill finish their pizza. Jill wolfs hers down.

JILL

Come on, hurry. Auditions start in ten minutes.

DANIELLE

Relax. They'll go on for at least an hour. It's a five minute walk.

JILL

You been practicing?

DANIELLE

I've looked it over. We don't have to have it memorized, right?

JILL

No. You can read your lines.

DANIELLE

You have it memorized?

JILL

No.

DANIELLE

What? The super drama nerd doesn't have her lines memorized?

JILL

I'm probably not gonna try out.

DANIELLE

Why not?

JILL

Oh, come on. We all know you'll get the lead. You're the only female senior. Other than me I mean.

DANIELLE

What about Kathy Torres?

JILL

She's not in drama.

DANIELLE

No shit. You don't have to be in drama class to audition for the play. The

(MORE)

DANIELLE (CONT'D)
 quarterback can audition if he wants.
 Kathy tried out last year.

JILL
 Don't worry. You'll get it. Kathy
 isn't outgoing enough.

DANIELLE
 I can't figure out from these pages
 what the fuck this play is about.
 Can you?

JILL
Sides. I didn't really look at it.
 C'mon, let's go.

DANIELLE
 What's your hurry? Wait, if you're
 not trying out then why are you going?

Jill shrugs.

JILL
 Moral support.

Danielle laughs.

DANIELLE
 Riiiiight.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - AFTERNOON

Most of the drama class kids mill around the auditorium as well as lots of other STUDENTS. Danielle, Jill and Victor sit together. Roger saunters onstage, looking every bit the rock star. Someone catcalls. Roger mimics a rock star stance for a few seconds.

ROGER
 Thank you, Albuquerque! Good night!
 (back to normal)
 Can everyone sit down? Let's get
 this show on the road. You've all
 got your sides. I'm going to put you
 onstage in groups of three. Don't be
 nervous, just have fun. Lots of roles
 for everyone. Any questions?

DANIELLE
 Yeah, I have a question.

ROGER
 Yes, Danielle? Hey, Woyzech, you
 made it!

JILL
 Hi. I'm not trying out. I'm just
 here for moral support.

VICTOR
And to enjoy the view.

Danielle waves her papers to get his attention back on her.

DANIELLE
This character list is alphabetical.
So which ones are the leads?

ROGER
Aha. That's another reason why this
play is so great for high school drama
classes. There ARE no lead roles!
All the roles are equal. You each
have a short monologue of several
lines that sums up your life and death.

Danielle looks horrified. Stares at Roger. Stares at her sides.
Roger heads to his seat several rows behind the kids.

VICTOR
Sorry, Danny-girl.

DANIELLE
No lead roles? What the fuck?!

VICTOR
There are no small roles. Only small
actors.

ROGER
First group will be Danielle Brooks,
Marcus Santiago and Terry Pritchard.

DANIELL
(to Jill and Victor)
Any last suggestions?

JILL
Yeah. Be as loud as possible.
Projection is important.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - LATER

Three ASPIRING THESPIANS onstage prepare to start their audition.
Someone taps on Jill's shoulder from behind. She turns.

HELPFUL GIRL
(whispers)
Roger's trying to get your attention.

Jill looks back to Roger several rows back, alone. He gestures
"come here." She does.

The kids onstage begin their audition so Roger stays silent,
pats the seat next to him. She sits.

Danielle looks back to see what's going on, sees Roger and Jill
sitting together, alone. She leans over to Victor.

DANIELLE
What's going on there?

He sneaks a peek. Shrugs.

VICTOR
Shh. Magic is happening onstage.

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

The group onstage finishes their audition.

ROGER
Very good! Thank you! Next is Matthew
Wilson, Anita Hicks and Taylor Begay.

As they gather themselves he turns to Jill.

ROGER
I was thinking. I know you're not really
keen to be onstage. But I'm gonna need
an assistant director who's -

JILL (V.O.)
Assistant director! His assistant!

She keeps her joy undercover.

ROGER
- smart and together and reliable who
can help me and -

JILL (V.O.)
His assistant! I'm gonna be his
assistant!

She's still holding it together.

ROGER
- I was wondering if -

JILL (V.O.)
Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!

ROGER
I thought you'd be perfect. You
interested?

She pretends to think about it for a few seconds.

JILL
Sure. I think I can do that.

ROGER
Excellent. Okay, next group ready?

JILL (V.O.)
Squeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, DRAMA CLASSROOM - LATER

Jill sits at Roger's desk with him.

ROGER

...and help me schedule rehearsals and keep things on track during performances. Kind of be my right hand man. Or woman, sorry.

JILL

Yeah. Sounds great. Can't wait. If one isn't suited for the stage then backstage is their proper place.

He lets that sink in.

ROGER

You know what? You remind me of someone. A character in a play.

JILL

Let me guess. Woyzeck.

ROGER

No. Alma. In Tennessee Williams' "Eccentricities of a Nightingale."

Victor and Danielle trail through class on their way out.

ROGER

I'll post the results of the audition tomorrow afternoon. See you then.

Danielle and Victor leave.

JILL

What were you saying?

ROGER

At first I couldn't think who you reminded me of, but it just hit me. Alma. You're so like her. Anyway, you better go. I gotta lock up.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, LIBRARY - MOMENTS LATER

JILL

"Eccentricities of a Nightingale," do you have it?

Jill is at the LIBRARIAN's desk.

JILL

By Tennessee -

LIBRARIAN

Williams. Yes, I know.

JILL (V.O.)
I gotta read it! Please have it!

LIBRARIAN
 No, sorry. We don't carry plays.
 The drama department has to order
 them as needed for the students.

JILL (V.O.)
Crap.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, AUDITORIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

Roger locks up the back stage entrance. He notices Victor off
 in the distance. A DUMB BULLY also sees Victor.

DUMB BULLY
 Gay!

Dumb Bully turns and sees that Roger is now right behind him.
 Dumb Bully tenses, expects to be yelled at.

ROGER
 Was that supposed to be an insult?

DUMB BULLY
 Um, no, um...I was just, um, I
 wasn't...

ROGER
 That wasn't a very good insult.

DUMB BULLY
 Uh...

ROGER
 There's nothing intrinsically incorrect
 or dysfunctional about being homosexual.

Big, dull eyes from Dumb Bully.

ROGER
 I'm sorry, let me dumb it down for
 you. Being gay is okay.

DUMB BULLY
 Yeah, I know!

ROGER
 I don't think you do. You yelled "gay!"
 as if you were trying to hurt him.
 But if you know there's nothing wrong
 with being gay then it wasn't a very
 effective thing to yell.

Dumb Bully squirms. Confused and yet humiliated.

ROGER
 That doesn't make you seem very clever.

Roger gives him time to reply, but only gets a slow blink.

ROGER

Right. I thought as much. You sure you don't want to try and do better? Like "Hey, your test scores are below average!" Or "Hey, you're compensating for a small penis by being a bully!" Something like that?

DUMB BULLY

You're weird.

ROGER

There you go, tiger! A little bland, but you're getting there.

Dumb Bully backs away, attempts an escape. Roger lets him.

ROGER

Hey. Nothing wrong with being gay. But being an asshole...there's something very wrong with that.

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL, PARKING LOT - LATER

Roger walks to his car as dusk approaches

DANIELLE (O.S.)

Hey, sailor, need a ride?

Danielle pulls up beside him in her car, keeps pace with him.

ROGER

Got my own ride, Danielle, thanks.

DANIELLE

Could I interest you in getting some post-audition nachos? Or some tacos?

He stops in his tracks.

ROGER

Actually, I could murder a burrito right now.

DANIELLE

Great! Let's go on a killing spree.

She slams on the brakes. He hops in.

INT./EXT. DANIELLE'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Danielle navigates through the parking lot.

DANIELLE

So I hear you've got yourself a new assistant director.

ROGER

Yeah! I think she'll be perfect.

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)
You'll all be in safe hands.

As they leave the school grounds Danielle sees Jill, who has just come out of the library. Danielle gives a snotty "ha ha, look who I'm with" wave and points to Roger without him seeing. Roger sees Jill and rolls down his window.

ROGER
Hey, stop for sec.

Danielle doesn't.

ROGER
Wait! Stop!

Danielle finally does. He leans out the window.

ROGER
Hey, Woyzeck! In the mood for a taco?

Jill furrows her brow in confusion.

ROGER
We're going to Taco Hut, wanna go?

Danielle opens her mouth to protest, but nothing comes out.

JILL
Sure!

Roger hops out to let Jill get in. He pulls the front seat forward so he can get in the back seat.

DANIELLE
(to Roger)
No, no! You're the guest of honor,
you get the front seat.

ROGER
The ladies should get the front.

When Roger isn't looking Danielle gives a fierce glare to Jill and mouths "Back seat!"

JILL
It's okay, Roger, I'll get in back.

Jill pushes him aside, gets in back before he can protest.

Danielle turns the stereo on. Adjusts the speaker balance to the back seat only. Just enough so that Jill is deafened by Aerosmith but up in the front seat it's not so loud.

INT. DANIELLE'S CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Danielle drives Roger and Jill down the main fast food drag.

ROGER
I saw Aerosmith in Boston once. Back
(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)
in the '70s. Amazing show. They're
one of my favorites.

DANIELLE
Really? Mine too! They're my
favorite. This is my favorite
cassette. I saw them last summer.

ROGER
Yes. I noticed your concert shirt
the other day.

DANIELLE
Yeah, well, kind of hard to miss,
what with all the boobage and all.

She gestures to her ample boobs. He chuckles.

ROGER
Yeah, I kinda noticed that, too.

Jill, still deafened by the back seat volume, leans forward.

JILL
What? What're you guys saying?

Danielle has to yell for Jill to hear her.

DANIELLE
Nothing, L.B.!

Roger looks at Jill.

ROGER
What's L.B.?

Jill still can't hear a damn thing.

JILL
What?

DANIELLE
Late Bloomer.

ROGER
Aaaah.

JILL
What?

EXT. TACO HUT PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Danielle pulls into the drive-thru.

JILL (O.S.)
Can't we go inside?

DANIELLE (O.S.)
Nah.

INT. DANIELLE'S CAR, TACO HUT PARKING LOT - DUSK

Sun has set, it's starting to get dark. Danielle, Roger and Jill eat in the car in the parking lot.

Danielle and Roger talk in the front seat, but Jill can only hear their indistinct chatter over the music. She munches her taco, not involved in whatever conversation happens up front. She watches Roger and Danielle laugh. Jill spies a few outdoor concrete picnic tables.

JILL

Hey, look, they have tables outside.
Let's go sit.

DANIELLE

Nah, I'm comfortable where I am.

JILL

Can you turn the music down?

Danielle finally turns the music down.

DANIELLE

You didn't like being married?

ROGER

It was okay.

DANIELLE

I'm not sure I could ever be married.
It doesn't sound fun.

ROGER

Sometimes it is. Sometimes it isn't.

DANIELLE

I like to have fun. I think you were
wise to break up. Now you can have
some fun.

He nods. She lifts her burrito to her lips, licks her lips, somehow makes it sensuous when she takes a bite.

ROGER

That's quite a burrito you have there.

DANIELLE

I love burritos.

JILL

I got a taco. It's really good!

Jill takes a bite. Splinters of taco shell, cheese and beef cascade down Jill's shirt, into her lap. Danielle smirks and chuckles. Turns the music up in the back seat again.

DANIELLE

Nice. Very sexy.

ROGER
Burritos are definitely sexier.

JILL
What? I can't hear! Turn it down!

DANIELLE
Fine!

Danielle turns the music down very low.

ROGER
(to Danielle)
When I lived in California you know
what my favorite fast food place was?
(lurid)
In-n-Out Burger.

Danielle chuckles, appreciates the double entendre.

DANIELLE
I've heard of it.

ROGER
In-n-Out, it was VERY popular.

DANIELLE
It's pretty popular here, too, Roger!

Danielle and Roger chuckle. Jill considers this for a few seconds.

JILL
What are you talking about, Danielle?
We don't have In-n-Out Burger here.

Roger laughs, nearly does a spit take with his soda.

DANIELLE
(to Roger)
L.B.!

EXT. LA MANZANITA HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

Danielle drops Roger off at his car. After he gets out Jill gets out of the back seat to move to the front.

ROGER
Goodnight, children. Go home and do
your homework.

JILL
Oh crap! I really do have homework!
I left my algebra book in my locker.
Shit. I gotta go get it.

DANIELLE
Get it tomorrow, I gotta get home.

JILL
You want me to do my algebra homework
(MORE)

JILL (CONT'D)
ten minutes before class? Yeah, right.

DANIELLE
C'mon! I don't have time for this!

JILL
Jeez, have some patience!

Roger steps back to them.

ROGER
Hey, Danielle, if you need to go I
can take Jill home.

Jill perks up.

JILL
Yeah! If you're in a hurry, Danielle,
you should go.

ROGER
Don't worry about it, I got it.

DANIELLE
Oooh. Um, okay.

Jill raises her eyebrows to Danielle, a secret "ha ha, look who has him all to herself now!" gesture.

ROGER
Thanks for the dinner trip. 'Night!

DANIELLE
Night.

Danielle drives off leaving Jill with Roger.

INT. ROGER'S CAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Jill looks through her algebra book as Roger drives.

JILL
Oh, my god! This is gibberish!

ROGER
I'm no good with algebra either,
otherwise I'd help you.

JILL
That's okay. I'll figure it out. A
wise man once told me what doesn't
kill me makes me stronger.

ROGER
I didn't make that up, you know.

JILL
I know. I looked it up.

ROGER

The girl does her research. I go east on Wyatt Avenue, right?

JILL

Yeah, then left on Jensen.

ROGER

Hey, you mind if we make a stop?

JILL

No, go ahead.

ROGER

I've got something at my house I wanna show you.

Her eyes dart up from her textbook.

JILL

At your house?

ROGER

Yeah. My house is right off Bratton. We can just swing by real quick.

JILL (V.O.)

His house? Alone? Now?

JILL

Okay.

He makes a right turn off into a quiet neighborhood.

JILL (V.O.)

Oh god, what if...does he think we were offering sex when we took him to eat? Wait, he would've brought Danielle here if that was the case, not me.

He puts his arm up on the back of the bench seat, his fingers brush her shoulder. It jolts her.

JILL (V.O.)

Or, or would he? What could he want to show me? Oh my god, what if that was like his clever way of saying he wants to show me his thingy? What would I do? Do I want to...do this?

She closes her algebra book. Slides it off her lap.

JILL (V.O.)

"His thingy"? Victor and Danielle are right. I am a late bloomer. I can't even say that word.

He hums one of the songs that blared in Danielle's car earlier.

JILL (V.O.)

But I gotta grow up sometime. Roger's so charming and smart. I bet he'd be gentle. The perfect guy to be my first.

She sneaks a glance at him. No sly grin from him. No wink. Nothing. Eyes on the road. Reality sets in.

JILL (V.O.)

Yeah, right, he has his choice of Danielle or me to seduce and he's gonna pick me? Danielle had her car, I didn't, that's why he's giving me a ride home.

She almost laughs at herself for such absurd thoughts.

JILL (V.O.)

Jeez, Jill, get a grip.

EXT. ROGER'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

They pull up to a small house on a dark street.

ROGER

Here we are.

Roger parks in his driveway, hops out, heads to the house.

JILL (V.O.)

Sitting in his car while he runs in the house, no big deal.

He doubles back, pokes his head back in his window.

ROGER

Come on, Jill. Come inside.

Her eyes go wide. He heads inside.

JILL (V.O.)

He called me *Jill*.

After a few seconds of frozen indecision Jill gets out of the car. Follows him inside the dark house. The door shuts behind her.