

# Ivanka Vs. Reality

By Lucy Wright & William Missouri Downs

Agent:  
Patricia McLaughlin  
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

(3w - 1m)

**Sylvia**

(45-55ish)

*A Screenwriter, Fueled By Antidepressants*

**Ivanka**

(35 to 50)

A Midwestern Mother Fueled By Ranch Dressing, who looks vaguely like Ivanka Trump

**Victoria**

(30 to 50)

*A Hip Hollywood Agent*

**Zeke**

(17)

*A Rebellious Tattooed Video Game Junkie*

(Sylvia, Zeke and Victoria's race should reflect the diversity that is Los Angeles - Cecelia is white)

SETTING

A neutral playing area, like an empty boxing ring, that becomes several overlapping locations. As in a Shakespearean play, one scene flows into the next with no more than a brief music cue, without set change and only small costume variations. Think Our Town with hardly any scenery and almost no props.

TIME

The Present

LOCATIONS THAT ONLY SUGGESTED

An Agent's Office In Beverly Hills

A Crappy Bar On Hollywood Blvd

Forest Lawn Cemetery

An Airport Terminal

A Burbank Bungalow

A Psych Ward

**PLEASE NOTE**

The following quote should dominate the cover of the program, taped to the front door of the theatre, hung above the urinals, and wedged between the seats.)

"Perception is more important than reality. If someone perceives something to be true, it is more important than if it is in fact true."

- Ivanka Trump

Synopsis: Sylvia, a screenwriter, has been kicked around in Hollywood for 20 years - she can take it, but cracks are showing. Her teenaged son Zeke plays "Drone Strike" ten hours a day, her husband ran off with a woman half his age, and her careers sliding.

Zeke tells Sylvia that he has reason to believe that the NSA has hacked his computer and that, from his bedroom in Burbank, he's controlling actual drone kills in Afghanistan.

To pay for her son's psychiatrist, Sylvia takes a crap job writing a "based on a true story" script for Ivanka a midwestern woman who wants her life story turned into a Hollywood blockbuster. But Sylvia soon realizes that the woman's narrative is bogus.

Then Zeke has a mental breakdown; he thinks while playing Drone Strike he's accidentally killed twenty members of a wedding party near Kabul.

This leads to a dramatic, comic, climatic sequence of events that forces Sylvia to question the nature of reality in a world full of fake and alternative facts.

(Act One)

**[It Sucks To Be A Woman In Hollywood]**

Agent's Office, Beverly Hills

*(SYLVIA a screenwriter fueled by anti-depressants. She's been kicked around in Hollywood for years, she can take it, but cracks are showing.)*

*(VICTORIA, a high energy Hollywood agent.)*

*(We enter mid-crisis.)*

SYLVIA

*(Dire, frustrated)*

I'll do anything. I'll even write for a crappy reality show.

VICTORIA

*(While checking her I-phone)*

That'd kill your soul. As your agent it's my job to think of your emotional well being, not just your bank account.

SYLVIA

Any reaction to my last script?

VICTORIA

Which one was that?

SYLVIA

The love story about the beautiful Ukrainian woman.

VICTORIA

I need more.

SYLVIA

Who falls in love with the Iowa tractor salesman.

VICTORIA

*(Trying to place it)*

Right, ah, Iowa... *(Making shit up)* Herb over at Warner Brothers said it was fairly touching.

SYLVIA

But?

VICTORIA

Iowa's not trending at this time.

SYLVIA

There's got to be something.

VICTORIA

How's the new spec coming?

SYLVIA

Got some pages. You'll like it. It's, I-don't-know, 'Pride and Prejudice' meets 'Orange Is The New Black'.

VICTORIA

But not set in Iowa.

SYLVIA

No.

VICTORIA

*(Trying to be upbeat)*

Sounds like... an idea. Let's talk when you have something.

SYLVIA

*(On a writer's rant)*

I shouldn't have charged the head of Sony with sexual harassment. I should've let him masturbate in the elevator, I mean, it's his elevator he can do what he wants in it.

VICTORIA

You did the right thing, you just did it before it before it was hip.

SYLVIA

I'm blacklisted in Hollywood.

VICTORIA

*(Lying)*

No, you're just in a bit of a slump.

SYLVIA

*(Frustrated)*

Victoria... I... I...

*(She locks up, she's having a panic attack.)*

VICTORIA

Xanax?

SYLVIA

*(Trying to breathe)*

I...

VICTORIA

Oh crap. You need a feel good moment. I'm not good at 'feel good' but okay. Ah... How's, ah, Zeke?

SYLVIA

*(Distracted)*

Never comes out of his room. Plays Drone Strike all day.

VICTORIA

Warner Brothers is making an animated movie version of Drone Strike. I was part of the deal. Out next summer.

SYLVIA

*(Not happy about that)*

Great, that's what the world needs. Your Dad?

VICTORIA

Tired. Enjoying retirement. *(That's all the feel good she can do)* Okay, that was our feel good moment/

SYLVIA

*(Blurting)*

You're not going to dump me are you?

VICTORIA

No. I'm here for you. My father was your agent so I'm your agent, and as long as he's alive I'll never...

**(MORE)**

## VICTORIA (CONT'D)

*(She stops, she's said too much)* I'm here for you, can't we just leave it at that.

*(SYLVIA pulls out a crumpled parking deck slip.)*

SYLVIA

Can I get some validation?

VICTORIA

Of course, you are a good writer/

SYLVIA

I mean parking.

VICTORIA

*(Seeing the parking slip)*

Oh.

SYLVIA

Without validation they charge fifteen dollars an hour.

VICTORIA

*(Calling off)*

Steph? Would you validate Ms. Parks's parking? Steph? *(She's not there)* She must be in the bathroom.

*(During the following VICTORIA takes parking stickers out of her purse and puts them on Sylvia's parking slip.)*

SYLVIA

*(Pacing)*

I see these young screenwriters writing in Starbucks. How do they hear themselves think with all that noise and banging and Facebooking? Writing should be sad, lonely and pathetic, not a public act. Victoria... I can't go back to being a script girl. I need work.

VICTORIA

*(Concerned)*

It's really that bad?

SYLVIA

I met with a real estate agent today.



VICTORIA

*(Taking a breath)*

Okay, shit, I might have something - It's total crap.

SYLVIA

I'll be the judge.

VICTORIA

This woman, Ivanka or something, I don't remember her name, was in here yesterday. She wants to hire a screenwriter to tell her life story.

SYLVIA

Oh jeez.

VICTORIA

Back in Dayton/

SYLVIA

*(Grossed out)*

Ew...Ohio?

VICTORIA

Got a problem with that?

SYLVIA

No. I just didn't know any decent stories ever came out of Ohio.

VICTORIA

She's got this kid, a teenager, who had like a lung transplant or something and she wants to hire a Hollywood writer to do a script about it.

SYLVIA

*(Skeptical)*

A movie about a lung transplant?

VICTORIA

You know, Hallmark Channel, Christmas-ie, mid-America type bullshit/ Iowa! This would play in Iowa.

SYLVIA

And she's got money?

VICTORIA

I think she said she'd saved up, like, ten thousand out of her allowance.

SYLVIA

*(Laughing)*

Her allowance? Are you shitting me?

VICTORIA

Or maybe it was money from a lawsuit, don't remember.

SYLVIA

*(To herself)*

Christ.

VICTORIA

It's just quick-dirty money. Interview her, crap out a ninety pages, take the money, and send her back to the fly-overs. If it makes you feel better, it doesn't have to be good.

SYLVIA

*(Ironic)*

A feel good movie about a lung transplant.

VICTORIA

Write it under a pen name. You know, a nom de plume.

*(She considers for a moment.)*

SYLVIA

...No. No, I've got standards. I'm not writing "Lung" for the Family Channel.

VICTORIA

And I respect that.

SYLVIA

Really?

VICTORIA

No.

SYLVIA

*(Blurting)*

I am an Emmy nominated writer!

VICTORIA

For a Hulu show that was cancelled after half a season that few saw and no one remembers.

SYLVIA

...Shit. Thanks for the validation.

VICTORIA

If you change your mind, if I can find her name, I'll give it to Steph.

*(VICTORIA exits.)*

SYLVIA

*(Calling after)*

I won't change my mind!

*(Fade to.)*

*(Please Note: Scene changes should be uncomplicated. One reality flows to the next with only a light and short music cue.)*

**[Southern California's Drone Strike Champion]**

*Sylvia's Bungalow, Burbank*

*(SYLVIA turns to find her living room. She picks up mail that's come through the door slot and thumbs the past due notices.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

*(Calling off)*

I'm home. Don't feel like cooking. Pizza? *(Beat)* Zeke? You in there?

*(SYLVIA turns to find something she's seldom seen, her son ZEKE is not in his room.)*

*(ZEKE's a rebellious high school junior. He's got the required nose ring and black hoodie. He's a modern, tattooed Hamlet at 17.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

And to what do I owe the honor of this rare appearance?

ZEKE

*(Small)*

Shut up.

SYLVIA

You want dinner? I'll order it the way you like it, not a vegetable to be found.

ZEKE

*(Troubled)*

We gotta talk.

SYLVIA

You want to talk? Now you're really freaking me out.

ZEKE

I'm serious.

SYLVIA

You could be a dead rotting corpse in there, how would I know?

ZEKE

Something's happened.

SYLVIA

Crap. Not the car.

ZEKE

I/

SYLVIA

No, start with how much it's going to cost me, give me a dollar amount, and work back from there.

ZEKE

*(Dark)*

...I killed someone.

*(That needs a pause.)*

SYLVIA  
(Perplexed)

Okay... Ah. Not good.

ZEKE

I'm serious.

SYLVIA  
Is this something you need to talk over with Dr. Altman?

ZEKE  
I was flying over southern Nangarhar Province.

SYLVIA  
Sorry for not knowing where that is. West Covina?

ZEKE  
Afghanistan.

SYLVIA  
You were playing Drone Strike.

ZEKE  
Yeah.

SYLVIA  
Bit of advice, you might mention up front when you say you've killed someone.

ZEKE  
I killed Hafiz Saeed Baghdadi, a Taliban commander. I'm not upset that he's gone. He said terrible things about Jews/

SYLVIA  
Wait, he talks against the Jews? I know these video games are realistic but jeez...

ZEKE  
No. In real life.

SYLVIA  
In real life what?

ZEKE  
I killed him.

SYLVIA

*(Incredulous)*

Okay, so... What do you want on your pizza?

ZEKE

I was on a scanner mission.

SYLVIA

*(Snide)*

Scanner, right, I know exactly what you're talking about.

ZEKE

*(Dark, honest)*

Was near the Pakistan border, was trying not to cross out of Afghan air space, that's minus ten points.

SYLVIA

Of course, minus ten, not good.

ZEKE

When my mission panel lit up telling me that there was a hot target leaving Torkham in a white Toyota Land Cruiser. I accepted the mission. You'd be proud of me, I waited, held my fire.

SYLVIA

Because?

ZEKE

The target was passing a mosque. So I circled, fired, direct hit, blew the shit out of'em. Got 10,000 points and two gold stars.

*(She takes a Fat Tire beer from her purse, twists off the top and gulps.)*

SYLVIA

*(Sarcastic)*

Was hoping you'd become a doctor, I'd even take a lawyer, but you got 10,000 points and two gold stars. I'm so proud. Now, would you care to join me for dinner or are you going to eat in your room like you always do?

ZEKE

I made today's paper.

(ZEKE hands SYLVIA an L.A. Times.)

SYLVIA  
(Reading)

"Drone strike kills Taliban commander." ...I don't understand.

ZEKE

Read the name.

SYLVIA

Hafiz Saeed Baghdadi.

ZEKE

It was me, I killed him.

SYLVIA

Ah, Zeke, you do know this is a coincidence.

ZEKE

Second time it's happened.

SYLVIA

So what're you saying, that from your bedroom, here in Burbank, you actually, for real, killed a Taliban commander ten thousand miles away playing a video game?

ZEKE  
(Dark)

The NSA hacked me.

SYLVIA

Zeke/

ZEKE

Don't say it! Don't do what you always do!

SYLVIA

Okay, okay, I believe you.

ZEKE

You do?

SYLVIA

Yes.

ZEKE

Really?

SYLVIA

*(Irritated)*

No! You're telling me that the NSA is using *you* to control their drones in Afghanistan?

ZEKE

Who better? I am the regional Southern California Drone Strike Champion.

SYLVIA

And what am I supposed to do with this information?

ZEKE

The time and locations of my kills are exactly the same.

SYLVIA

Did you take your Ritalin today?

ZEKE

*(Pissed)*

See, that's what you do! You shoot me down all the time!

SYLVIA

*(Frustrated)*

Zeke, please, I've had a hard day. My agent is going to drop me, my career is teetering on the edge of female middle-aged oblivion and I can't write at Starbucks!

ZEKE

*(Confused by this)*

Starbucks?

SYLVIA

Do you want to go live with your father and his child-bride in Pasadena?

ZEKE

Pasadena sucks.

SYLVIA

*(Kindly)*

I agree. We have something in common. Let's build on that.

**(MORE)**



SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Now... I'm worried about you. I want you to be healthy and not sit in your room twelve hours a day.

ZEKE

You do the same thing.

SYLVIA

That's different, I'm writing, I have a purpose.

ZEKE

I have a purpose. America needs me.

SYLVIA

Zeke, I need you, I need you to take the lock off your door.

ZEKE

So you can fuck with my computer again?

SYLVIA

And when I knock I need you to answer.

ZEKE

You want me to be a phony!

SYLVIA

How is that making *you* a phony?!

*(ZEKE starts out.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

*(Pissed)*

Don't walk away when I'm talking!

*(ZEKE stops. SYLVIA takes a breath.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

*(Trying a new tactic)*

Okay. Who knows. You might be right. The world today is so bat shit crazy, I don't know what's real anymore.

ZEKE

*(Tentative)*

You proud of me?

SYLVIA

Sure. I'd be prouder if you saw Dr. Altman.

ZEKE

You don't got the money.

SYLVIA

Don't worry about money, I'll get the money!

ZEKE

You could've been a famous writer!

SYLVIA

What?

ZEKE

But you had to file charges!

SYLVIA

He was masturbating in an elevator.

ZEKE

So what, that's like any given Tuesday at Burbank High!

*(ZEKE walks out. SYLVIA drinks.)*

*(Fade to.)*

### **[Becky And Her Lung Transplant]**

*A Crappy Bar On Hollywood Blvd*

*(SYLVIA drinks a beer at her regular hangout. She's on her cell with her ex.)*

SYLVIA

*(On her cell, intense, bitter)*

...Yes, I'm at a bar, yes I'm drinking, and yes I am fully aware that it's ten in the morning! Don't change the subject! You're three months behind. ...Bullshit. ...You said that last month. ...I'll meet you at the neutral location at noon. ...Bring money and don't bring her, I don't want to see her peppy little tits/

*(On 'tits' SYLVIA turns to find IVANKA, a smiling midwesterner. They're a study in contrast. SYLVIA is driven by ambition, IVANKA by ranch dressing.)*

Hi.

IVANKA

...Hi.

SYLVIA

Ms. Parks?

IVANKA  
*(Smiling, upbeat)*

Yeah?

SYLVIA

Ivanka Trump.

IVANKA

Excuse me?

SYLVIA

IVANKA  
That's just a little joke I do to freak people out. My first name is in fact Ivanka, but my last name isn't Trump it's Trumper. Let me tell ya, it's quite the conversation starter.

SYLVIA  
*(Confused, on cell)*

Gotta go.

*(She hangs up. There's an odd pause as IVANKA stands there smiling.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Your last name is Trumper?

IVANKA  
Can you tell the difference? You guest it. I haven't had as much work done as she. I can still wiggle my nose.

*(IVANKA wiggles her nose.)*

SYLVIA

*(Confused)*

Ah. Can I get you something? Morning beer?

IVANKA

Morning beer?

SYLVIA

It's like a regular beer but you drink it in the morning.

IVANKA

No. I'll have a Squirt.

SYLVIA

What's a Squirt?

IVANKA

It's like pop.

SYLVIA

You mean soda pop?

IVANKA

Yeah.

SYLVIA

*(Calling off to unseen waitress)*

Waitress, when you get a sec, another Fat Tire and a Squirt.  
*(To Ivanka)* Shall we?

IVANKA

Oh, thank you.

*(They sit at a table. Again a stupid pause as IVANKA smiles.)*

SYLVIA

*(Trying to find a subject)*

So, ah, you live in Dayton.

IVANKA

Sure do.

SYLVIA

That's in Ohio?

IVANKA  
Sure is. Go, Buckeyes.

SYLVIA  
First time in L.A.?

IVANKA  
Yeah. I took the Universal Studios tour yesterday.

SYLVIA  
And how was that?

IVANKA  
My rental car was stolen from the parking lot.

SYLVIA  
Sorry to hear that.

IVANKA  
And today I'm going to a taping of "Dancing With the Stars."

SYLVIA  
(Unimpressed)  
That should be... fun.

IVANKA  
You've done it?

SYLVIA  
No, but *(Lying)* it's on my bucket list.

IVANKA  
You okay?

SYLVIA  
Me?

IVANKA  
You seem sorta preoccupied.

SYLVIA  
Nooooo. Just wondering where the waitress went. So, ah, your daughter...

IVANKA  
Yeah.

SYLVIA

Both kidneys?

IVANKA

Excuse me?

SYLVIA

She had a kidney transplant or something?

IVANKA

Lung transplant.

SYLVIA

That's what I meant. And you want a movie made about it.

IVANKA

Please forgive me, I don't know how this works. I've never met a writer before.

SYLVIA

Well, it's simple, you talk, I take notes and we'll see what happens.

IVANKA

*(Sincerely)*

I want to share my story with the world. I want a movie that so real it creates its own kinda an illusion.

SYLVIA

*(Bullshitting her)*

And that just might happen. You never know. It's Hollywood, nobody knows anything.

IVANKA

You wrote that animated doggy movie, "You've got Pee Mail."

SYLVIA

*(Hardly proud of it)*

Yeah, long time ago.

IVANKA

I own the DVD.

SYLVIA

Good for you.

IVANKA

The character of Diego was my favorite. You really got into the head of a Cocker Spaniel.

SYLVIA

*(Chagrin, drinking)*

Thanks.

IVANKA

And you were nominated for that gay sitcom thing.

SYLVIA

Right the 'gay sitcom thing'.

IVANKA

You're *known* in Hollywood?

SYLVIA

I suppose.

IVANKA

I mean, you're a *name*.

SYLVIA

No screenwriter in Hollywood is a 'name' but/

IVANKA

But with 'Sylvia Parks' on the script studios'll take notice.

SYLVIA

*(Bullshitting)*

Well, you see, ah, I use the name Sylvia Parks when I write animated doggy love stories, or 'gay sitcom things' but for this, more of a 'feel good' Family Channel story, I'd use my pen name.

IVANKA

Pen name?

SYLVIA

Yeah, writers use lots of different names.

IVANKA

What name would you use for my story?

SYLVIA

Alan Smithee.

*(She sees the unseen waitress.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

*(Calling off)*

Waitress, I really need that Fat Tire.

IVANKA

And a Squirt.

SYLVIA

*(Calling off)*

And a Squirt!

IVANKA

Um, Alan Smithee's a man's name.

SYLVIA

Yeah well, being female in Hollywood is not an advantage.

IVANKA

Is that who I make the check out to, Alan Smithee?

*(She opens her large midwestern handbag.)*

SYLVIA

Ah... We're jumping right to money?

IVANKA

Isn't that how Hollywood works?

SYLVIA

Sure. But... make it out to Sylvia Parks.

IVANKA

Parks not Smithee. *(Writing the check)* Walter said I should pay half up front and half when you finish.

SYLVIA

Who's Walter?

IVANKA

My pastor.



SYLVIA

He should've been an agent.

IVANKA

*(Still filling out the check)*

Five thousand. A lot of money.

*(She shows the check to SYLVIA.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

*(To herself as she writes three exclamation points)* Boop boop boop. *(To Sylvia)* I put three exclamation points after the amount.

*(She holds up the check.)*

SYLVIA

What for?

IVANKA

Cause it's a lot of money. Here.

*(IVANKA offers the check.)*

SYLVIA

Thank you/

*(IVANKA pulls it back.)*

IVANKA

Wait. If I don't write it down in the check register right away I'll forget.

*(She writes in the checkbook register - who does that now? SYLVIA thinks she's entered a episode of the Twilight Zone.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

*(Talking to herself as she writes)*

Check number 544. Parks. Hollywood money. Five Thousand.

*(IVANKA adds three exclamation points to the check register too.)*

*(Making sure no one is looking, an embarrassed SYLVIA grabs the check.)*

SYLVIA

Okay, let's get started.

IVANKA

Sure. What do you need to know?

*(SYLVIA takes out a pad and takes notes. She doesn't want to do this.)*

SYLVIA

Well, for starters, what's your daughter's name?

IVANKA

Becky. Bec for short.

SYLVIA

*(Talking to herself, taking notes)*

Bec.

IVANKA

'B' for shorter.

SYLVIA

That's about as short as you can get. Is 'B' with you? Can I interview her too?

IVANKA

No, she can't travel, she's had a lung transplant.

SYLVIA

Right. That could inhibit travel. So, tell me a story about Becky-B and her lung transplant.

IVANKA

Well, to begin, Bec wasn't like me, or her father, or anyone.

SYLVIA

*(Talking to herself, taking notes)*

Daughter, loner.

IVANKA

She liked to volunteer at the local soup kitchen sponsored by the Episcopal church.

SYLVIA

*(Taking notes)*

Helped the poor.

IVANKA

That's how she met Dominique, a child from the ghetto.

SYLVIA

Ghetto?

IVANKA

Yes.

SYLVIA

I didn't know we used that word anymore.

IVANKA

Dayton has a ghetto.

SYLVIA

*(More notes)*

Okay. Dominique. Ghetto-girl. Got it.

IVANKA

Dominique's parents died when she was nine, so my daughter brought her home to live with us. But my husband wouldn't hear of it. They had a terrible fight. My husband, ex-husband, well almost ex, the divorce isn't final, he's what you'd call kind of a racist.

SYLVIA

Dominique is black?

IVANKA

Yes.

SYLVIA

*(Taking notes)*

Husband-bad. Daughter-good.

IVANKA

So Bec hid little Dominique in our attic. That's where she grew up.

SYLVIA

*(Halted)*

Wait. Your daughter hid a child from the "ghetto" in your attic?

IVANKA

Yes.

SYLVIA

For how long?

IVANKA

Five years.

SYLVIA

*(Boggled)*

Five years? And you didn't know someone was up there?

IVANKA

Sometimes I heard noises but I thought it was squirrels. We'd had problems with rodents before.

SYLVIA

*(Taken aback)*

Okay, ah, for five years, your daughter hid an orphan-child in the attic.

IVANKA

Brought her food, books, they studied together. Became fast friends.

SYLVIA

And she never left the attic?

IVANKA

How could she? My husband would've her sent to an orphanage.

SYLVIA

Orphanage?

IVANKA

Yeah, orphanage.

SYLVIA

*(Sorta to herself)*

Okay, if you have 'ghettos' in Dayton, I guess you've got 'orphanages' too.

IVANKA

Do you have children?

SYLVIA

A son.

IVANKA

Can you imagine if he never left his room for five years?

SYLVIA

*(To herself)*

Matter of fact.

IVANKA

Then one day Dominique was discovered, my husband had her arrested and charged with trespassing. My daughter's heart was broken. She became ill. It was as if the spiritual power that linked them had been shattered.

SYLVIA

*(Taking notes)*

Spiritual power.

IVANKA

*(Tears)*

And then my Bec was diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, and given only three months to live.

SYLVIA

*(More note writing)*

Not good.

IVANKA

So, on Christmas morning, Dominique escaped from the orphanage to be with her. But just as they were to meet up, Dominique was hit by a truck.

SYLVIA

*(More note writing)*

Holy crap.

IVANKA

Driven by my husband.

SYLVIA

On purpose?

IVANKA

No, it was an accident. My husband had this... this...

*(IVANKA can't go forward, she chokes back tears.)*

SYLVIA

It's okay, you can say it.

IVANKA

*(Choked up)*

...Ford F-150.

SYLVIA

Can I get you something? A morning beer, I mean, a tissue?

IVANKA

*(Crying)*

As I held Dominique in my arms, her last dying wish was that my sweet Beck get her lungs.

SYLVIA

*(Amazed)*

Wait. Your daughter has the black girl's lungs?

IVANKA

Yeah.

SYLVIA

*(Amazed)*

Ah...

IVANKA

Bad?

SYLVIA

No. That's like the perfect Family Channel, feel good/ Wait, were they lesbians?

IVANKA

Who?

SYLVIA

Dominique and your daughter.

IVANKA

No/

SYLVIA

That's the perfect Family Channel, feel good, movie.

IVANKA

*(Wiping her tears)*

I was trying to come up with a title, like, "Christmas Lung" or "Miracle Lung".

SYLVIA

We can title it later. This is amazing.

IVANKA

*(Wiping her tears)*

You like it?

SYLVIA

If I can be honest, I wasn't looking forward to this meeting, but this... *(Calling off)* Waitress hold off on the Fat Tire. Thank you. *(Back to Ivanka)* And it's based on a true story. Hollywood loves that.

IVANKA

*(Still sniffing)*

Well, not exactly.

SYLVIA

What I mean is that the basic parts of the story are true. The lung transplant.

IVANKA

*(Endearing)*

Yes. But nothing else.

SYLVIA

Nothing else what?

IVANKA  
Is true.

SYLVIA  
(*Beat, confused*)  
Ah. Let's start over. Your daughter's name is Becky.

IVANKA  
Bec for short.

SYLVIA  
And 'B' had a lung transplant.

IVANKA  
Yes.

SYLVIA  
And her friend's name was Dominique.

IVANKA  
No.

SYLVIA  
What's her friend's name?

IVANKA  
My daughter has no friends.

SYLVIA  
...But you said?

IVANKA  
My daughter's a meth addict.

SYLVIA  
...Excuse me?

IVANKA  
You asked me to tell you a *story* about Becky and her lung transplant so I did.

SYLVIA  
But in real life your daughter is...

IVANKA  
A meth addict.



SYLVIA

*(Unable to cope)*

Ah... Can we start over again. Your daughter's name is Becky.

IVANKA

Bec for short.

SYLVIA

And 'B' had a lung transplant.

IVANKA

Yes.

SYLVIA

Because?

IVANKA

She huffed too much spray paint.

SYLVIA

*(Dumbfounded)*

So... ah... Let me get this straight... You want a Christmas movie about a meth addict who huffs spray paint? Have you watched the Family Channel?

IVANKA

I don't want truth. That's why I hired a screenwriter. If I wanted truth, I would've hired a real writer.

SYLVIA

*(Ego stung)*

I am a real writer.

IVANKA

Mr. Smithee or is it Ms. Parks? I hope you're not upset.

SYLVIA

*(Lying)*

Me. No, not at all.

IVANKA

In reality my daughter is an addict and my marriage is a failure. Who wants to see a movie about that? Especially if it takes place in Dayton. I want my story told my way.

SYLVIA

But this isn't your story.

IVANKA

It's an alternative telling of my story.

SYLVIA

*(Calling off)*

Waitress! I'm back on with the Fat Tire!

IVANKA

And a Squirt.

SYLVIA

*(Calling off)*

And a Squirt!

*(SYLVIA's phone rings. She checks the screen.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Oh, shit, sorry. Agent.

*(SYLVIA answers.)*

*(Lights up on VICTORIA in her office.)*

VICTORIA

*(On phone, pissed off)*

Sylvia. Me. Your son's in my office.

SYLVIA

*(On phone)*

Zeke?

VICTORIA

*(On phone)*

And I want him out of my office.

SYLVIA

*(On phone)*

What the hell's he doing in your office?

Pitching/

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

Pitching what/

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

A television series/

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

A television series?

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

Please stop repeating what I say.

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

Hand the phone over.

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

He's in the bathroom. I know we're like family or whatever and he was over at the house a lot when he was growing up but I haven't seen him since he was like twelve and he asked me on a date, so this is just really creepy.

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

Be right there.

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

*(SYLVIA hangs up. Lights out on the agent.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Can we pick this up later?

IVANKA

Problem?

SYLVIA

That was my agent/

IVANKA  
Someone important in her office?

SYLVIA  
Yeah.

IVANKA  
Who?

SYLVIA  
*(Bullshitting, hurried)*  
Ah... Ah... Mel Gibson.

IVANKA  
'Passion of the Christ' Mel?

SYLVIA  
One and the same.

IVANKA  
I'd love to meet Mel Gibson.

SYLVIA  
Yeah, well, you know, he's really busy.

IVANKA  
What's he doing in your agent's office?

SYLVIA  
*(Bullshitting - more lies)*  
He's, ah, looking for a writer for a new television series.

IVANKA  
Based on 'Passion of the Christ?'

SYLVIA  
Yeah, like a weekly, episodic, you know.

IVANKA  
But you'd write my script first?

SYLVIA  
Of course. But I've gotta take the meeting. I'll call tomorrow.

Oh! Do me a favor?  
IVANKA

Sure.  
SYLVIA

Get me Mel's autograph?  
IVANKA

...Right. Will do. I'll get his autograph.  
SYLVIA

Wow.  
IVANKA

I gotta run.  
SYLVIA

You have a nice day.  
IVANKA  
(*Sincerely midwestern*)

(*SYLVIA exits. IVANKA exits.*)

(*Fade to.*)

### [I've Lost The Story]

Agent's Office, Beverly Hills

(*ZEKE returns from the bathroom.  
His nose is running. He's uptight.  
He must be high on something.*)

ZEKE  
Sorry about that. These pills they got me on make me have to  
pee like every five minutes.

No problem.  
VICTORIA  
(*Placating*)

So... (*Sniffing*) I think you can see how important this is.  
ZEKE

VICTORIA  
What is?

ZEKE  
My pitch.

VICTORIA  
Right.

ZEKE  
It's timely and current. And it's based on true events. I heard studios are looking for reality based stories. We could even put in the opening credits, "Based on actual events."

VICTORIA  
So, the NSA tapped into your/

ZEKE  
Wrong. They hacked.

VICTORIA  
Hacked/

ZEKE  
And not just me, I'm just the local southern California winner, god knows what they've done to national winners or international. China's got some bad ass Drone Strike dudes.

VICTORIA  
And they don't know they're actually, for real, killing people in Afghanistan.

ZEKE  
And other places.

VICTORIA  
And so there's this massive C.I.A. cover up/

ZEKE  
N.S.A.

VICTORIA  
*(Placating him)*  
Right. Well, Zeke, let me, you know, bounce it off some people.

Producers, directors?

ZEKE

Sure.

VICTORIA  
(Lying)

But don't tell my mother.

ZEKE

No?

VICTORIA

She wouldn't understand.

ZEKE

Right. It'll be our secret.

VICTORIA  
(She thinks he's nuts)

How about if I call next week to see where you're at with it. And thank you for taking the meeting. *(Sniffing)* I mean normally agents don't, you know.

ZEKE

Well, to be honest Zeke, when you said it was an emergency about your mother, I actually thought it was an emergency about your mother.

VICTORIA

Or better yet, instead of me calling, maybe, we, you and me, could, you know...

ZEKE

No, I don't know.

VICTORIA

Go out Friday night. Maybe dinner? And, I don't know, do-ya like movies?

ZEKE

*(SYLVIA enters, out of breath.)*

Steph, yes, Thank you. *(Seeing her son)* Zeke.

SYLVIA  
(Calling off)

**(MORE)**

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

What a surprise. What are you doing here? (*Trying not to be fake*) Isn't this something.

ZEKE

(*Pissed off, to Victoria*)

You called her?

VICTORIA

(*Trying to cover*)

Me? No, ah, we have a meeting.

SYLVIA

(*Covering badly*)

That's right we have a meeting.

VICTORIA

Right. So, what did you want to meet with me about?

SYLVIA

(*To Victoria*)

Oh, ah, I just stopped by to say the meeting with Ivanka went well.

VICTORIA

Who?

SYLVIA

Ivanka.

VICTORIA

Ivanka who?

SYLVIA

The Family Channel thing.

VICTORIA

(*Not covering well*)

Oh, right, The Family Channel thing.

SYLVIA

We hit it off, she wants me to write it.

VICTORIA

Write what?



Lung.

SYLVIA

VICTORIA  
*(No idea what she's talking about)*

Lung. Right.

ZEKE  
*(Yelling)*

This is bullshit! Total Fucking Bullshit!

VICTORIA  
*(Tense, to Sylvia)*

I'll let you handle this.

*(VICTORIA quickly exits. SYLVIA's alone with her son.)*

SYLVIA  
*(Desperate)*

What're you doing?

ZEKE

Pitching.

SYLVIA

You're not a writer.

ZEKE

That shows how little you know. I blog all the time.

SYLVIA

That doesn't make you a writer.

ZEKE  
*(Shouting)*

I'm A Writer!

SYLVIA

Can we not do this here? Let's talk in the car.

*(SYLVIA tries to leave. ZEKE stubbornly refuses to move.)*

ZEKE

You've embarrassed me.

SYLVIA

I've embarrassed you!

ZEKE

You've made me insubstantial.

SYLVIA

You want to be a Hollywood writer, being insubstantial is the first thing you got to get used to.

ZEKE

I have a ground breaking story, an important narrative and you're devaluing it!

SYLVIA

I've begged you to go to Dr. Altman.

ZEKE

I don't want to see my mother's psychiatrist!

SYLVIA

Lower your voice.

ZEKE

Fuck This Bullshit!

SYLVIA

*(Desperate)*

Zeke. Please. We're standing in my agent's office, if you have any respect for me, and my need to make a living, we will give our apologies to Victoria and we will talk in the car.

ZEKE

*(Shouting)*

I killed Hafiz Saeed Baghdadi!

SYLVIA

Okay! I believe you! But right now I just don't have the, the, brain matter to deal with it.

ZEKE

You're no Salinger!

SYLVIA

What the fuck does that mean? You're not Holden Caulfield!

ZEKE

I'm going to the news papers/

SYLVIA

Please don't/

ZEKE

They'll believe me!

*(Pissed off, Zeke pushes his way past SYLVIA and exits.)*

ZEKE (CONT'D)

*(O.S. - In the lobby)*

You're All A Bunch Of Phonies!

*(SYLVIA's left alone for a moment. She tries to breathe.)*

*(VICTORIA tentatively re-enters.)*

*(SYLVIA tries to laugh it off.)*

SYLVIA

*(Deeply embarrassed)*

What can I say. He's at an age. I think he needs more structure in his life.

VICTORIA

*(Quietly, forceful)*

This will not happen again. Goodbye.

*(VICTORIA starts to leave. SYLVIA stands there defeated, trying to hold it together.)*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

What?

SYLVIA

*(Precarious)*

I...

VICTORIA

You're completely embarrassed, you feel like crap, I got all that. Now, I've got to get back to work.

SYLVIA  
(Desperate)

...I've lost the story.

VICTORIA

Excuse me?

SYLVIA  
I don't feel like I'm in control of my story anymore.

VICTORIA  
So? You're a writer, rewrite.

SYLVIA  
(Distraught)  
I'm not a writer, I'm a mimic. I take surgically chosen lines and words from other peoples' stories and I patch'em together without citation. I'm a cut and paste writer. All I do is repurpose words.

VICTORIA  
Oh shit, you're drinking again.

SYLVIA  
I'm limiting myself to beer.

VICTORIA  
(Condescending and angry)  
Let me make things clear, your job is to put words on a piece of paper, my job is to sell that piece of paper and then we make our car payments. That's our professional working relationship. I didn't work my ass off dealing with sexist bald middle-age producers, fighting to get a few damn female writers accepted into this all male club, so that one of them could embarrass the shit out of me in front of the entire William Morris Agency staff. And while I'm at it, I'm not the one you call when you need to be bailed out of Sybil Brand after driving on the 405 with a blood alcohol level of point-one-five. Now, I don't want to hear from you again, until you have some good goddamn words, repurposed or otherwise, on a piece of paper!

(SYLVIA stands there, miserable.)

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
*(Pissed off)*

What?

*(She takes out the parking deck slip.)*

SYLVIA

Could you validate?

VICTORIA

Oh for god's sake!

*(VICTORIA exits.)*

*(SYLVIA exits.)*

*(Fade to.)*

**[Who Is The Real Alan Smithee?]**

*A Crappy Bar On Hollywood Blvd*

*(Several weeks later, IVANKA enters with the finished screenplay.)*

IVANKA  
*(Thrilled, calling off)*

Waitress, a Fat Tire and a Squirt please.

*(She sits and bows her head.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)  
*(Praying)*

Dear lord/

*(SYLVIA enters.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

Oh, you're here! I read it! And it's wonderful! Just exactly what I wanted.

SYLVIA  
*(Needing a drink)*

Oh. Good.

IVANKA

Oh, I just love the scene where the doctor with the drinking problem, who's been barred from the hospital, rushes in and saves the day.

SYLVIA

Hold that thought I need a...

*(SYLVIA starts for the bar.)*

IVANKA

Sit. Let me wait on you.

*(IVANKA runs off.)*

*(SYLVIA sits, then suddenly remembers something.)*

SYLVIA

Oh shit! That's right.

*(She grabs a pen and scrap of paper from her purse, writes something on it and puts it back in her purse.)*

*(Thrilled, IVANKA reenters with the drinks.)*

IVANKA

*(Sing song)*

Here we go.

SYLVIA

So, you liked it.

IVANKA.

Hold that thought. When I start somethin' I like to finish.

*(IVANKA sits, lowers her head and mutters a prayer.)*

IVANKA

*(We hear only a few words)*

Dear Lord, *(Muffled mumbling)* Producers... *(Muffled mumbling)* ...Ancillary rights... *(Muffled mumbling)* ...Percentage of gross... *(Muffled mumbling)* Amen.

SYLVIA  
What are you...?

IVANKA  
Praying.

SYLVIA  
Why?

IVANKA  
I'm praying that some big Hollywood producer will make this script into a block-buster.

SYLVIA  
I'm pretty sure praying doesn't work in Hollywood.

IVANKA  
Oh, I just loved the scene where the racist husband goes to the black family and begs for forgiveness. It's just so powerful. I cried.

SYLVIA  
Thank you. Suggestions? Notes?

IVANKA  
Oh no, I couldn't change a word, it's just oh so perfect.

SYLVIA  
In that case, I'll take the back money and wish you luck.

IVANKA  
Well, maybe, one little change.

SYLVIA  
You're the boss.

IVANKA  
Could you add a new scene?

SYLVIA  
*(Not wanting to)*  
...Sure.

IVANKA  
Do you remember the moment in the script where the mother takes Becky to the school bus stop?

SYLVIA

Yeah, I wrote it.

IVANKA

Well, I was thinking, every morning, before I took the real Becky to the bus stop, I'd always make her breakfast, blueberry pancakes, her favorite.

SYLVIA

*(Taking notes)*

So you want a mother-daughter-blueberry-pancake scene.

IVANKA

*(Sweetly remembering)*

We'd always share a moment - Talk about boys.

SYLVIA

Did you talk about anything other than boys?

IVANKA

Dating.

SYLVIA

Have you heard of the Bechdel Test?

IVANKA

What's that?

SYLVIA

It states that a movie should have at least one scene where two women talk about something other than men, or boys.

IVANKA

Wow, that'd be unique.

SYLVIA

So did you talk about anything else?

IVANKA

*(Guessing)*

...Politics?

SYLVIA

I can write that. *(Beat)* If it's true. That's true, right?



IVANKA

What do you mean?

SYLVIA

You talked politics over blueberry pancakes with your daughter.

IVANKA

Oh-no. We only talked about boys. And while I'm at it, I should tell you I never made her breakfast. I was too busy working the morning shift. I do it seven days a week.

SYLVIA

Who made her pancakes?

IVANKA

No one did. Becky was mostly raised by her deadbeat racist dad. But he loved her more than anything.

SYLVIA

...And is that true?

IVANKA

No. We found out later that he was her drug dealer.

SYLVIA

*(Frustrated)*

Ivanka, ah...

IVANKA

Yeah?

SYLVIA

Did it ever occur to you that you want this movie written because you, um, have...

IVANKA

Regrets?

SYLVIA

Trouble dealing with reality?

IVANKA

But what's reality?

SYLVIA

*(Frustrated)*

Truth, facts, you know, that sort of stuff.

IVANKA

Not anymore. *(Kindly)* Today reality is whatever you can get away with.

SYLVIA

Okay, fine, I'll add a mother/daughter scene over blueberry pancakes. Anything else?

IVANKA

Just one little thing.

SYLVIA

Sure, but then I do have a meeting.

IVANKA

With Mel Gipson/? Oh! Did you get his autograph?

SYLVIA

Got it right here.

*(SYLVIA takes out the piece of paper she signed at the beginning of the scene and hands it to IVANKA.)*

IVANKA

Oh, wow! *(Reading)* "Dear Ivanka, good luck with your screenplay" Signed, "Mel Gib-fon."

SYLVIA

*(Pointing at the scrap)*

That's an 's'.

IVANKA

No that's an 'f'.

SYLVIA

No that's definitely an 's'.

IVANKA

*(Delighted)*

Who would've guessed that Mad Max would have such pretty handwriting. Everyone in Dayton will be so impressed. Perhaps I'll get it framed. Should I get it framed?

SYLVIA

Why not. If that's it? Should be...

IVANKA

Oh, just one more thing.

SYLVIA

Sure.

IVANKA

The ending.

SYLVIA

What about it?

IVANKA

It feels fake.

SYLVIA

Fake? I disagree.

IVANKA

*(Opening the script)*

Becky gets out of the hospital, she and her parents go to the airport and fly back to Dayton and there's a rainbow. Fade out. Credits roll.

SYLVIA

What's wrong with that?

IVANKA

I don't like rainbows.

SYLVIA

I'm not married to the rainbow, I'll cut it.

IVANKA

No, it's not just the rainbow, what I'm trying to say is that... I don't like that they live happily ever after.

SYLVIA

Why not?

IVANKA

Cause life isn't that way.

SYLVIA

*(Put out)*

Well, that's what people want. They want to believe that someday we'll all fly off into the sunset. With or without a rainbow.

IVANKA

I want a different ending. After all, I am paying.

SYLVIA

Okay, whatever. What do you want?

IVANKA

I want the plane to crash.

SYLVIA

*(Beat)*

...Excuse me?

IVANKA

I want the plane to crash in a big ball of fire. No survivors.

SYLVIA

*(Stunned)*

Ah, let me get this straight, you want the little girl whose heart stopped beating during the operation but because of the heroic doctor who gave up drinking, rushes in and tries a new experimental procedure thereby saving her life and his career - you want her, and her loving parents to get on a plane, and as they're taking off, there's a, what...?

IVANKA

An engine fire.

SYLVIA

And the plane?

IVANKA

Loses altitude.

SYLVIA

And, what, they all start screaming?

IVANKA

And take crash positions.

SYLVIA

And then they plummet into the ground at five hundred miles per hour/

IVANKA

Impact. Fireball, black out, credits roll.

*(Beat. SYLVIA is speechless.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

*(Upbeat)*

Can you write that?

SYLVIA

Why?

IVANKA

Aren't you tired of happy endings?

SYLVIA

No!

IVANKA

It's time that Hollywood admits that life sucks.

SYLVIA

...But, but, what about your daughter?

IVANKA

What about her?

SYLVIA

How will she feel about having a movie made where she dies in a horrible fireball?

IVANKA

*(Stoic)*

My daughter's been in a coma for six months. I found out this morning that the doctors want to take her off life support.

SYLVIA  
(Halted)

I'm... So sorry... But I have to ask, is that true?

IVANKA

Yes.

SYLVIA

Are you sure?

IVANKA

Know how you can tell?

SYLVIA

Not really.

IVANKA

It isn't pretty.

(Beat.)

SYLVIA  
(Giving up)

Okay, fine. I'll write a fireball ending. Is that it?

IVANKA

When you're done will you show it to your agent.

SYLVIA

That's not part of the deal.

IVANKA

I'm sure it was.

SYLVIA

No, I write it, you market it. You can do anything you want with it. You can even put your name on it if you want.

IVANKA

You lied to me.

SYLVIA

What's this?

IVANKA

I looked up Alan Smithee. It's a fake name that Hollywood writers use when they want to disassociate themselves from a project they think is crap.

*(Beat. Shit, she's on to her.)*

SYLVIA

Ivanka/

IVANKA

No, I understand. There's a reason why it's called show *business*.

SYLVIA

Look, I'll add a pancake scene, and I'll kill them all off at the end, and have the script delivered to you today at your hotel. Are we done here?

IVANKA

*(Disappointed)*

I suppose.

SYLVIA

Can I get my back money?

IVANKA

Oh, sure.

*(CELELIA takes a checkbook out of her massive bag and writes a check.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

*(Writing the check)*

You've lived a charmed life, Ms. Parks. If you think it's tough to be a woman in Hollywood, you should try being one in Dayton. *(Writing)* Five Thousand.

SYLVIA

You don't need to put any exclamation points on it.

IVANKA

That's okay. I like to. *(To herself as she writes three exclamation points)* Boop boop boop.

*(She hands over the check, but then takes it back.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

Wait. If I don't write it down right away I'll forget.

*(SYLVIA grabs the check.)*

SYLVIA

That's okay, you can do that later.

IVANKA

Oh! I forgot, I came up with the new title.

SYLVIA

Yeah?

IVANKA

Christmas Lung just wasn't right. So I'm calling it "Reality."

SYLVIA

Reality?

IVANKA

Like it?

SYLVIA

Sure.

IVANKA

So put that on the title page. A pleasure doing business with you Ms. Parks. And you too Mr. Smithee.

*(IVANKA exits. SYLVIA is left alone with the check.)*

*(Fade to.)*

**[Reality]**

*Sylvia's Bungalow, Burbank*

*(SYLVIA turns to find her living room. She's had a hard day.)*



SYLVIA  
*(Calling off)*

I'm home. Zeke?

*(She hopes for a response.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
*(Calling off)*

I'm ordering Chinese. Zeke?

*(No answer.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
*(Calling off, frustrated)*

Okay, fine, we'll play by your rules. I'm going into my room now and I'm going to stare at a screen for twenty hours a day.

*(Her cell rings. She answers.)*

*(Lights up on a time-strapped VICTORIA in her office.)*

VICTORIA  
*(On phone, hurried)*

Me. Read it.

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

Read what?

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

The script.

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

What script?

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

The lung thing.

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

What? How did you...?

VICTORIA  
(*On phone*)

I was about to leave the office when that woman, what's her name?

SYLVIA  
(*On phone*)

Ivanka?

VICTORIA  
(*On phone*)

Walked in and gave it to me. I wasn't going to read it, but I had a sec and I just couldn't put it down.

SYLVIA  
(*On phone*)

You're kidding.

VICTORIA  
(*On phone*)

The scene where the doctor has to take the breathalyzer test right before the operation to prove he's not drunk, touching. And that moment when the mother breaks into her daughter's room and smashes her computer while she's playing drone strike, powerful. Glad you put your name on it/

SYLVIA  
(*On phone*)

Wait, my name/

VICTORIA  
(*On phone*)

I've sent a copy over to Lorenzo Hopper at Sony. We're working on a hot project right now.

SYLVIA  
(*On phone*)

Hot project?

VICTORIA  
(*On phone*)

'Ninja President.'

SYLVIA  
(*On phone*)

What the fuck?

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

It's about a president only he's a ninja.

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

Seriously, what the fuck?

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

Shut up. If the people want a Ninja President they get a Ninja President!

SYLVIA  
*(On phone)*

Look, it's not a good script, I cranked it out in two weeks. I didn't even proof it.

VICTORIA  
*(On phone)*

Gotta another call. Gotta go.

*(She hangs up and exits.)*

SYLVIA  
*(To herself)*

What the fuck.

*(ZEKE enters but not from his bedroom. His deeply troubled eyes are swollen with tears. He holds an L.A. Times.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Thought you were in your room... Where you been?

*(No answer. Zeke moves towards his bedroom.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Dinner? I'll order out. *(Blurting)* Stop when I talk to you!

*(ZEKE stops.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Where you been?

ZEKE  
*(Small, troubled)*

How do you do it?

SYLVIA  
Okay, fill me in, do what?

ZEKE  
Write bullshit.

SYLVIA  
Please, do me a favor and save up all your disdain for me and lay it on all at once. How about if we set aside one day a week for disdain. How about Wednesdays? Wednesdays, from now on, will be disdain day.

*(ZEKE tears up. He hugs himself.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
What?

ZEKE  
*(Losing it)*  
I don't want to go back to Dr. Altman.

SYLVIA  
*(Confused)*  
Okay. I won't make you.

ZEKE  
*(Desperate)*  
I want you to commit me.

SYLVIA  
Zeke, I'm not committing you. You got problems but/

*(ZEKE falls to his knees crying.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
Crap. Okay, if it'll make you happy I'll commit you.

ZEKE  
*(Weeping)*  
I fucked up. I was tired. Hadn't had anything to eat. I shouldn't have accepted the mission.

*(ZEKE loses it. Deeper tears. SYLVIA should hold him but she can't, she doesn't know how.)*

SYLVIA  
*(At wits' end)*

I want you to be well. What I'd give for you to be well.

*(ZEKE drops the newspaper.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

What?

ZEKE

Read it.

*(SYLVIA picks it up.)*

SYLVIA  
*(Reading)*

"Pentagon admits it was a missile from a US drone that...  
*(Her heart sinks)* Killed twenty-seven members of a wedding party in Afghanistan."

ZEKE  
*(Weeping)*

I keep thinking we're on the right side. Like we're better. But in reality, we pull just as much shit as they do! We're phonies, only we celebrate it.

SYLVIA

Zeke/

ZEKE

Didn't wait for confirmation. Didn't follow protocol. Saw my chance... There were women and children...

SYLVIA

This isn't real.

ZEKE

There was twenty thousand points at stake... And three gold stars!

*(ZEKE weeps.)*

SYLVIA  
*(Distraught)*

Zeke...

*(SYLVIA gets up the courage to hug  
her son. It's awkward.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
*(Devastated)*

This isn't real. ...This isn't real.

*(On the hug, the lights fade.)*

*END OF ACT ONE*

(Act Two)

**n95 particulate masks ]**

Agent's office, Beverly Hills

*(We enter mid-crisis.)*

VICTORIA  
*(Pissed off)*

Imagine my surprise!

SYLVIA

I'm so sorry.

*(VICTORIA picks up the script and reads the last page.)*

VICTORIA  
*(Reading the screenplay)*

"Exterior. Dayton Airport. Day. Orange and purple luminescence pencil the sky as their Airbus comes in for a landing. There is no rainbow." What the fuck does that mean?!

SYLVIA

She/

VICTORIA

Shut up! *(Reading)* "Suddenly the engines begin to whine. Smoke shoots from the wings. An explosion. Captain, voice over, "Brace for impact!" The engine disintegrates taking the wing with it. We hear only the anguished cries of the panicked passengers as they plummet to earth. Fireball. Blackout. Credits roll."

*(Beat, VICTORIA is incredulous.)*

SYLVIA

I thought you said you read it.

VICTORIA  
(Yelling)

I'm An Agent! I Don't Read! Not all the way through! I get the *gist*! I am a *gist* getter! And the *gist* up to page 92 was that they'd land safely and our lung-girl would go on to graduate from college, get married, name her daughter Dominique, and become a US Senator who fights for Universal health care!!! The *gist* was not that she, and her family, were about to be incinerated on a runway in Dayton Ohio! What The Fuck Is Wrong With You?!

SYLVIA

I wrote what she wanted/

VICTORIA

Thank God Hopper thought the ending was a joke. But you can imagine my confusion when he calls, tells me he loves the script, even the stupid scene where the mother and daughter talk politics over pancakes, but we'll have to cut the joke ending and I'm trying to figure out what the hell he's talking about!

SYLVIA

I tried to talk her out of it.

VICTORIA

I know I called her. I tell her she's the luckiest midwestern mama in the world and you know what she says?

SYLVIA

She won't compromise/

VICTORIA

She Won't Compromise!! She won't sell unless its done exactly as written!

SYLVIA

She's kinda attached to it.

VICTORIA

No shit! So I say, okay, and I totally bullshit her, how about if they add that ending to the director's cut? And she says no way. Do you realize how big this is? Hopper wants to cast Emma Watson.



SYLVIA

You're kidding. Why would she do a Hallmark channel bullshit movie?

VICTORIA

Because it's not Hallmark channel anymore! Hopper wants to make it a real movie. Like a holiday blockbuster. A new 'Miracle on 34th Street'. He wants to rush it into production so it'll be out by Christmas.

SYLVIA

What do you want me to do?

VICTORIA

You are going to make Little Miss Dayton Ohio change her mind and you're going to do it today!

SYLVIA

Can't/

VICTORIA

And then you and I are going do a meeting with Hopper at two o'clock at Sony.

SYLVIA

Can't do it today, my son's in the hospital.

VICTORIA

For?

SYLVIA

He's... He's...

VICTORIA

What!

SYLVIA

*(Disingenuous)*

He's got Polio.

VICTORIA

What?

SYLVIA

*(Fabricating)*

It's a new thing, it's not like old Polio but it's like new Polio/ related to Polio.

VICTORIA

Oh, he's in the nut house!

SYLVIA

Please don't.

VICTORIA

Just say it!

SYLVIA

I promised I'd stop by at two o'clock every day. He needs structure in his life.

VICTORIA

*(Condescending)*

Let me explain how this works - I make a meeting with a big important person, you drop everything you're doing, we go to said meeting, we make lots of money, I buy a new BMW 7-series, you pay your divorce lawyer's bill, and we ride off into the sunset/

SYLVIA

I really need to see my son/

VICTORIA

One more time. I make a meeting with a big important person, you drop/

SYLVIA

Okay!

VICTORIA

*(Beat, calming)*

You did good. Your career was dead, I didn't tell you, but you were beyond blacklisted, you were nobody. But you came back, you cracked the glass ceiling, and I'm proud of you.

SYLVIA  
*(Small)*

Thanks.

VICTORIA  
 I'll see you at Sony at 2 o'clock, Judy Garland Building.  
 Don't disappoint. And if by chance anyone should drop his  
 pants in the elevator, you smile, laugh and say, how witty.

*(SYLVIA is too self absorbed to  
 answer.)*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 I need a verbal confirmation.

SYLVIA  
*(Small)*

I'll be there.

VICTORIA  
*(Grabbing her stuff)*  
 Gotta go, got a meeting. And do yourself a favor, go get a  
 hot stone massage, you don't want to look desperate for the  
 meeting. Oh, and while you're at it whiten your teeth.

*(VICTORIA exits.)*

*(Fade to.)*

**[An Oscar Meyer Corndog With Real French's Mustard]**

*L.A. Hospital, Psych Ward*

*(Far off we hear the echo of a  
 hospital intercom calling for a  
 doctor.)*

*(SYLVIA turns to find herself in  
 the Psych Ward meeting room. ZEKE  
 steps in wearing a bathrobe. He's  
 deflated, dark.)*

SYLVIA  
*(Trying to be upbeat)*

Hey.

ZEKE  
(Hoarse)

Hi.

SYLVIA  
(Trying to find a subject)

The doctors let you have a robe and slippers.

ZEKE  
(Hazy, hoarse)

My reward for acting normal. If I keep it up they say I can have my phone back.

SYLVIA  
Your voice, kinda hoarse there.

ZEKE  
So?

SYLVIA  
They tell me you been yelling a lot. You can't do that if you want to get out.

(The conversation dies, SYLVIA  
tries to restart it.)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
...They, ah, feeding you okay?

ZEKE  
Had a corn-dog for lunch.

SYLVIA  
For what this place costs, they give you corn-dogs/

ZEKE  
You're three hours late.

SYLVIA  
Traffic.

ZEKE  
Three hours?

SYLVIA  
The 405, total mess.

ZEKE  
(*Accusatory*)

You were writing.

SYLVIA  
...So? Do you know what this place costs? And it's not all covered by insurance/

(*ZEKE fades for a moment. A sinking spell.*)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
You okay there?

ZEKE  
They got me on some shit. The lights got like halos around'em.

SYLVIA  
Yeah, forgot what it's called. Supposed to help. You kinda failed to mention you were self-medicating.

ZEKE  
Mom.

SYLVIA  
Shit.

ZEKE  
What?

SYLVIA  
It's been so long since you called me 'Mom'.

ZEKE  
If you love me/

(*SYLVIA's phone rings.*)

SYLVIA  
Shit. One sec.

(*SYLVIA checks, stops the ring.*)

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
You were saying?

ZEKE

Then you'll do something for me.

SYLVIA

Of course. How about a decent meal? We'll order out.

ZEKE

No.

SYLVIA

What then?

ZEKE

Validate me.

SYLVIA

And... how do I do that?

ZEKE

Admit there's a possibility.

SYLVIA

That...

ZEKE

I'm right.

SYLVIA

*(Finding her way, uncomfortable)*

Zeke... I took your computer down to the shop, they couldn't find any spyware or malware or anything.

ZEKE

Do you honestly believe the NSA would do something that could be detected by a nerd at the Mac genius bar?

SYLVIA

Look, Zeke, life... is just crazy, but if this is true, then life... isn't... life anymore. If it's true then nothing is true.

ZEKE

You got it.

SYLVIA

*(Frustrated)*

I can't do that. I can't live in a post-fact world.

ZEKE

*(Beat, cold)*

Will you sign the consent form so I can leave?

SYLVIA

Give it another week.

ZEKE

I turn eighteen Thursday.

SYLVIA

*(She forgot)*

Didn't forget.

ZEKE

*(His eyes narrow)*

You didn't?

SYLVIA

No.

ZEKE

At eighteen I can sign my own consent form.

SYLVIA

Please don't get all analytical. I'm not an analytical type, I'm just your average writer.

ZEKE

But you don't write about reality.

SYLVIA

*(Getting irritated)*

And what is reality? Tell me, I'd like to know.

ZEKE

*(Bitter)*

Reality is a bite of an Oscar Meyer corn-dog with real French's yellow mustard.

SYLVIA  
*(Small, confused)*

...What?

ZEKE

Don't get it, do you?

SYLVIA

Who would?

ZEKE  
*(Small)*

Fuck off.

*(ZEKE starts out.)*

SYLVIA  
 Okay. I'll stop by tomorrow. Two o'clock on the nose.

ZEKE

Whatever.

SYLVIA  
*(Pissed)*

Don't walk away when I'm talking!

*(ZEKE stops.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
*(Fed up)*

When it comes right down to it, you're the one who can't deal with reality. You got this fake concept of what a mom is supposed to be.

*(SYLVIA's phone rings.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
*(To herself)*

Goddamnit.

*(She stops it from ringing.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
 You live in a TV-world where it all ends happily fucking ever after. That's not real, sometimes the plane goes down with no survivors. That's when it's so real it hurts.



*(ZEKE brings his arms up mechanically as if he were a drone. He flies towards SYLVIA, buzzing.)*

ZEKE

Buzzzzzzzz.

SYLVIA  
*(Calling off)*

Nurse/

ZEKE  
*(Shouting)*

Target Identified! Permission to fire?

SYLVIA  
*(Confused, backing up)*

Zeke/

ZEKE

Permission granted! Engage!

*(ZEKE punches SYLVIA in the stomach knocking her to the ground.)*

SYLVIA  
*(Stunned, gasping for air)*

Son of a bitch. Nurse!

*(ZEKE stands over her. SYLVIA's terrified.)*

ZEKE  
*(Shouting)*

Direct hit! No survivors!

SYLVIA  
*(Desperate)*

Nurse! Can I get a nurse please!

ZEKE

Target Eliminated! Twenty thousand points!

SYLVIA  
*(Desperate)*

Nurse!

ZEKE

Two gold stars! Buzzzzzz.

*(ZEKE, as a drone, flies out.)*

*(SYLVIA is overwhelmed. She pulls herself to her feet. She can't help tears.)*

*(Fade to.)*

### **[Writing Is Rewriting]**

#### *A Crappy Bar On Hollywood Blvd*

*(SYLVIA finds herself in the bar. She has little energy left. Her stomach still aches from the punch. She sits, empty.)*

SYLVIA

*(Calling off)*

Fat Tire please. No, make it gin and tonic. No ice. And no tonic. Double.

*(IVANKA enters with the energy of a bumble bee. Under one arm she has the manuscript, under the other a book on screenwriting. In her hands are a Fat Tire and Squirt.)*

IVANKA

There you are. Ready for a work session?

SYLVIA

*(to herself)*

Oh jeez.

*(IVANKA plops down but she's so excited she can't sit still.)*

IVANKA

I've been thinking. My mind's on fire.

SYLVIA  
*(To herself)*

Great.

IVANKA  
The script. I think it's got problems. I mean, the point of attack is too late and the catharsis too long.

SYLVIA  
What, you're a screenwriter now?

IVANKA  
Well sort of, I bought a book. "Screenwriting for Dummies."

*(She holds up the yellow and black book.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)  
I had no idea so much was involved. But after reading it, I'm convinced that our problem is the character of Dominique.

SYLVIA  
What's wrong with her?

IVANKA  
You've got to give her some depth, bump her up by two percent.

SYLVIA  
*(Condescending)*  
Right, two percent, not three.

IVANKA  
And now I'm thinking that setting the story at Christmas is too feel-good-ie.

SYLVIA  
Feel-good-ie?

IVANKA  
Yeah, Feel-good-ie.

SYLVIA  
Is that a word?

IVANKA

And while we're at it, the attic scenes have got to go.

SYLVIA

What's wrong with the attic scenes?

IVANKA

They're just too Anne-Frank-ie.

SYLVIA

Okay, I know that's not a word.

IVANKA

This is not a major re-write.

SYLVIA

We don't do rewrites until they tell us what to rewrite.

IVANKA

Oh, that's too bad cause I was thinking about the ending.

SYLVIA

Except the ending. *That* we can rewrite.

IVANKA

I mean with them just crashing, it's just not enough. I thought we could... hold on.

*(She opens the screenwriting book to a marked page.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

*(Reading)*

"Up the stakes."

SYLVIA

And how do you propose we do this?

IVANKA

Got an idea.

SYLVIA

*(to herself)*

Of course you do.

IVANKA

What if, as the plane is about to land in Dayton, we cut to a family, the Fankhousers from Middletown Ohio, and they're waiting in the terminal, and they're about to take a trip of a lifetime to, like Hawaii or something, and they look up, and they see this huge plane, with its wings on fire, coming right at them. Impact! Fireball! Black out! Credits roll.

*(SYLVIA drops her head in her hands.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

You don't like it?

SYLVIA

You can't kill off a family that's just about to go on a Hawaiian vacation!

IVANKA

It's what I want to say.

SYLVIA

It's Hollywood, you don't get to say what you want to say!

IVANKA

But it's my story.

SYLVIA

Ivanka, please, listen, this is a script about hopefulness. It's about overcoming, and about new beginnings, and all that bullshit.

*(Again, SYLVIA's cell rings.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Goddammit.

*(SYLVIA stops the phone.)*

IVANKA

Or maybe the problem is that you're too close to the material? You can't kill your puppies.

SYLVIA

Puppies?

IVANKA

It's an old Hollywood saying. It means that sometimes there's a scene or a character that the writer loves, but you have to cut it out of the script.

SYLVIA

The saying is, kill your *darlings*.

IVANKA

Oh, I thought it was puppies.

*(She flips through the screenwriting book trying to find the page.)*

SYLVIA

Ivanka, how can I explain this. There are formulas, accepted methods.

IVANKA

But what about my unique voice?

SYLVIA

No one in Hollywood is interested in unique voices. Look, I'll say it, did you ever consider seeing a psychiatrist?

IVANKA

*(Taking back)*

What?

SYLVIA

I know a really good one.

IVANKA

Well now, is it your intent to insult me?

SYLVIA

No. It's just that you seem obsessed with killing off everyone in Ohio. Maybe you need help. Like, with reality.

IVANKA

*(Elegantly stoic)*

Ms. Parks, my divorce is final on Friday.

SYLVIA

And your daughter's in a coma, yes, I got all that.

IVANKA

But she won't be for long. The doctors called this morning. They're going to take her off life support Monday morning.

*(Beat. That takes the wind out of SYLVIA.)*

SYLVIA

I'm so sorry.

IVANKA

*(Kindly)*

Is that enough to let you know that I have a firm grip on reality? *(Beat)* Now, the reality is, I got a plane to catch, I gotta go home and say goodbye to my little girl. So let's compromise.

SYLVIA

Thank you.

IVANKA

We'll leave the ending the way it is. They simply crash. No one in the terminal is hurt, although after watching a hundred and fifty people die in front of them I doubt the Fankousers from Middletown Ohio will be in the mood for Hawaii. Do we got a deal?

*(IVANKA offers her hand. Beat, SYLVIA tries a new tactic.)*

SYLVIA

*(Wits' end)*

Ivanka... I have a son.

IVANKA

I know.

SYLVIA

He's in a psych ward. Doctors say he's suffering from P.T.S.D.

IVANKA

He was in the war?

SYLVIA

No, he got it from a video game. He believes that when he plays Drone Strike he's actually killing people in Afghanistan.

IVANKA

...Wow.

SYLVIA

He thinks he killed twenty-seven people at a wedding party playing Drone Strike. And the terrible thing is, he might be right, because, today, how could I know? How would anyone know what's real? That's why we need the movies. We need to escape. But in such a way that we know the exact boundaries between what's real and what isn't.

IVANKA

But why can't a movie make a point?

SYLVIA

People don't want to know what they already know. They already know that it's all going to end badly. So we need... We need...

IVANKA

Lies.

SYLVIA

If you want to call it that. I prefer innocent fictions.

IVANKA

Like Episcopatism?

SYLVIA

Well, I wasn't going to get that exact with my analogy, but, okay, Episcopatism. And...

IVANKA

Batman.

SYLVIA

And...

IVANKA

Presidential elections.



SYLVIA  
 And...

IVANKA  
 Methamphetamines.

SYLVIA  
 ...And happy endings.

*(Beat.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
*(Small)*  
 Ivanka, I need a happy ending... Whether it's real or not.

*(Beat.)*

IVANKA  
 I'm sorry about your son.

SYLVIA  
 And I'm sorry about your daughter. I hope you can find peace.

IVANKA  
 We may be the two worst mothers ever.

SYLVIA  
*(A sad laugh)*  
 You're probably right.

*(Beat. They hold hands. A tender moment. Then...)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)  
 Now, the ending.

*(Beat.)*

IVANKA  
 Yes.

SYLVIA  
 There's a lot of money on the line.

IVANKA  
 Is that so important?

SYLVIA  
*(Lying)*

No. *(Beat)* Although that's part of it.

IVANKA  
 Sometimes your voice, you know, who you are inside, that's not for sale.

SYLVIA  
 Ivanka/

IVANKA  
 I've lived out of a tip jar for my entire life. I gave you a lot of those tips, the least you can do is give me a voice. Okay? Okay.

*(IVANKA grabs her big midwestern bag.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)  
*(Midwestern upbeat)*  
 Have a nice day.

*(IVANKA exits.)*

*(SYLVIA sits for a moment. Her phone rings.)*

SYLVIA  
 Goddamnit.

*(Without seeing who it is she hangs up.)*

*(She exits.)*

*(Fade to.)*

**[Cut To The Chase]**

Hospital, Psych Ward

*(Somewhere deep in the bowels of the building.)*

*(ZEKE enters dragging a chair. He wears a robe. He has a cell phone.)*

ZEKE

*(On phone, hoarse, despondent)*

And of course I get your fucking answering machine. *(Laughs, Sarcastic)* Good news, I snatched a phone from the nurses' station. So, I got a bathrobe and some slippers and a phone and guess what, I found a chair.

*(Far off an alarm sounds.)*

ZEKE (CONT'D)

Hear that? That means they've figured out that I've gone missing. Don't have much time, so let's cut to the chase.

*(He pulls the cloth belt from the bathrobe and stands on the chair.)*

ZEKE (CONT'D)

*(On phone)*

This is real. It might've happened in a galaxy far far away, but I still did it. We all did it. And we have to live with it. *(Beat)* Or not.

*(He drops his bathrobe. If possible he should be naked, or wearing as little as possible.)*

*(ZEKE ties the belt of the robe around his neck.)*

ZEKE (CONT'D)

*(On phone)*

By the way, mom, today was my birthday, not Thursday.

*(Lights out.)*

**[Pathetic, Heartless, Bastard]**

Agent's office, Beverly Hills

*(VICTORIA enters with SYLVIA.  
SYLVIA's weak, she's been  
drinking.)*

VICTORIA  
What the hell happened to you?

SYLVIA  
*(Pulling herself together)*  
I need a drink.

VICTORIA  
Did you call your son?

SYLVIA  
What?

VICTORIA  
He called here and left two cryptic messages.

SYLVIA  
I was with Ivanka, I'll call him tomorrow.

VICTORIA  
Did she agree to the change?

SYLVIA  
No.

VICTORIA  
Christ. Okay. Fine. I'll tell the lawyer to write the contract up so that she can't possibly figure out what it says. But you screwed up, totally screwed up.

SYLVIA  
I don't know why this is so important. It's not even her story.

VICTORIA  
Whoa whoa, not her story?

SYLVIA  
She made it up.

VICTORIA  
But her daughter had a lung transplant, right?

SYLVIA

Yes, but nothing else is true. Her daughter is a meth addict.

VICTORIA

A what?

SYLVIA

It's all a bunch of bullshit.

VICTORIA

But the whole attic thing/

SYLVIA

There is no attic, there is no black friend, her daughter had a lung transplant because she huffed too much spray paint.

VICTORIA

*(To herself)*

Holy fucking shit.

*(Beat. VICTORIA begins to laugh.)*

SYLVIA

You think this is funny?

VICTORIA

Woman, our problems are solved!

SYLVIA

How?

VICTORIA

It's not her story - We don't need her fucking permission.

SYLVIA

She hired me. I cashed her checks. There's a paper trail.

VICTORIA

She paid you to write a story. Any story. It doesn't have to be *this* story.

SYLVIA

What do you want me to do, whip out another lung transplant script in a week?

VICTORIA

No, all you need is a script, any script will do. And we have one.

*(VICTORIA pulls Sylvia's Iowa screenplay.)*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

Beautiful Ukrainian bride falls for Iowa tractor salesman.

SYLVIA

Oh, shit, no.

VICTORIA

It's perfect.

SYLVIA

But you already sent that out.

VICTORIA

No, I didn't.

SYLVIA

You told me Herb over at Warner Brothers said it was 'fairly' touching.

VICTORIA

I'm an agent, I lie. I didn't send it to anyone.

SYLVIA

Why not?

VICTORIA

Cause it's crap!

SYLVIA

Thanks for letting me know.

VICTORIA

It has no heart.

SYLVIA

I need a drink.

*(VICTORIA takes a flask from her drawer and offers it to SYLVIA. She takes a swig.)*

VICTORIA

Now, listen, when she sues us, which she will, you simply say she pitched you the Iowa tractor salesman story and you wrote it.

SYLVIA

No. No, I have standards.

VICTORIA

You can't copyright an idea, only the script.

SYLVIA

I know, but/

VICTORIA

She's from Ohio. Iowa, Ohio, they even sound alike.

SYLVIA

I can't.

VICTORIA

It makes total sense that this is what she asked you to write. And when you met her she told you about her daughter's lung transplant which inspired you to write your original script.

*(SYLVIA wobbles, she's light headed.)*

SYLVIA

*(Tears)*

Victoria, I'm a mess.

VICTORIA

Maybe that's why you wrote such a damn good script. For once, you put yourself into it. Sylvia, this is more your story than hers. She might have inspired you, but you own it. You wrote all those wonderful Anne-Frank-ie scenes in the attic.

*(SYLVIA can't believe she said "Anne-Frank-ie.")*

SYLVIA  
*(To herself)*

Oh for god's sake.

VICTORIA  
 And that magnificent moment when the father tells the daughter, for the very first time, that he loves her right before the operation - That scene is Oscar bait. I cried - And as you know I don't cry. That was you, my friend, all you.

*(SYLVIA begins to cry.)*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)  
 Why? Why are you doing that?

SYLVIA  
*(Drunk)*  
 You don't understand.

VICTORIA  
 Shit, stop that.

*(VICTORIA gives her a tissue.)*

SYLVIA  
 My father...

VICTORIA  
 What about him?

SYLVIA  
*(Crying)*  
 ...He could never tell me that he loved me.

VICTORIA  
 And isn't that a good thing? I mean if he had you never would've become a writer. You'd be a normal person, how boring is that?

SYLVIA  
 And I'm the same... I've never told my son I love him.

VICTORIA  
 Well now, you just march yourself over to that insane asylum right now and let him know.



Can't.

SYLVIA

Oh, yes you can.

VICTORIA

No.

SYLVIA

You've made so many great movie moments, you deserve to have one in real life.

VICTORIA

But it's not real.

SYLVIA

Make it real.

VICTORIA

No.

SYLVIA

Why not?

VICTORIA

*(Beat.)*

SYLVIA  
*(Weeping)*

Cause I don't love him.

*(Beat. VICTORIA is stung.)*

VICTORIA  
*(Halted)*

Well, that's just... not... right. All mothers love their sons.

SYLVIA  
*(Wiping her tears)*

In the movies, not in reality.

*(VICTORIA backs away.)*

VICTORIA

*(Perplexed)*

I don't understand. You've written so many wonderful, believable moments between mothers and sons. 'You've Got P Mail' the scene between Cathy the Chihuahua and her baby.

SYLVIA

Made it up.

VICTORIA

And the touching scene where Paula the Pekingese holds her son for the very first time, that must have come from somewhere.

SYLVIA

*(Barely able to get the words out.)*

It's just repurposed words on a piece of paper.

*(SYLVIA weeps. VICTORIA hugs SYLVIA.)*

VICTORIA

*(Tenderly)*

Come on you pathetic, heartless, bastard, I'll drive you home.

*(They exit.)*

*(Fade to.)*

### **[Happy Endings]**

*Los Angeles International Airport*

*(LAX airport announcements echo down the corridor.)*

*(IVANKA enters pulling her overstuffed roller bag and struggling with her massive purse. She's on her phone.)*

IVANKA

*(On phone, frazzled)*

Can't talk, I'm trying to find my gate, and I'm lost, and I hate this airport/ What? ...No, I'm still in LAX. ...Wait, you're talking too fast. Slow down. *(Beat, stunned)* ...What do you mean she came out of her coma? ...Like, she spoke? Like words? What did she say?

*(What she hears totally overwhelms her. She is consumed by massive tears of joy!)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

*(Tears of joy!)*

...She asked for a Squirt!

*(She falls to her knees, elation!)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)

Oh my god! Oh my god! Tell my little snow cone I'll be there soon. ...What are you saying? ...What? ...But. ...Okay, I'll consider calling off the divorce but there have got to be changes. Lots of changes... I'm sorry I'm just a little overwhelmed right now. ...Do you realize what this means? ...There is such a thing as a happy ending!

*(Weeping, IVANKA exits pulling her roller bag.)*

*(Fade To)*

## **[Unhappy Endings]**

### Forest Lawn Cemetery

*(Many months later. After a graveside service. Birds chirp. Sunshine. VICTORIA enters wearing black and a funeral veil. She's on her cell.)*

VICTORIA

*(On phone)*

Look, since the nomination Sylvia can't do every meeting.

**(MORE)**

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

You're going to have to wait your turn. ...Can we talk later?  
...I'm at a funeral. ...Next week.

*(She hangs up. Sees someone off.)*

VICTORIA (CONT'D)

*(Calling off)*

Robert, thank you for coming. Call me.

*(SYLVIA enters.)*

SYLVIA

Hey.

VICTORIA

Hi.

SYLVIA

*(Trying to find something to say)*

...Beautiful day.

VICTORIA

Couldn't ask for better.

*(They stand beside each other and look out at the crowd. Beat.)*

SYLVIA

I knew your father knew everyone in Hollywood but I didn't think that meant he knew everyone in Hollywood.

VICTORIA

*(Waving at someone important)*

Yeah, all the important players are here.

SYLVIA

*(Looking out)*

Can't imagine this many people at my funeral.

VICTORIA

*(Looking out)*

That's cause you're a writer. People don't like going to writers' funerals - It's too depressing. *(Beat)* I know I supposed to ask so I will... How did it go at the Betty Ford Center?

SYLVIA

I haven't had a drink in three months.

VICTORIA

And Zeke?

SYLVIA

Living with his father and his child bride in Pasadena.

*(VICTORIA waves at another off stage guest.)*

VICTORIA

*(Calling off)*

Bob! Thank you for coming, call me. Let's do lunch. *(Then quietly to Sylvia, doubting)* Shit, I think his name is Bob.

SYLVIA

He answered to it.

VICTORIA

Then his name is Bob.

SYLVIA

You're networking at your father's funeral?

VICTORIA

*(Scanning for important people)*

You'd be amazed at how many deals are made at funerals in this town. *(In confidence)* Okay, so, act like we're grieving, like you're comforting me, but tell me what you're wearing Sunday night.

*(They huddle up as if they are comforting each other.)*

SYLVIA

*(Quietly)*

Oscar de la.

VICTORIA

*(Quietly)*

Buying or renting?

SYLVIA

Renting. You?

VICTORIA

Buying. Dress by Armani Prive. Shoes by Jimmy Choo. Hair, Giuseppe Franco, lips by Dr. Adam Goldstein of Beverly Hills. (Beat) You're going to win you know that don't you.

SYLVIA

Stop saying that.

VICTORIA

Offers are flowing in. Steve at Paramount wants to talk to you about re-writing the new Kung Fu Panda movie and Jerad at Columbia wants to meet you on Friday afternoon about writing the new Lego Angry Birds movie.

SYLVIA

Can't.

VICTORIA

Why not?

SYLVIA

I'll be in New York.

VICTORIA

When you coming back?

SYLVIA

Sunday morning.

VICTORIA

Wait wait wait, you're flying back on Sunday. But you/

SYLVIA

Don't worry, it's a morning flight.

VICTORIA

*(Breaking the quiet talk)*

Are you nuts?!

SYLVIA

I'm taking Zeke to a P.T.S.D. specialist in Manhattan.

VICTORIA

Holy Shit. What if your plane's late?

SYLVIA

It won't be.

VICTORIA

If you aren't there I will personally kill you.

SYLVIA

I'll be there.

VICTORIA

You know this is just temporary, next year no one will remember who won, you need to take full advantage.

SYLVIA

I'll be there.

*(VICTORIA sees someone off.)*

VICTORIA

Rob! Wait, let's talk. I'll be right there. *(Back to Sylvia)*  
Okay, see you Sunday. And for your speech.

SYLVIA

I'm not going to win.

VICTORIA

You gotta give that same speech you gave at that Writer's Guild breakfast last week.

SYLVIA

Stop it, I'm not going to win.

VICTORIA

It was brilliant. When you told that story about your son and breakfast and the Blueberry pancakes, there wasn't a dry eye in the house, my friend, not a dry eye.

*(VICTORIA runs off to network with whomever.)*

*(SYLVIA is left alone with her thoughts.)*

*(The sound of whining jet engines as a plane lands.)*

*(Fade to.)*

**[You Have A Nice Day]**

Dayton Airport

*(Dayton airport announcements echo down the corridor.)*

*(Sylvia finds herself at a small airport restaurant.)*

SYLVIA

*(On cell, frazzled)*

...No, I didn't miss the flight, it was cancelled. ...No, I got rebooked, but I had to change planes in Dayton. ...No, I'm not kidding. I'm in fucking Dayton Ohio. ...Yes, I know I have only six hours.

*(ZEKE enters pulling a roller bag. He's playing a game on his phone, I-buds stuck in his ears. He's a little medicated.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

*(On cell)*

I might not be glamorous, but I'll be there.

*(She hangs up.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Do you want something to drink?

*(But he doesn't hear her with the buds.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Zeke!

*(She pulls a bud.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

Do you want a drink? How about a coke?



Whatever.

ZEKE

*(For the rest of the scene ZEKE is consumed by a game on his I-phone.)*

Waitress a coke and a/

SYLVIA  
*(Calling off)*

*(SYLVIA stops.)*

*(IVANKA enters. She's wearing a waitress uniform.)*

And a Fat Tire.

IVANKA

*(One hell of a beat. SYLVIA doesn't know how to react.)*

Now isn't this a movie moment - You showin' up here.

IVANKA

*(SYLVIA grabs her things to go.)*

Zeke, we gotta go/

SYLVIA  
*(Backing away)*

No, it's okay. Don't. Please.

IVANKA  
*(Kind)*

*(SYLVIA stops.)*

So, tonight's the big night, huh?

IVANKA (CONT'D)

Ah. Yeah.

SYLVIA

Whatcha doing here then?

IVANKA

SYLVIA

My flight was cancelled, I'm reconnecting.

IVANKA

This your boy?

*(ZEKE doesn't look up he's too into his game.)*

SYLVIA

Yeah. Zeke, say hello. Zeke!

*(He never looks up.)*

SYLVIA (CONT'D)

He's kinda...

IVANKA

Off in his own little reality, aren't we all.

*(Beat.)*

SYLVIA

*(Trying to find something to say)*

So, ah, how's your daughter?

IVANKA

In a wheelchair.

SYLVIA

I'm so sorry.

IVANKA

Oh no, don't be. Life's great.

SYLVIA

Really?

IVANKA

Yeah. I survived a bout with breast cancer this fall, and my daughter's learning to type with a stick in her mouth and with the settlement payoff my husband and I reaffirmed our vows in Hawaii.

SYLVIA

Oh. That must've been wonderful.

IVANKA  
 Our rental was stolen.

SYLVIA  
 Ivanka/

IVANKA  
 It's okay. Don't you know, it still qualifies as a happy ending.

SYLVIA  
 It does?

IVANKA  
 Oh sure. *(Beat)* So, you're going to get all dolled up. And put on someone else's jewelry and, are you taking a limousine?

SYLVIA  
 Yeah.

IVANKA  
 Isn't that nice.

*(IVANKA's eyes get big, she points out to the runway.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)  
*(Shocked)*  
 Oh My God! Look!

SYLVIA  
 Where?

IVANKA  
*(Pointing out the window)*  
 There/

SYLVIA  
 What/

IVANKA  
 There! That plane/

SYLVIA  
 What plane/

IVANKA  
 Its Engine Is On Fire!

SYLVIA  
*(Trying to find it in the sky)*

Holy Shit! Where!

*(IVANKA smiles and laughs.)*

IVANKA  
 Just kidding.

SYLVIA  
 What the hell?

*(IVANKA laughs.)*

IVANKA  
 Gotcha.

SYLVIA  
*(Pulling herself together)*

I... Gotta go. Zeke.

IVANKA  
*(Suddenly serious)*  
 You see that's the difference between you and me.

*(SYLVIA backs away.)*

IVANKA (CONT'D)  
 You know that's possible. I don't. So I'll always be happier than you. *(Beat)* You have a nice day.

*(IVANKA exits.)*

*(Fade to)*

*(In the darkness Zeke exits.)*

**[And The Winner Is...]**

*(The lights fade to a single pool isolating SYLVIA.)*

*(We hear the sound of applause in a large auditorium and then the voices of beautiful people.)*

VOICE OF ACTRESS  
(V.O.)

And the nominees for best original screenplay are.

VOICE OF ACTOR  
(V.O.)

Bryan Winter for "Lord of the Rings, The return of Sauron."

VOICE OF ACTRESS  
(V.O.)

John Ahart for "Lego Ghostbusters."

VOICE OF ACTOR  
(V.O.)

William Strieber for "Rapture Road Redemption."

VOICE OF ACTRESS  
(V.O.)

And Sylvia Parks for "Reality."

*(SILVIA holds her breath in anticipation.)*

VOICE OF ACTOR  
(V.O.)

And the Oscar goes to...

*(SILVIA is totally alone.)*

*(The roar. It's an out of control incoming airliner, it may be real, it may be in SILVIA head.)*

*(Then an massive explosion, fireball, blackout, credits roll.)*

END OF PLAY