

HERRICK

Juniors only.

IRIS

That's okay, Cole and I will go out to Meijer Market and buy six tons of Lucky Charms and that's all we'll eat from now on.

She and Cole sign back and forth and laugh. Herrick, left out, goes back to Tony Orlando and the canned laughter.

INT. REHEARSAL ROOM, NIGHT

Herrick directs the boys as they mutilate "Gee, Officer Krupke!". Rowena and some of the other students watch from the audience.

Every time Herrick looks in Rowena's direction he finds her staring at him. It distracts the hell out of him.

EXT. KENNEDY HIGH, NIGHT

Herrick walks across the nearly empty parking lot. His Corvair, newly painted, badly painted, sits alone in the teachers' section. Rowena is waiting there.

ROWENA

Classic car, Mr. Herrick.

HERRICK

Really? I never thought of it that way. I suppose it will be a classic if it holds together for a few more years. That's better than calling it a piece of worn-out junk. Classic... I like that.

ROWENA

No, classic like, genius, like perfect. It's perfect for you, it's cute.

HERRICK

Really..

ROWENA

Look, Mr. Herrick, I was supposed to catch a ride with Toby Klein, but I think he wants to rehearse
(MORE)

MR. ORLOS

START

ROWENA (CONT'D)
the love scenes -- for real.
So I told him I'd catch a ride
with someone else ... could
you... ?

HERRICK
Of course.

He opens the door for her and she jumps inside.

INT. CORVAIR

He gets behind the wheel, pumps the gas pedal. Rowena looks around the car and at Herrick.

ROWENA
Classic... Just drop me by my
parents' restaurant. You've
been there, right?

HERRICK
Yeah, the pizza place.

He drives away.

EXT. BOWSER'S PIZZA, NIGHT

A mom and pop pizza parlor. Herrick pulls up across the street.

INT. CORVAIR

HERRICK
There you go.

ROWENA
Are you hungry? Pizza's on me
... on my folks.

HERRICK
Pizza sounds good. I'll have
to call home.

ROWENA
Great! I'm starving!

INT. BOWSER'S, NIGHT

Herrick and Rowena eat, though she talks more than she eats.

ROWENA

I love the way you teach music.
I mean, you have this ... thing,
this aura that you give off...
like, I don't know, like this
energy field. You love music
and you make people love it
with you. I have different
ears because of you.

HERRICK

I'm not a plastic surgeon.

ROWENA

Don't make fun of me. I hear
things differently now, that's
special.

HERRICK

I'm just a teacher.

ROWENA

No, you're not. Mr. Prins is
just a teacher.

INT. BOWSER'S, LATER

Herrick and Rowena finished the pizza a long time ago. There
are a number of empty Mountain Dew and Dr. Pepper bottles on
the table. "Spanish Harlem", the Aretha Franklin version,
is playing on the jukebox.

ROWENA

Have you ever read "Even Cowgirls
Get the Blues"? No? You should,
you should. It's genius, really.
It changed my life. How about
"Ragtime"? Classic... "Stranger
in a Strange Land"? Genius.
(beat, listening)
I love Aretha Franklin, isn't
she genius? I wish I could
sing like that.

HERRICK

You have the voice.

ROWENA

The voice is nothing. She has...
feeling. It's pure, raw sex
and pain and heart and soul
and... life. There's living
behind that voice. I haven't
lived yet.

HERRICK

I think I know what you mean.
I felt that way the first time
I heard John Coletrane play.

ROWENA

Who's that?

HERRICK

Where do I start? He was...
genius, classic ... perfect.

ROWENA

You're making fun of me again.

HERRICK

No, no, never. John Coletrane
was all those things and more
... he was...

INT. BOWSER'S, LATER

The place is empty except for Herrick and Rowena in a booth
and one guy mopping out the kitchen.

HERRICK

...a symphony that took what
George Gershwin and Aaron Copland
did with the music of their
time and brought it into the
world of rock and roll. Took
American music to the next step.
A grand opus of American music.

ROWENA

Opus? The only Opus I know is
in that comic strip, Bloom
County. You know, with Milo
and Bill the Cat. So when can.
I hear this ... opus, symphony
thing?

HERRICK

I never finished it -- I gave
it up. I worked on it for...
five years and then... Other
people did it better than I
ever could.

ROWENA

Oh, but not like you'd do it.
You should finish it.

HERRICK

I only got to the first movement.

ROWENA

So... finish it. You have great things in you, Mr. Herrick. You're a talented man. I've watched you, you've got genius in you.

She reaches over and takes his hand -- the intimacy overwhelms him.

HERRICK

God, look at the time. Tomorrow's a school day, for both of us.

He rises and goes for his wallet.

ROWENA

I told you, my treat.

HERRICK

Well, thanks... Can I give you a ride home?

ROWENA

No, my dad'll be here soon to cash out. Thanks for the talk, and everything.

Herrick smiles and nods.

HERRICK

See you at rehearsal.

ROWENA

You bet!

He leaves.

INT. HERRICK HOUSE, NIGHT

Herrick enters quietly and puts down his briefcase. He stands in the dark room for a while, then walks over to the desk. He switches on the desk light, opens a drawer, and takes out his sheet music, the opus.

Sitting down, he begins to read the pages, whispering the notes, smiling as he does. Not bad.