

FATHER FIGURE

A Theatrical Fable About Parenting in the Modern Age

By

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Cast of characters:

BETTY DRAUPER

VICTOR SPITZ

MIA – A TEENAGER, AGE 17

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Location- The Living Room

“Per Education Clause 43 Dash 12- Every child from the age of twelve will have the right to choose their parents according to their needs, in order to reach their desired achievements and full potential as a citizen in the country. It is our duty to do everything for the child’s best interest.”

Scene 1- Rent A Dad

(The stage is set with several black pieces of furniture, Betty stands holding a contract as Victor looks around to inspect the premises.)

BETTY: Do you like it?

VICTOR: Yes.

BETTY: It's a small, cozy house.

VICTOR: Certainly, very cozy. Mrs. Drauper.

BETTY: Call me Betty. Mrs. Drauper sounds so formal...(Pause) This is the couch. It's quite comfortable...You can try it. This is the table. A vase. There's a wonderful flower shop down the street, with little touches of nature. Do you like nature?

VICTOR: Of course. I love nature.

BETTY: Great...And this is the window. It opens and shuts smoothly, just like that, no problem at all.

VICTOR: Are you okay?

BETTY: Oh, yes. Everything's A-OK.

VICTOR: I see concern in your eyes.

BETTY: Concern? No! Maybe a bit. Still, you're a stranger. We don't know one another. Though, I must note, I feel very comfortable around you. Not threatened at all.

VICTOR: I can promise you I meet all professional standards.

BETTY: How tall are you?

VICTOR: Five foot nine!

BETTY: Wonderful.

(She gazes deeply in his eyes)

VICTOR: Is everything all right?

BETTY: Oh, yes. Your eyes. Are they emerald?

VICTOR: Hazel.

BETTY: Authoritative features.

VICTOR: Certainly.

BETTY: She's going to love it. (Writing) Shall we sign?

VICTOR: You're lucky to have contacted me when I'm available, Mrs. Drauper.

BETTY: Betty, call me Betty.

VICTOR: That's a beautiful name, Betty. Very unconventional.

BETTY: Oh, how sweet of you.

VICTOR: And what's my name?

BETTY: Victor.

VICTOR: Victor. A worthy name. V-I-C-T-O-R.

(Betty hands him the contract.)

BETTY: So, the contract is for one month.

VICTOR: When is she due to arrive?

BETTY: Any minute. Here's the pen.

VICTOR: What's the rush? Here we are, you and I, sitting here enjoying ourselves.

BETTY: But Mia will be back soon and I—

VICTOR: No stress. We'll sort out the contract. But first, let's talk.

BETTY: About what?

VICTOR: About parenting. What do we know about it? There's no instruction manual. One minute you're a person, and the next- a

Parent! Taking care of something so fragile, without one bit of information, with no ability, no understanding. There's nothing parallel to this in nature.

BETTY: Oh, of course. You're right.

VICTOR: Have you ever been to Africa, Mrs. Drauper?

BETTY: Africa? No.

VICTOR: I have. Do you know how they raise children in Africa? The child is thrown outside. To the wind, the sun, the desert sands. Full of energy, it explores. Picks everything off the ground and puts it in their mouth. Rocks, ants, animal dung. The child pours sand into his mouth, and there is no one there to tell him he might choke. His mother is gathering. His father is hunting. The child has no choice but to wise up. To realize he's all alone in this world. But over here, oh, wow! We take care of every little thing for them. The child so much as reaches for something, and whoop, the parents rush to take the object from his tiny hands. (Pause.) At the end of the day, we're the problem, Mrs. Drauper. The parents. And this is precisely where I come in. I assume you've read my op-ed- "Calm Down! The Art of Fatherhood."

(Takes a biscuit from the table and bites into it.)

BETTY: No.

VICTOR: No? That's a shame. So how did you reach me?

BETTY: I saw you on the Morning Show...

VICTOR: That's a shame. Fifteen years of experience crammed into one article. Most fathers, what do they know? They have one family, two at max. They've long forgotten what it means to be a father figure. But I, as a professional father, I see through these kids like an X-Ray, and I can tell you for a fact, Mrs. Drauper-

BETTY: - Betty.

VICTOR: That I will not be manipulated. I have never met a child that I've failed to raise to utter excellence.

BETTY: Wonderful. So, if everything is to your liking, just give me a little squiggle here, please...

VICTOR: I'd love to have something to drink, this biscuit made my lips dry.

(Betty pours him a glass of water)

VICTOR: Nothing beats water. Nature's liquid. So where were we?

BETTY: We were saying that Mia is about to get here-

(Betty places a small gift bow on his lapel.)

VICTOR: Oh, yes. Yes, Mia. The little rascal. Yes, tell me a bit about her.

BETTY: Of course. What would you like to know?

VICTOR: I'd love you to fill me in on your objectives.

BETTY: What objectives?

VICTOR: Tell me what I have to take care of. What's the issue? I want to coordinate our expectations.

BETTY: No issues, she just wants a father.

VICTOR: And why is that?

BETTY: Because...you know how it is...

VICTOR: How is what?

BETTY: Kids...they all have fathers! She also feels like trying one. And the truth is that it sounds nice, to shake things up a bit.

VICTOR: Where's the original father?

BETTY: The biological father died in the war. She never knew him.

VICTOR: So, let me guess, she suffers from raging tantrums?
Overindulgence? What's the problem? Does she wet her bed?

BETTY: She does not wet her bed.

VICTOR: Is she overly needy? Doesn't know how to part from her toys?
Don't keep anything from me, there's no issue that can't be fixed
with a bit of assertiveness and charisma.

BETTY: I assure you, there's no issue in this house. It's a completely
ordinary house.

VICTOR: I feel like you're keeping something from me. Every house has
an issue. A completely ordinary house is a house with an issue.

BETTY: I assure you that if there was an issue, I would be aware of it.
Well, perhaps she gets bored easily. Loses interest. But I wouldn't
call it an issue. It's completely normal.

(Mia enters while speaking into her cellphone camera)

MIA: Hi Status, I just got home. Thanks for walking with me. Kisses,
love you, bye. *(Hangs up.)* Mom... Mother... I'm a total queen,
you have no idea. *(Notices Victor)* Who is this?

BETTY: Let me introduce you to Vict-

MIA: *(Ignoring her, continues)* The annoying history teacher. That keeps
giving us tests just to show off that she's smart and we're stupid,
so we made a petition, and all the students signed it, and guess
what...She was fired! Boom! Who's smart now?

BETTY: Ahem, Mia...

MIA: What?

BETTY: This is Victor.

MIA: Who's Victor? *(It dawns on her)* No, get out. No! No-no-no-no-
no-no. Dad?! My actual dad?! Oh my god!

VICTOR: Hello.

MIA: Awesome! Your voice! So, like, in charge. I can't believe it.
Mom, where did you find him?

BETTY: On The Morning Show with Paula...

MIA: Is this for real? Are you really my Dad?!

BETTY: He will be if I can just have you sign here for a sec-

VICTOR: Look...

MIA: Oh my god, I've waited for this moment for so long! This is exactly what I was imagining. Wow, I, I, I, I just want to hug you. Can I? Wow, wow! Wow! My heart is pounding. Oh, you're so old, and soft, and serious looking. And your eyes are-

(Betty and Mia gaze at one another and say simultaneously:)

Both: Hazel!

MIA: You have no idea how badly I wanted a dad!

BETTY: So badly.

MIA: Oh my god, my heart. Mom, I can't breathe.

BETTY: Inhale, exhale, deep breath in, deep breath out.

VICTOR: *(To Betty)* There's no need for you to breathe for her.

MIA: Mom, this is the most amazing thing you've ever done for me. Dad, you're amazing, this is the most amazing thing that's happened to me EVER (a beat) Wait, I must lose this uniform. Don't go anywhere.

(Mia exits)

BETTY: So, what do you think?

VICTOR: How old is she?

BETTY: Seventeen.

VICTOR: And you waited until now to call me? You didn't mention she was seventeen.

BETTY: I mentioned it over the phone.

VICTOR: I precisely recall you not mentioning it.

BETTY: When?

VICTOR: Over the phone.

BETTY: Didn't I? Well, she's seventeen, no doubt about that.

VICTOR: You're a little late. It's very difficult to mold children at this age.

BETTY: Is that a problem?

VICTOR: If you'd have read my op-ed, you'd have realized this.

(Victor takes a step towards the door)

BETTY: You're not leaving, are you? Please don't, she'll kill me...

(Mia enters)

MIA: Family Insta-story!! I'm sharing this everywhere. they're going to love you for us.

VICTOR: Who's they?

MIA: My followers.

BETTY: Mia's doing very well on social media.

(Mia doing a TikTok dance.)

MIA: How do I look? Huh? Dad? How do I look?

BETTY: You look lovely.

MIA: I wasn't asking you. I was asking Dad. Come on, say something. Say something a dad would say...

VICTOR: This is how you present yourself in public?

MIA: I live!

VICTOR: That style of dress disrespects you.

MIA: This is super chic. But what do you know, hashtag- Old-School-Dad.

BETTY: I think it's very flattering-

MIA: Hashtag- Shut-Up-Mom. *(Stands on the couch)* Okay, Story-time!

VICTOR: You can't photograph yourself dressed like that.

MIA: Why not?

VICTOR: Think of the message you're sending!

MIA: This is how I like to dress.

VICTOR: *(To Betty)* Well, in that case, I'm afraid it is not possible for me to stay in this house.

BETTY: What? No, no.

MIA: Mom?! What have you done?

BETTY: *(To Victor)* You can't leave. *(To Mia)* Mia, change your outfit.

MIA: To what? I have nothing to wear!

BETTY: You have plenty to wear.

MIA: Yeah, ugly clothes!

BETTY: Just yesterday we bought you three-

MIA: *(Approaching Victor)* This is because you don't like the way I look, right? Right?

VICTOR: That's not what I said.

MIA: You think I'm ugly. You think I'm full of zits. That's why you want to leave.

BETTY: *(To Mia)* He doesn't think that. *(To Victor)* You don't think that, right?

MIA: Why does something good always turn into something bad?!

BETTY: That's not true. Mia

MIA: It's because I have nothing to wear. Nothing, period. And I'm ugly, and no one wants to be around me. I hate myself.

BETTY: Mia.

MIA: Stop 'Mia'-ing me. You can see for yourself; he doesn't like me.

VICTOR: I didn't say that.

MIA: *(To Betty)* This is all your fault. Now, this entire day is ruined. Ruined!

BETTY: It's not ruined.

MIA: You're a terrible mother.

BETTY: Me? Nonsense!

MIA: I want to die.

BETTY: You don't want to die.

MIA: Yes, I do.

BETTY: No, you don't.

MIA: I do too!

BETTY: Please don't die...

MIA: Then get me something to eat, I need sugar-

BETTY: Do you want some pie?

(Betty runs towards the kitchen)

MIA: Ewww. There's nothing to eat in this house.

BETTY: A snack then?

MIA: What snack?

VICTOR: A snack?!

BETTY: There's a granola bar-

MIA: I hate granola bars! We never have any snacks I like. I hate this life, I hate it.

BETTY: You don't hate it!

MIA: *(Simultaneously)* I do hate it! It's disgusting!

BETTY: *(Simultaneously)* Don't use the word "hate", it's not disgusting!

MIA: I'll use whatever word-

VICTOR: *(Raising his voice)* WHAT IS THIS!? A mother and daughter fighting like this?

BETTY: I wasn't fight-

VICTOR: SILENCE! *(Pause)* Alright, I've made my decision.

(Victor takes the contract and signs it)

VICTOR: Mia, who chose what to wear? Answer me.

MIA: I did...

VICTOR: And who wanted a father?

MIA: I did...

VICTOR: So, as your father, let me teach you. If you want something, own it. Am I clear? I asked if I'm clear.

MIA: Yes.

BETTY: That's exactly what I always try to-

VICTOR: Betty, let me. *(To Mia)* You haven't had a father for a very long time, but now that I'm here, you'll have to make some adjustments. So, I'm going to ask you to put something on, and we'll move forward. Am I clear?

(Mia laughs.)

VICTOR: What's so funny?

MIA: How you're all serious...

VICTOR: Go on then, do I need to stand here for much longer, or are you going to shoot that video you wanted?

MIA: Okay, sure. Mom!

BETTY: I'll cover you with something.

(Betty lays a shawl on Mia)

BETTY: Is that better?

VICTOR: Absolutely.

MIA: Hashtag- I-Look-Fifty.

BETTY: Hashtag- Mommy-Loves-You.

MIA: *(To Betty)* Hashtag- You're-Not-Doing-It-Right.

VICTOR: Go on then.

(They pose)

MIA: *(To the cellphone camera)* Hi guys! So, all my followers- meet my family. You already know my mom, Betty. *(To Betty)* Mom, move closer to Dad. *(To the camera)* And this is my new dad, Victor. *(To Victor)* Say hi. *(Victor doesn't move)* That's all for now, love you all. Going to see what having a dad is all about! Kisses! *(Turns off the camera)* This is the best day of my life.

Scene 2- Trouble at Home

(Some time has passed- Victor sits down on the couch)

VICTOR: Those were difficult days when the war began.

MIA: Hashtag- Dad's-Telling-A-Story.

VICTOR: Enemy forces were progressing toward us. I was one of the first to enlist and quickly found myself on the front lines. Sweltering heat. The sun beating down on our heads, and I'm standing against an impending aggressor. The constant sound of shots firing, shells blasting all around us. I saw people wounded, dead. It was a bloody war. A war for our future.

BETTY: My god.

VICTOR: One day, my unit was sent on a special mission. We had to infiltrate an enemy camp and set an explosive. But the enemy knew about this operation and was waiting in ambush. There was no choice, I grabbed two of the soldiers who were with me and we started running. We found a hiding place behind a large boulder. Enemy soldiers were searching for us and we knew it was a matter of time until they find us. The only way for us to save ourselves was for one of us to create a diversion as the other two ran. One of us had to sacrifice himself so the others could live.

BETTY: You?!

VICTOR: *(Stands up, clearly traumatized)* I said goodbye to my friends and started running. The yells of the enemy soldiers sounded from far behind me. They began shooting in my direction bullets were whistling around me. And then bam...one hit my leg. The pain was crushing, my energy drained from me. But I went on running, bleeding, until I fell to the floor, covered in blood. And then...I felt the barrel of a gun at my back. It was an enemy

soldier, a young man, with frightened eyes. He spoke to me in a language I didn't understand. I tried telling him that he doesn't have to do it. He doesn't have to be a killer. He aimed the rifle at my head.

BETTY: I can't take it.

VICTOR: Three... Two... One... *(Groaning)* Ah... *(Falls to his knees)* Aaaahhh
(Let's out a final groan.)

MIA: Go on!

(Victor gets a stroke and dies.)

BETTY: Victor? Victor...?

MIA: *(To Betty)* I don't get it, was that dad's story? Or Dad's?

BETTY: Victor?

VICTOR: *(Jumps up)* Boo!

BETTY: Ah!

(They all laugh. Mia becomes manic, films herself doing a TikTok dance.)

BETTY: She'll be up all night after that story.

VICTOR: Oh, look at that, it's already ten PM. Time for bed.

MIA: LOL...I don't go to bed that early.

BETTY: She doesn't go to bed that early. *(To Mia)* Gin?

MIA: Yes, thank you, Mother. On the rocks with a twist.

(Betty pours Mia a glass of gin)

VICTOR: You drink?

MIA: Mom, ask Dad if he also wants a drink.

BETTY: *(To Victor)* Whiskey, vodka, or a gin and tonic?

MIA: I don't like vodka.

BETTY: *(To Victor)* It gives her heartburn. *(Hands Mia a cigarette)* And here's your cigarette.

MIA: Thanks, Mom. Where's the ashtray?

BETTY: On the balcony. *(To Victor)* I can't stand the smell of cigarettes.

MIA: And I can't have a drink without one.

BETTY: It's like meditation for her. But Mia, please don't use the neighbors' balcony as an ashtray...

MIA: I didn't use their balcony as an ashtray. I accidentally dropped my butt.

BETTY: And their house nearly burned down.

MIA: Mom, you're being annoying. *(To Victor)* Dad, are you coming to the balcony? I'm getting so many comments from people who want to know more about you. I have an idea, Hashtag Confessions- My Dad's going to tell us how he lost his virginity.

VICTOR: Excuse me?

MIA: Have you ever had sex with a man?

VICTOR: Turn that camera off.

MIA: Oh, did you have a threesome?

VICTOR: Turn that camera off!

(Mia takes her phone down and puts it in her pocket. Victor takes the cigarette from Mia's lips.)

MIA: Hey, what the hell?

VICTOR: *(Turning to Betty)* So what's next? You're going to tell me she does drugs as well?

BETTY: Only medicinal marijuana.

VICTOR: And you're fine with that?

BETTY: It smells nice, like incense, it reminds me of Notre Dame.

MIA: Sure, so can I have my cigarette now?

VICTOR: You're not getting this cigarette back.

(Victor rips it apart and throws it on the floor)

BETTY: She's a teenager, they smoke...

VICTOR: We don't smoke in this house.

MIA: Hashtag Zero-Vibe-Dad.

VICTOR: - And we don't discuss sex on social media!

MIA: What? Why?! Mom told me about her first time. She lost her virginity on a Kibbutz.

BETTY: Guilty as charged.

VICTOR: Not as long as I'm in this house.

MIA: Oh my God- *(Pulls out her camera again)* Hashtag Tough-Dad.

VICTOR: Turn that camera off, I'm serious.

MIA: So, my Pop here just caught me smoking and drinking and he wants to stop me.

VICTOR: Mia!

MIA: He's very angry. *(Whispers to Victor)* That's perfect, keep going.

VICTOR: I said, put your phone down.

MIA: No, it's a live!

BETTY: *(To Victor)* She's broadcasting live!

MIA: *(Runs away, panting)* If you're watching me now, this may be the last time you see me... Tell Guy from my math class that his breath is vile, and I'm literally done with him-

VICTOR: Take it down, or I'm going to punish you.

BETTY: We don't do punishment in this house-

MIA: Punishment?!

VICTOR: You leave me no choice.

BETTY: Mia, could you please show your father some respect and put your phone down?

MIA: Punish me!

VICTOR: Don't try me.

MIA: Come on. I never got a punishment. What do I have to do?

VICTOR: You shouldn't be happy about it.

MIA: *(Mia passes Betty her cell phone to video her)* Get this. Finally, something exciting in this house!

VICTOR: If that's the case, then no.

MIA: Please...

VICTOR: No.

MIA: Please, please, please.

VICTOR: No.

MIA: PLEASE!

BETTY: Do you want me to punish you?

MIA: What? No, that's not the same thing. Come on, Dad! Daddy! DAD!!!!

BETTY: Will you please punish her? She's so looking forward to it.

MIA: Please, Dad! Punish me, or I'm telling Mom to FIRE you!

(Now he's really getting angry)

VICTOR: So rude! Go to your room right now, young lady!

MIA: Yes!

VICTOR: And have a good think about your behavior.

MIA: Just a think? I can think right here. *(Mimes thinking)* There, I thought about it.

VICTOR: Go to your room! This is not a game. Go on! And I don't want to hear another word!

(She starts moving)

MIA: Just go?!

VICTOR: Yes!

MIA: *(To Betty)* Are you filming?

BETTY: Of course, I am. You look beautiful.

MIA: *(To the camera)* So I am now going to my room for an undetermined amount of time.

BETTY: *(To Victor)* How long is she meant to be there?

VICTOR: I'm starting to regret this punishment, already.

MIA: No, no, dad. I'm totally being educated right now.

BETTY: Give me a call from your room if you need anything.

MIA: Get me some popcorn, I'm going to watch T.V.

(Mia leaves for her room.)

BETTY: So...That story you were telling earlier, that's almost exactly what happened to the original *(father-)*

VICTOR: *(Changes the subject)* Is that how you raise her?

BETTY: How?

VICTOR: With no boundaries? Cigarettes, alcohol, disrespect?

- BETTY: Oh, she's at that age.
- VICTOR: That's no excuse. A child needs to respect their parents. They need to understand who runs the household. The parents are here *(Signifies high with his hand)* and the child is there *(Signifies low with his hand)*.
- BETTY: ... I don't see our household that way.
- VICTOR: You allow her too much. This is going to end badly. Your child needs boundaries, immediately.
- BETTY: Mr. Spitz. She is my daughter, and I know her best. Mia is a sensitive girl; she needs warmth and love. You could show some tenderness as well-
- VICTOR: You're raising a monster.
- BETTY: I don't think you're in a position to criticize me.
- VICTOR: Of course I am, I'm her dad.
- BETTY: Only for a month.
- VICTOR: All the more so, we have a lot to get through.
- BETTY: Get through what?
- VICTOR: Align our stances regarding her education. She cannot be getting mixed messages. It's confusing her.
- BETTY: Excuse me, but Mia doesn't need any more changes in her life right now, she's hormonal, her life is an emotional rollercoaster as it is.
- VICTOR: So, what am I here for exactly?
- BETTY: She wanted a father.
- VICTOR: *(Sits down beside her)* Exactly, so let me do my job. The best interest of children is my area of expertise.

BETTY: Are you insinuating that I'm not a good mother?

VICTOR: I'm not insinuating, I am stating- you are not a good mother. I have been Father of The Year for fifteen executive years, in 65 different families, and I cannot stand by and watch when I see a girl ruining her own life. Do you realize what you're doing? This girl will never learn the concept of responsibility this way. She will never get a job. Earn a living. Have a relationship. She will have no idea how to cook for herself, do laundry. Is that what you want? Her to end up a drug addict, in some dark alleyway? Listen to me. Assertiveness is like magic. You'll see results you wouldn't believe. It may not be easy but trust me. And most of all, trust your daughter. You don't need to coddle her and keep her wrapped in cotton wool. She's more resilient than you think.

BETTY: She's also more resilient than you think.

VICTOR: We'll see about that.

(He lifts his hand to stroke her hair)

MIA: *(From her room)* Mom!? What about the popcorn?!

BETTY: Coming...

Scene 3- Re-education

(Betty is moving the couch back, sweeping the floor.)

BETTY: *(Practicing)* Go to your room right now, if that's okay with you...No...You will not speak to me that way, if you don't have to...Tidy your room this second, my love, or I'll do it later!

(Yelling is heard from outside the room)

VICTOR: Mia?! Come back here! I'm talking to you!

MIA: *(Mia storms in)* I hate you!

VICTOR: *(Chasing after her)* You will come here when I am speaking to you!
I said go to your room! Do not pretend you can't hear me. GO
TO YOUR ROOM RIGHT THIS SECOND!

MIA: I don't want to.

BETTY: What happened?!

MIA: None of your business!

VICTOR: You will listen to me right now!

MIA: *(Stands up on the couch)* I don't want to! No!

VICTOR: *(Simultaneously)* I am not interested in what you want or don't
want!

MIA: *(Simultaneously)* I'm not listening to you!! Lalalalalala

BETTY: *(Simultaneously)* Please calm down! Please, calm down,
please...Calm down.

VICTOR: Calm down?! Calm down?! How can I calm down when she is
doing what she is doing?!

BETTY: What has she done?

VICTOR: Oh, let me tell you what she's done.

BETTY: Whatever she's done, she didn't mean to!

MIA: I meant to, like hell I meant to!

BETTY: No, you didn't!

MIA: I meant everything I've done and everything I haven't done!

BETTY: What hasn't she done?

VICTOR: You will apologize, right now!

MIA: Never! I will never apologize.

VICTOR: *(Tries to hold her)* I am the father-

MIA: Don't touch me.

VICTOR: I am the father-

MIA: Don't touch me.

VICTOR: I am the father-

MIA: Don't touch me!

VICTOR: I am the father in this house, and I will not allow you to behave like this.

MIA: I don't give a crap about you and your rules!!

(Mia raises a chair at him, and the chase resumes)

BETTY: Mia, enough. What's going on here?!

MIA: You think you rule over me?! I'm not some puppet you can tell what to do.

BETTY: He's simply practicing assertiveness-

MIA: *(To Victor)* I don't need you anymore, I don't need anyone anymore! I'm leaving this house!!!

BETTY: What?! No!

VICTOR: If you walk out that door, you have nowhere to come back to!!!

BETTY: Of course, you have-

VICTOR: Betty don't contradict me!

MIA: I hate you! I hate everyone! I'm never coming back to this house as long as I live!

VICTOR: If you leave right now, it's over!

BETTY: No, Mia, come back.

VICTOR: And...

(Mia storms out, slamming the door behind her)

BETTY: *(To Victor)* What have you done?!

VICTOR: Scene!

(Betty faints)

VICTOR: Shit.

(Mia returns)

MIA: How was...What happened?

VICTOR: She fainted.

MIA: Mom... Mother...

BETTY: *(Dazed)* Mia...My girl...You came back...

VICTOR: Are you all right?

BETTY: *(Confused)* Are you alright?!

VICTOR: I told Mia we'd do a little simulation. Get it out of the way.

BETTY: A simulation?

VICTOR: *(To Mia)* We were depicting an extreme situation, to gain some learning about where things may deteriorate to.

MIA: How was I?!!

VICTOR: You have an extraordinary learning curve.

MIA: That was so much fun. *(To Betty)* I wish you would have filmed it.

BETTY: I thought...

MIA: *(Excited)* You thought I ran away? To become a Central Station Junkie?! Did I pass? I was so believable, right?

VICTOR: Your diction still needs some work.

MIA: I'm on it. *(Practicing)* S...S...S...SSSSS....

BETTY: But, why?!...I was so alarmed. I nearly had a heart attack.

MIA: OMG, you're so self-centered! Can't you be happy for me for once?! Such a party pooper,, God.

(Victor glances at Betty in disbelief, she rises to her feet)

BETTY: Don't talk to me like that... if you don't have to...

VICTOR: Mia!

MIA: Yes, Dad?

VICTOR: We don't take that tone. Apologize.

MIA: Why?

VICTOR: We show our parents respect, remember?!

MIA: Oh, right. I'm so sorry.

BETTY: I forgive you.

VICTOR: Nice and pleasant, isn't it?

MIA: What do we do now? Wow, Dad, you're always teaching me new stuff.

VICTOR: Let's talk about your future.

MIA: Yas! Da future!

VICTOR: What do you want to be in twenty years?

MIA: I want to be famous.

VICTOR: Fame is nothing but a device. Do you want to be a doctor? A pilot? A lawyer?

MIA: A lawyer, then. A famous one.

VICTOR: *(Betty)* You hear that? *(Betty nods)* Come on, let's go get some ice cream. Give your mother some time to recover.

MIA: Yes. Thanks Mom! Thank you for bringing me Dad.

(Mia and Victor exit, Betty is left confused)

Scene 4- Dinner

(classic music from a piano is heard from Mia's room)

VICTOR: Smells wonderful!

BETTY: Is she playing the piano?

VICTOR: Yes. Mia's very talented.

BETTY: So...What did you talk about yesterday?

VICTOR: She didn't tell you?

BETTY: Umm...No...

VICTOR: Oh, well, it was a long and meaningful conversation. About the future. About practicing law. About the infinite universe.

(The music ends)

VICTOR: Should we sit down to eat?

BETTY: Yes...Mia, dinner's ready, Mia, we're sitting down to eat. Mia, come eat.

VICTOR: Assertiveness, Betty.

BETTY: Mia!

MIA: In a minute!

VICTOR: Tell her the food is getting cold. I don't know anyone who likes to eat cold food.

BETTY: You don't know Mia; she loves cold food.

VICTOR: I don't like to eat cold food. Do you like to eat cold food?

BETTY: *(Knocks on Mia's door)* Mia, open the door.

MIA: I said I'm in the middle of something.

BETTY: Come here for a moment. Please!

MIA: *(Enters)* What?!

BETTY: Come eat.

MIA: I'm doing a Live! You're ruining it

BETTY: ... But the food is getting cold.

MIA: I'm not hungry.

BETTY: But you haven't eaten all day...Have just a bite.

(Victor is already eating)

VICTOR: Mmmm...I'm so hungry. Mmm. The food is wonderful! There's nothing like a warm plate of food! What did you put in this stew?

BETTY: Turmeric.

VICTOR: Turmeric, it's extraordinary. Turmeric.

(Mia joins the table)

BETTY: There. Happy you could join us.

MIA: What's that? Ew! There's a tomato in here. I'm not eating that.

BETTY: There, no tomato.

MIA: You always make something I hate.

BETTY: You need your vitamins.

MIA: I hate vitamins.

BETTY: Then eat around the vitamins.

(Mia sits down to eat begrudgingly, Betty is waiting in suspense. Mia brings a forkful to her mouth)

VICTOR: Stop. You've missed your chance to eat with us, young lady. In this house, we eat our food while it's still warm.

BETTY: But she hasn't eaten all day...

MIA: Good. gonna grab me some Pringles.

VICTOR: *(To Betty)* You're going to allow her Pringles?? That's the number one killer!

BETTY: *(to Mia, trying to be assertive.)* You cannot have any Pringles right now.

MIA: Hilarious.

BETTY: I said, put that back.

VICTOR: *(Quietly)* Don't give in.

BETTY: Put those Pringles back in the cupboard.

MIA: I'm hungry!

VICTOR: Get up.

(Betty grabs the snack from Mia's hands)

MIA: Okay, what do you think you're doing?

BETTY: You want Pringles, here you go, Pringles! Why do I bother cooking?! Why would you eat any food that's actually good for you?! Here, have a snack, so God forbid you don't call me a bad mother. *(She makes a scene with the Pringles)* There, nice and thin, so you don't even have to chew...Help yourself. *(Mia doesn't move)* Take it from me before I eat it myself...

MIA: Hashtag- Mom's-Losing-It...

BETTY: I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

(Betty exits, upset)

MIA: What is up with her?

VICTOR: Respect, Mia. She's trying, she's really trying. And I have to say you're not doing her any favors. She's right. You should eat healthier.

MIA: Dad, how do you know how to be a dad?

VICTOR: Why do you ask?

MIA: Because you do it so well. Where did you study?

VICTOR: I received my authorization from the Sorbonne. But the true learning, Mia, comes from years of experience, passion, and market forces! Nothing compares to the powers of the free market to lead to fulfilling one's full human potential.

MIA: That sounds so intriguing.

VICTOR: The day will come when you leave the nest, and this great market will reveal itself to you. That is why it is important that you be focused and alert, set goals for yourself, and never give up. Look into my eyes, you have the power to do anything with your strength, tenacity, and the quickness of your thumbs.

MIA: I wish my mom would have gone to the Sorbonne too, maybe then I'd be less spoiled and insufferable.

VICTOR: She's doing her best.

MIA: I think she went to art school, but she never finished her apprenticeship. She had an affair with some Dutch guy.

VICTOR: Well, what can you do, she's your mother.

MIA: She never, never in my life let me wash the dishes. How am I supposed to learn like that?

VICTOR: Nobody's perfect.

MIA: Let alone take out the trash! Well, that's really disgusting, trash smells rotted.

VICTOR: You're taking out the trash today.

MIA: Hashtag- New-Experience...!

VICTOR: Come on, help me clean up.

(They clear the table and clean up)

MIA: Mom spoils me too much.

VICTOR: I can't argue with that.

MIA: Maybe it's my fault.

VICTOR: Why would you think that?

MIA: Because that's what I hired her for. I wanted a mom who'd root for me. My biological one was really cold.

VICTOR: ...You hired her?

MIA: *(Comes clean)* Yes.

VICTOR: Your mom is a rental?

MIA: Yes, since age 12, from the second I could make that choice.

VICTOR: She didn't tell me that.

MIA: She forgets. She really got into the role. It's like she'd love me even if I amount to nothing.

VICTOR: Very unprofessional.

MIA: Even if I don't become really famous. She just wants me to be happy.

VICTOR: That's not right...That's definitely not okay. *(A moment. He thinks)*
Ice cream?

Scene 5- Goodbye

(Mia is playing the piano in the other room. Betty's reading a magazine. She is visibly tense.)

VICTOR: She's gotten so much better...Betty?

(Pause)

VICTOR: Betty?

(Betty refuses to speak)

VICTOR: Is everything alright? Betty?

BETTY: *(Glances at her watch, then breathes a sigh of relief)* You can call me Mrs. Drauper now.

VICTOR: What happened?

BETTY: What's happened is that your month with us has ended... this...minute.

VICTOR: Oh.

(Surprisingly, Victor sits down. The piano playing ends. Mia enters, she looks different, dressed up, prim and proper)

MIA: Good, I'm glad you're both here. This is very exciting. *(Hands her phone to her mother)* Mom, are you filming?

VICTOR: Perhaps you try experiencing instead of documenting for a moment?

BETTY: Should I document this?

MIA: Leave it, never mind. Okay, so some parting words. Hashtag-Moving-Moment.

BETTY: I'm not documenting this.

MIA: No worries, the hashtag is for me. So. This month was the most exciting month of my life. So many pennies dropped, a total roller coaster. I realized how strong and capable I am. I remember that at the start of this month, wow, Dad, it feels like such a long time ago, you told me the story about the butterfly, that in order to learn to fly, it must fight to emerge from its cocoon, and that's how it makes its wings stronger.

VICTOR: *(In a thick German accent)* Der Schmetterling und Der Grashauper

MIA: *(Adds in German)* Ja! If you try to help it out, it dies. Ka-ching! That was the sound of a penny dropping. That butterfly, it's me! Not the dead one, the live butterfly.

VICTOR: Of course.

MIA: Anyway, Dad, it's all because of you. And I want to use the time we have left to say thank you, Dad, for opening up so many options for me.

VICTOR: Just doing my job.

BETTY: And what a wonderful job that was...

MIA: And now, it's time to say goodbye. *(Begins to sing "So Long, Farewell" from the Sound of Music)*

BETTY: *(Impatient)* Yes, Mr. Spitz. So, this month was indeed challenging. In a heart-wrenching sort of way, you might say. Your contribution to Mia, really, I have no words ... at the moment ... I assure you that this lesson ... in benevolent parenting ... is one that we will cherish ... after a few days of ... rest.

MIA: What? No, Mom, no.

BETTY: I don't know about you, but I need some rest ... Perhaps a Gin and tonic ... *(She pours a drink for herself)*

MIA: No, Mother, Mommy, you misunderstood me. Dad's not leaving.

BETTY: Oh, no? Then, even more so ... *(She downs the drink in one gulp)*
Wait, I don't understand ...

MIA: We're saying goodbye to you ...

BETTY: To me?

MIA: And I also have to thank you for all of the years that you were here for me. Even on my worst days!

BETTY: They weren't that bad.

MIA: Horrible.

BETTY: Not Horrible.

MIA: Horrible.

BETTY: Not even close to horrible.

MIA: Horrible, never mind, that's not what's important right now... Anyway, the door to this house will always be open to you, if you want to visit.

BETTY: Visit?

VICTOR: *(To Mia)* I'm not certain that's a good idea...

BETTY: *(To Mia)* But what about our contract?

VICTOR: According to Article 47 A- The lessee will be free to void the contract immediately if there is any danger to the child's best interest.

BETTY: I never put you in any danger –

MIA: Not me, Mom. My future!

BETTY: Wait, is this another one of those simulations?

MIA: Believe me, I know this is difficult for you, but it's the best way to go for me. Sorry Mom, I know you did your best, and gave all you could, and were there for me in the best and worst of times. But it's just ... not enough.

BETTY: So, we're just, ending this?

MIA: Yes, Mom, come on, please don't make this any more difficult than it already is.

VICTOR: And it is indeed very difficult.

MIA: It really is super difficult, and I know that this is what you want for me; to be happy and unleash all the potential that's hiding within me ... Ugh ... Here come the tears.

BETTY: So, you want me to leave?

MIA: many children would love a mother like you, Helicopter Moms are super trendy right now.

BETTY: So, you're firing me?

MIA: yes. *(To Victor)* Am I not being clear?

VICTOR: *(To Mia)* You are very clear.

BETTY: Mia, now in all seriousness, , I'm asking you is this really what you want? This is not coming from him. This is you want?

MIA: Yes, Mom, this is what I want.

BETTY: ...Okay.

MIA: Okay?

BETTY: Okay.

MIA: Really?

BETTY: Yes, I'll go.

(Betty takes off her shoes)

MIA: So...you're leaving?

BETTY: If that's your wish, my dear, I respect it.

MIA: I thought this would be more difficult for you.

BETTY: It's difficult, believe me.

MIA: Because you were still, you know... You were still my mom for a good number of years.

BETTY: Yeah. Five. Five years.

MIA: It's not my fault it's come to this. Don't put this on me. You are my mother! Take some responsibility!

BETTY: *(Hopeful)* So should I stay?!

MIA: No!

BETTY: *(With sorrow)* Have it your way.

(Betty removes her wig)

MIA: So, all this time you were only pretending to love me? Even when I yelled at you, and cursed you, and hated you, and humiliated you?

BETTY: You do have a talent for being truly insufferable... *(Betty takes off her "Mother costume")* Perhaps you're both right, perhaps I'm not a good enough mother for you. *(Starts to exit)*

MIA: So you're just leaving?

BETTY: Do you want me to stay?

MIA: No!

BETTY: I understand.

(Betty exits)

MIA: Wait...Mom...

(Betty's already gotten further away, Mia stares at the empty doorway, pause, then Mia turns to her dad...)

BETTY: *(Comes back)* Yes?

MIA: ...You left your magazine

BETTY: Oh. I don't read French.

(Betty exits, Mia goes to Victor, crying, he consoles her)

VICTOR: You know, Chopin's entire repertoire consists of pieces for the piano, apart from two Concerti for piano and-

BETTY: *(Peers back in)* Did you call me?

MIA: No!

(Betty exits)

Scene 6- Mia Manipulates Victor

(Victor enters, shopping bags in hand, to find Mia sprawled on the couch)

VICTOR: Mia, what are you doing at home? You have a piano lesson.

MIA: I'm not going.

VICTOR: What happened?

MIA: I'm not feeling well.

VICTOR: Do you have a fever? *(He checks her forehead with his palm)*
You're perfectly fine.

MIA: My finger hurts.

VICTOR: Mia, we're on a tight schedule. If you miss a lesson, that's time going to waste.

MIA: Then I'll go tomorrow.

VICTOR: Tomorrow, you have French and statistics.

MIA: Then later.

VICTOR: What does later mean?! Really, come on. Please stop taking selfies while I'm talking to you! *(She lets her phone drop to the floor)*
What's the issue?

MIA: What's the issue?!

VICTOR: What's the issue?

MIA: Look at me!

VICTOR: What am I meant to be seeing here?

MIA: My hair! My hair, Dad!

VICTOR: What's wrong with your hair?

MIA: It looks terrible, I want to die.

VICTOR: It's perfectly fine.

MIA: How can I leave the house like this?!

VICTOR: You're making a mountain of a molehill. Fix your hair and go to your lesson.

MIA: Mom used to comb it for me.

VICTOR: Come on.

MIA: I don't know how to do my hair.

VICTOR: You didn't know how to play piano either, and now you do.

MIA: Because I have a teacher for that, but I don't have a teacher for hairstyles, do I?

VICTOR: Alright, this is way out of line. Here, take a comb and run it through your own hair.

MIA: But I don't know how.

VICTOR: Give me the comb. I said, give me the comb.

(Victor begins combing her hair)

- VICTOR: It's not that difficult. You simply run it through from top to bottom.
- MIA: Ow.
- VICTOR: I'll do your hair, and you'll leave for your lesson.
- MIA: Tighter.
- VICTOR: We agreed that I'd stay for another month. And that was followed by an additional month and now, another month. You are losing momentum, and then you complain you've had enough!
- MIA: Because it's boring.
- VICTOR: What's boring? Combing your hair?!
- MIA: Not combing my hair, practicing piano.
- VICTOR: Let's go, you're out of excuses.
- MIA: I'm not playing on an empty stomach.
- VICTOR: Then quickly go and make yourself a sandwich.
- MIA: I don't know how to make it taste good.
- VICTOR: Mia, we've talked about this.
- MIA: But it takes me so much time! Dad, please, then I'll go to my lesson.
- VICTOR: What's so complicated, you take a slice of bread, spread some peanut butter on it, and put another slice on top. Honestly. We have goals. If you want to be independent and a lawyer, you need to get your act together and fast. We don't have much time.
- MIA: You want to leave me?!
- VICTOR: I want you to make a sandwich!

MIA: You want to up and go and leave me alone too? Nobody loves me in this world. I feel so alone. And I suck so bad at everything I do.

VICTOR: You don't suck- (Pulls himself together) Mia, I see exactly what kind of manipulation you're doing, I see through you like an x-ray.

MIA: No, you don't. That's exactly what you think, and that's what the piano teacher thinks, and the geography teacher and that's what Mom thought.

VICTOR: Wipe those tears away.

MIA: Leave me alone!

(She pulls out a bottle of alcohol)

VICTOR: Let go of that!

MIA: No!

VICTOR: You don't need that! You really don't need it!

MIA: You don't love me. Nobody loves me in this world!

VICTOR: That's not true...Give me the bottle. *(He grabs the bottle from her hand.)*

MIA: Say it. Say you want to leave.

VICTOR: I will not leave you. I have never abandoned a child before they were able to take care of themselves.

MIA: Because you love me, right? Tell me you love me and I'll go to my lesson.

VICTOR: I...

MIA: Yes?

VICTOR: Love you.

MIA: Hashtag-World's-Best-Dad!

VICTOR: Mia, we don't speak in hashtags!

MIA: Sorry, it just came out.

(Mia hugs Victor, they take the flask back and forth from behind one another's backs as they embrace)

Scene 7 – Home coming.

Nearly one year later.

(A knock sounds at the door, Mia and Victor are both offstage)

MIA: *(From outside)* Dad, there's a knock at the door.

VICTOR: *(From outside)* Open it.

MIA: *(From outside)* What?

VICTOR: Open it!

MIA: Dad, the door!

VICTOR: *(From outside)* I'm in the bathroom. Open it.

MIA: *(From outside, commanding)* No! You open it!

(Victor enters and opens the door, looking exhausted. Betty marches in. She's dressed modernly and looks confident.)

VICTOR: Yes?

BETTY: Hello.

VICTOR: Oh, hello. Excuse me, Miss, what day is it today? Are you the Corrective Teacher?

BETTY: You don't remember me?

VICTOR: No...Who...? Mrs. Drauper?

BETTY: Formerly known as, yes. That's not really my name.

VICTOR: Then what is your name?

BETTY: It doesn't matter.

VICTOR: What are you doing here?

BETTY: So, you're still here?

VICTOR: Yes, yep. Working. You know how it is.

BETTY: Is Mia home?

VICTOR: I'll go get her. Mia, can you please come here for a moment?

MIA: I'm playing!

VICTOR: You have a guest.

MIA: Is this my surprise?

VICTOR: Oh, the surprise...

MIA: You promised.

VICTOR: Yes, yes, one moment ... *(To Betty)* Excuse me.

(Victor rushes out of the house. Mia enters)

MIA: So, we're celebrating now?? *(Notices Betty)* Hi.

BETTY: Hi.

MIA: What...are you doing here?

BETTY: Happy Birthday.

MIA: Thanks.

BETTY: I thought I'd stop by for a visit, to see how you're doing.

MIA: You don't say.

BETTY: I see you two are still together...

MIA: Yes.

BETTY: So, how are you?

MIA: I'm fine. Perfectly fine. And you?

BETTY: Same. Fine.

MIA: Good.

BETTY: Yeah.

MIA: How's the new family?

BETTY: I don't have a new family.

MIA: Oh...

BETTY: It wasn't...for me. I made a career change...I'm a beautician now.

MIA: Did Dad call you?

BETTY: Victor? No, I came on my own merit.

MIA: Good ... *(A pause)* Why?

BETTY: It's not every day you turn eighteen...You haven't shared a story in a long time...

MIA: Didn't feel like it...

BETTY: So, you graduated high school!

MIA: You can say that.

BETTY: With honors?

MIA: What? No, not quite.

BETTY: Oh, I thought... And the music?

MIA: I played in the Municipal Concert Hall for a while.

BETTY: Wow-

MIA: *(Cuts her off)* Until I sprained my pinky!

BETTY: Well ...Look at you. How you've grown.

MIA: What are you doing here? Did you come to see what a failure I've become?

BETTY: Of course, not-

MIA: Because differential algebra is really not a big deal. I'm only failing so Dad won't go.

(The lights turn off. Darkness. Victor enters with a store-bought cake with a candle on top of it)

VICTOR: Happy Birthday to you...Happy Birthday to you...Happy Birthday dear Mia...

MIA: What's this?

VICTOR: Your cake.

MIA: This is my cake?! *(Mia raises her voice)* I'm eighteen, Dad!

VICTOR: Please, we have company.

MIA: You could have made a bit more of an effort. It's store-bought! And it looks terrible, and it probably doesn't taste any good. What a stupid day. I was looking forward to this birthday. You know how long I've been waiting for this.

VICTOR: It's a cake Mia! Why wouldn't it taste good? Come on, make a wish!

MIA: I'm not making any wish. This birthday is totally ruined.

VICTOR: Make a wish.

MIA: I will not wish.

VICTOR: Wish something!

MIA: I wish nothing.

BETTY: Excuse me, I just wanted to tell you something.

VICTOR: Go right ahead ... *(To Mia)* But I'll have you know, I'm not budging on this wish, this is a matter of principle.

MIA: *(Blows out the candles)* No wish made!

BETTY: I want to ask you something.

MIA: You want to come back?

VICTOR: You want to come back?

BETTY: No, I'm not interested.

VICTOR: Very well, it really wasn't for you...

MIA: Then why did you come?

BETTY: I've come to offer you a job.

MIA: Me?

VICTOR: Her?

BETTY: According to Article 2 in the Employment Law- an individual's services can be hired from the moment they turn eighteen.

MIA: But I don't know how to do anything.

VICTOR: We've had a bit of a delay with the final exams...

BETTY: You don't have to do anything. I want to hire you to be my daughter. I tried being a mother to other girls. But I kept calling them Mia. No matter how hard I tried, I never managed to feel what I felt with you.

MIA: You said I was insufferable.

BETTY: So, I said it.

MIA: I fired you.

BETTY: So, you fired me. That's how it is at your age. I shouldn't have left you, even if you hired me... A real mother is for life. Can you

forgive me? I still love you. I'm offering that you come with me, to my house, to be my daughter. Will you?

MIA: Are you serious? I...I don't know what to say...Wow, a job offers. My first job offers. Dad, Dad, what do you say?

VICTOR: You can't take this offer.

MIA: What? Why?

VICTOR: Did you even clarify the terms?

MIA: What terms? *(To Betty)* Mom, can I be twelve? That was more fun than adolescence.

BETTY: No, I'm hiring you to grow naturally.

MIA: But can I still be annoying, bossy, and spoiled?

BETTY: Yes, that's fine. You can be who you are.

MIA: She's offering me-

VICTOR: I understand what she's offering!

MIA: Then what's the problem?

VICTOR: What's the problem? If you take this offer, you'll stay in the role of the child for your entire life.

MIA: It's not for life, Dad, no one stays in the same job today for more than a year or two.

BETTY: No, Mia, I can't part from you again, my offer is for life.

MIA: *(To Betty)* I missed you so much.

VICTOR: *(To Mia)* Can't you see what she's doing?! *(To Betty)* Oh, I've underestimated you, Mrs. Drauper.

BETTY: I'm not Mrs. Drauper anymore.

VICTOR: Whoever you are. This is your way of getting back at me, I'm not blind!

BETTY: This has nothing to do with you.

VICTOR: You come here waving around job offers?! I'm bleeding myself dry to get this girl on her feet after the immense damage you've caused her, and you offer her to be your daughter?! What kind of future are you giving her by taking her backward?

BETTY: No one's going backward. I've changed, I'm putting myself first now.

VICTOR: You've always put yourself first. All you've ever cared about is her loving you *(To Mia)* I stayed here for an entire year because I believe in you. You can be an advocate. A Supreme Court judge!

MIA: I don't want to be a judge.

VICTOR: Then an excellent VP Marketing.

MIA: I don't care about being excellent.

BETTY: It's a generational thing...

VICTOR: *(To Betty)* Let me. *(To Mia)* I love you!

MIA: I love you too!

(Mia moves closer to give him a hug)

VICTOR: *(Enraged)* Don't touch me. *(A moment)* Where's your self-respect? Is this what you want? To sell yourself?

MIA: That's what you're doing.

VICTOR: That's what I'm doing?

MIA: I didn't create this world. This is your world.

VICTOR: I'm teaching you independence; I'm teaching you to not need anyone.

MIA: What good is this independence if I end up alone?

BETTY: You won't end up alone. I'll never leave you alone!

MIA: Where do I sign?

(Betty opens her bag as if to take out a contract, and pulls out a wig from her bag instead, she gives it to Mia)

MIA: Wow, that's so nice!

VICTOR: If you put that on, I will never speak to you again!

BETTY: Victor, don't do that to her, that's not fair.

VICTOR: Don't Victor me! Do not put that on!

(Mia puts the wig on her head)

VICTOR: If you walk out like that, you can forget about me! I will never speak to you again! You are not my daughter!!

MIA: Dad, how do I look?

VICTOR: *(Turning his back to her)* Do not call me Dad from now on!

MIA: Dad, come on, stop it! It's not the end of the world.

BETTY: Let him be, he's hurt now...Come on, my love, let's go set up your room. I also want to buy you some books.

MIA: But I'm not going to read them.

BETTY: Of course you won't, I didn't think otherwise-

(They begin to exit, Mia suddenly stops)

MIA: Mom, can dad come with us? Please?! It really, really means a lot to me.

BETTY: I don't know, Mia. He's not really my cup of tea.

MIA: Look at him. He's really, really sad. Please, Mom. For me?

BETTY: Can't we let it go?

MIA: Pleeeease!

BETTY: It's that important to you?

MIA: Pretty pleaseee!

BETTY: Alright, sweetie pie. *(Overcomes herself)* Victor, you are welcome to come with us.

(Victor doesn't respond)

BETTY: See, he's not interested.

MIA: Dad! Come on, please, Betty's inviting you to come with us.

BETTY: By the way, Mia, my name isn't Betty.

MIA: Oh, it isn't?

BETTY: No.

MIA: Then what's your name?

BETTY: I'll tell you at home. Come on.

MIA: *(Hugs him)* Come on, Dad, don't be so stubborn.

BETTY: Mia, Victor expressly asked that you no longer call him Dad.

VICTOR: *(Breaks his silence. To Betty)* You will not tell her how to call me! Mia, if you don't go with her, I promise I'll stay with you forever!

BETTY: What's that?

VICTOR: You heard me.

BETTY: That's not in your contract.

VICTOR: I have feelings too!

BETTY: But I said it first.

VICTOR: This isn't a competition!

BETTY: Oh, now it isn't? I thought the world was the Olympic Games to you-

VICTOR: Have you ever looked at yourself?

BETTY: Have you? Does that look like a birthday cake to you? Where did you get that? The supermarket?

VICTOR: It's better than the disgusting food you cook. Putting that damn turmeric in everything.

BETTY: Father of the Year, my ass!

VICTOR: No, because you're an excellent mother. A dishrag of a mother, that's what you are.

BETTY: Show me, show me your certificate of excellence, where are all your medals? Let's see them!

VICTOR: Willing to live with a man you can't stand only to appease her?!

BETTY: I was never going to live with you-

MIA: *(Screams over their fighting, they slowly quiet down to watch her)* Hi! Status update! *(Films the situation)* Hi to all my followers. It's been a long time! So how can you tell your parents really love you? If they simply can't stop fighting because of you! So, if you enjoyed this video, share, like, and subscribe, and don't forget to vote on my survey: Mom, or Dad?! *(Takes another confused look at her mom, then at her dad and back to the viewers)* Kisses, love you, bye!

THE END