

Iceland

Michael Toohar

207.650.1276

michaelttoohar@gmail.com

SETTING: THE APARTMENT OF THE CHADIWICK FAMILY

Character List - Iceland

Max Chadiwick

50ish. male. A failed revolutionary turned technical writer who enjoys strong drink. The father.

Eudora Chadiwick

50ish. female, Max's wife. A stay at home mom with a pill habit and a hazy belief that it's 1957.

Danielle Chadiwick

17, female, the daughter. An anorexia positive hellion who wants to be famous by any means necessary.

Preston Chadiwick

17, male, the son. A troubled young man who finds self empowerment by transforming into a Viking.

Sonja Henie

40ish, female. The 1940's skating sensation and movie star whose spirit lives in the Chadiwick's TV set.

Tad/Jeremy/Doctor Wittgenstein/Viking

Various ages. All these parts are played by a single 20ish male actor.

2 Plot Summaries - Iceland

A Very Brief Summary

A troubled teenager finds empowerment by transforming himself into a Viking with the help of Sonja Henie who lives in the family's TV set.

A Somewhat Longer Summary

PRESTON is a troubled, questioning youth dealing with all the issues that adolescence brings.

Alas, his loving family isn't as helpful as they could be. His father MAX is a failed revolutionary but an extremely successful tosspot. Mother EUDORA has a serious prescription medication jones and a hazy belief that it's 1957.

Adding to PRESTON's tension level is his sister DANIELLE. She's a 17 year old anorexia positive fashionista with a secret plan to become famous by making a sex tape. This is proving rather difficult because she can't bear to be touched.

Just as things look darkest for our young hero, help arrives in the person of SONJA HENIE. The 40's champion ice skater and movie star appears to him through the TV set and offers a glimmer of hope:

Embrace your inner Viking.

PRESTON agrees, seeking empowerment by assuming the guise of a Nordic pirate.

Difficulties arise as he transforms since even his family, whose concept of sanity is very loosely defined indeed, are considering having him committed. PRESTON is rescued from this dire fate by the timely appearance of his Viking horde and he sails away. In his wake he leaves his parents in a state of pharmaceutically reinforced denial.

The play ends with SONJA merrily calling for DANIELLE, beckoning her to come to the TV set....

ACT I

Scene I

An apartment.

A dining area is stage right, the living room is center. Doors lead off to the entrance and two bedrooms.

Elegant forty years ago, it's now a mite shabby. The space is overcrowded with sundry and odd mementos, books and cartons from various home shopping networks.

Sitting on a couch center stage, grasping a pill container in one hand and a phone in the other is EUDORA CHADIWICK, a middle aged woman.

She is staring at a TV set tuned to a home shopping network. The TV set has been muted. The light from the set illuminates her face.

Long pause.

Suddenly, a bell rings.

EUDORA

(Urgently, into the phone.)

Yes...yes?

Pause. EUDORA looks at the phone. There is no response.

EUDORA

Yes?

A bell rings. EUDORA stares at the phone.

EUDORA

(almost in tears)

Yes? What? What, what, what?

Pause.

The bell rings again. EUDORA tears her attention from the TV and starts to look around frantically. She spies the medication timer just as it goes off again.

EUDORA

Oh.

She opens the pill container and starts to count out pills.

EUDORA

One. No...two.

(Beat)

Oh...three. Three will be fun. Three is always fun.

She takes the three pills. Long pause. EUDORA seems instantly calmer.

EUDORA

Now...that's better. Huh?

(Beat)

Why, yes it is!

EUDORA arranges herself.

EUDORA

OK now....phone....

(She picks it up carefully)

Phone...check. Now...hmmm...TV. TV....

She searches around on the cluttered coffee table for the remote. Finding it, she juggles the phone, the remote and the pill container for a bit.

EUDORA

Wait, don't need these for a bit now, do I?

She drops the pill container haphazardly on the table.

EUDORA

There.

She stares at the TV set for a moment.

EUDORA

Ok now...now...wait...ah...

(Beat)

Anti-mute!

She presses a button on the remote and much to EUDORA's surprise and pleasure, the audio comes on. It's the voice of a female announcer.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...why I do believe that's the quickest sellout we've had. A four times the size of life bust of Hermann Goring.

EUDORA

I love his music.

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

One hundred and fourteen units sold in twenty seven seconds.

(Beat)

Of course, it's just so practical. This gigantic bust would make a perfect loveseat...

EUDORA

Awww...of course it would....

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

But now, the What Would Jesus Buy network is proud to offer the latest child rearing book by America's teenage tough love expert, the Reverend Dr. Lacey Merriweather Bacon!

EUDORA

Ooooooo....

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

Dr. Bacon is the best selling author of several prizewinning books...

EUDORA

She's good...

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...including “Spare the Rod, Raise a Terrorist” and “Swing and a Miss, Biblical Permissions For Beating your Teenage Daughter”...

EUDORA

I have those.

(Looks around)

Do I have those?

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...is today introducing her latest book, exclusively here on WWJB...

EUDORA

Oh!

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)

...it’s called “The Daddy Hammer, Bringing Fear and Faith to the Teenage Flock.”

EUDORA mutes the TV.

EUDORA

Max will want that...

(Picks up the phone)

I would like a copy please. No...two copies...wait...

EUDORA looks at the phone then at the TV for an instant then back at the phone.

EUDORA (cont'd)

Oh. Hmm...

(Beat)

Right, right...I call them.

The cuckoo clock on the wall chimes. EUDORA turns to face it for a moment. Suddenly the sound of someone coming up the stairs is heard.

Dropping the phone, EUDORA runs into the kitchen. Banging and clattering is heard, growing more intense by the moment.

Just as the footsteps approach the door EUDORA appears dressed in a 50's Donna Reed housewife ensemble. She's holding an elaborate tropical drink and a plate of very fancy looking canapes. EUDORA dashes to the door and puckers up.

The door immediately opens as she steps into place.

MAX enters.

MAX

Why...

(Smiles)

Mrs. Chadiwick...

EUDORA

Mr. Chadiwick.

They kiss chastely. EUDORA offers the drink.

EUDORA (cont'd)

How was your day, Mr. Chadiwick?

MAX slips off his coat, which he kicks into the corner. He takes the drink.

MAX

Good, Mrs. Chadiwick. Productive.

(Beat)

I wrote.

EUDORA

You did?

MAX

I did.

(Beat)

An entire chapter. Chapter 7.

EUDORA

Concerning?

MAX

Concerning the proper care, cleaning and maintenance of the 700 series Samsung DVD/VHS/MP3 player.

(Beat)

I was trying to be pithy and bright but at the same time convey a gentle wisp of concern for the downtrodden souls who make these items.

EUDORA

No doubt.

MAX

Afterward I had planned to check the Internet for the absolute latest information regarding the condition of the laboring classes around the world but...

EUDORA

But?

MAX

I fell asleep.

(Beat. MAX sips his drink.)

Guava? With an infusion?

EUDORA

(Happily)

Yes!

MAX

Of?

EUDORA

You can't tell? You can't guess?

MAX

Well...

(Beat)

I can taste the usual assortment of five different rums...

EUDORA

Of course.

MAX

But...

(Beat. MAX sips his drink)

You have perplexed me.

EUDORA

Passion fruit!

MAX

Amazing. Well done Mrs. Chadiwick.

(Beat)

What news of the children?

EUDORA

Ours?

MAX

Indeed.

EUDORA

Ah...

(Beat. She looks at the clock)

Home presently.

(Beat)

Less than a minute, it appears.

MAX heads to the couch.

MAX

Good.

(Beat)

I like a consistent regularity.

The front door is opening slowly and quietly. Presently DANIELLE and PRESTON's heads appear.

DANIELLE

Well?

PRESTON

Shut up.

You shut up. DANIELLE

No you. PRESTON

Are they here or not? DANIELLE

I don't know, I can't hear. You won't shut up. PRESTON

Shut up. DANIELLE

Now what was the quote? MAX

They're here... PRESTON

Damn! DANIELLE

(Beat)
I hate them.

You hate everyone. PRESTON

So what? I'm a teenage girl. That's my function. DANIELLE

Wait, ah yes... MAX

(beat)
"Regularity in the hours of rising and retiring, perseverance in exercise, adaptation of dress to the variations of climate, simple and nutritious aliment, and temperance in all things are necessary branches of the regimen of health."

Who said that? EUDORA

Lord Chesterfield. MAX

Why? EUDORA

Why? MAX

EUDORA
Yes why? Why do people say these clever things? Do they have a club? Do they know they are going to get written down? Is there a central clearing house for clever sayings?

Oh Good God. DANIELLE

I don't know dear. But thank the heavens we have them eh? MAX

EUDORA is moving toward the door, unseen by DANIELLE and PRESTON.

The cuckoo clock chimes and EUDORA yanks the door open. DANIELLE and PRESTON tumble in at her feet.

Mother! DANIELLE
(Hissing)

Children... EUDORA
(Happily)

Get off of me. PRESTON
(To DANIELLE)

They get up off the floor. EUDORA attempts to hug DANIELLE.

DANIELLE

No, no, no, no, no, no, no ...

(Beat)

We have discussed this.

MAX

Dani...

(Beat)

Kiss your mother.

EUDORA

Don't bother yourself with this, Father. It's just a phase...

DANIELLE

I'm like a fancy store, no touchie!

PRESTON

(Archly. To DANIELLE)

Excuse me.

PRESTON hugs EUDORA.

EUDORA

Ah, that's nice...

(Beat)

And how's my little man today?

PRESTON

Your little man is seventeen, eight inches taller than you and struggling to excel in a nightmarish educational system that doesn't give a damn about his talents or needs.

DANIELLE

He said damn. You heard him say damn.

MAX

Don't curse at your mother, son.

PRESTON

I was referencing my educational situation, Papa.

DANIELLE

He said damn.

PRESTON

Plus, to make things worse, I believe I'm having my first existential crisis.

EUDORA

That's nice dear.

(Beat)

Tell us all about it at dinner.

MAX

Please do. Your mother and I love to hear all about your activities.

DANIELLE

He said damn. You heard him.

MAX

That's enough Dani, we have ears.

(Beat)

Were you planning to greet your mother or not?

DANIELLE

No hugging. Not hugging. That's so gross. Can't I just wave or something? Like a cute Pope?

DANIELLE does a solemn Pope wave.

MAX

No, that's completely unacceptable. She's your mother not your congregation. Now give her a kiss.

DANIELLE

Ewwwww.

MAX

Danielle Delores Chadiwick...

DANIELLE

(Petulantly)

Oh alright...

(Beat)

But a...Hollywood kiss. Like they do in Hollywood.

EUDORA

Like movie stars do?

DANIELLE

Right. See we sort of get our heads close...

(Beat)

But not too close...

(Beat)

Then you kiss the air, kiss, kiss, kiss and then move your head to the other side and repeat...

(Beat)

Kiss, kiss, kiss...

EUDORA

Well isn't that novel. Welcome home dear.

DANIELLE

Thanks.

(Waves)

Papa...

MAX

(Raises glass)

Danielle, welcome home dear.

DANIELLE

Thanks...

(Beat)

We done here?

EUDORA

Done?

DANIELLE

Finished? Through?

(Beat. Then testily)

May I go to my room please?

EUDORA

Of course.

(Beat)

We'll be having dinner in a bit.

DANIELLE

Great.

DANIELLE exits into her room, slamming the door.

MAX

Does she seem a little...moody?

PRESTON

No Papa, not really. Her major issue is that she's just a complete bitch.

MAX

Prez, don't curse at your mother.

PRESTON

I wasn't cursing at Mama.

EUDORA

I thought I heard the B word...

PRESTON

And my name is not Prez. I am not a Prez. Call me Press. Press. How many times have I asked you that?

MAX

Press?

(Beat)

As in to act upon with steadily applied force?

PRESTON

Yes.

EUDORA

Not Preston?

PRESTON

No!

(Beat)

Press. I like it. It's a good name. A strong name. A man's name. Just call me that please. Like I've asked you a bazillion times before.

MAX

Ah...

(Beat)

Speaking of which...

(Beat. Then to EUDORA)

Darling, could you excuse us for a moment please?

EUDORA

Oh...mantalk, eh? OK. I need to get dinner ready anyway.

PRESTON

Oh God...

EUDORA exits to the kitchen.

PRESTON

Yes...?

MAX

I was wondering. Just pondering really. In an idle manner...

PRESTON

What?

MAX

Well, for instance, if you were looking at, say, a Victoria Secret's catalog...

PRESTON

Huh?

MAX

Do you think that you'd be more interested in the comely young women contained within or maybe, perhaps, the undergarments themselves?

PRESTON

What?

MAX

I've just been wondering..

PRESTON

Exactly what are you trying to say?

MAX

A father does start to wonder when his son turns your age and doesn't appear to be interested in...

PRESTON turns on his heel and marches toward the door to his room. Suddenly he turns to MAX.

PRESTON

Ok. OK. Since you asked, since you're so interested, when I look at a Victoria's Secret catalog I don't notice the girls or the undergarments...

MAX

No?

PRESTON

No.

(Beat)

You see I am busy in my mind translating the text into Serbo-Croatian.

(Beat)

In my mind. In my head.

(Beat)

Any other questions?

PRESTON exits into his room, slamming the door.

EUDORA enters from the kitchen.

EUDORA

So how did that go?

MAX

I'm not sure really.

(Beat)

Although he appears to be interested in languages.

EUDORA

That's good huh? You can do a lot with languages. You can go far.

(Beat)

Another aperitif, my darling?

MAX

Please...

(Pause)

Is it me or do the children seem a mite quarrelsome today?

EUDORA

Just let it go dear, they're teenagers.

(Beat)

It's a phase...

Blackout

END Scene 1

Scene 2

The family is eating dinner.

MAX has a large tiki bowl drink in front of him. EUDORA is eating daintily from a plate obscured by pill bottles. DANIELLE is pushing food around her plate while occasionally stuffing some under her napkin. Stacked next to her is a large and odd assortment of gossip magazines.

PRESTON looks preoccupied and stares into the middle distance.

MAX

(To EUDORA)

My darling, you have outdone yourself.

EUDORA

Thank you.

MAX

What is the name of this splendid feast?

EUDORA

It's called a Holiday Cheese Meat log.

DANIELLE gags a bit and starts shoveling more food under her napkin.

EUDORA (cont'd)

I found the recipe in an old LIFE magazine. 1953 I think.

MAX

Apparently a very good year.

DANIELLE

A good year? A good year? For what, cardiac arrests? It's all meat and cheese fat.

MAX

But good.

DANIELLE

Are you trying to kill me?

PRESTON

Who would want to do that?

(Staring at the food lumped under her napkin)

You're doing such a fine job yourself.

DANIELLE

Shut up.

PRESTON

(Indicating the lump under the napkin)

What is this thing you're constructing? Some sort of food igloo?

DANIELLE

Shut up, Mister Sexually Confused.

(looking at the food pile)

God I wish we had a dog.

MAX

We have a cat.

PRESTON

Had.

EUDORA

Well he's a cat.

*Lights come up on the bookcase where HENRY sits.
Stuffed. The family turns and glares at him.*

DANIELLE

Except he's, well, sorta dead.

MAX

It's better this way. He liked to run away.

DANIELLE

Fat lot of good he's doing me like that. I wish we had a dog.

PRESTON

To eat your meals for you?

DANIELLE

Bite me.

EUDORA is sorting through her medications.

EUDORA

Hmmmm? Preston?

PRESTON

Press.

EUDORA

What did you mean, dear?

PRESTON

Let's just say that Dani thinks the orange powder at the bottom of a Cheetos bag is a major food group.

MAX

It's not?

DANIELLE

Excuse me. I like to be shapely. I like to be fashionable. Admittedly...I'm a picky eater.

(PRESTON snorts)

You don't get to judge me, Prez. Is it wrong to want to be popular and fun to be around?

PRESTON

Fun to be around?

(Beat)

Dani, you're a total bitch.

DANIELLE

Some guys like that.

(Beat)

But I'm not shuffling around all day moaning about life and meaning. I have goals and dreams.

PRESTON

Oh you mean like to be five pounds soaking wet?

DANIELLE

Ooooooo value judgements from a guy with no girlfriend, no friends at all really, who spends way too much time in the stands mooning over the football players.

(Beat)

Right Prez?

PRESTON

Press...

DANIELLE

A manly name for a manly fellow. Football players like that.

PRESTON

Cut it out. I am not gay. How is it that all of a sudden everyone thinks I'm gay?

MAX

(looking up from his plate)

So you're gay?

PRESTON

No.

MAX

It's fine son, your mother and I are fully accepting modern parents...

PRESTON

I'm not gay.

DANIELLE

(Smirking)

You're so brave Prez. Coming out can be difficult...

PRESTON

Press, Press, PRESS. And get this straight you. And everyone. All of you. I-AM-NOT-GAY. Got that? I-AM-NOT-GAY.

Long pause. Eventually EUDORA looks up from the table where she has been arraigning her medications carefully.

EUDORA

Who's gay?

PRESTON

I give up.

EUDORA

Oh.

MAX

Then, son, how would you define yourself, if I may ask?

PRESTON

Cautious.

EUDORA

Well I'm glad that's settled. Who's for dessert?

EUDORA heads toward the kitchen.

DANIELLE

Dessert...

(Beat. Then stretching out the words)

Dessssss-ert.

(Beat, Then brightly.)

Why Mother dear, I do believe I am full up.

PRESTON

You're full up?

DANIELLE

Yes.

PRESTON

On what exactly, Miss Anorexia Positive of the Year?

MAX

Do have some dessert baby girl. A revolutionary has to get her nourishment wherever she can. You never know when you will get called to the jungle to organize the people in an armed revolt against their oppressors.

DANIELLE

What?

MAX

You are looking a mite thin.

DANIELLE

So Papa...

MAX

Yes dear?

DANIELLE

(Brightly)

At the end of long day spent fomenting revolution, what do you think Che's favorite cocktail was?

PRESTON stifles a giggle.

MAX

Oh. Well...hm.

(Beat)

I do believe rum would be it eh? Running around near the equator, busy all day with social justice, a revolutionary builds up a powerful thirst. So rum I believe.

(Beat)

But I'll go look it up.

MAX leaves the table, taking his drink with him.

DANIELLE

(To PRESTON)

Viva la revolucion!

They laugh.

EUDORA enters from the kitchen carrying a tray of little orange jack o' lantern heads.

EUDORA

Dessert!

EUDORA passes the tray to PRESTON. He and DANIELLE look at the dessert dubiously.

PRESTON

Ummmm...huh....

DANIELLE

What is that, Mother?

EUDORA

These are iced pumpkin blondies, dear. Try one.

DANIELLE

(Pause)

And it's shaped like a little pumpkin head why?

PRESTON

Because it's May. The traditional little pumpkin head season.

DANIELLE

What's in it?

EUDORA

Brown sugar, cream cheese, little colored sugar bits for the eyes and such...

DANIELLE

Oh god...

EUDORA

And lots and lots of butter.

DANIELLE starts to retch.

PRESTON

(To DANIELLE)

Bon appetit.

MAX returns to the table with a large book.

MAX

Nothing yet but I'll keep looking.

PRESTON

For?

MAX

Favorite revolutionary cocktail recipes.

(Beat)

Oh darling, these look scrumptious. What are they?

EUDORA

Iced pumpkin blondies.

MAX

Brilliant. How do you do it? I'll have two dear.

DANIELLE

Two? Just looking at them makes my arteries want to explode. And another thing, Mother, where's the pumpkin? And what the hell is a blondie?

MAX

(looking at book)

Hmmm? What dear?

EUDORA

Mouth. You. Mouth.

Pause.

DANIELLE glares at her plate while the others eat. She then picks up the blondie and slides it under her napkin. The pile under her napkin is quite tall and substantial.

DANIELLE

Done.

EUDORA

Another dear?

DANIELLE

Can't, can't, can't...gotta get ready. Tad's coming over.

MAX

Tad?

DANIELLE

Yes, Tad.

EUDORA

He seems nice.

DANIELLE

You've never met him, Mother.

MAX

Then see? He starts with a clean slate with us. Wasn't that easy?

PRESTON

(serving DANIELLE)

Oh do have another.

(Beat)

I insist.

DANIELLE

(Grimly)

Thank you.

EUDORA

So you two young people are studying tonight, Dani?

DANIELLE

Yes Mother...studying.

DANIELLE deftly palms the blondie and gets up from the table

DANIELLE (cont'd)

Done.

DANIELLE moves behind PRESTON.

DANIELLE (cont'd)

Seconds, brother dear?

DANIELLE slams the blondie into the side of PRESTON's head. It hangs there.

PRESTON sits there with a hangdog expression on his face.

DANIELLE exits with a smile.

EUDORA

What was that? Was that another earthquake?

MAX

(Looking at the book)

Or that damn cat?

A light goes up on HENRY on the bookshelf. The family turns and glares at him.

EUDORA

Mouth. Mouth. Mouth.

MAX

My darling, I apologize.

EUDORA

(Sweetly)

Accepted, of course.

MAX

I love you darling.

EUDORA

I love you sweet prince.

They blow kisses to each other then return to their own worlds on either end of the table.

PRESTON looks at them incredulously.

PRESTON

What about me?

MAX

Hmmmm?

PRESTON

Me. Your son. "Oh Press, what are you up to this evening, good son?"

EUDORA

Well dear, we just assumed you were going to spend the evening in your room doing what you always do.

PRESTON

Oh? Such as?

MAX

Sulking and scheming. Plus some homework, we hope.

PRESTON

(Snidely)

Wow, you've got me pegged.

MAX

It is a foolish parent who does not know his own child.

PRESTON

What does that mean?

MAX

It's just one of those vaguely wise things parents say to make their teenage children go...Huh?

EUDORA

We have all sorts of techniques like that.

MAX

Because...that's how we roll.

PRESTON

That's how you roll?

EUDORA

Yes, dear. We roll mad deep...

(beat)

Yo...

PRESTON

Could someone at this table say something that contains, maybe, just the slightest hint of something rational or sane?

(Beat)

Seriously...

MAX

Probably not.

(Beat. Holds up glass)

I've had a very too many of these....

EUDORA

(Hazily)

I'm sorry...what dear?

(Beat)

Another blondie?

MAX

They're so good. I'll eat it if Prez doesn't want it.

PRESTON looks back and forth between his parents, his expression a mix of rage and despair.

Pause.

PRESTON

Do you ever get up in the morning and take a deep breath and wonder...why am I here? Do you ever stand in the shower and say to yourself what does it all mean? Ever walk to school or work and want something? Something different? Something better?

(Beat)

Something like...anything but what I am now?

(Beat)

I can barely get up out of bed in the morning anymore. These things, these issues are like giant stone pillars. Like those Easter Island statues. They loom over me. Sometimes I think my mind is crumbling, these pillars are crumbling and that they are going to fall down and crush me.

DANIELLE enters and listens.

PRESTON (cont'd)

I feel like I'm not strong enough to fight anymore. I'm teetering on the edge of the cliff, circling the drain, going down for the third time.

(Beat)

And I feel like there's not a thing I can do about it.

Pause.

MAX

Good son.

(Beat)

I'm glad we had this talk...

EUDORA

Honey...

PRESTON

Did either of you hear a single thing I just said?

MAX

Yes.

(Beat)

Statues make you uneasy. I'm sorry.

EUDORA

Honey, it's just a phase...

Pause.

PRESTON

Yes, I see that now. Very clearly...

PRESTON drives his forehead into his dessert plate. He pauses there for a second, then turns his head to the side and does the same. Finally he turns again and finishes coating his head, banging his head against the plate repeatedly.

He stops.

EUDORA

(Not looking up)

Ah Prez, I'm glad you enjoyed your dinner.

PRESTON

It was delicious. Thank you.

(Beat)

May I be excused from the table?

MAX

(Not looking up)

Of course son.

The lights fade on the dining room table as EUDORA and MAX start to clear the table. PRESTON staggers grimly to the living room where DANIELLE is splayed out dramatically on the sofa.

DANIELLE

It's...over. It's over. I'm not going to make it. I'm circling the drain, headed to oblivion with the dirty dishwater and the baby too! Save me. Help, help, help!

(DANIELLE laughs)

You are pathetic.

PRESTON sits down heavily on the couch. He stares straight ahead.

PRESTON

Thank you for your support.

DANIELLE

I like your new hair product. It smells...

(Beat)

Pumpkiny...

PRESTON

Great.

DANIELLE

Alright Prez, listen...

PRESTON

Press!

(PRESTON makes a weight lifting motion)

PRESS!

DANIELLE

Whatever....

(Beat)

Look here now. You've got to get a grip. Just face the truth about yourself and you'll feel better. The dam will break and the truth will set you free.

PRESTON

What? What the hell are you talking about?

DANIELLE

Two things really.

PRESTON

What? What things?

DANIELLE

First, come out of the closet.

PRESTON

What?

DANIELLE

Just come on out of the wardrobe, big boy.

PRESTON

I'm not gay.

DANIELLE

Oh?

PRESTON

No.

DANIELLE

Not gay?

PRESTON

NO.

DANIELLE

Everyone thinks you're gay...

PRESTON

Oh really? Well everyone thinks you're a raging annie positive bitch.

DANIELLE

(Smiles)

No they don't. And you know they don't.

(Beat)

It's ok for young girls to be thin. Society likes that. And as for my alleged bitchness, well...

DANIELLE doubles over, holding her tummy and wincing.

DANIELLE

(Dramatically.)

I'm...I'm having my period...

(Beat. Then with a wail.)

Why can't you understand that?

PRESTON laughs in spite of himself.

PRESTON

You've been having your period steadily for the last four years.

DANIELLE

Yup. Everyday.

(Beat)

Well not really. It stopped when I hit 95 pounds but just the idea of menstruating is a powerful, powerful weapon to use against the opposite sex.

DANIELLE thrust her pelvis in PRESTON's direction.

DANIELLE (cont'd)

Feel my devastating power! Zing!

(Beat, Then grinning)

It's great. Especially against straight men. You can literally get away with anything. Gay men...well...they just want to see you suffer.

PRESTON

95 pounds?

(Beat)

Dani...

DANIELLE

90 is my goal.

(Beat)

Stop looking at me all scrunchie concerned face, Mr. Suicidal Depressive. I'm only going to 90.

(Beat)

Besides which, we are talking about you.

PRESTON

(Wearily)

Yeah, right...

DANIELLE

And second...you need a plan.

PRESTON

I do?

DANIELLE

Yup.

PRESTON

So...

DANIELLE

Yes?

PRESTON

Do you have a plan?

DANIELLE

Of course I have a plan. A secret plan.

PRESTON

Why?

DANIELLE

A goal. A dream. You have to have one, it brings meaning to life.

(Beat)

“I have a dream today...”

PRESTON

Doctor MLK. The man.

DANIELLE

Yup. But my plan is better.

PRESTON

You have a better plan than world wide peace and tolerance?

DANIELLE

Well...yeah. A plan I need a gay brother for.

PRESTON

Huh?

DANIELLE

Ok, just a gay guy in general really. To head my posse. I gotta have a crew, right? And a gay brother would be so cool.

Pause.

PRESTON

Now I just want to get this straight.

DANIELLE

So to speak.

PRESTON

You want me to be gay because it will fit into your secret plan?

DANIELLE

Exactly.

PRESTON

(Pause)

I am losing the will to live.

DANIELLE

See? You have no goal, no over arching dream. No secret plan. You are adrift. I feel for you, I really do.

PRESTON

Great...

Pause.

DANIELLE

So...

PRESTON

So?

DANIELLE

This is where you say, voice really down low... "So Dani...what's the secret plan?"

PRESTON

I honestly and truly do not want to know. Ever.

DANIELLE

Nice.

(Beat)

Then get out. I need to use the living room.

PRESTON

For?

DANIELLE

Tad's coming over.

PRESTON

Oooooo.

DANIELLE

Get out.

PRESTON

Let me guess, some sinister part of the secret plan?

DANIELLE

Mister, everything is part of the secret plan.

(Beat)

And don't you forget it.

BLACKOUT

End Scene 2

Scene 3 - An hour later

DANIELLE is scurrying about, setting up a video camera pointed at the couch. The couch is framed in the TV set. There are also 2 small video lights arranged artfully around the couch.

They are off.

DANIELLE is dressed in a cute color coordinated skin tight outfit that covers her neck to ankle.

She is making last minute adjustments in the mirror when MAX enters.

He is wearing a gaudy robe with an embarrassingly dramatic portrait of Che Guevera rendered in satin on the back.

MAX

So where is this young man?

DANIELLE

Daddy!

MAX

Baby girl?

DANIELLE

Please, if you don't mind...

MAX

Not at all. I just want to meet this lucky young fellow.

DANIELLE

We're doing homework. You're not giving me in marriage to the village chieftain for 10 goats.

MAX

Only 10?

DANIELLE

Do you mind? Please...

MAX

Ah, like go away, you old embarrassment?

DANIELLE

Exactly.

MAX

Danielle!

DANIELLE

You said it, not me.

MAX

Still, a little respect if you please. I am the paterfamilias.

DANIELLE

Daddy, you are completely tanked and dressed like you're a member of some sort of revolutionary Las Vegas chorus line.

MAX

I'll have you know that this robe was crafted for me by the Orphaned Blind Children's Revolutionary Collective of Muy Muy, Nicaragua.

DANIELLE

Right...

(Beat)

Pick that up on your last organizing visit to the mountain highlands, did you?

MAX

No. Internet.

(Beat)

It's easier.

DANIELLE

And the orphans take Master Card?

MAX

Well, all major cards really I'm sure...

DANIELLE

(Muttering)

Viva la revolucion...

PRESTON enters from his room.

PRESTON

(Snidely)

For your information, I am currently wrestling with calculus homework and calculus is winning, three falls to none. Do you think you two could keep your father daughter bonding down to a dull roar?

(Beat)

I mean, as touching as this intergenerational display is and all.

DANIELLE

Oh God! Shut up Prez...

MAX

(To PRESTON)

Merely fulfilling my paternal responsibility. Someday, my son, you will see...

DANIELLE

Mother!

As they talk over one another and squabble, the TV set clicks on.

The picture, in black and white, looks like it is coming from the 40's. On the screen a blond woman skates a lazy circle. She skates up to the camera, stops sharply and smiles.

SONJA

(With a Norwegian accent)

Preston...

PRESTON

(To DANIELLE)

What?

(Beat)

What did you say?

DANIELLE

Nothing. I didn't say anything to you.

(Beat)

You two need to go, Tad is coming and you two need to get out..

SONJA

Preston...

(Beat)

God dag a du!

PRESTON

(To DANIELLE)

Did you just say "goddam you" to me?

DANIELLE

No...

Children...
MAX

Mother!
DANIELLE
(Furiously)

EUDORA enters.

EUDORA
What what what is going on here?

SONJA is spinning and gliding about on the screen.

SONJA
Preston, God dag a du!

The family is arguing. PRESTON starts to stare at the TV set.

EUDORA
Ms. Danielle Chadiwick. Mouth, mouth, mouth on you.

DANIELLE
I didn't say anything!

MAX
Now baby girl, I heard you.

DANIELLE
You did not. You did not! I didn't say anything..

As the rest of the family argues, PRESTON slowly approaches the TV set, entranced. He stares at the picture on the screen.

SONJA
Preston!

PRESTON
(Slowly)
Yes?

SONJA
(Merrily)
God dag a du!

PRESTON
What?

SONJA
God dag a du.
(Beat)
Hello to you.
(Beat)
Hello to you, Preston. Hello to you.

SONJA skates and twirls happily.

PRESTON
God dag a du...

SONJA giggles.

MAX approaches PRESTON, who is crouched in front of the TV.

MAX
Son, what are you ...

The TV clicks off.

PRESTON
(To TV)
Wait...

MAX
What, son?

PRESTON
Nothing..

EUDORA
Alright now, Dani, enough fuss potting..

I didn't say anything!

DANIELLE

The door bell rings.

Now Dani...

EUDORA

That's Tad, that's Tad!

DANIELLE

(Beat)

Get out! Get the hell out. Now.

Mouth!

EUDORA

Ladies now...

MAX

Out!

DANIELLE

PRESTON is still staring at the TV.

Dani, do you mind if I just sit here for a bit...

PRESTON

Yes, I do mind.

DANIELLE

And wait?

PRESTON

The doorbell rings again.

Daddy!

DANIELLE

Now...

MAX

EUDORA

(To MAX)

You should discipline your daughter, the mouth on her...

MAX

Family, silence.

(Beat)

Silence.

(They quiet down.)

Your paterfamilias will rule now. Danielle is entertaining her young man in the living room...

(To PRESTON)

Ergo, you are going to your room.

PRESTON

Ergo?

MAX

Indeed. Go. Now.

(Beat. Then to EUDORA)

As for you my dear, to the bedchamber...quick march...

EUDORA

Ooo I love it when you're forceful, Commandante M...

MAX

Head off to base camp, revolutionary. Time for a little reeducation...

EUDORA

Oooooooo...

Eudora exits.

DANIELLE

Oh God...ewww...

The doorbell rings again.

DANIELLE (cont'd)

(Loudly, To the door)

I'll be right there!

(Beat. To MAX)

Daddy, daddy puleeze....

DANIELLE moves to the door.

MAX

OK, OK...I'm off.

(Beat)

Remember to be reproductively responsible...

DANIELLE

Go!

MAX

Right, right...

MAX exits.

DANIELLE

(Beat)

As for you...

PRESTON

Dani...

DANIELLE

What?

PRESTON

There...there's a blonde lady in the TV set.

*DANIELLE grabs PRESTON by the ear and pulls him
bodily to the door of his room.*

DANIELLE

Uh-huh. Right.

PRESTON

And she's like, like Swedish or something.

DANIELLE throws him into his room.

DANIELLE (cont'd)

Freak. Get some help.

DANIELLE arranges herself as she rushes to the door. She flings it open dramatically. TAD is standing there. He's a somewhat handsome high school jock boy.

DANIELLE (cont'd)

Hi!

TAD

Yo.

(Beat)

Got your note.

DANIELLE

The one from your locker?

TAD

Yup.

DANIELLE

What did you think?

TAD

Hot.

(Beat)

Nasty hot.

DANIELLE

Yeah?

TAD takes a step toward DANIELLE.

TAD

Yeah. So Darlene, what's up?

DANIELLE takes a step back.

DANIELLE

Danielle.

Who? TAD

Me. DANIELLE

You what? TAD

I'm Danielle. DANIELLE

Oh. TAD

(*Beat*)

Whatever. (*Beat*)

So what you got in mind baby?

Pause.

DANIELLE tries to strike a seductive pose.

Whatta you think? DANIELLE

About? TAD

Me... DANIELLE

Oh... TAD

(*Beat*)

Hot. Kinda skinny. But hot.

Cool. DANIELLE

Yeah. TAD
TAD takes a step toward DANIELLE.

TAD (cont'd)
So uh, what's on your mind, beautiful.

DANIELLE takes a step back.

DANIELLE
A project.
(Beat. Then huskily)
A cool project...

TAD takes a step toward DANIELLE.

TAD
Like...?

DANIELLE waves her hand toward the couch and camera setup.

DANIELLE
Like that.

TAD
Ummm...what? Video?

DANIELLE takes a step forward.

DANIELLE
Not a video. A movie...
(Beat. Then seductively.)
A porn movie.

TAD
(Amazed)
You're kidding.

DANIELLE
Nope. Not at all.

You and me? TAD

Oh yeah. DANIELLE

I gotta know... TAD
(Beat)
I gotta know why.

Part of my secret plan. DANIELLE

Which is? TAD

A secret. DANIELLE

Wow. Cool. TAD
(Beat)
Never met a chick with a secret plan before.

Pause.

Trust me, we all have them. DANIELLE
(Beat)
So?
(Beat)
You in or what?

Yeah. Hell yeah... TAD

Ex-cell-ent. Then let's get started huh? Shirt off, on the couch. DANIELLE

TAD whips his shirt off and lays down.

Ready.

TAD

DANIELLE switches on the video lights and checks the focus on the camera.

Tad's image appears on the TV set in a head and shoulders shot.

Looking good...

DANIELLE

DANIELLE pulls her top down so that her shoulders are bare then launches herself on top of TAD.

PRESTON peers out of his bedroom door.

Holy shit. Holy shit!

PRESTON

Ok start.

DANIELLE

What?

TAD

Grinding and looking hot. Like this...

DANIELLE

DANIELLE starts doing an elaborate pantomime of sexual ecstasy.

What are you doing?

TAD

Acting. C'mon and help me. Start.

DANIELLE

Well, how about a kiss?

TAD

No. DANIELLE

No? TAD

I don't kiss. DANIELLE

What? TAD

No kissing. It's disgusting. DANIELLE
(Beat)
Now lets get to work here.

Like sex, right? TAD

Sex? DANIELLE

Yeah. TAD

Eww...God no. DANIELLE
(Beat)

What's the matter with you anyway?

TAD jumps up from the couch, leaving DANIELLE in a heap.

TAD
The matter with me? What the hell is up with you? You ask me over here saying I'm gonna get some and I find out you're doing some sort of weird ass video show.
(Beat)

What the hell is going on here?

DANIELLE

(Defiantly)

I am making a porn movie.

TAD

Porn movies have sex in them.

DANIELLE

It's called acting. Pretend. Ever heard of it? Acting.

(Beat)

Now let's get back to work. First positions please.

TAD

I've got a first position for you...

*TAD gets atop DANIELLE and kisses her forcibly.
DANIELLE smacks him about the head. Watching his
sister struggle, PRESTON enters from his room and pulls
TAD off her.*

*The three of them stare at each other for a long moment,
PRESTON obviously gunned up for a fight.*

Thinking twice about it, TAD pulls on his shirt.

TAD

Stay away from me, just stay away from me. At school, on the street, in the whole damn universe. I don't know you, I don't want to know you. This never happened.

(Beat)

Freak...

TAD exits.

DANIELLE, in tears, sits up.

PRESTON

What was that...

DANIELLE

Ah...

DANIELLE starts to cry quietly.

PRESTON

Hey...

PRESTON comforts her. DANIELLE eventually collects herself.

DANIELLE

My brave warrior. Thank you.

PRESTON

Sure.

(Beat)

So...uh...what was that about?

DANIELLE

The plan. That was the plan or what used to be the plan. Now all ashes.

PRESTON

The secret plan.

DANIELLE

Yup.

PRESTON

Which was...what exactly?

DANIELLE

Porn.

(Beat)

Make a sex tape. Release sex tape.

(Beat)

Be famous.

(Beat)

Be happy...

PRESTON

A sex tape? Dani, you hate being touched...

DANIELLE

Ummm yeah, there is that. But I was working a sort of acting thing. Pretend, staged.

(Beat)

Tad didn't quite get that part.

PRESTON

No, he didn't.

DANIELLE

So now I need a new plan. But I'm tired now. Really tired.

(Beat)

I'm going to bed.

PRESTON

Dani?

DANIELLE

Yeah?

PRESTON

That's what you want? To be famous?

DANIELLE

That's all I want.

PRESTON

Why?

DANIELLE

Cause it's better than this.

PRESTON

Than what?

DANIELLE

Than this. Here. This place. And everything else too. I don't want my life to be invisible. And make no mistake about it, if you aren't famous nowadays, you are invisible. So...I've got to take my shot. And, frankly, I don't have a lot to offer...

PRESTON

Now...

DANIELLE

I'm cute. I'm thin. That's about it.

PRESTON

Wait. That's not true.

DANIELLE

No?

PRESTON

You're...fashionable. You know about clothes and girl stuff and who designed what...

DANIELLE

Yeah. Fat lot of good it does me.

(Beat)

Good night.

PRESTON

Dani, you know what?

DANIELLE

What?

PRESTON

I want stuff too.

DANIELLE

Yeah?

PRESTON

I want...

(Beat)

I want to be powerful. I want to be confident. I want to be done being a teenager.

DANIELLE

Me too.

(Beat)

And Press, you are confident.

PRESTON

Huh?

DANIELLE

You chased Tad out of here didn't you? He backed right down when he saw how mad you were.

PRESTON

He did, didn't he?

DANIELLE

Yup.

PRESTON

I want...

(Beat)

I want to feel like that all the time. Every day for the rest of my life.

(Beat)

But I don't know how...

The TV set flickers on. Silent static appears on the screen.

DANIELLE leans over the couch and gives PRESTON a peck on the cheek.

DANIELLE

I really hope you find out. I wish I could.

(Beat)

Good night.

As DANIELLE starts to exit. SONJA appears on the TV set. PRESTON sits transfixed for a moment.

PRESTON

Dani...we

DANIELLE exits.

SONJA

Preston!

(Beat)

God dag a du!

PRESTON

Hello.

SONJA
Hello to you.

PRESTON
Um...who are you?

SONJA
(Giggles)
I am Sonja.

PRESTON
And why are you in the TV set?

SONJA
Because it is a good way to get your attention, no?

PRESTON
Yeah. Yeah it is.
(Beat)
And why...

SONJA
So many questions...
SONJA skates a lazy circle.

SONJA (cont'd)
I am Sonja, I am a skating Sonja, I am a famous skating Sonja.

PRESTON
Really? Hmmm...
PRESTON grabs a laptop and goes online.

PRESTON (cont'd)
(Typing)
Sonja, skating...
(Pause)
Wow...

SONJA
Be om tilgivelse meg? (Excuse me?)

PRESTON

You're like...a star. A superstar.

SONJA

Ja...

PRESTON

A skating star, a...a...three time Olympic champion and a ten time World Champion.

(Beat)

And a movie star...

SONJA

That's me.

PRESTON

But it also says here that you were obsessed by money and sex and had a vile temper.

SONJA

Ja. What may I say? It is true. I was a driven person. But that was a long time ago.

PRESTON

And it also says you're...

MAX enters staggering sleepily to the bathroom.

PRESTON

Hi Dad.

MAX

You're up late.

PRESTON

I'm talking to an ice skating Norwegian lady who's in the TV set.

MAX

That's nice, son.

MAX exits.

PRESTON

It says here that you're dead.

SONJA

I am. It happens. It will happen to you someday.

PRESTON

So when you die...

MAX enters.

MAX

Get some sleep son.

PRESTON

Hey Dad, the lady in the TV set? She's dead.

MAX

That's nice son. Good night.

MAX exits.

PRESTON

So when you die you go into a TV set?

SONJA

(Giggles)

No, Preston. It is much more complex than that, silly boy.

PRESTON

Yeah?

SONJA

Ja.

PRESTON

How? Tell me...

SONJA

Nei, nei, nei. (No, no, no)

(Beat)

Everyone enters the mystery their own way. As I did. As you will.

Pause.

PRESTON

So that's it isn't it? You've come to claim me.

(Beat)

I'm going to die...

SONJA

Nei.

PRESTON

This is so unfair! I'm 17, I haven't even lived yet. How could you do this to me?

SONJA

Nei.

PRESTON

Please don't do this, I beg you. Please....

SONJA

Shhhh, shhhh, ung ettall. (young one)

(Beat)

Calm now, calm please. Here...do this please.

SONJA places both hands over her mouth.

PRESTON watches her for a long moment then imitates her.

SONJA (cont'd)

That is good.

(Beat)

Preston, dum gutt (silly boy), you are not going to die. I am here to help you live.

PRESTON

What...how...?

SONJA clamps her hand back over her mouth. PRESTON immediately does the same.

SONJA

Because, you called me here. I hear you through all of everything and said here is a boy who wishes to be better. To be more, to be a man. To be...as good as a man can be.

PRESTON

Which is what? What?

Pause

SONJA

(Grandly)

En Viking.

PRESTON

A Viking?

SONJA

Yes, en Viking..

PRESTON

A Viking...

SONJA

Strong, powerful, faithful. Self sufficient. Nordic masters of the sea. Sons of the god Thor.

(Beat)

A man could do worse.

(Beat)

Ligne en Viking, Preston. Be like a Viking

PRESTON

That would be so...cool. A Viking.

(Beat)

But they were raiders too. Plunderers. They were fearsome warriors. They were respected. And feared...

SONJA

Ja.

PRESTON

I want to be a Viking.

SONJA

Nei, Preston, Nei. Ligne en Viking. Like a Viking Preston. Be like a Viking. Be brave. You are a Vik, one who lurks in a bay or an inlet in order to attack...

PRESTON

Attack?

SONJA

Ja, a Viking is a...what do you say them as? A...pirate.

PRESTON

(Beat)

Yes. That is me. That is me now. I want to be a Viking. A Vik, a pirate.

PRESTON leans in to the TV screen.

PRESTON (cont'd)

But how?

SONJA

We start liten, we start little.

PRESTON

How?

SONJA

You must start to act like a Viking, Preston. How would a Viking act? If you were a Viking and you are also Preston, how would you act?

PRESTON

I would act....brave.

SONJA

Ja, good start.

(Beat)

But you need more...

PRESTON

What?

You need... SONJA

SONJA makes a gesture and the screen blacks out. Lightening plays across the living room accompanied by a rumbling of thunder. With a sudden flash and a loud bang, a hat, a toy Viking hat, falls from the sky into PRESTON's lap.

Pause.

A hat. PRESTON

SONJA is visible on the TV screen again.

Ja. SONJA

But it's like, a toy or something. PRESTON

It is a little hat, ja. SONJA

What do I do with it? PRESTON

You wear it. On your head, dum gutt. SONJA

But it's a small hat. PRESTON

You are a small Viking. SONJA

(Pause)
Yes, yes I am, aren't I? PRESTON

Yet someday ...a big Viking, ja? SONJA

PRESTON looks at the hat dubiously.

PRESTON

Ja.

SONJA

Ja.

Pause.

PRESTON

Now what?

SONJA starts to skate away.

SONJA

(Giggling)

Now you will show me.

(Beat)

På gjensyn snart, Preston! I will see you soon.

The TV set blacks out. The lights dim slowly around PRESTON as he stares at the hat. Slowly, he gets around to placing it on his head. As he does so, his face changes, becoming different somehow.

Fade-out.

End ACT 1

ACT 2

The breakfast table.

MAX, EUDORA and DANIELLE sit, eating quietly. MAX is drinking a mimosa.

Pause.

PRESTON enters from his room, and pauses to place the toy Viking hat on his head.

He strides to the table and sits down.

PRESTON

Family.

MAX

(Not looking up from his paper)

Son.

EUDORA looks up at PRESTON who has bowed his head and is praying fervently. DANIELLE takes in the whole scene with gleeful amusement.

DANIELLE

Hey Prez...

(Pause)

Nice. Hat.

EUDORA

Dear, whatever are you doing?

PRESTON

Praying, mother.

EUDORA

Praying?

PRESTON

Yes.

EUDORA

To?

PRESTON

Odin and his son Thor, god of war.

EUDORA

Well hmmm...

(Beat)

Any particular reason dear?

DANIELLE

Oh boy...

PRESTON

For courage in battle.

MAX

You do realize that religion is just a ruling class social construct to give comfort to the exploited working masses, don't you?

DANIELLE

Nice hat.

EUDORA

Yes, indeed it is.

(Beat)

Max darling, look at Preston's lovely hat.

(Urgently)

Max...

MAX looks up.

MAX

Hmmmm...

(beat)

Nice hat.

(beat)

Seems a bit small tho...

DANIELLE

I thought so too.

PRESTON stops praying and begins to eat. He is very focused on his food, eating rapidly as if someone was about to take it from him.

EUDORA

What does the hat mean dear? Are you going to a party? I love parties.

PRESTON

No Mother, no party.

EUDORA

Or a play? Are you in the school play dear? That would be nice. I was in my 7th grade school play.

PRESTON

(Brusquely)

No play.

MAX

I remember you mentioning that darling, weren't you part of a food group?

EUDORA

I was. I was yogurt.

MAX

You were cultured.

EUDORA

(Happily)

Being yogurt, I was.

(Beat)

So what part are you playing, Preston?

PRESTON slams his fist down on the table.

PRESTON

Silence woman!

Everyone, including PRESTON, is shocked for an instant.

MAX

(Coolly)

Excuse me comrade?

DANIELLE

Uh-oh.

(Beat. To PRESTON)

You're getting comraded. Not good.

EUDORA

I...I...

PRESTON

I...I...

MAX

What is going on?

EUDORA

What did I do?

PRESTON

Nothing, I...

EUDORA

This is what I get for taking an active loving interest in my children's lives?

(Beat)

They never tell you this in the books.

EUDORA reaches for her pills.

MAX

I'm so sorry my darling.

(Beat. Then to PRESTON)

Explain yourself. Howling at your mother like that...

PRESTON

I am...trying...something different. I am trying to be powerful.

MAX

By screaming at your mother?

PRESTON

No...

MAX

Ah.

(Beat)

Then what?

PRESTON

I just...I...I dunno...

DANIELLE

The lady in the TV set told him to be a Viking.

MAX

Hmmmm?

EUDORA

What?

PRESTON

Yeah.

(Beat)

Right after she told you to make a sex tape so you could win Ms. Popularity at school

Pause.

DANIELLE

(Getting up)

Done.

PRESTON

(Getting up)

Done.

They both scurry to their rooms.

MAX

Hmmmm...

EUDORA

Hmmmm...

(Beat)

So what is this all about dear? I'm so confused. I don't remember adolescence being this...complicated.

MAX

And complex too, eh?

EUDORA

Yes.

MAX

Let's review. Prez is now transitioning into a Viking and Dani apparently, according to her brother, is now creating cinema vérité at home.

EUDORA

See? It is complex. When we were this age it was about sex and drugs and rock and roll.

MAX

Oooo. And don't forget that apparently Prez is taking spiritual guidance from a woman in the television set.

EUDORA

In the set? Inside it?

MAX

I honestly don't know. Maybe coming through it? Being broadcast on it?

EUDORA

Goodness.

MAX

I do believe I shall have another tiddle while I consider these matters and prepare for work. Would you like one?

EUDORA

No dear, I'm good.

MAX

Odd way to start the day, eh? Vikings and sex tapes and what not.

EUDORA

You know, when I think about it, I'm sure it's all just a phase...

MAX

Oh.

(Beat)

No doubt.

EUDORA

Children....school.

The doors to the bedrooms open.

DANIELLE

Mother. No!

PRESTON

President's Day.

DANIELLE

Thank god.

PRESTON

And Lincoln and Washington.

DANIELLE

But Taft and Hoover and Bush one and two...

PRESTON

Especially number two.

DANIELLE

No thank you.

Pause.

MAX

What is Presidents's Day? Is it like the old Great October Socialist Revolution day?

EUDORA

More like Stalin's birthday.

MAX

An obscure holiday but you ignored it at your own peril. Holidays of the revolutions were like that.

(Beat)

And with that, I depart to labor.

EUDORA

Travel safely, mon cheri...

They kiss passionately.

The lights fade on MAX and EUDORA.

The doorbell rings. DANIELLE enters from her room.

DANIELLE

Mine. Me. Mine!

DANIELLE flings the door open.

DANIELLE (cont'd)

Hey you!

JEREMY enters. He is a very attractive, very fashionable young man.

Note: TAD and JEREMY are played by the same actor.

JEREMY

Hello you. You look fantastic.

DANIELLE

Do I?

JEREMY

Yes you do.

DANIELLE

Someday s....

JEREMY

Hush you. The senior class women would kill for this figure. Now let's go drape it, shall we? The shops await us.

DANIELLE

I'll be right back. Potty first.

DANIELLE exits.

Pause.

JEREMY looks around the apartment. PRESTON's door cracks open as he peers at JEREMY.

Pause.

JEREMY

You can come out if you want to.

PRESTON

(Sheepishly)

I know that.

(Beat)

I live here.

JEREMY

Ah.

PRESTON

I do.

JEREMY

I wasn't doubting you. I was agreeing.

PRESTON

You were?

JEREMY

Sure. Why would I doubt you?

PRESTON

I don't know.

JEREMY

I'm Jeremy.

The door opens. PRESTON enters cautiously, wearing his hat.

PRESTON

I'm Preston. I like to be called Press. But people call me Prez a lot.

JEREMY

Don't you just hate that?

(Beat)

People should just call you what you want.

PRESTON

Yes. Exactly.

(Pause)

Are you gay?

JEREMY

(Easily)

Yes.

PRESTON

You are?

JEREMY

Um-hmm.

PRESTON

And you can just say that? How?

JEREMY

Because it's true.

PRESTON

That so rules...

JEREMY

Being gay?

(Beat)

It does seem very fashionable doesn't it?

PRESTON

No, no.

JEREMY

No?

PRESTON

I mean...I mean being strong like that. Just saying what's what. Like you just did.

(Beat)

I want to do that.

JEREMY

I see.

PRESTON

Yeah. I'm sort of changing. I mean, I'm trying to change and become...different.

JEREMY

Different?

PRESTON

Better, stronger, more...powerful.

JEREMY

I think everyone wants to grow and evolve.

Pause.

PRESTON

I am becoming a Viking.

Pause.

JEREMY

Well, that certainly explains the hat.

PRESTON

Yes.

JEREMY

Nice hat.

(Beat)

But...

PRESTON

But?

JEREMY gives him an assessing look.

JEREMY

It's too small.

PRESTON

Yeah, I thought so too.

JEREMY

Sort of a starter Viking hat.

PRESTON

So...

JEREMY

So, you really need a hat that fits your head. If you are going to be powerful then you have to project it. A larger hat that fits your head would say powerful, what with the horns and all.

(Beat)

But this, well I'm afraid, just says silly.

PRESTON

I thought so too.

(Beat)

How do you know all this stuff?

JEREMY

I'm a costume designer over at the Working Theatre. You have to think about how the clothes reflect the character. So...if you want to be powerful, you have to look powerful.

PRESTON

Sort of like how clothes make the man?

JEREMY

Sure. Or the Viking in this case.

(Beat)

Tell you what, we did a production of Wagner's Ring a few years ago with the University. I'll check the costume hold and see if we have anything we can part with.

PRESTON

(Pause)

Thank you.

JEREMY

Sure.

PRESTON

I appreciate it.

JEREMY

Dream your dream, Press. For as you dream so shall you become.

(Beat)

I read that somewhere.

PRESTON

I love it.

DANIELLE enters.

DANIELLE

Ready ready ready to roll you.

JEREMY

Great.

DANIELLE

You met Prez right?

JEREMY

You mean Press. Why yes I did. We've been chatting.

DANIELLE

Stimulating I'm sure.

The TV blinks to life with an image of a smiling SONJA.

JEREMY

As a matter of fact Ms. Snarky Pants, your brother is a very interesting fellow.

SONJA

Preston!

JEREMY

What was that?

PRESTON

Wow look at the time, you guys should get moving.

JEREMY

It sounded like a buzzing or something...

DANIELLE

See? What did I tell you? You stay around here too long and you start hallucinating. Let's go.

SONJA

Preston! God dag a du.

JEREMY

There it is again.

PRESTON

Time to go now.

JEREMY

But...

PRESTON

Now!

DANIELLE

You are so rude.

PRESTON

Don't forget the hat.

PRESTON pushes them out the door.

PRESTON (cont'd)

Whew...

SONJA

Hello to you, Preston, Hello to you.

PRESTON

Sonja, I'm getting a new hat.

SONJA

Good.

PRESTON

That should help. Maybe make me feel better. Being a Viking this morning didn't go too well.

SONJA

No?

PRESTON

I sort of accidentally yelled at my Mom, while I was trying to be strong and Nordic and all.

(Beat)

But I'm getting a new hat.

SONJA

Ah...

PRESTON

Ah? That's it? All you can say is ah?

SONJA

Vikings do not yell at their mothers, dum gutt. (silly boy)

PRESTON

No, no they don't.

(Beat)

I feel small.

SONJA

A new hat is good. But it is just a hat Preston.

PRESTON

But...

SONJA

A hat is a hat. You must live and breathe Viking. Conduct yourself as a Viking. All the time. Always.

Pause.

PRESTON

I see...

SONJA

Do you?

PRESTON

Yes...

SONJA

Good.

(Beat)

På gjensyn snart, (Goodbye to you) my little Viking.

SONJA's image fades and the TV blinks out.

Pause.

PRESTON

Live and breathe Viking. Live and breathe Viking. Live and breathe...

(Beat)

Viking.

Blackout.

End Scene.

Scene 2

Late Afternoon.

Shadows play across the apartment.

The door opens and DANIELLE and JEREMY enter.

DANIELLE is carrying a multitude of shopping bags. She has also worn some of her purchases home. Her fashion statement is an odd one. The garments are covering her all over and are puffy, as if she was trying to shield herself from the environment.

She drops her bags and twirls dramatically.

DANIELLE

Well?

JEREMY

It's a statement all right.

DANIELLE

That's hardly a ringing note of approval.

JEREMY

(Beat)

Honey...it's a radical look. And, frankly, I don't believe it's for you.

DANIELLE

(Pouting)

Why not?

JEREMY

Because you, mademoiselle, were blessed with the pretty skinny gene. It's a great asset and you should be showing it off, not hiding it.

DANIELLE

Well, I want to be radical. Fashionistas make radical statements. You know that. You have to do that to get noticed. And I want to be noticed. I really do.

JEREMY

Fine. But that six pack you're sporting under all that fabric would get you noticed in a hurry, girl.

(Beat)

The hot way.

DANIELLE

Well see, that's just the easy way. And I'd like to avoid that whole thing..

JEREMY

What whole thing?

DANIELLE

The whole hotness leading to touching thing..

(She shivers)

Ewww....

JEREMY

Dani, that's a little off don't you think? People want, no, people need to be touched, dear.

(Beat)

Every heard of skin hunger?

DANIELLE

No. Is that like a vampire zombie thing?

JEREMY

No woman. Scientists have proven that we people have a physical need to be touched, to be hugged.

DANIELLE

Well, they haven't proven it to me.

Pause.

JEREMY

(Concerned)

Dani, how long have you...

Suddenly a clatter and banging is heard. It is the sound of metal being worked in a very vigorous manner.

JEREMY (cont'd)

What was that?

Orange and yellow lights flicker around the edge of PRESTON's closed bedroom door. The noise continues.

DANIELLE

Ohmigod!

(Beat)

Preston...?

JEREMY

Press?

The door to PRESTON's room opens violently.

PRESTON enters in a billow of smoke. It appears that a medieval forge has somehow been installed in his room. He is carrying a large, deadly looking, two handed sword.

He doesn't notice DANIELLE and JEREMY standing there with mouths agape.

He strikes several poses as he tests the weight and heft of the sword.

DANIELLE clears her throat.

DANIELLE

Preston...

Pause.

JEREMY

Press...

(Beat)

So...whatcha been up too?

Pause.

PRESTON

Crafting.

Pause

JEREMY

Hey...we stopped by the theatre and got you that hat.

DANIELLE

(Quickly)

Oh we sure did.

(She pulls a hat out of a bag)

See?

PRESTON

I thank you for thinking of me.

DANIELLE

Sure...

PRESTON exits into his room, which is still eerily lit with wisps of smoke escaping. He enters again immediately.

He is wearing a huge Viking helmet, one that looks as if it has seen many battles.

Pause.

JEREMY

Nice...hat.

PRESTON

It is a helmet.

DANIELLE

It sure is...

PRESTON

A helmet meant for battle.

JEREMY

Of course...it...is...

PRESTON

I crafted it on my forge.

DANIELLE

Your forge?

MAX and EUDORA enter through the front door.

MAX

I remember when meetings of the Radical Revolutionary Workers party were exciting..

EUDORA

Ummmm....

MAX

And dangerous too...

EUDORA

Yes dear...

MAX

Now it's just a group of us oldsters discussing their urinary tract issues.

(Beat)

The dream is fading..

EUDORA

Hello Dani. Who's your little friend here?

DANIELLE

(Indicating PRESTON with a nod of her head)

Mother...

JEREMY

I'm Jeremy...

(Beat)

We...we were just...chatting...with Preston...

EUDORA looks at PRESTON, who is standing in a rigid warrior pose.

EUDORA

Son...

PRESTON

Mother.

EUDORA

You got the part. That's terrific. Max, look, Preston is going to be in a play.

MAX

I see that. You look ferocious, son. Very savage.

MAX gazes at the light and wisps of smoke coming from PRESTON's room.

MAX (cont'd)

And you have a new hobby too I see.

PRESTON

Mother. Father.

(Beat)

I honor you.

EUDORA

Oh that's so sweet.

(EUDORA kisses PRESTON)

Thank you baby.

PRESTON

I must go now. I will hunt.

EUDORA

Hunt?

MAX

On 57th street?

DANIELLE

(Quietly. To JEREMY)

Did he bump his head or something?

JEREMY

I don't know. I honestly don't...

DANIELLE

Oh parental units, have you noticed anything...odd...about our Prez?

MAX

Odd?

EUDORA

He is in a play. That's very creative.

PRESTON

(Gravely)

Know now what I say to you. My time with you is short. I will provide for the season before I depart.

(Beat. PRESTON moves toward the door with his sword)

Farewell.

PRESTON exits.

MAX

So...where's he going?

JEREMY

Out apparently.

DANIELLE

To hunt. He went out to hunt. On 57th street.

(Beat)

I don't think he's right. I mean less right than he was, which is still pretty bad.

JEREMY

Huh?

DANIELLE

I'm worried.

EUDORA

Oh stop now. He's in a play and he's working out the part. Right?

DANIELLE

Mother. He is strolling around midtown with a sword.

EUDORA

You're worried about your brother? That's so sweet.

MAX

You two have certainly grown close.

DANIELLE

He is wandering around hunting! How is it you aren't worried about this?

JEREMY

He told me he wants to be a Viking.

MAX

Ah...A Viking you say?

JEREMY

Yes.

EUDORA

It's just a phase.

MAX

Of course it is.

DANIELLE

A phase?

(Beat)

You're kidding right?

MAX

No. Not at all. Sort of like you with your fashion ...experiments.

EUDORA

Is puffy in this year dear?

JEREMY

Actually no...

DANIELLE

Shut up you.

(Beat)

We're not talking about me, we're talking about Preston. It's not a phase. Something's not right. Something's wrong.

MAX

My darling girl. You don't have the history of child rearing, the overview if you will, that your Mother and I have.

EUDORA

Trust me, it's a phase.

DANIELLE

But...

MAX

Ah now. Before you pop off again let me ask you something. Do you remember when you and Prez were four?

DANIELLE

Vaguely.

MAX

You and your brother wouldn't eat anything but fish sticks, rice and corn for a year and a half.

EUDORA

Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

MAX

So it was a...say it with me...

EUDORA

A phase.

DANIELLE

Really? Ok then...explain the forge.

MAX

That's a forge?

JEREMY

It appears so, yes.

EUDORA

He's interested in native crafts?

(Beat. Then to MAX)

Right?

MAX

Perhaps...

DANIELLE

Sure, it's all good. He's got a medieval forge in his bedroom that he's used to craft a gigantic sword and helmet and now he's running around midtown hunting.

(Beat)

And all of this because a woman in the TV set told him to.

(Beat)

Nothing to see here people, just move on. Everything's fine.

JEREMY

A woman in the TV set?

DANIELLE

You do not want to know.

JEREMY

This might actually be the time to consider professional intervention.

EUDORA

(Holding her pill container)

It worked for me.

MAX

You are a woman of an age my dove, you've earned the right to be pharmaceutically managed.

EUDORA

(Brightly)

I have, haven't I?

DANIELLE

What are we going to do about this?

JEREMY

A medical opinion wouldn't hurt at this point.

MAX

Nonsense you two.

(Beat)

I'll catch Preston when he returns and we'll have a chat. Mano e mano if you will. I will express our collective concerns in a manly yet non-threatening manner.

EUDORA

Father knows best.

DANIELLE

Oh boy...

Blackout

END Scene 2

Scene 3

Midnight

The apartment is completely dark.

Suddenly, center stage, a fire pit ignites.

PRESTON's face is revealed in the light. He is now wearing an outfit made of animal robes. Plus the helmet.

Behind him a large crude map of Ireland has been tacked to the wall with ornate looking daggers in each corner.

PRESTON moves off into the darkness for a moment then returns abruptly. He has a large carcass on a spit which he places over the fire.

Finally satisfied that the meat is cooking, he turns to the map standing before it contemplatively.

PRESTON

We will come in darkness...hidden by night's black pools...

MAX enters. He pauses for a long moment watching his son.

MAX

Well, we've been busy, hmmm?

PRESTON whirls around and drops to one knee, holding his sword in front of him.

PRESTON

Father, I honor you.

MAX

That's very nice indeed son, but all this honoring is making me a tad uneasy. I mean compared to the usual teenaged snarling and sulking.

(Beat)

And, of course, there's the matter of the open fire in the living room.

(Beat)

Please get up.

PRESTON

Thank you, sir. Will you dine?

PRESTON turns swiftly and hacks a piece of meat from the carcass with one stroke. He offers it to MAX.

MAX

Ah...no...no. But thanks...

PRESTON

We will drink together then, yes?

MAX

Drink?

PRESTON produces two enormous tankards and a pitcher. He pours a yellow liquid into the tankards.

PRESTON

Mead.

MAX

Huh?

PRESTON

A wine of honey.

(He raises his tankard)

To Odin. To the goddess Sonja. To victory!

MAX

Victory?

PRESTON indicates the map.

PRESTON

My quest.

MAX

For...?

PRESTON

Victory.

(Beat)

We will come under velvet darkness and attack without warning. Those who will obey will be spared, those who deny us will be slain.

MAX

Is this some sort of school project?

(Beat)

I knew we should have enrolled you in something more traditional.

PRESTON

Father? I do not know your meaning..

Long pause. MAX studies the map.

MAX

Is that Ireland?

PRESTON

Eire, my lord. A rich hunting ground indeed. We attack in the spring then return to Thule to winter. To family, to friends, to rest.

MAX

Thule?

(Beat)

You mean Iceland...?

PRESTON

As you will my Lord.

Pause.

MAX

You know son, sometimes when we have a lot of concerns and a lot of pressure on us, we...we sometimes deal with it in...nontraditional ways...

PRESTON

Indeed?

MAX

Perhaps I should have seen this coming. Maybe we just had too many expectations for you...

PRESTON

Father no.

(Beat)

This, what I am now, in this very moment, is what I have always been meant to be.

MAX

A...

PRESTON

Viking.

MAX

No...

PRESTON

Yes, my father, yes.

Pause.

MAX

And how did all this come about?

PRESTON

The goddess Sonja appeared to me and showed me my destiny.

MAX

Sonja?

PRESTON

Sonja Henje.

MAX

The ice skater?

PRESTON

She comes to me through this box. She has instructed me and illuminated my mind. She has guided me unto the one true path.

MAX

Sonja Henje? The ice skater? The one from the forties?

PRESTON

The goddess may have many names. This is how she has chosen to reveal herself to me.

MAX

I see

(Beat. Then quickly)

More mead please.

PRESTON

Of course, Father.

PRESTON pours his father another drink.

MAX

I was wondering if tomorrow you might have time to meet a friend of mine...

PRESTON

I would be honored.

MAX

Ah more honoring...

PRESTON

We should meet early with the rising of the sun. For on the morrow, I must depart with the tide.

MAX

Depart?

(Beat)

Depart to where?

PRESTON

To the sea. To join my men and start my journey.

Pause.

MAX

Well...what about your mother and your sister?

PRESTON

What of them?

MAX

Son, they'll miss you.

PRESTON

I leave them in your good hands, Father.

MAX

And school?

PRESTON

The sea will be my school.

MAX

Ah...so you have this all thought out, eh?

PRESTON

Indeed.

Long pause.

MAX

I see.

(Beat)

You know, I can't help but feel that somehow I've failed you, Press.

PRESTON

No.

MAX takes a long drink.

MAX

I wish I could believe that.

PRESTON

Father...

(Beat)

I think, I think that after a certain age a person is solely responsible for finding their own way.

(Beat)

Now is my time.

(Beat)

I could not have asked for a better father.

MAX

Thank you.

PRESTON

And now, sir, I must prepare for my departure.

MAX

Yes...

(Beat)

Yes of course...

(Beat)

But...you will talk with my friend tomorrow, eh?

PRESTON

Of course.

MAX

Well, Ok then.

(Beat)

Good night son...

PRESTON

Good night Father.

The lights dim on PRESTON as MAX heads to his bedroom door where EUDORA and DANIELLE await.

DANIELLE

Well?

MAX

Well...

EUDORA

Well what, my love?

DANIELLE

(Hissing)

Well, Daddy, what now?

MAX

He will meet with a "friend of mine."

EUDORA

A doctor?

MAX

It might be prudent darling...

DANIELLE

Thank God.

EUDORA

I don't understand this. I do not understand this. Why? Why are people so upset?

DANIELLE

Why are people so upset? Mother!

EUDORA

He has become polite and respectful. He's interested in things. He seems...happy...

(Beat)

He can be a Viking if he wants to.

(Beat)

He'll have new interests when the play is over.

DANIELLE

There's an open fire pit in our living room.

EUDORA

Oh.

(Beat)

So there is.

(Beat. Then to MAX)

Was that always there dear?

DANIELLE

He's not in a play. This isn't a "phase". He isn't well and he needs some sort of professional intervention.

EUDORA

No he doesn't.

DANIELLE

Yes he does.

EUDORA

It will all be fine.

DANIELLE

No it won't.

Pause.

EUDORA

Well, what about you?

DANIELLE

Me?

(Beat)

We aren't talking about me.

EUDORA

Maybe...maybe we should...

DANIELLE

Daddy!

MAX

Ladies enough.

(Beat)

Tomorrow we'll have my "friend" over and see what he says. Then we'll go from there.

DANIELLE

But...

EUDORA

But...

MAX

Enough. I have ruled here. Bed, you two.

(Beat)

Now.

Blackout.

END Scene 3

Scene 4

Dawn.

PRESTON is kneeling beside the TV set, sword in hand, praying.

PRESTON

My Goddess, I beg you, reveal yourself to me and grant me the succor of your wisdom.

The room darkens suddenly and the TV set comes on with a pop. SONJA appears in close up with a serious expression on her face.

SONJA

God dag a du.

PRESTON

God dag a du, O my Goddess.

SONJA

And you, you are well?

PRESTON

I am...

(Beat)

I am worried, I am...I guess...

SONJA

Fearful?

PRESTON

No.

(Beat)

Well...

SONJA

A bit?

PRESTON

Yes...

(Beat)

A bit.

SONJA

It is natural. You have started your journey, you are on your way. Your heart has begun the voyage, soon your person will follow. Everyone has worries at the start of the new.

PRESTON

Yes?

SONJA

Yes.

PRESTON

Thank you.

SONJA

And you are changing yes?

PRESTON

Am I?

SONJA

I see it. You are different. You are no longer Preston. The boy, that Preston boy, is gone now.

PRESTON

But...

SONJA

Bow your head.

PRESTON bows his head.

SONJA

From infant to child, from child to stripling, from stripling to man...

A flaming sword appears on the TV screen, spinning slowly.

SONJA (cont'd)

I dub you...

The room darkens. Suddenly lightning flashes and thunder booms.

SONJA (cont'd)

Hjorvarth...the Just. And all your fellows shall know you as such.

PRESTON

Thank you, my goddess.

SONJA's image reappears on the TV.

SONJA

And you are charged by me to go forth now. Into the wilderness and out to the sea. Out to the sea in ships.

(Beat)

Fulfill your destiny.

PRESTON

Yes.

(Beat)

I will not fail you.

SONJA

Your journey awaits...

The doorbell rings. The room brightens.

SONJA (cont'd)

It is time.

The TV screen blacks out.

MAX and EUDORA enter.

MAX

Well good morning son.

PRESTON

Good morning Father.

The doorbell rings.

MAX

(Brightly)

I wonder who that could be?

EUDORA

(Archly)

Yes...I wonder.

MAX goes to the door and flings it open. A middle aged slightly greying DOCTOR stands there.

The DOCTOR is played by the same actor who plays TAD and JEREMY.

MAX

Doctor! Oops, I mean...um...

Pause.

DOCTOR

Wittgenstein.

MAX

(Whispering)

First name.

DOCTOR

Bob.

MAX

Bob!

(Beat)

Look everyone, Bob's here.

Pause. An uncomfortable silence.

EUDORA

So he is.

MAX
Bob, my darling wife Eudora.

DOCTOR
My pleasure.

EUDORA grunts.

DANIELLE enters, covered head to toe in an absurdly elaborate sleeping ensemble.

DANIELLE
Who is that?

MAX
That is Bob.

DANIELLE
Who's Bob?

DOCTOR
Me. I'm...uh...Bob.

DANIELLE
Short for Robert?

DOCTOR
Ah, yes...yes indeed.

DANIELLE
(To MAX)
Who's Bob?

MAX
This is my friend Bob. You remember, pumpkin, we were discussing him just yesterday.

DANIELLE
Oh...that Bob...
(Beat)
Hi Bob.

DOCTOR
Hello...miss?

Danielle. MAX

Danielle. DOCTOR

Hello. DANIELLE

Pause.

DOCTOR
Well Danielle, I've heard a lot about you. How are you doing?

Excuse me? DANIELLE

How's school? DOCTOR

What? DANIELLE

DOCTOR
Tell me Danielle, do you have a lot of friends?

Pause.

Daddy... DANIELLE

What pumpkin? MAX

DANIELLE
(Whispering)
He thinks he's here to see me.

Oh. MAX

(Beat. Then to DOCTOR)
No, no.

DOCTOR

Danielle, do you sometimes feel life has no purpose?

DANIELLE

Daddy!

EUDORA

Oh my goodness.

DANIELLE stomps out.

MAX

No Bob. I meant that one. That one over there...

(Beat)

My son Preston.

The DOCTOR turns to see PRESTON.

DOCTOR

Oh!

(Beat)

Oh.

(Beat)

Hello...Preston.

(Beat)

Good morning.

PRESTON

(Curtly)

Sir.

MAX

Bob, my son Preston...

PRESTON

Father...

MAX

Son?

PRESTON

Preston is no longer with you.

(beat)

I am transformed.

MAX

Oh?

EUDORA

Uh-oh.

PRESTON

Yes, pater. The goddess has blessed me. I am Hjorvarth...

(Beat)

The Just.

Pause.

MAX

Hjorvarth...

DOCTOR

Hjorvarth?

EUDORA

That's nice dear. Is that your character's name? What a nice Viking name.

MAX

Ok, ok...well...

(Beat)

Hjorvarth... this is my friend Bob.

PRESTON nods.

PRESTON

You would speak to me?

DOCTOR

(Cautiously)

I would.

PRESTON

Speak.

DOCTOR

Um...could you remove your hat so I can see your face?

PRESTON

No.

EUDORA

He's in a play.

(Beat. Then to PRESTON)

Is this method acting dear?

(Beat. Then to DOCTOR)

He's a very good little Viking don't you think?

DOCTOR

Oh yes. Yes indeed.

PRESTON

Speak sir. For soon I must depart.

DOCTOR

Depart?

(Beat)

Where are you going?

Pause. PRESTON takes a step closer to the DOCTOR.

PRESTON

I sense a falseness about you.

DOCTOR

I'm a friend of your father's.

MAX

He is.

*Pause. PRESTON takes a step closer to the DOCTOR.
DANIELLE is watching from the bedroom door.*

PRESTON

I sense a trickery about you.

DOCTOR
Do you?

PRESTON
(Ominously)
I do.

DOCTOR
So Preston....

PRESTON
Hjorvarth.

DOCTOR
I see you're a...a...Viking.

PRESTON
Indeed.

EUDORA
He's in a play.

MAX
Shhhhhhh.

DOCTOR
How exactly did you become a Viking?

DANIELLE
(Yelling)
Some old muscle butt ice skating fattie on the TV set told him he was, that's how.

MAX
Danielle...

DOCTOR
So Pres...I mean Hjorvarth...people on the TV set talk to you?
(Beat)
Directly to you?

PRESTON
The goddess Sonja appeared to me. She counseled me, directed me, gave my life purpose and form.

(Beat)

And today, I begin my journey.

DOCTOR

She appeared to you?

(Beat. Indicates the TV)

In that box?

PRESTON

Yes.

DOCTOR

I see.

(Beat)

I need to talk to your father for just a moment.

The DOCTOR and MAX move away from PRESTON.

MAX

Well, Bob?

DOCTOR

Um...I'll be honest, OK? It's not good. I mean, I've only talked to him for a few moments but clearly he's impaired.

EUDORA

No.

DOCTOR

I'm afraid so.

EUDORA

(To MAX)

No...no.

MAX

Let's hear him out darling.

DOCTOR

Normal people don't believe that people on TV are talking to them. Normal people don't dress like they're from the eleventh century.

EUDORA

He's in a play.

MAX

(Gently)

No angel, no he's not.

EUDORA reaches unsteadily into her pocket for her pills.

MAX

(To the DOCTOR)

What do you recommend?

DOCTOR

Offhand I'd say a week's committal for observation. Then probably a fairly heavy regimen of anti psychotic medication. And that's only if he stays...

PRESTON moves toward the group.

PRESTON

(To the DOCTOR)

You speak of me?

DOCTOR

Well...

PRESTON

You speak of me to my father?

MAX

Son, he's a friend and just wants to help.

PRESTON

(To the DOCTOR)

Speak no falsehoods. I sense danger within you.

DOCTOR

I'm here to help.

PRESTON

And who here requires your help?

Pause.

MAX

Ummmm...

DOCTOR

You.

(Beat)

You do.

PRESTON

I require no assistance.

(Beat)

Leave us.

DOCTOR

Look... Sometimes we get...over tired. Yes, overtired. We get confused and worried. Sometimes we just need to take a bit of a rest. You know, get away from the stresses of life. Take a break.

PRESTON

Father, I must depart soon. Send this man away.

(Beat)

Or I will.

MAX

Son...

DOCTOR

We know you've been under a lot of stress lately. We want to help...

The DOCTOR reaches out to touch PRESTON. Instantly a dagger flashes and PRESTON backs the DOCTOR up against the wall, the dagger at his eye.

MAX

No!

PRESTON

You will turn now, leave this place and never return. If you do not then I shall send you to the depths of hell before you draw your next breath.

The DOCTOR nods, frightened. MAX pulls PRESTON off of the DOCTOR. DANIELLE dashes from her room and stands between the two. Her outfit is now even more elaborate and confining, there is not an inch of bare flesh but her face. EUDORA cringes away from the scene.

The DOCTOR moves to the door, shaken. He opens it then turns to the family.

DOCTOR

I'm calling the authorities, Max.

(Beat)

I'm sorry, I really am. But he's violent and it's my professional opinion that he's very, very disturbed.

PRESTON

Die, swine.

PRESTON lunges at the DOCTOR. MAX and DANIELLE hold him back.

DOCTOR

And one other thing, maybe you should consider getting some sort of help for your daughter too.

DANIELLE

You bastard!

DANIELLE lunges for the DOCTOR but he escapes, slamming the door behind him.

Long pause.

MAX

Oh my, oh my...

MAX collapses into a chair.

DANIELLE

How dare he? Where does he come off saying that? I am scaling the heights of avant garde fashion.

EUDORA

Of course you are dear. Of course you are.

MAX

It's been a morning, hasn't it?

DANIELLE

It's not over yet. The police will be here. Very soon.

MAX

Yes.

(Beat. Then to EUDORA)

Darling, I am nonplussed. Could I impose upon you for a wee little tiddle, my dove?

EUDORA

Right away, my sweet prince.

EUDORA exits to the kitchen and instantly returns with an elaborate cocktail.

MAX

Splendid.

EUDORA

You're welcome, my delight.

MAX turns to PRESTON as EUDORA moves to the couch, availing herself of a few pills. DANIELLE sits next to her, placing a large hat with a heavy veil on her head. She is now completely hidden.

MAX

Son...

(Beat. Then to PRESTON)

I am concerned about what the future is going to bring for you. I really am.

PRESTON kneels besides MAX's chair.

PRESTON

I apologize for disturbing the peace of your home, Father. But I did what I felt I must.

MAX

I know. I know. But we have to consider the possibility that he is...

PRESTON

Father...

MAX

...right.

PRESTON

The wind...

DANIELLE

What?

MAX

Perhaps you need more help...

PRESTON

Do you feel it?

MAX

...than we can provide.

PRESTON

The wind...

EUDORA

What wind?

A wind moves across the set, gently at first.

PRESTON

The wind is freshening.

DANIELLE

This can't be good...

PRESTON

The wind is freshening.

The wind grows stronger.

PRESTON (cont'd)

They have come.

(Beat)

It is time.

Urgent footsteps can be heard coming up the stairs.

EUDORA

The police? Oh God...

There is a loud pounding at the door. Not a knocking, more like someone trying to break it down.

MAX

Ohmigod. The fascists have come for us.

DANIELLE

Daddy!

The door pancakes into the floor with a resounding crash. A VIKING stands revealed in the doorway. He enters.

Note: The same actor plays the VIKING who plays TAD, JEREMY and the DOCTOR.

VIKING

My lord.

(He salutes.)

It has been far too long.

PRESTON

Indeed.

They embrace.

VIKING

The tide is with us, your ship awaits. Let us depart.

PRESTON

A moment...

(To MAX)

The season is upon us and I must take my leave of you now. I return with the snows, bearing gifts and treasure, my beloved ones. I pray for your good health in the meantime. And you must pray for me, pray to Odin for my good fortune and courage in battle, I beg you.

Pause.

MAX

We will.

EUDORA

Take...take care son.

DANIELLE

Bye, freakshow.

PRESTON

Farewell.

PRESTON and the VIKING exit.

Long pause.

They sit on the couch. A wind moves through the curtains. Then sounds. The sounds of ships, the water, of men moving. Suddenly a voice rings out.

VIKING (O.S.)

I give you...Hjorvarth!

A loud cheer rings out.

DANIELLE

No...

DANIELLE waddles to the window to look.

DANIELLE

I don't believe it.

What dear?
EUDORA

They're...
DANIELLE

A splash of sea water hits DANIELLE full in the face. She is stunned and returns to the couch. Outside, men are lustily singing obscure Nordic sea chanteys. Gradually the singing and sea noises fade.

Well...
MAX

Ummm, yes.
EUDORA

I do believe, even though it is early, I could use a refill.
MAX

Of course.
EUDORA

Will you join me?
MAX

Yes...
EUDORA

Yes I will. *(Beat)*

They get up.

My dove...
MAX

Dear?
EUDORA

What just happened here?
MAX

EUDORA

Oh...well. Nothing really.

(Beat)

It's just a phase he's going through.

MAX

I see.

EUDORA

It's just temporary.

MAX

You think so? Thank goodness.

EUDORA

You know what teenagers are like.

MAX

Indeed.

They exit.

Long pause.

DANIELLE sits silent, motionless on the couch.

Suddenly The TV set snaps on. SONJA appears.

SONJA

Danielle...

(Pause)

Danielle...

DANIELLE stirs, looking this way and that.

SONJA (cont'd)

Danielle...

DANIELLE rises unsteadily from the couch, following the voice.

SONJA (cont'd)

Danielle...

(Beat)

God dag a du!

DANIELLE kneels down next to the TV and peers at the screen.

SONJA smiles.

SONJA (cont'd)

God dag a du, liten piken. (little girl)

(Beat)

God dag a du!

DANIELLE stares at the screen for a moment. Slowly she removes her hat and veil.

DANIELLE

God dag a du?

SONJA smiles warmly at DANIELLE then turns to the audience and winks.

Blackout.

END ACT 2

Curtain

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