

ROOMIES

"The Funeral Debut"

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CAST

CHRIS..... ACTOR  
CHARLIE\*..... ACTOR  
VALERIE..... ACTOR  
MELISSA..... ACTOR  
MICHAEL..... ACTOR

GUEST CAST

PASSENGER..... ACTOR  
INSTRUCTOR..... ACTOR  
REVEREND TAYLOR..... ACTOR  
AUNT LESLIE..... ACTOR  
UNCLE JAY..... ACTOR  
AUNT KATHERINE..... ACTOR  
UNCLE TOM..... ACTOR

*\*In loving memory of Ariel "Charlie" Grigas.*

COLD OPEN

EXT. AMTRAK PASSENGER TRAIN - MORNING

Zooming through Indiana, west to east.

INT. AMTRAK PASSENGER TRAIN BATHROOM - DAY

CHRIS is eating a KitKat Bar and has his cell phone against his ear; he lifts the toilet seat up with his foot. He starts to pee.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Are you sure you don't want me to come with you?

CHRIS

(chewing)

Yeah. It's gonna be a real drag.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Have you decided on what you're going to say?

CHRIS

Not a clue...

The train gets bumpy, and Chris pees all over the toilet and wall.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Fuck! This is a fucking mess.

CHARLIE (V.O.)

Dude, you're gonna get through it.

Chris is trying to gain control of his stream of urine.

CHRIS

Oh my god, you can't imagine how hard this is to...

CHARLIE (V.O.)

You're going to through this, Chris!

CHRIS

I'm not so sure - I gotta go.

Chris hangs up, puts the phone in his pocket, and grabs a few paper towels to clean up his mess, all while trying to maintain his balance. There is violent banging on the door.

PASSENGER (V.O.)  
Hello?! You've been in there for a  
long time!

CHRIS  
(yelling)  
I literally just got in here.

PASSENGER (V.O.)  
Well, there are other people on the  
train besides you, sir.

Chris looks in the mirror and touches his face.

CHRIS  
(under his breath)  
Sir?!

Chris finishes cleaning the pee and tosses out the paper towels. He then takes the remaining KitKat Bars and rubs them in his palms to melt the chocolate. Chris takes his dirty fingers, and rubs them all over the door knob. He then washes his hands and carefully opens the door to avoid the chocolate. He smiles at PASSENGER on his way out. Passenger violently closes the bathroom door.

PASSENGER  
Oh, my God!

End of Cold Open

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON.

A cab approaches a yellow ranch style home in a middle class suburban neighborhood. Chris steps out of the cab with a backpack and a small duffle bag.

Chris's approaches the front door and rings the door bell. His mom opens the door and embraces Chris in tears.

VALERIE  
Oh, honey. It's so good to see  
you.

CHRIS  
Hi, mom.

Two small dogs approach, and they're barking violently.

CHRIS (CONT'D)  
Da fuck?

VALERIE  
Don't look them in the eye.

CHRIS  
Are you serious?

Valerie shows Chris her bandaged hand.

VALERIE  
(under her breath)  
I'm about to leave the fucking back  
door open...

Chris enters the house.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM

Chris and Valerie enter the bedroom, and MELISSA is sitting on the bed going through a jewelry box. Melissa is Chris's older sister and is drinking a glass of prosecco.

CHRIS  
What is that?

MELISSA  
What?

CHRIS  
THAT! That you're drinking out of.  
Nee Nan's crystal china!

MELISSA  
She's not here, Christopher...

CHRIS  
Yeah, and she's only been dead for,  
like, a minute, so how about you  
have some respect?

VALERIE  
(to Chris)  
Would you like a glass of prosecco?

CHRIS  
Yeah, but I'll get my own glass,  
thank you.

INT. KITCHEN

Chris opens a cabinet and grabs a generic glass and pours himself a generous glass of prosecco. The dogs are still barking violently.

VALERIE

I can't even hear myself think!

Valerie grabs some dog treats and opens the door to the outside patio. She tosses the treats out onto the patio, and once the dogs run after the treats, she locks them outside.

CHRIS

Mom, it's really cold outside.

VALERIE

Well, if they die, maybe I can sneak them into my mother's casket.

Chris empties the bottle of prosecco into Valerie's glass.

CHRIS

You doing okay?

VALERIE

I'm medicated.

(beat)

I don't know what to do with my free time.

CHRIS

Yeah, you were here a lot.

VALERIE

Everyday before and after work, and lunch on the weekends.

CHRIS

Well, we're going to have to find you a project for the time being.

VALERIE

I'll be sifting through a lot of this junk for a lifetime.

Chris reaches for a cookie out of the cookie jar and notices a sticker underneath the lid.

CHRIS

What's this? K-H.

VALERIE

Where?

Chris hands his mom the ceramic lid.

CHRIS

Right here--

VALERIE  
I DON'T FUCKING BELIEVE THIS SHIT!

CHRIS  
What?

VALERIE  
Katherine Howard.

CHRIS  
Huh?

VALERIE  
That bitch was already claiming  
shit before she died. Fucking  
BITCH!

Valerie grabs the cookie jar and storms off. Chris opens the door to the patio and lets the dogs back in.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Chris is seated in front of his light-up keyboard, and he's playing classical music. He has a note pad on the seat next to him. Valerie enters the room.

VALERIE  
I remember how excited you were to  
get this.

CHRIS  
Oh yeah?

VALERIE  
But I never understood why you  
wanted it so much.

CHRIS  
Well, Nee Nan knew that I loved to  
play but struggled with reading  
sheet music. Remember my recital?

EXT. AKRON MUSIC CENTER - 15 YEARS AGO - NIGHT

INT. CONCERT HALL

Young Chris is backstage with INSTRUCTOR.

INSTRUCTOR

Chris, cut it out. If you haven't practiced, then you only have yourself to blame.

CHRIS

I have been practicing, but all the notes look the same, and I've only been able to memorize the first half of the song...

INSTRUCTOR

You're just going to have to try your best.

CHRIS

I'm not doing it.

INSTRUCTOR

Wanna bet?

CHRIS

Yes.

Instructor pushes Chris out on stage into the spotlight. Chris stands still and noticeably pees himself. The crowd gasps. Chris looks back at his instructor and smiles.

INT. CHRIS'S BEDROOM

VALERIE

Yes, I do remember that, unfortunately. Your grandmother was dyslexic too, so she could sympathize.

CHRIS

She was dyslexic, too?

VALERIE

Yeah, and that's why she babied you.

CHRIS

Oh, wow. I didn't know that.  
(beat)  
I should talk about that during her eulogy.

VALERIE

About her difficulty with reading, or how you got the nickname Pampers?



CHRIS

About how she was able to overcome  
so much in a lifetime.

Chris grabs his note pad and starts to write down some  
thoughts.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

"Even with dyslexia she managed to  
graduate business school at a time  
when women weren't encouraged to  
work."

VALERIE

Yeah, she was amazing, and thanks  
for speaking tomorrow.

CHRIS

Well, about time my big mouth did  
something useful.

VALERIE

I just don't think I'd be able to  
without breaking down.

CHRIS

I'll be able to manage. I cry  
enough on stage in theatre, so  
this'll be a nice break for me.

VALERIE

Just remember this isn't going to  
be a comedy club setting, so...

CHRIS

I know, mom. Don't worry--some of  
my sets have felt like funerals.  
I'm prepared.

VALERIE

Good. Will you help me go through  
some old photos?

CHRIS

Of course. I welcome the  
opportunity to screen out some of  
our questionable fashion choices  
throughout the years.

Chris turns off his keyboard, stands up, and pushes his chair  
in.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - MORNING.

Melissa is in her robe chasing one of her dogs around the exterior of the house.

INT. KITCHEN

Chris's father MICHAEL is frying up bacon, and Chris is at the table. Valerie is on the kitchen phone but has the phone cord stretched into the dining room.

CHRIS

So what happens with the house?

MICHAEL

We haven't really discussed it yet, but I imagine your mom will want it.

CHRIS

I figured.

Michael takes a plate of bacon over to the table and sits down.

MICHAEL

Unless Katherine put her name on it already...

CHRIS

Dad, I can't believe she did that.

MICHAEL

Especially since we only see her a couple times a year, and they live half an hour away.

CHRIS

Well, I guess on the bright side, this will probably be the last time we see her.

MICHAEL

God, I hope so.

Valerie enters the kitchen and hangs up the phone.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Got it all figured out?

VALERIE

Not yet. I stretched the cord too far, and it yanked out of the phone. He'll call back.

Chris feeds one of the dogs a piece of bacon. Valerie sits down and makes herself a plate of food.

CHRIS

Is there anything else you need me to do today besides finishing the photo boards?

VALERIE

Yes, actually. Can you stop by the liquor store and grab a few miniatures of Tuaca?

CHRIS

We have a bottle on top the fridge...

VALERIE

The miniatures are easier to hide in my purse.

CHRIS

That's my mom!

MICHAEL

I'll take a couple vodka mini's while you're at it.

CHRIS

Ok, but we gotta pick out a nice purse to go with *your* ensemble.

The three of them laugh. Suddenly, the dog barfs in the middle of the floor, and the door from the garage opens. Melissa walks in out of breath and holding the other dog. She sees that everyone is looking at the vomit.

MELISSA

So, were you all planning on just ignoring it until I came in and "found" it?

CHRIS

It literally just ralphed.

MELISSA

*His* name is Finn.

VALERIE  
(pointing to the dog in  
Melissa's arms)  
I thought *that* was Finn.

Melissa storms off leaving the puke.

MELISSA (V.O.)  
And you wonder why I don't want any  
kids.

CHRIS  
Is she just gonna leave the barf  
there?

MICHAEL  
(getting up from his seat)  
I'll get it.

The other dog runs in the kitchen and starts to eat Finn's vomit. Michael, Valerie, and Chris all push their plates to the center of the table and stand up.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM. LATE AFTERNOON

Valerie is standing in front of the full length mirror analyzing her outfit. She's wearing a black pantsuit. Chris walks in.

CHRIS  
Are you ready?

VALERIE  
No.

CHRIS  
I get it. I'm not looking forward  
to this either.

VALERIE  
Should I wear a dress instead?

CHRIS  
No, what you have on looks perfect.

VALERIE  
Well, help me pick out a pair of  
earrings.

Valerie pulls out two pairs of earrings from a little pouch in her bag.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I only brought these two pairs from home. I was thinking the hoops.

CHRIS

Nope. Neither.

Chris grabs a pair of earrings from his grandma's jewelry box.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

These.

VALERIE

These were her favorites.

CHRIS

Well, they're yours now.

Valerie puts them on and stares in the mirror.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Yup, that's what your ensemble was missing. But we seriously need to go so we can set up before everyone gets there.

VALERIE

I'll be right out.

Chris leaves, and Valerie looks around the room. She puts her purse over her arm and motions to leave. She stops and turns back.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I'm getting rid of those curtains, mom, but that's it.

Valerie kisses her fingers and lightly touches a framed photo of her parents before turning the lights off and walking out of the room.

EXT. SHATIPSKI'S FUNERAL HOME - DUSK.

Cars are pulling up in front of the funeral home, and elderly people are being escorted into the building by personnel on staff.

INT. FUNERAL HOME MAIN ROOM.

The room is beautifully decorated in flowers, and there are poster boards with photo collages throughout the room.

Elderly women are going from poster board to poster board to see photos that chronical Nee Nan's entire life. Staff from the funeral home approach Valerie and Michael, and they exit into the entrance room together.

Melissa and her friends are seated towards the back, and Chris is speaking with members of his grandma's church. Michael reenters the space and approaches Chris.

MICHAEL

Hey, big guy, I need to talk to you.

CHRIS

Excuse me, ladies.

Chris follows Michael into the lobby, where Valerie is arguing with the Pastor from Nee Nan's church. They get quiet as Chris approaches. Other family members stand on the other side of the room, and they're watching this transaction.

MICHAEL

The family decided that we're all just going to let Reverend Taylor conduct the entire service without any other speakers.

CHRIS

But I prepared a eulogy.

REVEREND TAYLOR

And thank you for doing that. Your efforts won't go unnoticed.

CHRIS

Would you like to have my notes?

REVEREND TAYLOR

How about we give you a moment to say whatever you need to say to her before the service. I need to speak to a few people, so I'll see you all in a few.

Reverend Taylor walks back into the main room, and the other family members follow.

VALERIE

(to Michael)

Why did you say, "The family decided?"

MICHAEL  
I just felt...

VALERIE  
We didn't decide anything.

CHRIS  
It's okay -

VALERIE  
It's not okay. It's 2020,  
Goddamnit.

Valerie reaches into her purse for some miniatures, and she hands one to Michael and one to Chris.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
Take this. Cheers to Nee Nan.

They all quickly tap their miniatures and drink them. They hand the empty bottles back to Valerie, and she places them in her purse. Michael walks back to the main room.

VALERIE (CONT'D)  
(to Chris)  
I'm sorry, baby.

CHRIS  
It's okay. I get it.

VALERIE  
If Nee Nan was here, she'd only  
want to hear you speak.

CHRIS  
You think?

VALERIE  
Damn it, Chris, I KNOW. The rest of  
them here never made an effort.  
You live the furthest away, but you  
visited her more than any of those  
assholes in there.

CHRIS  
The eulogy wasn't going to be  
gay...

VALERIE  
You know what? I wish it was.

Valerie hugs Chris.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

With strobe lights, good music, and a room full of accepting people with an elevated fashion sense.

CHRIS

That sounds great, actually.

VALERIE

No matter what happens today, know that we're the best dressed and Italian Vogue would knock on our door before anyone else's.

CHRIS

I love you, mom.

VALERIE

Back at cha, kiddo. Now mommy needs a valium.

Valerie grabs a pill from her purse.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

Want half of this?

CHRIS

Sure!

Valerie splits a valium in half, and they each take it.

INT. FUNERAL HOME MAIN ROOM

Chris is seated in the back speaking with Melissa and her friends. Valerie is surrounded by friends, and AUNT LESLIE enters the room with husband, UNCLE JAY. Aunt Leslie is Valerie's best friend since childhood, and she approaches Valerie.

AUNT LESLIE

Val!

VALERIE

There you are! I thought you were going to meet me here early and help set up.

AUNT LESLIE

Well, Jay and I had an impromptu brunch, and the mimosas are really messing with his stomach.

(MORE)



AUNT LESLIE (CONT'D)

He already tried 2 Alka-Seltzer tablets, but we're gonna have to head home for his prescription meds. Needless to say, it has not been a good day.

VALERIE

My mother is in a box on the table.

AUNT LESLIE

Come again?

VALERIE

MY MOTHER IS IN A BOX ON THE TABLE,  
LESLIE!

Everyone gets quiet and Chris rushes to his mom. He smiles at Aunt Leslie and escorts his mom out of the main room and into the lobby.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

I'm surrounded by crazies, and I don't think I brought enough booze.

CHRIS

You're not wrong, and we can always get more.

Valerie hugs Chris.

VALERIE

Thanks, baby.

(beat)

Wait, when did Charlie get here?

Chris turns around and sees CHARLIE at the main entrance. He approaches.

CHRIS

Dude, what are you doing here?

CHARLIE

I couldn't miss your big funeral home debut.

CHRIS

Well, we'll have to wait for the next death in the family because my eulogy got axed.

CHARLIE

So you're just not going to try?

CHRIS

I was told *no*.

CHARLIE

Wanna know what I think? People say a lot of things in the biz, but we should never take *no* for an answer.

VALERIE

Ya know, I agree with Charlie.

CHARLIE

Thanks, Mama Moore. So, what are we drinking?

VALERIE

You have your pick of Vodka or Tuaca.

CHARLIE

Oh, surprise me.

VALERIE

How about a little of column A and a little of column B. You need to catch up.

Valerie digs through her purse. Aunt Leslie and Uncle Jay approach Val.

UNCLE JAY

Val, I wanted to come pay my respects to your beautiful mother, but I'm gonna get going because I'm not feeling great, but I'm going to come back and pick up Leslie after the service.

VALERIE

I understand, and thank you for coming.

AUNT LESLIE

(to Uncle Jay)

I'll text you when I'm ready.

UNCLE JAY

You know I don't do texts.

AUNT LESLIE

Yes you do, honey, now go home and get your medicine.

UNCLE JAY  
Okay, honey.

Uncle Jay crosses towards the door.

AUNT LESLIE  
And feed the dogs!

Uncle Jay nods and exits.

AUNT LESLIE (CONT'D)  
(to Valerie)  
I'm sorry.

VALERIE  
It's okay. Thank you for staying.

AUNT LESLIE  
Am I just in time for a shot?

VALERIE  
I have no idea what you're talking  
about.

AUNT LESLIE  
I'll cover you.

Leslie stands in front of Valerie as she takes out a handful of miniatures. They all discreetly toast before downing the miniatures and stuffing the empty bottles back into Valerie's purse.

EXT. SHATIPSKY'S FUNERAL HOME - NIGHT

INT. FUNERAL HOME MAIN ROOM

A few minutes later, funeral home staff is ushering everyone to their seats before the service begins. Valerie, Michael, Melissa, and Chris sit in the front row, and across the aisle AUNT KATHERINE, her husband and two kids are seated. Charlie pulls up a chair next to Chris for Aunt Leslie, and he takes a seat in the back near Melissa's friends. Reverend Taylor approaches the podium.

REVEREND TAYLOR  
I know what a lot of you are  
thinking: "Why her, God? Why our  
sweet, sweet Velva?" Well, I'll  
tell you why; God has very special  
plans for this lady. I'd like to  
read a passage from the book of  
Revelations...

Montage of the clock ticking away. The camera pans to the elderly crowd fully engaged and crying while Melissa's friends are texting each other in the back row. Every time we see the pastor open the book to read another passage, Valerie rolls her eyes and squeezes Michael's hand.

REVEREND TAYLOR (CONT'D)

To conclude this service, please bow your head and join me in the Lord's Prayer. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses. As we forgive those who trespass against us, lead us not into temptation, and deliver us from evil. Amen."  
(pause) Thank you all for coming.

Valerie nudges Chris. Chris jumps out of his chair.

CHRIS

Yes, thank you all so much for coming.

(shaking the pastor's hand)

And thank you Reverend Taylor, for that beautiful service. I'll take it from here.

REVEREND TAYLOR

I believe the family spoke, and...

MELISSA

(standing)

No one spoke to me. When did the family speak?

AUNT KATHERINE

(jumping out of her chair)

We just felt it best if we kept it traditional.

REVEREND TAYLOR

(to Chris)

Yes, so if you don't mind--

CHRIS

I do mind.

VALERIE

I do, too. Sit down, Francis.

Aunt Leslie skootches over to Chris's vacant chair and offers her seat to Reverend Taylor. Aunt Katherine and Melissa take their seats, and the entire room is silent as Chris gets situated at the podium. He looks to the back room for support, and Charlie motions a high-five.

CHRIS

Thank you all for coming tonight to celebrate the life of my Grandma. I wrote something down, but it won't do me any good because I can't read too well when I'm nervous. I'd put it in the casket with Nee Nan, but apparently, I just learned last night, she couldn't read too well either.

There's slight laughter amongst the crowd.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So, here we go, and I promise to be brief.

(Chris clears his throat  
and fights through tears)

Velva Howard. Captain of her high school women's basketball team, fashion model, business school graduate, wife, career woman, mother, founder and president of the Coventry Senior Center, grandmother, caregiver, watermelon seed spitting champion, and friend to many. The list goes on, but I knew her as Nee Nan, and Nee Nan always reminded me, a scared little kid who never seemed to fit in anywhere, that I was worth it. She broke down barriers, and she laughed at the expectations society placed on women. Not only was she my grandma, but she's also my hero, and I'm happy to say she always knew that. I spoke to her every day on my way to work. And everyday she would ask me if I was happy. So tonight, in honor of Nee Nan, I ask that you find out what makes you happy, and go for it. And don't worry; Nee Nan said it's okay to be dissatisfied with mediocrity, so go be happy, and thanks again for being here to celebrate my hero, Velva Howard.

Charlie stands up to clap, and the whole room starts clapping. Valerie walks up to the podium.

VALERIE

And family and friends are all  
invited back to the house for food  
and drinks!

AUNT LESLIE

(to Reverend Taylor)  
Notice she didn't say clergy.

EXT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - NIGHT.

Melissa is chasing Finn around the house.

INT. GRANDMA'S KITCHEN

There are a lot of family members and friends throughout the house. Aunt Katherine just walked into the kitchen where she sees Charlie and Chris making themselves a drink. Aunt Katherine is looking around the kitchen, presumably for her cookie jar.

AUNT KATHERINE

I brought nuggets.

CHRIS

I saw.

AUNT KATHERINE

They're in the dining room.

Chris and Charlie lean to look towards the dining room.

CHRIS

(beat)

Did you want me to bring you  
some...?

AUNT KATHERINE

No, silly. I'm offering them to  
you and, um... I didn't quite catch  
your name.

CHRIS

This is my best friend, Charlie.

CHARLIE

(extending his hand)  
Nice to meet you.

AUNT KATHERINE  
(shaking hands)  
Likewise. (pause) So, Charlie--  
you're Chris's... "friend?"

CHARLIE  
Yes.

AUNT KATHERINE  
Friend...

CHRIS  
Best Friend.

AUNT KATHERINE  
And you live together?

CHARLIE  
Yes.

AUNT KATHERINE  
Hmm... (pause) How many bedrooms?

CHARLIE  
Two.

AUNT KATHERINE  
I see.  
(beat)  
And it's just you two?

CHARLIE  
Yep.

AUNT KATHERINE  
Ok.  
(beat)  
I'm getting it.

CHRIS  
What's to get?

AUNT KATHERINE  
This little... "situation."

Valerie and Aunt Leslie walk into the kitchen and make their way towards the drinks to do a shot.

CHRIS  
Define "situation."

Valerie grabs the Tuaca bottle from on top of the fridge.

VALERIE  
What situation?

AUNT LESLIE  
Is there a situation?

AUNT KATHERINE  
(to Valerie)  
You know, just trying to understand  
his lifestyle.

VALERIE  
(to Katherine,  
sarcastically)  
Yeah, Charlie fucks my son in the  
ass, Katherine.

CHRIS  
MOM!

VALERIE  
Is that the situation you're  
getting at? That my son rides this  
dick like the mechanical pony  
outside of Chattam Mall!

CHRIS  
I do NOT - I mean, I've never  
even...

KATHERINE  
Valerie, you're disgusting--

VALERIE  
And you're a narrow minded bitch!

KATHERINE  
Where's my cookie jar, Valerie?!

CHARLIE  
(to Chris)  
I'm going to grab some chicken  
nuggets.

CHRIS  
Don't!

CHARLIE  
Why?

CHRIS  
Because Chik-fil-a is closed on  
Sundays, and I don't know how long  
they've sat out.



AUNT KATHERINE  
(to Chris)  
They're fine.

CHRIS  
We're okay.

AUNT KATHERINE  
Let you little "friend" have some nuggets.

Aunt Leslie is pouring shots.

AUNT LESLIE  
We don't want your nuggets,  
Katherine.

VALERIE  
It doesn't belong to you,  
Katherine, and you're not getting  
it!

CHARLIE  
(to Chris)  
Are there other things to eat  
besides nuggets?

CHRIS  
(to Charlie)  
Yes, but I don't feel comfortable  
leaving Katherine unattended with  
all of this silverware lying  
around.

Melissa barges in out of breath and holding Finn.

AUNT KATHERINE  
(to Valerie)  
She told me I could have it.

MELISSA  
Have what?

KATHERINE  
My cookie jar.

MELISSA  
Then take the jar.

VALERIE  
(to Melissa)  
She can't HAVE it!

MELISSA

Why not?!

VALERIE

Because she wasn't here, okay?!

Everyone is quiet. Aunt Leslie quickly takes a shot by herself and then pours another for her and Valerie.

VALERIE (CONT'D)

You can't just come in here out of the blue and put your name on shit and act like that's appropriate behavior.

KATHERINE

And you're the epitome of appropriate behavior?

VALERIE

Compared to you, I'm a fucking saint!

KATHERINE

Oh, really? After you just told me about how your son gets fucked by animals at the mall?!

MELISSA

Eww...

CHRIS

That's not even remotely true.  
(to Charlie)  
I've never even been to that mall.

CHARLIE

(to Melissa)  
And that's not even an accurate quote. The animal in question is inanimate and was used as a simile for dramatic effect.

They all look at Charlie for a moment to digest what he said.

AUNT KATHERINE

(to Valerie)  
I wasn't here because you didn't want me here.

VALERIE

I'm never excited to see you... but mom was, and that mystery died with her this week.

AUNT KATHERINE  
She liked seeing me?

VALERIE  
Apparently. Might've been a big  
heart; might've been dementia.

Aunt Katherine is moved. Aunt Leslie hands everyone a shot.

AUNT LESLIE  
To Nee Nan.

Everyone takes the shot and puts the empty shot glass back  
onto the counter.

AUNT LESLIE (CONT'D)  
(to Valerie)  
Give her the cookie jar.

VALERIE  
Leslie--

AUNT LESLIE  
You don't need it, and it shouldn't  
be the reason your children have to  
suffer.

MELISSA  
Yes.  
(baby voice)  
And Finn wants to get to know his  
widdle cousins.

They all stare at Melissa.

AUNT LESLIE  
Come on, Val. Let's go get it.

Valerie grabs the bottle of Tuaca, and she and Aunt Leslie  
walk towards the back bedroom. Aunt Katherine looks at Finn,  
and he starts growling.

MELISSA  
(to Aunt Katherine)  
Don't look him in the eye. He  
hates that.

AUNT KATHERINE  
Would your puppy like a treat?

MELISSA  
Not if it's those day old Chik-fil-  
a nuggets.

The dog starts barking at Aunt Katherine.

AUNT KATHERINE  
They didn't have any nice puppies  
at the pet store...?

CHRIS  
He's a rescue.

MELISSA  
He just needs time to warm up to  
you--

Aunt Katherine reaches to pet the dog, and he snaps.

AUNT KATHERINE  
Oh, my god!

Aunt Katherine pulls back her arm and then immediately bops  
the dog on the snout with her hand.

AUNT KATHERINE (CONT'D)  
(to Finn)  
*Bad dog!*

MELISSA  
Don't hit him!

AUNT KATHERINE  
(to Melissa)  
I don't want that thing near my  
kids. You hear me?

Melissa runs off in tears while holding her dog. She exits  
towards the back bedroom.

CHRIS  
His name is Finni-

AUNT KATHERINE  
(snapping at Chris)  
I don't care *what* his name is! Once  
I get what I came for, you won't  
have to worry about me anymore.

CHRIS  
I don't worry about you; you're a  
lost cause.

AUNT KATHERINE  
You live your life in sin.

CHRIS

You try to pass off lawn chairs as living room furniture, so I think we all know who the *real* sinner is.

CHARLIE

I'm sorry to interrupt, but is there more to eat besides these nuggets, or should I place an online order somewhere?

Chris and Aunt Katherine stare at Charlie. Valerie enters the kitchen with the cookie jar.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ROUTE 70 - NIGHT

INT. AUNT KATHERINE'S CAR.

UNCLE TOM is driving, Aunt Katherine is in the passenger seat, and her kids are fighting in the seats behind her. She's holding the cookie jar on her lap.

AUNT KATHERINE

You two better calm down back there. We're not having all that, ya hear me?

Aunt Katherine starts to sniff in all directions, and she turns around in her seat to look at the kids behind her.

AUNT KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Do either of you need to use the bathroom before we get too far?

The kids both get quiet and shake their heads.

AUNT KATHERINE (CONT'D)

Are you sure?

The kids shake their heads again. Aunt Katherine turns around.

UNCLE TOM

They both went before we left, honey.

AUNT KATHERINE

Did you poot?

UNCLE TOM

Excuse me?

AUNT KATHERINE

I smell something, and it certainly wasn't me.

UNCLE TOM

Well, it definitely wasn't me.

Aunt Katherine turns around again and speaks to the kids.

AUNT KATHERINE

Check your shoes to see if you tracked something into mommy's car.

The kids check and they look up with shrugged shoulders. Aunt Katherine turns around and then stares at the cookie jar in her lap. Her eyes get big as she slowly opens the lid to find that someone has put dog shit in the jar. She clenches a fist and looks up.

AUNT KATHERINE (CONT'D)

God Damnit, Valerie!!!

EXT. AMTRAK PASSENGER TRAIN - EVENING

Zooming through Indiana, east to west.

INT. AMTRAK PASSENGER TRAIN

Chris and Charlie are both seated in the quiet car. Chris is digging through his bag while Charlie looks out the window.

CHARLIE

(whispering)

We've got a long ride ahead of us.

CHRIS

(whispering)

But my mom sent us with supplies.

Chris pulls a Ziploc baggie full of miniatures out of his bag.

CHARLIE

Oh, nice!

The passengers shush Charlie. Charlie stands and squeezes to the aisle.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

(whispering)

I'm going to grab a sandwich and  
some sodas from the café car. I'll  
be right back.

CHRIS

Hey, Charlie?--

Charlie turns around, and various passengers are shushing  
Chris from all directions. Chris rolls his eyes.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

(whispering)

Thanks for, ya know...

CHARLIE

(whispering)

Don't mention it.

Charlie walks to the next train car. Chris's phone rings,  
and passengers shush him again. He quickly answers it.

CHRIS

(whispering)

What's up, Melissa? Did you and  
your babies make it home?

MELISSA (V.O.)

Yep, and we're all tucked in.

CHRIS

(whispering)

Good.

MELISSA (V.O.)

I wanted to tell you that you did a  
good job today.

CHRIS

(whispering)

Thanks, sis, but I gotta call you  
tomorrow because I'm in the quiet  
car.

MELISSA (V.O.)

(whispering)

No worries. Text me in the morning  
when you're back in Chicago.

CHRIS

(whispering)

Okay, good night.

MELISSA (V.O.)  
(whispering)  
Good night.

INT. NURSERY

Melissa is wearing a robe and bed slippers. She puts her cell phone in her robe pocket. Camera slowly pans around a nursery covered in framed photos of Melissa's dogs. We see both dogs in matching pj's in an oversized crib. Melissa approaches the crib.

MELISSA  
(baby voice)  
Are my little angels feeling any  
better?

She lightly pets them both.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
Family can be tough, but I'll never  
let anything happen to you.

She kisses them both on the head and walks to the door.

MELISSA (CONT'D)  
And don't worry, I taught that  
bitch a lesson.

Melissa turns off the lights.

**THE END**