

DIFFERENT DRUMMER

by

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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Early morning March light floods the funky bedroom. Rumpled bed covers suggest restless sleep - or great sex.

On the bedside table, a cell phone RINGS. RINGS. RINGS.

Cocooned in her comforter, **HELEN**, late 30's, groans. She opens one eye and checks the bedside clock - 6:06 AM. Reaches a hand from under the covers.

Groping for her cell, she bumps a framed PHOTO. In it, Helen's daughter, 16, smiles for the camera, while her son, 13, mugs.

Helen's hand finds the cell. Drags it to her ear.

HELEN

Huh?

There's no voice on the other end, only Helen's **DAD**'s wheezy breathing.

HELEN (CONT'D)

It's 6 AM. You better be dead.

DAD's voice sounds like gravel over the phone.

DAD (O.S.)

I need butter!

Helen wants to choke him.

HELEN

Tell me you didn't just call for that.

DAD (O.S.)

I also need cream rinse.

HELEN

You don't have hair.

So done with his drama, Helen hangs up on him. Sets the cell on the table, grabs something off the floor and slips it under the comforter. CLICK.

Muffled under the covers, a vibrator HUMS.

Helen slides down in the bed - closes her eyes and gets comfortable. Soon, a little moan escapes and her head lolls to one side.

Feeling watched, her eyes pop open. Four eyes stare back. Mortified, Helen CLICKS off the vibrator. Reaches toward the table and flips the photo of her kids face down.

Repositioning herself, Helen shuts her eyes.

CLICK. HUM. MOAN.

JAKE (O.S.)

Mom!

Helen doesn't hear him. She arches. Another moan escapes.

JAKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Mo-om!

Helen loses it. CLICK. The vibrator dies. Helen thumps her head on the pillow.

JAKE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

MOM!!!

HELEN

I'm coming!
(to herself)
Not!

INT. HELEN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Helen belts a robe over her unsatisfied body. En route to the coffee maker, she hits play on the ihome and Bruce 'The Boss' Springsteen permeates the morning.

She knows every word. Sings along in her best Boss voice and does a sorry drum solos on the counters as she makes coffee.

Dressed for school, **JAKE**, 13 shuffles in. He's got a single sock in one hand and a digital camera in the other.

A black lab, **KIT**, pads after him.

Jake is the product of single momdom - verbal, animated, still mostly sweet. He takes in Helen's percussion performance. It's lame.

JAKE

Ew.

Jake sets the sock and camera on the table and opens the photo-plastered fridge. Grabs milk and creamer. Still scanning, he hands Helen the creamer.

HELEN
Thanks, sweetie.

She shakes the carton - empty. Frustrated with her day so far, Helen pats the dog.

HELEN (CONT'D)
Did you let Kit out?

Jake closes the fridge door.

JAKE
Mm-hmm.

Helen pulls a bowl from the dishwasher, reaches a box of cereal from the cupboard and hands both the Jake.

HELEN
Where's your sister?

JAKE
Picking a zit.

He sits at the table and pours cereal.

JAKE (CONT'D)
How come you didn't answer when I called?

Helen gets Jake a spoon from the drawer. As soon as her back is turned, he drinks straight from the milk carton.

She catches him.

He spills some and stops.

HELEN
I was busy.

JAKE
With the neck massager?

Helen busies herself dabbing spilt milk.

JAKE (CONT'D)
You've had a lot of neck kinks lately.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

SAM, 16, a typical teenage girl, dabs a green blob of zit cream over the eruption on her chin.

SAM

Ugh-a!

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

The motor idles as Helen and Jake wait impatiently in the front seat. Kit lounges on a seat in the back.

HELEN

Come on Sam!

She turns up the rock on the radio. Her hands thump to the beat on the steering wheel as she checks her watch.

Jake stares as she incorporate the dashboard into her drum solo.

JAKE

Why do you always do that?

Helen looks at him. Her face says What?

He thumps on the dashboard.

JAKE (CONT'D)

That!

EXT. HELEN'S FRONT PORCH - DAY

The door front door bursts open. Dressed to the high school nines, Sam's facial expression is positively hormonal as she shleps her backpack to the van.

The green blob of acne medicine still highlights her chin.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Helen speeds down the road as Sam pulls a notebook from her backpack. Sam reaches from the back and turns the radio off.

SAM

Ready?

Helen turns the radio back on.

HELEN

For what?

SAM

I gotta poll you for my speech.

HELEN

What speech? Sambo, why didn't you do this last night.

SAM

That's not my name.

JAKE

Cuz she was sitting by the phone praying for Brennan McCarthy to call.

SAM

Shut up, you little maggot.

She punches him.

SAM (CONT'D)

Mr. Anderson said we have to have one interview done by today.

JAKE

Way to get on it.

HELEN

What's it about?

SAM

What's attractive to old people. Like you and Grandpa and Charles.

JAKE

Suppositories.

Helen slugs him.

HELEN

You can't lump me in with Charles and Grandpa on what's sexy.

SAM

Not sexy. Mr. A says we have to say attractive.

JAKE

No one wants to hear that about their mom.

SAM

Shut up, turd breath. No one asked you.

(to Helen)

What you think, Mom?

HELEN

Definitely Springsteen! And a good listener.

She points to the corner of her eye.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Those little smile lines around the eyes.

SAM

That's lame. Can't you think of something better?

Helen thinks a second. Even gets a little excited.

HELEN

Okay. The way sexiest thing in the whole world - a great rock drummer! Boxer shorts don't hurt. Both of them together would be outstanding.

JAKE

That's just wrong!

SAM

What about sex?

Jake groans.

HELEN

What about it?

SAM

When was the last time you had it?

HELEN

That would be none of your business.

JAKE

No, that's really wrong! Mom, pull over. I'm think I'm gonna be sick.

SAM

Okay, then how many guys have you slept with?

Jake covers his ears.

JAKE
La, la, la, la, la...

Sam slugs him again.

SAM
C'mon you moron. Even mom's get
horny.

EXT. MLK (MARTIN LUTHER KING) HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Helen pulls to the curb of the school, circa 1912, and Jake bolts for the front doors.

Carved in marble over entry is King's quote:

I HAVE A DREAM

Students flock to the entrance. Many talk on cell phones. As they have for eons, the girls look older than the boys.

MISS BENTON, self appointed monitor and busybody science teacher, points to a **TEENAGE GIRL**'s cropped top and wags her finger.

The lanky janitor, **LEROY**, teases Miss Benton as he scrubs graffiti from the statue of Martin Luther King.

LEROY
Weren't you ever young?

Miss Benton gives him a nasty look.

MISS BENTON
Maybe once, for about five minutes.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

Helen watches as senior soccer stud, **BRENNAN MCCARTHY**, and **TWO BUDDIES** taunt Leroy.

HELEN
Poor guy.

Sam shoves the notebook in her backpack.

SAM
Who?

HELEN
They're hassling the janitor.

LeRoy appears unaffected.

SAM
Who cares. That's LeRoy. He's
always talking to himself.

Sam climbs out of the minivan.

SAM (CONT'D)
He's subnormal. Who'd want to be a
janitor? They're freaks.

HELEN
Sambo, stop it! Maybe he loves what
he does.

SAM
That's not my name.

HELEN
And his isn't freak!

Unaware that the green blob is still plastered to her zit,
Sam slams the van door.

Helen rolls down the window and calls after her...

HELEN (CONT'D)
Sam, you're chin!
(louder)
Sam!!

But Helen's voice is lost to the din of high school. As Sam
sashays past LeRoy, Brennan points to her chin. His voice
carries all the way to the minivan.

BRENNAN
Bet you couldn't see yourself in
the mirror after you squeezed that
one.

Mortified, Sam covers her chin and flees. Brennan and his
cronies about die laughing.

The last thing Helen sees is LeRoy, scrubbing the statue and
chuckling to himself.

INT. MLK HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

Humiliated, Sam dials her locker combination. Her best friend, **KATO**, stands watch - through a pair of white sunglasses, she stares down the hall.

KATO
It's him!!

Sam starts to run, but Kato holds her arm. Watches over Sam's shoulder.

KATO (CONT'D)
Don't look.

IN SLOW MOTION: Brennan struts down the hall toward them - head nods his acknowledgement to the chosen few. He's God's gift to high school - and he knows it.

KATO (CONT'D)
Oh my God! He is is freaking Mmmmm!

Her back to Brenna, Sam touches her chin.

SAM
Brennan McCarthy's a butt crumb.

Suddenly Brennan's at Sam's locker. Apologizing as he passes.

BRENNAN
No hard feelings, Sam-I-am.

Kato's tongue hangs out as she watches Brennan disappear down the hall.

KATO
He knows your name...

SAM
Yah, if I'm a Dr. Seuss character.

MR. ANDERSON (O.S.)
Best get your tongue off the floor.

MR. ANDERSON, late 30's, Sam and Kato's cool literature teacher, waves a hand in front of Kato's eyes.

MR. ANDERSON (CONT'D)
Should probably close your mouth while you're at it.

Kato's stare turns into a sheepish grin.

SAM
Hi, Mr. A.

MR. ANDERSON
How are the speeches coming?

SAM
What speeches?

Mr. Anderson balks.

SAM (CONT'D)
Gotcha!

The teacher laughs. He's been had and he knows it. As he walks away, Sam calls after him...

SAM (CONT'D)
I polled my mom, Mr. A. I'll be polling you too.

Mr. Anderson doesn't turn back. He raises his index finger and waves *No-no!* in the air.

INT. MINIVAN - DAY

There's loud rock on the radio and traffic is tight as Helen maneuvers down a trendy street.

In the back, Kit launches a whimper-fest at a jewel-collared **POODLE** prancing down the sidewalk with it's **HAUGHTY FEMALE OWNER**.

Helen reaches into the back seat to quiet the dog.

HELEN
No, Kit! Knock it-

She doesn't finish. Suddenly slams on the brakes in the middle of the street. Her gaze bores through the window of the **PAWNDEROSA**, an upscale pawn shop with a western theme.

Impatient at the wheel, the SUV driver behind Helen **HONKS**.

On the street, the poodle **YAP YAP YAPs** and Kit **HOWLS**.

EXT. TRENDY STREET - DAY

Amidst the ruckus, Helen steps from the minivan. Every eye is on her as she stands in the street and stares at the Steel Blue **DRUM KIT** in the window of the **Pawnderosa**.

Ignoring the road rage around her, Helen smiles.

Suddenly the Pawnderosa **PAWN BROKER**, encased in a huge cowboy hat, posts a sign on the drum kit.

DONE GONE!

Helen's smile vanishes.