

FAMILY COLORS

"Pilot"

written by

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COLD OPENING

FADE IN:

INT. THE HOWARDS FAMILY'S HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING - DAY

The Howards house looks like a SIMPLE, CHICAGO-LIKE MIDDLE CLASS HOME.

LEON HOWARD (43) African American, A tall, handsome office worker, ties up his TIE and puts on his SUIT COAT.

LEON

Let's go, guys! We're gonna be late!

Leon goes to the counter, and puts each sandwich, oranges, and dollar bill in THREE SEPARATE LUNCH BAGS.

LEON (CONT'D)

Sandwich, sandwich, sandwich.
Orange, orange, orange. Dollar,
dollar... five dollars.

(beat)

The Great One has improvise.

BRANDON (12), Leon's oldest son, comes downstairs with a basketball.

BRANDON

Morning, Dad.

LEON

Morning, son.

BRANDON

Man, Dad, you would never believe what dream I had. I was playing in the NBA Finals, scoring a winning basket at the buzzer, and the whole team lifted me up while I was holding the championship trophy.

LEON

Well, I had a dream that you're gonna be shooting hoops in your room if you don't get your grades up.

Leon takes a MUG OF COFFEE and takes a sip.

BRANDON

Come on, Dad. Why do young black brothers like me need to learn at school when I could in the pros like LeBron?

PETE (10) Leon's smart autistic son, comes downstairs with his DIORAMA OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM.

PETE

Because one, LeBron never went to college. And two, a mind is a terrible thing to waste.

LEON

What he said.

PETE

Hey, Dad. You got something I could use for Pluto? I need it for my Solar System project which is due today.

BRANDON

Pete, how many times do I have to tell you that Pluto ain't even a planet, it's the name of Mickey Mouse's dog.

Pete gives Brandon a "not funny" look.

PETE

(sarcastic)

Very funny, Brandon.

Leon opens his counter drawer, picks up a GOLF BALL, and TOSSES it to Pete.

LEON

Here, son. Use my old golf ball.

PETE

Thanks, dad.

AALIYAH (7) Leon's youngest daughter, comes downstairs and runs into Leon as he picks her up.

AALIYAH

Good morning, Daddy.

LEON

Good morning, Baby Girl.

Leon kisses Aaliyah on the cheek.

AALIYAH

Are you coming to pick me up and
take me to ballet class today?

Leon puts Aaliyah down.

LEON

I'm afraid not, Baby-girl. Daddy's
got business to take care of at
work.

BRANDON

Again? Dad, this is every month
this week the Man's bustin' your
behind. When can't you just quit
and start your own business?

LEON

If I *do* quit, I won't have a job,
you guys won't have a house, and
we'll be living in the streets,
sleeping in a cardboard box.

PETE

(to Brandon)
What *he* said.

Leon's kids agree as he looks at his phone.

ON PHONE: The TIME on the CLOCK says 7:15.

LEON

Now, come on. Grab your lunch bags
and get in the car. We don't wanna
be late.

Brandon, Pete, and Aaliyah grab their lunch bags from the
counter. Leon grabs his suitcase from the dinning chair.

AALIYAH

SHOTGUN!

Aaliyah BOLTS out to the backdoor. Brandon follows suit.

BRANDON

Hey, you better not call my seat! I
do *not* wanna hear "*Old McDonald Had
A Farm*" again!

Leon and Pete look at each other and shake their heads.

PETE

I'm very lucky that I'm just a
middle child.

LEON

Mmm-hmm.

Leon and Pete go out the backdoor.

INT. THE COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING - DAY

The Collins' house looks like a BEAUTIFUL, SHINING NAPPERVILLE-LIKE SUBURBAN HOME.

DIANE COLLINS (42) Caucasian, a stay-home, party planner, makes some COFFEE with her COFFEE MAKER.

MIRANDA (12) Diane's oldest daughter, is looking at her PHONE. And **STACY** (10) Diane's smart, but liberal daughter, is preparing her written speech while eating breakfast on the table.

MAX (9) Diane's youngest, but rebellious son, cruises down the kitchen with his skateboard.

DIANE

Max, what have I told you about skateboarding in the house?

Max hears Diane's voice as he turns around to his mother who is not looking at him.

MAX

But you didn't look at me while I was skateboarding. How did you even notice?

Diane turns around and faces her son.

DIANE

Because sometimes, a mother has two eyes in the back of her head. That way, I always know what you're doing. Now, put your skateboard away and come eat breakfast with your sisters.

Diane turns the stove off as Max puts up his skateboard and goes to the table to eat. Diana reads her checkbook.

MIRANDA

Mom, are you gonna volunteer for the Sadie Hawking Dance?

DIANE

Uh, Yes? Why?

MIRANDA

Please don't.

MAX

What's wrong? Afraid that Mom's gonna embarrass you again?

MIRANDA

(to Max)

At last year's dance, she tried to do one of those TikTok dances and everyone laughed at me. It's totally humiliating.

DIANE

Hey, don't blame me. Haters gonna hate.

MIRANDA

Unless you're Taylor Swift.

Stacy SLAMS HER HANDS on the table.

STACY

(grunts)

Could you guys be quiet, please? I'm trying to recite my speech to Principal Richards today about banning plastic water bottles in our school.

MIRANDA

Stacy, you know Principal Richards got too much time in his hands.

STACY

Miranda, if we don't save Mother Earth from Climate Change, the human race will cease to exist.

MAX

Relax, Nature Girl. We'll be fine. We'll probably get *The Avengers* to save us.

Stacy gets up, and moves her face towards Max, staring deep into his eyes.

STACY

Max, you're gonna be sorry when a giant hurricane comes after you while you're stake boarding, and wash you away like the little fish you are.

Miranda extends her arm to move Stacy away from Max.

MIRANDA

Stacy, cool it. Just take a deep breath and keep the words of your speech in your head at all times. You'll be fine.

STACY

Thanks, Miranda. I'm lucky to have you *and* Mom as the two, independent women in this family.

MAX

Lucky? We need some more dudes in the house. I'm the last man standing.

Diane looks up.

DIANE

Hey, don't look at me! The factory's closed.

They then hear a BUS HONK three times.

STACY

There's the bus.

Miranda, Stacy, and Max grab their backpacks and leave the table. Diane picks up their lunchboxes, and hands them to the kids.

DIANE

Okay, kids. I love you, have a great day at school, make good choices, and Max, please don't glue Mr. Franklin's butt in his chair again.

MAX

Come on, Mom. The "*Glue in a chair*" prank is a classic.

MIRANDA

Too bad that classic almost got you suspended.

The kids head out the back door.

MIRANDA/STACY/MAX (CONT'D)

(in union)

Bye, Mom!

Diane closes the back door.

DIANE
(exhales in relief)
Alone at last.

The DOORBELL RINGS.

DIANE (CONT'D)
And here he is.

Diane leaves the kitchen.

INT. THE COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Diane BOLTS to the door. She fluffs her hair a little, exhales, she looks good and ready as she opens the door. It's Leon with a bouquet of roses.

Diane smiles seductively at him.

LEON
Happy Six-Month Anniversary, baby.

DIANE
Ooh, you remembered!

Leon and Diane kiss each other romantically and passionately.

DISSOLVE TO:

MAIN TITLES!

ACT ONE**FADE IN:****INT. THE COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Leon and Diane continue to make out. She then resists, and pushes back.

DIANE

No, no. I don't know about this anymore.

Diane goes to the couch and sits there as she stresses out. Leon puts the roses on the glass table.

LEON

Don't know what, baby?

DIANE

I don't know how long we can keep this up. I mean, this is worse than the time Max almost flooded the school to get out of a math test.

Leon goes over to Diane.

LEON

But Diana, ever since we met again at our high school reunion, I don't wanna wait another minute. Do you remember all the good times we had after that?

Leon bends down and takes Diane's hand as they gaze at each other.

LEON (CONT'D)

(dreamily)

Lunch dates every Friday.

DIANE

(dreamily)

Talking on the phone while nobody's watching.

Leon and Diane stare closer at each other.

LEON

(dreamily)

Slow dancing under the stars.

DIANE
(dreamily)
Kissing in the moonlight. It was so romantic.

LEON
(dreamily)
And proud. Guilty, yet proud.

They're about to press their lips to each other, but Diane resists again, and gets up from the coach.

DIANE
But Leon, this is nuts! We've been secretly in love for six months, and both of our kids haven't even met yet. I think it'll just be a matter of time if they found out.

LEON
Oh. I see.
(beat)
Well, there's something else they haven't found out yet.

DIANE
Find out about what?

Leon goes over to Diane and takes her hands.

LEON
Diane, ever since my wife passed away two years ago, I thought it was the end of the world. But when I see you again after college, I don't wanna lose you once more. That's why I want us to be together. Till death do us part.

Leon bends down, goes to his pocket, brings out a SMALL BOX, and pulls out a RING WITH A DIAMOND.

Diane is in total shock.

DIANE
(gasps)
Leon... Oh, my God.

LEON
Diane Collins, will you marry me?

Diane takes a moment, but she smiles excitedly and cries with tears of joy.

DIANE
Yes.

LEON
Yes?

DIANE
YES!

Leon gets up, picks Diane up, spins her around as they hug each other. He stops, and puts the ring on Diane's finger.

Diane smiles at the ring.

DIANE (CONT'D)
Oh, Leon, it's so beautiful. This
is the best anniversary ever!

Leon and Diane kiss again. But Diane steps out for a moment.

DIANE (CONT'D)
But wait! What about the kids? How
are we supposed to tell them about
us?

LEON
Don't worry. This Saturday
afternoon, both families are having
lunch together. And if both of our
kids get along, *then* we'll tell
them about our relationship.

DIANE
Oh, that's a great idea. I mean,
that's the first step of building
one big happy family.

Leon goes over to Diane again.

LEON
So... uh... shall we finish what we
started.

Diane looks to Leon seductively. She then JUMPS in Leon's arms.

DIANE
(seductively)
Leon, I think it's time to step
into the jungle.

Leon and Diane kiss as he carries her out of the living room and heads upstairs.

INT. LEON'S CAR/DRIVING - AFTERNOON - DAY

Leon drives with Brandon in the front seat, and Pete and Aaliyah in the back seat.

AALIYAH

(to Pete)

Hey, Pete, check out my crazy string.

Aaliyah picks up her CRAZY STRING BOTTLE and sprays it on Pete's glasses.

PETE

(to Aaliyah)

Hey, stop that?

(to Leon)

Dad, Aaliyah's spraying crazy string in the car again.

AALIYAH

I was just having fun with it, Daddy.

LEON

Baby Girl, you need to be careful with that crazy string, okay?

AALIYAH

Okay,

Aaliyah sprays crazy string on the window. Pete looks up and shakes his head.

PETE

And *that* is why she's Daddy's little princess.

BRANDON

Dad, I just don't understand why we are having lunch with a white family in an all-white neighborhood?

LEON

Because Diane is a very good friend I knew back in high school. Besides, I think you'll like her and her kids.

BRANDON

Ah, I don't know, Dad. As Kanye West would say, she might be a gold digger.

LEON
Hey! Watch your mouth.

AALIYAH
Daddy, what's a gold digger?

PETE
(to Aaliyah)
A woman who dates a man because of money.

AALIYAH
Oh. I wanna be a gold digger when I grow up.

Pete BANGS his head on the car seat behind Leon.

LEON
Listen, guys, now, we're gonna have a nice, enjoyable friendly lunch with them, and when we get there, just get along with her kids, and be on your best behavior, understand?

BRANDON/PETE/AALIYAH
Yes, sir.

BRANDON (CONT'D)
And if somebody in that neighborhood calls the police, we'll make like Ezell from *Friday* and run.

Pete and Aaliyah laugh hysterically. Leon looks up to THE HEAVENS.

LEON
Dear God, please let this be a normal, peaceful day.

INT. THE COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/LIVING ROOM - LATER

Max sits on the couch, watching FUNNY YOUTUBE PRANKS on TV. He laughs so hysterically.

Diane enters the living room, noticing Max watching TV. She takes the remote from him, and turns the TV off.

MAX
MOM! What gives?!

DIANE

Don't "Mom" me. Mr. Howard and his kids should be here in less than three minutes, and you need to get ready.

MAX

Man, is he one of those catfish guys you see on those fake dating websites? Cause the last guy you dated stole \$20 from you to pay an Uber.

DIANE

Okay, one, he stole \$50. And two, he's not one of those guys. So, please behave?

MAX

(grunts)

Whatever.

Diane crosses her arms, and gives Max her "lost his mind" face.

MAX (CONT'D)

(clears throat)

I mean, uh... yes, ma'am!

Max goes to his tablet, acting like he hasn't said anything.

DIANE

(sighs)

Works every time.

Diane picks up some stuff around the living room. Miranda and Stacy come downstairs to face Diane.

MIRANDA

Mom, I can't believe you're letting some unknown guy and *his* kids come to our house. That is totally unfair.

STACY

Yeah. I mean, this should be a total violation for all single, independent women of the world out there for letting the men do all the work on this planet.

MAX

And yet, it's a theory that still messed-up this world for centuries.

DIANE

Now, girls, listen. Don't be rude.
Now, Mr. Howard is a familiar face
I knew back in high school, he and
I have some roman--

(pause for a moment)

I mean, uh... good... times
together.

Miranda, Stacy, and Max go over to Diane, staring at her
suspiciously.

MIRANDA

What kind of good times?

DIANE

(nervously)

Uh... Just... some... uh...

The DOORBELL RINGS.

DIANE (CONT'D)

Ooh! He's here! Kids, line up.

Miranda, Stacy, and Max stand in a straight line as Diane
goes to the door, and opens it for Leon and his kids.

Leon comes in and he and Diane shake hands like their not
even a couple.

LEON

Oh, Diane Collins. Long time, no
see, old friend.

DIANE

Leon Howard, it has been too long
since high school, right?

Leon and Diane chuckle awkwardly.

BRANDON

(scoffs)

Unbelievable.

Diane peeks over and sees Leon's kids standing in her
doorway. She goes over to them.

DIANE

(to Brandon, Pete, and
Aaliyah)

Oh. You must be Leon's children.
Uh, Brandon, Pete, and... a...

BRANDON
(to Diane)
Aaliyah, ma'am. Her name is
Aaliyah.

DIANE
Oh! Aaliyah, like the famous
singer, right?

Diane notices Aaliyah's hair.

DIANE (CONT'D)
(to Aaliyah)
Ooh. Aaliyah, your hair looks
amazing.

Diane reaches over to touch Aaliyah hair, but Aaliyah SMACKS
Diane's hand.

DIANE (CONT'D)
Ow!

AALIYAH
(angrily)
Don't touch my hair!

Pete moves Aaliyah back from Diane.

PETE
(to Diane)
Sorry. Aaliyah doesn't like it when
people try to touch her hair.

Diane shakes her hand off.

DIANE
And now, I know why.

Leon goes over to Miranda, Stacy, and Max.

LEON
So, you guys must be Miranda,
Stacy, and Max. Nice to meet you.

MAX
(in an urban voice)
Yo, yo, yo, my brother! What's
cracking up in this hizzle?

Max gives Leon an "urban-like" handshake. Leon gets confused.

STACY
(to Leon)
Don't mind Max, sir.
(MORE)

STACY (CONT'D)

He's been in his room and listening to too much rap music that exploits women.

LEON

You don't say.

DIANE

Okay. Why don't you kids go to the backyard, mingle, and get to know each other.

LEON

And we'll meet you guys in a minute.

BRANDON/PETE/AALIYAH

(flatly)

Fine.

MIRANDA/STACY/MAX

(flatly)

Fine.

The kids go out of the living room to head to the backyard. Leon and Diane peek over to them as they leave.

LEON

Okay, not a bad start, right.

DIANE

Yeah, except the part when Aaliyah smacks my hand.

(beat)

Anyway, I hope the kids get along okay, Leon. Cause other than that, they're gonna find out sooner or later.

Leon comes to Diane, and takes her hands as they both exchange affections.

LEON

Baby, don't worry. Remember, if the kids get along, then we tell them.

DIANE

Okay, I hope you're right. I love it when you're always right.

LEON

And I love you.

Leon and Diane exchange smiles, kiss each other, and go out of the living room.

EXT. THE COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/BACKYARD - LATER

Leon is on the grill, fixing some burgers, Miranda comes out of the house with a bowl of french fries to the picnic table while Diane is fixing some salad in a bowl.

Brandon sits next to Pete, who is playing video games on his TABLET.

DIANE

So, Miranda, what do you think of Leon so far?

MIRANDA

Uh, he's okay. But Mom, are you really sure that you and him were good friends back in high school?

DIANE

Honey, of course, I'm sure. I mean, he's smart, kind, sophisticated...
(dreamily)
charming, dreamy, and handso--

Diane pauses at the moment as she turns around and sees Miranda; who's giving her a suspicious stare again.

DIANE (CONT'D)

(clear throat)

Uh, Leon, are the burgers done?

LEON

Not yet!

Miranda looks up and shakes her head.

MIRANDA

Give me a break.

Stacy comes out of the house with a petition as she goes to Brandon and Pete.

STACY

Brandon, Pete, would you two be so kind to sign this petition?

Brandon and Pete turn around and notice the petition with no signatures that Stacy is holding out.

BRANDON

Sign it for what? We don't even go to your school.

STACY

Well, after Principal Richards rejected my speech yesterday about banning plastic bottles, I have organized a petition which needs one-hundred signatures. And I need you two to be the first ones to sign it.

PETE

I'll sign it.

Pete takes the petition and writes his signature on it.

BRANDON

Pete, what are you signing it for? There's nothing we can do about all the bad stuff going on in the world.

Pete gives the petition back to Stacy.

PETE

Brandon, we have to do what we can to save the environment.

STACY

See? That's *exactly* my point.

Stacy and Pete high-five each other. Stacy goes to Miranda and Diane.

BRANDON

(rolls his eyes)

Man, y'all fools need to save yourselves.

LEON

Alright, guys, time for lunch.

Leon comes to the picnic table with a plate of almost-burned burger patties. Miranda notices the patties and looks disgusted.

LEON (CONT'D)

How did those burgers look, Miranda?

MIRANDA

Uh, Leon, are you sure they look safe to eat?

LEON

Of course, I'm sure. My father always taught me to never leave any meat uncooked. Even if they're a little burned.

DIANE

Hey, speaking of which, where's Max and Aaliyah.

Max BOLTS out of the house with Aaliyah's crazy string can as she chases him around the backyard and to the picnic table.

AALIYAH

MAX, GIVE IT BACK! GIVE ME BACK MY CRAZY STRING!

MIRANDA

I think *that* answers your question.

Max and Aaliyah stop as he aims her crazy string up high in the sky. Aaliyah tries to reach it.

AALIYAH

Max, stop playing! Give it back now!

MAX

You want your crazy string back?
YOU WANT YOUR CRAZY STRING BACK?!

AALIYAH

Yeah!

Max aims Aaliyah's crazy string can at her.

MAX

Here's your crazy string.

Max SPRAYS some CRAZY STRING at Aaliyah.

AALIYAH

Max, stop! NO! NO!

DIANE

Oh, this is not good.

Brandon and Pete step it as Pete takes the crazy string can away from Max.

BRANDON

Hey, you better quit messing with
our sister!

PETE

Yeah, it's not right to spray crazy
string all over people whenever you
feel like it.

MAX

Hey, don't blame me. She was
annoying me about it.

BRANDON

Well, she may be annoying, but
she's our sister. Now, how would
you like it if someone did *this* to
you?

Brandon SPRAYS some CRAZY STRING at Max. Leon's kids laugh at
him.

Miranda and Stacy are in shock and step it, armed with TWO
BOTTLES of SALAD DRESSING. Miranda tosses Max another one.
They aim them at Brandon, Pete, and Aaliyah.

MIRANDA

You guys leave our brother alone,
and nobody will get hurt.

STACY

Yes. We have bottles of salad
dressing, and we're not afraid to
use them.

PETE

Oh, yeah?

Brandon, Pete, and Aaliyah grabs KETCHUP, MUSTARD, and MAYO
BOTTLES and aim them at Diane's kids.

AALIYAH

Go ahead. Make... our... day.

DIANE

(to the kids)

Okay, now everybody takes a deep
breath, put down the bottles, and
just calm down for a moment.

The kids pause for a second, but they unload the bottles, and
SQUIRT ketchup, mustard, mayo, and Salad dressing at each
other. They then throw food at each other as well.

Leon and Diane go to them to stop the commotion.

LEON

HEY HEY HEY! Y'all stop that right now!

DIANE

This is just great, Leon. I knew we should've started this before we dated.

The squirting battle stops as both of their kids look at their parents with STUNNED FACES and their JAWS DROP.

MIRANDA

(to Diane)

You guys dated?!

STACY

(to Diane)

Without even telling us?

BRANDON

So, *that's* why you always come home late after work, Dad. You and Barbie here caught jungle fever.

LEON

(to Brandon)

You watch your mouth, Brandon. Cause she is not a Barbie, and we're not dating, we're getting married!

KIDS

(in unison)

WHAT?!

DIANE

(nervously)

Surprise.

The kids are stunned at the moment.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. THE HOWARDS/COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE - AFTERNOON - DAY

The words "*Two Weeks Later*" appear on screen as the Howards' MOVING TRUCK pulls up in the parking space.

Diane comes out with a warm smile while Miranda, Stacy, and Max come out with frown faces as Leon, Brandon, Pete and Aaliyah get out of the truck.

Diane waves at Leon and his kids.

DIANE

Hi!

Leon waves back.

MAX

There goes the neighborhood.

DIANE

Max, be nice.

MIRANDA

How can we be nice when you've lied to us about your secret dating life and got engaged without even telling us?

DIANE

Look, I'm sorry for lying and keeping this secret from you guys, but Leon and I love each other and I think this would be the best thing for all of us.

STACY

But Mom, don't you think it's a red flag to let them move in so soon at a day's notice?

DIANE

Well, some people are simply... unencumbered by belongings.

Leon carries his box as he climbs upstairs. Brandon, Pete, while Aaliyah moves some boxes out the back of the truck.

LEON

Hey, Ms. Beautiful.

DIANE
(chuckles)
Oh, Leon, you're gonna make me blush.

MAX
And you're gonna make me puke.

DIANE
Okay, Miranda, Stacy, and Max, why don't you guys go help.

STACY
Okay. But cardboard boxes are not safe for the environment.

MIRANDA
Oh, please. You think *everything* is not safe for the environment.

Miranda, Stacy, and Max go downstairs to help as Leon goes to Diane.

LEON
Looks like they're in good spirits.

DIANE
I hope.

Leon and Diane smile warmly at each other and go inside the house. Brandon, Pete, and Aaliyah watch on as they carry a few boxes.

BRANDON
(scoffs)
Man, I cannot believe Dad made us move here. I mean, this neighborhood is too good for people like us.

AALIYAH
Middle class people?

BRANDON
No, Aaliyah. Black folks.

Miranda, Stacy, and Max come out of the truck as they hear the conversation.

PETE
So, you're saying that you don't like the fact that our Daddy is marrying a white woman?

BRANDON

Uh, no. I didn't mean it like that.

The Collins Siblings go up to the Howard Siblings as they put down the boxes.

MIRANDA

Wait. Did I hear clearly that our mother can't marry your father because she's Caucasian?

PETE

But I thought she was white.

MAX

Dude, it's the same thing.

STACY

You know, that's total prejudice. It's the 21st Century. Everyone should marry whoever they want.

BRANDON

So, y'all okay that your mother is marrying a black man.

MIRANDA

It's not because of that, it's because we don't like it when our mother has been secretly dating some guy she knew for six months!

BRANDON

Hey, don't call our Dad "Some guy!"

The kids engage in a total argument. Leon and Diane BOLT out of the house, noticing that both of their kids are at it again.

DIANE

So, this is what you said about good spirits?

Leon whistles and the kids stop arguing.

LEON

Alright. Now, we went inside for exactly two minutes, and you guys are fighting?

MAX

Dude, chill. You don't tell us what to do.

Leon and gives Max the "Have you lost your mind" look.

MAX (CONT'D)
(stuttering)
Uh, uh, I mean... uh... I'll be...
finishing carrying these boxes, Mr.
Leon, sir.

Max picks up a box and he BOLTS into the house.

BRANDON
Note to self, never talk back to a
black parent.

MIRANDA
Uh, I think we *all* need to finish,
right?

STACY
Yeah, no problem.

PETE
Absolutely.

AALIYAH
You don't have to tell *me* twice.

The rest of the kids pick up the boxes and carry them into the house.

DIANE
Wow, honey. You did that look
better than me.

LEON
Hey, my mama told me that look when
she doesn't play no games with me
and my brothers when we were
little.

Leon and Diane go back into the house.

INT. THE HOWARDS/COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The house is quiet. Diane sits on the couch, watching TV.

Leon enters the living room with a big bowl of popcorn.

LEON
Hey, baby. Are you okay?

Leon sits next to Diane.

DIANE

Yeah. Why wouldn't I?

Leon notices the concerned look on Diane's face.

LEON

Honey, what's on your mind? You have been ghosting me since this afternoon.

Diane takes the remote and turns the TV VOLUME down.

DIANE

Leon, it's just that. Everything is not going the way we expected. Our kids probably hate us, they hate each other, and to tell you the truth, I don't like livestock that much.

Leon puts his arm around Diane's shoulder.

LEON

Honey, I know this new, blended family isn't a heck of a good start, but if I were you, I would take this as a restart. Diane, when I first fell in love in high school, I told you that someday, I'm gonna marry you.

DIANE

Then after Graduation, we went our separate ways. And I thought we would never see each other again.

LEON

Yeah. We became adults alone, we were raising our kids alone, we worked alone, we were sleeping alone. Basically, we're always alone. And then, at our high school reunion, destiny brought us together. Well, fate and Bel Biv Devoe.

DIANE

(chuckles)

Well, now you know.

LEON

(chuckles)

But now, today, we're not alone anymore.

(MORE)

LEON (CONT'D)

Now, there's gonna be some working developments. But I promise you, for better or worse, til death do us part, we'll always love each other.

Diane smiles warmly at Leon.

DIANE

With every beat of our heart. I love you so much.

Leon and Diane kiss.

Max enters the living room with a can of soda, seeing Leon and Diane kissing, and look disgusted.

MAX

Dude, get a room!

Leon and Diane stop kissing as they hear that. Max goes upstairs.

DIANE

Max, what did I say about having soda before bed?

Max squeals and BOLTS upstairs.

LEON

How did you know he has a can of soda?

DIANE

Have you ever heard of Spider-Man's spider sense? I got Mama sense.

LEON

Well, I'll take *that*.

Leon and Diane hi-five each other.

INT. THE HOWARDS/COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - MORNING - DAY

Diane cooks some breakfast on the stove. Leon puts his cases in his suitcase. Miranda, Stacy, and Max are at the table with their electronics.

LEON

Come on, y'all! Come downstairs! We don't have a lot of time. We're gonna be late!

DIANE

Leon, honey, don't be in a rush. We got all the time we needed.

LEON

Diane, if the kids are late for school, and I'm late for work, we're gonna waste time. And time waits for no man.

Diane turns off the stove. She goes over to Leon.

DIANE

Leon, in this house, we always eat breakfast together as a family.

LEON

You do? How?

DIANE

Well, we all wake up, get dressed and come downstairs at the same time.

LEON

Hmm. I never thought about that. As a matter of fact, I never will think about that.

Leon walks off as he packs up his suitcase. Diane returns to the stove to cook.

Brandon and Pete come downstairs to the kitchen.

BRANDON

Morning, Dad.

PETE

Good Morning, Dad.

Brandon and Pete give Leon hi-fives. Then they go to Diane.

BRANDON

Uh, Diane, do y'all have any cereal in this kitchen? Like some *Frosted Flakes*, *Cinnamon Toast Crunch*, or *Coco Puffs*?

PETE

Or maybe, *Honey Nut Cheerios*?

DIANE

Uh, Brandon, Pete, we never eat any sugary breakfast cereal in our home. We eat homemade, home cooked breakfast meals.

PETE

So, you guys don't have any cereal at all?

MIRANDA

Nope. The only cereal she allows us to have is Corn Flakes. They were not good.

MAX

And word of advice, add some sugar to it. That way, it'll taste *really* good.

STACY

Don't listen to him, guys. Last time Max ate *his* Corn Flakes with sugar, he was so hyper, that he was riding his skateboard down the street blindfolded.

Max nods and smiles slightly.

MAX

Good times, good times.

BRANDON

Uh, we'll just take the home cooked breakfast when it's done.

Brandon and Pete go to the table.

LEON

Hey, speaking of which, where's your sister?

BRANDON

In the bathroom.

PETE

Yeah, she said that her stomach isn't feeling good.

DIANE

Her stomach isn't feeling good?

Diane goes upstairs. Leon and the kids follow suit.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

They climb upstairs as they hear Aaliyah MOANING and GROANING in the bathroom.

Diane knocks on the door.

DIANE

Aaliyah? Honey, are you okay?

AALIYAH

(groaning)

No. my tummy hurts really bad. I need to go to the doctor.

Leon opens the bathroom door.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

They enter the bathroom and notice Aaliyah rocking back and forth on the floor.

Leon and Diane go up to Aaliyah, Leon picks her up from the floor.

LEON

Aaliyah, baby, what's wrong? Why's your stomach hurting?

Diane touches Aaliyah's forehead.

DIANE

I think she must have a fever.

AALIYAH

(groaning)

No. It must have been chicken nuggets that I put in the microwave and ate last night.

MIRANDA

Chicken nuggets? But they are not chicken nuggets they are *fish nugget* .

LEON/BRANDON/PETE

Fish nuggets?!

PETE (CONT'D)

Aaliyah's allergic to fish!

BRANDON

(to Diane)

How could you feed our sister fish
when she's allergic?! I mean, what
kind of *so-called* Mother are you?

DIANE

I didn't know that she was. I'm
sorry.

MIRANDA

Hey, don't talk back to *our* Mom!

BRANDON

Girl, you better check yourself
before you--

LEON

Alright, that's enough! Now,
everybody, get in the car! We're
going to the hospital! Let's go!

Diane and the children leave as Leon carries Aaliyah out of
the bathroom.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE**FADE IN:****INT. THE HOSPITAL/LOBBY - EVENING**

Leon, Diane, Brandon, Miranda, Pete, Stacy, and Max sit in the lobby, waiting for the doctor.

Diane goes back and forth, worrying in death. Leon goes over to her.

DIANE

Oh, Leon, I'm so sorry. I mean, I didn't know Aaliyah's fish allergies right away, and I hope she's okay.

LEON

Honey, clam down. You made a mistake. She'll be alright.

Brandon scoffs as he gets up and goes to Leon and Diane.

BRANDON

Dad, why are you trying to comfort this woman that you called fiancée when she tries to poison your daughter. I mean, that ain't right.

Miranda goes up to Brandon.

MIRANDA

Hey, ease up, will ya? She didn't do anything wrong.

Brandon turns to Miranda.

BRANDON

Hey, why don't you stay out of this and mind your business?

MIRANDA

This is my business.

Brandon and Miranda argue. Pete and Stacy turn and look at each other.

PETE

(to Stacy)

I'm sick of hearing their nonsense, haven't you?

STACY

(to Stacy)

I couldn't agree more. I mean, I couldn't stand to see an ongoing conflict like this.

PETE

You know, for the first time, us middle siblings are a lot smarter than the older siblings.

STACY

A theory that controls the balance on this planet for centuries.

PETE

Shall we?

STACY

We shall.

Pete and Stacy exchange in a proper handshake as they leave their seats to go up to them.

PETE/STACY (CONT'D)

QUIET!

Brandon and Miranda stop arguing.

PETE (CONT'D)

Listen. This beef you two have with each other has got to stop.

PETE (CONT'D)

Brandon, you need to start accepting Diane as our new mother and Dad's new wife. Because like or not, she and Dad are happy.

STACY

And Miranda, you need to stop being so hard on Leon and his children. Because he's a handsome, responsible, mature young gentleman that Mom had ever met since high school.

PETE

So, both of you, please, for the love of sanity...

PETE/STACY (CONT'D)

SQUASH IT!

Pete and Stacy return to their seats. Leaving both Leon, Diane, Brandon, and Miranda's faces stunned.

Max's face is stunned too.

MAX

Man, this is so *much* better than YouTube!

LEON

Wow. You middle siblings did it better than us.

DIANE

And I have never seen Stacy put her foot down since she won the debate championship.

BRANDON

And come to think of it, they're right.

MIRANDA

Yeah. I guess we older siblings needed a little more time getting used to things.

Brandon extends his hand for a handshake.

BRANDON

(to Miranda)

Hey, I'm sorry. Truces?

Miranda takes a moment, but she eventually shakes his hand.

MIRANDA

(to Brandon)

Truces.

BRANDON

Oh, and Dad, Diane...

BRANDON/MIRANDA (CONT'D)

We're really, really sorry.

MIRANDA (CONT'D)

And... we're glad that you two are getting married.

Leon and Diane smile and their oldest children warmly.

LEON

Apology accepted.

DIANE
And thank you.

The DOCTOR (44) male, enters the lobby. Leon and Diane go up to him.

LEON
Doc, how's my daughter? Is she okay?

DOCTOR
Aaliyah's out of recovery, and in her room. We treated her with epinephrine. She's a little woozy, but she's gonna be okay.

Leon and Diane sighs in relief.

LEON
Thank you so much, Doctor. It means a lot. Where is she?

DOCTOR
She's in room 18 and she wants to see you.

LEON
Okay.

Leon is about to go, but the Doctor holds his hand up to stop him.

DOCTOR
No. She wants to see her Mom.

Diane looks very surprised.

DIANE
Wait. Aaliyah just called *me* Mom?

DOCTOR
Well, actually, she was asking for the *Barbie*. Uh, may I ask, is that because of the movie based on a doll or--

DIANE
Uh, it's a long story.

Diane leaves the lobby.

INT. THE HOSPITAL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Aaliyah sleeps in her hospital bed. Diane slowly opens the door and notices Aaliyah snoozing.

She closes the door, and goes up to Aaliyah on the left side of the bed.

Diane touches Aaliyah's forehead. Aaliyah opens her eyes, turns around and sees Diane.

AALIYAH
(groaning)
Diane? Is... that you?

DIANE
Yes, sweetie. It's me. The *Barbie's* here. Are you okay?

AALIYAH
Uh, yeah. I really hate those fish nuggets, you know? They tasted worse than my Aunt Ella's meatballs.

DIANE
Listen, Aaliyah, I'm sorry about those fish nuggets in the fridge. I didn't know that you're allergic.

AALIYAH
It's okay. Sometimes, everyone makes mistakes, but the best way to defeat them is to learn from them. I mean, that's what my Ma--

Aaliyah pause for a moment.

AALIYAH (CONT'D)
My Mom always said.

Aaliyah's TEARS comes down. She wipes them away.

DIANE
Oh, Aaliyah, you're crying. What's wrong?

AALIYAH
(sniffs)
Nothing. You don't wanna know?

DIANE

Aaliyah, I may not be your mother,
but I'm willing to listen if you
tell me.

AALIYAH

Are you sure?

DIANE

Definitely.

AALIYAH

(breaks down crying)

It's just that-- everything hasn't
been the same anymore. Ever since
my Mom died, it was just Daddy, my
brothers, and me. We've always been
a team.

(beat)

But ever since he's been secretly
dating you, he hasn't had time for
me. And now, I'm scared that I
might lose him just like I lost my
Mom.

DIANE

Oh, Aaliyah, you're not gonna lose
anybody.

AALIYAH

Well, how do you know? You haven't
lost anyone you love before, did
you?

Diane pauses for a moment.

DIANE

Actually, I did.

Diane takes a seat to sit with Aaliyah.

DIANE (CONT'D)

You see, about a year ago, my
husband, Kyle, was a firefighter.
He was a heroic father that me and
the kids have ever had. And I
always loved him very much.

AALIYAH

What happened to him?

DIANE

One day, one Miranda's 12th birthday, he got an emergency call saying that there was a burning building over downtown Chicago, and he needed to go down there ASAP.

(beat)

Before he leaves--

(breaks down in tears)

The last words he told me and my kids were "I love you, and I'll be home soon." And that was the last time we saw him alive. Three hours later, we found out that he died in the fire.

Aaliyah is in shock.

AALIYAH

Wow. I'm so sorry for your loss.

Diane wipes away her tears.

DIANE

I know. And ever since that day. I thought our family would never be the same again. But then, something incredible happened. Maybe the best thing that ever happened in my entire life.

(beat)

I met your father again.

AALIYAH

At your high school reunion?

DIANE

Yes. And the most important thing I love about your father... is that he inspired me that no matter what life tries to throw at us, we can take on anything that stands in our way. Even raising a family.

AALIYAH

But if you and Dad get married, would we still be a team?

DIANE

Aaliyah, you guys will always be a team. You just needed to add in a few players. Like me, Miranda, Stacy, and even Max.

AALIYAH

Yeah. You know, I'm still getting Max back for my crazy string.

Diane and Aaliyah chuckle with each other.

AALIYAH (CONT'D)

But other than that, I guess you and Daddy deserve to be happy again. With each other.

DIANE

No. With *all* of us. Aaliyah, I know everything is happening so fast, but I promise you, whatever problems we'll face, we're gonna figure things out. Together. Okay?

Aaliyah smiles and nods.

AALIYAH

Okay. And Diane?

DIANE

Yes?

AALIYAH

Is it okay if I start calling you Mom?

DIANE

(sighs)

Of course. Just like I would be proud to start calling you my daughter. So, do you mind if I hug you?

AALIYAH

Okay. But don't touch my hair.

DIANE

(chuckles)

I won't.

Diane and Aaliyah happily embrace affectionately.

Leon opens the door, he stops and sees Diane and Aaliyah hugging, and smiles.

INT. THE HOWARDS/COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

The words "*Three Days Later*" appear on screen.

Brandon, Miranda, Pete, Stacy, Max, and Aaliyah are sitting down, watching TV.

BRANDON

Man, why are we watching this dumb-old corny vampire movie? The Bulls/Lakers game's gonna be on in just two minutes.

MAX

I try to tell them that this movie sucked. But girls are so weird.

Miranda and Stacy shush at them.

MIRANDA

(quietly)

Pipe down. This is our favorite part of the movie.

STACY

(dreamily)

It's so romantic. Demetri, the teenage vampire, is about to sacrifice himself to the Vampire Bureau. But then, Anabel rush in, trying to save him, before he died in her arms.

MIRANDA

(dreamily)

And they both said they loved each other, and shared their one last kiss.

Miranda and Stacy sigh with delight.

PETE

Well, too bad he didn't put a ring on her finger.

AALIYAH

And that kissing part is nasty.

BRANDON

Or better yet, how's this *romantic* scene better than basketball?

MIRANDA

Well, it's better than LeBron Jones.

BRANDON

Okay, one, it's pronounced LeBron
James. And two, do not disrespect--

Brandon and Miranda argue. Leon and Diane come downstairs,
they notice two of their kids arguing.

LEON

Hey, hey, hey. What's going on?

DIANE

And please, don't tell us you guys
are fighting again.

Brandon and Miranda stop arguing as they turn and see their
parents.

BRANDON

(nervously)

Ah, nothing. Just the six of us
kids watching TV.

Brandon puts his arm around Miranda's shoulder. They both
smile at their parents strangely.

MIRANDA

(nervously)

Yeah, I mean, we're just... getting
along like you told us to.

(to their siblings)

Right, guys?

The rest of the siblings nod and agree with them.

LEON

Well, we're glad you guys are
getting along these past couple of
days.

PETE

Yup, Dad. We're becoming one, big
happy family. Just like you said.

MAX

(murmuring)

Unless we're *The Simpsons*.

Aaliyah BUMPS Max on his arm.

MAX (CONT'D)

Ow!

AALIYAH

Watch it, Bart.

Max comforts his arm.

MAX
(quietly)
Sorry.

DIANE
Okay, so, we'll be in the kitchen
if you guys need us, okay?

BRANDON
Don't worry. We're good.

LEON
Alright.

Leon and Diane leave the living room as the kids continue to watch TV.

INT. THE COLLINS FAMILY HOUSE/KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Leon and Diane enter the kitchen.

LEON
You know, I've never seen both of
our kids get along since we were
engaged, huh?

Leon pours a BOTTLE OF WINE in two glass cups.

DIANE
Yeah, I mean, the last time I saw
people get along is when my Uncle
Frank and my Aunt Terri boogie down
to the *Saturday Night Fever*
soundtrack when I was a kid.
(beat)
But the worst part is watching my
uncle split his pants.

LEON
I'm glad that we didn't grow up in
the disco era.

Leon gives the glass of wine to Diane.

DIANE
But other than that, I'm glad this
family is finally coming together.

Leon and Diane stare at each other deeply.

LEON
Yeah, me too. And do you wanna know
the best part?

DIANE
What is it?

LEON
Is that I get to share this
adventure with you.

Diane smiles at Leon warmly.

DIANE
Oh, honey, me too.

Leon and Diane raise their glass.

LEON
A toast. To a new beginning.

DIANE
To a new beginning.

They toast their glasses and take a drink. They then press
their lips to each other.

Then they hear kids argue LOUDLY.

MIRANDA
HEY! YOU JUST TURN OFF FROM THE
BEST PART!

BRANDON
WELL, TOO BAD! THE GAME IS ON!

LEON
Shall we?

DIANE
We shall.

They leave the kitchen to go back to the living room to end
the commotion.

FADE OUT.

THE END