

MID-LIFE

Pilot Episode

Original Series

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COLD OPEN

INT. FOOD CO-OP - MORNING

TANYA SPRINGER, 47, is bagging her groceries at a check out counter in a chaotic and crowded grocery store. CASHIER, 40, scans her last item through.

CASHIER

How do you want to pay?

TANYA

Debit.

She rifles through her wallet, and swipes her card. There is a pause as they wait for the computer to catch up, and Tanya and the cashier stare at each other. Tanya leans in confessionally.

TANYA (cont'd)

Y'know, I'm leaving New York today,
after twenty five years.

CASHIER

Oh.

TANYA

You're the only person I've told,
besides my landlord.

Cashier looks around, suspicious that Tanya is crazy.

TANYA (cont'd)

I haven't told any of my friends.
Because, I don't know, maybe I don't
have any anymore? Hard to tell. I've
really seen only my family for the
last what... nine months? Lost my
job, was pushed out by technology,
actually, even though I'm the best,
by far-at what I do...

CASHIER

Can you hit okay on the pin-pad?

TANYA

Oh! Sure.... sorry. Anyway, maybe I'm
telling you because I feel like
you'll understand this next part -
worse than losing my job and the life
that I've known, will be leaving this
co-op. I don't know how I'll survive.

Checkout woman is now empathetic and touches Tanya's hand.

CASHIER

Oh honey, I hear you. I always think,
I could leave this whole city behind,
except for the food co-op.

TANYA

You think I'll find something like
it?

Checkout woman looks at her with pity, then past her and
signals to the line for the next customer.

CASHIER

No. But you'll find something, and if
they don't have dinosaur kale for two
bucks a bundle, you'll...

TANYA

What.

CASHIER

I'm trying to think of the word,
starts with an "A"...

TANYA

Acquiesce?

CASHIER

No, but close, it's aaaah... it's
when you kind of morph into something
else? Learn to live another way? It's
on the tip of my...

TANYA

Oh no! Oh no, please don't say...

CASHIER

Adapt!

TANYA

No! I really don't want to have to do
that!

An older woman approaches and starts unloading a few items
onto the counter as Tanya solemnly lifts her bags into a
cart. She turns around to see that the next customer is her
buttoned up, prim and proper therapist, LINDA, 62.

TANYA (cont'd)

Linda!

LINDA

Oh! Well here we are on the big day.

Tanya stands, frozen, as Linda holds Tanya's shoulders and looks in her eyes.

LINDA (cont'd)

We'll break this down when I see you
in half an hour, okay?

Tanya nods and turns to the cashier.

TANYA

I lied.

CASHIER

Huh?

TANYA

I lied. You and my landlord aren't
the only people I've told. She's my
therapist.

CASHIER

Yeah, mine too.

LINDA

Hi Chloe. This city can be a small
town sometimes.

The cashier whispers as Tanya walks away.

CASHIER

Do you like her better than me?

LINDA

I like you both the same. I'll do
debit.

She pushes the button on the pin-pad.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT I

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - MID-DAY

Tanya's husband, CHRIS, 49, is seated next to her on a couch. Tanya stares out the window. Linda sits opposite them in a chair.

TANYA

I just hope we're making the right
decis....

CHRIS

We are.

LINDA

Tanya, what are you're experiencing
right now?

TANYA

Total anxiety. I'm going from being
somebody my whole adult life to being
nobody.

CHRIS

I wouldn't put it that way.

LINDA

Chris, remember we're just listening.

TANYA

I guess because we've still been
living in the city, it's really just
hitting me now. It was always in the
back of my head that I'd land another
job.

CHRIS

And your moth...

Linda holds a hand up toward Chris.

TANYA

And now, this feeling of failure -
like if I'd just been able to get
another job, we wouldn't be in the
position of having to leave the city
to go to...

CHRIS

Oh for Criminey's...

TANYA
...the suburbs.

Chris drops his head into his hands.

CHRIS
She's not facing reality. Her mom is
dying and...

TANYA
You think she's dying?!

He reaches out to hold her hand, but she pulls it back into
her lap and looks at Linda with a panicked expression.

LINDA
This is a lot. The job, your mother's
condition, the move. These are major
changes.

CHRIS
I don't know how many times I have to
say it — a family of four can't
sustain it here on one salary.

LINDA
Can we re-frame this? There is an
opportunity here to explore another
side of yourself, Tanya.

CHRIS
Yeah, like you took it to the bank
for years, and now you get to take it
down a couple notches — relax as a
stay at home parent.

LINDA
Holding space...

TANYA
Sounds like house-arrest.

LINDA
Maybe there's a class you've been
wanting to take?

TANYA
Oh Jesus.

LINDA
This also opens the door to new
friendships...

TANYA

I have the best friend I could ever need in my own mother!

LINDA

I maintain that every grown woman needs at least one friend who is not her mother.

TANYA

Fine. But why would I want to be friends with women who all...

CHRIS

Tanya!

LINDA

Nobody's saying you have to replace anyone, but perhaps an openness to something - or some-one new - is in order. You are moving, after all. You can fight it, or not.

Tanya sighs.

LINDA (cont'd)

I'm looking at the time, and we're going to have to stop here. I hope you'll take my recommendation to continue therapy in Connecticut. This will be a process.

Everyone stands, and Chris and Linda shake hands. Tanya and Linda then awkwardly dance it out and hug superficially. Tanya whispers.

TANYA

Do you like him more than me?

EXT. CITY SIDEWALK - DAY

Leaning against her car, Tanya holds an open bag of veggie chips as she watches people enjoying Prospect Park. Just then, a loving nanny, SHERRIE, 40, approaches with two young girls, IRIS, 6 and JANE, 4. Iris is charismatic, flamboyantly dressed, Jane is cute and chubby cheeked. Sherrie hugs both girls at once.

IRIS

Sherrie, come visit us!

SHERRIE

Ok, and you're gonna come back to
Brooklyn to play with me, right?

Jane hugs Sherrie's legs, then the kids climb in the car.
Sherrie buckles Jane in car-seat, then turns to Tanya, who
has tears spilling down her cheeks. Tanya embraces Sherrie.

TANYA

God, thank you for everything,
Sherrie. I don't know how I'll do any
of this without you.

Sherrie repeatedly pats Tanya's back, looking bored while
trying to disengage.

SHERRIE

You mean raise your own kids, right?
C'mon.

Sherrie wrestles Tanya's hands from her body, then gently
pushes her down in the car, quasi police style. Tanya sits,
frozen. Sherrie sighs, leans over, and buckles her in.

INT. TANYA'S SUBARU - DAY

Tanya is driving along an interstate with tears streaming
down her face. A Kleenex box sits in her lap and a heap of
wadded tissues lies in the passenger seat.

Iris, chewing gum in the back seat, blows a big bubble.

IRIS

Mommy, did you chew gum when you were
a kid?

Tanya snuffles, blows her nose and throws the tissue aside.

TANYA

We weren't allowed to chew it in
school. Plus, my father hated it so I
wasn't allowed to chew it ever.

IRIS

But now you can do whatever you want,
because you're a grown up. Right?

TANYA

I guess that's right.

Iris speaks cautiously.

IRIS
Plus... he's dead, so....

Tanya bursts into uncomfortable, too-loud laughter.

TANYA
You're right, Iris, I can do whatever
the hell... HECK! Whatever the HECK I
want!

Tanya alternates between laughing and crying. Iris leans
over and whispers to Jane.

IRIS
What the hell is the matter with her?

EXT. HIGHWAY - AFTERNOON

Tanya's car exits into a quiet neighborhood lined with small
houses. They are painted different colors, with "Black Lives
Matter" and "No matter where you are from, we're glad you're
our neighbor" signs in yards.

INT. TANYA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

Iris and Jane crane their necks, taking in the neighborhood
and pointing out each house as they pass.

IRIS
Mommy, wait, is this our house? Is
that it?

TANYA
Almost. Two minutes.

JANE
We're gonna sleep in a bunk bed
tonight!

TANYA
Not yet, we need to build it first.

JANE
What?! You said we'll have a whole
house and me and Iris can sleep in a
bunk bed!

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

The car pulls up next to a moving truck in front of a charming yellow house. The front door is propped open. Chris and YOUNG MOVER, 23 place a dresser down on the sidewalk.

The girls dash over, ring the old-time doorbell and run around in the yard. Chris hugs and chases the girls excitedly. They stop to take in their surroundings together.

CHRIS
What do you think, girls?

JANE
Good!

Iris throws her hands up in the air and screams at the sky.

IRIS
I loooooove Connecticut!

Young Mover smiles and looks at Chris and Tanya.

YOUNG MOVER
I think you're going to be really
happy here.

Everyone looks up at the house excitedly, except for Tanya, who looks like a deer in headlights.

END OF ACT I

ACT II

INT. DINING ROOM - EARLY AFTERNOON

A few weeks later. Moving boxes litter a mostly furnished house. Tanya sits in front a laptop at a cluttered dining room table, video-chatting with her bald mother, BONNIE, 78.

TANYA
Mom, can you please put the wig on?

BONNIE
Why? The kids aren't around.

TANYA
No, but...

BONNIE
Fine, I know how delicate my little girl is.

She puts on a wig and adjusts it as she talks.

TANYA
So, how is it up there?

CUSTER, 80 dips his head into the screen for a moment.

CUSTER
I fucking hate it here. A far cry from New Jersey.

BONNIE
Oh shut up, will you?

CUSTER
I moved here for your mother, that's all.

Bonnie readjusts her position, wincing a little as she does so. Custer looks at Bonnie.

CUSTER (cont'd)
How come whenever you talk to her, you act like you're sicker than me?

BONNIE
You're definitely sicker.

CUSTER
Thank you.

He walks out of the frame.

BONNIE

It was hell getting here, but we did it.

TANYA

Yeah, you're just far away. I know Custer didn't want to move in with us, but if you two change your mind...

She looks around sadly.

TANYA (cont'd)

...I'm here.

BONNIE

We should be good here. They have the nursing staff, and it's not too expensive, is it?

TANYA

It's fine, Mom. We were lucky to find a place within a few hours' drive where your treatments are included. And we'll all come visit.

Custer suddenly appears back in the frame.

CUSTER

That's the *only* benefit to going this far. Don't bring those brats up here yet!

BONNIE

Will you please shut the fuck up? You realize they're helping *us*, don't you?

TANYA

Hey, I've gotta go pick up the kids.

BONNIE

Okay. Tell me though, how are they liking it?

TANYA

Iris loves everything about everything. Jane is too scared to go upstairs alone.

BONNIE

Well, she's always had you only three feet away in that apartment. She'll get used to it.

TANYA

Her and me both.

Suddenly the doorbell rings loudly.

TANYA (cont'd)

Shit, someone's at the door, I've really gotta go.

Tanya shuts the laptop and gets up to open the front door. Tall, skinny ANNIE, 78 with chin length gray hair stands on the stoop. She speaks with a sing-song-y lilt.

ANNIE

Hi there! I hope I'm not bothering you. I'm Annie and I've lived next door for forty years now. I wanted to welcome you to our lovely street.

TANYA

Oh, that's nice, thanks. I'm Tanya. I'd invite you in, but I'm about to get my kids...

Annie pushes inside past Tanya, looking around as she talks.

ANNIE

Yes, I saw them just this morning for the first time! You all moved in while I was away on my annual folk-dancing retreat. Oh well, that's just the way it goes, I suppose. Your girls are too precious! The older one looks so much like my niece did when she was that age, and the younger one! Her cute, scratchy-dare I say sexy-voice...

TANYA

You think my four year's voice is sexy?

ANNIE

Forgive me, I'm getting off on the wrong foot. I'm just delighted that you're here after the house sat empty so long. Oh, I see you got rid of the built-ins.

(MORE)

ANNIE (cont'd)
I remember when George and Rosa had
them put in. Well, you've certainly
made this place your own.

Tanya follows Annie's eyes as she looks around, before
ushering Annie back out to the stoop.

ANNIE (cont'd)
Can I come by later and bring the
girls a little treat? Two cupcakes
from my favorite bakery.

TANYA
Sure, they'd love that. I'll send
them over when we're back.

ANNIE
Oh, don't you worry, I'm sure I'll
hear them! Ha ha!

Annie attempts another glance inside, but Tanya body-blocks
her. Annie stumbles, catches herself and laughs.

TANYA
Oh my god, I'm sorry! You okay?

Annie does a little folk step, and then loses her footing
once more, and sways a bit before regaining her balance.

TANYA (cont'd)
Jesus!

Annie walks off with a hop, as Tanya slowly shuts the door
and leans against it from the inside. She peers out the
window to make sure Annie is gone before re-opening it and
dashing to her car.

EXT. OUTSIDE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

In Tanya's haste, she is abruptly cut off by a herd of
gawky, TEEN-AGED MALE RUNNERS, tearing out of the woods into
her street. One boy holds a hand-held radio playing "The
Escape Song,/Pina Colada Song".

MUSIC
*"If you like pina coladas/And getting
lost in the rain..."*

Tanya leaps back, startled, and watches them pass.

EXT. SCHOOLYARD - AFTERNOON

Throngs of parents are walking up the school sidewalk at dismissal. A string of buses pull into the roundabout.

Tanya walks swiftly toward a doorway, above it which reads "Pre-K" and joins the line. She awkwardly utters half-hearted hellos to other parents who chat among themselves and don't even notice her. Children rush into their parents' arms, except Jane, who, in contrast, walks slowly and cautiously out the door to Tanya and grabs her hand, saying nothing.

Iris runs up to her mom and sister, full of exuberance.

IRIS
Mommy! Can we play on the playground?

TANYA
Um, okay. For a few minutes...

Iris drops her backpack right there and runs away. Jane holds tight to her mom's hand as Tanya picks up the backpack and continues walking, looking somewhat nervous.

TANYA (cont'd)
You want to play too?

JANE
I wanna stay with you.

TANYA
Oh, thank god.

JANE
What?

TANYA
Nothing sweets, just happy to have you with me.

A tall woman with long, braided hair, VERONICA LI, 38, joins in stride next to them. She talks fast, loud and is bubbly—the opposite of Tanya's style.

VERONICA
Hi!! I'm Veronica. Your daughter Iris is in my son's class. I met her on the museum field trip last Monday. Iris is cool, she talks to everyone, told me she likes my hair. I love kids like that.

TANYA
You like kids that like your hair?

VERONICA
Yes, actually.

TANYA
I'm Tanya, and this is Jane.

Jane grabs Tanya's hand and buries her face in her mom's legs. Veronica bends down way too close, practically in Jane's face and very close to Tanya's crotch.

VERONICA
Hi! I have a four year old at home who'd love playing with you!

Tanya steps back.

TANYA
Janie's really attached to me. She barely wants to leave me on this playground, so I'm not sure she's ready for a play date.

Jane runs to a climber and starts playing happily. Veronica smiles at Tanya, who looks slightly embarrassed.

TANYA (cont'd)
Guess she's acclimating though.

VERONICA
Iris told me you just moved in.

TANYA
Yeah, been a few weeks.

VERONICA
You should come over tomorrow! Myriam's home with me on Fridays and there's a group of moms who come hang. Y'know, tea, chat, let the kids play.

TANYA
Oh, that sounds fun, but we're busy on Fridays. Otherwise, we totally would.

Jane appears behind her.

JANE

But Mommy, isn't Friday our day at home together?

Tanya turns around, surprised, then turns back to Veronica.

TANYA

That's right, I'm still getting the schedule straight. *This* Friday - tomorrow, I've got a work thing.

JANE

But you don't work anymore.

Tanya looks at Jane and points at the climber. Jane runs off again to play.

VERONICA

Well, I moved here five years ago and have lots of helpful information, like, where to get the best bread, what grocery stores are worth a shit, what restaurants are good, who's fucking who....

TANYA

Whoa!

VERONICA

Just kidding. Kind of, I mean, people do tell me stuff.

TANYA

But you don't even know me.

VERONICA

Yet, you mean. And it was a joke. A not-funny one, I guess. I should know better, my mother's a Type A too.

TANYA

So I remind you of your mother.

VERONICA

Not really, but you're also a geriatric mom...

TANYA

A *what?*!

VERONICA

A geriatric mom, isn't that the medical term for...oh wait, it's geriatric pregnancy.

TANYA

Yeah, in New York we just call that "a mom".

VERONICA

Yeah, I know, I'm from New York, too. When Iris told me you'd moved from Brooklyn, I put you on my list.

TANYA

Your list?

VERONICA

Yeah, of people I want to meet. I add about one person a year because... look, you make your own fun here. Anyway, just put your number in there.

Veronica hands Tanya her phone and leans forward, watching as Tanya reluctantly types her number in and hands it back. Veronica tucks her phone back in her purse and looks out over the playground, satisfied at having accomplished a mission. Suddenly she screams, military style.

VERONICA (cont'd)

Ben! Time to move! Let's go!

Tanya looks on with a hint of curiosity in her eye.

EXT. STRIP MALL PARKING LOT - MORNING

The next day. Tanya weaves her car in and out through a parking area, hesitating and braking abruptly. She looks exasperated as she tries to wend her way to a parking space in front of a massive grocery store. She parks, grabs her reusable grocery bags and gets out with determination.

She is wearing a *Park Slope Food Co-op* shirt that bears some ridiculous, hippie design on it.

INT. GROCERY STORE - CONTINUOUS

Tanya enters through the automatic door, pulls a cart from the cart-cue forcefully and faces the aisles. She wears a determined expression.

First, she looks confused by the peanut butters, then the aisle-long choices of breads. We see her look in horror down an aisle containing zillions of lettuces in clam-shell containers. She picks a lettuce off the shelf, dangling it between her fingers, then drops it in her cart. Her expression becomes gradually more panicked as she frowns at the ingredients in the yogurts. In a dizzying manner, she pushes her cart around the corner into the next aisle when she comes face to face with a life-sized, slowly moving robot with googly eyes. She screams; music crescendos and cuts out abruptly as she slumps to the floor.

A crowd gathers. SHOPPERS gasp as one runs to tell a store employee. Suddenly, Veronica appears from around the corner pushing a half-full cart. She stops to take in the scene before recognizing Tanya on the floor.

VERONICA

Oh, my... okay.

WOMAN

Here, use these!

A WOMAN, 26, grabs a pack of baby wipes from her cart and rips it open, throwing a few at Veronica, who kneels calmly and places them on Tanya's forehead.

WOMAN (cont'd)

Are you a nurse?

VERONICA

Nope. But I know her. My son and her daughter are in the same class at Maple Grove School. They actually got the *best* teacher, Ms. Bloom. She gives the kids extra recess. Anyway, Tanya's family just moved here from Brooklyn...

TANYA

Please stop.

Tanya's eyes flutter open as she tries to make sense of where she is. She sits up, and Veronica catches her arm. A MANAGER, 50, hands Tanya a paper cup of water.

MANAGER

I'm calling for medical assistance.

TANYA

No! Please don't. I... I just fainted. Happens sometimes. I'll be okay in a minute.

She focuses on Veronica, who is steadying her.

VERONICA
You must think I'm a serious
creepster.

TANYA
You must think I'm a fainting freak.

VERONICA
During your work meeting, no less.

Tanya lowers her gaze to the floor, embarrassed.

TANYA
Oh god, it's Friday, is it?

VERONICA
It's okay. I'm not here to bust you.

MANAGER
You sure you're okay, ma'am?

TANYA
Ow, yes. Thank you. I'm sorry.

MANAGER
Don't apologize. But you're lucky
your friend is here to help you.

Veronica gives a satisfied smile.

MANAGER (cont'd)
I'll be at that counter over there if
you need anything.

He walks away. Tanya sits upright and the baby wipes fall
from her forehead into her lap.

TANYA
Ew. I wondered where the fake baby
smell was coming from.

VERONICA
I see you met The Robot.

TANYA
Yeah, what on earth...?

VERONICA

It's a pilot project. It meanders around the store, looking for spills and shit for an employee to come clean up. A walking - rolling, actually - metaphor for the absurdity of this town.

TANYA

Scared the shit out of me.

They look at the robot over by the counter with the manager, who has his arm around it.

VERONICA

Looks like you scared it too. Hard to say which one of you likes attention more.

Tanya shoots her a look.

VERONICA (cont'd)

Ok, got some pride, I can respect that. How about I drive?

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - MID-DAY

Chris is splitting wood on a stump when something catches his attention. He turns around to look, sees nothing, and goes back to chopping.

JACK, 50, is lanky and wearing an 80s style Members Only Jacket and penny loafers with sweatpants. In his arms is a small dog wearing a basket muzzle. He peeks his head out from behind a tree, and uncaps a marker with his mouth and marks the tree before dashing quickly to hide behind another one.

Chris turns around again, and sees Jack's shadow clearly on the ground, jutting out from a tree. He approaches the tree, and looks behind it. Jack stands stock still holding the pen, and looks at Chris.

JACK

I wasn't trespassing, exactly.

CHRIS

Um, actually you were.

JACK
It's just you've got some prize
maples and I heard you finally moved
in, so I wanted to...uh...

CHRIS
Wanted to what?

JACK
Get you on board for our sugaring
season. I'm Jack.

He holds out his pen hand, then switches to his dog hand.
Chris smiles exuberantly and shakes its paw.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Chris and Jack walk together around the house, Jack pointing
out various trees, when Veronica's car pulls up. Tanya gets
out of the passenger side gingerly.

CHRIS
Hey, Tan! I want you to meet Jack! I
met him, uh... right in our yard,
actually. He's a wealth of knowledge
about this area - knows where every
sugar maple is.

Tanya gives a weak wave.

CHRIS (cont'd)
How do you know where every tree is?

Jack places his dog down, and unrolls a scroll with a bunch
of trees drawn on it.

JACK
Zillow App plus Google Street View.

CHRIS
You hear that, baby? Connecticut
Maple Syrup!

Chris and Jack awkwardly fist bump, when Chris doubles back.

CHRIS (cont'd)
Wait, where's the car?

Veronica stands up, half out of the driver's side, as Chris
looks on, confused.

TANYA
'Member the mom I met at the
playground? Veronica just happened to
be at the store when I ...

CHRIS
Shit, did you faint again?

He walks toward her to offer support.

TANYA
I'm okay.

CHRIS
Oh man, I can't thank you enough,
Veronica.

VERONICA
No worries. Hey, Jack.

Jack raises a hand in salutation, and looks at the ground.

TANYA
Wait, you guys know each other?

VERONICA
Everyone in this town knows each
other.

JACK
Thanks for coming to my party last
weekend.

VERONICA
Sure. Was fun. Kind of.

FLASHBACK:

INT. DARK PARTY HALL - NIGHT

A crowd of dressed up party-goers, including Veronica, are
huddled down trying not to be seen through a window. Jack's
wife stands holding a party horn in her mouth.

JACK'S WIFE
Shhh! He's here... get ready to yell
Surprise!

She watches a large figure emerge from a car.

JACK'S WIFE (cont'd)
No idea what he's wearing though...
Ok, he's coming, get down!

They huddle down and wait, but there's no entry through the front door. Suddenly, the back door bursts open and a giant gorilla runs in, stands in the center of the room and roars. Kids go screaming and crying in different directions as the adults scream in shock. He flicks on the lights and pulls the gorilla head off his head and looks around, satisfied.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE - MID-DAY

JACK
Yeah, I don't like surprises.

Veronica turns to Tanya.

VERONICA
You should come over tomorrow since the kids have off. We start at 10:30. And no excuses this time.

CHRIS AND TANYA
There's no school tomorrow?

JACK
Professional development.

CHRIS AND TANYA
Shit.

She waves, ducks back into her car and drives off.

JACK
I'm'a head out too, I guess.

Jack tips an imaginary hat, and picks up his dog.

TANYA
That muzzle really necessary? She seems so docile.

JACK
Oh, not really. I can take it off when I'm holding her.

He snaps the muzzle off and the dog licks Tanya's hand vigorously. She leans her face toward the dog for a kiss.

JACK (cont'd)
Yeah, she's a sweetheart, but she
eats other dogs' shit when she's not
wearing it.

TANYA
Oh my god.

INT. LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Tanya lay on the couch with closed eyes. Chris sits at the
end of the couch.

TANYA
I couldn't figure out the produce.
And why do they need nine brands of
peanut butter?

CHRIS
What exactly do you mean by 'figure
out?' If you're talking about
organic, there's a whole sec....

TANYA
Remember Lou Reed in *Blue In the
Face*?

CHRIS
Wha? No. Who was his character?

TANYA
Lou Reed. He plays Lou Reed. And he
talks about how he couldn't live
anywhere other than in New York,
because he knows New York. He
understands how things work there,
and anywhere else he'd be too scared.
What if I'm Lou Reed?

CHRIS
Lou Reed was a childless ex-junkie
rock star.

TANYA
Childless, junkie *artist* rocker, and
most of all, a dyed-in-the-wool New
Yorker. And he had a dog, for your
information. But the point is, his
fear. He's afraid of non-NYC life. Of
living on Long Island. Of not knowing
his way around a city, or worse, of
people actually talking to him.

CHRIS
I'm beginning to see the
similarities.

TANYA
He's not afraid of someone running at
him with a knife, he's afraid of
nothing ever happening! Afraid of too
many peanut butters...

Chris sighs.

TANYA (cont'd)
He is afraid, essentially, of his own
lack of adaptability.

CHRIS
Why don't I do the shopping for a
while? I can go at night after the
kids are in bed.

Chris pauses.

Tanya. I know you're gonna hate what
I'm about to say, but...

CHRIS
...you've gotta go to the
play date.

TANYA
I'll go to the damn play
date.

END OF ACT II

ACT III

INT. VERONICA'S KITCHEN - MORNING

MYRIAM, 4, sits on a bar-stool in front of a giant sticker book. Snack bags litter the counter. Chatting at the island are two women, SHANA, 36, and LEAH, 37, drinking tea. The girls stare at each other as Jane grips Tanya's hand.

JANE

Mommy, stay.

TANYA

I'm right here, sweets.

VERONICA

Shana, Leah, this is Tanya. She and her family just moved here from Brooklyn. That's Jane with Myriam, and she has Iris too who just ran upstairs.

Shana is holding a nine month old baby and points at Jane.

SHANA

Wait, so this one's yours?

TANYA

Yes.

LEAH

This little one?

VERONICA

Yes, the one she brought, the one that walked in with her. The one child in this room you've never met before.

TANYA

I had my kids late.

SHANA

I have Jasper in the other room, and Clara here.

LEAH

I'm Leah. Lived here forever and now back in the house I grew up in.

The sound of a long fart is heard and the two girls look at each other and burst into laughter. Jane lets go of Tanya's hand and they leave together, giggling.

Veronica hands Tanya a cup of hot water and a tea box.

SHANA

So how are you liking it here?

TANYA

Oh, it's great. Lots of ... space.

Veronica spots her son, BEN, 6, climbing up on the counter.

VERONICA

Ben! Off that counter!

Tanya flinches. Ben dismounts and sullenly exits.

TANYA

Um, it's a culture shock, the suburbs, but I guess anything would be when you move from New York City.

VERONICA

I would never raise my kids in New York. Just going to school meant being sexually harassed on the subway and I couldn't wait to get the fuck out of there. There are two kinds of New Yorkers - the ones that know they want to raise their kids out of the city, and those that wouldn't do it anywhere else.

Iris comes sliding into the kitchen on her heels.

IRIS

Mommy!

TANYA

Yeah?

IRIS

Lanie doesn't talk. Like, at all.

Tanya lowers her voice, and turns to the adults.

TANYA

Is she mute?

They all laugh.

VERONICA

She's just shy, she talks to me. She and Ben have been friends since pre-school. Her mom had to work this morning so I told her to drop Lanie off for a couple of hours.

TANYA

Can you figure out how to communicate with her, Iris?

IRIS

Mommy. It's not a problem, I just wanted to tell you.

Iris skates out again and runs upstairs.

SHANA

So how long were you in the city?

TANYA

Twenty five years.

LEAH

Oh wow! What brought you here?

TANYA

My husband works from home and I... Well... I lost my job. Brooklyn is expensive enough now that we decided to jump ship. And my mom is not well, so we're putting some money there, too.

LEAH

Oh I'm sorry, that's hard. What do you—did you—do for work?

TANYA

Centerball. I made the game what it is today.

They look confused for a beat, then burst into laughter.

VERONICA

You mean that absurd urban sport where neanderthals kick a ball into a trash can? Speaking of trash cans, I've been trying to get my town trash can replaced for weeks. Have I bored you with this saga?

LEAH
Still dragging the one with the
broken wheel?

VERONICA
Every week I call and....

Tanya cuts them off, dead-seriously.

TANYA
Centerball is a legitimate, skill-
based sport. I was responsible for
the league's image.

They snap back to attention, realizing that Tanya is not
joking. Leah clears her throat.

TANYA (cont'd)
I shaped the players' media image.

SHANA
So you were high up...in marketing?

TANYA
I was high up in a position that I
created. I predicted their every
word.

Shana, Veronica and Leah look at each other. Tanya, on a
roll, goes on.

TANYA (cont'd)
I raised the game from street ball to
being recognized at the national
level. That took a combination of
skill, and, some even say, divining.

Tanya goes on, rhapsodizing to Leah now, who is the only one
who continues to politely listen. Shana whispers to
Veronica.

SHANA
Where'd you meet this woman?

VERONICA
Give her a chance.

TANYA
....their words flowed from my
fingertips, to the keyboard...

LEAH
Closed-captioner?

Shana shakes her head.

TANYA
...until they replaced me, at age
forty six, with a computer.

LEAH
Oh!! You were a *transcriber*!

Tanya's face freezes. An awkward silence follows,
interrupted by the buzz of Tanya's phone. She picks it up
from the counter.

CHRIS TEXT BUBBLE
You having fun?!

INT. VERONICA'S DOORWAY - MID-DAY

Leah holds the door as her children bust past her outside.

LEAH
You should come out with us Thursday
for a drink. Our friend's band is
playing at the video store.

VERONICA
It's Jack's band, you met Jack.

TANYA
The guy with the shit-eating dog?

Veronica nods. Leah leaves and the three women return to the
kitchen.

TANYA (cont'd)
At a video store?

SHANA
An updated video store. They sell
alcohol. By the way, Veronica, that
cookie you gave me last week was one
of the best!

Veronica glances at Tanya, slightly nervously.

SHANA (cont'd)
Oh! Sorry...

TANYA
It's fine. Talking reefer, right?

SHANA

Um, I guess you don't really...

FLASHBACK

INT. BRIGHTLY LIT KITCHEN - NIGHT

Chris and bald Bonnie stand at a stove-top, cooking weed down into oil. Tanya looks on as Custer limps past.

CUSTER

I'm going to lock myself in the bedroom so I'm not implicated in these illegal endeavors.

BONNIE

Oh will you be quiet? Medical marijuana is not illegal. Chris, make a little extra and I'll put it in his coffee. And for Tanya, while you're at it. She is so... uptight.

TANYA

Mom, they routinely test at my job.

CHRIS

They only test the athletes, though.

TANYA

I need my fingers to work at peak.

Bonnie looks at Chris with pity.

END FLASHBACK

INT. VERONICA'S KITCHEN - DAY

VERONICA

You should try one of these.

She reaches into the back of her freezer and pulls out two ziplocs, labeled 'Medicine' and hands one to each of them.

SHANA

Oh my god, thank you! Veronica's cookies make sex *amazing*. Ok, I've gotta get Clara down for her nap. Jaaaaas-per!

We hear a kid's footsteps on the stairs, followed by the slam of a door. Tanya turns to Veronica.

TANYA
How much...

VERONICA
Oh, I'm not selling them.

TANYA
No, I mean, just eat the whole thing?

Veronica beams.

VERONICA
If only the dads in Maple Grove knew what I do for them.

Tanya takes a large bite and starts chewing. An astonished Veronica jumps to swat it out of her hand.

VERONICA (cont'd)
Wait! What are you doing?!

TANYA
What!?

Tanya starts spitting into the sink.

TANYA (cont'd)
Am I gonna die?! Oh my god!

VERONICA
No, but... wow. Okay. You're not gonna die. It won't even kick in for about an hour, but...

TANYA
I only live twelve minutes away.

VERONICA
Yeah, I just thought, you'd save it for a night with your husband or something.

Ben, Iris, LANIE, 6, Myriam and Jane rush into the kitchen.

MYRIAM
Mommy, are you okay?

Tanya and Veronica look at each other.

VERONICA

I'm fine. Why? Were we loud?

IRIS

Yes.

TANYA

Y'know what? Time to head home, it's lunchtime.

MYRIAM

Mommy, can Janie stay longer?

TANYA

Y'know, Jane would probably love that some other time.

JANE

Mommy, I wanna stay.

Tanya is visibly surprised.

VERONICA

Fine with me, but Sarah wants Lanie back by noon. She lives over by you, actually. I can drive Jane home in an hour if you take Lanie now.

Veronica whispers.

VERONICA (cont'd)

And I mean, *now*.

TANYA

Sure. We can do that, can't we, Iris?

Iris nods in excitement. Veronica and Tanya smile. Lanie looks on, deadpan.

INT. TANYA'S SUV - MID-DAY

Tanya drives and Iris sits in the passenger seat, turning back toward Lanie, who stares out the window. It is uncomfortably silent.

IRIS

Lanie, do you play any sports?

Lanie ever-so-slightly shakes her head no.

IRIS (cont'd)
Do you like doing crafts? Or have any
pets?

Again, Lanie barely shakes her head. Tanya whispers to Iris.

TANYA
Radio?

IRIS
Lanie, I'm going to scan and when you
hear something you like, tell me and
I'll stop it, okay?

Lanie stares out the window. Iris scans through stations,
all the while watching Lanie to make sure she doesn't miss a
cue to stop. We first hear a Christian rock song. Iris
turns, studying Lanie's face - nothing. Then it moves on to
NPR. Iris looks at Lanie, who remains motionless. Next we
hear a Spanish ballad, then a pop song, synth-y, 80s style.
Dedicated Iris keeps looking back to see if Lanie approves.
Next we hear Bad Company's three measures of power chords,
followed by '*I Feel Like Making Love!*'

Lanie, with a complete poker face, raises one finger in the
air and speaks with no affect at all.

LANIE
I like this.

END