

Twilight of the Gold's

SUZANNE: Yes?

DAVID: *(through the door)*
Open up, you rich bitch.

SUZANNE:
David, you shit.

DAVID: *(opens the door with his key)*
I'm gonna smash your Krups cappuccino maker.

SUZANNE:
Very funny.

DAVID:
Hi, sis. I called Bloomingdale's, they said you left early, so I thought I'd catch you, see how you're doing.

SUZANNE:
I have a headache.

DAVID:
That reminds me, this is for you. *(He takes out a CD from his pocket.)*

SUZANNE:
Gypsy. Well, at least it's not opera.

DAVID:
This is the Angela Lansbury recording. I already gave you the original with Merman, but I saw last time I was here that you still haven't opened it. So I figure two different versions improves my chances.

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SUZANNE:

You're really starting to piss me off.

DAVID:

Please, if I wanted to piss you off, I'd bring Tyne Daly.

SUZANNE:

Put it with the others. I know how you like them in alphabetical order.

DAVID:

My pleasure.

SUZANNE:

I'm making dinner. There's not enough food, you can't stay.

She exits to the kitchen. David looks at the CD collection. He picks up a boxed opera set.

DAVID:

I don't believe it! It can't be! "Vittoria!"

SUZANNE:

What are you yelling about?

DAVID:

The *La Boheme* is out of the plastic. There's hope!

SUZANNE:

(from the kitchen) Don't get excited. *Moonstruck* was on cable.

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DAVID:

From me it's boring.....

SUZANNE:

Honestly, David, I wish you'd stop bringing us that stuff. IT puts me in a very awkward position.

DAVID:

I don't take it personally. Besides, it's not for you anymore.

SUZANNE:

Rob has no interest.

DAVID:

Somebody will.

Pause. Suzanne enters.

SUZANNE:

Mom told you. I knew she would. This family talks too much.

DAVID:

So then it's true. How can you? Do you realize what you're doing?

SUZANNE:

Funny I don't remember asking for your input.

DAVID:

Suzanne, I can't just sit by and let this happen.

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SUZANNE:

Stop it, David. Stop it before you say another word. You have no right to come in here and tell me what to do. Especially after Marnie Eisner.

DAVID:

What? Marnie Eisner? I can't believe you're throwing that in my face.

SUZANNE:

You were a junior in high school. You came to me in a panic, your voice was cracking. You said, "Suzanne, I don't know what to do. I can't have a kid. I won't be able to go to college." Remember?

DAVID:

It just happened.

SUZANNE:

Do you remember how I went with you to the bank and we got out some of your bar mitzvah money?

DAVID:

Of course I do. I remember.

SUZANNE:

I brought the two of you to that clinic that smelled like Windex. I held her hand. I held your hand. I took care of both of you and we got it done.

DAVID:

Yes, you were wonderful.

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SUZANNE:

You were so afraid Mom and Dad would find out.

DAVID:

Now that's what they pray for.

SUZANNE:

Whatever happened to Marnie?

DAVID:

She lives with a woman in Seattle. I think we both knew something wasn't right. So, what's your point?

SUZANNE:

I supported you. No questions asked. Now I want you to do the same thing.

DAVID:

I'm sorry, I can't do that.

SUZANNE:

David!

DAVID:

It's not the same thing. Not even remotely. Marnie got pregnant by accident. Her life would have been badly damaged as would mine, and so would the kid's. You and Rob wanted this baby. You can afford it. You're ready to be parents. But now, because you know something about this person you've created that you don't care for, you're ending his life.

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SUZANNE:

It's my choice, David. It's my right to choose. And stop saying "his."

DAVID:

Ah, yes, the right of choice – the last refuge of the morally indefensible. We demand the right of choice when we know deep down what we want to do is wrong. Necessary maybe, regrettable yes, but definitely wrong. We demand our God-given right to take the easy way out.

SUZANNE:

You don't believe that.

DAVID:

Yes. Right now, I think I do.

SUZANNE:

No, I know you don't. You're talking like some right-wing fundamentalist crackpot. Coming here in your own little "Operation Rescue." Don't you dare give me a sermon as if you had morality on your side. I think we know you don't.

DAVID:

That's not what this is about. I would never take away your right. I'd march in the streets and write my congressman to make sure you keep it. But this is something new. This is a decision that no one's ever had to make before. I'm asking you to choose carefully. Please. Think it over.

SUZANNE:

I have.

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DAVID:

Think harder. How can you do this to me?

SUZANNE:

Oh, this is about you, is it?

DAVID:

You're erasing me from the world. You're rubbing me out. Why? I thought you loved me.

SUZANNE:

Don't play those games with me. They won't work. *Beat*

DAVID:

What does Rob say?

SUZANNE:

Rob says a lot. He says he'll be patient and support me in my choice but I should hurry up and decide. And if I feel up to the challenge of raising this one, then he is too. The message is coming through loud and clear: Why put ourselves through this? And, frankly, I don't blame him. This baby was going to change our lives and make everything better. Not that things are bad, but, I don't know, we could use a clear sense of purpose. Now the whole thing is tainted. I wish we didn't know, but we do. And it's a problem.

DAVID:

What wouldn't be a problem with you?

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SUZANNE:

Oh, please.

DAVID:

What if you found out the kid was going to be ugly, or smell bad, or have an annoying laugh, or need really thick glasses?

SUZANNE:

Come on, David. We're talking about something pretty serious.

DAVID:

But where do we stop? You know we have relatives who died for less. So now we have this technology, what are we going to do with it? It starts with us, Suzanne.

SUZANNE:

Oh, shut up! Shut up! Shut up! I can't take it anymore.

DAVID:

That's because you know I'm right.

SUZANNE:

No, it's because I'm sick of you. I'm tired of your lectures and the way you talk down to all of us. Goddamn it, I am so sick of being "the shallow one." Everybody dotes on you, with all your deep feelings and higher interests. The truth is you're just a spoiled brat who always has to have his own way.

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DAVID: *(crossing to the door)*

Yes. You're right. And so is Stephen. I'm a horrible little shit. I should get the hell out and grow up. And maybe I will. But when I'm done, I'll come back and say the same things and I'll still be right. *(he opens the door)*

SUZANNE: *(faltering)*

Why are you doing this?

DAVID: *(stops in the doorway)*

Because I'm fighting for my life. Do you have any idea how horrifying this is? To find out that the people who brought you into this world wish that they had slammed the door?

SUZANNE:

This family has been very good to you in every way, David. Don't play the martyr. We all love you, you know that. We love you.

DAVID:

Then love him.

SUZANNE:

I don't have the strength for it. I wish to God I was as strong as you are, but I'm not. I can't take it.

DAVID:

Is that a good enough reason?

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SUZANNE:

Probably not. But, think of that little boy. What would it be like for him? You know how people are. How would Rob and I be able to help him, feeling the way we do? It wouldn't be fair to any of us. David, what kind of mother would I be if I didn't understand my child?

DAVID:

I'd say you were pretty typical.

SUZANNE:

I doubt that. This isn't typical. You're not typical. There's nothing typical about you. You're still a mystery to me.

DAVID:

Just like you are to me. But I consider that an asset.

SUZANNE:

David, I know it's been hard for you. When I think of all the times I've heard you say you're lonely or scared...

DAVID:

You never feel that way?

SUZANNE:

You tell me your problems, and it terrifies me.

DAVID:

Don't make me regret sharing my life with you.

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SUZANNE:

Why should we put someone else through that if we can help it? Why isn't it more humane to wait until we can bring a child with no disadvantages into the world?

DAVID:

Because we'll lose too much. Don't you see? All the things you love about me are tied to that one element that makes you queasy. Every human being is a tapestry. You pull one thread, one undesirable color, and the art unravels. You end up staring at the walls. When Siegfried dies...

SUZANNE:

Oh, God, here we go. I should have known this was coming.

DAVID:

Listen, Siegfried, was the bravest hero the world has ever known. Without fear, he breaks all of the gods' outdated laws in two. He follows his heart and what he learns from Nature. He understands the calls of birds. He's beautiful.

SUZANNE:

What happens to Siegfried?

DAVID:

The world, which is cruel and corrupt, destroys him. He is stabbed in the back by evil men. Such a hero cannot survive in a decaying civilization.

SUZANNE:

So Siegfried went through all that pain for nothing.

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DAVID:

She brought a beautiful hero into the world.

SUZANNE:

And the world destroyed him. I don't want that to happen to my child.

DAVID:

Then change the world.

SUZANNE:

David, look at me. I couldn't finish pre-med, you want me to change the world.

DAVID:

You can do this.

SUZANNE:

David, you know I don't like to be tested. I just want the life Mom and Dad had when we were kids. I want to live in the world we saw growing up. That's all I ask.

DAVID:

We can't have that. Even if it existed in the first place, which I doubt, it's out of our grasp now. We don't have what our parents had. We don't have the faith, we don't have the money. We don't have the leaders, the confidence, or trust. And so, what do we do to combat the malaise? We shut ourselves off. We shrink from any challenge and take the easy way out. We've become lazy and fearful because we doubt our ability to love. Without question. I know you, Suzanne. You have the strength. You can do this. You're not shallow.

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SUZANNE:

You don't think so?

DAVID:

No. That's a card you play because it's easy. But that's not you. I know you. There's greatness in you, Suzanne Gold. Don't be afraid. Awaken. Usher in a new era, take care of your child. Okay? Okay?

SUZANNE: *(after a moment)*

You know what I was just thinking about?

DAVID:

No, what?

SUZANNE:

Your bar mitzvah.

DAVID:

Really?

SUZANNE:

You wore that brown three-piece suit with Pierre Cardin's name written like fifty times on the back of the vest. And a really thick tie.

DAVID:

You were wearing culottes.

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SUZANNE:

They were gauchos. But who's counting? I was so proud of you. I remember when you finished your Haphtarah and you looked up, you looked right at me.

DAVID:

You gave me one of these. *(He wipes his brow and makes a "whew" sound.)*

SUZANNE:

I remember thinking, how incredible. I look in his face and I see my own.

DAVID:

At the party, I danced the first slow dance with you.

SUZANNE:

What was the song? It was some Top 40 ballad.

DAVID:

It was Roberta Flack.

SUZANNE:

Oh, God, you're right.

DAVID: *(quietly sings the song "Killing Me Softly") "*

I heard he sang a good song, I heard he had style...." He rises. He takes Suzanne's hand and leads her to the center of the room. She joins him in a very slow, almost motionless dance.

SUZANNE:

Oh, God.

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DAVID: *(singing)*

"And so I came to see him to listen for a while."

SUZANNE *(singing)*

"And there he was this young boy, a stranger to my eyes."

BOTH *(singing softly and dancing)*

"Strumming my pain with his fingers, singing my life with his words..."

The song trails off. David hugs her.

DAVID:

Don't. Please don't. Don't do it. Don't.