

# Very Special

Written by  
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Sitcom Pilot

"Welcome Freshmen"

COLD OPEN

INT. SPECIAL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING - 1994

ABBY SPECIAL (11) cuddles in her PJs on the big puffy couch.

INFOMERCIAL ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
Learn about Scott Erickson's  
amazing new cassette tape course...

MICHAEL SPECIAL (39), the family patriarch with a theatrical flair, ties his robe shut as he staggers down the stairs.

MICHAEL  
Abby, you're up already?

ABBY  
I'm watching Fantastic Inventions.

Michael wags his finger at his daughter.

MICHAEL  
Infomercials? For SHAME.

ABBY  
What's so bad about infomercials?

MICHAEL  
Long-form marketing is a scourge to  
the theater. I lost my "Juliet" to  
one of these charlatans.

ABBY  
I'll stick to the movie channels.  
They don't even have commercials.

MICHAEL  
OUTSTANDING. But no Cinemax.

ABBY  
You got it, dad.

Michael tousles her hair, then heads back upstairs. Abby grabs the remote. She turns the channel to Cinemax, and we hear sexy sax music and moans.

ABBY  
Oh. Ooh. Interesting.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT I**INT. SPECIAL HOUSE - ZARA'S BEDROOM - MORNING**

ZARA SPECIAL (14), a nerd with glasses and her hair in a bun, stands in front of her mirror, judging herself.

She loses the glasses. Pops in contacts. Lets down her hair.

ZARA

Okay, Zara Special. First day of high school. Today is your day.

Abby sits on the bed behind Zara.

ABBY

You can't just take off your glasses and expect to be popular.

ZARA

I've seen a million movies that prove you wrong.

Abby sniffs the air.

ABBY

Is something burning? It smells like they lit a fart on fire.

Zara sniffs.

ZARA

Dad's cooking again.

**EXT. SPECIAL HOUSE - OUTSIDE KITCHEN - MORNING**

Michael huddles outside with his wife JENNIFER BAXTER-SPECIAL (38), looking artsy with her blue-tinted sunglasses. They pass a JOINT back and forth.

MICHAEL

I hate hiding this side of us from the children.

Jennifer takes a contemplative hit. Exhales.

JENNIFER

Lying to them is such a bummer.

Michael hits the joint.

MICHAEL

(coughs)

Is it so bad to want to come home after a late-night rehearsal at the theater and have a joint while I watch Dave?

JENNIFER

It's that D.A.R.E. propaganda. The kids are brainwashed.

MICHAEL

Especially Ricky.

JENNIFER

Especially Ricky.

**INT. SPECIAL HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING**

The kitchen lights switch on. RICKY SPECIAL (16) dressed like a politician heading to a rally, complete with an American flag lapel pin, enters.

Michael gasps outside the window. The joint gets sucked back in his mouth. He gags.

RICKY

(sniffs)

Is that a skunk?

Ricky turns on the RADIO so he can listen to RON LINUS.

RON (O.S)

--for five years now, folks. For five years, Ohio made funding the arts a top priority, and where has it got us? Our public school scores are so high, they're throwing off the national average. Funding the arts DESTROYS AMERICAN LIVES.

Jennifer lifts her arms and pretends to be a giant monster like Godzilla or something. Michael LAUGHS.

Abby enters and sits at the table. Zara, now with bangles and crimped hair and way too much purple eye shadow, follows.

ZARA

Where's Dad?

Michael signals to Jennifer with dramatic hand gestures to indicate they should sneak around the house and come in through the living room. They tiptoe off.

Ricky does a double-take at Zara's new outfit.

RICKY  
What's with the new get-up?

ZARA  
I'm trying to get with the  
nineties.

Zara does a lame little dance.

RICKY  
Screw the nineties. Give me the  
eighties... Men wore ties instead  
of parachute pants. Ronald Regan  
was King President.

ZARA  
And you were a toddler.

Ricky looks off wistfully.

RICKY  
Yeah. The good old days.

Abby sniffs the air.

ABBY  
That smell! It's even worse down  
here. We should call Rescue 911.

Michael and Jennifer come in from the living room, winded.

MICHAEL  
NO 911. We took care of it.

JENNIFER  
It was, like...

MICHAEL  
The neighbor...

JENNIFER  
Killed his dog?

MICHAEL  
And burned the body this morning,  
like the VIKINGS.

JENNIFER  
The only person he would trust to  
bury his dog, was like, his dog.

MICHAEL  
That's beautiful.

He grabs Jennifer and kisses her passionately.

RICKY

Hey, hey, hey. There are kids here.

MICHAEL

You're lucky. Some of your friend's parents are divorced. Take Phillip--

The kitchen door SLAMS open.

It's the teenager next door, legal name Phillip Simonson, but he goes by SINNIMON SLUSH (16). He looks like he raided the dumpster outside the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air dressing rooms.

SINNIMON

What up, my Specials?

ZARA

Ricky, your tryhard friend is here.

Jennifer steps between Zara and SINnimon with a tray of ASSORTED PASTRIES and BREAKFAST MEATS.

Michael stares at the tray, mind blown.

MICHAEL

Whoa. Where did this come from?

JENNIFER

I have no idea, man.

The kids swarm the tray. BITS OF FOOD fly everywhere. They move to the kitchen table, leaving behind a pile of crumbs and a lettuce leaf for some reason.

Michael picks up the lettuce leaf and stares at it.

MICHAEL

Well, I know where it's going.

(turns to the kids)

Zara, that's an... outfit.

ZARA

I'm trying to stand out. It's like Nosloo says... Kill or be killed.

She stabs her muffin with a fork. Holds it up. Stares at it.

ZARA

But, like, you don't have to kill them if they accept you. HA.

Zara takes one last bite, then runs to the door.

ZARA

Just watch. I'm gonna be, like, the most popular girl at Everly Heights High!

She exits.

SINNIMON leans over to Ricky.

SINNIMON

Jerome wants to pound your ass.

RICKY

What? Why? I did his dad's taxes, and I found so many loopholes.

SINNIMON

He's gonna wrap them loopholes round your neck. He got audited.

RICKY

Maybe Mr. Matheson can help me amend the return.

SINNIMON

Word. Let's bounce.

He dances his way out the door.

Ricky scarfs down his last piece of bacon, then snatches his BRIEFCASE from under the table.

RICKY

See you both tonight for the Welcome Back Dance.

MICHAEL & JENNIFER

Welcome Back Dance?

RICKY

You're signed up to chaperone.

Michael flails around like he's being tortured.

MICHAEL

Oh, sorrow! Oh, profound disappointment! Oh-- hio Arts Board meeting tonight. We can't miss it. You know how much Everly Heights depends on the arts.

RICKY  
 If you guys flake, I'll never be  
 able to show my face at the Future  
 Neocons of America meeting again!

JENNIFER  
 "Especially Ricky..."

Michael and Jennifer giggle.

RICKY  
 This is no laughing matter, you  
 two. This is about honoring your  
 commitments. This is about personal  
 responsibility. This is about--

JENNIFER  
 Don't cry, Gen Y!

MICHAEL  
 Don't cry, Gen Y!

RICKY  
 Grow up!

He slams the door behind him.

JENNIFER  
 So... Wanna go finish that joint?

MICHAEL  
 We have time for carnal pleasure.

ABBY (O.S.)  
 Did you guys forget about me?

Abby sits at the table, disgusted.

MICHAEL  
 Did you hear any of that?

ABBY  
 The joint, or your carnival  
 pleasures?

JENNIFER  
 Either?

MICHAEL  
 The joint.

**END OF ACT I**



ACT II**EXT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY**

The bright young minds of Everly Heights, Ohio file into...

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY**

Zara watches the other students from the top of the stairwell. Friends reunite. Freshmen study their schedules. A drug deal goes down by the blue lockers.

Zara cocks her head back. Cue the STRINGS.

ZARA

(singing)

*IT TOOK ME THE WHOLE SUMMER  
TO SETTLE ON THIS PLAN.  
I'M FUNKY FRESH. I'M SUPER FLY.  
PARENTS JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND.  
MY PRIMING PROMPTING PEDANTRY IS  
ALL COMPLETELY RELEVANT.  
WITH ANY LUCK, MY FRESHMAN YEAR IS  
GOING TO BE DIFFER--*

A JOCK smacks Zara with his bag. She tumbles down the stairs.

JOCK

That song sucked, stair girl!

Everybody points and laughs at "Stair Girl." She covers her face.

ZARA

No! No! Don't look at me!

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - MR. MATHESON'S ROOM - DAY**

Zara SLAMS the door behind her.

Ricky and SINnimon climb out from under the teacher's desk.

RICKY

Close the door. We're hiding from Jerome Bentley.

ZARA

You think you've got problems? It isn't even first bell, and I've already--

The door pops open. STEVE THE GEEK (16), in a classic suspenders/short pants combo, peeks in.

STEVE THE GEEK

Did you guys see the girl who wiped out on the stairs? Everybody's calling her Stair Girl.

(snorts)

We're all uniting as a school to bully her.

Steve the Geek notices Zara standing there.

STEVE THE GEEK

Oh. Hi, Zara. Cool outfit. Anyway, you guys want to go join the mob forming on the quad?

RICKY

We're fine here. Can you close the door on the way out, Steve?

STEVE THE GEEK

Sure thing.

(geeky giggle)

Later, gang!

Steve leaves.

RICKY

I feel sorry for Stair Girl. Her year is SUNK.

ZARA

I'm Stair Girl, dumbass. I'm going home, as soon as I can get out of here without anybody recognizing me... OH YEAH. Nosloo lent me a spare outfit.

Zara pulls a wad of clothes out of her backpack.

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY**

Zara walks down the hall, now dressed in jean shorts and a tied-up flannel shirt.

BEATRIX KNAPP, VERONICA, and REBECCA, more commonly known as "The Sparkles," a trio of mean girl mall brats, conspire by the red lockers.

BEATRIX  
We should check our hair...

REBECCA  
After we find Stair Girl.

VERONICA  
I can't wait to make her cry.

The Sparkles CACKLE together. Zara builds up the courage and walks over to them.

ZARA  
I know, right? Like, what kind of loser can't walk up stairs?

BEATRIX  
Who said you could talk to us?

ZARA  
I just thought I'd seek out the coolest girls in school since, you know, I'm, like, cool.

Zara flips her hair back in an uncool way.

Veronica gives the other Sparkles a knowing look.

VERONICA I totally see it now. REBECCA Totally cool.

Beatrix pulls a bottle of CRYSTAL PEPSI from her bag.

BEATRIX  
The coolest. Hey, want a Crystal Pepsi? All the cool girls started drinking them over the summer.

Zara snatches the bottle from her hand.

ZARA  
HECK YEAH. Everybody knows Crystal Pepsi. It's just like Sprite.

The Sparkles smile at each other since Crystal Pepsi totally isn't just like Sprite.

VERONICA Go ahead. REBECCA Take a sip.

BEATRIX  
You're cool, right?

ZARA  
Yes. Yes. A million times YES. I  
mean, sure. Whatever.

Zara takes a swig, then immediately spits it out all over herself. The Sparkles giggle at Zara's clothes, now covered in WHITE SPLOTCHES. Zara can't stop COUGHING.

VERONICA  
Did you really think that new  
outfit would fool us, Stair Girl?

BEATRIX  
Look, everybody! We found Stair  
Girl, and she drinks BLEACH.

Everybody points and laughs at Zara.

ZARA  
You put bleach in this?  
(coughs)  
That could kill me.

REBECCA  
Yeah, if you aren't cool it can.

Everybody LAUGHS at Zara again.

ZARA  
Um, it doesn't work like--

Rebecca and Veronica hoist Beatrix up on their shoulders. She commands the crowd, an upper-middle-class Evita.

BEATRIX  
Everly Heights Earworms! Stair Girl  
thinks she's cool, but she's never  
even tried Crystal Pepsi.

Out come more bottles of Crystal Pepsi. The students shake the bottles and spray Zara down with their sugary streams.

Zara stands there, drenched and crying. She wipes the excess soda out of her eyes and slinks away.

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - MR. MATHESON'S ROOM - DAY**

Ricky sits at the desk, biting his fingernails. SINnimon doodles the Tommy Hilfiger logo on the board.

Enter MR. MATHESON, a nebbish math teacher.

MR. MATHESON

They're spraying down some poor girl with Crystal Pepsi out there. Somebody should do something.

SINNIMON

Yo, you're a teacher and shit, right? Can't you do something?

MR. MATHESON

Oh, dear no. Breaking up fights isn't for real teachers like me. Leave it to the gym teachers, the history teachers, and the gym-slash-history teachers, I say.

Mr. Matheson puts down his briefcase and sits at his desk.

MR. MATHESON

How can I help you, boys?

Ricky pops open his briefcase and pulls out TAX RETURNS.

RICKY

You know those loopholes you showed me? They got my client audited.

Mr. Matheson leans back and takes off his glasses. He wipes a single wistful tear from his eye.

MR. MATHESON

Oh, Richard. Your first audit. Why, it feels like just last year when I first taught you how to do taxes.

RICKY

It was last year.

MR. MATHESON

Even so, you kids grow up so fast.

RICKY

Mr. Matheson, FOCUS. Can you help me amend these returns?

MR. MATHESON

Absolutely, my dear boy. When do you need it by?

SINNIMON

He needs that shit tonight.

MR. MATHESON

Oh, dear. As you children know,  
tonight's the Arts Board meeting,  
and I can't leave until we have an  
approved budget.

RICKY

They put a math teacher on the Arts  
Board?

MR. MATHESON

Somebody has to do the "creative  
accounting" needed to ensure the  
arts get as much funding as  
possible. Sorry, Richard, but your  
tax woes will have to wait. Now, I  
have to prepare for first period,  
and you boys need to get to class.  
No wick for the rested... Or  
something like that.

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY**

Ricky and SINnimon walk down the hallway.

RICKY

That freaking Arts Board meeting!  
It's like Ron Linus says... The  
arts are destroying American lives.  
At least the dance will be fun.

SINNIMON

Yo, you can't go to the dance.  
Jerome will be there.

RICKY

Damn it, you're right. If there are  
two things everybody knows about  
Jerome, it's that he loves punching  
people, and that he never misses a  
chance to show off his dance moves.

SINNIMON

We can chill in my basement--

Ricky grabs SINnimon's jacket and pulls him close.

RICKY

No. We're going to that dance,  
which my parents will chaperone,  
because we'll shut down that  
liberal wet dream of an Arts Board,  
side-by-side.

Ricky sniffs the air. He GAGS.

RICKY  
Damn, man. Cool it with the Tommy  
Hilfiger spray. You smell like a  
rotten orange grove.

**EXT. SUBURBS - AFTERNOON**

Zara walks down the sunny street. She slumps her shoulders.  
Cue the ALTERNATIVE ELECTRIC GUITAR.

ZARA  
(singing)  
*WITH THE GIRLS GONE, IT'S LESS  
DANGEROUS. NO MORE SPARKLES HERE TO  
SHAME US. I WAS STUPID AND  
OUTRAGEOUS. HERE WE ARE NOW--*

THUNDER. Rain pours from the sky, drenching Zara. A SMALL  
CROWD pops out from behind a bush to POINT AND LAUGH at her.

ZARA  
*GOD MUST HATE US.*

**EXT. EVERLY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY BUILDING - DUSK**

INSERT - The sign out front reads OHIO ARTS BOARD MEETING  
TONIGHT - DO NOT DISTURB - NO SOLICITORS.

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS COMMUNITY BUILDING - BOARD ROOM - DUSK**

BOARD MEMBERS mill about, picking at the catering table,  
stocked with fine wine, caviar, and a full oxygen bar.

Mr. Matheson approaches the oxygen bar with caution. He waves  
to get the ATTENDANT's attention.

MR. MATHESON  
Evening, friend. Goodness. Scented  
oxygen. What will they think of  
next? I'll take banana, please.

The attendant straps a mask to Mr. Matheson's face.

ATTENDANT  
Here you are, sir. Breathe in  
premium oxygen, a "thank you" for  
your contributions to the arts.

Mr. Matheson takes a deep breath. His shoulders relax.

MR. MATHESON  
You're quite-- Oh, that's nice.  
Banana-ey.

BRENDA (36), the Arts Board chairperson with a stick up her ass, "networks" with MAYOR BROWN (40s) by the massage tables.

BRENDA  
I saw you on News 8 last night,  
Chuck. You were... impressive.

MAYOR BROWN  
You know what I say: "A town that  
funds the arts funds its future."

BRENDA  
(giggles)  
You are hilarious, Chuck.

MAYOR BROWN  
Am I?

Michael and Jennifer enter the board room.

MICHAEL  
Let me do the talking. My edible  
hasn't kicked in yet.

She bats her eyes at him. Her edible has kicked in.

JENNIFER  
Oh, you. You're so handsome.

They approach Brenda with open arms.

MICHAEL  
Brenda! How are you?

BRENDA  
Oh. The Specials.

MICHAEL  
Mayor Brown, a pleasure, as always.

Michael bows to the mayor. Jennifer pets his head.

JENNIFER  
Isn't he handsome?

BRENDA  
Heavens no!



MICHAEL

Brenda, we need a favor.

BRENDA

Here we go. Michael, we love what Cornerstone Theater adds to the community, but we can't give you more than the three million we already promised. The rest is going to some Riverdance knockoff.

MICHAEL

Dance trends strike again. But no, we forgot we volunteered to chaperone the school dance tonight. Our son is counting on us.

BRENDA

You're the parents. Tell the little bastard to suck it up.

Brenda claps three times.

BRENDA

We have arts to fund, people!

The group gathers around the conference table. Brenda POUNDS her gavel.

BRENDA

I hereby call this meeting of the Ohio Arts Board to--

Two workers barge through the door carrying a ladder. It's Ricky and SINnimon, in cheap wigs, overalls, and fake beards.

RICKY

(in a bad Italian accent)  
It's a me, Mario the building inspector. This is my brother...

SINnimon smells something weird in his beard. Ricky COUGHS.

SINNIMON

Yo, I'm Luigi or some shit. We're inspecting ass busters.

The Board members look at each other, confused.

RICKY

He means asbestos. This whole place is coated in the stuff. We're shutting it down for your safety.

SINNimon pulls out his hammer. He taps various items, including the oxygen bar, which then COLLAPSES.

SINNIMON

Mamma mia!

MR. MATHESON

My banana-flavored air...

MAYOR BROWN

Who are you?

RICKY

It's... Uh...

SINNIMON

We're with NWA, yo.

MAYOR BROWN

NWA?

RICKY

Um, yeah. The NWA. The National Watchdog Association? We're here to enforce those overreaching liberal government agency safety standards.

MAYOR BROWN

Oh. If you were sent by the NWA, we'd better get straight out of the conference room.

BRENDA

Chuck... We can't delay this vote. If the arts aren't properly funded, it'll shut down our local economy.

MAYOR BROWN

Look, if the NWA says go, you go.

Mr. Matheson jumps from his chair.

MR. MATHESON

Perfect! Now I can help my student fix his taxes so the government won't know he cheated on them.

MAYOR BROWN

You know the NWA is here, right?

**END OF ACT II**

ACT III**INT. SPECIAL HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT**

A narrow hallway with several doors.

SINNIMON (O.S.)  
Yo, man, where's my Tommy Hill?

RICKY (O.S.)  
You don't need more cologne.

Zara wanders into the hallway in sweats and a t-shirt. Ricky runs out of his room, neckties laid across his arm.

RICKY  
You're a girl. Which one of these ties says "I'm going through a hip hop phase, but should still be able to find a stable career in computers once I grow out of it?"

Zara pokes through the ties without much interest.

ZARA  
Like, the orange one, or whatever.

Ricky gestures to her casual outfit.

RICKY  
You aren't ready for the dance.

ZARA  
Nah. I'm gonna go see what Nosloo's working on.

RICKY  
Look, I know today sucked. You should still go.

ZARA  
They changed the theme of the dance from 'Multicultural Unity' to 'Let's Make Fun Of Stair Girl.'

RICKY  
Maybe Nosloo is your best option. Tell him he owes me a clock radio.

ZARA  
Sure. Whatever.

She heads down the stairs without falling, for once. As Ricky goes into his room, Abby runs out of hers.

ABBY

Isn't anybody going to ask about my day?

(a beat)

Guess being the cute kid who's quick with a quip is all I'm good for to these buttheads.

She stomps back to her room. SLAM.

**EXT. THE SPECIAL'S BACK YARD - NIGHT**

Zara exits the house through the kitchen door, walks to the fence, pulls back one of the slats, and steps through to...

**EXT. NOSLOO'S BACKYARD - NIGHT**

A Technicolor hoarder's nest, filled with 90s-era junk: Parachute pants taped to DustBusters. A cordless phone welded to a single rollerblade. An army of troll dolls keep watch.

ZARA

Hey, Nosloo.

NOSLOO (1,236), a dark troll wizard with a bearskin cloak over his green fur, pops out from under a pile of junk.

NOSLOO

Hey, hey, hey! I've been building stuff all day. You're gonna love this.

Nosloo scurries over to his trunk and pulls out a MICROWAVE, with a CLOCK RADIO strapped to the top.

NOSLOO

I call this my Microshortwave Radio. It can send a message to my home dimension, but I have to keep it under 280 characters.

ZARA

What can you say in 280 characters?

Nosloo stares off into the distance.

NOSLOO

I'd let them know what I had for dinner.

(MORE)

NOSLOO (CONT'D)

So, you kids don't come over here unless you need my help. Something tells me your first day didn't go like we planned. My rad outfits didn't work?

Zara pets Nosloo like a dog. He's into it.

ZARA

Oh, Nosloo, your outfits were all that, but I felt like a phony. I was so worried what about those girls thought of me, I just left. Now Ricky wants me to go to the dance, but I don't want to see anybody.

She cries into Nosloo's pelt.

NOSLOO

Hey, watch the bearskin.

ZARA

Sorry. I just-- This was supposed to be MY DAY.

NOSLOO

It's obvious what your problem is.

ZARA

What?

NOSLOO

You care too much, kiddo. Your enemies can only hurt you if they know where you're vulnerable. If fighting the dark lord Hibboticus taught me anything, it's that winners don't show weakness.

ZARA

So I need to be tough?

NOSLOO

Sort of. No matter what these teen witches throw at you, you can't let them know you care. Hide your feelings deep down inside, so deep you won't think about them until you're on your death bed, and by that point, who cares, right?

Zara's eyes light up.

ZARA

I know just what to do. Thanks,  
Nosloo. You always give the best  
advice!

She pats Nosloo on the head, runs back to the fence, then  
steps through the slats back into her own yard.

NOSLOO

Well, she's doomed.

**EXT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT**

A RED CARPET leads into the gymnasium. Student reporters snap  
pictures with disposable cameras.

CARRIE TART, a high school news anchor, shouts into her  
microphone from underneath a thick layer of Aqua Net.

CARRIE

The Welcome Back dance is on!  
Coming down the red carpet, the  
flyest crew in Everly Heights. They  
love to hate you... You hate to  
love them... THE SPARKLES.

Beatrice, Veronica, and Rebecca strut down the red carpet like  
runway models as the CROWD CHEERS.

CARRIE

Any words for your adoring fans?

BEATRIX

Screw. Off.

REBECCA

Yeah. Eat our skorts, man.

VERONICA

Don't reference The Simpsons. Only  
nerds watch it now.

Rebecca covers her face in shame.

REBECCA

I am, like, dead.

Ricky and SINnimon tumble onto the red carpet. Zara stands  
behind them, but we can't quite see her.

CARRIE

This SPECIAL guy says he'll be the next President of the United States, and while we all hope he's wrong, we can totally see it... It's RICKY SPECIAL. Oh, and his neighbor, Phillip Simonson.

SINnimon runs over and snatches Carrie's microphone.

SINNIMON

(to the camera)

That's SINnimon Slush, y'all!

CARRIE

Since when?

He drops the mic. Carrie catches it, then pushes him out of the way.

CARRIE

Who is that with you, Ricky? Does Mr. Special have a special girl?

RICKY

Ew, gross. That's my sister.

He steps back to reveal Zara, transformed. Her stylish hair, brushed flat against her head. Her contacts, replaced with thick glasses. If a level of emotional detachment beyond boredom exists, Zara is so there.

CARRIE

Really?

(back to the camera)

ZARA SPECIAL is in the house, sporting a new look. You might know her better as the infamous Stair Girl, who a mob of students has been searching for all day. Zara, why did you come to the first big event of the season looking like you crawled out of a trash bag?

Zara flips Carrie off, then walks in with the others.

CARRIE

Oh-kay. Next up-- Oh. Chaperones. Cut the feed. We're done here!

The crowd goes silent. The flashes stop. Everybody pushes their way into the school.

Michael and Jennifer stumble down the empty red carpet.

MICHAEL

Whoa. Weren't there like--

JENNIFER

People? Yeah. Weird, man.

MICHAEL

Serlingesque. Speaking of the  
Twilight Zone, wanna smoke a little  
before we go in?

Jennifer smiles at her husband.

JENNIFER

You know I can't say no to doing  
drugs at school.

**INT. EVERLY HEIGHTS HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - NIGHT**

Kids dance to a HIP 90S SONG. Ricky and SINnimon peek out  
from behind the bleachers.

RICKY

Do you see Mr. Matheson?

SINNIMON

Nah, but I see your homie Jeromie.

JEROME, six-foot-five and 300lbs of "I don't give a shit,"  
flips over the cookie table.

JEROME

Where's Ricky Special?

Ricky and SINnimon duck back behind the bleachers.

On top of the bleachers, Zara stretches out and stares at the  
ceiling. The Sparkles notice her from across the room.  
Veronica points.

VERONICA

Look, it's Stair Girl, but she  
looks like SHIT.

Record scratch. The dance grinds to a halt.

REBECCA

Stair Girl is Shit Girl now!

The other kids CRACK UP as the Sparkles march up the  
bleachers. Beatrix pokes Zara with her foot.



BEATRIX  
Hey, Shit Girl.

**UNDER THE BLEACHERS**

SINnimon pushes Ricky out of his way.

SINNIMON  
Yo, move. I gotta check this shit.

RICKY  
But Jerome is looking for us.

SINNIMON  
He's looking for you. SLUSH OUT.

**ON THE DANCE FLOOR**

SINnimon pushes to the front of the crowd to watch the girls.

BEATRIX  
Who gave you that outfit? Rick  
Moranis?

ZARA  
Yeah. After he shrunk his kids, he  
gave away their clothes. Who did  
your makeover? Glamour Shots?

The crowd OOHs.

BEATRIX  
Like, who do you think you are?

ZARA  
Didn't you hear? I'm Shit Girl. I  
look like shit. I smell like shit.  
When I leave, I'll go home and roll  
around in shit. You gave me a new  
identity. Thanks. You Sparkles are  
my heroes. Especially you, Beatrix.

BEATRIX  
You're... You're saying nice  
things, but it still feels like  
you're being mean somehow?

VERONICA  
It's confusing?

REBECCA  
I don't like it?

ZARA  
I don't care?

BEATRIX

Fine, but we're watching you, Shit Girl.

ZARA

You're watching me shit, girl?  
That's weird. And probably illegal.

The kids laugh at The Sparkles as they slither away.

ZARA

Finally.

Cue the INDIE FOLK ROCK.

ZARA

Fuck off. I'm not singing.

DANCE MUSIC starts up. Everybody gets down.

Jerome stalks through the crowd, looking for Ricky.

Not by the punch bowl. Not in the hall.

Not under the-- No, wait. He's under the bleachers.

JEROME

SPECIAL. Get out here.

Jerome pulls Ricky out.

RICKY

Jerome. Great to see you. How's  
your dad?

Jerome tosses Ricky out onto the dance floor.

SINNimon runs over.

SINNIMON

Yo, what'd you do to my boy Ricky?

JEROME

You wanna fight, asshole?

SINNIMON

No, just curious. SLUSH OUT.

Jerome turns back to Ricky, still on the ground.

JEROME

You're dead.

RICKY  
C'mon. Can't we make a deal?

JEROME  
Yeah. I'll deal with you, and  
you'll shut the f--

Zara appears behind Jerome, a misanthropic ninja.

ZARA  
Brute force. What a smart strategy.

JEROME  
Gee, thanks!  
(he catches it)  
Hey, I ain't smart. You making fun  
of me?

ZARA  
You aren't important enough to make  
fun of, honestly.

JEROME  
Um... Um... Um... Shut up, Shit  
Girl! I'm gonna kick your brother's  
tax-cheating ass.

The big gym doors CRANK open. Smoke pours in from outside.

JEROME  
Shit. It's the chaperones. Keep  
quiet or I'll kick your other ass  
too.

RICKY  
Other ass?

Michael, Jennifer, and Mr. Matheson walk out of the smoke in  
slow motion. As they weave through the crowd, the kids all  
move at normal speed. The adults are just crazy high.

Mr. Matheson holds a copy of the corrected TAX RETURNS.

MR. MATHESON  
(still in slow motion)  
Has anybody seen Ricky Special? I  
got--  
(coughs)  
...distracted by his parents.

Ricky runs up and snatches the returns from Mr. Matheson.

RICKY  
 Just in time, Mr. M.  
 (sniffs)  
 Did somebody let a skunk in here?

Jerome shoves Mr. Matheson out of the way, then grabs Ricky.

JEROME  
 You ready to get both your asses  
 kicked?

Ricky shoves the tax returns in Jerome's face.

RICKY  
 No need, pal. We've corrected the  
 "errors" on your father's tax  
 returns. Now, instead of owing  
 \$25,000 to the IRS, it looks like  
 he'll be getting back--  
 (he looks at the returns)  
 One hundred bucks, which is ten  
 bucks more than he paid me for  
 doing his taxes.

Jerome snatches the returns.

JEROME  
 Good. I hate being mad at you.

Jerome pulls Ricky into an uncomfortable hug.

RICKY  
 No... problem. Can you... let go?  
 I... can't... breathe.

JEROME  
 You got it, buddy. And Special?  
 Tell your sister to stop being such  
 a bitch. It's confusing.

Jerome wanders off.

Michael and Jennifer stumble up to their kids.

RICKY  
 Mom! Dad! You made it.

MICHAEL  
 Yeah, it was the weirdest thing.  
 The NWA shut down the meeting.

Ricky and Sinnimon look at each other.

RICKY

You don't say?

JENNIFER

He did say! Zara, thanks for standing up for your brother. We saw it through the window.

MICHAEL

That's another... outfit. I thought you were trying to look like somebody people could like?

ZARA

Dad, this morning I cared a lot about how people saw me, but today I learned that not caring means it doesn't matter who likes you. From now on, I'll sit on the sidelines of life, making cynical smart-ass comments. It's safer that way.

MICHAEL

Well, that's a good lesson to learn, dear.

JENNIFER

Is it?

MICHAEL

Sure. Maybe we could all stand to care less. If that bully had cared less about his dad going to jail, the whole fight would have never even started. And if Ricky had cared less about us chaperoning his dance, maybe the arts would be properly funded tonight. Isn't that right, "Mario?"

Ricky kicks at the ground.

RICKY

Shucks. You knew?

MICHAEL

Did you think I wouldn't recognize those costumes you took from the theater? Your friend had your mother's merkin from our All-Female, All-Nude production of Hamlet glued to his face.

SINNIMON

What's a merkin?

Michael kneels down and puts his hand on Zara's shoulder.

MICHAEL

And Zara, you cared about caring,  
then learned to care about not  
caring. In the end...

Michael stands, puts his arms around the group, and pulls them close.

MICHAEL

All that caring added up to a very  
special day.

They laugh.

JENNIFER

Every day with our crew is Special.

MICHAEL

That's right. We grow and change in  
surprising new ways every week.  
Except for your little sister Abby.  
She never changes.

JENNIFER

Wait. Where is Abby?

ZARA

Were we supposed to be watching  
her?

JENNIFER

I can't remember.

They all run out of the gym to go find her.

**END OF ACT III**

TAG**INT. SPECIAL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Abby sits on the couch munching on popcorn.

SURFER DUDE (V.O)  
You're a beach babe from beyond?

BEACH BABE (V.O)  
You bet your ass, dude.

The front door opens. Jennifer runs in and hugs her daughter.

JENNIFER  
Oh, my baby, I totally spaced on getting you a sitter for tonight.

ABBY  
It's cool, Mom. I'm a nineties kid. I'm used to my parents forgetting about me.

Jennifer smiles, relieved. Her eyes drift to the television.

JENNIFER  
What are you watching? This looks a little mature for you.

ABBY  
It's about these aliens who fly across the galaxy and enter a bikini contest. It's all a big metaphor for women entering the workforce in the 70s.

JENNIFER  
Why is she licking his nipple?

ABBY  
Empowerment.

Jennifer grabs a handful of popcorn and sits down.

JENNIFER  
Oh. Ooooh. Interesting.

**END OF EPISODE**