

EXT. BAR PATIO

PAUL, 47, reads a few sheets of paper with a smile on his face. Nearby sits VANESSA, 25 and ridiculously smart. Within the past five minutes, she's let him know that he's her dad.

He flips through the papers again and sets them down.

PAUL

Well... I'd say it's hard to believe, but it's not. You're lucky. You got her looks, thank goodness. But you did get my eyes.

(shakes head)

Crazy. Soooo... twenty-five years to catch up on, huh?

VANESSA

Yeah, so what you been doing for the past twenty-five years?

PAUL

I was talking about you.

VANESSA

I know... we'll get to that.

Her look turns more serious.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

Elaine's not the sharpest tool in the shed. My brain paid for college. I didn't get that from her. So why are you still in the same college town working the same job you were back when you two met?

PAUL

Hey, at least it's at a different bar!

VANESSA

Not an answer to my question.

PAUL

I've worked at pretty much every bar in this town. I like bartending. I always have... that's how I met your mom.

VANESSA

Quit changing the subject. You're obviously smarter than you're letting on. Have you met my mom's family? I'm an alien.

Paul laughs.

PAUL

I'm a guy who is haunted by the p-word.

Vanessa frowns. She can't bring herself to say it... then.

VANESSA

Pussy?

Paul laughs again.

PAUL

Yeah, come to think of it, that has haunted me on more than one occasion. Ha! No... potential. I was the one who had potential.

They each ponder that for a moment.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I never applied myself properly according to my dad and several other smart humans.

VANESSA

In what area was your potential?

PAUL

I was an architecture major... thought I was gonna be the next Mike Brady.

VANESSA

Who's that?

PAUL

Jesus... twenty-five is a lot younger than it used to be.

She stares. She wants an answer.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Brady Bunch. TV show. He was the dad and was an architect. What'd you major in?

VANESSA
Civil engineering.

PAUL
Again... wow. The apple doesn't
fall far from--

Vanessa interrupts.

VANESSA
--She's right... you are an
asshole.

Paul volleys.

PAUL
How do you figure?

VANESSA
You obviously dropped out of the
architecture program, if you ever
made it past your basics. Then you
got a job bartending, figured out
it was an easy way to get laid, and
became a full-time womanizer.

PAUL
That's a... that's a jump.

VANESSA
It's true, though, isn't it?

He thinks.

PAUL
Sure... for a while. Actually, for
a good long while.
(shrugs)
Busted. Guilty.

VANESSA
I'm twenty-five, not eleven... I've
dated guys like you. Don't care for
your type.

PAUL
Understandable... so you have a
boyfriend?

VANESSA
I'm not gonna share that with you
yet. Ask something else.

PAUL
 OK... so did you get your degree?
 Did you get a job?

VANESSA
 I had a scholarship. Of course I
 graduated. Had the same job for
 about two and a half years now. Ask
 me something that matters.

He thinks.

PAUL
 What's most important to you?

VANESSA
 How very general.
 (thinks)
 Right now? My friends. My
 integrity. A feeling of purpose.

PAUL
 I wish I had your focus back when I
 was your age.

They sit silent for a bit.

VANESSA
 Why'd you and my mom break up?

PAUL
 I started seeing someone else while
 your mom and I were dating.

VANESSA
 What you mean to say is that you
 were fucking someone on the side.
 Just say it.

PAUL
 OK. I was fucking someone on the
 side. Your mom found out, that's
 why she left... and again, she
 never told me you existed. So... I
 got serious with this "other
 woman." Got engaged. I re-enrolled
 in school to finish my degree. I
 finished my first semester back and
 she graduated... education major.
 We went to Pittsburgh for Christmas
 so I could meet her family. She
 woke up one morning and felt bad...
 it was a brain aneurysm.

(MORE)

PAUL (CONT'D)

Died instantly. I quit school and just bartended and slept... slept a lot.

VANESSA

Oh, God. That's awful.

PAUL

Yeah... but it was no excuse to throw away my life along with hers. Feel like I've wasted most of my life... my time here. But looking at you? I don't feel like a piece o' shit right now.

He stares at her.

VANESSA

Is this where you ask if I'll consider letting you into my life?

PAUL

You are smart... and a smart-ass. You get that from me, too, you know?

VANESSA

Probably true... Elaine doesn't get half my jokes.

He smirks. She half-smiles.

VANESSA (CONT'D)

This is a good start. Based on what my mom said, you're not half as bad as I was expecting.

PAUL

Good start? So what does that mean?

She gets up.

VANESSA

I'll come visit again. We'll see what happens.

PAUL

That's uh... thank you. I'd like that.

He stands. He holds his arms out for a hug. She extends her hand.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Sure... that makes sense.

They shake hands... it's awkward.

VANESSA
That was weird.

PAUL
Yeah.

She looks him in the eye and turns and walks away. She then comes back a few steps.

VANESSA
We'll hug next time.

Paul smiles and nods. She only half-smiles, still not sure about this whole thing. She exits.

END SCENE